



S. HRG. 113-319

NOMINATIONS OF THE 113TH CONGRESS—FIRST SESSION

HEARINGS

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

MAY 7 THROUGH DECEMBER 17, 2013

Printed for the use of the Committee on Foreign Relations



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**NOMINATIONS OF HELEN MEAGHER LA LIME,
CYNTHIA H. AKUETTEH, LARRY ANDRE, JR.,
AND ERIC T. SCHULTZ**

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2013

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

Helen Meagher La Lime, of the District of Columbia, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Angola
Cynthia H. Akuetteh, of District of Columbia, to be Ambassador to the Gabonese Republic and to be Ambassador to the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe
Larry Edward Andre, Jr., of Virginia, to be Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Mauritania
Eric T. Schultz, of Virginia, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Zambia

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 3:50 p.m., in room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Christopher Coons presiding.

Present: Senators Coons, Murphy, and Flake.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. CHRISTOPHER A. COONS,
U.S. SENATOR FROM DELAWARE**

Senator COONS. I am pleased to call to order this hearing on ambassadorial nominees to serve our Nation in Angola, Mauritania, Zambia, and Gabon and Sao Tome and Principe. All four nominees before us have impressive records of accomplishment in the Foreign Service and I look forward to hearing your respective priorities for advancing U.S. interests in your posts if confirmed. Our four nominees today will serve at a particularly significant moment, in which the United States is seeking to strengthen its economic ties with Africa and engage more deeply to deal with regional challenges and security development.

Our first nominee is Ambassador Helen La Lime, for Angola. Angola is one of the largest oil-producing and exporting nations on the continent and an important regional power. Angola also faces extremes of income inequality and struggles with the ramifications of what was a 27-year-long civil war, political domination by a small elite, and lack of political will to achieve transparency and accountability, and a challenging human rights record.

The United States-Angola relationship is not an easy one. I am particularly interested in how we can promote good governance, respect for human rights, diversify trade, and strengthen our ties with Angola's military.

For this important post, the President has nominated Ambassador La Lime, who is no stranger to diplomacy or Angola. A career member of the Senior Foreign Service of the U.S. State Department with the rank of Minister Counselor, Ambassador La Lime most recently served as DCM and Chargé d'Affaires in South Africa. She has served as consul general in Cape Town, Ambassador to Mozambique, DCM in Morocco, and Director of the Office of Central African Affairs.

Just north of Angola lies Gabon and the islands of Sao Tome and Principe. Thanks to its rich natural resources and to Gabon's small population, it has the fourth-highest per capita income in all of sub-Saharan Africa. However, a third of the population lives in poverty. While President Ali Bongo, son of Gabon's long-serving President Omar Bongo, has shown some reformist inclinations, the political opposition has been suppressed and impunity for corruption continues.

Sao Tome and Principe are located off the coast in the Gulf of Guinea, where maritime security cooperation has recently become critically important, an issue that Senator Flake has championed with my strong support.

We are considering Cynthia Helen Akuetteh for both Gabon and the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe. Ms. Akuetteh, a career member of the Foreign Service, has wide-ranging experience in Africa and strong mentoring skills. She most recently served as Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of African Affairs and has previously served as Director, Office of Europe, Middle East, and Africa in the Bureau of Energy Resources and as a Peace Corps staff member.

Next we will consider Mauritania, on the western edge of the Sahel, where regional security threats and concerns include AQIM and splinter organizations active in neighboring Mali, Algeria, and Niger. In addition to challenges relating to transnational security threats, Mauritania faces pressing socioeconomic challenges with a impoverished society that continues to recover slowly from a devastating regional drought in 2011. While Mauritania is one of our leading counterterror partners in the Sahel, bilateral relations are complicated by Mauritania's problematic record relating to democracy and human rights, including the persistence of slavery.

Larry Andre, the nominee for Mauritania, most recently served as Director of the Office of the Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan. Given the long history of development, governance and human rights challenges in Mauritania, Mr. Andre's recent experience will be particularly relevant. A two-time DCM, Mr. Andre will bring strong leadership, mentoring, and policy skills to a relatively isolated and demanding mission.

Last but certainly not least, we consider Eric Schultz to be Ambassador to Zambia. Home to one of the seven natural wonders of the world, which some day I want to see, Victoria Falls, Zambia draws tourists not only because of its UNESCO World Heritage sites, but also for its relative peace and stability since independ-

ence. Like the other three countries we are considering today, Zambia also faces some challenges, including some backsliding on democracy, widespread poverty, poor health conditions, largely due to the prevalence of HIV-AIDS.

Mr. Schultz is a three-time DCM with regional experience and an extensive background in economics, security, and democratization. At State he has led interagency teams on coordinating extensive assistance programs and he has broad experience in key Zambian economic sectors, especially finance, agriculture, mining, and energy.

I would like to invite my colleague on this subcommittee, Senator Flake, to make any opening comments.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JEFF FLAKE,
U.S. SENATOR FROM ARIZONA**

Senator FLAKE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I have enjoyed meeting each of you and I am always impressed with the breadth of experience and knowledge and capability those who serve in the Foreign Service bring to this mission.

I would also like to note the presence of my former colleague, Mark Green, former Ambassador to Tanzania.

I appreciate hearing what you plan to do to further the relationship of our government and our people and the people of the countries in which you will serve. As I said, we are very well served, and each of you in your own way have difficult assignments, some more so than others, at this crucial time for our government, with regard to deepening relationships with these countries.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Senator Flake.

I would now like to welcome each of our nominees and invite you to give your opening statements. I, in particular, would like to encourage you to take the time to introduce your family and friends who might be here, who we recognize are an essential part of supporting your service to our Nation. We are grateful for their sacrifices as well as yours.

We would like to encourage Ambassador La Lime, Ms. Akuetteh, and Schultz, and Mr. Andre in that order. Madam Ambassador.

STATEMENT OF HON. HELEN MEAGHER LA LIME, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF ANGOLA

Ambassador LA LIME. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Flake, members of the committee, it is a great privilege and honor for me to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the next Ambassador to the Republic of Angola.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with you and the honorable members of this committee to advance United States interests in Angola. I believe that my 32-year State Department career, half of it spent working in or on Africa, has prepared me for this assignment. I have had many rewarding positions, to include service as Ambassador to Mozambique, as deputy chief of mission in Pretoria, and most recently as director of outreach at the U.S. African Command.

Service in Angola next, if confirmed, would be especially significant on a personal level. I lived there as a child as a result of my father's position with Texaco. I hope to have a chance to share some of Angola's wonders and history with my two children, Matthew and Adriana, who are with me here today. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my family and especially my mother and my deceased father for all of the support that they have given me throughout my career.

Mr. Chairman, I would welcome and be deeply honored by the opportunity to lead our efforts to encourage Angola to further expand its democratic space, to diversify its economy, and to strengthen our commercial ties. I look forward also to supporting the Angolan Government in its efforts to increase economic opportunity and the quality of life for all Angolans.

Angola has a remarkably young population. It is estimated that more than 55 percent of its people are under the age of 20. Angola's youth are full of hope and promise, and through our partnerships our Embassy is working to build good relations so together we can lay the foundations for a more prosperous, democratic future for this rising generation.

Mr. Chairman, the advancement of democracy is an important component of our Angola policy. A little over a year ago, on August 31, Angola held its first successful Presidential election. President Jose Eduardo dos Santos became President when his party garnered the majority of the votes. We commend the Angolan people for this significant democratic milestone.

