

# 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 PETER MCKINLEY; ISOBEL  
COLEMAN; AND RICHARD VERMA**

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2014**

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

Peter Michael McKinley, of Virginia, to be Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan  
Isobel Coleman, of New York, to be Representative to the United Nations for U.N. Management and Reform, with the rank of Ambassador; and as an Alternate Representative to the Sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations during her tenure of service as Representative to the United Nations for U.N. Management and Reform  
Richard Rahul Verma, of Maryland, to be Ambassador to the Republic of India

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:33 p.m., in room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Tim Kaine presiding.

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

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

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

Ranking Member Senator Risch is on his way and will be here presently. Senator Johnson, welcome.

This is an important hearing dealing with three critical nominees. I will make opening statements. If Senator Risch is here, he will then make opening statements. If he is not here, we will move right to witness introductions and witness statements.

I know Senator Reid, the majority leader, will be coming at some point during the hearing as well because he wants to give some introductory comments about the nominee for the India post, Richard Verma. When he arrives, we will offer him the chance to cut in line and make his intro comments because I know he will be moving on to other priorities.

But I want to welcome all to this hearing. And it is good to see, given the importance of these posts, a full committee room.

Given what is occurring in the Nation's current war against ISIL in the Middle East, there can be a danger, as we focus on those challenges, that we lose focus on the importance of other South Asian nations to the United States national interest. Afghanistan and India are very, very different nations with very different situations, but they are critical partners for the United States in the 21st century. This is a region that demands more attention, not less, so that we can meet looming challenges, so we can seize new opportunities, and we can also take advantage of some significant progress that has been obtained through the work that has been done by the United States thus far.

In India, I had the opportunity last month to have an excellent visit with Senator King, Angus King, and we had meetings with governmental, business, and civil society leaders. There is an extraordinary momentum in the relationship, and it is a wonderful time to capitalize on it.

More than a billion and a half people, the world's oldest democracy. The United States linking up with the world's largest democracy is an incredible opportunity. The relationship is unique. It is built on a solid foundation from the bottom up, beginning with shared affection between the populations of the United States and India, people-to-people ties, business and entrepreneurial ties, and shared values.

There is a greater potential, we learned as we visited, for defense and counterterrorism cooperation, trade and economic development. Senator King and I visited the Mazagon shipyards in Mumbai and also spent time at sites in Mumbai that were associated with the horrible terrorist attack on India in November 2008, another sad reality that both of our countries share both in our past but also in our concerns about today and tomorrow.

We were very excited at Prime Minister Modi's visit to the United States a few months ago which was truly amazing. I do not even think Senator Johnson or I could fill Madison Square Garden if we went. And Prime Minister Modi's wonderful reception there and throughout his visit was remarkable. And we are excited that our President has been invited and is planning to go to India in January as a guest of honor for India's Republic Day, which is the first time a United States President is receiving that honor.

Afghanistan I first visited in 2006 as Governor. My most recent visit was also in October. We had a subcommittee hearing here in April where we looked at progress in Afghanistan that is often overlooked, progress that has been the result of many factors but including significant U.S. investments in time, talent, blood, and treasure.

Despite the many challenges—and the challenges continue to exist. And we will certainly ask Ambassador McKinley about them—Afghanistan has undergone a particularly extraordinary transformation. At the turn of the century just 14 years ago, few could have imagined that in today's Afghanistan 3 million Afghan girls are enrolled in school. Two-thirds of Afghans have cell phones. Over 75 television channels commonly accessed. Female life expectancy has increased by 20 years over the last 13 years, and that is 20 extra years of life for more than 15 million women.

The security challenges cannot be underestimated. A recent spike in Taliban attacks especially in Kabul and elsewhere in the country raise concerns. We will talk about those. I very much support the decisions announced recently by the administration to broaden the authorities available to the U.S. military forces that remain in Afghanistan beginning in January 2015. I think that was important and smart. It certainly resonates with what folks in Afghanistan mentioned when we were there.

At the U.N., the U.S. leadership in the United Nations is more critical than ever whether it is our efforts against ISIL, upholding Ukraine's sovereignty, supporting Afghan political transition or continuing the very, very difficult challenge of hopefully finding a negotiated political settlement in the ongoing civil war in Syria. The U.N. plays a very important and critical role in promoting stability across the globe. The U.N. is often incredibly frustrating to us on this committee and incredibly frustrating to Americans of all political parties because of our belief that they can do more and that they should do more. And yet, it is important to remember that the U.N. only exists because of the farsighted wisdom of American leaders, particularly President Roosevelt who, even after the collapse of the League of Nations, knew that international institutions like the United Nations would be needed in the 20th century and beyond. And if the United States had not played a leadership role, we would not have these institutions and the world would be poorer as a result.

The United States is the largest contributor to the U.N., but it also means we should strive to do the utmost to make sure that every dollar of taxpayer money is spent right and that we appropriately leverage the investment we make to try to promote reforms both in the management and operations of the U.N. but also in the seriousness and maturity with which they tackle global problems.

So these are important posts that you are each being nominated for.

Now let me introduce the nominees.

Richard Verma serves as senior counselor to the global law firm of Steptoe & Johnson, as well as to Albright Stonebridge Group in Washington, DC. Mr. Verma has an extensive public service background in the State Department, as a longtime national security advisor to Majority Leader Harry Reid, to other private firms, and he began his public service career as a first lieutenant and captain in the United States Air Force. Mr. Verma, we congratulate you on your nomination and welcome you here today.

Ambassador Michael McKinley assumed his current position as U.S. Deputy Ambassador to Afghanistan in September 2013. Previously Ambassador McKinley served as the U.S. Ambassador to Colombia and Peru. He was also Deputy Chief of Mission at the European Union in Brussels and prior to that has served in numerous posts in countries as far flung as Mozambique, Uganda, Belgium, Bolivia, tours in Washington. He joined the Foreign Service in 1982. He has expertise in Latin America, and that is obviously why he has been sent to so many countries not in Latin America. They did not want him to grow stale with his Latin American expertise.

Dr. Isobel Coleman was previously the senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York. She directed the CFR Civil Society Markets and Democracy Program, and her areas of expertise included political economy of the Middle East, democratization, civil society, economic development, education reform, and gender issues. She is the author and coauthor of numerous books and articles. Prior to joining the CFR, she was the chief executive officer of a health care services company that partnered with McKinsey and Company in New York. She is a Marshall Scholar and holds degrees from Princeton and Oxford and serves on several nonprofit boards that are relevant to the proposed appointment to the United Nations.

I would like to ask each of the witnesses to offer opening statements, and we will just start with Ambassador McKinley and move right across the table. Let me just see. Senator Risch is not yet here. When Senator Risch comes, I will offer him the chance to offer some opening comments, but I will have you deliver opening statements. Your entire written statements are going to be submitted into the record, so you can summarize if you choose. When Senator Reid comes, we will just pause and let him do the introductory comments that he wants to make about Mr. Verma. But welcome to all of you, and Ambassador McKinley, the floor is yours.

**STATEMENT OF HON. PETER MICHAEL MCKINLEY, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN**

Ambassador MCKINLEY. Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the next U.S. Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. I look forward, if confirmed by the Senate, to working with you to advance America's interests there.

I have spent the past year serving as Deputy Ambassador in Kabul and have had the honor to work with hundreds of remarkable civilian personnel and with our equally remarkable men and women in uniform. They serve as inspiration and a reminder of the immense sacrifices our Nation has made these past 13 years in Afghanistan and of our achievements.

Our national security interest brought us to Afghanistan, and it is our national security interests that keep us there. The United States combat mission in Afghanistan will conclude at the end of this year, but we will maintain counterterrorism capability to prevent an al-Qaeda resurgence. In order to safeguard the progress we have made with our Afghan partners, we, along with our NATO allies and partners will continue to train, advise, and assist the Afghan National Security Forces.

As Secretary Kerry said today at the NATO ministerial, we will also consult closely with Afghanistan's leaders on security issues, to include a discussion of possible refinements to our plans regarding the mission's duration, and work closely with ISAF Commander General Campbell as he makes his own assessments. Our shared partnership and successes in Afghanistan will help us continue to protect vital American interests in a critical region.

Afghanistan has undergone a major transformation. Millions of boys and girls go to school and university. Afghanistan has among the freest press in the region. The economy has quadrupled. Millions of refugees returned home. Women are no longer in the shadows.

This is the context for 2014, a year that we knew would be one of transition. I want to talk about where that transition stands.

Even as the Afghan Security Forces now provide security for the majority of Afghan people, Afghans recognize the need for continued international support. On September 30, 1 day after his inauguration, President Ghani and CEO Abdullah witnessed the signing of the bilateral security agreement and the NATO status of forces agreement. The Afghan Parliament overwhelmingly ratified both.

The transition is also happening politically. This year saw Afghanistan's first peaceful democratic transfer of power as Ashraf Ghani succeeded Hamid Karzai as President. The election was not easy, and we should not have expected it to be. Yet, millions of Afghans defied Taliban threats and voted. With fraud allegations threatening to undermine the election, the candidates agreed to an unprecedented audit, to abide by its outcome, and to form a unity government. The result is a legitimate and inclusive government.

The new government knows that continued international assistance depends on concrete actions. President Ghani is acting, presenting an austerity budget and reopening the Kabul Bank investigation. He has pledged to address corruption at all levels, to bolster revenue collection, to reform the banking sector, to work with donors on a sustainable long-term strategy, and to protect the gains women have made as USAID launches its largest-ever gender program with Promote. These themes are at the center of the national unity government's presentation at the London Conference which begins tomorrow.

We owe the U.S. taxpayer the strictest accountability and assurances that the resources we provide will be used to good effect. If confirmed, I will work closely with all of our oversight inspection offices to address the shortcomings that are identified in our programming and to chart the most transparent way forward.

The new government is also improving Afghanistan's relations with the international community. Both President Ghani and CEO Abdullah are in Brussels today and will attend the London Conference. President Ghani has reached out to neighbors in the Heart of Asia meeting in Beijing, at the South Asia summit in Nepal, and has visited Pakistan.

The optimism I express reflects the energy of the government of national unity, which took office just over 60 days ago. The terrible acts of terrorism by the Taliban in recent days will not slow this momentum. Afghans are hopeful for their future and want to take control of their destiny. We have a stake in their success not just because of our sacrifices or the partnership we built with the Afghan people, but because Afghanistan's success is in our national interest.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador McKinley follows:]

## PREPARED STATEMENT OF PETER MICHAEL MCKINLEY

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Risch, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the next U.S. Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. I am honored to have been nominated by the President, and look forward, if confirmed by the Senate, to working closely with you to advance America's interests in Afghanistan.

I have spent the past year serving as Deputy Ambassador in Kabul, and have had the honor to work with hundreds of remarkable civilian personnel from across the U.S. Government and with our equally remarkable men and women in uniform. They serve as inspiration and a daily reminder of the immense sacrifices our Nation has made these past 13 years in Afghanistan, and of the achievements that provide a strong foundation for the next phase of our relationship with the Afghan people.

Our national security interest brought us to Afghanistan 13 years ago, and it is our national security interest that keeps us there. It was in Afghanistan that the attacks of September 11, 2001, were planned. It was in Afghanistan that al-Qaeda had its safest harbor. As the President announced in May, the United States combat mission in Afghanistan will conclude at the end of this year, but we will continue to maintain a counterterrorism capability there to prevent an al-Qaeda resurgence in Afghanistan. And in order to safeguard the progress we have made in building with our Afghan partners a stronger, more stable, and more resilient Afghanistan, we, along with our NATO allies and other international partners, will continue to train, advise, and assist the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). Our shared partnership and successes in Afghanistan will help us continue to protect vital American interests in a critical region of the globe.

Thirteen years on, Afghanistan has undergone a major transformation. Millions of boys and girls go to school and university. Afghanistan has among the freest press and political environments in the region. The economy has quadrupled in size. Afghans have participated in four major elections. Millions of refugees have returned home. Women are no longer in the shadows but have a place in Afghanistan's Government and public society. While we continue to help, the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) have the lead in combat operations and provide security for the majority of the Afghans.

This is the context for 2014, a year that we anticipated would be a critical point of transition. And so it has proved to be. After a difficult period when the future of the U.S. security relationship with Afghanistan was unclear; when it was unclear whether a peaceful political transition could be achieved; and when the economic future of Afghanistan appeared to hang in the balance; the transition is happening, the Bilateral Security Agreement has been ratified, there is a new government in Kabul, and the Afghans can now turn their attention to their economy.

On the security front, as noted, the ANSF have had the lead role in all combat operations since June 2013, and are on track to assume full security responsibility at the end of this year. They secured two rounds of elections earlier this year. The courage of the ANSF in carrying on the fight in spite of heavy casualties is a tribute to their resolve. Now, the ANSF are looking to consolidate the gains of past years, improve respect for human rights, and strengthen their capabilities to counter the Taliban and be a more effective partner to us in countering terrorism.

Afghans have recognized and welcomed the need for continued international support. On September 30, one day after his inauguration, President Ashraf Ghani, with his former rival and now his Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, witnessed the signing of the Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) and the NATO Status of Forces Agreement. The Afghan Parliament voted overwhelmingly to endorse ratification of both of these agreements, demonstrating the broad popular support for a continued security relationship with the United States and our allies and partners. These agreements give us the basis to work with NATO and partner nations to train, advise, and assist Afghan forces and to continue our counterterrorism mission.

The transition is also happening politically. This year saw the first peaceful, democratic transition of power in Afghanistan's history, as Ashraf Ghani succeeded Hamid Karzai as President. The election was not easy, and we should not have expected it to be. The Taliban made clear their intention to target those who went to the polls. Two years ago, the country did not have the necessary legal framework for national elections. Millions of new voters needed to be registered; and the logistics and security for the elections took months to plan.

Afghans overcame these challenges, passing electoral laws, registering nearly 4 million new voters, more than a third of whom were women, and distributing ballots to every province. Afghan political leaders put together strong, multiethnic tickets, three of which included women as vice-presidential candidates. They conducted

nationwide campaigns, organized hundreds of rallies and held many televised debates. And millions of Afghans defied Taliban threats and voted.

When credible allegations of fraud threatened to undermine these achievements, the two leading candidates agreed to an unprecedented audit, to abide by its outcome, and to form a unity government. The result is a legitimate and inclusive government of national unity with a solid mandate to pursue reforms to increase security, improve governance, strengthen democracy, and build the economy. It is important to emphasize that, while the United States and the international community facilitated this effort, the outcome is an Afghan political agreement that reflects the will of Afghan voters.

The transition is also happening in economic terms and developmental terms, as investors and ordinary Afghans look to the future with greater confidence and the new government outlines important reform objectives.

At the same time, however, it is clear that continued international assistance depends on concrete actions by Afghanistan to address corruption, increase transparency, improve revenue collection, and implement economic policies to lessen its dependence on aid. There are real concerns about the short-term fiscal shortfall the new government inherited and the need for a more sustainable economic model. President Ghani is already implementing an austerity regime, has pledged to reform Afghanistan's budget process, address endemic corruption, bolster revenue collection, reform the banking sector, and work with donors on a sustainable long-term strategy to grow the economy and to create employment. These are critical steps toward making Afghanistan an increasingly self-reliant, sustainable state. These themes are the centerpiece of the national unity government's presentation at the London Conference on Afghanistan which begins tomorrow December 3.

We owe the U.S. taxpayer the strictest accountability and assurances that the resources we provide will be used to achieve our foreign policy goals, strengthening and building on what has been achieved. I will, if confirmed, work closely with all our oversight inspection offices, including SIGAR, to address real shortcomings that are identified in our programming, and to chart the most transparent paths forward to success. This includes reviewing our counternarcotics programs as part of the broader challenge to develop strong Afghan institutions and implement the rule of law.

As I have noted, there have been many gains in the area of women's rights. The new Afghan Government intends to build on these gains. Three weeks ago, Ambassador Cunningham and USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah, in partnership with President Ghani, committed to the largest-ever USAID gender program in the world. The goals are to empower women entering leadership positions, expand higher education for girls, and strengthen gender protections. President Ghani has also pledged to nominate women to senior positions in the Cabinet and judiciary.

The optimism I express reflects the energy of the government of national unity, which took office less than 60 days ago and is already transforming promises—to promote national unity, protect human rights, and tackle corruption—into action. President Ghani, with the full support of CEO Abdullah, reopened the Kabul Bank investigation, the largest financial scandal in the nation's history. Money laundering regulations have been improved and issued. Reporters penalized for doing their jobs have been allowed to return to work. Judges complicit in the release of a drug trafficker have been charged. The government of national unity has also signed and effectively lobbied for ratification of the BSA and NATO SOFA and announced agreement on a formula and a timeline for appointing Cabinet members.

