

**RUSSIA'S INVASION OF UKRAINE: ASSESSING  
THE U.S. AND INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE**

---

---

**HEARING**

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS  
UNITED STATES SENATE**

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

—————  
MARCH 8, 2022  
—————

Printed for the use of the Committee on Foreign Relations



Available via <http://www.govinfo.gov>

U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

WASHINGTON : 2022

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

ROBERT MENENDEZ, *New Jersey, Chairman*

BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, Maryland	JAMES E. RISCH, Idaho
JEANNE SHAHEEN, New Hampshire	MARCO RUBIO, Florida
CHRISTOPHER A. COONS, Delaware	RON JOHNSON, Wisconsin
CHRISTOPHER MURPHY, Connecticut	MITT ROMNEY, Utah
TIM KAINE, Virginia	ROB PORTMAN, Ohio
EDWARD J. MARKEY, Massachusetts	RAND PAUL, Kentucky
JEFF MERKLEY, Oregon	TODD YOUNG, Indiana
CORY A. BOOKER, New Jersey	JOHN BARRASSO, Wyoming
BRIAN SCHATZ, Hawaii	TED CRUZ, Texas
CHRIS VAN HOLLEN, Maryland	MIKE ROUNDS, South Dakota
	BILL HAGERTY, Tennessee

DAMIAN MURPHY, *Staff Director*

CHRISTOPHER M. SOCHA, *Republican Staff Director*

JOHN DUTTON, *Chief Clerk*

C O N T E N T S

---

	Page
Menendez, Hon. Robert, U.S. Senator From New Jersey .....	1
Risch, Hon. James E., U.S. Senator From Idaho .....	3
Nuland, Hon. Victoria, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, U.S. Department of State, Washington, DC .....	5
Prepared Statement .....	7

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

Responses of Ms. Victoria Nuland to Questions Submitted by Senator Jim Risch .....	44
Responses of Ms. Victoria Nuland to Questions Submitted by Senator Todd Young .....	58
Letter From Ruslan Stefanchuk, Parliament of Ukraine, Dated March 8, 2022 .....	62



## **RUSSIA'S INVASION OF UKRAINE: ASSESSING THE U.S. AND INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE**

**TUESDAY, MARCH 8, 2022**

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:59 p.m., in room SD-106, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Robert Menendez presiding.

Present: Senators Menendez [presiding], Cardin, Shaheen, Coons, Murphy, Kaine, Markey, Merkley, Booker, Schatz, Van Hollen, Risch, Rubio, Johnson, Romney, Portman, Paul, Young, Barrasso, and Cruz.

### **OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ, U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW JERSEY**

The CHAIRMAN. Now the Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing on "Russia's invasion of Ukraine: Assessing the U.S. and International Response" will come to order.

Let me thank Secretary Nuland for coming before us today to testify on the crisis facing Ukraine, Europe, and the world and for being with us yesterday in a classified session so that all of the questions that members would want to ask, some which could not be conducted in this forum, could be answered. We appreciate you being there.

In just 12 days, the world has changed. As we sit here, Ukraine is fighting for its life. A ruthless dictator is shelling civilians, refusing calls for diplomacy, and threatening the stability of a region.

As of this morning, at least 470 Ukrainian civilians have lost their lives because of Putin's brutality. At least 29 of them were innocent children.

The last 12 days have been an entire lifetime for the people of Ukraine, forced to leave their lives behind, spending days in subways and makeshift bomb shelters, fleeing from mortars with their children in hand, and sometimes they do not make it.

The rest of the world is being called upon to stand with Ukraine to make this war untenable for the dictator in Moscow. The United States and much of the world has rallied with impressive urgency and coordination.

I commend the Administration's efforts—the result of months of relentless diplomacy—to build a strong international coalition that has stood up and imposed sweeping costs on the Putin regime.

To date, we, along with the European allies and partners and others, have levied serious costs that are already having a dev-

astating effect on the Russian economy. The central bank of Russia is subject to unprecedented sanctions. The top banks in Russia are sanctioned along with Putin himself, and company after company is cutting off Russian ties.

We have made clear that with this unjustified, unprovoked invasion, Putin has miscalculated. He has chosen to turn the Russian state into a pariah and to have the Russian people suffer as a result of it.

I am afraid, and I hope I am dead wrong, that this may just be the beginning of the fight for Ukraine's existence.

We are here and we are prepared to support the Ukrainian people, but it may be a long road. While the response of the past 12 days is valiant, it cannot be the end.

Until Putin relents, we must keep the pressure on. That means holding Belarus and the Lukashenko regime to account for their role and acquiescence. It means continuing to squeeze Putin's oligarchs as well as the political elites and seizing their assets so they feel and respond to the pain.

In some respects, Europe has been somewhat ahead of us on this score. I think we should be doing what Europe has done. It means ensuring every bank is cut off from SWIFT. It means pressuring those countries who have not yet ended economic ties or arms sales to do so.

It means tariffs on non-oil imports and advocating for the private sector to follow the lead of some of our companies to divest and cease operations in Russia and, of course, it means staying laser focused on providing Ukraine every weapon, every piece of lethal assistance, every defense article possible, so that it can defend itself.

Many of us are working to do just that as we speak and to respond urgently to the personal appeals of President Zelensky and the Ukrainian ambassador in Washington.

I hope this week will result in a bipartisan demonstration of support for Ukraine through the omnibus bill as we heed their calls for additional assistance and weapons. We must also be thinking about the months ahead and recognize that the threat of Kremlin aggression is not going away.

I believe we must engage in a revitalized diplomatic effort to counter Russian aggression not only beyond Europe's borders, but globally.

Today, I am calling on the Administration to do just that. I have sent letters to the State Department's regional assistant secretaries asking that each detail their diplomatic strategies to counter Russia.

This must be a global effort. We need to match our words with action to fend off Putin's attempts to tighten his grip around the world and grasp at political legitimacy.

Most immediately, while I have broader concerns about the JCPOA, I am specifically concerned that returning to the JCPOA will benefit Russia economically at a time when the international community is committed to squeezing Moscow.

I am also extremely concerned that the Administration would consider purchasing oil from Venezuela. The Biden administration's efforts to unify the entire world against the murderous tyrant in

Moscow is commendable, but it should not be undercut by propping up a dictator under investigation for crimes against humanity in Caracas.

The democratic aspirations of the Venezuelan people, much like the resolve and courage of the people of Ukraine, are worth more than a few thousand barrels of oil.

These are extraordinary times and, yes, we are all looking for extraordinary measures in response, but we cannot lose sight of our core principles of our basic values.

We must turn Putin back, out of Ukraine, and out of the regions across the world where his influence has grown.

In closing, the people of Ukraine refuse to back down. Their cause is our cause because they should not have to fight. They should not have to flee their borders or leave their homes. They deserve to live and thrive in freedom.

The fight for Ukraine is a fight for democracy, a fight for freedom, a fight against a murderous dictatorship, and we cannot forget that.

Senator Risch.

**STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES E. RISCH,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM IDAHO**

Senator RISCH. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to Under Secretary Nuland for joining us today to discuss Russia's unprovoked, unwarranted criminal and murderous invasion of Ukraine.

I also want to thank you for appearing yesterday and participating in our closed discussion on the issues. I think probably you were impressed, as I was, with the unanimity amongst Republicans and Democrats about how to approach this issue and what should be done about it.