We believe it is important for Angola to expand the space for democratic debate, to empower civil society, and to reinforce democratic institutions. If confirmed, I will support Angola's efforts to build upon the gains of the last decade, to increase transparency and accountability, and to address the persistent challenge of corruption.

Mr. Chairman, Angola's rich endowment of natural resources, oil and diamonds, has fueled a strong economy, made it a major sub-Saharan trading partner with the United States, and a leading producer of oil. If the vast deep water presalt oil deposits prove viable, Angola has the potential to significantly increase its oil production in the coming years. United States companies have operated there successfully for decades, benefiting from, and contributing to, Angola's strong economy. Other U.S. companies are now diversifying the U.S. commercial relationship with Angola.

One of the tragic consequences of the long civil war was the devastating toll it took on the nation's health delivery system. The United States has forged a productive partnership with Angola to rebuild their health system. Our mission in Luanda partners with international actors and the Angolan Government to support the development of an integrated, comprehensive, and sustainable health care system.

Mr. Chairman, whether in the form of United States support for the Angolan Government's demining efforts, combating trafficking in persons, military-to-military cooperation, or outreach efforts to Angolan youth, the U.S. Government has a vested interest in helping Angola to reach its fullest potential. If confirmed as our next Ambassador to Angola, I will continue to promote United States in-

terests while vigilantly protecting the safety of our Embassy personnel and their families.

Mr. Chairman and members, I thank you again for this opportunity and I look forward to answering your questions. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador La Lime follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HELEN MEAGHER LA LIME

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Flake, and members of the committee, it is a great privilege and honor for me to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be Ambassador to the Republic of Angola.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, if confirmed, I look forward to working with you and the honorable members of this committee to advance U.S. interests in Angola. I am confident that based on my 33 years in the Foreign Service, I am prepared for the challenges of leading our efforts to encourage Angola to further expand its democratic space, to diversify its economy and strengthen our commercial ties, and to support the Angolan Government in its efforts to increase economic opportunity for all Angolans and to improve the delivery of health services to its people after decades of war. Angola has a remarkably young population—it is estimated that more than 55 percent of Angola's people are under the age of 20. These Angolan youth are full of hope and promise, and through our partnerships in Angola our Embassy is working to build good relations so together we can lay the foundations for a more prosperous, democratic future for Angola's rising generation.

I have spent much of the last decade working in southern Africa—first as our Ambassador to Mozambique, then as the consul general in Cape Town, South Africa, and later as our Deputy Chief of Mission and Chargé d'Affaires in Pretoria. During that time, I witnessed the rise of Angola, from the ashes of war to a leader of the subregion. Since 2011, as Director of Outreach for the United States Africa Command, I have observed Angola's continued ascension to political, economic, and military leadership throughout Africa. It has been an extraordinary transformation, one of which all Angolans should be proud. And yet, Angola still faces challenges to realize its fullest potential as a prosperous, secure, and democratic nation playing an active and supporting role-building peace and stability in the region.

Mr. Chairman, the advancement of democracy is an important component of our policy toward Angola. Positively, Angola held its first successful Presidential elections on August 31, 2012. The ruling MPLA Party won with a credible 72 percent of the vote, clearly a strong majority and enough to control the National Assembly, though noticeably down from the 82 percent the party won in legislative elections in 2008. President Jose Eduardo dos Santos, in accordance with the 2010 Constitution, automatically became President when his party garnered the majority of votes. We commend the Angolan people, who voted peacefully in large numbers, in an orderly way, for this significant milestone in Angola's young democracy. Despite this success, work remains in Angola to expand the space for democratic debate, to empower civil society and to reinforce democratic institutions. If confirmed, I will work to support Angola's efforts to build upon the gains of the last decade, to increase transparency and accountability and to address the persistent challenge of corruption. To this end, I applaud the Angolan Government's decision to hold local municipal elections—currently projected for 2015—to enable and encourage citizens to hold their governments accountable.

Mr. Chairman, Angola's rich endowment of natural resources—namely oil and diamonds—has fueled a strong economy and made it a major sub-Saharan trading partner with the United States. In fact, Angola's steady and reliable oil production, coupled with Nigeria's production issues in the Niger Delta, has resulted in Angolan parity with Nigeria as the two leading oil producers in sub-Saharan Africa. If the vast deep water presalt oil deposits prove viable, Angola has the potential to significantly increase its oil production in the coming years. U.S. companies such as Chevron and ExxonMobil have operated successfully for decades in Angola, benefiting from and contributing to Angola's strong economy. Other U.S. companies are now diversifying the U.S. commercial relationship with Angola, including General Electric, which signed an agreement early this year to supply 100 locomotives to Angola with U.S. content in excess of \$150 million. If confirmed, I will work to promote expanded and diversified commercial ties between our two countries and to encourage Angolan authorities to continue their own program of economic diversification so that natural resource extraction is not the only engine for growth. I also look forward to engaging with leaders in the Angolan diamond industry as the country seeks to become the next vice-chair and ultimately chair of the Kimberley Process

(KP). Angola's leadership of the KP would present a unique opportunity to address needed reforms and production issues in the diamond-mining areas near the Congo border while also contributing to Angola's ascension as an international leader.

One of the tragic consequences of the long Angolan civil war was the devastating toll it took on the nation's health delivery system. The United States has forged a productive partnership with the Angolans to rebuild their health system and to put it on a sustainable track. Largely drawing from the President's Malaria Initiative and the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), our mission in Luanda partners with other international actors and the Angolan government to support the development of an integrated, comprehensive, and sustainable health system capable of providing quality health care services to all Angolans. If confirmed, I will continue to champion these efforts as the government seeks to maintain focus on the key, cross-cutting theme of Sustainable Institutional Capacity Development by providing technical assistance to strengthen the national health care delivery system with an emphasis on strategic information, reducing child and maternal mortality, raising the status of women and girls, and working toward an AIDS-free generation.

Mr. Chairman, whether in the form of U.S. support for the Angolan Government's demining efforts, combating trafficking in persons, military-to-military cooperation, or outreach to Angolan youth, the U.S. Government has a vested interest in helping Angola to reach its potential and to pursue our convergent strategic interests. If confirmed as our next ambassador to Angola, I will continue to promote U.S. interests and encourage Angola's further political, economic, and social development, while vigilantly protecting the safety of our Embassy personnel and their families.

Mr. Chairman and members of this committee, I thank you again for this opportunity and look forward to answering your questions.

Senator COONS. Thank you very much, Ambassador La Lime.

Ms. Akuetteh.

STATEMENT OF CYNTHIA H. AKUETTEH, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE GABONESE REPUBLIC AND TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE

Ms. AKUETTEH. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Flake, and members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today. I am truly grateful to President Obama and to Secretary Kerry for the confidence that they have placed in me as their nominee for Ambassador to the Gabonese Republic and the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe. If confirmed, I will be honored to work with you and with other Members of Congress to protect and advance United States interests in Gabon and Sao Tome and Principe.

Most of my career has focused on Africa, beginning with my time with the Peace Corps, to my recent tour as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for the African Bureau. I look forward to serving our Nation again in Africa, a continent full of promise, opportunity, and challenges, if confirmed.

I would not be here today without the endearing love and support from my family and I would like to now introduce my daughter, Tekki, who is with us today.

Gabon is an active partner of the United States. United States policy priorities are clear: deepening security cooperation, especially in the maritime domain; strengthening Gabon's democratic processes; enhancing trade and economic opportunities that benefit both countries; and assisting Gabon in the protection of its unique and incredible natural heritage and biodiversity. Our objectives align well with initiatives the Gabonese are undertaking under President Bongo Ondimba's "Strategic Plan for an Emergent Gabon."

