

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

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**HEARINGS**

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS  
UNITED STATES SENATE**

**ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS**

**SECOND SESSION**

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**JANUARY 16 THROUGH DECEMBER 2, 2014**  
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**NOMINATIONS OF WILLIAM V. ROEBUCK;  
JUDITH BETH CEFKIN; BARBARA A. LEAF;  
AND PAMELA LEORA SPRATLEN**

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**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2014**

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

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William V. Roebuck, of North Carolina, to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of Bahrain  
Judith Beth Cefkin, of Colorado, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Fiji, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador to the Republic of Kiribati, the republic of Nauru, the Kingdom of Tonga, and Tuvalu  
Barbara A. Leaf, of Virginia, to be Ambassador the United States of America to the United Arab Emirates  
Pamela Leora Spratlen, of California, to be Ambassador to the republic of Uzbekistan

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The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:33 a.m., in room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Tim Kaine, presiding.

Present: Senators Kaine, Murphy, Risch, Rubio, and McCain.

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

Senator KAINE. This meeting of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee is called to order.

We have the fortune today to be conducting this hearing concerning the nominations of four long-time public servants to important ambassadorial posts.

Senator Risch, the ranking member on the Committee on Near East, South, and Central Asia, is en route and has indicated he does not want to delay the beginning of this hearing, so we will begin.

I will do introductions of the four nominees before us.

Following, each will give opening statements. Try to keep those to 5 minutes or less. And we will then get into questions. I have a number of questions for each of you, and I am sure other Senators who attend will, as well.

The nominees today are William "Bill" Roebuck, who is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of counselor, and cur-

rently serves as the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Egypt and Maghreb Affairs in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs of the Department of State. Mr. Roebuck has served in a variety of positions during his career as a Foreign Service officer, at State Department HQ, but also in Libya, Iraq, Israel, Syria, Jamaica. Prior to serving in the Foreign Service, he was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Cote d'Ivoire.

Barbara Leaf is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of minister counselor, and currently serves as Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Arabian Peninsula overseeing relations with the Gulf in Yemen and 10 other diplomatic posts. Ms. Leaf has served in a number of positions within State Department HQ, but also at Iraq, Italy, Bosnia, Herzegovina, France, Egypt, Israel, and Haiti.

Thank you, Ms. Leaf.

Judith Cefkin is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of minister counselor, and currently a senior advisor for Burma in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs at the Department of State, a position she has held since 2013. She has served previously in positions in main State, but also Bangkok, Bosnia, Herzegovina, the Philippines, and France.

And finally, Pamela Spratlen is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of minister counselor, and currently is U.S. Ambassador to Kyrgyzstan. She has served previously in positions in Russia and Kazakhstan.

And, Ambassador Spratlen, welcome.

The nominees are all people with tremendous public-service background. And I will just say to each of you, I just returned with five other Members of Congress from a 9-day CODEL in Tunisia, Morocco, and Spain, where we interacted, not only with the Ambassadors in each of the countries, but one of the things I do when I travel is, I always try to have a roundtable discussion with first- or second-term FSOs to talk about their lives and hear about their excitement in representing the United States, but also the challenges, and especially challenges that can exist in serving in some of the more difficult bits of real estate where we have embassies and consulates around the world. Anytime I do that, I always walk away with a real sense of pride in the kinds of people that we send. You are all nominated for capital-A Ambassador, but you will be working with a whole lot of small-a ambassadors. Everybody who represents the United States in any of these positions, whether it is a consular officer or anybody in the Department of State, or whether it is somebody who is working for an agency like the DEA or the Department of Commerce or, you know, any other agency—Ex-Im Bank, where we have people abroad—they are small-a ambassadors for the United States, and we have a superb team of people who sacrifice and serve. And I am always struck by that when I travel.

So, thank you for your commitment to service. Congratulations on being nominated for the positions—Mr. Roebuck for Ambassador to Bahrain; Ms. Leaf to Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates; Ms. Cefkin, Ambassador to Fiji; and Ambassador Spratlen to be Ambassador to Uzbekistan. Congratulations on those nominations. We will do all we can to move them promptly.

And what I would like to do is now start with opening statements. And why do I not just start with Mr. Roebuck, and then we will move across the table.

**STATEMENT OF WILLIAM V. ROEBUCK, OF NORTH CAROLINA,  
NOMINEE TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN**

Mr. ROEBUCK. Thank you, Chairman Kaine. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of Bahrain. It is a great honor as well as a dream of every Foreign Service officer to be in this position.

Mr. Chairman, with your permission, I would like to include my full statement for the record. I will just make a brief oral statement—

Senator Kaine. All of your statements will be included for the record.

Mr. ROEBUCK. Thank you.

I would like to start by acknowledging my wife, Ann, without whom I am quite confident I would not be sitting in this chair today. She and my son, William, who could not be here because he just began his freshman year at the College of Charleston last week, they both accompanied me on many challenging assignments overseas and provided invaluable support.

Those challenging assignments have included, as you mentioned, Senator Kaine, Jerusalem, Gaza, Damascus, Baghdad, and Tripoli, where I fostered political dialogue, helped governments address threats posed by violent extremism, promoted and protected human rights, supported elections, and encouraged regional security efforts between neighbors. I believe those experiences have seasoned me as a diplomat and positioned me well to take on this challenging assignment, if confirmed. I have also had great mentors in the Foreign Service who have ensured that I drew the right lessons from those challenging experiences.

Mr. Chairman, the United States and Bahrain have long shared important mutual interests demonstrated through our history of close bilateral cooperation, which we deeply value. Bahrain and the United States share key strategic goals reflected by the fact that our security relationship has grown over the years. Today, more than 8,000 Americans who are attached to the Fifth Fleet and to U.S. Naval Forces Central Command live and work there. Although we took the decision to limit certain aspects of our security cooperation following the unrest in Bahrain in 2011, our military relationship with Bahrain remains fundamentally strong and mutually beneficial. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Government of Bahrain and with my colleagues at the Department of Defense to ensure that our security partnership remains strong.

While mutual concerns about regional stability motivate our close cooperation on security matters, we also have a strong foundation to build on in the areas of trade and finance. Bahrain has one of the most open economies in the region, and our bilateral trade has doubled to nearly \$2 billion a year since our Free Trade Agreement entered into force in 2006.

With respect to the political situation in Bahrain, we encourage all of Bahrain's constituencies to work in good faith to develop a

broad consensus on addressing the underlying social and economic grievances that drove the protest of 2011. We think that a successful political compromise that allows these political societies to participate in upcoming elections would be the surest signal of Bahrain's progress toward reform and reconciliation. I believe strongly that a country that protects and promotes human rights will ultimately be a more stable country and a more effective security partner. If confirmed, I will make a strong case, both publicly and privately, to explain why political dialogue, reform, and promoting human rights are in Bahrain's long-term interest. The recent expulsion by Bahrain of a senior American diplomat was a significant setback in this regard. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that we continue to have an open and honest dialogue with Bahrain on the full range of issues affecting our bilateral relationship, including human rights.

Finally, should I be confirmed as Ambassador, protecting U.S. citizens in Bahrain will be one of my highest priorities. I have served at a number of high-threat posts, where security for Americans was a critical priority, most recently as Chargé d-Affaires at our Embassy in Libya, and I know the type of team effort that is required with the Embassy Country Team, with local security officials, and with the broader American community.

The United States/Bahrain relationship has translated into economic, social, political, and cultural benefits for the people of both countries. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that Bahrain can continue to rely on the United States and that we can continue to rely on Bahrain as an effective partner.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify before you. I am pleased to answer any questions you may have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Roebuck follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF WILLIAM V. ROEBUCK

Chairman Kaine, Ranking Member Risch, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you as the President's nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of Bahrain. It is a great honor, as well as the dream of every Foreign Service officer, to appear before you today. I am extremely grateful to President Obama and Secretary Kerry for the confidence they have shown in me. If confirmed, I look forward to representing the American people, and to working with this committee and other interested Members of Congress to advance U.S. interests with Bahrain.

I have spent most of my career posted in the Middle East, including assignments in Jerusalem, Gaza, Damascus, Baghdad, and Tripoli, fostering political dialogue, providing support for elections, helping governments address the threats posed by terrorism and violent extremism, promoting and protecting human rights, and encouraging regional security efforts between neighbors. I believe those experiences have seasoned me as a diplomat and positioned me well to take on this challenging assignment.

Mr. Chairman, the United States and Bahrain have long shared mutual interests in regional security, demonstrated through our history of close bilateral cooperation and partnership. We deeply value this friendship, rooted in the history of our two peoples dating back to the early years of the 20th century. If confirmed, I will work to maintain, expand, and deepen this partnership, while also continuing our support for King Hamad's efforts to bring reform, political dialogue, and reconciliation to Bahrain. My experience teaches me that these priorities are not mutually exclusive—in fact, I think they are inextricably linked. This approach will strengthen Bahrain's long-term security, stability, and prosperity.

Bahrain and the United States share key strategic goals, reflected by the fact that our security relationship has grown over the years. Our Navy arrived in Bahrain during the 1940s, and today more than 8,000 Americans who are attached to the Fifth Fleet or U.S. Naval Forces Central Command live there. We work closely with

the Bahraini Defense Forces, in particular their Navy and Air Force, on a range of fronts, including counterterrorism and antipiracy operations. Bahrain has pledged to help fight terrorists in Iraq and Syria; welcomed the appointment of Iraqi Prime Minister designate Al-Abadi; deployed its navy and ground forces in support of Operation Enduring Freedom; commanded the coalition task force responsible for maritime security in the gulf; and sent air, ground, and naval assets to Kuwait in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Although we took the decision to limit certain aspects of our security cooperation following the unrest in Bahrain in 2011, our military relationship with Bahrain remains fundamentally strong and mutually beneficial. If confirmed, I will look forward to collaborating with the Government of Bahrain and my colleagues at the Department of Defense to help Bahrain develop its defense capabilities to provide for its own defense, and to improve interoperability with our forces. Going forward, the U.S.-GCC Strategic Cooperation Forum, launched jointly in 2012 by Secretary Clinton and the GCC Secretary General, will be an important mechanism by which I hope to make progress on our partnership with Bahrain, addressing air defense, maritime security, cyber attacks, and other threats.

The State Department provides counterterrorism and critical incident response training for the Bahraini law enforcement units that provide security for U.S. naval facilities and the U.S. Embassy, and that act as Bahrain's primary internal security force. Bahrain is also a valuable partner in disrupting illicit finance flows to terrorist organizations. Bahrain hosts the Secretariat for the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force, a regional body that coordinates efforts against terrorist finance. In addition, Bahrain is a member of the Egmont group, the international coordinating body for Financial Intelligence Units, which facilitates global cooperation in the fight against terrorist financing. If confirmed, I will continue to prioritize our close counterterrorism partnership with Bahrain.

While mutual concerns about regional stability motivate our close cooperation in security matters, we also have a strong foundation to build upon in the area of trade, and financial cooperation.

Bahrain is one of the most open economies in the Middle East/North Africa region and shows a continued commitment to economic diversification and reform. Bilateral trade last year reached \$1.7 billion—more than double the levels since before the free trade agreement entered into force in 2006. More American companies are setting up shop in Bahrain every year. Consistent with the President's National Export Initiative and Secretary Kerry's directive that we improve our effectiveness at economic and commercial diplomacy, if confirmed, I will ensure that all our Embassy's agencies and sections understand the priority we place on commercial diplomacy and that they are working closely with stateside offices to vigorously promote the export of U.S. manufactured goods, services, and farm products to this important market. If confirmed as Ambassador, I would also seek to encourage more Bahraini students to study at U.S. colleges and universities.

Let me say a few words about the political situation in Bahrain: We encourage all of Bahrain's constituencies to work in good faith to develop a broad consensus on how to address underlying social and economic grievances that drove the protests of 2011. We think that a successful political compromise that allows these political societies to participate in the upcoming elections would be the surest signal of Bahrain's progress toward reform and reconciliation.

The Government of Bahrain has made some important strides in implementing the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry recommendations to advance a reform and reconciliation agenda. For instance, the government has created a victims compensation fund that has distributed about \$6 million to the families of 39 victims of the 2011 violence and appointed an ombudsman to the Ministry of Interior. It is important to acknowledge King Hamad's leadership in initiating the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry, for accepting the recommendations put forward in the report, and for committing to implement reforms. The government has more to do on a range of BICI recommendations.

I believe that a country that protects and promotes human rights will ultimately be a more stable country and a more effective security partner. If confirmed, I will make a strong case both publicly and privately for why political dialogue, reform, and promoting and protecting human rights are in Bahrain's long-term interest. The recent expulsion by Bahrain of a senior American diplomat was a significant setback in this regard. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that we continue to have an open and honest dialogue with Bahrain on the full range of issues affecting our bilateral relationship, including human rights.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, should I be confirmed as Ambassador, protecting U.S. citizens in Bahrain will be one of my highest priorities. In the course of my career, I have served at a number of high-threat posts, where security for Americans was a

critical priority. I served recently for 6 months as Chargé d'Affaires at our Embassy in Libya, where I worked closely with my regional security officer and his team, and ensured close coordination with local law enforcement and with the American business community outside the Embassy. I understand that the safety and security of American citizens is a critical priority and I believe my experiences as a diplomat in the region have equipped me well to address this issue effectively.

The U.S.-Bahrain relationship has translated into economic, social, political, and cultural benefits for the people of both countries. I am committed to further building up these vital partnerships in the Kingdom and further solidifying our unique relationship that is based on mutual respect and a long history of consultation between friends. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that Bahrain can continue to rely on the United States and that we can continue to rely on Bahrain as an effective partner.

Thank you again for this opportunity and I will be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Roebuck.  
Ms. Cefkin.

**STATEMENT OF JUDITH BETH CEFKIN, OF COLORADO, NOMINEE TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI, AND TO SERVE CONCURRENTLY AND WITHOUT ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION AS AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF KIRIBATI, THE REPUBLIC OF NAURU, THE KINGDOM OF TONGA, AND TUVALU**

Ms. CEFKIN. Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am deeply honored to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Fiji, the Republic of Kiribati, the Republic of Nauru, the Kingdom of Tonga, and Tuvalu. I am grateful to the President and Secretary for their confidence in nominating me for this position, and I am equally grateful to receive your consideration.

With the chairman's permission, I would like to introduce my husband, Paul Boyd, who is also a Foreign Service officer. He has just capped over 40 years of public service, including combat service with U.S. Special Forces, work in law enforcement, and, for the past 30 years, we have shared the adventure of the Foreign Service.

Senator KAINE. And where is Paul? Thank you.

And where is Ann? Is Ann here with you, Bill?

Thank you both. I just wanted to make sure I know who you are.  
Thank you.

Ms. CEFKIN. Thank you.

My Foreign Service experience has taught me the power of our country's values-based diplomacy. If confirmed, I will relish the opportunity to draw on the lessons of my many years of regional policy experience also to advance U.S. strategic interests in the South Pacific.