The new government acted quickly to improve Afghanistan's relations with the international community. Both President Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah are in Brussels today for the NATO ministerial and will attend the London Conference tomorrow. President Ghani recognizes the importance of regional integration and has already reached out to neighbors in the "Heart of Asia" meeting in Beijing, and the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) discussions in Nepal. Energy investments and trade reforms are at the top of the integration agenda. President Ghani also visited Pakistan recently. The two countries are now focused on new opportunities to improve security cooperation and cross-border linkages in transportation, energy, and trade.

Ultimately, there will be the need to address a political solution to the conflict with the insurgency. President Ghani has taken the step of inviting the Taliban to talks. The United States has made clear we support efforts to negotiate an end to conflict inside Afghanistan. This, however, must remain an Afghan-owned, Afghan-led political process.

Afghans are hopeful for their future and want to take control of their destiny. At the same time, we have a stake in their success. Not just because of our sacrifices, or the partnership we built with the Afghan people, but because Afghanistan's suc-



cess will, I repeat, will help protect vital American interests in a critical region of the globe. Our challenge is to consolidate and strengthen the gains of the past 13 years.

Thank you Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Risch, and members of the committee. I look forward to your questions.

Senator Kaine. Thank you, Ambassador McKinley.  
Dr. Coleman.

**STATEMENT OF DR. ISOBEL COLEMAN, OF NEW YORK, TO BE REPRESENTATIVE TO THE UNITED NATIONS FOR U.N. MANAGEMENT AND REFORM, WITH THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR; AND AS AN ALTERNATE REPRESENTATIVE TO THE SESSIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS DURING HER TENURE OF SERVICE AS REPRESENTATIVE TO THE UNITED NATIONS FOR U.N. MANAGEMENT AND REFORM**

Dr. COLEMAN. Chairman Kaine, Ranking Member Risch, and other distinguished members, I am truly honored to come before you as the President's nominee to be the U.S. Representative to the United Nations for Management and Reform. I am grateful to President Obama, Secretary Kerry, and Ambassador Power for their confidence.

And I would also like to briefly acknowledge my family members who are here: my parents, my father and stepmother; my children, my five children; and my niece, Chloe, who are here today. They are a tremendous source of pride for me. So I appreciate their support.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will work tirelessly to advance America's interests at the United Nations. At its best, the U.N. can be a powerful partner of the United States, promoting our values and advancing global peace and security at far less cost to American taxpayers than if we act alone. Today, under enormously difficult conditions, U.N. peacekeepers are bolstering fragile states in places such as Liberia, Mali, and Haiti. U.N. experts are on the front lines of the Ebola crisis, working to halt its spread. Each of these critical activities and many others conducted daily by various U.N. agencies around the world are tackling global challenges and humanitarian crises that no one nation can or should have to address on its own.

But as we all know, the U.N. can be more effective. As President Obama has said, the U.N. is indispensable but also imperfect. Too often, there is a significant gap between the promise of the organization and the reality of its shortcomings, such as incidents of sexual exploitation by individual peacekeepers or politically motivated resolutions. As the largest contributor to the United Nations, we have a significant stake in holding wrongdoers accountable and demanding transparency and effectiveness across the entire organization. In recent years, U.S.-led reform efforts have achieved some meaningful results, such as creating a new inspector general for peacekeeping missions and streamlined logistics through the Global Field Support Strategy. Much-needed rationalization, for example, has led to the elimination of nearly 220 redundant positions and the freezing of salary and benefits for U.N. staff while the U.N. undergoes a comprehensive review of its compensation practices.

But let us not lose sight of the fact that the U.N.'s regular budget doubled in size in 10 years. There is clearly room for greater budget discipline. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the U.N. is deploying its resources in the most efficient and effective way, that it is conducting its business in a consistently ethical and transparent fashion, and that it is meeting the highest standards of conduct and integrity. American taxpayers deserve no less.

I have spent much of my professional life bringing reform and accountability to a variety of organizations. For nearly a decade, I was a management consultant at McKinsey, helping some of the biggest multinational corporations streamline complicated business and management operations; implement world-class human resource solutions; improve risk management and cut costs. I also worked in a pro bono capacity with public institutions such as the New York City Department of Education on multiyear efforts to enhance accountability and improve performance. In many of my client situations, I had to work with managers determined to maintain the status quo; legacy systems resistant to modernization; and organizations skeptical of change. Achieving success in these efforts depended on my listening to good ideas from all quarters and finding ways to bring the naysayers on board.

As a small business founder and CEO, I developed a deep intolerance for seeing scarce resources wasted or misused through a business-as-usual mindset. Having to make payroll every week instilled in me an even stronger appreciation for the value of each and every dollar.

For the past 12 years at the Council on Foreign Relations, I have focused my energies on bringing attention to the possibilities of reform in a global context, including economic reform, gender equality, educational reform, and political reform. The constant thread connecting all my work has been a relentless focus on improving outcomes. The opportunity to represent American interests in management and reform efforts at the United Nations in many ways uniquely marries my operational and management experience with my deep engagement on global issues.

If confirmed, I would be honored to join Ambassador Power in her determined efforts to make the U.N. more effective, efficient, and accountable. Working with others in the administration, in Congress, and especially with this committee, I would do my utmost to help the U.N. live up both to its ideals and its potential.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear here before you today, and I look forward to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Coleman follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ISOBEL COLEMAN

Chairman Kaine, Ranking Member Risch, and distinguished members, I am truly honored to come before you as the President's nominee to be the U.S. Representative to the United Nations for Management and Reform. I am grateful to President Obama, Secretary Kerry, and Ambassador Power for their confidence. I would like briefly to acknowledge my family members—my father and stepmother, my husband Struan, niece Chloe who lives with us, and my five children—who are here today for this hearing. My family is a source of tremendous pride and joy for me and I so appreciate their support.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will work tirelessly to advance America's interests at the United Nations. At its best, the U.N. can be a powerful partner of the United States, promoting our values, and advancing global peace and security at far less

cost to American taxpayers than if we act alone. Today, under enormously difficult conditions, U.N. peacekeepers are bolstering fragile states in places such as Liberia, Mali, and Haiti; U.N. experts are on the front lines of the Ebola crisis, working to halt its spread; and in Iraq, U.N. agencies are making their biggest push in a decade to provide emergency shelter and essential vaccinations to the nearly 2 million Iraqis displaced by the current violence in advance of winter. Each of these critical activities, and many others conducted daily by various U.N. agencies around the world, are tackling global challenges and humanitarian crises that no one nation can, or should have to, address on its own. When the U.N. works effectively, Americans are safer, our interests are promoted and burdens are fairly shared across member states.

But as we all know, the U.N. can be more effective. As President Obama has said, the U.N. is "indispensable" but also "imperfect." Too often, there is a significant gap between the promise of the organization, and the reality of its shortcomings, such as incidents of sexual exploitation by individual peacekeepers or politically motivated resolutions. As the largest contributor to the United Nations, we have a significant stake in holding wrongdoers accountable and demanding transparency and effectiveness across the entire organization. In recent years, U.S.-led reform efforts have achieved some meaningful results, such as creating a new inspector general for peacekeeping missions and streamlined logistics through the Global Field Support Strategy. Much-needed rationalization, for example, has led to the elimination of nearly 220 redundant positions and the freezing of salary and benefits for U.N. staff while the U.N. undergoes a comprehensive review of its compensation practices. The result has been the slowing of the long-term growth trend of the regular budget.

But let's not lose sight of the fact that the U.N.'s regular budget doubled in size over 10 years. There is clearly room for greater budget discipline. If confirmed I will work to ensure that the U.N. is deploying its resources in the most efficient and effective way, that it is conducting its business in a consistently ethical and transparent fashion, and that it is meeting the highest standards of conduct and integrity. American taxpayers deserve no less.

To ensure that U.S. funds are spent responsibly, improvements are still needed in audit transparency, whistleblower protections, and oversight. With over 70 percent of the U.N.'s regular budget going to personnel costs, the U.N. must have an effective human resources system that delivers the most capable and dynamic workforce, ensures accountability for performance and results, and also controls growth in compensation costs. Procurement and business processes must also meet international best practices.

I have spent much of my professional life bringing reform and accountability to a variety of organizations. For nearly a decade, I was a management consultant at McKinsey, helping some of the biggest multinational corporations streamline complicated business operations; implement world-class human resource solutions; improve risk management and cut costs. I also worked in a pro bono capacity with public institutions such as the New York City Department of Education on multiyear efforts to enhance accountability and improve performance. In many of my client situations, I had to work with managers determined to maintain the status quo; legacy systems resistant to modernization; and organizations skeptical of change. Achieving success in these efforts depended on my listening to good ideas from all quarters and finding ways to bring the naysayers on board.

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If confirmed, I would be honored to join Ambassador Power in her determined efforts to make the U.N. more effective, efficient, and accountable. Working with others in the administration, in Congress, and especially in this committee, I would do my utmost to help the U.N. live up both to its ideals and its potential.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today, and I look forward to answering your questions.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Dr. Coleman.

Mr. Verma.

**STATEMENT OF HON. RICHARD RAHUL VERMA, OF  
MARYLAND, TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF INDIA**

Mr. VERMA. Mr. Chairman and Senator Risch, it is a great honor to appear before you today. I have worked closely with this committee for many years when I worked in the Senate Leader's office and also when I was at the State Department as the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs. If confirmed, I am committed to working with this committee closely again in shaping our relationship with India, a country so important that President Obama called it the defining relationship for the United States in the 21st century.

Let me thank Senator Reid in advance, who will be here to do an introduction of me. I also want to thank President Obama for nominating me and Secretary Kerry for offering me the chance to be back in the State Department family once again. It is a high honor and a privilege I do not take lightly.

Let me also thank my family and friends that are here today. There are 11 members of my family here. I will not introduce all of them. But my wife Pinky and my children, Zoe, Lucy, and Dylan—I owe them all a special debt of thanks as they have enthusiastically embraced this new adventure and supported me at every turn. And to my parents, Dr. Kamal Verma, who is here today, and my mother, the late Savitri Verma; they left India, the country they loved, some 50 years ago to build a new life here in America, overcoming odds and working so hard. I cannot thank them enough for their courage, wisdom, and countless sacrifices they made on behalf of their children. And my wife's father, Fred Blackwell, a World War II veteran and former chief counsel of the Senate Labor Committee, is here as well.

There is no question that this is a defining and exciting time in the United States-India relationship. President Obama will make a historic visit to India in January, becoming the first United States head of state to attend India's Republic Day and the only sitting U.S. President to visit India twice. His trip will build on Prime Minister Modi's highly successful visit to the United States this past September. There is little doubt the relationship has been reenergized, with renewed enthusiasm to take our partnership to the next level.

The United States' strategic partnership with India is rooted in our shared democratic values and in our joint vision of a peaceful, just, and prosperous world. From expanding trade and defense relationships, to ensuring maritime security and freedom of navigation, from countering terrorist networks, to promoting clean energy and sustainable development, the United States and India share a wide range of critical national interests. Our partnership is deep. It touches nearly every endeavor of human pursuit, and it has produced important gains for each of our countries.

Two-way trade between our nations has increased fivefold to \$100 billion. The President and Prime Minister have talked about increasing it another fivefold, which would create tens of thousands of jobs in both countries.

On the defense front, the United States has become one of India's largest suppliers of defense items, and active discussions continue on identifying projects for coproduction and development, as well as renewing our 10-year defense framework agreement.

Our people-to-people exchanges are flourishing. There are over 100,000 Indian students studying in the United States, and the Indian diaspora in the United States, now estimated to be over 3 million, continues to make deep and lasting contributions to United States society.

On climate, energy, health, infrastructure, human rights, development, and so much more, the United States and Indian potential for collaboration and joint problem-solving is limited only by our imagination.

Beyond our initiatives, we are working hard at increasing regional connectivity. India shares our belief that peace and stability are much more likely to be sustained when the countries of the region are tied together in trade, economic agreements, and through physical infrastructure.

Across Asia, United States and Indian interests are converging. India has been called the lynchpin of our Asia rebalance. With India's Look East policies, our two countries can play a critically important role together in bolstering peace and security and promoting a rules-based, liberal, democratic order in the Indo-Pacific region.

And the ripple effects of our partnership need not be limited to Asia. As Prime Minister Modi noted, the true power and potential in this relationship is that when the oldest and largest democracies come together, the world will benefit.

We will have our differences from time to time. Close friends often do, but when we do have differences, it is imperative that we maintain a healthy dialogue, as we did recently with the Trade Policy Forum and as we will with the Civil-Nuclear Contact Group. We can stand up for our interests while not losing sight of the larger strategic interests that India and the United States share together.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will faithfully discharge my most fundamental responsibility and that is to protect the welfare of American citizens in India. This includes providing a safe and secure work environment for the U.S. Government employees and their families at Embassy New Delhi and our consulates in Chennai, Hyderabad, Kolkata, and Mumbai. We value their distinguished service, and I will be their biggest advocate and supporter.

Mr. Chairman, let me say in closing that I am deeply appreciative of all those who have served and worked so hard on cultivating this relationship over the many decades, the diplomats, development experts, security professionals, Members of Congress, and so many more, but also the immigrants from the Indian subcontinent, those who took a chance like my parents who worked hard, who continue to pursue their dreams, and along the way have helped ensure India and the United States have become the closest of friends.

Again, I appreciate the chance to be here today and look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Verma follows:]

## PREPARED STATEMENT OF RICHARD R. VERMA

Mr. Chairman and Senator Risch, it is a great honor to appear before you today. I have worked closely with this committee for many years, when I worked in the Senate Leader's office and at the State Department as the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs. If confirmed, I am committed to partnering with you again in shaping our relationship to India—a country so important that President Obama called it the defining relationship for the United States in the 21st century.

I would like to thank Senator Reid for his kind introduction, and of course, I would like to thank President Obama for nominating me, and Secretary Kerry for offering me the chance to again be part of the State Department family. It is a high honor and privilege that I don't take lightly. I'm also delighted to be here with Ambassador Mike McKinley, a highly decorated diplomat who represents the best of the Foreign Service, and Isobel Coleman, who brings a breadth of foreign policy experience to a critical position, Representative of the United States to the United Nations for U.N. Management and Reform.

Let me also thank my family and friends that have helped get me to this place. My wife, Pinky, my children Zoe, Lucy, and Dylan, I owe them all a special debt of thanks, as they have enthusiastically embraced this new adventure and supported me at every turn. And, to my parents, Dr. Kamal Verma, who is here today, and my mother, the late Savitri Verma. They left India—the country they loved—50 years ago to build a new life here in America, overcoming odds and working so hard. I can't thank them enough for their courage, wisdom, and countless sacrifices they made on behalf of their children.

For over two decades, I have had the good fortune of working in the national security and foreign policy arenas, with much of that time focused on South Asia. Whether in the military, working here on Capitol Hill, the State Department or in the private sector, I have seen firsthand how consequential our partnership with India can be.

There is no question that this is a defining and exciting time in the U.S.-India relationship. President Obama will make a historic visit to India in January, becoming the first U.S. head of state to attend India's Republic Day and the only sitting U.S. President to visit India twice. His trip will build on Prime Minister Modi's highly successful visit to the United States this past September. There's little doubt the relationship has been reenergized, with renewed enthusiasm to take our partnership to the next level.

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Two-way trade between our nations has increased fivefold since 2001 to nearly \$100 billion. In their recent meetings, President Obama and PM Modi committed to increasing trade another fivefold, which would create tens of thousands of new jobs in both the United States and India.

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Across Asia, U.S. and Indian interests are converging. India has been called the lynchpin of our Asia rebalance. With India's Look East, and now Act East policies, our two countries can play a critically important role together in bolstering peace and security and promoting a rules-based, liberal, democratic order in the Indo-Pacific region.

The ripple effects of our partnership need not be limited to Asia. As Prime Minister Modi noted, the true power and potential in this relationship is that when the oldest and largest democracies come together, the world will benefit.

We will have our differences from time to time—close friends often do—but when we do have differences, it is imperative that we maintain a healthy dialogue. The successful Trade Policy Forum held just last week in New Delhi—the first since 2010—and the recently established Civil-Nuclear Contact Group are examples of our collaborative, dialogue-driven approach when pursuing consensus in key areas. We can stand up for our interests, while not losing sight of the larger strategic interests that India and the United States share together.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will faithfully discharge my most fundamental responsibility: to promote and protect the welfare of American citizens in India. This includes providing a safe and secure work environment for the U.S. Government employees and their families at Embassy New Delhi and our consulates in Chennai, Hyderabad, Kolkata, and Mumbai. We value their distinguished service, and I intend to be their biggest advocate and supporter.

Mr. Chairman, let me say in closing that I am deeply appreciative of all those who have worked so hard on cultivating this relationship over many decades—the diplomats, development experts, security professionals, Members of Congress, and so many other dedicated public servants; but also the immigrants from the Indian subcontinent, those who took a chance like my parents, who worked hard, who continue to pursue their dreams, and along the way have helped ensure India and the United States become the closest of friends and partners. I will strive to live up to the high standards they have set.