Gabon sits on the strategic Gulf of Guinea, an important source of oil—of U.S. oil imports. It is the sixth-largest oil producer in Africa and the United States is one of its major markets. In August, Secretary of the Navy Raymond Mabus had a very productive visit to Gabon, where he met with President Bongo Ondimba and the Defense Minister. As a result, we have sent a Navy assessment team to assist Gabon in the development of a comprehensive maritime strategy.

The professional development of the Gabonese security forces continues to be crucial. I will stress to the leadership the significance that we place on respecting human rights, accountability, and transparency, and if confirmed I will enforce implementation of the Leahy law.

Democratization, transparency, and good governance are paramount for development. While Gabon has historically been a stable country, it is nevertheless emerging from four decades of stagnant development and rule by a single President. Since he took office in 2009, President Ali Bongo Ondimba has moved to streamline and modernize Gabon's entrenched bureaucracy. He has appointed policy experts, published an economic development plan, and begun to enforce administrative procedures.

On the economic front, we are pushing for the further opening of Gabon's market to United States trade and investment. For example, we have worked with the government to ensure that U.S. firms are given full and fair opportunity to participate in the development of the hydrocarbon sector. We are also helping Gabon diversify its economy through support for United States investment in other sectors, such as infrastructure development and education.

We partner with Gabon through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to strengthen the capacity of Gabon's parks agency. U.S. Marines and Navy teams have trained a unique unit of combined park and military police to secure Gabon's remote, forested frontier from criminal elements, particularly narcotics and other illicit traffickers. Gabon is a partner in the Congo Basin Forest Partnership, a United States initiative, and if confirmed I will continue to advance our shared work on environmental stewardship.

Let me now turn to the other country to which I am nominated to serve as Ambassador, Sao Tome and Principe. An island state, it is the second-smallest in size as well as one of the poorest countries in the world. U.S. national interests are served by its strategic location in the Gulf of Guinea and its respect for democracy.

To further strengthen regional cooperation, the United States provides military assistance and training for security forces in Sao Tome and Principe. If confirmed, I will continue in this endeavor and also to work with the government to develop a maritime strategy.

Most importantly, no goal will be more important to me than protecting the lives, interests, and welfare of Americans who live and travel in Gabon and Sao Tome and Principe. I look forward to leading and fostering the development of the dynamic Embassy team that we have in Libreville, which includes the first deployment of six Marine security guards.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, if confirmed I look forward to serving as the next United States Ambassador to the

Gabonese Republic and the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe. You will always be welcome.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Akuetteh follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CYNTHIA H. AKUETTEH

Madam Chair and members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today. I am truly grateful to President Obama and to Secretary Kerry for the confidence that they have placed in me as their nominee for Ambassador to the Gabonese Republic and the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe. If confirmed, I will be honored to work with you and other Members of Congress to protect and advance U.S. interests in Gabon and Sao Tome and Principe.

Most of my career has focused on Africa, beginning with my time with the Peace Corps as a staff member, to my recent tour as Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Africa Bureau. If confirmed, I look forward to serving our Nation again in Africa, a continent full of promise, opportunity, and challenges.

I would not be where I am today without the endearing love and support from my family and I would like to now introduce my daughter, Tekki, who is with us today.

Gabon is a stable country and an active partner of the United States. U.S. policy priorities are clear: (1) deepening security cooperation, especially in the maritime domain; (2) strengthening Gabon's democratic processes; (3) enhancing trade and economic opportunities that benefit both countries; and (4) assisting Gabon in the protection of its unique and incredible natural heritage and biodiversity. Our objectives align well with initiatives the Gabonese are undertaking under President Bongo Ondimba's "Strategic Plan for an Emergent Gabon."

Gabon sits on the strategic Gulf of Guinea, an important source of U.S. oil imports. Gabon is the sixth-largest oil producer in Africa and the U.S. is a major market for Gabonese oil exports. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Gabonese Government to promote security in this vital region. In August, Secretary of the Navy Raymond Mabus had a very productive visit to Gabon, where he met with President Bongo Ondimba and the Defense Minister. As a result, we have sent a Navy assessment team to assist Gabon in a review of its maritime forces that could inform the future of the development of a comprehensive maritime strategy.

The professional development of the Gabonese security forces, including law enforcement (gendarmerie) and peacekeeping, continues to be an important priority. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Gabonese Government, as well as the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) to promote regional stability and civilian protection. ECCAS, headquartered in Libreville, has been instrumental in the establishment of peacekeeping operations in the Central African Republic. To that end, I will stress to the leadership the importance we place on respect for human rights, accountability and transparency, and I will enforce implementation of the Leahy law.

Democratization, good governance, and transparency continue to be top U.S. priorities. Gabon has been historically a stable country. But, Gabon is emerging from four decades of stagnant development and rule by a single President. Since he took office in 2009, President Ali Bongo Ondimba, in contrast to his long-serving father, has moved to streamline and modernize Gabon's ailing and entrenched bureaucracy that resists undertaking reforms and inhibits economic growth and development. President Bongo Ondimba has appointed policy experts, published an economic development plan, and begun to enforce administrative procedures.

President Bongo Ondimba has reversed Gabon's longstanding nonaligned policies and strongly supports U.S. objectives on many critical international issues. In 2011, Gabon was removed from the Tier II Watch list for Trafficking in Persons due to its efforts to arrest traffickers, enhance legislation, and protect victims. If confirmed, I will continue to engage the government to do more to halt transnational crime, including the trafficking of persons. I will also continue to engage leaders from the government, opposition parties, and civil society to increase respect for human rights and protection for fundamental freedoms, and further strengthen Gabon's emerging democracy.

On the economic front, we are pushing for the further opening of Gabon's market to U.S. trade and investment. For example, we have worked with the government to ensure Gabon's tendering process in the oil sector is as fair and transparent as possible; and that U.S. firms are given full and fair opportunity to participate in the development of the hydrocarbon industry. We are also helping Gabon diversify its economy through support for U.S. investment in other sectors, such as infra-

structure development and education. These are sectors in which U.S. firms and educational institutions are already active.

Gabon is a country committed to environmental conservation. For several years USAID, through its Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE), has partnered with Gabon. In addition, we also partner with Gabon through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to strengthen the capacity of Gabon's Parks agency. This helps Gabon to administer its national parks and other protected areas and combat wildlife crimes that often go hand-in-hand with illicit trafficking of arms, gems, people, and weapons. U.S. Marines and Navy teams have trained a unique unit of combined Gabon Parks and gendarmes (military police) to secure Gabon's remote, forested frontier areas from criminal elements. Gabon is an important partner in the Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP), a U.S. initiative involving the public and private sectors and is a key African platform for addressing a host of regional issues. Some of the more notable issues include: stemming deforestation, combating wildlife trafficking, assuring economic livelihoods, and cooperation for climate change mitigation. If confirmed, I will continue to advance our shared work on environmental stewardship.

Let me now turn to the other country to which I am nominated to serve as Ambassador, Sao Tome and Principe (STP). An island state, it is the second-smallest in size as well as one of the poorest countries in the world. Sao Tome has a vibrant political scene but severe budgetary constraints have hampered the progress of democracy. U.S. national interests are served by Sao Tome's strategic location in the Gulf of Guinea and its respect for democracy. To further strengthen regional cooperation, the U.S. provides military assistance and training for security forces in Sao Tome. As with Gabon, following the successful visit of the Secretary of the Navy to Sao Tome in August, the United States will send a team to assist Sao Tome in the development of a comprehensive maritime security strategy. If confirmed, I will continue to work with Sao Tome to improve its port security through cooperation with the U.S. Coast Guard; and to strengthen regional security and improve bilateral trade links with the United States.