I also appreciated your agreement to convey the deep concerns that we had, on a bipartisan basis, on some issues that we are facing, and I truly appreciate that.

I look forward to your information, today in open session, about the Administration's actions to help Ukraine, the additional sanctions on Russia we can expect, and what the U.S. is doing to assist the massive humanitarian crisis that is growing both inside Ukraine and in Europe.

I also ask you to address the Administration's larger strategy for dealing with this crisis. My goal for security assistance to Ukraine is simple. Enable the Ukrainian people to expel the murderous invaders from their land and defeat Putin.

I am disappointed the U.S. did not send more to Ukraine before the invasion began, but I am glad to see the vast amount of international military support Ukraine has received in the past 2 weeks.

The U.S. has now sent healthy amounts of equipment to Ukraine. We all know they need more and they need it faster.

The international outpouring of disgust at Putin's actions has enabled sanctions on Russia to be more effective than we predicted. There are still huge loopholes that must be closed.

I am glad the Administration has cut off oil purchases from Russia. That said, it is imperative that we do not replace Russia's

heavy crude with supplies from the dictators in Iran and Venezuela.

We are in the enviable position of having the oil and gas reserves needed to increase production in our own country right under our own feet. It boggles my mind the Biden administration would pander to dictators when we can meet our own needs without blood on our hands.

Secondary sanctions on banks that undertake transactions with Russia also have not yet been imposed. This leaves open many different avenues for Russia to continue its transactions as usual.

As you know, I have been pushing for secondary sanctions since the beginning of this. I understand that the secondary sanctions are complex and I understand they must be handled delicately.

Obviously, with the waivers that are always provided, secondary sanctions can be an excellent tool. I predict that secondary sanctions are going to have to be grabbed and put into place at some point in time, in the not too distant future.

I also want to say a word about the people of Russia. We are not at war with Russia and we do not seek war with Russia. Putin has led the Russian people into disaster.

I know how much Putin is suppressing his own people. I urge them to refuse to be complicit in his crimes. There is much ordinary Russian people can do to push back on Putin's ugly humanitarian crimes.

On the humanitarian front, I applaud the work that State and USAID have done so far to prepare for and engage with the huge flow of refugees coming from Ukraine.

The stream of refugees looks to be even larger than estimated. Our EU partners are very capable of dealing with this challenge, but we can certainly assist.

I am particularly concerned about Moldova, one of Europe's poorest countries, which has one of the largest refugee populations per capita. It is struggling with high Russian-imposed energy prices and may have to deal with the activation of 1,500 Russian troops in its occupied region of Transnistria.

This senseless invasion at the hands of a madman is a threat not just to the innocent people of Ukraine, but to all of us in the democratic world. This conflict has immense implications for the people of Ukraine. It also speaks to the credibility of the U.S. and the West to defend the freedom and sovereignty of countries that want to decide their own futures.

We must do more to help the innocent civilians, women, and children who are dying each day, and the men and women who are fighting on the frontlines in a war they do not want.

I think we all know this can and will get much worse, and I look forward to hearing more from you in this public forum about what more the Biden administration will do to respond to Putin and help the Ukrainian people.

Finally, this struggle that Ukrainians are going through reminds us that freedom is not free, as we learned in our struggle to be a free people, and that the value of freedom cannot be measured, but its costs can be burdensome in the extreme.

However, at the end of the struggle, there is no greater gift one generation can pass to the next generation than the gift of freedom.



Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Secretary Nuland, we will start with your testimony. There is a lot to cover so I normally say if you can try to summarize it in 5 minutes, but we will give you a little latitude and then there is, I am sure, by the attendance here you see there will be a lot of questions.

So the floor is yours.

**STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE VICTORIA NULAND, UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON, DC**

Ms. NULAND. Thanks very much, Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and distinguished members of this committee for the opportunity to be with you here today and for the opportunity yesterday to talk in classified session to discuss Russia's premeditated, unprovoked, brutal attack on Ukraine and what the United States and our allies and partners are doing together in response.

To start, let me first thank all the members of this committee and the vast majority of members of Congress for your strong bipartisan support for the brave and resilient people of Ukraine and their government over many years, but especially now in the face of Russia's bloody aggression.

The United States, together with our allies and partners around the world, stand united in condemning Russia's war on Ukraine, a war that offends human decency, violates international law, and the core principles of democracy and international peace and security, and has created a catastrophic humanitarian crisis.

As we speak, Ukrainian men and women fight for their lives, for their country, for their freedom in the face of President Putin's imperial ambitions. We honor their sacrifice and bravery. Slava Ukrayini; Heroyam Slava.

First, what we are doing. We continue to provide defensive lethal security assistance to Ukraine. Just 10 days ago, President Biden and Secretary Blinken authorized the immediate delivery of an additional \$350 million of military support, and I am pleased to say that two-thirds of that has already gotten into Ukraine and, in total, the Administration has provided more than a billion dollars in security assistance in just this last year.

With Congress' bipartisan support, we are also facilitating third party transfers of weapons and have seen unprecedented international assistance to Ukraine from our allies and partners.

Second, we are providing urgently needed humanitarian assistance to Ukraine and its neighbors. Working with the Government of Ukraine, U.N. agencies, humanitarian organizations, and European partners, the United States is providing food, medicine, hygiene supplies, health care, and protection services, shelter support and other assistance.

Last week, Secretary Blinken announced an additional \$54 million in U.S. assistance, and countries around the world have met the U.N.'s humanitarian appeal with an additional \$1.5 billion in support. As you know, with 2 million refugees already and more than 1.2 million IDPs, needs will go up.

Third, we have imposed severe sanctions on Russia's financial institutions, its oligarchs, and political leaders, including President Putin and his cronies.

We have levied export controls on key industries and the Russian military in close coordination with almost 40 countries around the world, representing over half the world's economy, and those sanctions have had an immediate impact.

We are seeing a continued flight of capital, a tumbling of the ruble—it has lost half its value—rising inflation, higher borrowing costs, and evaporating access for Russia to global financial markets.

There is more on the way from the G-7, our EU partners, and countries around the world if President Putin does not end this vicious war.

We are also working with our allies and partners to limit the disruption of global energy supplies and to prevent Russia from weaponizing its global energy exports while also accelerating diversification of energy supplies.

We sanctioned the parent company of Nord Stream 2 and its CEO, and the German Government, as you know, has cancelled its support for the pipeline so that it will not become operational.

We are also using all multilateral fora to rally the world in condemning Russia and Belarus. As you know, last week, a record 141 countries voted in favor of the U.N. General Assembly Resolution, calling for Russia to end its war and withdraw from Ukraine—a historic outpouring of support and international solidarity.

Days later, the Human Rights Council overwhelmingly passed a resolution establishing a Commission of Inquiry to investigate and call out Russia's human rights abuses in Ukraine, and in close cooperation with our NATO allies, we are strengthening the defense and the deterrence of the alliance's Eastern Flank.

Allies agreed for the first time in the alliance's history to give the Supreme Allied Commander authority to deploy NATO's response force, including its spearhead component, the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force—the VJTF—and it is already beginning to deploy.

U.S. military personnel in Europe and in its waters now total approximately 100,000. We have more than doubled our U.S. forces in Poland and sent thousands of troops to the Baltics, to Romania, and elsewhere along the flank, along with advanced combat aviation.

A number of our allies are also starting to flow forces to NATO's east to bolster their presence and to fulfill their NATO obligations.