As a Pacific nation, the United States shares an important history with our Pacific Island nations. We also share a common destiny. This is reflected in President Obama's rebalance to the Asia-Pacific region. If confirmed, I look forward to working in partnership with the five nations to which I would be accredited to seek to ensure that our common future is one of prosperity, peace, stability, and human fulfillment.

Perhaps nowhere is the need for this focus more compelling than on the waters that bind us, those of the mighty Pacific Ocean. As Secretary Kerry noted when he organized the recent Oceans Con-

ference, our oceans facilitate our trade and provide much of the food we eat, and even the air we breathe. Yet, today Kiribati, Tuvalu, Nauru, Tonga, and Fiji face dramatic challenges related to rising sea levels, ocean warming and acidification, marine pollution, and overfishing. These challenges threaten the very existence of them, these populations. They also threaten broader global commerce and food security, issues that directly impact the United States. If confirmed, I will strive to advance solutions to improve regional environmental management, support adaptation projects, and promote sustainable fisheries methods.

The Pacific Islands are global players. Both Fiji and Tonga have been important contributors to international peacekeeping operations. We also work closely with Kiribati, Nauru, Tuvalu, and Tonga in the U.N. They take very seriously their responsibilities in that forum.

Furthermore, Fiji plays an important role in the Pacific region as a hub for commerce, diplomacy, academic affairs, transportation, and communications. And Suva is headquarters for the Pacific Island Forum and the Secretariat for the Pacific Community regional offices. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing to build this regional and global cooperation.

Success in tackling our common regional and global challenges will depend on fostering internal strength of our Pacific Island partners that comes from strong democratic institutions, rule of law, and respect for human rights. The Pacific islanders share our values, but realizing them, in practice, has been challenging. We are encouraged that, after 8 years of a coup-installed military regime, Fiji is scheduled to hold elections next week that offer the hope for a return to democratic governance. If confirmed, I will take great satisfaction in working to build foundations of democracy and good governments through all means available to us.

Embassy Suva is responsible for the United States largest geographic consular district in the world. At the same time, the region is challenged by frequent natural disasters. If confirmed, I will make emergency preparedness and attention to support for American citizens a priority focus.

My career at the State Department has taught me that our people are our most precious resource. If confirmed, it will be my privilege to lead Embassy Suva's diverse and dedicated team of American and local staff and support our 85 Peace Corps Volunteers who are in Fiji and Tonga, and I will work diligently to ensure our mission community's safety and security and to advance the professional enrichment of every member of our team.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today and for considering my nomination. If confirmed, I pledge to work closely with Congress to realize the full potential of our Pacific partnerships. It would be my pleasure to answer any questions that you have.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Cefkin follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JUDITH B. CEFKIN

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am deeply honored to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be United States Ambassador to the Republic of the Fiji Islands, the Republic of Kiribati, the Republic of Nauru, the Kingdom of Tonga, and Tuvalu. I am grateful to the President and the Secretary



for their confidence in nominating me for this position, and I am equally grateful to receive your consideration.

With the chairman's permission, I would like to introduce my husband, Paul Boyd. Paul, who is also a Foreign Service officer, has just returned from his assignment in Seoul, Korea. With this assignment, Paul has capped over 40 years of public service, including combat service with the U.S. Special Forces and 9 years as a police officer. For the past 30 years, we have shared the adventure of the Foreign Service.

As a Foreign Service officer I have been privileged to serve in a varied and fascinating mix of assignments touching on practically every region of the world. Certainly, the Asia-Pacific region has been a cherished area of focus, and much of my career has been dedicated to issues of countries in transition, striving to advance democratic and economic development. In my current position as senior advisor for Burma, I have been honored to work closely with Congress to elaborate strategies to expand freedom and opportunity for the people of Burma as they navigate a historic transition.

As Deputy Chief of Mission in Thailand, I took pride in motivating collaboration among a diverse and dynamic 3,000-person interagency team to enhance Bangkok's position as a regional platform supporting programs and operations throughout Asia. And as Deputy Chief of Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, it was gratifying to guide U.S. initiatives to cement the peace established by the Dayton Accords and encourage Bosnia's path toward integration in Euro-Atlantic institutions.

My experience has taught me the power of our country's values-based diplomacy. If confirmed, I will relish the opportunity to draw on these lessons and my many years of regional policy experience to advance the United States strategic interests in the South Pacific.

The United States is a Pacific nation. We share an important history with the Pacific Island nations. We also share a common destiny. This is reflected in President Obama's rebalance to the dynamic Asia-Pacific region. If confirmed, I look forward to working in partnership with the five nations to which I would be accredited to seek to ensure that our common future is one of prosperity, peace and stability, and human fulfillment.

Perhaps nowhere is the need for this focus more compelling than on the waters that bind us—those of the mighty Pacific Ocean. As Secretary Kerry noted when he organized the recent Oceans Conference, our oceans facilitate our trade and provide much of the food we eat and even the air we breathe. This is abundantly true for the Pacific. Yet, today, Kiribati, Tuvalu, Nauru, Tonga, and Fiji face dramatic challenges related to rising sea levels, ocean warming and acidification, marine pollution, illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing, and overfishing. These challenges threaten the very existence of some of their populations. They also threaten broader global commerce and food security—issues that directly impact the United States. If confirmed I will strive to advance solutions to improve regional environmental management, support adaptation projects, and promote Exclusive Economic Zones' surveillance arrangements and sustainable fisheries methods.

The Pacific Island nations are global players. Both Fiji and Tonga have been important contributors to international Peacekeeping Operations. Fijian forces are currently participating in the U.N. Disengagement Observer Force mission in the Golan, the Multinational Force and Observers mission in the Sinai, and the U.N. Assistance Mission in Iraq, where they are responsible for providing security for mission personnel and facilities. Tonga was an early member of the Coalition to liberate Iraq, and until April of this year provided security at Camp Bastion in Afghanistan. Kiribati, Nauru, and Tuvalu are also committed to their responsibilities as U.N. members, and the United States cooperates closely with them on a wide range of issues in that forum. Furthermore, Fiji plays many important roles in the Pacific region as a hub for commerce, diplomacy, and academic affairs as well as transportation and communications. Suva is home to the University of the South Pacific and the headquarters of the Pacific Islands Forum, the preeminent multilateral organization in the region. It is also home to regional offices of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, which manages technical and development programs throughout the Pacific. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing to build this regional and global cooperation.

Success in tackling our common regional and global challenges will depend on fostering the internal strength of our Pacific Island partners that comes from strong democratic institutions, rule of law, and respect for human rights. The Pacific Islanders share our respect for democratic values, but realizing those values in practice has been challenging, most notably in Fiji and to varying degrees in the other countries as well. We are encouraged that after 8 years of a coup-installed military regime, Fiji is scheduled to hold elections on September 17 that offer the hope of

return to democratic governance. The Kingdom of Tonga, which has also made progress toward a more representative form of government, holds its elections later this year. If confirmed, I will take great satisfaction in working to build foundations of democracy and good governance through all means available to us, including by expanding people-to-people ties and nurturing civil society. And as a special personal priority, I will champion efforts to combat violence against women—sadly, a challenge with which all too many South Pacific women struggle.

Embassy Suva is responsible for the United States largest geographic consular district in the world—over 2 million square miles. In addition to Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Tonga, and Tuvalu, that includes French Polynesia, New Caledonia, and Wallis and Futuna. An estimated 45,000 American Citizens are resident in these countries and territories and 30,000 more are estimated to visit each year to enjoy the region's wealth of natural wonders and rich cultural diversity. At the same time the region is challenged by almost yearly cyclones, floods, and tsunami warnings. If confirmed, I will make emergency preparedness and attention to support for American citizens a priority focus.

My career at the State Department has taught me that our people are our most precious resource. If confirmed, it will be my privilege to lead Embassy Suva's diverse and dedicated team of American and local staff and to support our 85 Peace Corps Volunteers who are serving in Fiji and Tonga. I will work diligently to ensure our mission community's safety and security and to advance the professional enrichment of every member of our team.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today and for considering my nomination. If confirmed, I pledge to work closely with this committee and others in Congress to realize the full potential of our Pacific partnerships. It would be my pleasure to answer any questions that you might have.

Senator Kaine. Thank you very much, Ms. Cefkin.

Ms. Leaf.

**STATEMENT OF BARBARA A. LEAF, OF VIRGINIA, NOMINEE TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES**

Ms. LEAF. Chairman Kaine, Ranking Member Risch, members of the subcommittee, it is a great honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates. I am deeply grateful to the President and Secretary Kerry for the confidence they have placed in me. If confirmed, I will do my very best to uphold my responsibilities on behalf of the U.S. Government and the American people.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to begin by recognizing and thanking my family who are here today with me: my husband, Chris, our wonderful daughters, my mother, Madonna, my sister, Mary Beth, and my brother, Tim. My family's loving support and willingness to bear sacrifice in their own right have been indispensable to my ability to serve our country wherever needed.

Mr. Chairman, I have spent much of my career working in or on the Middle East, serving in Iraq, Egypt, Tunisia, and Jerusalem. Most recently, I served as Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Arabian Peninsula, where the growing importance of the UAE in the region and as a foreign policy partner for us were driven home almost daily.

The UAE shares many of the same interests that animate our own regional and international policies, and our two governments work closely on these shared priorities. The Emiratis have sent troops to Afghanistan and given nearly a billion dollars in aid there. On Iraq, they have provided substantial diplomatic and humanitarian support since 2003, and I believe we are about to see that reach new levels of cooperation as we confront ISIL together.

The UAE remains engaged with the moderate Syrian opposition, pledging \$360 million in humanitarian assistance. The UAE sup-

ports international sanctions on Iran and P5+1 negotiations to negotiate a comprehensive solution on Iran's nuclear program.

In Egypt, the Emiratis have pledged over \$7 billion in aid and work with the Egyptian Government and the United States to foster economic recovery and stability there. The UAE has also provided a central political and financial underpinnings to U.S.-led efforts on the Middle East—on Middle East peace efforts.

And on Libya, we share a goal of a stable democratic state, and we are consulting closely to synchronize our efforts.

The UAE is a first-rate military partner, and Emirati troops and pilots have participated with the United States in five major coalition operations since 1990. Bilateral defense cooperation is superb. The Port of Jabel Ali is the U.S. Navy's busiest overseas port of call, hosting more of our ships on liberty calls than any other port outside of Norfolk. The Emirates play host to some 3,000 U.S. military personnel and U.S. military assets that support and undergird regional security.

Our bilateral trade is an especially vital part of the relationship. The UAE is the largest market for U.S. goods and services in the Middle East, with a trade surplus of over \$22 billion last year, our third-largest globally. Over 1,000 American firms have regional headquarters in the Emirates, working in petroleum, defense, education, and health care.

The UAE is also a regional leader on energy diversification and met the gold standard in 2009 on nonproliferation when it signed a 30-year 1-2-3 Agreement with the United States that opened the door to partnering with us on civil nuclear technology. In doing so, the Emirates took on a voluntary obligation to forgo domestic uranium enrichment and nuclear fuel reprocessing. They will rely on international markets for fuel for the four nuclear power plants they are constructing.

One of the Emirates' most noteworthy human capital investments is the drive to bring women into all levels of government and business. Women make up 70 percent of university graduates today. They are training as military pilots. And, increasingly, they fill key diplomatic and government positions. Four Cabinet Members are women. The UAE stands out in the region in recognizing it cannot realize its potential without the full participation of half of its citizenry.

The United States works closely with the UAE on human rights and countering trafficking in persons. And, while it does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking, it is making significant efforts to do so: prosecuting cases, funding shelters for victims, and implementing public awareness campaigns. That said, there is more work to be done on these and other human rights issues.

In the wake of the region's 2011 revolutions, we have seen the UAE act against certain civil society organizations and curtail certain activities of individuals. The UAE views the forces of extremism that stalk the region today as the preeminent threat to the modern, moderate, forward-looking country built with breathtaking speed and success by the country's founding father, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan. But, in defense of that project, the UAE Government has periodically encroached on its citizens' freedoms of

expression and association. If confirmed, I pledge to engage in a productive and candid dialogue on these issues, working from the core values and democratic principles that define America.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, there is no question that the United States has a deeply committed foreign policy and security partner in the UAE. If confirmed, I pledge to work with its government to promote our national security and a more stable and prosperous Middle East. I will advocate aggressively for U.S. companies.

And, finally and most importantly, more than 50,000 American citizens make the UAE their home, in addition to our own diplomatic and military personnel. If confirmed, I pledge to do my utmost to protect the safety and security of the dedicated men and women at our mission, as well as that of all Americans living, working, or traveling in the UAE.

I appreciate the committee's oversight of our mission in the United Arab Emirates, and, if confirmed, look forward to hosting members and staff there.

Thank you for letting me appear today before you, and I would be happy to take your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Leaf follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF BARBARA A. LEAF

Chairman Kaine, Ranking Member Risch, members of the subcommittee, it is a great honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates. I am deeply humbled and grateful to the President and Secretary Kerry for the confidence they have placed in me. If confirmed, I will do my best to live up to their trust and to work as closely as possible with this committee to carry out my responsibilities on behalf of the U.S. Government and the American people.

Mr. Chairman, with your permission I would like to submit my full statement for the record and begin by expressing my enormous appreciation for the support of my family, who are here today with me: my husband, Chris, and our two wonderful girls. Suffice to say that that my family's loving support and willingness to bear sacrifice in their own right have been indispensable to my ability to carry out my responsibilities as a Foreign Service officer. I would also like to thank my mother, Madonna, and sister, Mary Beth, who have joined us today.

Mr. Chairman, I have spent much of my career working in or on the Middle East, including in assignments in Iraq, Egypt, Tunisia, and Jerusalem. Most recently I served as Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Arabian Peninsula, where the growing importance of the UAE in the region, as well as its critical value as a foreign policy partner for the U.S., were driven home almost daily.

The UAE is a young nation gifted with extraordinary resources and ambitions to match. It is a country that benefited early on from the region's oil wealth, but one which took a longer view of what success would look like, committing to economic diversification, education of its people, moderate government, and global engagement. In the last decade in particular, the UAE's role on the world stage has evolved accordingly, as it has increasingly demonstrated leadership in grappling with global issues such as violent extremism, illicit trade and proliferation, and poverty. If confirmed, I pledge to broaden and deepen our cooperation with the UAE on these and the many other issues of direct national security interest to the U.S.