And, most importantly, if confirmed, no goal will be more important to me than protecting the lives, interests, and welfare of Americans living and traveling in Gabon and Sao Tome and Principe. I look forward to leading and fostering the development of the dynamic embassy team that we have in Gabon, which includes the first deployment of six Marine Security Guards since 1994.

Madam Chair and members of the committee, if confirmed, I look forward to serving as the next U.S. Ambassador to the Gabonese Republic and the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Ms. Akuetteh.
Mr. Andre.

**STATEMENT OF LARRY EDWARD ANDRE, JR., OF VIRGINIA,
NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC
OF MAURITANIA**

Mr. ANDRE. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, I am honored to come before you as President Obama's nominee to be the next United States Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Mauritania. I am grateful to the President and the Secretary for their confidence in me.

I am accompanied today by my daughter, Ruhyyih Andre, her friends, my sister-in-law, and my former boss, Ambassador Mark Green.

Mauritania is a strong partner of the United States in northwest Africa. We support efforts of the Mauritanian Government, political parties, and civil society, to strengthen democratic institutions, to end slavery, and to build a secure, united, and increasingly prosperous society that celebrates the cultural diversity of this starkly beautiful land.

The Mauritanian people are menaced by Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb. Mauritania's security forces are eliminating this menace. We assist their efforts. Mauritania supports its neighbor Mali as

that country renews its democracy and while confronting this same menace of violent extremism.

Mauritania hosts more than 66,000 Malian refugees. Since the Mali conflict began two years ago, the United States has provided over \$30 million in humanitarian assistance to Mauritania to address food insecurity and the needs of the Malian refugees.

Mauritania held the first round of legislative and municipal elections last month. The second round is scheduled for this Saturday. Presidential elections should be held in 2014.

Mauritanians are distancing themselves from a history of autocratic governance. Democratic governance, resting on a foundation of citizens' rights and integrity in the management of public resources, is the surest path to social and economic advancement. Inclusive, honest governance is both the best response to violent extremists who seek to reverse Mauritania's recent gains and an effective means to strengthen Mauritania's national unity.

Like many other multiethnic countries, including our own, Mauritania has struggled a national identity that fully reflects its cultural diversity. The mix of Arab, Berber, Halpulaar, Soninke, and Wolof cultures gives Mauritanian society its richness and ties with its neighbors. During my first visit in 1984, I was impressed by the Mauritanian people's generous hospitality, entrepreneurial spirit, and love for poetry and theological debate. Mauritanians of all ethnic communities share a deep reverence for their faith. Their tradition of pious, spiritual, and scholarly Islam is respected throughout the Muslim world.

My career in Africa began 30 years ago as a Peace Corps Volunteer living in a small village. As a diplomat since 1990, among several other assignments in Africa, I served as deputy chief of mission in Sierra Leone and Tanzania. I served in Sierra Leone at the end of a brutal war. Our Embassy played a vital role in the launch of a remarkable recovery. In Tanzania, our partnership broadened and deepened dramatically, contributing to Tanzania's progress while producing opportunities for American business.

As director of the Office of the Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan over the past 2 years, I admired the determination of Sudanese and South Sudanese citizens and of our colleagues at the two U.S. missions to build a better future in a region long suffering from war and injustice.

Mauritania has accomplished notable economic growth in recent years. If confirmed, I will work with American business to expand our growing commercial relations. I feel deeply the responsibility of a chief of mission to promote the security of resident Americans and U.S. Government employees. I also feel deeply the responsibility of a representative of the American people to apply our country's influence to the promotion of peace and human rights.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, if confirmed I will seek to build on the achievements of Ambassador Joe Ellen Powell and her team in advancing an American-Mauritanian partnership based on shared values and shared interests.

I welcome any questions you may have. Thank you for your kind consideration of my nomination.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Andre follows.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF LARRY EDWARD ANDRE

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to come before you as President Obama's nominee to be the next United States Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Mauritania. I am grateful to the President and Secretary Kerry for their confidence in me.

I am supported here today by my daughter, Rubiyyih Andre and my friends and colleagues from the State Department's Africa Bureau and the Office of the Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan. My wife, Salma Rahman, is serving at our Embassy in Cote d'Ivoire, and so cannot be here today. I am thankful for the support I have received from my family, friends, and colleagues.

Mauritania is a strong partner of the United States in Northwest Africa. We support efforts of the Mauritanian Government, political parties and civil society to strengthen democratic institutions, to end slavery and to build a secure, united, and increasingly prosperous society that celebrates the cultural diversity of this starkly beautiful land. The Mauritanian people are menaced by violent regional extremist groups, like al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb. We support Mauritania's security forces in confronting this threat. Mauritania supports its neighbor, Mali, as that country renews its democracy while confronting this same dire threat to regional security. Mauritania hosts more than 66,000 refugees from Mali. Since fiscal year 2012, the United States has provided nearly \$31 million in humanitarian assistance to Mauritania to address food insecurity and the needs of Malian refugees.

Mauritania held the first round of legislative and municipal elections last month. The second round is scheduled for this Saturday. Presidential elections should take place in 2014. Mauritians are distancing their nation from a history of autocratic governance. We know that democratic governance, resting on a foundation of citizens' rights and integrity in the management of public resources, is the surest way to achieve social and economic advancement. Representative, honest governance is both the best response to violent extremists who seek to reverse Mauritania's recent gains and an effective means to strengthen Mauritania's national unity.

Like many other multiethnic countries, including our own, Mauritania has struggled to achieve a national identity that fully reflects its cultural diversity. The mix of Arab, Berber, Halpulaar, Soninke and Wolof cultures gives Mauritanian society a special richness and ties to its neighbors to the North, East, and South. During my first visit in 1984, I was highly impressed by the Mauritanian people's generous hospitality, entrepreneurial spirit and love for poetry and theological discussion. Mauritanians of all ethnic communities share a deep reverence for their faith. Their tradition of pious, spiritual, and scholarly Islam is respected throughout the Muslim world.

My career in Africa began 30 years ago as a Peace Corps Volunteer, fresh out of college, living in a small village in West Africa. I greatly cherish all I learned from my village friends and host family. As a diplomat since 1990, among several other assignments in Africa, I served as Deputy Chief of Mission in Sierra Leone and Tanzania. In Sierra Leone, at the end of a brutal conflict, our Embassy played a vital role in the launch of a remarkable recovery. In Tanzania, our partnership broadened and deepened dramatically, contributing to Tanzania's development while producing new opportunities for American business. As Director of the Office of the Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan over the past 2 years, I greatly admired the determination of Sudanese and South Sudanese citizens, and of our colleagues at the two U.S. missions, to build a better future in a region long suffering from conflict and injustice.

Mauritania has accomplished notable economic growth in recent years. If confirmed, I will work to expand our growing commercial relations, working closely with American business. I feel deeply the responsibility of a Chief of Mission for the welfare of all resident Americans and of all U.S. Government employees. I also feel deeply the responsibility of a representative of the American people to apply our country's influence to the promotion of peace and human rights.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, if confirmed, I will look to you for counsel and support as I seek to build on the achievements of Ambassador Jo Ellen Powell and her team in advancing an American-Mauritanian partnership based on shared values and shared interests. I welcome any questions you may have. Thank you very much for your kind consideration of my nomination.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Mr. Andre.
Mr. Schultz.