The message to Russia is clear. NATO is united and our commitment to Article 5 is iron clad. President Putin has not only attacked Ukraine, he has trashed the U.N. principle of self-determination of states and questioned Ukraine's very right to exist.

He is testing the foundations of international law and he is testing all of us and NATO and the EU and the G-7 and democracies around the world.

As President Biden said, we are now in a battle between democracy and autocracy, and free people, free nations, and a free Ukraine must prevail.

As Putin tries to reduce Ukraine to rubble, he is also turning Russia into a prison. Credit cards and ATMs have stopped working,

capital controls are biting deeply, imported food, technology, and other goods are drying up, and the last of Russia's free press has been strangled, all while the government hemorrhages money—money that belongs to the Russian people—to fund its war effort and to prop up the ruble.

Last week, President Putin criminalized anti-war protests and efforts to support Ukraine. The so-called consultancy laws with Kyiv can result in 20 years in a penal colony. Thirty years of progress in Russia has been wiped out in just 12 days.

This is a war launched by one man for his own twisted reasons. It is a war built on lies he has told the world, he has told his own people, and his military, and now it is a war also built on the suffering and grief of so many Ukrainians and also Russians—parents, spouses, partners, children—who will never see their loved ones again, all because of one man's evil choices.

Ukrainians are fighting for their nation's survival, but they are also fighting for all of us and for the principles of freedom and democracy that are foundational for our nation and for our allies and partners.

Together, we must do all we can to ensure Ukraine not only survives, but it thrives again. We in the Administration are proud to work with all of you towards that difficult, but righteous goal.

Thank you. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Nuland follows:]

#### **Prepared Statement of Ms. Victoria Nuland**

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss Russia's premeditated, unprovoked, and brutal attack on Ukraine and what the United States and Allied partners are doing in response.

To start, let me thank the members of this committee and the vast majority of Members of Congress for your strong bipartisan support for the brave and resilient people of Ukraine and their government over many years, but especially now, in the face of Russia's bloody aggression. The United States, together with our Allies and partners around the world, stand united in condemning Russia's war on Ukraine—a war that offends human decency, violates international law, and the core principles of democracy and international peace and security, and has created a catastrophic humanitarian crisis. As we speak, Ukrainian men and women fight for their lives, their country, and their freedoms in the face of Russian President Putin's imperial ambitions. We honor their sacrifice and bravery. Slava Ukraini; Heroyam Slava [Honor to Ukraine; to its Heroes, Honor].

Our immediate focus has been to provide Ukraine the help it needs to defend its sovereignty, protect its democratic government, and support Ukrainians seeking aid and refuge.

First, we continue to provide security assistance to Ukraine, including equipment needed to defend against threats from the air, from armored assault, as well as to ensure the people standing up to defend Ukraine have the body armor and medical support they need. On February 25, President Biden and Secretary Blinken authorized the immediate delivery of an additional \$350 million in military support, and two-thirds of that has already gotten into Ukraine. In total, the Administration has provided more than \$1 billion in security assistance in the last year and more than \$3 billion since 2014.

We continue to urge Allies and partners to contribute security assistance to Ukraine as swiftly as possible. With Congress's bipartisan support we are facilitating third party transfers of weapons and have seen unprecedented international assistance to Ukraine. Some of our closest allies and partners have made dramatic policy shifts and are providing lethal assistance for the first time.

Second, we are providing urgently needed humanitarian assistance to Ukraine and its neighbors, led by a forward-based team of dedicated humanitarian response experts from USAID and the Department of State. Partnering closely with the Government of Ukraine, as well as UN agencies, humanitarian organizations, and Euro-

pean partners, the U.S. is providing food, medicine, hygiene supplies, health care and protection services, shelter support, and other assistance, including an emergency announcement last week of an additional \$54 million in assistance to those affected by Russia's invasion. As with other forms of assistance, we are encouraged by the contributions of Allies and partners who continue to receive and support all those who are fleeing Ukraine, and who together have pledged nearly \$1.5 billion in support of the UN's humanitarian appeal.

Third, we have imposed severe sanctions on Russian financial institutions, oligarchs, and political leaders—including President Putin and his cronies—and levied export controls on key industries and the Russian military. We have taken these actions in close coordination with almost 40 countries—representing over half the world's economy—and they have had immediate impact. We are seeing a continued flight of capital, a tumbling ruble, rising inflation, higher borrowing costs, and evaporating access to global financial markets. Additionally, with Allies and partners, we are launching a joint task force to hunt down and freeze the assets—including mega yachts and mansions—owned by sanctioned Russian companies, oligarchs, and government officials. And we're not done. There is more on the way from the G7 and our EU partners as early as this week if President Putin does not end his vicious war.

We are also coordinating closely with our Allies and partners to limit disruption to global energy supplies and to prevent Russia from weaponizing its global energy exports while also accelerating diversification of energy supplies. And as President Biden promised, we sanctioned the parent company of Nord Stream 2, Nord Stream AG and its CEO, and the German Government has also cancelled its support for the pipeline, which will not become operational.

We are using all multilateral fora to rally the world in condemning Russia and Belarus. As you know, last week 141 countries voted in favor of the UN General Assembly resolution calling for Russia to end its war and withdraw from Ukraine, a historic outpouring of support for and international solidarity with the Ukrainian people. Days later, the Human Rights Council overwhelmingly passed a resolution establishing a Commission of Inquiry to investigate and call out Russia's human rights abuses in Ukraine.

At the Organization for Security and Co-operation (OSCE), we are resolved to hold Russia and its forces accountable for any and all human rights abuses, violations of international humanitarian law, and war crimes they commit in Ukraine—including sexual and gender-based violence, as we are seeing reports of this and other potential abuses.

And in close cooperation with NATO Allies, we are adjusting our force posture to strengthen the defense and deterrence of the Alliance's eastern flank. Allies agreed for the first time in history to give Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) authority to deploy the NATO Response Force (NRF), including its spearhead component, the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF).

In recent weeks, we have significantly increased U.S. military personnel positioned in Europe and its waters, which now total approximately 100,000. We have more than doubled our forces in Poland and sent thousands of troops to the Baltics, Romania, and elsewhere on NATO's eastern flank—along with advanced combat aviation. Several Allies including France, Germany, and the UK, have also bolstered their troop presence. The message to Russia is clear: NATO is united, and our commitment to Article 5 is ironclad.

President Putin has not only attacked Ukraine, he has trashed the UN principle of the self-determination of states and questioned Ukraine's right to exist. He is testing the foundations of international law and he is testing all of us. He is testing the resolve of NATO, the EU, the G7, and democracies around the world. As President Biden said, we are in a battle between democracy and autocracy, and free people, free nations, a free Ukraine must prevail.

As Putin tries to reduce Ukraine to rubble, he is also turning Russia into a prison. Credit cards and ATMs have stopped working; capital controls are biting deeply; imported food, technology, and other goods are drying up; international travel is getting difficult and expensive; the last of a free press plus Twitter, Facebook, and other social media outlets are strangled, all while the government hemorrhages state funds on the war effort and to prop up the ruble. And last week President Putin criminalized anti-war protests and all sympathy with Ukraine—so called “consultancy” with Kyiv can result in 20 years in a penal colony. Thirty years of progress in Russia has been wiped out in 10 days.

This is a war launched by one man for his own twisted reasons. It is a war built on the lies he has told the world, his own people, and his military. And now it is a war built on the suffering and grief of so many Ukrainians—and Russians too—

parents, spouses, partners, children—who will never see their loved ones again, all because of one man's evil choices.