The UAE shares many of the same goals and interests that animate our policy in the region and internationally, and our two governments work closely and collaboratively on these shared priorities. As a member of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan since 2003, the UAE has sent troops to Afghanistan, and, in the last 5 years alone, has contributed nearly \$1 billion for humanitarian aid and reconstruction in that country. On Iraq, the UAE has provided substantial diplomatic, humanitarian, and other support to U.S.-led efforts, and I believe we are about to see that reach new levels; in 2008 the UAE forgave over \$7 billion in Iraqi debt, and it has contributed over \$60 million in aid to Iraq since 2009. On Syria, the UAE remains engaged with the United States in supporting the Syrian Opposition, is an active member of the Friends of the Syrian People (FoSP) Core Group known as the London 11, and has pledged \$360 million in humanitarian

assistance for Syria and the region. On Iran, the UAE supports international efforts to implement sanctions on Iran and the P5+1's efforts to achieve a comprehensive solution on Iran's nuclear program. In Egypt, the UAE has pledged over \$7 billion in loans, grants and in-kind goods while working with the Government of Egypt and the U.S. to foster economic reform there. On Libya, we share with the UAE a goal of a stable, democratic end state. We are consulting closely with the UAE on Libya, and we are continuing to make clear to all countries with an interest in Libya that we believe unilateral foreign intervention undermines the process of achieving a stable government. The UAE, along with other Arab League states, has played a key supporting role in the Middle East peace process, urging both sides to remain committed to achieving a durable peace. The UAE has also been a major provider of humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian Authority and in Gaza. It has been a supporter of the post-conflict reconstruction process in Somalia, providing extensive aid (\$213 million since 2009) and establishing formal diplomatic ties with Somalia in 2013. As a member of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which brokered the historic political transition in Yemen in 2011, the UAE supports the Yemeni Government's efforts to achieve peace and stability. The UAE is also a valued member of the multilateral Friends of Yemen group, and has contributed over \$1.3 billion in aid to Yemen since 2009.

The UAE is a strong military partner and a reliable contributor to coalition operations, participating in five major such efforts with the U.S. since Operation Desert Storm. This cooperation is only amplified on a bilateral basis. The port of Jebel Ali in Dubai is the U.S. Navy's busiest overseas port-of-call, hosting more Navy liberty ship visits than any other port outside of Norfolk. The UAE plays host to some 3,000 U.S. military personnel and key U.S. military assets. The UAE is one of our largest Foreign Military Sales (FMS) customers, with over 90 implemented FMS cases valued at approximately \$19.2 billion. The UAE has actively participated in international operations to police the gulf and has supported U.S. forces in our various military operations in the region. The UAE's security partnership with the U.S. and the international community is not new; in 1999, the UAE was among the first non-NATO states to publicly support NATO's bombing campaign in Kosovo, and the UAE sent almost 1,500 peacekeeping and special operations troops to participate in the NATO-led peacekeeping mission there, the single largest contribution to the mission by a predominantly Muslim state. During Operation Desert Storm, UAE troops took part in the Gulf Cooperation Council's Peninsula Shield Force, participating in the liberation of Kuwait in March 1991; UAE forces also participated in international coalitions in Somalia and Libya.

Our trade relationship with the UAE is an especially vital part of the bilateral relationship. The UAE is the largest market for U.S. goods and services in the Middle East. Our bilateral trade surplus in 2013 was \$22.3 billion, the third-largest surplus in the world for the United States. The United States continues to be a premier destination for foreign direct investment (FDI) from the UAE, with the Emirates now among the top 20 sources of FDI into the United States. Just as significantly, the UAE is a great place for American business. With its infrastructure and business and logistical services, the UAE has become the regional headquarters for over 1,000 American companies active in the petroleum, defense, services, education, and health care sectors. It has developed a leading role in business services, including finance and logistics, and has emerged as the preeminent business hub between Asia and Europe. Dubai's Emirates Airlines is the single largest customer for Boeing's 777 aircraft.

The UAE is also a partner on energy policy and environmental responsibility. While it holds nearly 8 percent of the world's proven oil reserves and nearly 5 percent of proven gas reserves, the UAE has also sought to expand to renewable energy and is home to the newly established International Renewable Energy Agency. The UAE early on made a commitment to diversify its economy beyond fossil fuels, adopting long-term plans to develop its manufacturing base, services sector, and nonoil trade. In 2012, the UAE launched a long-term Green Economy Initiative, which aims to make the UAE a world leader in energy efficiency and environmental safety. As part of its effort to diversify its energy sources, the UAE is constructing four civil nuclear power plants, the first of which is expected to start operating in 2017, and is reported to be considering the construction of additional plants after that. U.S. companies including Westinghouse Electric and Bechtel are providing equipment, fuel, and design and project management services for the Baraka project. The vision of the UAE on sustainability can also be seen with the establishment of the Masdar Institute, which was created in cooperation with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology as a cutting edge institution looking at ways to meet the energy challenges of the future.

In the area of nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the UAE takes its international obligations seriously. In my own time working on Middle East issues, I have seen a significant evolution of the UAE's approach to proliferation—from a country with many informal and unregulated trade routes, to a global trade leader and regional transshipment hub that is taking meaningful steps to ensure its trade links are not exploited by illicit actors. Not only has the UAE cooperated vigorously with U.S. law enforcement on interdiction, but it has also helped conduct interdiction training for other gulf countries.

In another sign of the UAE's forward-thinking support for international standards, in 2009 the UAE signed a nuclear cooperation agreement with the U.S. This 30-year agreement, which allows the UAE to partner with the U.S. on civil nuclear technology, includes a voluntary obligation by the UAE to forgo domestic uranium enrichment and nuclear fuel reprocessing and instead rely on existing international markets for nuclear fuel.

One of the UAE's most noteworthy efforts in human capital terms is its effort to involve women in all levels of government and business. In 2012, the UAE adopted a requirement that the boards of directors of all UAE Government agencies and corporations must include women. Emirati women make up 70 percent of the UAE's university graduates today. Four UAE Cabinet Ministers are women—including international cooperation and development minister Sheikha Lubna Al Qasimi, who was on Forbes magazine's 2007 list of the 100 most powerful women in the world, along with UAE businesswoman Fatima Al Jaber. The UAE stands out in its recognition that it cannot realize its economic, political and cultural potential without the full participation of half of its citizens. It goes without saying that, if confirmed, I will look for opportunities to encourage just this kind of forward-thinking among Emirati leaders at all levels of society, to increase opportunities for women to participate fully in business, government, and society.

The U.S. also works closely with the UAE on human rights and countering trafficking in persons. The UAE is working to improve its response to the scourge of forced labor and forced prostitution, particularly among the substantial foreign migrant worker population the country hosts. The Department's most recent congressionally mandated Trafficking in Persons report found that the UAE does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking, but that it is making significant efforts to do so. During the past year, the UAE continued to prosecute sex trafficking cases, fund shelters for sex trafficking victims, and implement public awareness campaigns.

That said, there is more work to be done on these and other human rights issues. While the UAE Government provides some avenues for migrant workers' complaints, some forced labor victims remain unidentified, unprotected, and are vulnerable to being punished for offenses committed as a direct result of being subjected to human trafficking. Over the last several years, in the wake of the so-called Arab Spring revolutions of 2011, we have also seen the UAE act against certain civil society organizations, shutting down offices of organizations such as the National Democratic Institute and Konrad Adenauer Foundation, and curtailing certain activities of individuals. The UAE views the forces of extremism which stalk the region today as the preeminent threat to the modern, moderate, forward-looking country built with breathtaking speed and success over the last 40 years, by the country's founding father, Shaikh Zayed al-Nayahn. But in defense of that project, the UAE Government has periodically encroached on its citizens' freedoms of expression and association. If confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to the UAE, I pledge to engage in a productive and candid dialogue on these issues, working from the core values and democratic principles that define America.

As the UAE's political and economic prominence only continues to grow, so too must our engagement. With Abu Dhabi's growing engagement in some of our top foreign policy priorities including Egypt, Syria, and Iraq, there is no question that the United States has a serious and committed partner in the UAE. If confirmed, I pledge to work with the UAE Government to promote our foreign policy objectives and a more stable and prosperous Middle East.

The UAE is ripe for increased U.S. business as Abu Dhabi invests to diversify beyond oil production and Dubai continues its expansion as a regional and global commercial hub. If confirmed as U.S. Ambassador, I will advocate aggressively for U.S. companies and work to find new export opportunities for American goods and services in the UAE.

It goes without saying that paramount among my priorities, if confirmed, will be the welfare, security, and interests of all American citizens in the UAE. More than 50,000 American citizens make the UAE their home; add to that the staff in the U.S. diplomatic mission and U.S. military personnel in the UAE. If confirmed, I pledge to do everything possible to protect the safety and security of the dedicated



men and women at our mission, as well as that of all Americans living and working or traveling in the United Arab Emirates.

I appreciate and value this committee's oversight of our mission in United Arab Emirates. If confirmed, I look forward to welcoming the committee's members and staff to the UAE. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Risch, members of the subcommittee, thank you for this opportunity to address the committee. I would be pleased to respond to any questions that you may have.

Senator Kaine. Thank you, Ms. Leaf.  
Ambassador Spratlen.

**STATEMENT OF HON. PAMELA LEORA SPRATLEN, OF CALIFORNIA, NOMINEE TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN**

Ambassador SPRATLEN. Chairman Kaine, Ranking Member Risch, ladies and gentlemen, it is a great honor to appear before you today as the United States Ambassador-designate to the Republic of Uzbekistan.

I am deeply grateful for the confidence President Obama and Secretary Kerry have entrusted in me with this nomination. If confirmed, I will work to strengthen bilateral relations with Uzbekistan and promote U.S. interests and values there. I look forward to working with Congress in pursuit of these goals.

My 25 years in the Foreign Service have prepared me for this position. I know and appreciate the region. As the U.S. Ambassador to the Kyrgyz Republic, I have the opportunity to implement important U.S. security, human dimension, and development policies in a fragile democracy. As the Deputy Chief of Mission in Kazakhstan, I helped deepen our partnership with that country, a key ally during the time that it hosted the 2010 summit of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. As Director for Central Asian Affairs and then-Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary, I became well acquainted with U.S. policy priorities in Uzbekistan and played a role in the earliest days of the South and Central Asia Bureau. With the experience I have gained to date, I feel well prepared to tackle the challenges and seek opportunities for the United States in Uzbekistan.

Uzbekistan lies at the heart of Central Asia and is the most populous country in the region. Since its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, the United States has always maintained a strong commitment to Uzbekistan's sovereignty and stability. The United States also remains committed to encouraging Uzbekistan's development toward becoming a more tolerant, prosperous democratic society that cooperates effectively with its neighbors, adheres to its international obligations, and promotes peace and stability domestically, regionally, and globally.

Uzbekistan is an important partner in our ongoing efforts to help neighboring Afghanistan reach its full potential. Uzbekistan continues to provide vital assistance to Afghanistan in the form of electricity that keeps the lights on in homes and businesses across Kabul. The only railroad that connects Afghanistan to the outside world runs through Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan is also a key link in the northern distribution network, which helps keep U.S. and NATO troops well supplied and helps U.S. and NATO forces remove cargo from Afghanistan now that the mission there is in tran-

sition. If confirmed, I will encourage the Government of Uzbekistan to continue that important support.

Our security cooperation with Uzbekistan is in a time of transition, but will continue to focus on the common goal of preventing Afghanistan from once again becoming a safe haven for terrorists. Increased cooperation with Uzbekistan on a number of training programs would help prevent a resurgence of terrorism in the region, stem the flow of illegal narcotics, and prevent human trafficking and illicit smuggling. Our security cooperation also includes efforts to professionalize the conduct of security forces and reinforce the need for accountability in law enforcement institutions. If confirmed, I would build on our existing partnership to continue this cooperation.

Uzbekistan's large population and energy and mineral resources make it a natural choice for U.S. companies seeking to invest in Central Asia. The United States has been working with Uzbekistan to improve its investment climate and foster a cooperative regional economic environment. If confirmed, I will encourage Uzbekistan to implement necessary changes to further attract U.S. investment, diversify its economy, and promote regional and economic connectivity.

As Ambassador to the Kyrgyz Republic, I have highlighted the importance of nurturing nascent democratic institutions, civil society groups, and a free and open media. I also understand the profound importance of protecting respect for human rights, the rule of law, and fundamental freedoms. If confirmed, I will strongly encourage the Government of Uzbekistan to comply with all of its international legal obligations on human rights. I will also continue to press the government on specific prisoner cases, such as those raised by Senator Menendez and others in recent letters to President Karimov. I will work closely with my government counterparts in a diverse array of civil society institutions to address concerns about forced and child labor, allegations of torture, arbitrary arrests and imprisonment, restrictions on independent civil society opposition and media, as well as religious freedom.

I know from my past experience on Central Asian affairs that progress on some of the issues will not be easy. If confirmed, I am fully committed to working with Members of Congress, the executive branch, and the people of Uzbekistan to make concrete progress on tough issues, like human rights and economic reforms. I will employ constant engagement to stress the need for meaningful action in these areas.

I place the utmost importance on protecting American citizens and U.S. values overseas, and, if confirmed, I will focus my efforts on protecting U.S. citizens and their interests in Uzbekistan.

The position of Ambassador is a position of public trust, and I take this responsibility very seriously. Direct engagement with the people of Uzbekistan will be a priority if I am confirmed. Public diplomacy efforts, outreach, and educational exchanges promote mutual understanding and foster deeper bilateral ties.

Finally, I place great emphasis on strong leadership. If confirmed, I will bring my experience, enthusiasm, and knowledge to bear as I lead the mission to the best of my ability.



I thank you for your consideration of this nomination, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Spratlen follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF PAMELA L. SPRATLEN

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, it is a great honor to appear before you today as the United States Ambassador-designate to the Republic of Uzbekistan. I am deeply grateful for the confidence President Obama and Secretary Kerry have entrusted in me with this nomination. If confirmed, I will work to strengthen bilateral relations with Uzbekistan and promote U.S. interests and values there. I look forward to working with Congress in pursuit of these goals.

My 25 years in the Foreign Service have prepared me for this position. I know and appreciate the region. As the U.S. Ambassador to the Kyrgyz Republic, I have had the opportunity to implement important U.S. security, human dimension, and development policies in a fragile democracy. As the Deputy Chief of Mission in Kazakhstan, I was able to help deepen our partnership with Kazakhstan, a key ally during the time the country hosted the 2010 summit of the Organization for Security Cooperation in Europe. During my tenure as Director for Central Asian Affairs and then Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary, I became well acquainted with U.S. policy priorities in Uzbekistan and played a role in the earliest days of the South and Central Asia Bureau. With the experience I have gained to date, I feel well-prepared to tackle the challenges and seek opportunities for the United States in Uzbekistan.

Uzbekistan lies at the heart of Central Asia and is the most populous country in the region. Since its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, the United States has always maintained a strong commitment to Uzbekistan's sovereignty and stability. The United States also remains committed to encouraging Uzbekistan's development toward becoming a tolerant, prosperous, democratic society that cooperates effectively with its neighbors, adheres to its international obligations, and promotes peace and stability domestically, regionally, and globally.

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Uzbekistan's large population and energy and mineral resources make it a natural choice for U.S. companies seeking to invest in Central Asia. The United States has been working with Uzbekistan to improve its investment climate and foster a cooperative regional economic environment. If confirmed, I will encourage Uzbekistan to implement necessary changes to further attract U.S. investment, diversify its economy, and promote regional economic connectivity.