**STATEMENT OF ERIC T. SCHULTZ, OF VIRGINIA, NOMINATED
TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA**

Mr. SCHULTZ. Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, it is a privilege to appear before you today as the President's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Zambia. I am deeply honored by the confidence that President Obama and Secretary Kerry have placed in me. I am also grateful for the support of my lovely wife, Klaudia, and my older son, Alek, who are with us today, as well as my older son, Adam, who is not.

If confirmed, this will be an exciting time for us to return to Africa, a continent my family and I love very much, having served only a few years ago in Zambia's southern neighbor, Zimbabwe.

Zambia's economy has averaged better than 6-percent growth in recent years, and if confirmed part of my priorities as Ambassador will be to expand opportunities for United States companies as Zambia pushes in the near term to status as a middle-income country. In particular, I am committed to increasing United States trade and investment with Zambia. United States business can play an important role in Zambia's economic future, setting an example, as they have in my previous assignments, of how to conduct business honestly, without corruption, and bringing jobs to local citizens. And those businesses can prosper in the process, doing well by doing good.

I would be especially proud to represent the United States in a country with Zambia's record of peaceful and stable democratic traditions. Zambia lies at the heart of southern and central Africa, a country of stunning beauty that can and should be a model of governance for the continent. For that to happen, Zambia needs to build even further on its democratic achievements. This has been a U.S. Government priority and if I am confirmed it will remain so.

Although Zambia has a justifiable reputation for peace and stability and a record of commitment to multiparty democracy, recently the United States has expressed increasing concern about human rights and the trajectory of good governance in Zambia. Zambia successfully conducted elections in September 2011 that were peaceful and credible and which resulted in a peaceful transition of power. Yet, recent by-elections have been marked by violence and allegations of abuse of government resources, raising concerns about freedom and fairness.

If confirmed, I will vocally advocate for an open, robust dialogue among political parties, media, and civil society in order to help strengthen Zambia's democratic institutions, to amplify the positive aspects of peace and security, and to encourage respect for the rights of all Zambians.

Promotion of democracy has been a part of my career from its beginning. In particular, I have worked to identify and promote development of new generations of leaders in my previous assignments, and if confirmed this will be among my highest priorities in Zambia. A particular emphasis will be supporting young leaders in the public sector, private sector, and civil society through the President's Young African Leaders Initiative.

One of Zambia's greatest challenges is the crippling burden of disease, including HIV-AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria. More than

12 percent of Zambians are HIV positive. In partnership with Zambia, the United States invests extensively in health assistance programs, including treatment, care, and prevention of HIV transmission, as well as building the Zambian Government's own capacity to address the health care needs of their citizens through a substantial PEPFAR program.

Since the program's inception in 2004, the United States has contributed over \$2 billion to Zambia to help arrest and then reverse the pandemic's tide. Today over half a million Zambians are alive because of the U.S. HIV-AIDS assistance. If confirmed, I will continue to constructively implement our assistance programs, ensure American taxpayers' funds are spent wisely and effectively, and continue to work in partnership to increase ownership by the Zambian Government of health care for all Zambians.

A Millennium Challenge Corporation compact with Zambia focused on improving access to clean water and sanitation facilities entered into force in November. Throughout the course of compact implementation, Zambia must continue to meet the Millennium Challenge Account indicators—in particular, adherence to standards of democracy and governance and respect for human rights for all Zambians regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, faith, or sexual orientation, as well as vigilant implementation of sound fiscal policy. If confirmed, I will champion respect for rule of law and the liberties guaranteed by Zambia's Constitution.

I hope my experience and service to our Nation has prepared me for this assignment, so that if confirmed I will be able to successfully represent the American people. My service has convinced me of the importance of American engagement in the world and strengthened my belief that effective partnerships require both respect and candor. If confirmed, I will work with the Zambian Government and the Zambian people to deepen our relationship and promote regional stability. It would be my privilege to lead Embassy Lusaka as we strengthen this partnership.

I thank you very much for the opportunity to appear before you today and I am happy to address any questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Schultz follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ERIC T. SCHULTZ

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, it is a privilege to appear before you today as the President's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Zambia. I am deeply honored by the confidence that President Obama and Secretary Kerry have placed in me. I am also grateful for the support of my wife Klaudia as well as that of my two sons, Alek and Adam, all of whom were able to join us today.

If confirmed, this will be an exciting time to return to Africa, a continent my family and I love very much, having served only a few years ago in Zambia's southern neighbor, Zimbabwe.

Zambia's economy has averaged better than 6-percent growth per year. If confirmed, one of my priorities as Ambassador would be to expand opportunities for U.S. companies as Zambia pushes in the near term to a status as a middle-income country. In particular, I am committed to increasing U.S. trade and investment with Zambia. U.S. business can play an important role in Zambia's economic future, and those businesses can prosper in the process—doing well by doing good. In all of my previous assignments, American businesses set an example of how to conduct business honestly, without corruption, and they brought jobs to local citizens.

I would be especially happy to represent the United States in a country with Zambia's record of peaceful and stable democratic traditions. Zambia lies at the heart of southern and central Africa, a country of stunning beauty that can and should

be a model for the continent. For that to happen, Zambia needs to build even further on its democratic achievements. This has been a U.S. Government priority, and if I am confirmed, it will remain so. Although Zambia has a justifiable reputation for peace and stability and a record of commitment to multiparty democracy, over the past year, the United States has expressed increasing concern about human rights and the trajectory of good governance in Zambia. If confirmed, I will encourage Zambians to uphold the standards they have set for themselves on human rights and rule of law, recognizing that democratic principles are in Zambia's own interest, and central to U.S. policy.

If confirmed, I will work to strengthen our partnership to amplify the positive aspects of peace and security and encourage respect for the rights of all people and the institutions of a strong democracy. Zambia successfully conducted elections in September 2011 that were generally peaceful and credible and which resulted in the peaceful transition of power. Yet, recent regional by-elections have been marked by violence and allegations of abuse of government resources, raising concerns about freedom and fairness. If confirmed, I will vocally advocate for an open, robust dialogue among political parties, media, and civil society in order to help strengthen Zambia's democratic institutions. In fact, promotion of democracy has been a part of my career from the beginning. In particular, I have worked to identify and promote development of new generations of leaders in the former Soviet Union and in Africa, and if confirmed, this will be among my first priorities in Zambia. A particular emphasis of mine will be supporting young leaders in the public sector, private sector, and civil society through the President's Young African Leader's Initiative.

One of Zambia's greatest challenges is the crippling burden of disease, including HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria. More than 12 percent of Zambians are HIV positive. In partnership with Zambia, the United States invests extensively in health assistance programs, including treatment, care, and prevention of HIV transmission as well as building the Zambian Government's own capacity to address the health care needs of their citizens through a substantial PEPFAR program. Since the program's inception in 2004, the United States has contributed roughly \$2.25 billion to Zambia to help arrest and then reverse the pandemic's tide. Today over half a million Zambians are alive because of U.S. HIV/AIDS assistance. If confirmed, I will continue to constructively implement our assistance programs, ensure American taxpayers' funds are spent wisely and effectively, and continue to work in partnership to increase ownership by the Zambian Government of health care for all Zambians.

A Millennium Challenge Corporation Compact with Zambia focused on improving access to clean water and sanitation facilities in the capital city of Lusaka entered into force on November 15, 2013. Throughout the course of compact implementation, Zambia must continue to meet the Millennium Challenge Account indicators—in particular, adherence to standards of democracy and governance and respect for human rights for all Zambians, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, faith, or sexual orientation as well as vigilant implementation of sound fiscal policy. If confirmed, I will champion respect for rule of law and the liberties guaranteed by Zambia's Constitution.