Mr. Chairman, again, I appreciate the chance to be here today, and I look forward to your questions.

Senator Kaine. Thank you, Mr. Verma.

We will begin questioning now. We will have a round of 7-minute questions. There is some chance that we may get into multiple rounds of questions because these are important nominations and important posts.

And the hearing of this committee will remain open until the close of business today so that any members attending or not who have questions to submit for the record can submit questions by the end of the day. And we would encourage your prompt response should they do so.

To Ambassador McKinley, talk a little bit about what you see as the reason for the recent up-tick of attacks in Kabul but maybe more especially how are the Afghan forces responding to those up-ticks in Taliban attacks?

Ambassador MCKINLEY. Well, there is a cyclical approach to the tactics the insurgency employs inside the country, and we have been here before. There have been up-ticks in urban violence and terrorism targeting civilians at different stages over the last 13 years. Over the last few weeks but certainly throughout this year, there has been emphasis on attacking urban centers. The Taliban sought to thwart the elections which took place this year, and they are also trying to challenge the relationship that Afghanistan will have with the international community going forward.

The fact of the matter is, as you look at not just this year, but the last 2 years of progression in the capabilities of the Afghan Security Forces to deal with security inside their own country, they are having successes. At the moment, there is a very serious review going on on Kabul's security involving the police, the security forces, and obviously the international partners. But the fact of the matter is, as you look at the year as a whole, insurgent activity inside the country looks like it will be at or lower than the levels of 2013 and in the context of the Afghan Security Forces carrying out 99 percent of operations inside the country.

Senator KAINE. Ambassador McKinley, you raised in your opening comments some of the positives that you have seen, that we have seen since the formation of the national unity government, which was significantly aided by the efforts of Secretary Kerry and others in the State Department. The London donor's conference, which starts within a few days—one of the questions I know the donors are going to be pressing is the formation of the Cabinet. I read the news earlier this week that the President, President Ghani, had dismissed the previous Cabinet. Talk about the progress toward the formation of a new Cabinet. I gather that that has been difficult, and I would love to get kind of a status report.

Ambassador MCKINLEY. Well, the government of national unity came about after a prolonged electoral crisis in which there was an audit and then discussion between the two candidates on what the path forward would be, and a government of national unity duly emerged at the end of September.

Over the past 60 days, President Ghani and CEO Abdullah have actually been working well together, meeting several times a week, discussing the major policy issues on the table, agreeing to very specific measures to put meat on the bones of the reforms that both promised when they were candidates.

In terms of the division of power inside the Cabinet, these discussions have taken longer than some would have wished, but on Sunday President Ghani, CEO Abdullah, and all of their deputies on national television and radio announced that they had an agreement on the methodology going forward, picking future Cabinet Ministers who would be new to the Cabinet and untainted by the past, and have a formula for how they will divide these Cabinet positions between the two groupings inside the government. The anticipation is that the naming of actual ministers will take place over the next 2 to 4 weeks. So, again, while it is taking longer than some might have desired, the progression is all in the right direction.

And I would note that on Sunday the two teams, so to speak, appearing together was the first time that had been seen since the signing of the BSA and was yet another public and important symbolic exhibition of a national unity government with a sense of purpose going forward.

Senator KAINE. We have had testimony at this committee and before the Armed Services Committee that corruption may pose a more significant existential threat to Afghanistan than terrorism. What can the United States best do to engage in accountability and governance issues with the new unity government?

Ambassador MCKINLEY. We are very fortunate that the unity government, since it has come in, has made fighting corruption a priority. When you look at the documentation and the work that has gone into preparing for the London Conference, in fact the government's presentation in London in 2 days—and I am not really anticipating. It has already been foreshadowed over the past week—will include a very strong component on specific measures to address corruption inside the country. In fact, President Ghani and CEO Abdullah have signaled that fighting corruption has to rank in the top two or three priorities of the new government.



In terms of specific measures, we are looking at everything from the reopening of the Kabul Bank investigation, the biggest financial scandal in the country's history where \$900 million went missing. We are taking a look at reviewing how customs is administered. The President is speaking about replacing hundreds of corrupt officials and revamping the customs and revenue collection system around the country. There is going to be an effort to revive the strength and efficacy of the judiciary, taking a look at the attorney general's office, taking a look at how the Supreme Court operates. Procurement is going to be taken out of individual government ministries and centralized so that there is greater transparency and less opportunity for fraud in contracting in this government. There are other measures that the President has proposed, and he will be laying out in greater detail in London in the next 2 days. But the fact of the matter is more is being done. More has been done in the last 60 days than we have seen in many years.

Senator KAINÉ. One more question. Then I would like to have Majority Leader Reid offer introductory comments about Mr. Verma.

A personal opinion. I had been concerned from my first visit to Afghanistan in 2006 that policymakers with a lot of challenges on our plate have in the past turned our eyes away from Afghanistan, and we have let situations in Iraq take our attention in another direction. When I was in Afghanistan in 2006, the then-Ambassador warned that that could happen and he was concerned about it. And I think often that has, in fact, happened. Now we have a significant challenge in Iraq with the war against ISIL that we have to take very seriously. But I do have some concern, as we are tackling that threat, that it could cause us to turn our attention away from Afghanistan.

If you could talk about the fragility of the gains that we have achieved and give us an encouragement to maintain our eye on the need for continued promotion and acceleration of progress in the country.

Ambassador MCKINLEY. If I can start by saying that in the first place, thanks in large part to the support of the members of this committee, but our commitment to Afghanistan over a very difficult period in the last 2 years have been difficult in terms of our bilateral relationship with the country. We have stayed the course. There is a bilateral security agreement on the table which will give us an opportunity to continue a strong security relationship going forward. There is a significant commitment both in terms of what we will do to support the Afghan Security Forces in budgetary terms. The commitment we are making in terms of development assistance, sustaining the pledges that we made in Tokyo in 2012. So the basis for a strong, ongoing relationship with Afghanistan is there.

It depends on the new Afghan Government making good on the many commitments to reform it has already announced and frankly a transformation of the relationship with the United States going into this next stage of our relationship with the country. And we do have a strong basis. We are working very differently on political issues, on security issues, on developmental issues going forward.

Notwithstanding, the fragility is there. The poverty rate in the country is still 36 percent of the population below the poverty line. The Taliban insurgency remains a very serious concern. Afghanistan's democracy has progressed but still needs consolidation, and in fact, one of the objectives of the government of national unity is to strengthen governance and democratic reforms in the coming years. And given those fragilities, I think the importance of sustaining a positive forward-looking relationship with Afghanistan is extraordinarily important, and if I could add, in the context of what is happening more widely in the region, the successes we have in Afghanistan are important to consolidate, and we now have a government and the basis on which to make good on the gains that we have had.

Senator Kaine. Thank you, Ambassador McKinley.

As I indicated at the top of the hearing, we will now take time for Majority Leader Reid to offer some comments about one of these nominees that he knows very well, Mr. Verma.

Majority Leader Reid.

**STATEMENT OF HON. HARRY REID,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM NEVADA**

Senator Reid. Thank you very much. Appreciate that. Members of the committee, this is really a pleasure for me to come in here and to see his lovely wife and his little children who I have not seen very much. I cannot imagine how they have grown the way they have. And I have a lot of affection for his wife for a lot of reasons, but one, when I was growing up and until after I got out of high school, I was known as "Pinky." Well, that is her name. So if that does not create affection, I do not know what would. [Laughter.]

Ambassador to India, without being too overzealous here, is an extremely important post and that is a gross understatement. With a population approaching 1.3 billion people, India is the world's largest democracy and indispensable partner to the United States. India's new Prime Minister has committed to strengthen ties between our two nations, as evidenced by his recent trip here to the United States just in September.

Our ties to India transcend global policies. My home State of Nevada and so many other States in this country have a proud and thriving Indian American population that promote the values and interests of India. We share them clearly with India.

Rich Verma is somebody that is uniquely suited to be our Ambassador in India. He is an expert on foreign policy, Southeast Asia. He served as Assistant Secretary of State for Congressional Affairs under Secretary Hillary Clinton. He served honorably in the United States Air Force. He worked for me as my national security advisor for more than 4 years. He is a wonderful, wonderful, caring man with a great mind. His ethnic background will be extremely helpful to us in India.

One of my boys, my next-to-youngest boy—his best friend growing up in high school was a Verma whose father was a math professor at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas. So many Vermas, a name that I have known for a long, long time.

Rich is very good at building consensus. He works across party lines as well as anyone I have ever seen. His bipartisan approach, coupled with his keen understanding of legislation, helped us pass the United States-India Civil-Nuclear Cooperation Agreement. Frankly, I am not sure it could have been done without him. He was an instructor for me. I was so well educated in pushing this matter forward.

Rich is the son of Indian immigrants. He has an understanding of India.

As I have indicated, I have known him for a long, long time. I repeat. He has a perfect family. And I say without any hyperbole, I say with complete confidence that no better choice could have been made, no more highly qualified candidate for this important post than Rich Verma. So I hope you will give him and the other two nominees before this committee, which I know you will, the utmost consideration as quickly as possible.

Thank you very much.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Majority Leader Reid.

Senator REID. And I am glad you do not have any questions. [Laughter.]

Senator KAINE. We will ask you what you really think about him later. [Laughter.]

Ranking Member Risch for questions.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Verma, you certainly come with excellent qualifications when it comes to nuclear matters. And we know that one of the priorities of the Modi government is to do better as far as providing energy to its people. That is particularly true with electrical generation.

My State is the home of the Idaho National Laboratory, as you know. The lab is the lead agency when it comes to dealing with India on the nuclear cooperation agreement. As you probably know, they hold a conference each year, alternately once in India, once in Idaho every other year to work this out. And I can tell you that the people at the lab are anxious to continue that. They are experts in this area. They do an excellent job.

Having said all that, we still in the United States are troubled by the fact that our people who provide nuclear parts, nuclear equipment, nuclear know-how to India are hamstrung because of the laws in India that have stymied really the development of nuclear power. With your background, I am sure you know that nuclear power certainly is one of the important answers for the current administration in India.

Can you give me your thoughts on that a little bit about how you would move the ball forward in that regard and try to make a better climate there for American manufacturers, American companies who want to do business in this area to actually start some work there?

Mr. VERMA. Senator Risch, thank you for the question.

I am aware of the work of the Idaho National Lab. I have seen the public minutes of their work and together with their Indian counterparts, and I know what a critical role they play.

As Senator Reid said, I was also involved with the passage of the Hyde Act. I worked the amendments on the floor. And it was a

great moment for both countries who came together closely like never before.

I also know that there has been great disappointment in the full implementation of the agreement mainly because of the liability issues, although there are another couple of issues that need to be resolved as well.

I am encouraged, however, by the fact that President Obama and Prime Minister Modi came together and discussed this issue in great detail in September. I have no doubt it will come up again. But one of the important developments that came up out of their meetings was the establishment of a contact group to try to press this issue forward and get to a solution. It has to come to a resolution. The Prime Minister himself said he wants to triple the amount of nuclear energy used in India. It is not just an American company concern. It is a concern of European companies and others, including Indian companies. So I am hopeful that we can resolve the liability issue in a way that will live up to the promise of the accord that was reached many years ago here in this body.

Senator RISCH. Well, I appreciate that. And it has been a long time coming. Certainly with your expertise, I have high hopes that you are going to be able to move the ball forward and we can actually get something started. There are knotty problems. No question about it. But it is good to hear your input on that and also, like you, I have seen publicly the statements from the Modi administration where they are going to try to resolve that. And I hope you can urge them to do that.

Mr. McKinley, we all know that probably the two biggest issues that the Afghan people are facing are the corruption issue, which you have already addressed. And of course, secondly is the Taliban. If those two issues were resolved, I think everyone would feel a lot better walking away and feel that the result might be better than what a lot of us think may be going to happen.

Tell us a little bit about the negotiations with the Taliban, both ours and the Afghans themselves. What can you tell us about that?

Ambassador MCKINLEY. Over the last 4 to 5 years, there certainly have been efforts and a declared intention of the Afghan Government to try to negotiate with the Taliban. And the conditions which have been set out at various times on that have been related to an acceptance of a constitution and a renouncement of the links with al-Qaeda and participating peacefully in the political process and in the national life. The progress I think, as we all know, has been extremely fitful over the years with the Taliban intent on a violent insurgency and still on a violent overthrow of a government inside Afghanistan.

In terms of our own role in this, we do view reconciliation efforts as something to be handled by the Afghan Government. At the end of the day, if negotiations materialize, it will be an Afghan-to-Afghan process, but we do recognize that a political solution to the insurgency at some point would be a very good thing. So in our own efforts and dialogue with the government, before with President Karzai's government and now with President Ghani, we will support efforts of the Afghan Government in its outreach to explore the possibilities of launching negotiations to bring conflict to an end inside Afghanistan.

Senator RISCH. Well, understanding you cannot predict the future, what is your personal view as to how this plays out?

Ambassador MCKINLEY. Across this year—and we have seen the very public evidence of the approach the Taliban has taken to this year of transition. First, there was the focus on trying to thwart the elections, and notwithstanding the threats, we had 7 million and 8 million Afghans coming out to vote in each of the two rounds of elections that were held. In terms of their stated declarations about the continued international presence and what they carried out in terms of an offensive through the spring and the summer and what we are seeing in terms of terrorism in urban centers which target not just international actors but innocent Afghans from all walks of life, to include young boys and men at volleyball games, there is not much to indicate that there is an interest in engaging in talks. That said, insurgencies and conflicts around the world have shown over time that the openings come at the most unexpected of times and they must be taken when they present themselves.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. McKinley. Appreciate your thoughts in that regard.

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

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Senator Risch.

Chairman Menendez.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, thank you, Senator Kaine. Let me thank you and Senator Risch for conducting this hearing toward the end of the session with an important panel of nominees that I hope, assuming that all the questions here go well, could ultimately make it before a business committee meeting and then before the Senate adjourns for this congressional session. These are incredibly important positions. So I want to thank you for holding the hearing.

Mr. VERMA, with reference to India, your tenure there, if confirmed, would come at a pretty critical time in our relationship. There is a host of challenges in Asia, as both India and China grow in economic influence and military strength. And I would like to hear from you what is your strategic vision for the U.S. relationship with India, and how does that strategic vision deal with, for example—I have been a strong supporter of the United States-India relationship for years. But their nonalignment movement creates a somewhat insular set of circumstances that concerns me about how do we get them to be the larger player that they should be in strategic questions that we care about. So why do we not start there?

Mr. VERMA. Mr. Chairman, thank you. Mr. Chairman, the relationship that we seek with India is really anchored in our values and our interests, the largest democracy and oldest democracy. And I think our impact and our strategic impact can be felt not only in South Asia but also now in East Asia as we do have a convergence of interests. I think we have to articulate a vision, which you and others on this committee have articulated, which is the United States and India upholding liberal democratic rules-based order not only in South Asia but in East Asia and ensuring maritime cooperation, freedom of navigation so that the kinds of cooperation that we engage in—I think we have to think much broader than a transactional relationship, think about the strategic partnership

that we both can have and can achieve. And that is the vision statement. We have to operationalize that, and we can operationalize that through our defense relationship, through economics and trade, through energy and climate. There are a lot of different ways. And the richness of this partnership is really unlimited.

Now, as you rightly point out, Mr. Chairman, we have had also challenges which come from India's history, a very proud history of nonalignment, and sometimes we get frustrated when they do not join us in international campaigns or on international efforts more publicly. But I would say that the trend line in our partnership is very strong and that we have to view it over a period of time and that we have to do the hard work that our bureaucracies are doing. And the fact that the two leaders of both countries came together and articulated a very strong strategic vision statement for both countries I think really bodes well for the relationship. And I do think the time is now to build upon that.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, I hope we can get the Prime Minister to engage with us in a more robust way than we have seen so far. I mean, there is a lot of great expectations. And I had an opportunity to meet him when he was in New York. But I hope that this can be taken more than the niceties that have appeared.

There are a lot of substantive questions. One of them that I would like to get your commitment on is the question of intellectual property rights, and while the Trade Representative is largely in charge of this, the messaging that you will send as a U.S. Ambassador is incredibly important. It makes no sense to have trade agreements if, at the end of the day, you cannot have them be enforced, and it makes no sense to produce some of the greatest ingenuity in the world if, at the end of the day, other countries with impunity will take your ingenuity and use it without recognizing the intellectual property rights that created it.

So with India, we have some challenges in this regard. We have a special 301 report from USTR that found India's IPR protections lacking. I think a stronger IPR regime will help India, at the end of the day, attract the international investment in technology that it wants for economic growth.