My most recent experience as Ambassador to the Kyrgyz Republic highlighted the importance of nurturing nascent democratic institutions, civil society groups, and a free and open media atmosphere. I also understand the profound importance of promoting respect for human rights, the rule of law, and fundamental freedoms. If confirmed, I will strongly encourage the Government of Uzbekistan to comply with all of its international legal obligations on human rights. I will also continue to press the government on specific prisoner cases such those raised by Senator Menendez and others in recent letters to President Karimov. I will work closely with my government counterparts and a diverse array of civil society institutions to address concerns about forced and child labor, allegations of torture, arbitrary arrests and

imprisonment, restrictions on independent civil society, opposition, and media, and religious freedom.

I know from my past experiences on Central Asian affairs that progress on some of the issues I just described will not be easy. If confirmed, I am fully committed to working with Members of Congress, the executive branch, and the people of Uzbekistan to make concrete progress on tough issues like human rights and economic reforms. I will employ constant, consistent engagement to stress the need for meaningful action in these areas.

I place the utmost importance on protecting American citizens and U.S. values overseas. If confirmed, I will focus my efforts on protecting U.S. citizens and their interests in Uzbekistan. The position of Ambassador is a position of public trust, and I take this responsibility very seriously.

Direct engagement with the people of Uzbekistan will also be a priority if I am confirmed. Public diplomacy efforts, outreach, and educational exchanges promote mutual understanding and foster deeper bilateral ties.

Finally, I place great personal emphasis on strong leadership. If confirmed, I will bring my experience, enthusiasm, and knowledge to lead the mission to the best of my ability.

Thank you. I look forward to your questions.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Ambassador Spratlen.

We will have 7-minute rounds of questions. And if we do not get to you on a first round, do not relax, because we will often have multiple rounds.

I will start with Mr. Roebuck. I was very distressed about the news of the recent arrest of a prominent human rights activist, Meriam al-Khawaja in Bahrain. If you could, describe the status of that case and what the State Department is doing to raise that issue, please.

Mr. ROEBUCK. Thank you, Senator Kaine.

We have followed this case closely. We are aware of Ms. Khawaja's arrest. We have raised this case publicly with the Bahraini Government, and we have also done so privately. And we have urged the government to ensure that Ms. Khawaja's due-process rights are protected, that she has the right to expeditious judicial proceedings, access to a lawyer, and hopefully that this matter will be resolved as quickly as possible. So, we have raised this matter, and we are following it very closely.

Thank you, Senator.

Senator KAINE. Sort of in a related area, and then I think a number of the questions about Bahrain will be dealing with this. The Bahraini Government—and you alluded to this—expelled visiting Assistant Secretary Tom Malinowski, and the ostensible reason was for holding a meeting with opposition representatives without government officials present. Also, Representative Jim McGovern and human rights researchers have been denied entry in Bahrain. Talk about the current status of the dialogue between the governments on the situation with Assistant Secretary Malinowski and how you, in your post, will handle the issue of interacting with all segments of Bahraini society, including folks associated with opposition parties.

Mr. ROEBUCK. Thank you, Senator.

The expulsion of Assistant Secretary Malinowski, we have made clear to the Bahraini Government, was unnecessary and unhelpful. We have dealt with the aftermath of the expulsion primarily through diplomatic channels. We believe the Bahraini Government has understood our position clearly. We expect, going forward, that the Bahraini Government will take steps more consistent with our

strong bilateral relationship, and that they will address this issue. We continue to support a strong reform reconciliation process in Bahrain, hopefully leading to inclusive elections across broad Bahraini society sectors.

With regard to the return of Assistant Secretary Malinowski, I have discussed this with Assistant Secretary Malinowski. He wants to return at a time that would be most helpful. We have discussed this with the Bahraini Government. They have indicated they would welcome his return. And so, we are discussing with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about the timing for that.

Bottom line, we have made our position known to them. We expect, in the future, that they will take steps more consistent with our strong bilateral relationship and with existing diplomatic norms.

Thank you.

Senator KAINE. What is the—I was in Bahrain in December 2013, and one of the issues at that time—it was a significant point of discussion, and I imagine it still is—is the status of U.S. arms sales to Bahrain. It is been significant, but there has also been suspensions of arms sales because of human rights concern. What is the current status of the situation with respect to the arms sales between the United States and Bahrain?

Mr. ROEBUCK. Senator, we continue to carefully evaluate our security cooperation posture toward Bahrain. We have not made changes in the policies recently. We will consult closely with Congress before making any such changes.

At present, we are withholding the export of lethal and crowd-control items intended predominantly for internal security purposes, and certain other items. We have resumed, on a case-by-case basis, the export of certain items related exclusively to external defense, counterterrorism, and the protection of U.S. forces in Bahrain. Our strong assessment is that we continue to have a very strong security partnership with the Government of Bahrain. And, if confirmed, I will do everything I can to strengthen that relationship.

Senator KAINE. There is some difference of opinion, I think, on the degree to which Iran is supporting Shiite hardline opposition factions within Bahrain. What is your current understanding of the role that Iran is playing, if any, in civil unrest in that country?

Mr. ROEBUCK. Senator, we have seen Iranian attempts, in the past, to exploit and exacerbate sectarian unrest of the kind that is going on in—and has gone on—in Bahrain. They do this to advance their own agenda and to undermine peace and stability in the region. I think it is inevitable that prolonged unrest and instability in Bahrain would open the door to Iranian influence among extremists in that country. We also believe that further efforts at reform will promote reconciliation, restore confidence. And, in doing so, it lessens sectarian tensions and it denies Iran the ability to exploit such situations.

Senator KAINE. I am trying to remember, from my visit last December, the population of Bahrain is—the leadership is predominantly Sunni, but the population is dramatically—65–70 percent Shia. Do I remember that correctly?

Mr. ROEBUCK. The population is about 1.25 million, and the figures that you have given are approximately the breakdown we understand on the demographics.

Senator KAINE. One last question, and then to Senator Risch.

Another key influence in Bahrain is Saudi Arabia, because of their closeness to the Bahraini Government. Are we working in tandem with Saudi Arabia in efforts to promote, you know, additional reforms or the national dialogue efforts to reduce unrest in Bahrain? Does Saudi Arabia play a role in that effort?

Mr. ROEBUCK. Thank you, Senator.

The Saudis have a very important relationship with Bahrain. They are close allies. I think it is fair to say that they have significant influence. And we believe that the Saudis can play a positive role. We discuss this issue and related regional issues with the Saudis on a regular basis.

We also underscore, with the Saudis and with our other gulf partners, the importance to Bahrain of a reconciliation process, reform and political dialogue, not only for Bahrain's security and stability, but also for regional security and stability. And we will continue those discussions.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Roebuck.

Senator Risch.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Roebuck, let us take the Malinowski incident first. Did State Department know that the meeting was going to take place with the opposition prior to the time it took place?

Mr. ROEBUCK. Yes, sir, we did. This was part of an arranged schedule of meetings that Assistant Secretary Malinowski arranged with the Embassy. This is a fairly typical way that a U.S. Government official would fly into the country and arrange a set of meetings across the board with all sectors of a political society.

Senator RISCH. So, was the Bahrainian response to that a surprise to State Department?

Mr. ROEBUCK. Yes. I would say that we were—I think that is a fair description. As I noted to Senator Kaine, we found the response of the Bahraini Government unnecessary and unhelpful, and we made that clear to them in the aftermath of the expulsion.

Senator RISCH. But, at this point, the wound is healed, you say that Malinowski's now welcome back in Bahrain? Did I catch that right?

Mr. ROEBUCK. I would say, Senator, that we are continuing to address this issue. We have discussed it at the most senior levels with the Bahraini Government. They understand the importance of taking corrective action, and they have indicated that they would welcome Senator Malinowski back. So, we are considering that and considering the proper timing for a return visit.

Senator RISCH. Do they appreciate the fact that they have overreacted on the issue?

Mr. ROEBUCK. I think that the Government of Bahrain has understood our position, which we have made clear, publicly and privately. I think they understand the need to take corrective steps, and they have indicated that they would do so.

Senator RISCH. I guess the thing I am struggling with here, as you can see, is that a lot of us, when we go to various countries,

meet with the opposition. I mean, it is not—like you say, it is not an unusual thing. And I am just—I am wondering what happened, here, that caused this kind of a reaction.

Mr. ROEBUCK. I think, Senator, that the negotiations and the dialogue that have gone on between the government and the opposition over the last couple of years has taken place in a difficult atmosphere, with a lack of trust on both sides, and that sometimes, you know, this atmosphere has prompted reactions—temporary reactions that require a change of course in—a course correction subsequently down the line. I think that is in the period where we are now.

Senator RISCH. Again, though, what—the description of the situation between the in-power and the opposition, that is not unusual. I mean, the description you gave is what usually happens in these circumstances. So, I am just—I am surprised at the reaction.

In any event, let us move on. I have a very local issue, and that is that the small arms sales to Bahrain is very important to my State, in that we do have a growing industry, manufacturers of small arms. And because of the sanctions that have been in place, they have some sales—specific sales that were stopped, as far as Bahrain is concerned, and they ask me, “Well, you know, what are you trying to do, here?” And you explain to them that what you are trying to do is to get some conformance to certain standards, as far as human rights are concerned. And, of course, they come back and say, “Well, look, if we do not sell them these, they are going to the Italians, or they are going somewhere, because these small arms are ubiquitous and easily obtained on the market, so you are not really gaining anything by stopping these kinds of sales, when they are easily obtainable from about anywhere.”

What do I respond to them when they say that?

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

I think the response needs to be that the United States maintains a relatively comprehensive arms policy with any given country. We have established a set of arms policies with regard to Bahrain, carefully vetted in our interagency process. We do not have plans to change it now, but we are looking carefully at when we would change it down the line.

I think that the current policy toward arms reflects our strong security cooperation with Bahrain, but it also reflects our other interests and values, and that we are postured about where we need to be, overall, with regards to our arms policies. I understand the particular issue you raise with some group of sales in that larger policy, but I think, overall, we are where we need to be right now with regard to our arms policy regarding Bahrain.

Senator RISCH. I heard what you just said, and I appreciate that. And I do not think there is anyone that wants to undermine the objective of trying to get compliance to basic human rights standards. After listening to your answer, I am not persuaded that stopping them from buying something in the United States that they can buy anywhere on the market is going to have any influence whatsoever in their decisionmaking. Again, do not get me wrong, I want to see you continue to pressure and attempt to get compliance, but I have real difficulties believing that keeping out of their hands an item that they can buy anywhere reaches that goal. And,

for Idahoans that want to work and for the good-paying jobs that are created here, it would seem to me that, if they are not created here, they are going to be created in China or Italy or somewhere like that. So, I hope you would keep that in mind as you help to form policy in that regard.

And my time is almost up, but I want to—a very short question for Ms. Leaf.

There has been quite a bit of disagreement between the UAE and Qatar regarding the Muslim Brotherhood. Could you talk about that for just a minute and what you think is the prescription for trying to resolve that?

Ms. LEAF. Thank you, Senator.

You know, the UAE and Qatar are two parts of a larger set of discussions and disputes that have been ongoing in the GCC. We saw, in the spring, a rather dramatic demonstration of that, when the Saudis, Emiratis, and Bahrainis withdrew their ambassadors.

What I would say, more broadly, is that the GCC has gone through these kind of internal disputes before, and they have come together. And we saw evidence of that this last weekend, when there was a GCC Foreign Ministerial, and they closed ranks. It is not to say they have thoroughly resolved these disputes. One of them is over the issue—as you say, over the issue of support to the Muslim Brotherhood or each state's stance on the Muslim Brotherhood, but they closed ranks in a very important way, and I think that is a reflection of all of the member states' recognition that there are huge security challenges afoot in the Middle East that directly threaten their interests and that now is the time to pull together in—and I think we are going to see evidence of that to an even greater degree over the coming days as we work with the GCC, including both of those members, in confronting ISIL.

Senator RISCH. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My time is up.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Senator Risch.

Senator McCain.

Senator MCCAIN. Ms. Leaf, I could not disagree with you more. It is unprecedented what the other countries did when they withdrew their ambassadors. You will have to tell me another time when that happened. The Qataris continue to provide funding to the most extreme elements, particularly in Iraq and Syria. The Qataris have, basically, been the strongest supporters, not just of the Muslim Brotherhood, but their money is going to people like al-Nusra, people like ISIS, and others. How can you sit there and say that this is just something normal? And, because they had a meeting of the GCC, that certainly does not address the issue—you are going to be the Ambassador to UAE, but our problems with Qatar are very deep-seated, ranging from funding to money laundering to all kinds of problems that we have with the Qataris. It is well known that they are extending financial and other support to the most extreme elements that we are trying to fight against. Would you disagree with that?

Ms. LEAF. Senator, I would say that they have a history with a number of Islamist movements in the region, and I think this—

Senator MCCAIN. Wait a minute. Let me—

Ms. LEAF. Sorry.

Senator MCCAIN [continuing]. Just stop you right there. "Have a history." Are they still doing it?

Ms. LEAF. Senator, I cannot discuss all of this in this setting. I would be happy to take these questions back and provide a fuller response in a classified setting.

Senator MCCAIN. Well, until you can give me a full response, in response to published information in newspapers and television and radio all over America and all over the world, then you have got the wrong guy, here. This is a serious problem of Qatar's assistance to these radical elements and funding which is going on as we speak. So, to just say, "Well, this kind of thing has happened before," it has not. And it is very serious. And, as long as ISIS is able to do the things they are doing with the assistance and cooperation of Qatar, our challenge with ISIS is dramatically, significantly increased.

I had not even intended, frankly, to ask you a question. But, when you sit there and say, "Well, this is just a normal thing," it is not normal. It is not. And the relations between Qatar and Iran are also troubling. That is not normal. It is not what we are trying to achieve in the Middle East.

So, I will be submitting to you some questions that are based on public information—not on sensitive information, but based on public information. And I would expect an answer from you.

But, believe me, I have spent enough time over there to know that this is a normal situation, the behavior of Qatar.

And, by the way, do you know whether UAE and Egypt notified the United States of America when they launched airstrikes against Libya?

Ms. LEAF. Senator, regarding this incident that you are referring to, there is very little that I could say in this hearing, but I would be happy to ask for a classified briefing for you on that matter.

Senator MCCAIN. I am not going to a classified hearing with you. I am asking you a question, whether the published reports, in the New York Times and the Washington Post, that UAE and Egypt launched airstrikes in Libya—whether the United States of America was informed by them, or not. Do you refuse to answer that question?

Ms. LEAF. No, Senator, I will answer that question. I cannot speak to those reports in this setting.

Senator MCCAIN. Then I cannot support your nomination if the Senate of the United States is not entitled to have that information.

Ms. LEAF. Senator, I would be happy to provide that to you in a classified setting.

Senator MCCAIN. It is not necessary, in a classified setting, if it is published information whether it is true, or not.

Ms. LEAF. I am aware of what the press has reported, but all I can say to you, Senator, in this setting, is the following, that I would be happy to take that back. I cannot—

Senator MCCAIN. What is classified about it? They either told the United States of America, or not. What is classified about that?