If confirmed, I will also serve as the United States Special Representative to the region's economic group, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), which is based in Lusaka. I look forward to working with COMESA's leadership to support their efforts to promote intra-African trade, remove trade impediments, and secure favorable conditions for long-term investment, development, and diversification of trade in the COMESA region—all of which can help accelerate growth throughout the region and potentially benefit American companies who do business in the region.

I was most recently the Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Kiev, Ukraine, where I partnered with an exceptional Ambassador conducting a full and challenging bilateral relationship in a large and strategically important country. One of our top priorities was the security of the mission, and if confirmed, I promise to make security, especially the safety of our employees, job one.

Prior to Kiev, as Minister Counselor for Economic Affairs at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, I led our complicated economic relationship with this key trading partner. Throughout my career, I have been dedicated to building economic ties with other countries and increasing American opportunities abroad, while at the same time upholding our fundamental principles, including ensuring the right of individuals to have governments that represent their interests.

Finally, as Deputy Chief of Mission in Harare, I worked tirelessly to support the Zimbabwean people's efforts to have a government that respected the right to freely express their opinions, assemble, and vote without fear of retribution.

I hope my experience in service to our Nation has prepared me for this assignment so that if confirmed, I will be able to successfully represent the American people. My service has convinced me of the importance of American engagement in the world and strengthened my belief that effective partnerships require both respect and candor. If confirmed, I will work with the Zambian Government and the Zambian people to deepen our relationship and promote regional stability. It would be my privilege to lead Embassy Lusaka as we strengthen this partnership.

I thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am happy to address any questions.

Senator COONS. Thank you very much, Mr. Shultz. Thank you to all four of our ambassadorial nominees.

I will start with Ambassador La Lime. First, Angola is a very important player in southern Africa, with a fairly capable military force. Given your previous role in AFRICOM, I would be interested in your thoughts about why our security cooperation with Angola has been relatively limited, what constrains that, and what opportunities there are for deepening and strengthening the military-to-military relationship and how we might encourage or support increased Angolan contributions to AU-led peacekeeping operations such as the one we discussed just before this for CAR?

Ambassador LA LIME. Thank you for the question, Mr. Chairman. Let me start first by addressing the issue of the Gulf of Guinea. Angola has been active in the regional effort in the Gulf of Guinea and has signed on to the code of conduct that was recently agreed to at a meeting in Cameroon this past June. This code of conduct requires the countries of the region to collaborate and to build Coast Guard capacity.

Yes, Angola does have a very strong military. It is my hope that if confirmed I can work with the Angolan Government to use their capacities to develop greater Coast Guard proficiency across the region.

I would also like to see Angola take a more active role in peacekeeping opportunities. I was pleased to see that, with regard to the effort in the CAR, Angola will be using its considerable lift capability to assist there with the transport of vehicles. It is my hope, if confirmed to be Ambassador for Angola, to engage with the Angolan Government to promote stronger mil-to-mil cooperation. I believe that my previous service at the U.S. Africa Command positions me to engage in that dialogue.

Senator COONS. I agree. Thank you.

Ms. Akuetteh, how do you see our potential partnership going forward with Gabon? I was interested in reading the material on the Congo Basin Forest Partnership. I had a great conversation previously with the Gabonese Ambassador about their remarkable biodiversity. They have the largest population of forest elements, for example, in central Africa. You highlight in your opening statement some concerns about the intersection between wildlife poaching and wildlife habitat.

How do we strengthen and sustain that? How do we go about that partnership?

Ms. AKUETTEH. Thank you very much, Senator, for that question. Gabon itself is very, very interested in partnering with the United States, forging a stronger relationship. Through AFRICOM we have been working with them to train their park services to counter narcotics and other illicit trafficking. We are also looking

to work with them through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to do more, as you said, to support conservation, to develop the park service. This will continue to be a priority for me as we go forward. It is something that is very much in the mutual interest of both of our governments.

Senator COONS. Sure. Thank you.

Mr. Andre, as you mentioned in your testimony, Mauritania has, despite a long tradition of poetry, theology, and piety, it has suffered somewhat from domestic radicalization. Some Mauritians have been leaders in AQIM as well as some of its splinter groups and in core al-Qaeda. To what do you attribute the increased radicalization of Mauritians? What steps is the government taking to improve its own security against regional threats, and to what extent is Mauritania being used as a training ground or a safe haven for these regionally significant players?

Mr. ANDRE. Senator, on the last point, the Mauritanian military has been extremely effective, both in absolute terms and relative to others in the region, in defending their borders, especially their border to the east, to prevent infiltration and in policing, controlling, a huge space. We are talking about a million square miles and only 3.3 million people. It is not a sub-Saharan country; it is mostly a Saharan country, 80 percent, so a lot of very remote areas.

But there have not been any attacks by al-Qaeda since 2011. Between 2005 and 2011 there were kidnappings, attacks on foreign missions, murders of aid workers and tourists, and quite a number of attacks that took the lives of the Mauritanian military.

They have the political will, and they began with a good amount of capability and that capability has been greatly enhanced through our partnership. Now, that is on the military side.

There has also been a lot of organization by the government and civil society and religious leaders to amplify the voice of those who are champions of traditional Mauritanian Islam. A lot of it is based on the Sufi brotherhoods that have come down from Morocco and it does emphasize spiritual aspects and it is quite anathema to those who are pushing these foreign-sourced ideas of violent extremism. Now, there are some that have fallen to the siren call of foreign-based radical movements. But there has been a good deal of success in Mauritania of countering those messages.

Senator COONS. That is encouraging.

Mr. Schultz, if I might. You mentioned in your testimony that Zambia has one of the world's highest HIV-AIDS prevalences. It has impressive economic growth, but obviously the humanitarian burden of HIV-AIDS, as well as tuberculosis and malaria, have made them a significant U.S. aid recipient. We have got an effective partnership. What do you see as the trajectory of our health programs in Zambia? We have made significant progress, I think, in Namibia and Botswana and in South Africa in sort of bending the curve and in sharing both the resource obligation and the opportunity. What do you see as the future trajectory for our health partnerships in Zambia and how do we make them more effective and less costly to the United States in the long run?

Mr. SCHULTZ. Mr. Senator, thank you very much for that excellent question. I frankly was a little bit surprised by the total amount of assistance that we have given to Zambia for HIV-AIDS

when I was reading in, and preparing for, this assignment. In fact, my last assignment was Ukraine. The sum total of assistance that we have given to Ukraine in 20 years is \$2 million, less than what we provide to Zambia. So it is an enormous amount of money.

It has gone to fix a huge problem. It has been enormously successful. Thanks to American assistance, the pandemic in Zambia really has truly been stopped, arrested, and it is beginning to decline. My sense is that this is not the time for us to be thinking about stepping back from that. We want to continue to provide assistance, to eradicate HIV–AIDS in Zambia.

That said, the Zambians can and should do more. I think my understanding is that they are in fact trying to do more. Although they have had very significant economic growth over the last 10 years, it is still a relatively poor country. In some parts of Zambia as much as two-thirds of the population lives below the international poverty line. So we have to be realistic about what they can do.

I think my role as Ambassador will be to encourage them to do as much as possible and to continue to urge them to take on responsibility themselves for the health care of Zambians.

Thank you, Senator.

Senator COONS. Thank you.

Senator Flake.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you. I appreciate the testimony.