Ukrainians are fighting for their nation's survival. But they are also fighting for all of us and for the principles of freedom and democracy that are foundational for our nation and our allies and partners. Together, we must do all that we can to ensure Ukraine not only survives, but thrives again. We in the Administration are proud to work with all of you toward that difficult, but righteous goal.

Thank you and I look forward to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Madam Secretary. We will start 5-minute rounds.

Let me start off with a letter that the Ukrainian parliament has sent us, and I want to read one paragraph of it because I think it creates context for everything we are deciding.

“As you read this, Russian troops are indiscriminately shelling civilians, residential areas, schools, and hospitals. The aggressor is using weapons prohibited by the Geneva Convention and international humanitarian law such as cluster bombs and vacuum thermobaric bombs, intended to cause severe suffering to human beings, and when civilians try to escape the combat zones Russian soldiers shoot at humanitarian ‘green corridors,’ turning them blood red.”

I ask unanimous consent that the letter be included in today's record, without objection.

[EDITOR'S NOTE.—The information referred to above can be found in the “Additional Material Submitted for the Record” section at the end of this hearing.]

The CHAIRMAN. The spokesperson for UNICEF has said 1 million children have fled Ukraine, calling it, “a dark historical first.” That spokesperson said, “We have not seen a refugee crisis of this speed and scale since World War II, and this is a children's crisis.”

So against that backdrop, I understand that the Government of Poland a very little while ago, after consultations between their president and the government, are ready to deploy immediately and free of charge their MiG-29 jets and place them at the disposal of the United States of America. They have decided not to go directly, but—and, of course, they are—they have concerns about the backfilling of that at some point in time in some way.

Can you speak to that and where we are at in that regard now that the Government of Poland has made that decision?

Ms. NULAND. Chairman, I saw that announcement by the Government of Poland as I was, literally, driving here today.

To my knowledge, it was not preconsulted with us that they planned to give these planes to us. As you know, we have been having consultations with them for a couple of days now about this request from the Ukrainians to receive their aircraft and were they to donate them whether we would be able to help support backfill in their own security needs.

I look forward, when this hearing is over, to getting back to my desk and seeing how we will respond to this proposal of theirs to give the planes to us.

The CHAIRMAN. They have moved forward now and they have said that their planes are now disposable. They are willing to give it. The one thing that we have heard consistently is a call for a no-fly zone.

I understand the challenges of that—NATO and other countries not willing to engage in a direct conflict with Russia. Giving Ukrainians the wherewithal to fight over their own airspace and to be able to have some control over their airspace is, clearly, desirable.

Now that Poland has made this decision and, it would be my hope, that other countries in the region as well, that we would be forward-leaning in finding a pathway forward because the one thing about all of this is time is of the essence. If we are going to make a difference, time is of the essence.

Let me ask you this. We are doing all these sanctions. There is no one who has been an advocate of sanctions, generally speaking, and, certainly, in this case, more than I have on this committee.

I am wondering about cryptocurrency because we are sanctioning all of the traditional financial and banking systems. Cryptocurrency is an opportunity for Russian oligarchs and others to move in a different direction.

Are we having our Treasury Department and others think about how we deal with that challenge?

Ms. NULAND. Mr. Chairman, we are. In fact, we have in the past, as you know, drained designated hacker wallets from Russia.

We have other authorities that allow us to go after crypto. Not only are we looking at it ourselves, we are consulting with our European allies and partners on how we might do more together to close down this dangerous spigot of revenue.

The CHAIRMAN. I think it is going to be one of the essential elements to continue to dry up every resource that Putin can have and to continue to tighten the noose—the economic noose—around his neck, at the end of the day.

Lastly, what are we doing in having a full-scale assault? I said that I sent letters to all the regional secretaries. It seems to me that Putin should feel the consequences everywhere—

Ms. NULAND. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. —and that means whether it be Latin America or Asia or Africa, we need to be at the forefront of pressuring Russia in all of those continents, in all of those countries.

Are we actively engaged in doing that?

Ms. NULAND. Mr. Chairman, we are. Not only are we pressing every country that we speak to at the president and secretaries level and all the levels in the department, every single one of our ambassadors has instructions to work with their host nations to try to get them to match U.S. and EU and allied sanctions to the extent that they can and are willing to condemn Russia.

You saw the vote in the UNGA—141 countries. There was significant, how should we say, diplomatic elbow grease went into that from allies and partners around the world. As you know, we have a number of big countries who have abstained from this fight so far and we are trying to use our influence with them as well to get on the right side of history.

The CHAIRMAN. I hope they get on the right side of history. Some of them I like very much, but they need to get on the right side of history.

Senator Risch.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First, I want to associate myself with the remarks of the chairman regarding the JCPOA. As I told you in the private session yesterday, I want to say it publicly here and I hope you will commit—you will transmit this to the Administration as you said you would yesterday. That is, there could not be a worse time for the Administration to be trying to come together on a JCPOA and announce it when we are in the middle of the mess we are in right now.

The chairman mentioned reasons for it. There is another reason for it, obviously, and I think you saw that yesterday, how united we are as the United States Senate in helping Ukraine and what is going on diplomatically and otherwise, when it comes to this struggle.

I cannot think of something you could do that would be worse to try to tear that apart than announce a JCPOA because we are going to be very divided on it. They started out saying it was going to be stronger and longer. There were two different bumper stickers, I guess. One was stronger and the other was longer.

Both of those, as we know, are by the by. They then said, well, they were going to work to get less for less. That has gone by the by, and from what everything that is leaking out now, it sounds like it is going to be worse for worse. I just cannot fathom that we want to enter into that at this point.

As the chairman properly notes, it is going to cause a tremendous amount of cash to be transmitted to the Russians as a result of a new JCPOA for the reasons he discussed.

There is no logical reason to be doing that at this time. Look, this thing has been dragging on. I know that Administration wanted to immediately reverse what Trump had done and I get that.

They have been at it now for a year and a half and it, certainly, can be put off for another 6 months. I am not asking that you end it.

I know what you are going to do and I know—when I say you, I mean the Administration—I know what the Administration is going to do and I know how it is going to wind up. At least put it on ice for 6 months until we get this mess behind us.

So that is the plea I have on the JCPOA. I think it would be in everybody's best interest to do that.

As I talked about in our closed hearing yesterday, I hope you will focus on this. We hear a lot about Stingers. We hear a lot about the Javelin. We hear a lot about the Russian MiGs that other countries have. We would like to get into the fight.

One thing that has not been discussed are other surface-to-air missiles between the Patriots, which are the big gun, and the Stingers, which are the small gun, I guess. I really think they could do some good with some of those intermediate missiles and I hope you will convey that to the Administration and work on that.

Finally, let me just close with secondary sanctions. I know the Administration has not reached for the secondary sanction tool in their toolbox yet. I would say and I would urge, the minute we see somebody trying to get around these sanctions or somebody trying to actually do business with the Russians, the secondary sanctions need to come into play.

They can be used surgically. They can be used in a targeted fashion so that we do not injure somebody through collateral damage,

either us or one of our partners. That can be done easily with the waivers.

So I would urge, again, that they keep that tool at the ready in case they need to use it, and if you want to respond to any of that you got a minute and 16 seconds.

Ms. NULAND. Thank you, Ranking Member Risch.