Will you commit to me that if you are confirmed, you will work on driving this issue with the Indian Government particularly as well with the pharmaceutical industry as one element of the IPR industry that I am concerned about?

Mr. VERMA. Mr. Chairman, I am aware of your leadership on this issue, and you will have my commitment to make this a top tier issue. There was some encouraging progress out of the Intellectual Property Working Group that just met. But you will have my commitment to make this part of the regular engagement with the Indian Government to try to achieve stronger intellectual property policy and framework and also stronger enforcement.

The CHAIRMAN. I appreciate that. You know, the announcement of the Indian commerce minister to look at a new IPR policy is encouraging, but some suggest that that was a prelude to the visit so that it would not be pressed. And I just want to make it very clear we are going to keep pressing this issue. I am a big supporter

of the relationship. I think there is enormous potential in it, but you have got to live up to your agreements.

Ambassador McKinley, first of all, thank you for your service.

I just want to drive on Afghanistan the question of a committee report that we issued in October which scrutinized our assistance to Afghanistan and called for more accountability for the investments made by the American taxpayer.

What lessons do you think the United States has learned from conditioning a portion of our assistance to Afghanistan, and how are these lessons instructive for future plans to condition assistance based on some concrete reforms? We understand we got a new partner here. It looks promising, but we have also seen a lot of investments that have headed in a direction that is less than desirable.

Ambassador MCKINLEY. Thank you, Senator, for the question.

I have read the report, and I think the report encapsulates the challenges but also the achievements we have had to date and points the way towards how we must try to do things better.

The fact of the matter is when we look at the investments we have made over the years, there are many positive results we can point to, but there are also many examples of cases where we could have done better on accountability in terms of project and programmatic management. And we are constantly striving and have over the years to improve the management of United States assistance to Afghanistan both because of our responsibility to the U.S. taxpayer but also because of the strategic importance of getting it right.

The CHAIRMAN. My time is running out here.

Do you see us conditioning as one element of trying to get the success that we want?

Ambassador MCKINLEY. Yes, I do. And what we have seen in terms of this incentive fund that was created a couple of years ago to try to elicit more proactive engagement in getting things done inside Afghan Government ministries is one example of that.

But going forward, I think we actually have a new opportunity now, and if confirmed, I would be looking forward to working that opportunity with a new government which is already looking at the conditionalities which the international community is putting forward as the basis for sustaining our assistance in the coming years, to include working on transparent budgets, cutting back on government expenditures that are unnecessary, improving not just revenue collection but the transparency of revenue collection, taking a look at what works in terms of priorities in assistance long term and what we can get done in the shorter term and in a more concrete fashion, something President Ghani is very much focused on. So as we look forward to the meeting in London tomorrow and Thursday, there will be a lot of discussion on how we can actually ensure that the funding we provide the government works in accord with the conditionalities which in other terms are simply the objectives that all of us share.

The CHAIRMAN. If I may, Mr. Chairman. I know the difficulty of trying to keep this clock.

Ms. Coleman, these are important nominees because they are country-specific. Your nomination in my view is a very important

one because as a strong defender of the United Nations, I have to tell you it gets harder and harder when we do not have the type of reform of an institution which we largely fund at the end of the day. And so I would like to hear from you the essence—assuming you are confirmed for this job, what are the specific reforms that you will look to work on and how do you get through the General Assembly part of it, which has been part of our challenge each and every time?

Dr. COLEMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for that question.

The U.N. is frustrating. I am the first to admit it, that it is a frustrating organization but also an indispensable organization. And my ideas on reform would revolve around several different areas. One is certainly in the budgeting process. In the Fifth Committee, there are a number of negotiations where I think we can count on likeminded countries to support us in achieving a fair and rational methodology for determining shares of expenditure for countries at the U.N. So pressing the U.S. interests in the Fifth Committee will certainly be one of my priorities, and there are a number of issues coming up in that arena.

Another area would be in peacekeeping. This is not only a source of significant cost at the U.N. but also of performance issues. And I think the time right now is ripe for a review of peacekeeping issues. And the good news is that the Secretary General has called for a review of peacekeeping, and I think one of my priorities would be to really push U.S. interests in seeing the most cost efficient and effective processes in place for peacekeeping missions around the world.

And two other things I would like to mention. Of course, a big source of cost at the U.N. is people costs. It is personnel, and 70 percent of the regular budget is personnel compensation and benefits. And so I would like to look at that area too. I think having a modern, simple, effective compensation system in place at the U.N. is in our interest so that the U.N. can have the best people in place to be pushing its interests forward. And the objectives that we have really depend on that.

And lastly would be procurement. Again, another source of potential efficiency improvements could be in the whole procurement area. Some work has been done there, but we cannot be satisfied with what has been done thus far. We have to keep pushing on the reform agenda.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, I appreciate that. I hope you have sharp elbows. You are going to need them at the U.N.

Thank you.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Senator McCain.

Senator MCCAIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I thank the witnesses and I appreciate their outstanding records of service to our country.

Mr. Verma, I believe that you are assuming a post at a nation that may be the most important relationship between the United States and India certainly in the future. And there are challenges, but I am very optimistic about the new Prime Minister, many of the reforms that are being made. And I know that you will work closely with the new government.



Ambassador McKinley, how would you assess the condition—well, let me put it this way. In 2014, General Dunford testified to the Senator Armed Services Committee that he does not believe the Afghan military will be capable of conducting the kind of operations we are conducting now to put pressure on al-Qaeda and others in the network of extremists threatening security before 2017.

Last week, we had a meeting with the chief of staff of the Indian Army, General Sharif. I asked him. I said if we totally withdraw under the schedule that we are withdrawing, can the Afghan Government survive. His answer was no.

I also am convinced that unless we have a conditions-based withdrawal, that we will see the Iraqi movie again.

Are you at all concerned about the schedule for withdrawal when it is clear that the Taliban attacks have escalated recently? And we are in the wintertime and they are already planning to escalate attacks as soon as the fighting season begins again.

Ambassador MCKINLEY. Senator, thank you for the question.

The answer is we do have to be concerned about security changes on the ground inside Afghanistan. And the fact is that looking to the future, we are prepared in discussion and consultation with the Afghan Government, which is carrying out a thorough security review and a review of threats to the country, and in close consultation with General Campbell on the ground who regularly reviews not just what is happening on the ground but also whether adjustments need to be made to the planning that was originally forecast for our presence there. The option will be there to take a look as we go forward and the security situation and strategic situation inside Afghanistan changes.

Senator MCCAIN. I am not sure that message has gotten through to the Taliban or to Members of Congress. Is the President going to announce that we are reviewing the policy and the requirement that by 2017 every American literally will be withdrawn?

Ambassador MCKINLEY. The calendar that was announced was a decision based on close consultation with our military commands.

Senator MCCAIN. Is our present plan still—

Ambassador MCKINLEY. And the present plan is still the one—

Senator MCCAIN. Is that still the plan?

Ambassador MCKINLEY. That is still the plan.

Senator MCCAIN. In your view, should that be the plan?

Ambassador MCKINLEY. I believe that we should continue to look at the situation on the ground and, if necessary, take a look at what necessary adjustments need to be made.

Senator MCCAIN. You see what is disheartening about your statement is that I agree with you, but yet, the message has been that not only are we going to be out, but we are going to celebrate that we are out. And yet, when I talk to General Dunford, I talk to other military leaders who have spent a lot of time on the ground there, all of them say what the Pakistani chief of the army said, that if we do not go to a conditions-based withdrawal, that we cannot succeed. And yet, the message has been sent that we have this schedule of withdrawal. Would it not be nice if the President of the United States said, wait a minute, we are going to gauge our withdrawal as to the conditions on the ground rather than what is now a declared policy of withdrawal by 2017?

Ambassador MCKINLEY. Secretary Kerry today at the NATO ministerial stated clearly that we would be in close consultation with the Afghan Government.

Senator MCCAIN. That is a lot different from we need to have a conditions-based withdrawal. That is very different.

Ambassador MCKINLEY. What he did say was that we were prepared to enter discussions with the Afghan Government on alterations to the timetable if they became necessary on the basis of a strategic consultation.

Senator MCCAIN. What is happening now would not drive that. Right now, we are seeing attacks in downtown Kabul. We are seeing foreign facilities inhabited by foreigners being attacked by suicide bombers. We are seeing Helmand in a state of significant disarray if you count the overrunning of a major base that we turned over to the Afghans. And that is, frankly, why I am a little disappointed in your statement because they talk about all the political gains and all of the efforts against fraud. Yet, there is no assessment in here of the situation on the ground.

So maybe you can give us an assessment verbally as to how serious you think this uprising is and the increase in attacks. First of all, you agree that attacks have increased, and how much does that concern you?

Ambassador MCKINLEY. Well, it is a matter of serious concern. When you take a look at the context of the combat operations over the last 2 years and in fact if you take a look at them over the whole period of our engagement inside Afghanistan, we do have to be concerned about the ability of the Taliban to continue to carry out attacks on the civilian population, on the security forces, on the international presence inside the country.

Over the past 2 years, a change that has come into play is a reflection of a 4 to 5 year investment in taking Afghan Security Forces, which in 2009 numbered less than 150,000, did not have the capabilities of carrying out operations, did not have a presence in all of the provinces inside the country, to what we have today, which is a force of 350,000, a presence in 34 provinces, and which in the last 2 years has denied the Taliban the ability to take and hold territory, has protected two major electoral cycles, and is the most respected institution inside the country. That is not to say—

Senator MCCAIN. Look, I appreciate everything you are saying, but again, facts are stubborn things. And the facts are—by the way, no one could be more pleased than you and me at the recent political environment in Afghanistan. It is wonderful. And I think we have got very serious efforts to address many of the problems that existed under the Karzai administration.

But the facts on the ground are that militarily the Taliban is still very strong and capable of mounting serious attacks, including inside the capital. And the message that has been sent is we are going to be out. And as long as that message is received in that way by the Taliban, it is bound to have encouraged them. And that is the problem that I see. I think you and I share the same concern.

I would like to see a statement from the administration that our withdrawal will be conditions-based rather than dictated by a certain calendar. And I hope you will maybe urge the President, not

just the Secretary of State, but the President, who is the Commander in Chief, to make that reality—counter the reality on the ground with a policy which is based on conditions-based. Otherwise, Mr. Ambassador, we will see Iraq over again, and that is of extreme urgency to me since I do not think many Americans would like to see that movie again which, by the way, there was a few of us predicted would happen.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Do you want to respond to that, Mr. Ambassador?

Ambassador MCKINLEY. Senator, the challenge of the insurgency I think is very real, as you say. The Taliban remain strong and it remains a priority, obviously, inside the country to confront, challenge, contain them. What we have seen over the past 2 years is a change in the way the Afghan Security Forces operate which give a basis for some optimism going forward on how the next fighting season will be dealt with. That does not mean the challenge has gone away. And, in fact, the intensification of Taliban attacks over the past 2 years and the ability of the security forces to contain and respond to those challenges is a positive indicator for the future.

We have also now had a change of government with a President who is prepared to enter into a security discussion with the United States, something his predecessor was not prepared to do. Constraints that have been in place on the Afghan Security Forces in responding to the insurgency have been lifted. In terms of the approach to the future, taking into account very valid points you raise about the situation we are in now, there is a national security review underway in close consultation with us, which is looking to address the very problems you have highlighted. And in the context of what we are seeing of heightened terrorism inside urban centers and in particular the capital, there is a very urgent review underway led by the palace with the security ministries to find a more effective way to respond to the challenge. This includes also what we have seen in Helmand, in Kunduz province in which the Taliban have surged but where the government is mobilizing a strong response.

So rather than sort of focusing on it remains a very serious challenge, I also believe we are at the cusp of an opportunity to respond to some of these challenges in a new way.

Senator MCCAIN. I thank you and thank you for your service.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator Kaine. Thank you, Senator McCain.

Senator Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ambassador McKinley, let me just follow up a little bit on some of the issues that Senator McCain has raised because one of the questions that I am not sure I have heard an answer to is whether we have heard from either President Ghani or CEO Abdullah or the ASF about whether they would like to see American forces extended. You mentioned an ongoing dialogue about national security that is underway. Is this something that we expect to be discussed as part of that dialogue?

Ambassador MCKINLEY. Senator, thank you for the question.

Absolutely, yes, we do. And in fact, in terms of the timing for that dialogue, there is an invitation from President Obama to President Ghani to visit Washington early in the new year. And in addition to the panoply of issues related to the bilateral relationship, we do anticipate security issues and the future of our relationship with Afghanistan to be part of that discussion.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

You mentioned in your statement and when we met last month, one of the things we discussed was the potential for agreement between President Ghani and Abdullah on the formation of a new Cabinet. And you suggested that they have come to some agreement around what the guidelines for that new cabinet might be. How soon do we expect some action on that? And is this something that will come up when they are in London tomorrow? Do we expect some assurances, that they will give some assurances in London about how swiftly they will move forward on a new cabinet and forming the rest of their government?

Ambassador MCKINLEY. Senator, we do believe we will be given assurances. I mentioned earlier that there is disappointment that the actual naming of Cabinet Ministers has been somewhat delayed. But in the context of everything else the government of national unity has managed to accomplish in just a little over 2 months, this is really part of the process. And just 2 days ago in the Presidential Palace, President Ghani accompanied by CEO Abdullah and by all their deputies made a public announcement to the Afghan people on a timetable for naming ministers, and they were talking about a 2 to 4 week timetable. And we do know that there have been ongoing discussions between both men over the disposition of different Cabinet postings, potential nominees, and general agreement that the persons selected not only should be the best ones for the job but people who have a high degree of integrity and credibility inside Afghanistan so the government's reform program can be carried forward. We, obviously, are going to have to wait a little longer, but this presentation 2 days ago I think gave us hope that this issue is moving towards resolution.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Mr. Verma, I have watched, as have so many people around the world, the debate in India since 2012 when there was the gang rape of the young woman from New Delhi and she ultimately died from the violence. Obviously, there still seems to be a fair amount of debate in India about how to address gender-based violence. Can you talk about what you can do, if confirmed, to help promote discussions to improve women's empowerment in India and how to address that kind of sexual violence and what we can do as Americans to support that?

Mr. VERMA. Senator, thank you for the question. This is a really important area, and it is a tragedy unfortunately not limited to India. But it was encouraging to see millions of Indians actually march against this kind of violence. It was encouraging to hear the Prime Minister in one of his opening speeches speak out against this kind of violence. And we have to continue to keep it as a top issue that we speak out against rhetorically.

Then at the programmatic level, I think there is a lot we can do and that we currently do. So USAID and other agencies of our Gov-

ernment in India have a number of programs to promote women's leadership, to promote women's skills training, entrepreneurship, skills development. But on gender-based violence specifically, there are a number of programs, for example, a Safe Cities program using mobile phone technology to ensure that women are able to report instances of violence. I think there is a lot that we can do together. I think we have to continue to focus on it.

In addition, the women's empowerment dialogue led by Ambassador Cathy Russell is also going to be stood up again, and this will be really important for her and her counterparts to continue to keep this as a high priority issue. It is an issue that cuts across law enforcement, societal issues, economics, training, but we have to really stay on top of it with our counterparts in India.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. I think all of the women in the Senate certainly stand ready to be as supportive as we can.

Given that we now have new leaders in both India and Pakistan, what is the potential that we might see a breakthrough in their relationship?

Mr. VERMA. I think, Senator, there was promise when the Pakistani Prime Minister came to the inauguration of the Indian Prime Minister, his inauguration back earlier in 2014. And just recently this past weekend, there was a handshake and some discussion between the two leaders at the SARC summit that led to the signing of some agreements on energy and motorways and railcars. And I think what we can do is continue to encourage that kind of dialogue. But ultimately it is for the Indians and the Pakistanis to discuss the security issues. I think where we can help is on the regional connectivity issues and on the economic and people-to-people issues between the two countries. And so this is something I think the three countries have to work at very hard. But again, on the security issues themselves, the pace, the character and the scope of those discussions between Pakistan and India are ultimately up to the two countries.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Ms. Coleman, one of the stories that led the news today was the fact that the U.N. had run out of food rationing for Syrian refugees. I wonder if you have any sense of what might have been done differently and what should be done now to address that since we have millions of Syrian refugees who are now facing an even more bleak future.

Dr. COLEMAN. Thank you, Senator Shaheen, for that question.

It is really a tragedy that is unfolding in that part of the world. The actions of the U.N. there I think underscore the importance of the U.N. and the tremendous work that they are doing in Jordan and in Iraq dealing with refugees from Syria, internally displaced people within Iraq, almost 2 million of them, trying to provide shelter in the advance of winter. I mean, this is a very critical situation. Clearly the urgency is building here, and the U.N. is trying to respond to this crisis in real time. You know, this is an ongoing issue. It is only getting worse, not better. It is not unique what has happened. You can look at the U.N. response to Ebola in West Africa. It has been the same type of crisis management in real time.