Ms. La Lime, what can we do that we are not doing right now with regard to Angola or to expand on what we are already doing to better the relationship? It has been a tenuous relationship with the government, let us face it. It has origins back in the cold-war times. But we have helped them on public health issues, I understand, and also land mine abatement. Is that still an issue? Are we still working with them on that issue on land mines?

Ambassador LA LIME. Thank you for the question, Senator. It is important to approach the relationship with Angola, I think, as a partnership of equals and one where the United States is ready to support Angola's efforts to diversify its economy and to increase prosperity for all of its citizens.

It is important to mention, I think, that the Government of Angola has done a lot of planning in terms of its development. They have a national development plan. They have various separate development plans to cover the area of agriculture, infrastructure development, education, and health. I see the United States being there to offer technical assistance that the Government of Angola would request of us in a relationship of equals as an important way to improve the relationship and to continue to build on the work of my predecessor, Ambassador McMullen.

Yes, we have been active in the area of demining in Angola. Our total contribution to that effort stands at about \$103 million. We are continuing there with an investment of \$6 million a year to clear the country of landmines so that the government's priority goal of developing its potential in the area of agriculture can be reached.

I think if we can be seen as a partner of the country, working with Angola's other partners—we are certainly not the only one—

that we can make progress in developing this relationship, and if confirmed I look forward to attempting this.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you. I appreciate that.

Ms. Akuetteh, we have a resolution coming forward with regard to maritime security. You and I spoke about my concerns that we not let the situation in the Gulf of Guinea get anything like it got on the other side of Africa. Are we doing enough there? What should our priority be at this time?

Ms. AKUETTEH. Thank you very much for that question, Senator. I think we are making very important progress with regard to maritime security. The countries of the region certainly recognize that, and I think one of the very encouraging signs is that they themselves are working together as a region, that they are doing intelligence-sharing, that they have signed, as Ambassador La Lime indicated, a code of conduct, where the countries themselves are sharing information, doing training. We also will be doing training in the spring, doing naval exercises. There is more that we can do, particularly as we look at the high seas. I think strengthening the capacity of those countries to protect their own borders is very critical and I am very encouraged by the Secretary of the Navy's visit in August to Gabon and also Sao Tome and Principe and the fact that we are assisting them with an overall maritime security strategy.

Senator FLAKE. I appreciate that. I hope that, if there are things that we ought to be doing in the Senate and the House, that you will let us know.

Ms. AKUETTEH. Yes. I very much look forward to working with you if confirmed.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Mr. Schultz, what is all this on Victoria Falls? Is it in Zimbabwe? You served in Zimbabwe and now Zambia.

Mr. SCHULTZ. Mr. Senator, thank you very much for that controversial question. [Laughter.]

When I served in Zimbabwe, of course it was in Zimbabwe. Now that I am, if confirmed, going to Zambia, it is clearly in Zambia.

Senator FLAKE. You are a diplomat.

With regard to development of Zambia, you mentioned that one of your priorities is to make sure that the United States—that we further our commercial relationships with Zambia. There we do have a competitor, China in particular. They are into mineral extraction in a lot of areas of Africa, including Zambia. What can we do to help U.S. companies feel welcome there? Are these rule of law issues, contracts? Where do we need to work to encourage U.S. cooperation there?

Mr. SCHULTZ. Thank you again. It is a superb question. The thing that actually sticks out to me about Zambia's economic relations is that China is their No. 1 economic partner. The United States is 11th. The Chinese total stock of investment is over \$2 billion. That is also true of South Africa and the United Kingdom. The United States by contrast is \$140 million.

I am not sure that the issue in Zambia is a lack of a welcome for American companies. I think it is a question of getting American companies interested in Zambia and understanding the potential to be successful there. The country has enormous agricultural

potential. It has enormous tourist potential. Victoria Falls is just one small part of that, really. And of course there is mining. It is the world second- or third-biggest exporter of copper.

So the opportunities are there for American businesses to be very successful. I see it as my job, if confirmed as Ambassador, to try to attract American companies to Zambia. And once they come, of course, then it is also my responsibility as Ambassador to protect them, to make sure that they are treated fairly and the same as all the other companies in the country.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Mr. Andre, obviously we are concerned about Al Qaeda in the Maghreb. What is Mauritania's biggest challenge? The extreme poverty we have seen in other areas that lends to people latching onto movements that they would not otherwise latch onto? Is it a function of cooperating on intelligence issues with the government? Where is the biggest challenge that we have in bettering the situation so that the probability is that this will not be a problem going forward?

Mr. ANDRE. Sir, I would say if you look at where the terrorists are drawn from, it is often the middle class, those who actually become the foot soldiers. It is not those who are the most poor. That said, a rising successful country gives less reason for frustrated young people to look for radical solutions outside their own local context.

In fact, Mauritania has been showing greater success. Its economy has been growing at a significant rate for the last few years. We would look to see that continue. We would look to see their democratic institutions, which are fragile, deepen and that people see that they can have a successful life following what have been traditional patterns in Mauritania when it comes to these sorts of behavior.

That said, Mauritania will not advance and become a fully successful modern country if they do not take care of certain very severe issues that are holding them back. First on that list is slavery, the institution of slavery.

Senator FLAKE. How about intelligence? Do we have good intelligence cooperation with their government?

Mr. ANDRE. Yes, the answer to that is yes. In my consultations with both our military colleagues and our intelligence colleagues, they are big fans and are quite happy with the fulsome cooperation that they are receiving.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you all.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Senator Flake.

I would like to welcome Senator Murphy.

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

Welcome to all of you. I just have one question with respect to Angola. I was struck in sort of looking at the materials in preparation for this hearing how substantial U.S. imports from Angola have dropped in recent years, from I guess about 18 billion in 2008 to around 9.6 billion. I do not know all the underlying reasons for that, but I assume some of it is that we have just a decreasing demand for foreign oil, which is going to be the story of this country, hopefully, for a long time into the future.

Meanwhile, we have seen substantial investment in Angola from the Chinese, who, although they are developing their own internal energy resources, that is certainly not enough to quell their interest in developing more avenues to import foreign natural resources.

So I guess my question is, given that trendline is likely to continue, that Angolan oil will probably be less to us and more to the Chinese, and given the sort of fits and starts of our relationship there, how do we compare with the Chinese in terms of the future scope of our partnership and of our investments there? Do you foresee that our interests there will—that our exports coming out of Angola will continue to decline as foreign oil becomes less and less important? And do you perceive that Chinese interests there and exports will continue to increase as they pump more and more money into that sector?

Ambassador LA LIME. Thank you for that question, Senator. The Chinese—the partnership that Angola has with China is a very strong one. Fifteen percent of China's oil comes from Angola; 40 percent of Angola's oil goes to China.

And yes, the levels of trade with us have declined because of the development of our own oil sector. But I do not think that that means that we are on a path toward greater decline if we are able to participate in the diversification of the economy that the Angolan Government is currently so focused on. They had in the past and they hope to develop again huge potential in the agricultural sector. Opportunities for U.S. companies in the area of electricity, natural gas, water.

So I think the issue is more developing a level playing field where American companies can compete with other companies. If that is the case, we bring expertise, technical abilities that the Angolan Government or the Angolan economy needs, has wanted, and has drawn upon in the past. So I believe that it is there.

Senator MURPHY. Just toward that goal of achieving a more level playing field for American businesses—and I apologize if these questions have been asked, but the IMF has a pretty substantial commitment to Angola today. What strings related to transparency does that money come with, and is there an expectation that that IMF commitment will allow for some of the reforms to be made?