Let me just say with regard to the weapons that we are sending to Ukraine, as you know, we talked about some of this in classified session yesterday and we, generally, do not talk in specifics in an open session.

With regard to other systems that we might be able to send, we are working very hard and fast on that now so—and we can speak further about it in another setting, if you would like.

Senator RISCH. That is good to hear.

Ms. NULAND. With regard to secondary sanctions, I think you know that some of what we have done already, particularly, the export control constraints, has a global impact in the sense that anybody seeking to transfer American high-tech—any component—anything at all to Russia that has American high-technology in it, whether that country is Singapore or China or Germany or whatever, has to have a license. So that is our effort to create a global regime here.

As I said, we are also seeking to get more and more countries to join us in as much of this regime as possible, but we will continue to look at all of these things that you raised.

Look, we are not having a hearing about the JCPOA. I will simply say that there was extreme concern that this is not an issue that can wait, given Iran's acceleration of its development of technology towards a weapon, and the last thing we need is this war and Iran with a nuclear weapon. Thanks.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Cardin.

Senator CARDIN. Secretary Nuland, first of all, thank you very much, and we, certainly, appreciate the unity that the Biden administration has been able to achieve with our allies in the global community in isolating Russia and providing needed help to Ukraine and the Ukrainian people.

So we talk about that there is strong agreement to supply Ukraine with the defensive lethal weapons they need, and we have done that and our allies have done that. Countries have done that. We have been pretty effective in getting that type of equipment to the Ukrainians.

So I am a little bit baffled as to why it is taking so long in regards to aircraft getting into Ukraine. President Zelensky has made it clear he needs it. There is strong unity among all of us that we should be supplying that, and I know that you are not up to date as to the most recent announcements made by the Poles in regards to the aircraft being delivered to Germany.

I would ask that if this is not going to be handled quickly to please advise this committee. Time is of the essence and we would like to see those planes there yesterday.

So if there is additional bureaucratic delays in making this available, I think we want to know about it because we would like to be helpful in getting it to the Ukrainians as soon as possible and we mean, like, today.



So if you could just make a commitment to let us know if there is going to be any delays in accommodating those aircraft I would appreciate that. I know the committee would appreciate that.

Ms. NULAND. Thank you very much. I did convey the strong bipartisan sentiment of the committee yesterday with regard to these aircraft and will do so again, based on this hearing. Thanks.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you.

I want to talk a little bit about Moldova and Georgia. If it were not for the Ukrainian resistance and Mr. Putin was able to overtake Ukraine in the timeframe that he thought he would be able to do it, I daresay that there would be a real concern that Mr. Putin may be on his way to Moldova and Georgia—non-NATO countries.

What steps are we taking today to help Moldova and Georgia, recognizing that if the circumstances change and Mr. Putin believes he has the ability he would not hesitate to cross those borders? He already has. I mean, he is already in Moldova and Georgia in contested areas. They are not contested, but only by Mr. Putin believing they are contested.

What steps are being taken so that those countries are going to be in the best possible position to defend themselves in the event that Mr. Putin decides he is going to move more aggressively in those two countries?

Ms. NULAND. Thanks, Senator Cardin.

First, with regard to Georgia, as you know, we have a long-standing security relationship with Georgia. They have also contributed regularly to all kinds of NATO operations and NATO exercises and have received lots of U.S. military training and equipment over the years, which—and that program accelerated quite a bit after President Putin's invasion of Georgia in 2008. That relationship is strong and continues to be strong.

With regard to Moldova, as you know, Secretary Blinken was in Moldova. I cannot remember—Saturday, maybe—Friday or Saturday. He went with the intention of showing U.S. support and seeking to understand better what their concerns are in the context of this war and, as you know, were Putin's troops to make that landing in Odessa, it is just a short hop up Transnistria and Moldova would be next.

In response to the president of Moldova's request, we are looking at increasing not only our humanitarian support to Moldova, because they are also hosting lots of Ukrainian refugees, but border security and energy security and other things that that government has asked for, and we will continue to be responsive as we can.

Senator CARDIN. So let me ask one additional question.

As early as Thursday or Friday, we are going to pass an omnibus appropriation bill. It is going to contain a significant amount of funds for humanitarian assistance.

Is the State Department prepared to be able to implement major supplying of humanitarian needs in regards to the refugees that have fled as well as the people within Ukraine that need help? Are we—have the capacity to make sure those relief funds and relief efforts are implemented immediately?

Ms. NULAND. We are, Senator. In fact, as we saw these troops mounting on Ukraine's borders, we began working with U.N. agen-

cies, with the Ukrainians, with neighboring states to stockpile humanitarian support.

Much of what was initially available was the result of that stockpiling. We are now continuing to push humanitarian support into Ukraine as are the U.N. agencies and into Moldova, as I said, and Poland is also getting a huge amount of international support as are Romania, Slovakia, Hungary, other countries on the front line, and we will do more together with our partners at AID and in the U.N. agencies.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Rubio.

Senator RUBIO. Secretary Nuland, does the United States recognize Juan Guaido as the president of Venezuela?

Ms. NULAND. We recognize his leadership in Venezuela, yes.

Senator RUBIO. Do we recognize him as the president of Venezuela? Is that not—is that not our official position?

Ms. NULAND. It is.

Senator RUBIO. So why would we meet with a dictator, Nicolas Maduro, without telling Juan Guaido or the ambassador here in the United States that it was happening? I know you told him afterwards. Why would we not coordinate with them beforehand?

Ms. NULAND. We did coordinate with them beforehand. We met with the opposition before that meeting.

Senator RUBIO. You met with the opposition after that meeting.

Ms. NULAND. I will take that. I think it was the other way around, Senator.

Senator RUBIO. I assure you it was after that meeting and, certainly, the ambassador feels that way. He was not aware of it until after that meeting.

You are aware that the Venezuelan oil industry is in shambles after years of mismanagement, corruption. It is a personal piggy bank.

They produce about—on a good day about a quarter of what they used to produce, what we would all remember as Venezuela, and every informed person in the oil industry will tell you that if we were to buy all of it—and we cannot because some of it is already contractually committed—it would be an insignificant impact on U.S. economy.

It is—but it would be a huge benefit to Maduro. It would be millions of dollars for his personal piggy bank. So is this meeting—the secret meeting that occurred this weekend, which is published everywhere—is this part of a Russia strategy or is it part of a general pivot in the broader Venezuela matter?

Ms. NULAND. There is zero pivot in our Venezuela strategy, Senator. First and foremost, and I can only talk about it to some extent in this setting—I am happy to talk to you about it in another setting if you would like or after this hearing.

Senator RUBIO. It is not—not because it is classified, but because it is confidential with another government, another country.

Ms. NULAND. For a number of reasons. First and foremost, the mission was about visiting and checking on the welfare of our incarcerated Americans—the CITGO 6 and the other two—and as you know, we have made regular visits to Caracas for that purpose.

We were also seeking to get the Venezuelan Government back to the table with the opposition in the internationally monitored peace talks, and then there were a number of other things that we discussed that I can talk to you about in another—

Senator RUBIO. Why did they leave those negotiations? Do you recall?

Ms. NULAND. They left them because they objected to the extradition of one of—

Senator RUBIO. Alex Saab.

Ms. NULAND. Yes, exactly. One of the—

Senator RUBIO. The guy that was helping them to steal gold and sell it to Iran.

Ms. NULAND. Right. I think you would agree that if they were willing to come back to the table with the opposition that would be a good thing for the opposition's goals.