Ms. LEAF. Senator, I would be happy to take it back.

Senator McCAIN. Well, perhaps you can tell me, in preparation for this hearing, why you were told that that—were you told that that is classified information?

Ms. LEAF. These are all issues—related to those events, they are classified, sir.

Senator McCAIN. Ms. Cefkin, I have a special feeling—it is nice to see you again—I have a special feeling for Fiji, and I wish you well. They have been through a terrible, difficult time, and I am interested in your assessment as to whether this first-time election in so long is going to be successful, or not. And thank you for—they are wonderful, gentle people, and they have had a very great—great difficulties in recent years. So, I thank you for your service. And I am interested in your assessment. I think it is September 17, is going to—the vote is going to be?

Ms. CEFKIN. Thank you very much for that question, Senator.

You are correct, the vote is scheduled for September 17, next week. We are working very closely with an international coalition led by Australia and Indonesia that is organizing international observers. We have several Americans that will participate in that observer mission. We have also been providing some voter education support through NGOs to the people of Fiji to help support a credible election outcome.

Of course, there are various predictions. I am reluctant to speculate and to give you any absolute prediction about what the outcome will be, but we remain cautiously hopeful that there will be a credible election that takes place that will allow us to move to another phase of our cooperation, our relations, and to look for ways to continue to deepen support for democratic institutions and democratic culture in Fiji.

We have, and we—the United States—will continue to urge that Fiji continue the progress, build on this progress, to further expand the rights of its citizens to fully participate, to fully enjoy freedom of expression and organization. We know that—I know, from my personal experience, that transitions are difficult, that they take time, generally. One election is not sufficient to complete the process of democratic transition. But, yes, we are committed, and, if confirmed, I will make that an absolute priority to focus on support for democratic development in Fiji.

Senator McCAIN. Well, there are many places where Ambassadors are very important. It is one of those. And I know you will be working closely with, especially, the Australians, as well as the other countries in the region that have imposed embargoes and other restrictions on Fiji. And I appreciate very much what the Australians, particularly, have done in addressing this issue.

Mr. Chairman, I had additional questions, but I would wait until next round if—

Senator KAINE. Thank you. Senator McCain, you can continue. I am going to have some additional questions, too, but I will hit cleanup if you want to continue, and then we will move to Senator Rubio.

Senator McCAIN. Thank you. I just wanted to talk to Mr. Roebuck for a minute.

The situation in Bahrain is pretty clear cut in some respects, I think, in that there has been a suppression of the opposition and



the treatment of Tom Malinowski is not an acceptable situation. Obviously, we cannot have our representatives thrown out of a country that is supposed to be a friend of ours. But, at the same time, there is ample evidence of Iranian influence; in fact, even Iranian weapons have been intercepted trying to be delivered to the opposition. So, it is not just a sort of a human rights issue and lack of democratization. We have got the Iranians playing heavily, here. And I am curious, How do we balance that, in your view? And, by the way, it is good to see you again, and thank you for your service.

Mr. ROEBUCK. Thank you, Senator.

Senator MCCAIN. Tell me how we can thread that needle.

Mr. ROEBUCK. Thank you, Senator.

As you indicate, we have a range of important interests in Bahrain. I have addressed the human rights dimension of our relationship in some detail in the—in my statement and in the questions. We will continue to raise those important issues.

We also have, of course, a very, very important security partnership with Bahrain. They host NAVCENT, they host the Fifth Fleet, 8,000 servicemembers live and work there. This hosting allows us to do a range of incredibly significant—

Senator MCCAIN. I understand all that.

Mr. ROEBUCK. OK. Got it.

So, the security relationship is very important. We want to ensure that that is maintained.

On the human rights and the internal security situation that you mentioned, we are encouraging the government and the opposition to continue political dialogue reform efforts and a reconciliation process to address the type of social and economic grievances that you allude to. They have had problems. There was significant unrest in 2011. And the efforts of the—

Senator MCCAIN. I want you to get to Iran.

Mr. ROEBUCK [continuing]. And the efforts of the—thank you, sir—the efforts of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry have been important to help them address these issues.

With regard to Iran, we are aware of Iranian attempts to have influence in Bahrain, in places like Bahrain, where there is sectarian unrest. I think it is inevitable that, you know, given that unrest and instability, they are trying to take advantage of that situation. We are aware of the reports that you mentioned. Much of the discussion surrounding these reports, Senator, is limited to classified sourcing and information. It is difficult for me to get into too much of it. But, your basic point about this involvement is accurate, in the broad sense—

Senator MCCAIN. So, is there not a—this is my final question—is there not a real threat, here, that this could turn into a—basically, a proxy war between the Saudis and the Iranians?

Mr. ROEBUCK. I think there is always a risk of outside powers getting involved in a situation like in Bahrain, where there has been—

Senator MCCAIN. Well, the Saudis have already been in, militarily, once.

Mr. ROEBUCK. Correct. They went in as part of the GCC Peninsula Shield Forces for a few months in 2011. There is that danger. And I think it is—and it is important that we continue to talk

closely with our allies, like the Saudis, ensure that they are playing a positive role. We believe, from our discussions, that they want to play a positive role. It is 2014 now, it is not 2011. I think they understand the—that. And I think, on the Iran side, you know, we continue with the P5+1 talks. Bahrain and others in the region clearly understand the dangers of a nuclear Iran to the region and to the world. And we will—

Senator MCCAIN. Well, could I say—

Mr. ROEBUCK [continuing]. Continue to address that—

Senator MCCAIN [continuing]. I am not so worried about a nuclear Iran, in this case, I am worried about Iranian arms and equipping the opposition and you are getting into a real firefight, here.

But, I thank you, Mr. Roebuck, and I thank you for your previous service. And you are inheriting a very, very delicate situation, where a lot of interests have to be balanced, here, probably one of the most difficult that I know of in the entire region.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ROEBUCK. Thank you, sir.

Senator Kaine. Thank you, Senator McCain.

Senator Rubio.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing.

Thank you all for your willingness to serve or prior to service to our country.

Mr. Roebuck, the bulk of my questions in the time I have will be toward you, just simply because of my interest in Bahrain and what is occurring there.

You may have answered this already. I may have missed it, so I may be restating it. But, I want to talk about the expulsion of Tom Malinowski, ostensibly for holding a meeting with the Wefaq representatives without a government representative present. My understanding is, the government also, reportedly, barred a Member of Congress, in the last few weeks, from visiting the country, based on a similar concern.

If and when, as I anticipate you will be, you are confirmed as Ambassador of the United States, do you plan to comply with this requirement, that they have a government representative anytime we meet with members of an opposition party?

Mr. ROEBUCK. No, sir, Senator Rubio. We have made it clear to the Bahraini government that this an unacceptable condition. It is not only unacceptable in Bahrain, it is worldwide. There are established diplomatic protocols for such meetings. And we use those types of—we expect compliance with those types of international norms in our meetings worldwide. And that goes for Bahrain, also.

Senator RUBIO. Well, there is an invitation out to Mr. Malinowski to return to the Kingdom. Do you know, what is the status of that? And have they set any “ground rules,” for his return, for him to be able to come back?

Mr. ROEBUCK. Senator, I spoke with Assistant Secretary Malinowski late last week about this. He wants to return at a time that would be most helpful to the broader political dialogue and reconciliation process. We have discussed this at senior levels with the Bahraini Government. They have indicated they would wel-

come him back. They understand the need for corrective steps to address the previous expulsion. And we will continue to work through this issue to try to resolve it. But, the conditions that you cite would not be acceptable for a return visit, and that has been part of the broader conversation.

Senator RUBIO. Now, I want to get a little broader on this, and I think some of the questions around here have touched upon it, because Bahrain is a nation that I have taken an interest in, a couple of years ago, for reasons of both human rights and geopolitical reality. And, you know, I believe human rights should always be at the forefront of what we do from a national security perspective and from a foreign policy perspective. And so, I was deeply concerned to see that a minority in that country felt oppressed and felt like they did not have the space to speak out in the Kingdom. And we engaged ourselves early in that conversation; in fact, met with some young people from there that expressed to us that their desire was not to overthrow the Kingdom, but simply to create a political accommodation where they had a greater role and more of a voice.

As that process has broken down over the last few years, you have begun to see evidence or indications that the opposition in the country has become increasingly potentially more radicalized, or at least elements of it there have become more radicalized, and that potentially have created stronger links with Iran as their sponsor in these efforts.

The answer we always get back, whenever we express our desire to speak forcefully on these issues of human rights, is, we have to be careful not to go too far on human rights, I am told, because Bahrain has such critical importance to the United States, from a geopolitical perspective, that somehow we need to push aside the human rights considerations because they are such an important partner in that region, from a defense perspective.

I think that is troubling and shortsighted, for a couple of reasons. One, I think it undermines our credibility, when we go around the world talking about how we are fighters on behalf of human rights and democracy, freedom, and the liberty of all people, and, on the other hand, we are willing, or appear willing, to tolerate it in some parts of the world because they are good partners. We did that in the cold war, as well, in many instances. And I do not criticize it now, and hindsight is always 20/20, but it was, to some—we still, in some extent, pay the price for that in some parts of the world.

The other is, I think it is actually bad for our allies, because, when they do this, when you have a large number of people in this country—in this instance, not even a minority—I just called it a minority; it is not a minority, but a group that feels being oppressed because they do not have a voice—I think, long term, that is unsustainable. If you are an ally of the United States, what we should be explaining to these countries—and I hope that we are—is, “What you have today is an unsustainable position. You have got to create space for every segment of your society to be involved. Otherwise, you have put for yourself—you put yourself in an unsustainable long-term position that actually is ripe for the sorts of instability that do not just undermine you, but ultimately undermine our standing in that part of the world.” But, again, the argu-

ment I get back is, "We have got to be careful not to push too hard, because Bahrain is too important."

I will say that in 2013 a former Director of National Intelligence, Dennis Blair, said, "Bahrain needs the United States, from both the security and economic points of view, more than the United States needs Bahrain." He went on to say, "The Fifth Fleet Headquarters should be moved back onboard a flagship as it was until 1993. Permanent basing in a repressive Bahrain undermines our support for reform and is vulnerable if instability continues."

So, I guess my point is, as you walk into this role there, what is your view of this balance, to the extent there needs to be a balance? And how would you—and, furthermore, how would you evaluate our alternatives for the naval support activity facility in Bahrain? How crucial is that facility? How crucial is that facility being stationed in that place, in Bahrain? How crucial is that to U.S. defense strategy in the Persian Gulf region?

But, the first one is the most important. How do you view that balance? Because I am not even sure there should be a balance, *per se*. I think all of our national security and foreign policy credibility is undermined when we are seen to be the sponsor of, and looking the other way to, repression.

Mr. ROEBUCK. Thank you, Senator Rubio.

I believe there does need to be a balance. I think that a country that promotes and protects human rights will be ultimately a more stable country and can be a more effective security partner. My commitment is to make the case, publicly and privately, if confirmed, to the Bahrain Government that it is in their long-term interest to promote and protect human rights, and also to support a vibrant political dialogue, reform, and reconciliation process. My view—and I think our policy is informed by this view—is that these two objectives—security partnership and human rights—are not in conflict, but that they mutually reinforce each other. I think it takes work to make sure that the policy functions in that way, but I do believe that that is a fundamental understanding of our policies towards Bahrain.

I do think that the hosting of U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, the Fifth Fleet, in Bahrain is incredibly important to our regional interest. That deepwater port's central location allows us to cover 2.3 million square miles of critical oceans and seas, demonstrate resolve to Iran, ensure the free flow of oil and commerce, and mount counterterrorism, counterpiracy, counternarcotics efforts.

So, yes, it is critical, but I believe we can balance that interest with our concern for human rights. And it is absolutely essential that we do so.

Thank you, sir.

Senator RUBIO. Can I just—

Senator KAINE. Please continue.

Senator RUBIO. Here was what I would just say. When you go that part of the world or you speak to people and say, "Well, why is the United States involved, and why do we care about what is happening in different parts of the world?"—one of the things we should always lead with is, "Well, we care about human rights. There are certain realities," I mean, this Nation was founded on

the principle that all human beings were created equal, endowed by a creator with certain rights that belong to them that are not granted to them by government. These are the founding principles of our Nation. And I think we have been a beacon to the world for over 240 years because we have been willing to go around the world and help those who aspire to that for themselves. It gives credibility to—and standing. And it makes us more than just a geopolitical player. It makes us, in essence, someone other countries look at as an inspiration.

Here is where we run into trouble. When you go to these parts of the world and say, “Well, you care about human rights, and you care about democracy, and you care about freedom unless it is some country that is critically important to you in some way. Then you are willing to look the other way. I mean, you looked the other way in Saudi Arabia, where there are no human rights, per se, where women are not even allowed to drive a car. You look the other way in Bahrain.” You know, and I have had these conversations, where they are—you know, where I have explained to Bahraini officials that it is critical that the space be created, because what they have, long term, is a powder keg.

People are not all of a sudden just going to decide to take it. This will continue to be a problem, and an unsustainable one.

And I look at other examples, where, over time, we were able to convince allies of ours, in a different era—the Philippines comes to mind—where, slowly but surely, we pressured and put—during the Reagan administration, created conditions, where eventually that dictatorship fell and transitioned to a democracy, albeit one that has some challenges, but certainly no longer governed by a dictatorship, as an example of a role the United States should also play. If we are truly someone’s ally, I think it is critical for us to explain and be forceful and continuing to nudge them toward a sustainable position that honors both human rights and democracy and does not cost us our credibility. Because I think when we look the other way, whether it is Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, or anywhere else, and say, “We care about human rights unless we happen to have bases in your country and you are helping us achieve some other foreign policy objective”—I actually think that threatens and undermines our credibility, our standing, and ultimately those countries, as well. So, as their allies, I think it is important that we continue to be forceful in explaining to them that, if they do not create these spaces where people can become legitimate and open and free parts of that society, where they feel like they have an outlet and a voice in the politics for those nations, those countries are in an unsustainable place and ultimately are going to continue to be places where Iran and others can come in and try to exploit that division.

So, I hope you will use this post as an opportunity to continue to further that dialogue and continue to nudge them in that direction. Otherwise, the situation they find themselves in is unsustainable, and I think Bahrain will continue to be susceptible to Iranian influence trying to stir up Shia militants and others to take actions against the Kingdom.

So, thank you.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Senator Rubio.

Ms. Leaf, let me pick up with you on the—I want to make sure I understand the dialogue you had with Senator McCain. We are very concerned on the committee, as you know, about this issue of the airstrikes in Libya. And I have seen it—you know, I have seen it kind of interpreted a couple of different ways. One interpretation is, you know, “How dare something like this happen without the U.S. being deeply involved.” I think a willingness to publicly self-police in the region is actually—could be a real healthy thing. I think this has been a region where often nations have, you know, quietly told us we need to do things, and they have been unwilling to stand up and do things themselves. Nevertheless, there is—you know, there is a lot of concerns about how it could be interpreted.