And if confirmed, looking at these situations would be something that I would put a lot of priority on to learn from what we did well

in responding to these crisis situations and what we did not do well and what we could do a lot better because one thing we know is that they are not going away. There are going to be other crises that the U.N. will have to respond to in same critical fashion, and certainly we can do things better than we have and that there are learnings to be had from the same, you know, logistics, supply chain, all of these types of things. We should not reinvent the wheel. We should understand what worked, what best practices, and how to implement that in future scenarios.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you. My time is up. But I certainly hope that if you are confirmed—and I expect that you will be—I certainly hope that all three of you will be confirmed very expeditiously—that you will look at whatever action we can take to support the Syrian refugees who clearly are facing a very dire future. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Senator Shaheen.

And I think it is important that we always point out that the United States is the largest provider of humanitarian relief to Syrian refugees in the world. I often hear comments at these hearings that the United States does not have a Syria policy as if the fact that we are the largest provider of humanitarian relief is just by accident. It is not by accident. We are doing it because it is an official part of our administration's policy. It is supported by the Senate and by others. But the Syrian refugee challenge is one that at the U.N. the efforts by Russia and China largely to block vigorous humanitarian responses in the Security Council is something we feel very deeply.

Now the favorite time of the hearing. Others have asked their questions and I get to go on ad nauseam without worrying about time limits. So let me jump to Dr. Coleman.

In 2007, the U.S. mission for the U.N. established this U.N. Transparency and Accountability Initiative, which was continued by President Obama. Could you talk a little bit about the results of that initiative and how it has done in tracking the adoption of management reforms by the U.N. funds and programs in the last 7 years?

Dr. COLEMAN. Sure. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As I look at it, the basis of reform is transparency. You know, if you do not know what is going on, you cannot fix it. And so having full transparency is critical. And I think the UNTAI measure that you have spoken of is a step in the right direction.

There have been some positive results from that. The requirement of audits and the publishing of audits and those types of things have been important. But can we go further? Yes. I think now it is a matter of consistent implementation and making sure that across the entire organization that they are meeting the highest standards of transparency and following through. So there is more work to be done but I think some good progress has already been made to date.

Senator KAINE. The other debate that often occurs here is whether we tie financial support to the U.N. to progress either on strategic goals or particularly to management reforms. What do you

think about that mechanism for conditioning U.S. taxpayer support for the U.N. on improvements in the management area?

Dr. COLEMAN. Well, as the largest contributor to the U.N., the United States has an obligation to make sure that the money is spent as efficiently, as effectively as possible. And if confirmed, that would be one of my highest priorities, to really ensure value for American taxpayers.

Conditioning our contributions, withholding our contributions is not always the most effective way to move forward. When we do that, we end up without a seat at the table, and our leadership on many of these issues is critically important. Likeminded countries who care about efficiency and effectiveness look to us for leadership on these issues, and when we condition our contributions, when we withhold payment, we lose credibility, our voice is weakened, and our leadership is diminished. And so I think that by engaging, we have shown some progress and we can continue to show progress by using our leverage with a seat at the table to really push for further reforms and increased accountability, transparency, and efficiency.

Senator Kaine. Thank you, Dr. Coleman.

Mr. Verma, today by fortune of coincidence, a hearing this morning in Armed Services concerned the nomination of Admiral Harris to be the head of PACOM, which includes the Indian subcontinent and the United States-India military relationship. And I noticed that both he and you used a phrase that I am going to start using in talking about the Pacific region. That is no longer the phrase. It is the Indo-Pacific region." So for purposes of any rebalancing or pivoting to Asia, the notion of the Indo-Pacific region I think actually is a more accurate expression. And I have learned something today as a result.

The United States and India held this trade policy forum last week to discuss a variety of economic issues. Talk a little bit about kind of the action items that have come out of the forum. And in particular, I know there has been significant concern about intellectual property in the WTO process, but there have been some recent advances on that that the United States has helped broker. Could you talk a little bit about the progress on the trade side?

Mr. VERMA. Sure. I think in recent weeks there is a good-news story on the trade side. Ambassador Froman and his team working through the WTO process and with their Indian counterparts were able to separate out and have the trade facilitation agreement move through the WTO, which was important to many developing countries, including India, and able to address India's food security concerns separately through what is called a peace clause in the WTO which again was an important breakthrough and it allows us now to talk about other issues such as copyright protection and patent protection. And we can have robust discussions in these areas.

I think certainly health access and delivery of pharmaceuticals has been a contentious issue over the past few years, and if we can talk about those issues in a way where we can bring our best practices together with some of the needs of India in delivering pharmaceuticals and delivering health and medicine, those are the

kinds of discussions I think that can get us past some of the thorny issues.

The fact that we had an intellectual property working group meet was I also think very significant. As I said to the chairman earlier, this has to remain a top issue because ultimately we want to help India attract investment, help India open markets, and that is what Prime Minister Modi said when he was here. He is looking for renewed investment in India, help economic growth. That will come through opening of markets and effective trade policies. That is not only good for American businesses but good for Indian consumers and Indian citizens across India.

As I said in my opening statement, trade with India has increased five times in the last 10 years. We can do much more if we can work together on some of these market access issues and on some of the trade issues which are vitally important.

Senator Kaine. When I was in India recently and returned, I had a couple of thoughts about areas of cooperation that I would like to focus on in the kind of national security space. Both our countries have been victimized by terrorist attacks on our home soil in recent years. And it was very moving, more moving than I actually thought it would be, to go to the sites associated with the LeT terrorist attack in Mumbai in November 2008. The terrorist attack was a huge atrocity. We had scheduled—Senator King and I—to do a couple of visits in the midst of a full day of events. And I do not know that we really walked in prepared to grapple with the extent of the challenge, and it obviously called up a lot of memories of the U.S. attacks on 9/11. It would seem that counterterrorism cooperation, because of this shared experience, would really be a significant opportunity in our work.

And secondly, we are dealing with cyber threats that grow and multiply in sort of a geometric way every day. Our cultures and educational systems and educational institutions in the United States and India produce significant technical expertise, technical wizardry that would seem to give us some real opportunity to work together on countering cyber threats. I wonder if you can talk a little bit about kind of current status but maybe more especially opportunities in the future for the United States and India to deepen counterterrorism cooperation and cooperation dealing with cybersecurity attacks.

Mr. Verma. Sure. Senator, I think these are both really important areas, and what you described about your visit to Mumbai I am sure was especially moving. And when we talk about shared values between our two countries, one of those shared values is standing against terrorism, having people being able to live peacefully in society, settling disputes peacefully. And we have built a very robust set of counterterrorism cooperation measures over the years with the Indians, and it is run across multiple agencies, Department of Homeland Security, Department of State, the FBI, and the Justice Department, the Department of Defense. It is fairly widespread. And I think we should look at ways to bolster it and we should continue to look at ways to do joint training, joint law enforcement cooperation, joint intelligence sharing so that we can be sure that citizens of both countries are sharing those values of peace and justice.



And on cyber as well, I think this is a critically important area not only on the technical side but working with India to really be a role model in cyber cooperation in how cyber is handled in a democracy in Asia. I think this can just send a very powerful message not only in South Asia but across Asia.

Senator Kaine. On the issue of counterterrorism, I want to segue into a follow-up on Senator Shaheen who asked you about the India-Pakistan relationship. The attack by the terrorist group LeT—those individuals are deeply connected with Pakistan. You indicated that the relationship between those two countries is obviously for them to figure out. We can be facilitators. We can be helpful. It is not our primary responsibility. But I know one of the security concerns we would have in this region with two nations that have nuclear weapons would be the danger of the escalation of an incident.

Senator King and I were in India and Pakistan at the time of, you know, what is kind of an annual almost set of border skirmishes in disputed border areas in the Kashmir. Most observers thought that the border skirmishes this year were sort of at their most aggressive in about the last 10 years. And I think a huge concern for the United States would be the danger of an escalation. If there would be another terrorist attack by LeT, for example, that could escalate pretty quickly. And in the absence of kind of regular channels of dialogue between the countries—we had hoped that that dialogue would have been more regularized beginning with the investiture of Prime Minister Modi last summer. Some of your comments suggest that we may be getting on track. In the absence of some of these mechanisms of consistent dialogue, I think a significant concern is this escalation effect which you may have seen it or maybe this past fall was a little bit of an aberration.

What do you think you can do in your post to encourage the creation of a more normal dialogue so that the communication does not just have to happen in times of emergency where there is an escalation danger that could get out of hand?

Mr. Verma. Senator, I think one way that we can do this, as I said, is through increasing regional connectivity so that the people-to-people ties actually increase. I think the trade right now between India and Pakistan stands around \$3 billion, which is a very small sum compared to what it could be. To the extent that greater trade, economic infrastructure, energy developments can be made through the countries, that will naturally help increase connectivity outside of the governments.

From the government-to-government level, obviously both capitals both in New Delhi and Islamabad, it is important to call for dialogue, try to encourage dialogue at every turn. We support the healthiest possible relationship between the two countries, and if confirmed, Senator, you can be sure that that is something that I will work on very closely.

Senator Kaine. The Modi government is still relatively new. So they need time to really probably demonstrate this. But can you talk a little bit about under the new government, India's role in Asian kind of regional architecture. There is an organization, the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum, that I think India has not necessarily been a significant participant in in the past, but

there are some opportunities there. What can you say about the Modi government's attitude toward the regional architecture in the area?

Mr. VERMA. Well, it has been fascinating to watch over the last year when Look East has become Act East because it has not just been about looking or rhetorical kind of flourishes. It has been about actual developments. The prime minister has made, I think, at least two trips to East Asia already, successful visits to Australia, to Japan. They have trade and defense relationships with Vietnam, with Malaysia, with Indonesia. There is joint training that now takes place. The Singapore-India trade relationship is huge. So they really are seeing a lot of their future, both economically and from a security perspective, in East Asia.

And as I had mentioned earlier, Senator, I think that converges with our rebalance to Asia as well, and there really, truly is a convergence of interests where we can work together on issues such as counterterrorism, such as maritime security, ultimately resolving disputes peacefully but preserving this post-World War II liberal democratic rules-based order that has been so important to the global system.

Senator Kaine. That is a very important point. I feel like in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union, we have been kind of looking for the new model to how to describe global relations. And I kind of look at it as a competition now between three leadership models, liberal democracies, authoritarian regimes, and sort of sectarian jihad, which is often non-state. And it is so helpful to have great examples of the liberal democracies on each of the continents, and India certainly is and even can be more that example and the world needs that example.

India's relationship with China is a complicated one, just as ours is. Economic cooperation but also strategic rivalry. Premier Ji's visit to Prime Minister Modi after he became Prime Minister coincided with the flare-up of border tensions along the India-China border, and there was a lot of confusion about exactly why that would have been the moment for there to be a flareup of tensions when this head of state visit that was so important was being paid.

What can you say about the current status of that relationship from your observations?

Mr. VERMA. Senator, much like the United States, the India relationship with China has elements of cooperation and elements of competition. But Prime Minister Modi himself has said that he wants a strong and healthy relationship with China. It is very much in our interest to see these two countries have a healthy relationship. There is a dialogue on border issues when they occur. And again, the economic issues are important to both countries. And so anything that we can do to ensure that the dialogue remains open, that trade and connectivity remain strong. There will be disagreements from time to time, but again, to the extent these are resolved peacefully—and thus far, I would say the Prime Minister has set out on a very positive footing on an economic basis raising security concerns when they come up but in a very positive set of outreach to their Chinese neighbors.

Senator Kaine. Thank you, Mr. Verma.

Ambassador McKinley, just kind of two last points. I wanted to ask you about your perceptions of the Afghanistan-Pakistan relationship. That is obviously critically important. As bordering nations, those areas of Afghanistan that border some of the tribal areas and others in Pakistan can be very critical in terms of the security issues. At least in the initial days of the Ghani/Abdullah government, what do you see as the developing relations between this new government in Afghanistan and the Government of Pakistan?

Ambassador MCKINLEY. There is a real change in tone and rhetoric but also substance, and both Prime Minister Sharif and President Ghani have outlined areas where they think they can cooperate that include security, a heavy emphasis on restoring consultations on border issues. There is an emphasis on cross-border trade which is absolutely essential for Afghanistan. And if I can sort of parallel what Rich said about India and Pakistan, obviously the opportunities of opening borders in the subcontinent and Central Asia is a very important objective in terms of creating opportunities and changing the economic dynamic of the region. And so President Ghani, in his visit to Islamabad, made a point of bringing along a business private sector contingent, meeting with Pakistani business, and working with Pakistani ministries to identify literally dozens of steps that can be taken to change the economic relationship between the two countries.

So there has also been communication exchanges, visits by security ministers. General Rahil has visited Kabul. And we have a very different dynamic at work.

Now, obviously the challenges are serious. We have a history of tensions and misunderstandings, but this is a very promising start to addressing some of those longstanding concerns.

Senator Kaine. Ambassador McKinley, last point. And I want to return to the line of questioning that Senator McCain was engaged in. His concern about drawdown of personnel or moves based on the calendar rather than based on conditions on the ground is a concern that is widely felt on this committee and in the Senate. But I was heartened to notice, after our visit and after our return from Afghanistan, the President made some adjustments to the authorities under which the United States military will operate in 2015. He did not change the calendar. He did not change the troop numbers, but facts on the ground, including some of these activities of the Taliban to destabilize Kabul and other parts of the country recently led the White House to make a proposed change in some of the authorities under which the U.S. military will operate during their mission in 2015.

I viewed that as sort of we have a plan, and it is good to have a plan better than no plan. But that plan is going to be determined, whether we just fully follow the plan or make adjustments, by facts on the ground. So I viewed it as a hopeful sign when I read press accounts that there was a slight shift in direction with respect to military authorities. I know you and others were encouraging that based upon what you were seeing on the ground.

Do you view it the same way?

Ambassador MCKINLEY. The President made his decision in May on the troop presence and the timetable, and those subsequent

months were spent both factoring in the changing dynamic inside Afghanistan in political terms and security terms but also the legal and operational requirements for our presence inside the country. And they always envisaged combat enablers in certain situations to continue supporting the ANSF, as well as creating the basis for force protection for our troops that stay inside the country and also to support the counterterrorism objectives that we continue to have in the region and our interests in, frankly, continuing to build the Afghan Security Force capabilities.

So the AUMF continues to be 2001, but in terms of, again, of defining how we would operate going forward, that is what was done over the months subsequent to the announcement on the timetable for the Resolute Support mission. And it is, obviously, going to provide a good and flexible base for us to respond to the challenges ahead.

Senator KAINE. And that process resulted in an outcome that was sensitive to the current facts on the ground as are being reported back to the administration from all of the United States hands that are there in Afghanistan.

Ambassador MCKINLEY. That is correct. And if I can perhaps state a little more clearly where we are. Secretary Kerry did, today at the NATO ministerial, make it clear that we are prepared to consult with the Afghan Government on refinements to our mission's duration. We are consulting, working closely with General Campbell on security assessments on the ground and what adjustments, if necessary, over time must be taken to make our mission more effective. And it is in consonance with this radical national security review being carried out by the Afghans themselves as they look to build on the extremely positive transformation of their security forces since 2009–10 and what they need to do going forward to deal with a threat that we all agree is serious but I would like to put it in the context of a year of offenses in which—I repeat—the Taliban did not retain or gain territory, in which the Afghan Security Forces greatly increased their operational tempo and led all combat operations, and in which their capabilities going forward look like they will only be strengthened.

Senator KAINE. When you think about what would have been the Taliban's motives during calendar year 2014, clearly the destabilization of the first set of civilian elections to peacefully transfer power was their top objective. They could not destabilize the first round of the Presidential elections. They could not destabilize the second round of the Presidential elections. When there was an audit and all of the ballots were gathered in one place for a pretty extensive review of those ballots, that was a real target for destabilization activities. They could not destabilize that. The defense against destabilization was largely carried out by Afghan Security Forces nearly completely. So their strongest motive was to destabilize a process that stretched out over a number of months and they were not able to do it. That gives us some confidence.

However, we are all deeply worried, given the American sacrifice to achieve the gains that I indicated in my opening statement, about any notion that a calendar date would magically suggest that we leave or that we are done because that could encourage other activities that would lose the gains and hurt the Afghan people.

And so we are really counting on—and the comments that you quote from Secretary Kerry today—we are really counting on this administration focusing on continuing gains rather than dates on the calendar. It is important to have a plan, but to the extent that the plan needs to be adjusted so that we can continue to harvest the gains that we have been a part of, we would continue to encourage you and other critical officials in the administration to advocate for that so that the right decisions are made. And I have no doubt that that is exactly what you will do, should you be confirmed.