Ambassador LA LIME. The IMF had a standby arrangement with Angola. It was concluded in 2012, successfully concluded, and that arrangement has produced very positive results—greater fiscal transparency; better management of budgets; the publication of budgets; the publication of implementation of the execution of budgets. So yes, it has produced good results. I think it is important that we not lose the groundwork, the progress that has been made, and I intend to make that an important area of our collaboration.

We, through the Department of the Treasury, are offering technical assistance to Angola as they develop a national debt strategy. We are also working to build capacity within the Ministry of Finance in connection with that national debt strategy.

I think it is important that we identify other areas for collaboration to ensure that public funds continue to—that the progress made in managing public funds continues to be realized.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Senator Murphy.

With the permission of my colleagues, I just wanted to ask one last question of all of you, because I think this has interest for all three of you, which is essentially: How do we grow the U.S. engagement, economic engagement, with all four of the countries to which you will hopefully be posted? Nominee Schultz specifically spoke to the compact with Zambia and the significant investment there by China and the need to help introduce American companies to the potential of Zambia. I think it is a uniquely positive tool for accomplishing that.

In the other three countries, there is significant opportunity for us, whether in oil or in a diversified economy, and we face real challenges, and that the Chinese economic relationship has eclipsed ours significantly, particularly in Mauritania and Angola.

How would each of you in turn suggest that we do a better job as a country in simultaneously advocating for the values that we bring—democracy; transparency; human rights; inclusiveness; diversity—while facing the challenge competitively of an expansive Chinese presence, given that China frankly does not bring a comparably difficult value agenda for our partner countries to embrace. So they do not ask questions about slavery. They do not press on issues of multiparty democracy and journalistic freedom. They do not raise issues that provide challenges in terms of transparency.

So how do we balance those two? How will you balance those two if confirmed to the countries in which you hope to serve? If you would, Ambassador.

Ambassador LA LIME. Thank you for that question. I think it is a central issue in the relationship with Angola and it is one on which I intend to focus, first of all by engaging with the United States company presence in Angola, which is very strong. American companies worked in Angola throughout the civil war and continue there. You have companies that are directly involved in oil, but also the secondary service sector companies, and the companies that are providing services in connection with the development of that oil.

I think it the fact that the Angolans want the United States involved in their economy as they seek to diversify. They need our expertise, they need our skills. But to attract us, to get us there, they need to provide a level playing field.

Well, I hope to maintain that dialogue with the United States companies and with the Government of Angola. We also have a trade and investment framework agreement between the Government of Angola—we hope to have another meeting on this trade and investment framework agreement in Washington in 2012. I see that as an opportunity to continue the dialogue and to raise issues that we may have at that time, with the expectation that we will be able to work on this constructively.

Senator COONS. Good. Thank you.

Ms. Akuetteh.

Ms. AKUETTEH. Thank you very much.

Gabon very much wants U.S. investment, very much wants to diversify its economy, very much wants U.S. expertise. So that is a big plus in terms of moving that agenda forward.

We are working on a bilateral investment treaty with Gabon. What I have said to governments when I was serving as the DCM in Burkina Faso and DCM in Cote d'Ivoire in response to their clamoring for U.S. companies because of the corporate behavior and ethics that we model—that it is very important to have the right investment climate to attract U.S. companies.

President Bongo Ondimba seems to get that. In his emergent Gabon he talks about transparency. He talks about good governance. So it is working with the Gabonese and it is important that they continue on that trajectory. I think there are enormous opportunities, not just in the oil sector, but in other sectors. We have Bechtel for example working in Gabon to assist in the development of their overall infrastructure plan. These are all very, very positive signs. I think I am coming at a wonderful time.

Senator COONS. Mr. Andre, is it a wonderful time in Mauritania?

Mr. ANDRE. It is a wonderful time in Mauritania, and I will cite you some figures. Sir, in 2009 U.S. exports to Mauritania, \$56 million. Now, that, frankly, is not all that much relative to our exports to any number of other countries. By 2012 it was \$290 million. Already this year we have signed \$200 million in contracts with U.S. earthmoving, excavation, mining-related equipment producers, with signs there will be more to come.

So the trend is a positive one. There are some real issues. One of them is Mauritania ranks 173 out of 189 on the World Bank's ease of doing business scale. They have some work to do, and as friends of the Mauritanian people and as partners of the Mauritanian Government we can help point out what they seem to want to do but do not quite know how, to get our advice to be considered.

Frankly, corruption is an issue and that is an issue that is greatly debated within Mauritania. How do you find the balance between our policy prescriptions, our human rights interests? It is a matter of partnering with Mauritians, who see that it is required that they focus on these fronts to advance their own country. We, our friends the Mauritanian people, partner with the government and we find individuals that we can work with on each of these issues.

Finally, on China, about 50 percent of exports are going to China. China is very much involved in the infrastructure market and in the consumer market in Mauritania. However, if there gets to be more competition, one thing we know about Mauritians: They are quite capable of driving a hard bargain. They are quite capable of determining value for themselves. Presented with more choices, they can decide what is quality and what is not. So I am quite confident they can make those choices.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Mr. Andre.

Mr. Schultz, if you might round out the question, and if you could speak to MCC and its role in strengthening economic ties.

Mr. SCHULTZ. Thank you very much for the question. First I would say that the fact that Zambia has a relatively competitive political system imposes a kind of accountability on corruption, basically. In that environment, I actually think that American companies might have an advantage in that they have a reputation for

doing business cleanly. That is actually something that I like to sort of push when, if I am confirmed and when I am in Zambia.

I am not sure if I should say the opportunity or the fortune in some of my previous assignments to work in economies where corruption was an issue. What I found with most of those economies was that one of the key checks on government corruption is actually an independent judiciary. So actually another of my priorities is to work closely with the Zambian judiciary, which we are already doing to a certain extent, to try to create a more accountable system in Zambia.

With respect to the MCC, our particular compact with Zambia is for about \$355 million. It is to build a water sanitation plant in Lusaka, in greater Lusaka. It is obviously a wonderful opportunity for the Zambian people to have clean drinking water. We are not at the stage yet where we are even looking at who we are going to give that contract to. I tend to think it would be very nice if that contract went to an American company, but we have an open bidding process through the MCC.

So I guess my point would be that the real value of the MCC might be as a way to attract the attention of American companies, as I was referring to earlier. I think there is an opportunity there if they choose to take it, and perhaps we can use the MCC as a way to attract their attention and get them to come to Zambia.

I will say this just in closing, that a couple years ago we had the first reverse trade mission to Zambia. We need to do more of this, get more companies to come, get more to see the opportunities that are available, not just in Zambia.

Senator COONS. Thank you very much. I would like to thank the entire panel. I would like to thank, if I got them right: for Ambassador La Lime, your mother I think is here. Your daughter—is it Tekki?—was wonderfully attentive here.

Ambassador Green had joined us previously, and your daughter—is it “Ruhiyyah”?

Mr. ANDRE. “Ruhiyyah.”

Senator COONS. And Klaudia and Alek, who actually also remained tirelessly attentive to this. As someone whose young children often tire at my own testimony in a variety of contexts, I really appreciate the support and attention of the families.

I am truly grateful to Senator Flake, who has been really accommodating with the time on his schedule, and he has been a wonderful partner in getting this done. I am so grateful for your ongoing willingness to serve our country in distant parts of the world and to continue to work on the very challenging issues we face in diplomacy and throughout the world.

Thank you all very much. We will leave the record of this hearing open until tonight so that you might all be on the business meeting agenda for tomorrow.

With that, this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:50 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]