I understood your answers to be, this question about whether the United States was notified is certainly a question that is important, that is worthy of an answer, the Senate should get an answer, but, to answer that question, you would have to reveal what you know through classified information that you are not at liberty to reveal. Is that basically correct?

Ms. LEAF. Yes, that is the—that is correct, Senator. And I—what I would say is there are more things that I simply cannot discuss in this setting, much as I would like to be responsive to Senator McCain’s question, and to your own. I think perhaps if it is helpful, I could add a few comments about the larger issue of the U.S. and UAE collaboration on Libya, because that actually is a policy—

Senator Kaine. That would be helpful.

Ms. LEAF. Thank you. That is an issue that we have been discussing in some depth with Emiratis since—well, since at least the spring and into the summer, and we are going to have another round of such discussions, in addition to the—to very regular senior-level contacts that we have between our government and theirs.

Libya is a place that the Emiratis engaged on as part of the NATO-led coalition, as you know, Mr. Chairman, and they have had an abiding interest, as we do, in seeing that country stabilize and become secure. And their concerns have been growing for some time, which they have reflected to us, about the growth of Libyan and transnational extremist groups.

So, we are enhancing—we are deepening the dialogue with them and other key partners on this issue as we speak.

Senator Kaine. You talked a little bit about events of the last weekend in kind of a—at least, kind of at face value, a reunification of some of the foreign ministers in the GCC. I am also struck, as I watch this—sometimes there is a theatrical element to breaks, and then there is a theatrical element to reunifications. And I am trying to determine what is theater and what is real.

Talk a little bit about the events of the last weekend and, sort of, what that—

Ms. LEAF. I would—

Senator Kaine [continuing]. Suggests to you is occurring.

Ms. LEAF. I would be happy to do so. In fact, I mean, these are very serious differences of view that have roiled the waters of the GCC. So, I perhaps gave an impression that it was business as normal. I would not by any means suggest so. Rather, that the overriding security challenges that have beset the region over the last couple of years and really have perhaps crested at this point in

Iraq with the emergence of, really, a truly terrifying and brutal movement—ISIL—that has had a very sobering effect on many people across the region, not the least of which are GCC partners.

I would not suggest that they have been able to put all differences aside on the issues that Senator McCain addressed. Far from it. And it was dramatic, what occurred in the spring. It was significant. But, there has been a pretty steady pulling together over the last weeks, in part led by the Saudi Government. But, I think it is a collective reflection that we see right now that they have got really, really bigger fish to fry, if you will. They are addressing their internal differences over the Muslim Brotherhood and other issues. They are addressing them as brothers in a family.

Senator Kaine. What more can the UAE do to support countries like Lebanon and Jordan with the Syrian refugee issues? I know they have been engaged on this humanitarian front, but talk a little bit about the status of that engagement, what more they can do.

Ms. Leaf. I will do so, happily.

The UAE is a really generous foreign assistance donor. I was looking at figures the other day that indicated they have provided assistance to 137 different countries around the world. Jordan ranks right at the top of their regional priorities. And the figure that I mentioned earlier is really meant to address this wave of Syrian refugees and the enormous impact that that has had on Syria's neighbors. Jordan and Lebanon together remain key diplomatic and humanitarian assistance priorities for the UAE. That goes without saying. Without us even raising it, that is a priority for that government.

Senator Kaine. Thank you, Ms. Leaf.

Ambassador Spratlen, a couple of questions. Talk a little bit about the current status of, sort of, democratization and human rights in Uzbekistan. And, in particular, I am always interested whether U.S. and other international-based NGOs are able to operate freely in the country. If you could address that issue.

Ambassador Spratlen. Well, thank you for the question, Senator Kaine.

Yes, the issue of human rights has been at the top of U.S. priorities with Uzbekistan for as long as we have had our diplomatic relations with them, over 20 years. And, as you may know from having read some of the congressionally mandated reports—the Human Rights Report, the International Religious Freedom Report, and others—Uzbekistan, quite unfortunately, ranks very, very low, in global terms, when it comes to compliance with internationally respected human rights norms. As a result, this is a conversation we consistently have as part of our bilateral relationship. I think one of the main differences is that Uzbekistan is a country that has a great deal of concern about the issue of terrorism, about the issue of dissent. And the central government uses considerable resources to constrain that dissent.

What I would also say, however, is that Uzbekistan highly values its relationship with the United States. We know each other well. And I think those conversations that we do have with them quite regularly are built on mutual understanding and mutual respect. But, what we would like to see is for the Uzbekistan government

to recognize that it is in its own interest to meet those international commitments.

With respect to the international human rights community, we are aware that there are a number of groups, such as Human Rights Watch and Freedom House and so on, that previously operated in Uzbekistan and have not been able to do so for a number of years. It is also true, however, that in recent years, I would say that the relationship with Uzbekistan has been improving. And that would include in terms of our conversations with them about human rights. And, while we have not seen, necessarily, actions on the part of the government that would signal a change in their policy, we have seen that they have been willing to release some prisoners when we, the United States, has made those requests, and we also know that a limited number of international human rights organizations are operating in Uzbekistan. For example, the National Democratic Institute is operating there, and they have a very good professional.

This individual just recently arrived, and so we will have to see what will happen with the person's ability.

The issue really—to operate there—the concern is that this—the operating space for human rights for civil society is really quite narrow in Uzbekistan. And the only thing I can say, Senator, is that this is very much a high priority for me in my current position, and it will remain so. We have had some limited successes in Uzbekistan. And I think as we continue to press, not only at the Embassy level, but with our visitors, we will continue to make the case that it is in the interest of Uzbekistan to narrow the gap between its international commitments and put the realities that we see on the ground.

Senator KAINE. I am aware of some reports that anticipate a possible retirement of the President, President Karimov, and that there could be some kind of internal power struggle among political elites in that event that could be destabilizing. I mean, those are in country; you know, those are issues that will be decided there. But, what is your current, sort of, outlook on the political stability of leadership in Uzbekistan?

Ambassador SPRATLEN. Well, I would say that political stability is really at the top of Uzbekistan's priorities. It has been led by Islam Karimov since the independence of Uzbekistan in 1991. I do not really want to get into speculating about—

Senator KAINE. Right.

Ambassador SPRATLEN. [continuing]. What will happen in the future. I think that we just have to watch very carefully what happens. There are all kinds of scenarios that might occur, but I think the most important thing is for us to deal with the reality that we have in Uzbekistan right at the moment. I think, from the point of view of President Karimov, he is very proud of the fact that the country has been very, very stable. I think there are a lot of things that could be different in Uzbekistan, and we have, as I said, been able to have those conversations with them. But, I would prefer not to speculate about what might happen in the future about the leadership.

Senator KAINE. I want to ask you some questions about the current energy outlook in Uzbekistan. Can they produce additional gas



for export? Is there any ability for them to use those resources to enter the European market? Would Russia try to block them from doing that? Talk a little bit about energy resources and their potential in Uzbekistan.

Ambassador SPRATLEN. Certainly. Thank you for the question.

Senator, during the Soviet period, Uzbekistan was really at the center of the energy situation for the countries in the region. It was really the hub. After the breakup of the former Soviet Union, and with the independence of all of the states, what turned out to be true is that countries like Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan ended up being the places that had enormous reserves for oil and gas. Uzbekistan does not have those kinds of resources, the kinds of resources that Azerbaijan, that Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan have. However, they do strategically use the oil and gas revenues that they do have. Of course, it is very important to them to use those resources for domestic consumption. They also sell to China. In the past, Russia has been an important customer of theirs, but, of course, the economic situation in Russia right at the moment has caused some changes in that. But, I would say that, yes, energy is important for Uzbekistan, but they are not going to be playing this—the kind of major role in the global energy market and for Europe that some of the other countries in the region have played.

Senator KAINE. How would you characterize the current relationships between Uzbekistan and Russia, on one hand, and Uzbekistan and China, on the other?

Ambassador SPRATLEN. Well, I would say the most important thing about Uzbekistan as a state is that it highly values its sovereignty and its independence, and it does not want to be put in a position of being forced to choose its partners. And, therefore, I think it has been very shrewd and very careful in developing relations with a variety of major partners. Obviously, as a former Soviet state, the relationship with Russia is an important one. But, I think Uzbekistan has signaled, in a number of ways, that it intends to safeguard its sovereignty. It was previously a member of the Collective Security Treaty Organization. It pulled out of that. It suspended its membership a couple of years ago. I think that was a kind of signal of their independence. And they have had a very robust relationship with China that has been developing at a very measured but important pace since 1991. In 2012, they raised the level of their relationship with China to a strategic partnership, and there have been exchanges of visits between Presidents that have been marked by signing various documents. And the relationship continues to grow strongly economically. There are some 500 companies—Chinese companies operating in Uzbekistan, and there is significant economic activity on the part of China.

So, what I would say is that Uzbekistan is using its relationships with major partners to ensure that it maintains its sovereignty and its independence, that it is not forced to choose partners, but, at the same time, that it sustains relationships that are meaningful and important to them.

With respect to Russia, I would just note that there are a considerable number of Uzbekistan citizens who work in the Russian Federation, and that the remittances that they send back home are extremely important to Uzbekistan's GDP.

So, I would say that these relationships, both with Russia and with China and with other important partners, continue to develop and grow, but all with the idea that Uzbekistan is at the center of it, wanting to safeguard its sovereignty and its independence.

Senator KAINE. One last question, and it deals with equitable water-sharing in Central Asia. I understand that Uzbekistan has some concerns about hydroelectric dams being built in neighboring countries, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. But, what is the appropriate role that we can play to encourage equitable water-sharing in these Central Asian nations?

Ambassador SPRATLEN. Well, Senator, yes, you have touched on one of the most sensitive questions in the region right at the moment. Uzbekistan is a downstream country, and the countries such as the Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan hold significant hydropower resources. And, in the case of Tajikistan, there is an interest in building a major dam project, which Uzbekistan has very strongly opposed.

What I would say is that the United States, as a matter of policy, is interested in having—we believe that all of the countries of Central Asia would prosper more and would enjoy more stability and security if they cooperated together. And this is also true in the area of water resources.

With respect to the specific issue of the Rogun Dam, our goal and, I think, the role of the United States is really to facilitate the dialogue and to ensure that the negotiations or the discussions that take place among countries are done—happen on the basis of facts, happen on the basis of what is technologically true. But, we know that these are also political questions for the country, for the individual countries.

But, the main role for the United States is to be a facilitator of dialogue. And if confirmed, of course, that is a role I will continue to play.

Senator KAINE. Ambassador Spratlen, thank you for those answers.

And, Ms. Cefkin, I would—this is a little bit of a followup on a line of questioning from Senator McCain, as well. But, I was intrigued, your position in Fiji in a time of political transition—how can you draw on your experience in working on Burma issues, which has been through an important transition—and you have, you know, seen that up close and personal—how can you draw on that experience to assist in your efforts, your work in—with Fiji?

Ms. CEFKIN. Thank you very much, Senator, for that question.

That is correct, that I feel very privileged that, through many of my assignments, the constant thread has been working with countries that are in transition, that are striving to develop their democratic systems, as well as promote their economic development. And I find great personal satisfaction in engaging on those issues.

I think that, first and foremost, what I have learned is the importance of really building people-to-people ties and networks. We have such a wealth, in the United States, of groups ranging from our nongovernmental organizations to our academic institutions to our government officials that can bring a lot of expertise and experience that they have to share. And I find, in general, that people

of the countries do aspire to really take on board these lessons, and they are very hungry for the information.

So, I certainly will look, if confirmed, to tap our programs through our public diplomacy programs and through whatever assistance resources are available to continue to expand that people-to-people engagement, as well, of course, as our diplomatic engagement and making sure that our positions on these issues are clearly understood.

Senator KAINE. To what extent has the ban on U.S. military assistance to Fiji sort of affected our objectives in the region?

Ms. CEFKIN. Well, I think certainly, Senator, that there is a very clear strategic importance to this region that can greatly benefit from greater military engagement. We have seen, as I noted in my comments, that several of these countries, including Fiji, have been very willing participants in international peacekeeping operations. They have participated with us, in the case of Tonga, in the coalition in Iraq and in Afghanistan. Currently, we have 45 Fijian peacekeepers who are being held captive in the Golan. So, it shows very much their willingness to accept risk, to support global peacekeeping. So, it would be, obviously, I think, to our benefit, if their political conditions allow, for us to be able to expand our support to them in these efforts.

And we also, I am happy to say, have a wealth of expertise in the United States Government, and resources also on the law enforcement front, where we are working very closely with these countries to support their surveillance efforts to protect fisheries. So, I think that we would hope to be able to look for opportunities to expand those efforts.

Senator KAINE. I was in the Sinai in February and had a chance to visit with the multinational force of observers that, since the 1970s, I guess, has been performing the border security with Israel in that region. And Fiji plays a major presence in that, and has for years. And while I did not visit their units, the American military personnel who were sort of head of that operation had very, very complimentary things to say about the Fijian commitment to this mission, these peacekeepers there in the Golan and other places. They have been a good partner in some very important parts of the world. And I hope the political transition would move at a pace where we would feel more comfortable in expanding our degrees of military cooperation.

You raised the issue of climate change in Fiji, and the other nations that you represent are affected by this. Has the—when we, as the United States, are in international fora concerning climate change issues, you know, do we publicly give support to, or raise the issues of, these small Pacific nations who are certainly seeing some of the most dramatic impacts of changing climate?

Ms. CEFKIN. Thank you for raising this very important issue, Senator.

Yes, we are working very closely with them in international fora, in international negotiations, U.N. Climate Convention negotiations, as well as through other less formal fora; for example, the Oceans Conference, which Secretary Kerry organized, in June this year. Several of the Pacific Island nations were represented at a very senior level, including Kiribati. President Tong, of Kiribati,

was one of the keynote speakers, and he made the very important point that, really, these countries are on the front lines of this effort, the strategic priority of mitigating climate change and preserving our ocean resources, that these countries, in many senses, are our early warning system, and the very dramatic existential challenges they are facing, from rising ocean levels, warming, acidification, and overfishing, is quite dramatic. We are working with them through some USAID resources on climate adaptation projects to support their communities' efforts to find ways to adapt and help mitigate the effects of climate change. We are working with them on programs to help improve environmental governance and also efforts to look at alternative energy resources. So, that is another important tool we have to support our common interest in working to mitigate climate change and to help preserve ocean resources. Through our public diplomacy programs, we have sponsored groups that have been able to come and to learn the benefit of some of our experiences.

So, there are a number of activities that are ongoing, where I think we are working very cooperatively together. And it is very important that we continue to do so.