Thank you all. You each have impressive track records. You each are taking on important responsibilities, and you each will also serve as leaders of organizations with some spectacular people. Everybody who serves in the Foreign Service in this country, even in New York, which to Virginia can seem foreign on occasion—everybody is a dedicated public servant and they are all small A ambassadors for the United States, and you are lucky to work with good teams. And I know you view that as one of the real honors of the responsibilities that you are being entrusted with.

With that, the hearing adjourns. If there are questions that other members want to submit, they can do so by the close of business today, and I would encourage you to respond promptly. The hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:15 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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#### ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

##### RESPONSES OF RICHARD RAHUL VERMA TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

*Question.* I believe that we should be expanding educational ties in all sectors—the best and the brightest from both sides should exchange ideas and build on the innovative and entrepreneurial spirit that exists in both countries. Rutgers University, for example, has formed strong relationships with Indian educational and research institutions, and has increased the profile of India with business, community, and nonprofit organizations in New Jersey.

- ◆ How will the United States and India increase areas of collaboration, including student and faculty exchange, research cooperation, e-learning, and cooperation between community colleges?
- ◆ India's higher education system is increasingly stressed by India's large and growing youth population. In what ways, if any, has the U.S.-India Higher Education Dialogue improved bilateral collaboration in this area?

*Answer.* Increasing educational collaboration, including student and faculty exchange, research cooperation, e-learning, and cooperation between community colleges, is one of the key focuses of the U.S.-India Higher Education Dialogue. The Fulbright-Nehru program has nearly tripled in size since 2009, with approximately 300 Indian and U.S. students and scholars participating annually. In addition, the United States and India launched the \$10 million 21st Century Knowledge Initiative in 2012 to support partnerships between higher education institutions in both countries. These projects strengthen teaching and research in priority fields such as energy, climate change, and public health. In the coming year, the U.S. Government plans to work with the Indian Government to bring more American science and technology professors and researchers to India.

India is home to the world's largest youth population, with more than 50 percent of India's population under 25 years of age, and over two-thirds under age 35. This demographic dividend presents a tremendous opportunity for India to become a global economic leader, and create new and diverse investment opportunities for the world. With U.S. and Indian Government support through the Higher Education Dialogue, U.S. community colleges partner with Indian institutions to enhance eco-

conomic opportunity in India through adoption of American community college and skills development best practices.

At last year's dialogue, the American Association of Community Colleges signed an agreement with the All-India Council on Technical Education to assist as India expands its community college model, with particular focus on building linkages with industry to ensure young Indian graduates can fully participate in the fast-changing workforce. To support the growth of institution-to-institution partnerships, the United States supports exchanges of administrators and education officials responsible for community colleges and vocational education, including through the Fulbright-Nehru International Education Administrators Program this fall and the Community College Administrators Program that will launch next year.

*Question.* In the early 1990s, approximately 108,000 Lhotshampa, primarily Nepali-speaking Hindus, were forced to leave Bhutan. After living in camps in Nepal for 20 years, nearly 80,000 Bhutanese refugees have been resettled across the United States and constitute one of the largest refugee populations in the country. Thousands have resettled and become United States citizens as they strive to become ever contributing members of our society and economy. More than 25,000 still remain in camps. Bhutan has thus far refused to allow any refugees to return.

- ◆ Given the United States does not have direct diplomatic ties with Bhutan, what can the U.S. Embassy in India do to ensure that resettled Bhutanese Hindus, now Americans, as well as those remaining in the camps in Nepal are given the ability to return to Bhutan should they choose to do so?

*Answer.* Finding a durable solution to the issue of Bhutanese refugees is a major U.S. priority. Our Embassy in New Delhi and U.N. missions in Geneva and New York regularly engage with the Government of Bhutan—including through visits of U.S. Embassy officials to Bhutan and through close ties with Bhutan's Embassy in New Delhi—to advocate for a lasting solution that takes into account the wishes of the refugees. The United States consistently urges Bhutan to approve voluntary repatriation cases referred by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and to work together with Nepal and UNHCR to advance a solution for the residual population of Bhutanese refugees in Nepal. The U.S. Government is proud that more than 90,000 refugees from Bhutan have been resettled in third countries, including nearly 80,000 to the United States.

*Question.* On September 5, 1986, Pan Am Flight 73 was hijacked in Pakistan by terrorists acting under the direction of the Libyan Government. By the time the Pakistani military intervened, 20 passengers had died and over 120 had been injured. In 2008, the State Department concluded the U.S.-Libya Claims Settlement Agreement, which led to the permanent termination of all pending lawsuits against Libya and to the creation of a humanitarian settlement fund administered by the Foreign Claims Settlement Commission. Victims of the Pan Am Lockerbie flight and the Berlin LaBelle Disco bombing were compensated regardless of nationality. However, compensation has been denied to Pan Am 73 passengers who were Indian citizens at the time, but have since become naturalized American citizens. These victims have been directed by the U.S. State Department to the Indian Government, which has responded that Pan Am 73 was an American Carrier, targeted because it belonged to America, and that the duty therefore lies upon the United States Government to ensure that everyone on board Pan Am 73 is awarded just compensation.

- ◆ What recourse do these naturalized American citizens have in seeking compensation for their injuries?

*Answer.* The Department of State strongly condemns all acts of terrorism and deeply regrets the losses sustained by the victims of the Pan Am 73 hijacking.

The Department of State's requirement that a claimant be a continuous U.S. national at the time of the incident—and not after—to be eligible for an award of compensation is a well-established principle of international claims practice. International, domestic, and mixed claims arbitral tribunals have applied the rule of continuous nationality, and it has been the consistent policy and practice of the Department to decline to espouse claims which have not been continuously owned by U.S. nationals from the date of injury. The Libya claims settlement involving the Pan Am Lockerbie flight and the Berlin LaBelle Disco bombing is no different, and the references to claims of U.S. nationals in the Claims Settlement Agreement, and other documents implementing the settlement, are necessarily informed by this principle.

Although the United States is not in a position under international law to espouse the claims of these victims, nothing in our agreements with Libya regarding compensation for U.S. nationals in the Pan Am Lockerbie flight and the Berlin LaBelle

Disco bombing would restrict the ability of the Government of India to take up these distinct Pan Am 73 claims with Libya or for the Pan Am 73 victims themselves to pursue these claims with Libyan authorities.

*Question.* What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What is the impact of your actions? Why were your actions significant?

*Answer.* I have had the privilege of working on democracy and human rights issues for over 20 years. From 1993 to 1994, I was the country director for the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) in Bucharest, Romania, where I led NDI's efforts to help build democratic institutions and improve the capacity of civil society groups. Again in 1999, I went on behalf of NDI to West Africa to the Republic of Niger for 1 month to train new parliamentarians in an effort to rebuild legislative capacity following a military coup. In 2000, NDI sent me to Nepal for several weeks to conduct an assessment and training on anticorruption efforts in Kathmandu, working with legislators and civil society. I continue to serve on the NDI Board of Directors, and provide advice on a wide range of NDI programming in the Middle East, Eastern Europe and Asia.

During my service in the U.S. Air Force, I served on the faculty of the Expanded International Military Education and Training program (E-IMET), where we provided extensive training to various countries' militaries on the role of a military in a democracy. Over a 4-year period, I worked with the militaries of Poland, Argentina, and Romania to conduct in-country trainings on human rights, the rule of law, and civilian control of the military, in addition to other related topics.

While working in the Senate Leader's office, I focused a great deal of attention on human rights, antitrafficking, and religious freedom issues around the world, traveling widely on staff and congressional delegations to bring attention to these issues in Africa, the Middle East and Persian Gulf region, South and Central Asia, Eastern Europe, and Latin America. I continued to work on these issues as Assistant Secretary of State for Legislative Affairs, and in that role, I also supported Secretary Clinton's efforts to promote women's rights, as a core component of our national-security and foreign-policy agenda globally.

In my private law practice, I have had the good fortune of representing, in a complex political asylum case, a young man from El Salvador who was targeted by Salvadorian gangs because of his sexual orientation. The case was recently successfully brought to conclusion, with asylum and temporary permanent residence awarded to this brave Salvadorian national. I have also been proud to be a member of the Board of Directors of Human Rights First (formerly the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights) for over 3 years, where I have helped advise and speak on matters related to the law of war and the Geneva conventions, refugee issues, and other humanitarian rights issues. If confirmed, I would continue to make democracy and human rights a priority, as it has been for me over the course of my career.

*Question.* What are the most pressing human rights issues in India? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to promote human rights and democracy in India? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

*Answer.* Although India has a long tradition of democratic values and a vibrant civil society, we do engage with the Government of India on a number of human-rights concerns, including police and security force abuses and corruption; societal violence, including gender-based violence; labor violations; human trafficking; and violations of religious freedom.

The U.S. Government has worked with successive Indian governments, through the Strategic Dialogue, the Global Issues Forum, the Women's Empowerment Dialogue, and other engagements, to emphasize the importance the United States places on human-rights issues. If confirmed, I will use these mechanisms, bilateral meetings, and quiet consultations to urge the Indian Government to promote tolerance and freedoms for ethnic, religious, and sexual minorities, support space for civil society to operate, combat corruption, respect fundamental labor rights, and combat gender-based violence by promoting equality and rule of law.

*Question.* If confirmed, what are the potential obstacles to addressing the specific human rights issues you have identified in your previous response? What challenges will you face in India in advancing human rights and democracy in general?

*Answer.* While no country has a perfect human-rights record, India has a long-standing tradition of pluralism, rule of law, and protection of minority rights. As in many countries, uneven enforcement of existing civil-liberty protections, and in some areas, uneven protections for civilian populations, can fuel impunity among security forces. While India has improved its laws on rape, enforcement remains uneven, and as in the United States, sexual violence is still vastly underreported.

Religious freedom is protected by India's secular constitution; however, differences between state and federal laws can curtail these freedoms. And corruption, lack of political will, and lack of capacity can undermine the enforcement of laws protecting workers from abusive conditions. If confirmed, I will work with the Government of India and courageous members of India's civil society, such as 2014 International Women of Courage Award winner Laxmi and Nobel Peace Prize Winner Kailash Satyarthi to promote our human-rights goals.

If confirmed, I will be a strong advocate for human rights and democracy. It's important to note that India's national elections this year—the world's largest organized human activity—saw more than 550 million citizens, about 8 percent of the world's population, turn out to vote. India's elections, and peaceful transition of power, were a reminder for both our nations that democratic principles are a common thread between our peoples. If confirmed, I intend to build on this common foundation of open and inclusive rules-based order to work with India to advance our common democratic interests.

*Question.* Are you committed to meeting with human rights and other nongovernmental organizations in the United States and with local human rights NGOs in India?

*Answer.* You have my commitment that, if confirmed, I will meet with human-rights and other nongovernmental organizations in the United States and with local human rights NGOs in India.

As Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights Sarah Sewall emphasized during her recent visit to India, promoting tolerance freedoms for ethnic, religious, and sexual minorities, supporting space for civil society to operate, fighting gender-based violence, combating corruption, and respecting fundamental labor rights are core U.S. interests and integral elements of our relationship with India. Meeting with civil-society organizations, human-rights organizations, advocates for women's rights, and other NGOs is an important component of advancing our core human-rights interests.

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RESPONSES OF PETER MICHAEL MCKINLEY TO QUESTIONS  
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

*Question.* What steps can President Ghani and CEO Abdullah take over the next year to improve women's rights in Afghanistan?

*Answer.* In their campaigns and since taking office, President Ghani and CEO Abdullah have repeatedly emphasized their commitment to consolidate and expand the gains women have made in Afghanistan since 2001. The Afghan Government's strategy to achieve this goal is based on three pillars: ending discrimination and violence against women and ensuring the equal treatment of women under the law, improving educational and economic opportunities for women and girls, and implementing gender-neutral policies and women-friendly employment practices throughout the government.

The Afghan Government has committed to implement fully the 2009 Law on the Elimination of Violence Against Women. This is a critical step to safeguard Afghan women's rights and access to justice, which requires raising greater public awareness among men and women on the law as well as improving implementation of the law within the justice sector.

As outlined in its paper for the December 3–4 London Conference on Afghanistan, the Afghan Government plans to develop a National Economic Empowerment Plan for Women. This plan would address critical issues such as women's inheritance and property ownership, financial literacy and financial inclusion, and affirmative action in government hiring.

Increasing women's participation in government will also be key to ensuring progress on women's rights. President Ghani has expressed his intent to nominate a qualified woman candidate to Afghanistan's Supreme Court, a step the U.S. Government and many Afghan women's groups have applauded. His spokesman has also said the new Cabinet will include four women as ministers, up from three currently. It will be critical that the new government include qualified women at all levels, from ministers to entry-level civil servants—an important issue we have raised with the Afghan Government. Increasing the number of women in the Afghan National Security Forces, with assistance from the United States and other members of the international community, will improve women's security and access to justice.

To facilitate the increased participation of women in government, it will be important for President Ghani to follow through on his plans to make government service



more women-friendly. These plans include the introduction of a sexual harassment policy, the implementation of affirmative action in hiring, and the provision of additional support to women serving in traditionally male fields such as the security forces.

The upcoming Parliamentary and district-level elections will also be an opportunity for the new government to take action early and diligently on ensuring the full participation of women as candidates, voters, election workers as well as addressing security issues to support an enabling environment for women to freely access polling stations as they did in the 2014 elections.

*Question.* The Special Immigrant Visa Program is an important initiative which helped to ensure the safety of thousands of locally employed staff in Afghanistan. It has also left a void in the Embassy and USAID's capacity to conduct diplomacy and assistance programs and engage with Afghans.

♦ What are your plans to mitigate this loss of capacity and institutional memory?

*Answer.* The SIV program remains a critical tool to helping brave Afghans who have helped the U.S. mission over the last 13 years and I appreciate the Congress' strong support for this program.

The U.S. Embassy in Kabul has taken a number of steps to mitigate the resulting departure of local staff. These efforts include increasing our recruiting pipeline and shifting back office functions to locations outside of Afghanistan when possible. Where possible, the Embassy is also looking into relying more heavily on multidonor trust funds to implement development assistance. Another mitigation strategy the Embassy uses is to assign local staff on Temporary Duty (TDY) from other countries to fill critical positions. These staffers often serve more than one tour, function effectively as the institutional memory of the mission, and help build the capacity of Afghan staff. This program has been in existence for several years and continues to be one of our best options for obtaining talented, experienced local staff. Finally, it may be possible to fill a small number of critical need positions with long-term (2–3 year) Third Country Nationals (TCNs).

*Question.* What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What is the impact of your actions? Why were your actions significant?

*Answer.* I have worked to support human rights and democracy throughout my career. In Mozambique from 1994–97, as Deputy Chief of Mission and later as Chargé d'Affaires, I worked with the government and the former rebel movement to ensure a smooth outcome to contested elections, leading to the first democratic government in the country. In both Mozambique and Uganda (1997–2000), I helped secure funding for returning refugees and for displaced conflict victims in northern Uganda fleeing atrocities by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). In addition, I helped draw attention to the plight of boys and girls rescued from the LRA.

As Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) I was responsible for identifying refugee populations for resettlement in the United States, and shepherding the relaunch of the refugee resettlement program in our country after it was closed down in the aftermath of 9/11; tens of thousands of refugees benefited as a result. As the PRM Bureau's lead point person responsible for Africa, I worked to improve conditions in refugee camps in Darfur and protection for women in these camps.

In Colombia and Peru, as Ambassador, I secured funding for the first rape crisis center in a conflict zone in Colombia and helped launch the second-ever LGBT Chamber of Commerce in Latin America. I personally negotiated labor rights protection clauses in the Free Trade Agreement with Colombia. I publicly highlighted the plight of left-wing activists threatened in Colombia, and lobbied successfully for additional funding for Afro-Colombian minority communities in both Colombia and Peru.

As mentioned, for much of my career I have been active supporting negotiations to end conflict, and save lives. I was proud to be part of the team that negotiated Namibia's independence and the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Africa. I also worked on peace negotiations in Uganda and Darfur.

*Question.* What are the most pressing human rights issues in Afghanistan? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to promote human rights and democracy in Afghanistan? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

*Answer.* As our human rights reports make clear, there are many pressing human rights concerns inside Afghanistan. Perhaps the most urgent is the need to preserve the enormous strides the Afghan people have made in this area over the past 13

years. Taliban views on human rights are made clear by their record when they controlled Kabul, their more recent pronouncements on issues such as the right of ordinary citizens to vote for their leaders, and the countless civilian casualties that are the hallmark of the insurgency they fuel. One of my most important missions, if confirmed, will be fostering a partnership with the Afghan Government based on the shared values enumerated in our Strategic Partnership Agreement.