Senator RUBIO. Actually, I do not really think it would matter. Maduro has had habitual—he is a habitual negotiator, but he never leads to anything. That is why the Vatican will not even host him anymore. Other countries do not even want to be involved anymore. He uses negotiations the way Putin does, habitually, to divide and demoralize his opposition.

I just do not understand why we think that cutting a deal with Maduro now to lift sanctions, as he yesterday bragged on television about that meeting and how it is the end of—and as they mocked Guaido.

That meeting did tremendous damage to the person that we recognize as the President of Venezuela. It is incredibly troubling and it would mean nothing. We would notice nothing. He is more than happy to agree to negotiations. He uses them to divide the opposition and demoralize them, habitually, the way Putin has done as well.

I only have a minute left. Let me ask you, does Ukraine have chemical or biological weapons?

Ms. NULAND. Ukraine has biological research facilities which, in fact, we are now quite concerned Russian troops, Russian forces, may be seeking to gain control of.

We are working with the Ukrainians on how they can prevent any of those research materials from falling into the hands of Russian forces should they approach.

Senator RUBIO. I am sure you are aware that the Russian propaganda groups are already putting out there all kinds of information about how they have uncovered a plot by the Ukrainians to release biological weapons in the country and with NATO's coordination.

If there is a biological or chemical weapon incident or attack inside of Ukraine, is there any doubt in your mind that 100 percent it would be the Russians that would be behind it?

Ms. NULAND. There is no doubt in my mind, Senator, and it is classic Russian technique to blame on the other guy what they are planning to do themselves.

Senator RUBIO. Last question. I am certain that the Russians were looking at their foreign—their reserves as a way to buffer sanctions. Do you know how—now that we have sanctioned the central bank along with others, what—do we have an idea of what percentage of their reserves are frozen or inaccessible to them?

Ms. NULAND. Virtually all of them are now frozen. You notice that the country has been under currency controls for almost 2 weeks now, and the whole point of putting so many of these top 10 banks under sanctions is to make it impossible for them to get access to their cash in hard currency.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for being here and for everything that the State Department and the Administration is doing to help Ukraine.

As I am sure you are aware, I weighed in with Senator Portman over the weekend on the importance of providing jets through Poland for the Ukrainians after we heard from President Zelensky that that was his number-one request, and I understand that we are still working on that issue that we had not coordinated with Poland before they made their announcement. Is that correct?

Ms. NULAND. Not to my knowledge, and I was in a meeting where I ought to have heard about that just before I came. I think that actually was a surprise move by the Poles.

Senator SHAHEEN. One of the challenges is being able to backfill any planes that are provided to Ukraine. Is there a willingness on the part of other—of our European allies to help support this effort?

Ms. NULAND. Senator, I think what is most important in the short run with regard to Poland is that they benefit from full air security from the NATO alliance and, as you know, the U.S. has increased our support to Poland as has—as have other NATO allies so—and we are also looking at putting some Patriot batteries into Poland.

So I think that the main issue is to evaluate together what Poland's immediate needs are in the context of being a neighbor of this conflict.

Senator SHAHEEN. I, certainly, agreed with the line of questioning that you heard from Senator Rubio about the disinformation and what—if you want to know what Russia is planning look at what they are accusing us of.

Ms. NULAND. Exactly.

Senator SHAHEEN. To what extent are we working with our allies on the responding to the disinformation that is out there that Russia is putting out? Because, obviously, the Baltic countries, Poland, a number of our Eastern European allies, have long experience with responding to disinformation on the part of Russia. Are we coordinating that effort in any way?

Ms. NULAND. Absolutely, Senator. I think you know the State Department's Global Engagement Center, which you all helped us stand up and supported, works 24/7 to—with other allies and partners not just in Europe, but around the world to bring to light Russian disinformation campaigns and who is pushing them. We also work with the tech companies to try to take down false stories and we are working very assiduously on all of that now.

We are also working to try to get truth into Russia in the context of a complete freeze on independent news going there, and that is an issue that is of paramount concern to all of us.

Senator SHAHEEN. So how are we replacing the information that might have been shared through social media that is no longer operating in Russia? Are we looking specifically in that area?

Ms. NULAND. What I would say to you without getting into it in too much detail there are a large number of Russian independent journalists who are now active outside the country who make use of the internet and telegram and other channels to get truth into Russia. There are huge numbers of influencers and vloggers and videographers who are themselves working to push the truth into Russia and I think that is partly why the Kremlin came down so hard on independent media.

We, ourselves, were doing interviews at all levels with what was left of Russian independent media and any Russian state media that would have us.

We are continuing to work with lots of the journalists that we already had been working with, as have our allies and partners, and trying to find as many creative ways as we can to get truth into Russia.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Finally, as you are aware, this—the European Subcommittee did a hearing on the Black Sea region a month or so ago and one of the things we heard is that the Administration was working on a strategy for the Black Sea.

Can you talk about how what Russia has done affects what that strategy might look like in the future?

Ms. NULAND. I think the greatest concern is the fact that as Putin has installed more and more weapons and more sophisticated weapons onto the Crimean Peninsula, he has used that weaponry to threaten freedom of navigation and to claim greater and greater parts of the Black Sea, well beyond territorial limits.

You will remember from the fall—I cannot remember the name of the British ship that came under fire when it was well in international waters.

We have a regular rotation of NATO exercises and U.S. exercises into the Black Sea to show presence and try to keep the Black Sea open. We are also working on the capability of all of those states on the littoral—Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey—and I will say that Turkey has taken some very strong moves since this conflict began under the Montreux Convention to deny warships access.

We are working on all of those things, and then the strategy will, of course, also look at cyber collaboration, economic integration, fishing, clean Black Sea, all of those things.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Johnson.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Under Secretary Nuland, welcome. I have done a fair amount of negotiating in my private sector life. Generally, when a negotiation proceeds and I realize the negotiating partner is not negotiating in good faith, I walk away. Actually, always if I am not proceeding in a good faith negotiation I walk away.

I have never, ever tried to negotiate with somebody who would refuse to even sit down and talk to me. In fact, is that not what is happening with the JCPOA negotiations right now where Iran refuses to meet with our negotiators?

Ms. NULAND. Senator Johnson, we do not sit face-to-face with Iran, but we have nearly completed this agreement on the basis of—

Senator JOHNSON. Okay. Again—

Ms. NULAND. —face-to-face negotiations that they do have with our European partners. So it is not ideal.

Senator JOHNSON. Again, it is—but it is true Iran refuses to meet with us, correct? Is that not an automatic admission that they are not good faith negotiations? Why would the Administration—why would President Biden participate in something like that? That is a charade. It is not a negotiation.

Ms. NULAND. Senator Johnson, I will say that I, too, have done a lot of negotiating in my life, and whereas it is not ideal not to sit in the same room, it can work and proximity talks have been known to produce very good agreements. Over time, we will see if we can get there on this one.

Senator JOHNSON. Okay. Following up on Senator Rubio's questioning on Venezuela, it sounds like you really were not talking about buying their oil. Is that true?

Ms. NULAND. Senator, I am happy to talk in some detail about all the contours of that trip in another setting or, perhaps, in a little while. We are still in the process of working on a number of things there. The primary purpose of that mission was to go see our eight Americans who are incarcerated.