Senator KAINE. I would definitely encourage that we do more of that. You know, this is in the, kind of, "for what it is worth" category. In Virginia, as I deal with Virginians on climate issues, some climate issues are perceived by Virginians to—Virginians actually are very concerned about the issue, overwhelmingly believe that humans are having an impact on climate, it is a serious thing, we ought to do something about it. What to do about it, how quickly to—how quickly to take those steps, there are a lot of differences of opinion there. But, many climate issues, Virginians kind of see as "tomorrow issues" that we ought to do something, because we want tomorrow to be OK. But, sea level rise is a "today issue" in Virginia. It is very visible. It is not a tomorrow issue that is kind of theoretical, "We should get to it sometime"; it is a today issue. And if it is a today issue in the Hampton Roads part of Virginia, it is a today issue probably on steroids in the nations where you will be serving. And I think people can see that so visibly that it has a way of convincing people of the science and of the urgency of a response. So, I think, working together with these nations is not only in their interest, but it also, I think, can have the ability of really shining a spotlight and educating people about the critical nature of this challenge that we are all dealing with as a planet. So, I would encourage you in those ways.

Last question I wanted to ask is this. We have our own policy with respect to these nations, but Australia and New Zealand do, as well. Talk a little bit about the relationship between the United States, Australia, and New Zealand and how we work together to coordinate economic or diplomatic or strategic efforts in the region.

Ms. CEFKIN. Senator, thank you.

They are, of course, very critical partners for us in working in the South Pacific, as also is the United Kingdom, which, of course, has deep historic interest and connections. And we are working very closely with them, both bilaterally and multilaterally, and informally in a smaller like-minded grouping. We are regularly sharing our assessments and our plans and looking for synergies where

we can collaborate. For example, on this issue of working on environmental management, currently the United States and New Zealand are cooperating on a very important waste management project in Kiribati. We are active partners in the various regional fora that are currently active in the region, including the Pacific Island Forum. And so, we work closely with them on all those levels.

But, you are right. Obviously we all have mutual interests, but first and foremost, if confirmed, I would be very attentive to, fundamentally, what is the U.S. interest and what can we do and what can we bring to the table in support of our common objectives.

Senator Kaine. Thank you very much.

Well, this will conclude the hearing. I will ask that the record remain open until 5 p.m. on Friday for members of the committee who want to submit questions for response by any of the nominees.

Again, I will state what I stated at the beginning of the hearing. Each of you have very distinguished and very diverse careers of serving this country in a variety of places, including in some challenging assignments, and we are in your debt for your service. We thank you and wish you the best, going forward.

With that, the hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:05 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

#### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

##### RESPONSES OF WILLIAM V. ROEBUCK TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

*Question.* In President Obama's 2011 speech following the outbreak of peaceful protests in Bahrain and other Arab nations, he said to the Bahraini Government, "The only way forward is for the government and the opposition to engage in a dialogue, and you can't have a real dialogue when parts of the peaceful opposition are in jail." I hope that this message has been reiterated privately, though it has not been publically reaffirmed. Other civil society leaders have been detained such as human rights defender Meriam al-Khawaja, who testified in the House in 2011. She was arrested on her return to Bahrain on Saturday, August 30, and international NGOs believe she was targeted for her international advocacy work in Washington and elsewhere.

- ◆ Does the President's call for the release from prison of peaceful opposition leaders remain U.S. policy?
- ◆ Is President Obama's message one you will be conveying publicly and privately to the Bahraini Government?

*Answer.* Yes—it remains our position that peaceful members of Bahrain's political opposition should be released; such imprisonment undermines the right of political expression and compromises the atmosphere for reconciliation.

We have repeatedly voiced concern about these cases, both publicly and privately, at the highest levels. As I said in my statement, if confirmed, I will make a strong case for why political dialogue, reform, and promoting and protecting human rights are in Bahrain's long-term interest.

- ◆ If confirmed, how will you engage with the Bahraini Government and opposition leaders to move forward with a national dialogue and political process?
- ◆ What specific ideas or proposals do you plan to offer?
- ◆ Are there specific actions that the Government of Bahrain or opposition societies have already taken that represent significant steps toward reconciliation?

*Answer.* I believe a stable Bahrain will be a more stable partner to the United States, and that the country's long-term stability requires advancements in its reform and reconciliation agenda. If confirmed, I will commit to supporting the Bahraini people in seeking a resolution to Bahrain's ongoing unrest. This is a Bahraini challenge that will require a Bahraini solution, but Bahrain's partners, including the United States, can also be supportive in the process.

Both sides—the government and the opposition—have taken good-faith steps toward reconciliation, but there is much more to be done. Before bringing any specific proposals to the table, I would first want to engage with the range of Bahraini stakeholders and assess how I can be helpful to the process.

*Question.* The U.S. Government has called on the Government of Bahrain to fully implement all of the recommendations of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI), including Recommendation 1722(a), which requires investigations into all gross violations of human rights, including torture and extrajudicial killings, and that officials “at all levels of responsibility” be included in the scope of the inquiry.

- ◆ If confirmed, how will you encourage the Government of Bahrain to take steps to fully implement the BICI recommendations, including undertaking credible investigations into the role of all levels of Bahraini security forces in the torture and extrajudicial killings of its citizens?

*Answer.* King Hamad has repeatedly reaffirmed his commitment to implementing reforms. The Bahraini Government has taken some important steps in line with BICI’s recommendations, including rebuilding mosques, establishing the Ombudsman’s Office, establishing a Special Investigative Unit, establishing the Commission on the Rights of Prisoners and Detainees, some training of police in human rights standards, and other measures.

However, the Government of Bahrain has more to do on its implementation of unfulfilled BICI recommendations and we will continue to press them on this. We have stated publically and privately that the Government has made no meaningful progress on accountability for abuses committed by security forces, media incitement, or antitorture safeguards. In fact, we have unfortunately seen backsliding in some of these areas, including reduced sentences for the few security officials convicted of mistreatment and ongoing cases of individuals subject to arrest and long prison sentences for peaceful political expression.

Implementation of the BICI recommendations is an important tool to move beyond the events of 2011. This report, however, did not fully address the broader social, political, and economic concerns that many Bahrainis have voiced and that a successful National Dialogue may begin to address. If confirmed, I will engage Bahraini stakeholders on the BICI recommendations, and more broadly, on the dialogue and reconciliation process.

*Question.* Over the past several months, Bahrain has established new trade and military ties with Russia, including ordering a new weapons system from Russian state arms company Rosoboronexport.

- ◆ How should the United States interpret this warming relationship and how should we respond?

*Answer.* Bahrain, like many of its Gulf Cooperation Council partners, has a diverse range of defense relationships, but its preeminent defense relationship is with the United States. Our Navy arrived in Bahrain during the 1940s, and today more than 8,000 Americans who are attached to the Fifth Fleet or U.S. Naval Forces Central Command live there. We work closely with the Bahraini Defense Forces, in particular their Navy and Air Force, on a range of fronts, including counterterrorism and antipiracy operations.

Bahrain is an important partner of the United States and our mutual interests intersect more than they diverge. If confirmed, I will directly engage the Government of Bahrain to ensure that the space where our interests overlap continues to grow.

*Question.* For several years the U.S. Government has refrained from selling certain items—including TOW missiles, Humvees, and crowd control items—to Bahrain, citing concerns of “increased polarization” throughout Bahrain and “the excessive use of force and tear gas by police.” The U.S. Government has continued to sell Bahrain numerous other items that are used reportedly only for “external defense,” though several Foreign Military Sales cases remain on hold.

- ◆ Please list the FMS cases that remain on hold. What is the administration’s policy on steps that need to be taken in order to lift the hold on these cases?

*Answer.* We continue to withhold the transfer of items to Bahrain that could be used for internal security, including small arms and crowd control items. We will be pleased to provide a list to the committee via confidential means. The administration does not currently have plans to modify our security cooperation policy with Bahrain. We continually reassess the policy and the situation in Bahrain, and we will continue to consult with the Congress prior to enacting any changes to the policy.

- ◆ Do you assess that if these holds are lifted, Bahraini security forces will use U.S. origin items responsibly?

Answer. Whether a government would use defense articles appropriately is a critical factor we consider in making arms transfer decisions for any country. The Conventional Arms Transfer policy, updated in January 2014, provides significant detail into how these decisions are made.

If confirmed, a principal factor in my recommendations to the Department of State on the appropriateness of any arms transfer to Bahrain will be whether such defense articles would be appropriately used if transferred.

*Question.* If confirmed, please describe steps that you will take to enhance effective implementation of Section 620M of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, commonly known as the Leahy amendment, within the Embassy in Bahrain, as well as the steps you would take to accomplish the goal of the law, namely, helping the Government of Bahrain end impunity for human rights violations by security forces.

Answer. The Department closely monitors human rights developments worldwide, including for evidence of misconduct by foreign security forces. This information is used for various purposes such as policy decisions or the annual Report on Human Rights, and is retained for use in Leahy vetting.

Leahy vetting takes place when assistance is proposed for a unit or individual member of foreign security forces. Bahrain is no exception. If confirmed, I will ensure that Embassy Manama and the Department of State continue to gather information on the conduct of Bahraini forces that will be taken into account in Leahy vetting and for any future security assistance to Bahrain.

RESPONSES OF BARBARA A. LEAF TO QUESTIONS  
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

*Question.* A coalition of nations is currently forming to defeat the regional threat caused by ISIS. Does the U.A.E. actively support this coalition led by the United States? If so, what will the U.A.E. contribute?

Answer. The UAE has been one of the earliest and strongest voices supporting the international coalition to combat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). In addition to private expressions of support for the U.S.-led campaign against ISIL, the UAE on September 3 issued a statement unequivocally condemning ISIL's atrocities and calling on the international community to take action against extremism and terrorism. In a September 10 Wall Street Journal op-ed, UAE Ambassador to the U.S. Yousef al-Otaiba wrote of the threat posed by Islamic extremism, and said, "Now is the time to act," including through direct intervention.

We have been in touch with the UAE and many other partners on the need for an international coalition to combat ISIL and we are pleased with the UAE's initial response. Secretary Kerry will continue to meet with regional partners, including the UAE in Jeddah to continue working out details of this coalition. Most of the specific military and security contributions of gulf partners will be classified, but we are prepared to provide a briefing on this subject in a classified setting.

*Question.* The State Department describes the U.A.E. as a "key partner."

- ◆ A. How would you define the core elements of our strategic relationship with the U.A.E.?

Answer. The core elements of our strategic partnership with the UAE are our shared goals for a stable region, our military and security partnership to confront the threats to the region, and our significant trade relationship.

On security, over 3,000 U.S. military personnel and key U.S. military assets are deployed to UAE bases. The UAE has been a reliable contributor to international coalition operations, participating in five major efforts with the United States since Operation Desert Storm—the only Arab country to do so. The UAE Air Force is built around the F-16 fighter, and the UAE has acquired a range of U.S. weapons systems to make its military interoperable with U.S. Forces. The UAE military is among the most capable in the Middle East, and the UAE modeled its new National Defense College on our own.

The UAE is one of our most important trading partners in the Middle East, importing over \$22 billion in U.S. goods in 2013. It is the largest destination for U.S. exports in the region. In November 2013, Boeing and GE announced orders of over \$100 billion for aircraft and engine sales to Etihad Airways, Emirates Airlines, and Flydubai. These combined deals, the largest in civil aviation history, will support hundreds of thousands of U.S. jobs for the next decade.

The Emiratis have been an important partner on Afghanistan, where they have fielded troops as part of ISAF; on Syria, where they are engaged in support for the SOC and in humanitarian relief efforts to offset the huge strain placed by Syrian refugees on neighboring countries such as Jordan; on Iran, where they have strongly supported and implemented a broad range of sanctions; and on Somalia, where they play a key role in stabilization efforts and counterpiracy.

♦ B. In your opinion, how does the U.A.E. view this relationship?

Answer. Speaking from my experience as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Gulf Affairs, and my many conversations with Emirati leaders, I am confident that the UAE values its relationship with the United States deeply. We have differences of perspective and approach on issues from time to time, as we do with even our closest allies. However, Emirati leaders are clear that they aspire to a truly strategic relationship with the United States, and view U.S. leadership in the region as indispensable to the UAE's security.

♦ C. Is the United States regarded as an indispensable partner of the U.A.E.?

Answer. I believe the relationship is hugely valuable to both parties, and if confirmed I will work to ensure that the partnership continues to support U.S. national security objectives regionally and internationally.

*Question.* According to State's Human Rights Report, the U.A.E. has an estimated 20,000 to 100,000 Bidoon (stateless individuals) who are mostly Baluchis or Pakistanis who came to the U.A.E. before there were defined boundaries. In many cases these individuals have lived there for centuries.

♦ What progress is being made by the U.A.E. Government to address the problems routinely faced by the Bidoon, including harassment and discrimination?

Answer. In July 2012, the UAE Government expanded the mandate of a government committee charged with reviewing requests for citizenship. Under the broader mandate, the committee could take up applications of those Bidoon who could satisfy certain legal conditions to be eligible for naturalization and subsequently could gain access to education, health care, and other public services. Separate from that, Bidoon who register with the government are able to receive identification cards, which allow individuals to work in public sector jobs and obtain medical services. The government is working with individual Bidoon to correct their residential status, and some Bidoon have begun to attend public schools alongside Emiratis. Some Bidoon have availed themselves of another country's citizenship, namely that of the Republic of Comoros, to gain a passport and legal identification under a program supported by the UAE Government. Nevertheless, if they were deported, the Republic of Comoros would not accept these persons.

More work must be done to ensure that the status of these stateless individuals is rectified. The U.S. Embassy regularly raises these concerns with the UAE Government, and meets with stateless individuals to stay apprised of the current situation facing the Bidoon.

*Question.* The U.A.E. has long-standing worker rights issues for noncitizens, including allegations in May of serious abuse toward South Asian workers constructing buildings for an Abu Dhabi branch of NYU.

♦ A. What is the U.A.E. doing to correct these abuses?

Answer. On the specific question of the NYU allegations, NYU Abu Dhabi is working on an ongoing basis with the Mott McDonald Group, a third-party auditor. In addition, the government of Abu Dhabi and the New York University announced in June that Daniel Nardello, a former Assistant U.S. Attorney in New York, would lead an investigation to inquire into labor conditions at NYU Abu Dhabi.

While the UAE Government views labor conditions as a serious issue, and UAE law prohibits all forms of forced or compulsory labor, enforcement of the law is far from adequate. The Emirati Government has taken some steps to prevent forced labor, including developing a Wages Protection System (WPS), an electronic salary transfer system intended to ensure timely and full payment of agreed wages. The government fines employers who violate workers' rights by entering incorrect information into the WPS, not paying workers for over 60 days, making workers sign documents falsely attesting to benefits, or making workers pay recruitment fees issued by the Ministry of Labor or recruitment agencies. The Ministry of Labor made 200 inspection and followup visits to recruitment agencies. The Ministry's Combating Human Trafficking Department conducted 474 inspection visits. However, the government rarely prosecutes potential forced labor cases under the country's antitrafficking law and does not provide protection services for forced labor victims.



- ◆ B. How can the Embassy help the U.A.E. to develop laws or other mechanisms to stop these problems?

Answer. As part of our ongoing dialogue with the UAE Government, the Embassy urges the UAE to continue investigating any allegations of abuse, as well as to pursue new means of protecting laborers and improve labor conditions.