Also of great importance is the protection of the rights of women and girls. That is why gender has been a policy and programming priority for U.S. Embassy Kabul, and why it will continue to be a priority if I am confirmed. The United States must support and hold the Afghan Government accountable for the implementation of its strategy to advance women's rights. This strategy focuses on ending discrimination and violence against women and ensuring the equal treatment of women under the law, improving educational and economic opportunities for women and girls, and implementing gender-neutral policies and women-friendly employment practices throughout the government. The new government of national unity has also declared its intention to work on gender protection and opportunity, as well as on strengthening the capacity of the judiciary to end impunity before the law.

In a related issue, we are strengthening the funding for Trafficking in Persons (TIP) initiatives, and I hope that this will allow for an expansion of shelters for women and boys in Afghanistan.

Given the Taliban threat mentioned above, an important part of our partnership with the Afghan Government is our cooperation with the Afghan National Security Forces. An essential part of that partnership must be confidence that the Afghan Armed Forces have the highest respect for human rights. President Ghani has made clear that he shares this view, and that he will not tolerate abuses committed by Afghan security forces. Beyond being U.S. law, Leahy vetting is an important and concrete reminder of our beliefs, and, if confirmed, I intend to ensure that we implement this process to the fullest extent of the letter and spirit of the law.

*Question.* If confirmed, what are the potential obstacles to addressing the specific human rights issues you have identified in your previous response?

*Answer.* We have many programs to promote and protect human rights in Afghanistan. However, as our presence in Afghanistan decreases, security restrictions will affect our outreach to some of Afghanistan's most vulnerable populations. To overcome this challenge, we are adopting creative solutions that allow us to continue implementing projects in the field without losing the ability to monitor and evaluate our programming.

*Question.* Are you committed to meeting with human rights and other nongovernmental organizations in the United States and with local human rights NGOs in Afghanistan?

*Answer.* Yes. Throughout my career I have met with and worked with civil society—independent NGOs, universities, women's groups, the media, and human rights organizations. I have every intention of continuing to do so in Afghanistan, where strengthening civil society organizations is absolutely critical to our achieving our objectives, and where they need our visible support.

RESPONSES OF ISOBEL COLEMAN TO QUESTIONS  
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

*Question.* What steps has the U.S. Government undertaken since 2009 to address abuse and misconduct by U.N. peacekeepers and civilian personnel participating in those operations? What further steps are you pursuing? Please address abuses by peacekeepers in UNMISS, MINUSTAH, and MONUSCO and responses taken.

*Answer.* The United States has long been a leading advocate for measures to eliminate abuse and misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), by U.N. peacekeepers. We have been a leading advocate for changes to the system. With strong U.S. encouragement, the U.N. has improved its internal oversight process, sped up investigations, improved oversight of field missions, and worked hard to obtain and publish better data. All U.N. peacekeepers—whether military, police, or civilian, seconded or contracted—must abide by the U.N.'s clear code of conduct.

The U.N. has focused on increasing good standards and has instituted enhanced screening procedures for peacekeepers, due in large part to pressure from the United States. For civilians, the U.N. maintains records of any prior misconduct by previous employees, and runs background checks on new hires. Screening for military and police personnel—in part because of the volume and frequent turnover—is more difficult, and currently consists of certification by the contributing govern-

ment that the individual has a clean record. Measures are in place to screen all categories of peacekeeping personnel with the exception of troops, a deficiency that the United States is actively working with other U.N. member states to fix.

In 2009, with strong U.S. encouragement, the U.N. developed a strategy for peacekeeping and humanitarian missions to provide short- and medium-term support to victims of sexual exploitation and abuse and children born to peacekeepers, even if the allegations have not been substantiated. Victims seek longer term restitution from the alleged perpetrators. The U.N. provides various types of assistance to victims, including counseling, medical treatment, and legal support.

The Conduct and Discipline Unit (CDU) in the Department of Field Support is responsible for overseeing policy and regulations on misconduct. They have a small but very dedicated staff. We have been able to help them in a couple of ways. First, we worked with Vanderbilt Law School, which funded a four-student team to help CDU clear a backlog of cases. The team also developed a field manual on SEA rules and procedures. Second, the Bureau of International Organization Affairs is funding an entry-level professional position in CDU that is filled by a young American, whose job specifically includes updating and energizing the Victim's Assistance policy. I, as well as CDU, regard keeping this position as a priority.

The CDU has also made progress in expanding the scope of its program to screen peacekeeping personnel before deployment, including the conclusion of an information-sharing agreement with the United Nations Volunteer (UNV) program that authorizes CDU to access information about whether prospective U.N. civilian staff members who previously served as UNVs were subject to any disciplinary measures. Second, there is now an interface between the CDU's Misconduct Tracking System (MTS) and the recruitment systems used by the Police Division and the Office of Military Affairs in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). CDU is now able to screen individual police officers, military observers, and military liaison officers serving in the field.

U.S. training under the Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI), which includes the Africa Contingency Operations and Assistance (ACOTA), includes instruction on conduct and discipline, including SEA prevention, as part of all peacekeeping training. Such instruction is included in both "train the trainer" programs and training for individual units that will deploy to peacekeeping operations. Trainers are provided a full set of course material and U.N. documents, but tailor the length and specific content of instruction based on the course being offered (for example, infantry, medical, officer, or enlisted), the length of the class, and the individual or unit's previous peacekeeping experience. Topics include the standards of conduct, impact on the local population and the mission, human trafficking, vulnerable groups, reporting, and scenarios.

U.S. training for police officers serving with U.N. missions includes both "train the trainer" programs for partner countries and training U.S. police officers who are deploying to U.N. missions. Both types of training include instruction on SEA regulations and procedures.

Overall, the number of SEA allegations per year has steadily decreased over the last 5 years. This is largely due to the U.N. strengthening its zero tolerance framework through increased and more targeted training, community outreach, and effective leadership. U.N. peacekeeping operations are fostering greater understanding of U.N. SEA and TIP policy, procedures, and reporting mechanism within local communities.

The U.N. Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), which has consistently had the highest rates of SEA allegations, is experiencing a decline. This is greatly due to training, assessment visits, and outreach efforts both within the mission and with civil society. In addition to new SEA preventative measures, MONUSCO has implemented a policy that refers local MONUSCO staff who commit SEA to local authorities.

The U.N. Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) has also experienced a marked decrease in SEA allegations, which reflects the success of a multidimensional approach to tackling SEA by U.N. peacekeepers, including "train the trainer" and other courses, nationwide awareness campaigns, and a robust zero tolerance policy. Unfortunately, much of these changes are a result of a series of past public SEA allegations against MINUSTAH peacekeepers. For example, in January 2012, three members of the Pakistani Formed Police Unit (FPU) serving with MINUSTAH were accused of sexually assaulting a 14-year-old Haitian teenage boy. Following an initial investigation by the U.N. Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), Pakistani authorities flew a Pakistani judge to Haiti and conducted an immediate trial. All three personnel were convicted, dishonorably discharged, and flown back to Pakistan in March that year to serve 1-year prison sentences.

The U.N. Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS), and its predecessor the U.N. Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), have consistently been among the missions with the highest allegations of SEA. Unfortunately, UNMISS' Conduct and Discipline Team (CDT) does not currently have the capacity to maintain a presence outside Juba and relies heavily on state offices to handle the case intake. These local officials often are untrained in SEA procedures and have other portfolios rather than working full-time on conduct and discipline. As a consequence, the local population is often unaware of U.N. SEA policies and reporting procedures. Furthermore, the current UNMISS budget does not contain resources to fund awareness campaigns.

To address these problems, I will push the U.N. to increase their followup to allegations of SEA and other peacekeeper misconduct, particularly with victims and the local community, on actions taken against perpetrators. The U.N. does not have the authority to prosecute, so any prosecution when appropriate would be conducted by a national government (either the host government or relevant troop contributing country). However, the U.N. cannot compel member states to report on actions taken.

Additionally, I will also increase efforts with like-minded countries to press troop and police contributing countries to take action when personnel are repatriated. Finally, I will continue to encourage the U.N. to properly fund and staff the CDU and the OIOS, which sends professional investigators, with experience in collecting and evaluating evidence.

*Question.* In your view, what issues in the broad area of U.N. management and reform should have top priority? What reforms will the U.S. mission emphasize during your tenure?

*Answer.* The U.S. mission will engage on multiple management and reform priorities during my tenure.

*Reform of the Regular Budget Process:* The United States will engage with likeminded allies to improve the U.N. regular budget process, which produces budgets of limited strategic value because of "incremental" development (prior budgets are used as baselines without any analytical justification). The Department agrees with a recent U.N. Board of Auditor's report (July 2014) suggesting the U.N. should better align program planning and strategic goals/work plans and more thoroughly link budget information to desired outcomes. Our overall goal, in addition to emphasizing broad reforms in the budget process, is to reduce costs as much as possible and seek absorption within the existing budget.

Another focus of U.N. budget reform during my tenure will be the U.N.'s practice of recosting, where the U.N. revises cost estimates to take into account inflation, exchange rate losses, increased personnel costs resulting from mandatory salary adjustments, and lower-than-planned vacancy rates. A recent U.N. report on the recosting process did not go as far as we would have liked, so we will work with our likeminded allies and others to continue the momentum for recosting reform, establish guidance and mechanisms to alleviate the impact of recosting, and pressure the Secretariat to live within its budget.

*U.N. Staff Compensation ("Common System"):* Earlier this year, the International Civil Service Commission implemented a landmark multiyear pay freeze affecting 30,000 U.N. staff across 24 organizations in the U.N. common system, and it continues work on a new compensational package. The pay freeze will narrow the 5-year average margin between U.N. staff and U.S. federal civil servants by 2019 and give U.N. common system organizations interim relief from budget growth caused by increases in staff costs. Our primary goal is to preserve the pay freeze decision by the ICSC and ensure that the new compensation package is simple, modern, and cost effective.

*Human Resource Management:* The United States is working with like-minded allies to pressure the Secretariat to establish a new performance management system that should allow for the effective measurement of performance, rewarding of good performance, and sanctioning for underperformance. If confirmed, I will continue to emphasize the paramount focus of the U.N. Charter as favoring the most qualified applicant over a more equitable geographic distribution of posts.

*Oversight and Transparency:* In 2012, the United States successfully advocated for the disclosure of audit reports by the Office of Internal Oversight Services, which are available to the public on a trial basis, through December 2014. As evident in a recent report by the Independent Audit Advisory Committee, public disclosure of internal audit reports had a positive impact on the quality of the reports. Based on the overall success of the pilot, I will work with like-minded member states to urge the General Assembly to make publication of internal audit reports permanent.

*Procurement:* Procurement has become an increasingly prominent issue for the U.N. In 2006, the Secretary General proposed a range of procurement-related reforms including strengthening internal controls, optimizing U.N. acquisition management to reduce costs, and ensuring staff have sufficient training and skillsets to support these efforts. According to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Issues and Joint Inspection Unit, the Procurement Division has improved its operations since 2006. However, the Office of Internal Oversight Services and Board of Auditors note that further improvements are necessary. If confirmed, I will engage the Secretariat to ensure progress with adequate training in contract management, well-defined delegations of authority, implementation of a monitoring framework, application of best value for money, and reductions in delays delivering goods and services.

*Question.* Some observers and experts, including U.S. policymakers, have argued that OIOS should not rely on funding from the U.N. programs and bodies that it audits in order to avoid a real or perceived conflict of interest. How does this conflict of interest impede their ability to accurately provide oversight and audit the appropriate programs? What steps, if any, is the United States taking to achieve operational independence for OIOS?

*Answer.* As the U.N.'s internal watchdog, we believe that OIOS should have all the tools it needs to conduct its work as efficiently and effectively as possible. Operational independence and jurisdiction over its budget and personnel decisions are essential for OIOS to perform its oversight functions free from influence by the organizations and officials it oversees. OIOS funding comes from three sources—regular budget, peacekeeping, and extra-budgetary sources. The United States remains concerned that this funding structure limits OIOS' flexibility to utilize resources where needed, restricting its ability to achieve its organizational goals.

The United States will continue to strongly support efforts to revitalize OIOS and further strengthen its core functions of audit, investigation, and evaluation. We worked tirelessly in the General Assembly to establish an Assistant Secretary General position to serve as OIOS deputy to elevate OIOS' role within the U.N. system. The Fifth Committee of the 69th session of the U.N. General Assembly is currently reviewing OIOS' annual report and the resolutions which govern OIOS. The United States is engaged with like-minded member states to use this mandate review as an opportunity to increase OIOS' operational and budgetary independence. The OIOS is also conducting a review of its funding arrangements, including its impact on operational independence. We will work with OIOS and member states to propose improvements to its funding structure and improve its operational independence, and I look forward to consulting with Congress on the results of these discussions, if confirmed.

*Question.* The implementation of humanitarian reforms within the United Nations since 2005 has focused on strengthening the capacity of response through relief sections; increasing coordination and leadership through the creation of the Humanitarian Coordinator at the country level, and the establishment of the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) to provide a faster U.N. response to humanitarian emergencies.

◆ Please comment on the implementation of these reforms. What are the strengths and weaknesses in the international humanitarian response system? What further reforms, if any, are necessary? Please discuss with regard to UNMISS and UNMEER.

*Answer.* There has been significant progress on U.N.-led humanitarian reforms since 2005. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)'s Transformative Agenda (TA) is the most recent iteration of these efforts and has focused on strengthening leadership, improving coordination, and enhancing accountability. Today, highly qualified and experienced humanitarians are regularly appointed to lead U.N. efforts in countries where there are major humanitarian crises. Field coordination continues to improve. Most humanitarian organizations engage in and strongly support the "cluster system," the coordination mechanism in place to provide leadership, coordinate needs assessments and gap analyses, and ensure comprehensive engagement by all actors operating under specific humanitarian sectors, including water and sanitation, food and nutrition, and health. Efforts to improve accountability to affected populations lag behind other reforms; however, improvements in humanitarian leadership and coordination have brought greater predictability to international humanitarian response and thus more accountability to the populations served.

The strengths of the system include resource mobilization, the ability of humanitarian staffers to work in difficult and often insecure environments, improved com-

munication and coordination between and among humanitarian actors, greater clarity about organizations' roles and responsibilities, stronger and more effective leadership, and improved information management. There are also important efforts underway to refine and improve the quality of the Strategic Response Plans, which provide overall direction to the response and support important prioritization of needs. The Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) administered by OCHA has been extremely effective in providing rapid funding to U.N. agencies when crises emerge.

More efforts need to be made to include local and national actors in humanitarian response. More senior U.N. and other humanitarian officials need to be nominated for the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator pools. Stronger partnerships between humanitarian and development actors are required, particularly since most humanitarian crises are protracted and last for several years. More countries need to contribute to the humanitarian appeals. All actors need to coordinate more closely with the U.N.-led response to avoid duplication, waste, and confusion. In terms of additional reforms, we will continue to support the full implementation of the ITA by all humanitarian actors.

Currently in South Sudan there is strong coordination between UNMISS and the U.N. Humanitarian Country Team (UNHCT). Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General/Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator, Toby Lanzer, is working closely with both the peacekeeping operation and humanitarian actors to ensure strong cooperation and appropriate division of labor. South Sudan remains one of the largest humanitarian operations globally, and there are continued efforts to improve UNMISS and UNHCT operations in the Protection of Civilians (POC) sites in particular.

UNMEER, established to respond to the unprecedented Ebola outbreak, is the first-ever U.N. emergency health mission. UNMEER harnesses the capabilities of a number of U.N. bodies, especially WHO, WFP, UNICEF, and UNDP, through a unified operational structure. Its objective is to ensure a rapid and coherent response to the crisis. Efforts continue to refine UNMEER to improve field coordination and information management and ensure it is able to stop transmission of the virus. Many U.N. organizations have seconded staff to UNMEER and are working closely with UNMEER leadership to provide all necessary support to improve the effectiveness of the U.N. response.

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RESPONSES OF RICHARD RAHUL VERMA TO QUESTIONS  
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BOB CORKER

*Question.* Over the past decade, the United States and India have pursued several bilateral strategic and economic initiatives yet there has been little demonstrable progress in these potential areas of cooperation. This has led some analysts to suggest that Washington and New Delhi have established unrealistic expectations for the bilateral relationship.

◆ Is it time to recalibrate expectations for the United States-India relationship?

*Answer.* We have, and should maintain, high expectations for the vibrant and growing partnership between the United States and India. Successive administrations have made the strategic decision that a rising India and a strong bilateral relationship are in the U.S. national interest. President Obama has called our ties with India a defining partnership for the 21st century. Our rebalance to the Asia-Pacific is premised on the consequential role the region's 4.3 billion people will play in global politics, security, and economics this century. A strong India will play a critical role in the coming decades in affirmatively shaping this Asian landscape. Our partnership with India will play an increasingly important role in providing security, prosperity, and stability in the Indo-Pacific region. All partnerships face challenges, but given our shared interests, the U.S. Government is confident that our investments in the relationship will yield dividends.