Senator JOHNSON. Again, Senator Rubio is more familiar with what their oil capacities are. It sounds like they really could not add much to anything we would do. I mean, can you just state categorically that we will not be buying Venezuelan oil? We will not—if we are going to buy oil we will buy American oil? We will not buy from a tyrant like Maduro?

Ms. NULAND. Senator, let me try to put this whole oil issue in some context, if I may. When we ban Russian oil, as we are—as the President very clearly did today, that has an impact on all kinds of things.

We already have a situation, thanks to the international efforts that we have galvanized where 70 percent of Russian fuel is stuck. The particular kind of Russian fuel that the U.S. imports or had been importing was heavy fuel and that is only produced in a couple of countries around the world.

Whereas we have—we want to ban Russian oil, we also need to find a way—if we do not want to have major economic impacts as a result of this war and the squeeze on oil around the world, we have to find a way to get more capacity into the system.

Senator JOHNSON. Okay. Again, you are not ruling out buying oil from the tyrant Maduro in Venezuela? You are not ruling that out?

Ms. NULAND. I will come back to you on that question.

Senator JOHNSON. Okay. We have seen some protests in Russia. Seems like they are being suppressed pretty effectively. People are being jailed.

What information are those individuals getting, how are they getting it, and what is the U.S. doing to make sure that the Russian people get more of the truth and less Russian propaganda?

Ms. NULAND. Again, President Putin is scared of what we were already doing, so scared that he had to choke off the rest of the—what was left of the free press in Russia.

As I mentioned to Senator Shaheen, we have—we and our allies have broad and deep relationships with lots of Russian journalists and lots of Russian brave influencers outside—operating outside of Russia who are able to push their information into Russia by various means.

We also have RFE/RL, which, though it has been closed down in Russia, has a relatively sizable listenership and viewership through the web, which—through the internet, which the—President Putin has not yet closed down in Russia.

We are working on lots of different ways to try to get truth into Russia. I will say that brave Ukrainians, whether they are individual citizens with their cell phones or Ukrainian journalists, have documented mass—the same pictures that we are seeing on our TV are now being packaged by some of these Russian journalists to get back into Russia and to get the truth to them despite President Putin's effort to blind his own people.

Senator JOHNSON. I hope part of the truth we are going to be broadcasting to Russia is just how much the oligarchs, Putin, has stolen from the Russian people. I hope we—as we confiscate that wealth, which I hope we do, I hope we lay it out for the Russian people.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Coons.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Chairman Menendez.

Thank you, Under Secretary Nuland, both for this hearing and for last night's classified briefing. I wish the American people could see the determined and strong and bipartisan engagement that I am, at least, experiencing from this committee and from Congress.

Over the weekend, more than 280 members of Congress took a call—participated in a call with President Zelensky and, if anything, I have been encouraged, even surprised at times, by the unanimity within Congress of support for stronger and stronger measures against Putin and Putin's Russia for his unjustified and immoral invasion of Ukraine.

You have served for 32 years, at least, our nation and our public in the State Department and in other roles, and your advice and your insight is greatly appreciated and welcome, and I believe that President Biden's forceful leadership, the decision to proactively release intelligence in order to make it clear to Russia we knew what they were planning, to proactively invest time and effort and diplomatic resources in rebuilding our ties with the EU, with NATO, with other vital partners laid the groundwork for what has been in just 12 days a striking, swift, broad action by the West to impose crippling sanctions on Russia and Russia's economy.

I am very concerned about the humanitarian situation in Ukraine. The United Nations is planning for 5 million refugees and 7 million internally-displaced people. There are, as of today, 2 million Ukrainians who have fled the country, a million of them children. That is more in 12 days than fled Syria in 3 years.

I am hopeful that this week we will pass an emergency supplemental for Ukraine that will be no less than \$12 billion and that more than half of that will be dedicated to the humanitarian crisis.

Please help us understand. The U.N. is playing a key role—the World Food Programme, UNHCR—as well as, of course, USAID and some other impressive private groups like World Central Kitchen are responding quickly. Our partners and allies like Poland, Hungary, Romania, Moldova, as you have mentioned, are responding.

What more can we and should we do to meet this humanitarian crisis, which is coming on top of refugee and food insecurity crises in a dozen other countries around the world?

Ms. NULAND. Senator Coons, I think you put your finger on it that, unfortunately, at 2 million refugees now we may not have even half of what we will see here.

What I will say is that they are fleeing into, by and large, European Union countries who are relatively prosperous and are doing a spectacular job in their own right of welcoming them, managing them.

EU agencies are also—EU ECHO and others—working actively with the U.N. and a large number of them are also going to relatives who already live in Europe.

That might be just the beginning of this, and I think as it gets worse we will have more and more of the infirm, of the young, of those who have special needs.

What we are trying to do is to ensure that we are continuing to get humanitarian assistance into Ukraine. You have seen the horrendous pictures of people sleeping week after week now in subway stations or in their bombed out houses, et cetera. The needs there appear to be moving from early on need for hygiene products and health products and those kinds of things to now needing foodstuffs and other things.

Then we are trying to help Poland not only with its ability to flow through refugees, but with its border management because those—that first day as they come off the border is where it is most congested, and we are——

Senator COONS. Senator Shaheen and I were in Poland just 2 weeks ago——

Ms. NULAND. So you saw——

Senator COONS. —and are impressed with the level of partnership. Let me just, in closing, mention this supplemental will include something many of us have supported, more funding for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty to try and get into Russia and Ukraine truthful, accurate reporting.

I am a co-sponsor as well of a resolution that is bipartisan condemning Russian war crimes and calling on international bodies like the ICC to investigate, and I want just to be reassured that we are doing everything we can to document the atrocities against civilians being committed by Russians and to hold Russia's military and political leadership and, specifically, Vladimir Putin accountable for crimes against humanity.

Ms. NULAND. To say their, it is Ukrainians who are doing a spectacular job as they confront these horrific incidents in getting documentation and ensuring that they get that out to the world, and



we are preparing, as an international community, to respond to all of that and to deal with it and to hold President—to hold Putin accountable as well as those who helped him prosecute this war.

Senator COONS. Thank you, and thank you for your service.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Romney.

Senator ROMNEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Secretary. I appreciate your willingness to provide this information to us today and again yesterday.

With regards to the aircraft that are now under U.S. control, apparently—MiG aircraft that will be in Ramstein and it will be—able to be sent to Ukraine—I know there will be hand wringing and concern about what might happen and how Russia might respond.

I did receive a note from a friend who said this. He said, it seems to me that this war will be over when Putin is more worried about what NATO might do than NATO being worried about what Putin might do.

I know that all things associated with this conflict have a certain degree of risk, but at the same time there are people dying and there is, I think, a worldwide clamoring, including by our people here, to provide support and help to the people of Ukraine and to help end this outrage.

You spent a lot of your career looking at Mr. Putin and trying to understand his reasoning, perhaps, not his psychology. There are a number of people that said he is not going to invade Ukraine. He realizes that is a terrible decision, would not be in his best interest. Nonetheless, he did.

There are others that are writing, oh, it was because we sort of opened the door to him—to Ukraine joining NATO that precipitated this. What is your view? As you look at Putin, why did he decide to go in? What precipitated this?

I do not just mean this immediate action, but, I mean, why did he make such an extraordinary investment of his country with such enormous repercussions? What drove this? I say that not because I am just curious for the past, but to try and get a sense of where we might be headed.

Ms. NULAND. Senator, I think, obviously, those questions should best be directed to Mr. Putin. I will give you a few thoughts here anyway.