- ◆ C. Has the Embassy used the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) in the last 12 months to train prosecutors and/or judges handling worker abuse cases?

Answer. During the past 12 months, our Embassy has sought to use the IVLP program to familiarize UAE judges with U.S. practices on worker/labor abuse cases during a Single Country Program (SCP) arranged for the Dubai Judicial Institute in December 2013. While the SCP was focused on cyber crime, Mission UAE recommended that the visiting group engage with New York's Court Innovation Center because of the center's focus on human trafficking issues. This meeting took place, and the judges reported that it was one of the most productive of their trip.

RESPONSES OF PAMELA LEORA SPRATLEN TO QUESTIONS  
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

*Question.* I sent a letter to President Karimov in May to express concern about the imprisonment of Dilmurod Saidov, Salijon Abdurakhmanov, Akzam Turganov, Bobmurod Razzokov, and Muhammad Bekjanov. Several human rights groups as well as the Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor have highlighted the political nature of these cases and called for their release.

- ◆ What is the current status of these five prisoners?
- ◆ Please provide a summary of recent U.S. efforts to secure their release.
- ◆ If confirmed, how will you advocate on behalf of these and other prisoners of conscience in Uzbekistan?

Answer. These five prisoners remain incarcerated. Muhammad Bekjanov is in urgent need of medical care because his health has severely deteriorated over the last 15 years he spent in prison. In a press release after a January 2014 prison visit, human rights activists reported that Salijon Abdurakhmanov's health had improved after he received 2 months of treatment for a stomach ailment. Dilmurod Saidov stated that he had not been subject to mistreatment and had been exempted from physical labor while Akzam Turganov reportedly linked an improvement in his prison conditions with the June 2013 letter that Senator Durbin and 11 of his colleagues sent to President Karimov.

The United States has ongoing concerns about the human rights situation in Uzbekistan. The Department of State consistently raises prisoner cases at the highest levels of the Uzbekistani Government, and we have made specific inquiries about the plight of several prisoners. In May 2014, Deputy Secretary of State William J. Burns raised the cases of Dilmurod Saidov, Salijon Abdurakhmanov, and Akzam Turganov with Foreign Minister Kamilov. On April 28, the State Department Spokesperson publicly highlighted the case of Muhammad Bekjanov as part of the Department's 2014 Free the Press Campaign. The State Department highlighted Bobmurod Razzokov's case in its most recent Human Rights Report.

If confirmed, I will employ persistent engagement with the Government of Uzbekistan to advocate on behalf of these and other prisoners of conscience in Uzbekistan, and for needed broader reforms to address torture, due process, and other serious human rights concerns. I will use congressionally mandated reports, multilateral fora, and my own good offices to urge the government to end its practice of politically motivated imprisonment. I will also encourage the government to allow civil society organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross access to prisons to monitor conditions there. I will work with Members of Congress to amplify the messages of advocacy on behalf of prisoners of conscience. Prisoner cases will be a top priority for me if confirmed.

*Question.* Large-scale, government-organized use of forced labor, particularly for harvesting cotton, is a serious and entrenched human rights issue in Uzbekistan.

- ◆ If confirmed, what approach will you take with the Government of Uzbekistan to persuade it to end this practice?
- ◆ What role, if any, can the United States play in supporting agricultural sector reforms that will end the use of forced labor?

Answer. The State Department has long-standing concerns about forced labor of children and adults in Uzbekistan, as evidenced by Uzbekistan's Tier 3 ranking on the State Department's "Trafficking in Persons Report." If confirmed, I will continue

to make ending the forced labor of children and adults in Uzbekistan a top priority. To this end, I will continue to work with the Government of Uzbekistan and the International Labor Organization (ILO) on a program for cooperation aimed at ultimately eliminating forced labor in Uzbekistan. If confirmed, I will urge the government to continue to engage with the ILO and press for further action by the government to address the forced labor of 15–18 year olds and of adults. If confirmed, I will also seek to hold the Government of Uzbekistan to its recent commitment to keep all children under the age of 18 out of the cotton fields during the 2014 harvest, which began on September 8.

The United States can continue to press for agricultural sector reforms that will end the use of forced labor. The United States strongly supports the ILO's recently established Decent Work Country Program (DWCP), and if confirmed, I will continue this important support. The DWCP is designed to help Uzbekistan comply with international labor standards and will analyze the forced labor problem in Uzbekistan, including the economic, political, and social causes, and provide specific recommendations to the government on how to improve. Given the complexity of this problem, if confirmed, I will employ steady, persistent engagement over the full course of my tenure as Ambassador with the goal of ultimately ending the forced labor of adults and children in Uzbekistan. If confirmed, I will also work with Members of Congress and civil society to address this problem.

*Question.* I am concerned about the nature of our security cooperation with Uzbekistan and strongly support the assistance conditions outlined in section 7076 of the FY14 appropriations law related to human rights, the establishment of a multiparty political system, free and fair elections, freedom of expression, and the independence of the media. In July, the administration exercised a national security waiver to continue assistance to Uzbekistan despite lack of progress on those issues.

- ◆ Can U.S. security assistance be used to leverage progress on democracy and human rights?
- ◆ Does exercising this waiver diminish the U.S. ability to promote the democratic principles outlined in section 7076 of the FY14 appropriations law?
- ◆ How will you specifically work to advance the principles laid out in section 7076 of the FY14 appropriations law?

*Answer.* Increased security cooperation with Uzbekistan has afforded us the opportunity to address issues like respect for human rights with Uzbekistan's security forces. We view the expanded access afforded by this enhanced cooperation as an opportunity to make the point to our Uzbekistani partners that effectiveness in countering terrorism and violent extremism—our common objective—is undermined by repression of citizens' rights.

Our security cooperation is complemented by a foreign assistance portfolio that aims to increase civil-society participation in government decisionmaking and support rule-of-law and judicial reform. Several of our programs, such as exchanges and health sector cooperation, increase our ability to promote the democratic principles outlined in prior congressional legislation by promoting engagement with the people of Uzbekistan.

Exercising this waiver does not diminish the U.S. ability to promote democratic principles. It allows the United States to provide assistance to the central government of Uzbekistan, including nonlethal equipment to enhance Uzbekistan's ability to combat transnational and terrorist threats. Enhancing Uzbekistan's defensive capacity improves the security of the United States supply transit system to Afghanistan and our ability to support U.S. troops there.

The State Department anticipates that the nature of our security cooperation with Uzbekistan will soon transition from NDN-focused to an effort aimed at preventing Afghanistan from once again becoming a safe haven for terrorists who seek to attack U.S. interests or the homeland. The United States seeks to cooperate with Uzbekistan on preventing a resurgence of terrorism in this region, particularly through training on counterterrorism and counternarcotics missions. Uzbekistan is an increasingly important partner in these efforts, especially in light of the threat that terrorist groups like ISIL pose to the Middle East and Southwest Asia.

If confirmed, I will continue Embassy Tashkent's steadfast efforts to improve the human rights situation in Uzbekistan. I believe that respect for human rights and security cooperation both are high priority objectives, and if confirmed, I will pursue U.S. objectives vigorously in both arenas. If confirmed, I will employ persistent, pragmatic engagement at the highest levels to urge Uzbekistan to improve its human rights record. I will press for expanded operating space for civil society and partner with both domestic and international nongovernmental organizations to hold the Government of Uzbekistan accountable on respect for fundamental freedoms. I will also use U.S. assistance programs to effect the changes called for by

prior congressional legislation. Finally, I will regularly consult with Members of Congress in order to keep them informed on Uzbekistan's progress.

*Question.* If confirmed, please describe steps that you will take to enhance effective implementation of Section 620M of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, commonly known as the Leahy amendment, within the Embassy in Tashkent as well as the steps you would take to accomplish the goal of the law, namely, ending impunity for human rights violations by security forces.

*Answer.* Encouraging accountability and respect for human rights among security forces features prominently in the U.S. security relationship with Uzbekistan. If confirmed, I will continue to encourage the Government of Uzbekistan to improve its human rights record and end impunity for human rights violators, especially among security forces.

If confirmed, I will continue Embassy Tashkent's effective implementation of Section 620M of the Foreign Assistance Act, commonly known as the Leahy amendment. Embassy Tashkent has a comprehensive system in place to implement the Leahy amendment, commonly known as "Leahy vetting." If confirmed, I will ensure we are conducting Leahy vetting based on the most complete information available. If the vetting process reveals credible information that a unit or a security force member has committed a gross violation of human rights, the Embassy will deny that unit or individual from receiving assistance and will notify the host government promptly. In these cases, if confirmed, I will instruct my team to join me in strongly encouraging Uzbekistan to take effective steps to thoroughly investigate any allegations of gross human rights violations.

To assist Uzbekistan in ending impunity for human rights violations by security forces, if confirmed, I will use existing and future military exchange and assistance programs to promote respect for human rights among Uzbekistan's security forces. Also, if confirmed, I will stress with my Uzbek interlocutors that the lack of sufficient progress on human rights will continue to constrain our bilateral relationship. Finally, if confirmed, I will keep Members of Congress informed of our efforts and cooperate closely with the legislative branch on improving Uzbekistan's overall human rights record.

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RESPONSES OF RABBI DAVID SAPERSTEIN TO QUESTIONS  
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

*Question.* Many who support your nomination differ with you on questions related to religious freedom, such as the meaning of marriage and the right to life.

- ◆ May I have your assurance that you will use your position to protect the religious freedom of those who disagree with you on issues such as same-sex marriage and abortion?

*Answer.* Throughout my career, I have had the opportunity to serve in leadership roles in interfaith coalitions spanning all major faith groups, and in faith groups in the United States with a broad range of theological views. My work with these groups has been driven by our shared values, including the universal freedoms of thought, conscience, and belief. This includes the freedom to manifest one's beliefs not only through worship but through teaching, preaching, practice, observance, and political expression. If confirmed, I will work to ensure these internationally recognized rights of religious freedom for everyone, including those with differing views on marriage and abortion.

*Question.* On numerous occasions, I have voiced concern on the issuance of the Country of Particular Concern designations. Until recently, the administration had waited almost 3 years to reissue this designation.

- ◆ Would you support making the CPC designation an annual occurrence as part of the International Religious Freedom Report rollout?

*Answer.* The International Religious Freedom office leads an annual review of all Countries of Particular Concern and other countries where gross violations of religious freedom are alleged to occur. If confirmed, I will participate fully in the annual review of countries and work within the Department of State to regularize the designation or redesignation processes as appropriate. The CPC process should be regular and systematic to be most effective. Indeed, under IRFA, we do not need to wait for the annual report if designation of a country is justified. Ultimately, my goal will be to put the CPC designations to the most effective use possible to encourage needed reform. We will use the CPC process, plus a range of diplomatic tools, in our efforts to end violence and discrimination and promote international religious freedom.

*Question.* A common concern is that the Ambassador at Large is buried in the bureaucracy at the State Department, without the authority or resources to accomplish anything. In the past, the State Department's treatment of this position has shown that it is a far lesser priority than, for example, the Ambassador at Large for Global Women's Issues.

- ◆ Who will you directly report to?
- ◆ Have you received assurances that you will be given the authority and resources to succeed?
- ◆ If after you enter your post, you find that you do not have the tools to succeed, will you return to this committee and recommend changes to the International Religious Freedom Act?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will serve as the principal advisor on religious freedom issues to the President and Secretary of State. The office that supports me is located administratively in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL), permitting me to draw on DRL's staffing, resources, and administrative support. I will report my findings and advice directly to the Secretary, as I deem appropriate, and I look forward to working with colleagues throughout the State Department and interagency to coordinate policy on religious freedom issues. If confirmed, I promise to work closely with this committee and Congress to advance our shared goal of promoting religious freedom worldwide.

*Question.* Earlier this year, Boko Haram kidnapped nearly 300 school girls in Nigeria. Although some of these girls have escaped, most remain captives of this terrorist organization. The Christian Association of Nigeria and International Christian Concern have stated that the majority of the girls kidnapped were Christian and that is why this particular school was targeted.

- ◆ Would you agree that Boko Haram is a terrorist organization with a religious agenda aimed at persecuting Christians?
- ◆ If confirmed, what specifically would you do to address the problem of religious persecution in Nigeria and to assist Nigeria's Christian community, which is increasingly under attack from Boko Haram?

*Answer.* Boko Haram, seeks to impose its violent extremist ideology on the territory it controls and was designated a terrorist organization on November 13, 2013. Boko Haram has murdered more than 5,000 people over the last 4 years. Their attacks have included indiscriminate acts of violence and targeted violence against perceived enemies and while the majority of their victims have been Muslim, the group has deliberately targeted Christians, as well as Muslims who spoke out against or opposed their radical ideology.

The Department takes the issue of religious persecution in Nigeria very seriously, and if confirmed, addressing this will be a priority for me. In fiscal years 2012 and 2013, the Department of State allocated approximately \$35.8 million in security assistance programs that benefited Nigeria, subject to congressional notification and approval. The Department of State is working with vetted police and civilian security components to build Nigerian law enforcement capacities to investigate terrorist cases, manage explosive devices, and secure Nigeria's borders. The Department of State is also supporting training of a vetted Army infantry unit to combat Boko Haram militarily.

If confirmed, I will work with the Government of Nigeria, Nigerian religious leaders, and civil society groups in their efforts to combat Boko Haram and to promote respect for ethnic and religious diversity as a central component to bringing peace and stability back to the people of Nigeria. If confirmed, I will also support DRL's work with Nigerian civil society to increase accountability for perpetrators of violence by addressing the ethnoreligious violence in the Middle Belt and by building strong, nonpartisan institutions.

*Question.* Religious freedom violations rarely occur in a vacuum; they are usually deeply connected to a complex context: deep-rooted militant religious nationalism in countries like Burma, Sri Lanka, and India, repressive regimes like those we see in China, Central Asia, Cuba, Vietnam, and North Korea, internal conflict and the influence of terrorist or criminal groups as we see in Pakistan and Indonesia or religious extremism of the sort we see in much of the Middle East but also on the rise in North Africa and parts of Asia. U.S. policy on international religious freedom is often further complicated by economic or geopolitical strategic relationships and interests.

- ◆ As Ambassador, how will you seek to address the root causes of international religious freedom violations in a holistic way—within the State Department, but also with Congress, the Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security, and the White House's National Security Council?

Answer. Threats to international religious freedom worldwide are interlinked with many other factors, such as repressive regimes, internal conflict, and violent extremism. Promoting religious freedom is a whole-of-government effort, and effectively elevating and advocating for religious freedom requires a unified effort to engage with foreign governments on this issue. If confirmed, I will highlight international religious freedom concerns at all levels within the State Department, including our missions around the globe and I will seek to work cooperatively with the Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security, and with the White House's National Security Council. In addition, if confirmed, I will pursue discussions with civil society members, including religious leaders, people of faith, and NGO representatives, regarding the root causes of religious freedom violations and will work multilaterally as well as bilaterally to urge and advance reforms.