*Question.* Prime Minister Modi has articulated an ambitious agenda, including a desire to strengthen relations with the United States. If confirmed, how do you intend to work with the Modi government to translate this enthusiasm into tangible areas of progress in the bilateral relationship? What areas do you believe are most ripe for advancing our shared interests?

*Answer.* If confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to India, I will execute the President's vision for the United States-India strategic partnership as outlined in the Joint Statement issued by President Obama and Prime Minister Modi during the Prime Minister's successful visit to Washington this past fall.

Given our increasingly convergent national security interests in the Indo-Pacific region and around the world, I will work with India to promote regional and global security. Additionally, solidifying and renewing our 10-year Defense Framework Agreement will be one of my highest priorities. Another of my top defense priorities will be to conclude codevelopment and coproduction projects under the auspices of the Defense Trade and Technology Initiative (DTTI) between our two governments. On the energy and environment front, I will work to promote both American exports and India's energy security and by helping India to diversify its hydrocarbon-dependent energy needs and by promoting renewable energy sources through our Partnership to Advance Clean Energy (PACE) and Promoting Energy Access through Clean Energy (PEACE) initiatives. I will also assist U.S. companies to participate in India's growing nuclear power sector by fully realizing our civil nuclear deal. I will dedicate a significant portion of my time to expanding two-way trade between our two nations, an effort that will increase employment for U.S. workers. To ensure our companies compete on the most level playing field possible, I will take every opportunity to convince Indian Government and business leaders that adoption of an intellectual property-rights regime based on international norms is the only way for India to attract the level of foreign investment the country needs to achieve its ambitious economic development agenda.

RESPONSES OF ISOBEL COLEMAN TO QUESTIONS  
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BOB CORKER

*Question.* The U.N. General Assembly's Fifth Committee deals with administrative and budgetary aspects of U.N. Peacekeeping. Allegations of serious misconduct including sexual, exploitation, and abuse (SEA) continue to compromise the success of peacekeeping missions.

- ◆ If confirmed, within your responsibilities over management and reforms, what initial actions do you intend to take to implement meaningful reforms to reduce these occurrences?
- ◆ More broadly, what are the long-term challenges facing U.S. and U.N. policymakers as they attempt to reduce instances of SEA in peacekeeping operations?
- ◆ Describe and detail your plan for addressing in a substantial and meaningful way this chronic problem of peacekeeper abuses?

*Answer.* The United States has been a leading proponent for measures to prevent misconduct by U.N. peacekeepers, in particular sexual misconduct, for almost a decade, and is a strong supporter of the U.N.'s efforts to fully implement its policy of zero tolerance of sexual misconduct.

The U.N. has made significant progress in strengthening measures against sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) over the past few years, largely due to efforts by the administration, which shares your deep concern about this issue. Strengthened measures include enhancing its misconduct tracking system, institution of a screening policy for all categories of personnel, and provisions withholding reimbursement to troop and police contributing countries on account of contingent personnel repatriated for misconduct, including SEA. If confirmed, I intend to push for a review of the recommendations of the 2005 report of the panel headed by Prince Zeid of Jordan, which was the basis for the measures currently in place, and I look forward to staying in close touch with you and your staff about this critically important issue.

Indeed, the U.N. has robust policies and procedures in place for prevention and training, handling allegations received, and investigations (for civilian and police personnel). Further progress, however, depends not on the U.N. alone, but also on the willingness of troop and police contributing countries to fulfill their obligations with regard to misconduct. More progress is needed to ensure that contingent commanders maintain discipline within the units under their command, that troop-contributing countries expeditiously investigate allegations of misconduct by their soldiers and inform the U.N. of the results of those investigations, and that both troop and police contributing countries take the appropriate disciplinary action (including, if relevant, prosecution) against soldiers and/or police found to have engaged in misconduct, including SEA.

To address this problem, I will push the U.N. to increase their followup to allegations of SEA and other peacekeeper misconduct, particularly with victims and the local community, on actions taken against perpetrators. The U.N. does not have the authority to prosecute, so any prosecution when appropriate would be conducted by a national government (either the host government or relevant troop contributing country). However, the U.N. cannot compel member states to report on actions taken. Additionally, I will also increase efforts with like-minded countries to press

troop and police contributing countries to take action when personnel are repatriated.

Additionally, I will continue to encourage the U.N. to properly fund and staff the U.N.'s Conduct and Discipline Unit (CDU) in the Department of Field Support and the U.N. Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS). The CDU is responsible for overseeing policy and regulations on misconduct. They have a small but very dedicated staff. In the case of serious allegations against civilians and police officers, OIOS sends professional investigators, with experience in collecting and evaluating evidence. Preserving evidence, whether interviews or physical evidence, may also pose challenges in post-crisis environments (often poor countries) where contemporary missions are deployed: the situation is chaotic, and the physical facilities and technical expertise may not be available.

Another area on which I intend to engage the U.N. is increasing the number of female peacekeepers in the field. In addition to providing role models for the local population, the presence of female peacekeepers reportedly decreases the incidents of SEA by other peacekeepers.

*Question.* This year, the U.N.'s Office of Internal Oversight Services found that peacekeeping missions have fallen short in upholding their protection of civilian mandates. Do you agree with the findings of the report? What reforms do you think are needed to ensure that peacekeepers are fully implementing their mandates in this respect?

*Answer.* I am aware of this report and share your concern, as well as the administration's support of the report's release. It provided empirical evidence proving something that we all suspected: that there is a disconnect between the intention of the U.N. Security Council in mandating peacekeeping operations to protect civilians, and the actions—or lack thereof—of peacekeeping troops on the ground, especially when the use of force is necessary in order to effectively protect civilians. Peacekeepers are authorized to use force to protect themselves—and to protect their mandate. In missions with protection of civilian mandates, peacekeepers are authorized and expected to use force to protect civilians from violence when necessary. The behavior detailed in the report is unacceptable and the U.S. Government is taking concrete steps to remedy this situation.

The administration has underscored its concern about the findings of this report to the most senior officials at the United Nations. The U.S. Government is pressing the United Nations to develop a comprehensive set of reforms—encompassing doctrine, communications, training, monitoring, accountability, coordination and political engagement—to more effectively ensure the protection of civilians in peacekeeping.

The administration recognizes that a key part of the problem is that troops in U.N. peacekeeping operations receive political guidance from their capitals not to take active measures to protect civilians, out of fear that these actions would compromise the peacekeepers impartiality and would place the troops at greater risk. The U.S. Government is therefore also making concerted diplomatic efforts to address this challenge. It is engaging troop contributors at a political level to press them to change their approach. The U.S. Government is also working with like-minded countries. For example, Rwanda plans to host a high-level conference in March on improving the protection of civilians in U.N. peacekeeping Operations.

*Question.* The U.S. Ambassador for U.N. Management and Reform is tasked with promoting a culture of accountability, integrity and transparency. Protecting legitimate whistleblowers is critical to success in this effort. How effective do you think the U.N.'s whistleblower policy has been in serving the organization? What are the policy's strengths, and which specific weaknesses do you believe need to be addressed?

*Answer.* The administration remains deeply committed to advancing accountability, integrity, and transparency reforms throughout the U.N. system. Since the U.N. Ethics Office became operational in January 2006, it has significantly improved whistleblower protections for all U.N. Secretariat officials. In December 2007, the Secretary General established an ethics framework for the U.N. Secretariat and the U.N. funds and programs (ST/SGB/2007/11), requiring all U.N. funds and programs to establish independent ethics offices. The U.N. policy is designed to protect U.N. personnel against retaliation and reverse administrative actions deemed to be retaliatory. The ethics framework also established the U.N. Ethics Panel, to unify ethical standards and provide a mechanism for staff to appeal ethics rulings and decisions by their organization.

Through an ongoing dialogue with the U.N. Ethics Director and other senior U.N. officials, I will continue to promote improvements to the culture of accountability



and protections for whistleblowers at the United Nations. At the urging of the United States and other major donors, U.N. member states requested the Secretary General to expedite the development of strengthened protections against whistleblower retaliation. To facilitate that process, the U.N. Ethics Office is currently reviewing the effectiveness of the current policy. The U.N. Ethics Office is expected to report its findings in 2015. To strengthen the culture of accountability, I will continue to advocate for the Ethics Director to have greater authority in order to make binding recommendations. Finally, in addition to providing remedies for victims of retaliation, I believe greater action should be taken to hold perpetrators of misconduct accountable.

*Question.* The U.N.'s internal justice system was reformed in 2009, and many observers agree that the reforms improved the effectiveness of the system. At the same time, however, some staff members and their attorneys have argued that the reforms did not go far enough.

- ◆ What is your opinion of the reforms made, and are you satisfied with them?
- ◆ Are there aspects of the justice system that concern you still? How might these concerns be addressed?

*Answer.* The United States was one of the primary architects of the reform of the previous U.N. administration of justice system in 2009. Over the past 5 years, the new United Nations Dispute Tribunal and Appeals Tribunal, along with a number of other innovative reforms, have made a positive impact on the transparency, fairness, efficiency, and accountability of the United Nations personnel system.

The administration is particularly pleased that the caseload of the Tribunals appears to be stabilizing. We applaud efforts to ensure easy access to the jurisprudence of the Tribunals allowing U.N. staff and management, as well as anyone acting as legal representatives, to inform themselves about the latest developments of the jurisprudence, to establish precedent that can guide the assessment of other cases, and to better understand relevant rules and regulations as applied by the Tribunals.

Now that the system is established, it is important to turn a critical eye toward evaluating its effectiveness. There are a number of issues that need to be monitored and addressed. These include ensuring that the Dispute Tribunal and Appeals Tribunal do not exercise powers beyond those conferred under their respective statutes and ensuring that recourse to general principles of law and the Charter, by the Tribunals, takes place within the context of, and consistent with, statutes and relevant General Assembly resolutions, regulations, rules, and administrative issuances. Of course we respect the independence of the Tribunals, but we also believe that these issues must be addressed to prevent judicial overreach.

This administration strongly supported the General Assembly's request last year for the Secretary General to present a proposal for conducting an interim independent assessment of the formal administration of justice, and the United States is currently exploring how the Secretary General can form an independent panel to conduct the assessment in a cost-efficient manner.

*Question.* Some observers and experts, including U.S. policymakers, have argued that the U.N. Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) should not rely on funding from the U.N. programs and bodies that it audits in order to avoid a real or perceived conflict of interest.

- ◆ Do you agree with this assessment? Please explain. What steps, if any, is the United States taking to achieve operational independence for OIOS?

*Answer.* As the U.N.'s internal watchdog, we believe that OIOS should have all the tools it needs to conduct its work as efficiently and effectively as possible. Operational independence and jurisdiction over its budget and personnel decisions are essential for OIOS to perform its oversight functions free from influence by the organizations and officials it oversees. OIOS funding comes from three sources—regular budget, peacekeeping, and extra-budgetary sources. The United States remains concerned that this funding structure limits OIOS' flexibility to utilize resources where needed, restricting its ability to achieve its organizational goals.

The United States will continue to strongly support efforts to revitalize OIOS and further strengthen its core functions of audit, investigation, and evaluation. We worked tirelessly in the General Assembly to establish an Assistant Secretary General position to serve as OIOS deputy to elevate OIOS' role within the U.N. system. The Fifth Committee of the 69th session of the U.N. General Assembly is currently reviewing OIOS' annual report and the resolutions which govern OIOS. The United States is engaged with like-minded member states to use this mandate review as an opportunity to increase OIOS' operational and budgetary independence. The OIOS is also conducting a review of its funding arrangements, including its impact

on operational independence. We will work with OIOS and member states to propose improvements to its funding structure and improve its operational independence, and I look forward to consulting with Congress on the results of these discussions, if confirmed.

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RESPONSE OF RICHARD RAHUL VERMA TO QUESTION  
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BARBARA BOXER

*Question.* As you know, the United States has made gender equality and efforts to combat gender-based violence a priority within its foreign policy. In India, rape and sexual violence against women have been long-standing challenges that have received increased attention in recent months due to high profile attacks on women and girls.

- ◆ How can the United States utilize the tools and actions outlined in the U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally to better respond to gender-based violence in India?
- ◆ If confirmed, how will you work to demonstrate the United States continued commitment to the basic human rights of Indian women and girls?

*Answer.* Given the global nature of the issue, gender equality has been, and remains, a top strategic priority for the Obama administration. The administration has been encouraged by steps taken by the new government to address gender-based violence and aim to strengthen our cooperation on women's issues. The United States, consistent with the tools outlined in the U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally, is seeking to renew its Women's Empowerment Dialogue with the new Indian Government, focusing on four key priority areas: national development planning and women's issues; expanding a national framework to address gender-based violence; promoting secondary education in India; and United States-India economic cooperation and women's economic advancement. Our bilateral Global Issues Forum also provides a platform to address human rights and gender-based violence. The Secretary noted during the last U.S.-India Strategic Dialogue that gender equality is a priority for the administration. As Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights Sarah Sewall underscored during her recent visit to India, advancing these priorities will help prevent gender inequality and find constructive ways to address the problem of gender-based violence, while improving protections and rights for women and girls and accountability for the perpetrators of such violence.

The USG has worked with successive Indian governments to address human rights issues, sharing our Nation's experience in forming a more perfect union. If confirmed, I will continue this respectful dialogue with the new Indian Government and continue to engage with advocates for women's rights and other civil society organizations.

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RESPONSES OF PETER MICHAEL MCKINLEY TO QUESTIONS  
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BARBARA BOXER

*Question.* The nation of Afghanistan has made important progress on women's rights in the last decade. Millions of girls are attending school, women have run for, and been elected to, public office, and many more have joined the civil service and the Afghan National Army and Police.

It is important now more than ever that the United States work with the new administration of President Ghani to ensure that the rights of women and girls are protected and that these important gains are not rolled back.

- ◆ If confirmed, how will you work to ensure that the United States continues to be a strong advocate for the rights of women and girls in Afghanistan?

*Answer.* As Secretary Kerry has said, creating opportunities for women and girls is not just the right thing to do, it is a strategic necessity. Societies where women are safe and empowered to exercise their rights and move their communities forward are more prosperous and more stable. Nowhere is the pursuit of that vision more compelling or critical than in Afghanistan. So let there be no doubt that even as the U.S. role in Afghanistan changes during the next few years, we will continue to stand with and work closely with Afghan women and girls. We will be vigilant and disciplined in our support and in our refusal to accept the erosion of women's rights and freedoms.

If I am confirmed, gender will continue to be a policy and programming priority for U.S. Embassy Kabul. The United States must support and hold the Afghan Government accountable for the implementation of its strategy to advance women's

rights. This strategy focuses on: ending discrimination and violence against women and ensuring the equal treatment of women under the law, improving educational and economic opportunities for women and girls, and implementing gender-neutral policies and women-friendly employment practices throughout the government.

We must also continue to press for the full implementation of the 2009 Law on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, increased numbers of women in the Afghan National Security Forces, and the implementation of Afghanistan's National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security.

That is why the United States is investing more in gender programming in Afghanistan than it ever has anywhere in the world. USAID's Promote project, which will be worth at least \$216 million over the next 5 years, is an investment in a new generation of Afghan women leaders. Promote is only one of dozens of U.S. Government projects that will invest in Afghan women's development in the Transformation Decade (2015–24). These projects address, among other concerns, women's educational opportunities, economic empowerment, access to justice, health and nutrition, and gender-based violence prevention and victims' assistance.

*Question.* I was deeply disturbed by a recent report from Oxfam International, which found that Afghan women have been systematically excluded from the Afghan Government's efforts to start peace talks with the Taliban.

As you may know, the United States National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security seeks to ensure that the United States promotes women's meaningful inclusion and participation in mediation and negotiation processes undertaken in order to prevent, mitigate, or resolve violent conflict.

◆ If confirmed, what will you do to ensure that Afghan women are fully and meaningfully represented in any future peace talks between the Afghan Government and the Taliban?

*Answer.* It is essential that women play a meaningful role in any future peace talks between the Afghan Government and the Taliban. This is critical not only because of our commitment to Women, Peace, and Security, but because any attempt at peace made by excluding more than half the population is no peace at all.

Ensuring women have a voice at all levels—national, provincial and local—at the decisionmaking tables and in rebuilding their nation alongside men will help to consolidate security gains. That is why the international community has made clear that the necessary outcomes of any process are that the Taliban and other armed opposition groups end violence, break ties with al-Qaeda, and accept Afghanistan's constitution, including its protections for women and minorities. As Secretary Kerry has said, "there can't be an effective peace, and there won't be, in Afghanistan if we can't hold onto the gains and continue them, continue the progress that is being made with respect to women's participation in Afghan society."

If confirmed, I will do my best to ensure women play a significant role in determining Afghanistan's future. I plan to advocate for meaningful representation of women in any peace negotiations and the timely implementation of Afghanistan's new National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security.