I think, over the years, President Putin's imperial ambition has grown and he is dissatisfied with the last 30 years of Russian history and has longed for some time to be the guy that helps recreate the Soviet Union, the fall of which, he said, was one of the greatest tragedies of the 20th century. Imagine that, the 20th century.

I think he has had that ambition. I think in the last couple of years he has been particularly obsessed with this and particularly consumed. He has created, as you know, a whole bed of lies about how the U.S. would use Ukraine as a springboard to Russia or that NATO would, and he has, frankly, made clear in the last couple of days that he does not actually think that Ukraine is an independent country from Russia.

I think his interior mind is now out there for everybody to see. That is what makes me worried that not only do we have to ensure that this Ukraine gambit is a strategic failure for Putin for

Ukraine's sake, but also for all of the other countries in the region, and his appetite has only grown with the eating. We cannot allow this to stand.

Senator ROMNEY. Do you have a sense of what the end game might be for Putin? Because losing is not acceptable, I am sure, in his psyche. Is there an off ramp? Are there some options that you consider that might be ways for this conflict to end?

Ms. NULAND. The way this conflict will end is when Putin realizes that this adventure has put his own leadership standing at risk with his own military, with his own people, that he is hemorrhaging the lives of the people of Russia, the army of Russia, and their future to his own vain ambition, and he will have to change course or the Russian people take matters into their own hands.

From the U.S. perspective, the end game is the strategic defeat of President Putin in this adventure.

Senator ROMNEY. Would China have the capacity to influence his decisions at this stage and are they trying to do so?

Ms. NULAND. The Chinese like to say that they are neutral in this conflict. As we discussed a little bit yesterday, we believe that it is incumbent on all of us and our leadership is, certainly, involved in this and so are many of our allies and partners.

I think you know that President Scholz and President Macron—Chancellor Scholz and President Macron talked to Xi Jinping just today to impress upon the Chinese that neutrality is not an option here, that this is a violation of international humanitarian law, violation of sovereignty, that they should not want to stand with somebody who would exact this kind of brutality on his own people, that they should be pushing Putin to stop, that they should be pushing for humanitarian corridors, that they should be thinking about their own strategic and economic interests as this war ramps up energy prices and makes it harder for them, ramps up global commodity prices. As you know, they just reported the slowest growth in some 15 years of their own.

They have an opportunity for leadership here and we are all urging them to take it.

Senator ROMNEY. Thank you, Madam Secretary.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Murphy.

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

Mr. Chairman, I thank you for your opening comments. We are all standing today in awe of the bravery and heroism of the Ukrainian people, of their government, and I am so pleased that this committee and this Congress has, by and large, been able to come together in our support for their efforts.

Madam Secretary, I want to thank you personally because I do not know that there is an American diplomat who has fought more vigorously for Ukraine, for Ukrainian sovereignty, for Ukrainian independence over the course of the last decade than you have.

First, second, and third, we thank the Ukrainian people for what they are doing right now on behalf of global democracy. It is the U.S.-Ukrainian partnership—an economic partnership, a political partnership, a military partnership—that you have helped forge, I think, that has been contributory to their ability to stand up and defend themselves. So I am grateful for the work that you have

done and for your friendship and your candor, as always, time after time with this committee.

Let me just say, I think it is a curious decision by Poland to announce their gift of several \$100 million worth of jets to the United States without alerting us first, especially since, frankly, they would be the more natural direct partner with Ukraine, given that these are MiG jets that the Poles know how to use and will, ultimately, have to help transfer to the Ukrainians, and I look forward to consultations that we will have with them about their recent announcement.

I did want to turn just for a moment to some of the questions that have been raised about Russia's role within the talks inside Vienna, and let me just ask you a pretty simple predicate question to make sure we sort of level set what this committee needs to worry about.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine is not the only security challenge posed to the United States today, correct?

Ms. NULAND. Correct.

Senator MURPHY. Listen, I, frankly, think it would be national security malpractice for the United States to kick down the road another 6 months a nuclear deal with Iran, given what this Congress has learned about the progress of the Iranian nuclear program since the withdrawal.

To give it another 6 months is to, essentially, put Iran on the doorstep of a nuclear weapon. So because you have been asked questions already about the particulars of these negotiations, maybe just draw us back for a moment and talk to us for a minute about the consequences of not entering—reentering a deal with the Iranians and, in particular, the prospects for a nuclear arms race in the Middle East to be set off by a sort of final failure of the United States and Iran to get back to a diplomatic agreement.

Ms. NULAND. Thanks for the opportunity, Senator, and thanks for your very kind words—my home state senator, we should admit here and a long friend.

Let me just say that, as you put it, the last thing we need on top of Putin's bloody war is a nuclear-armed Iran and, you know, what we can say in this setting is that nuclear capability of the kind that we do not want to see could come to Iran in a matter of weeks and months if we do not get them back into this agreement.

That is not good for the planet, and to have both Iran and Russia able to threaten all of us in that way would be catastrophic at this time, not to mention what they might do if they teamed up.

We have got to be able to walk and chew gum at the same time and that is what we are trying to do, and we do appreciate the fact that we have been able to come up to the Congress again and again and again to try to work on these issues together.

Senator MURPHY. So just spend the last moment here talking about what Russia's role is at that table, what their equities are. I know many of my colleagues are worried about the benefits that may accrue to Russia through an agreement.

How do we workshop their role in these negotiations?

Ms. NULAND. I remember earlier in my career working with the Russians during the Bush administration and we were concerned

about Iran's nuclear program, and they would say they cannot do it.

It is not going to happen. Then a switch flipped at some point in the mid odd years where they began to understand that Iran with a nuclear weapon could threaten them, and that is what got them involved in working with us and bringing China along in this negotiation.

They have been—they were partners in the first JCPOA and they have been actually very helpful in trying to get us back to where we are now, first and foremost, because a nuclear-armed Iran is closer to them than they are to us and the range of the weapons that Iran would have, first, could hit them before they could hit us.

That said, they also have the—some unique capacity to downgrade uranium, et cetera, so one of the roles that they would play in this deal would be to take higher grade uranium fuel that is only appropriate for weapons and blend it down so that it could be used in reactors, et cetera.

There have been—we have had some questions about whether Russia stands to gain financially from this deal. Russia has relatively small trade relations with Iran so it is primarily in the interest of their own national security and their own concerns about a nuclear Iran that they participate in all of this and offer to be the blender down of the fuel.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Just an observation—they are not the only country who can do that.

Senator Portman.

Senator PORTMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Nuland, unfortunately, you were right about Putin and so here we are. We have a brutal, illegal, totally unprovoked unjustified attack on our ally, a democratic country, a sovereign country, and tonight, as we sit here in Ukraine they are continuing to bomb civilian targets.

They shelled civilians who chose to walk down the humanitarian corridors that they had agreed to. They killed people who were on these corridors.

We have to remember this is something that requires us, along with our allies—all countries, really—certainly, all freedom-loving countries who care about what might happen to them to step up and do more.

I appreciate what was said today, but we have got to do more, both in terms of military assistance and in terms of sanctions, and it is a matter of days or weeks, not months, that we have to do more because it will be too late otherwise.

I think Putin miscalculated. He miscalculated about the resolve of the Ukrainian people and the competence of their military. He miscalculated about the resolve of the alliance to respond.

Let us get these planes into the country. I think it is a good sign that today the Polish Government sent out a release saying, you can have these MiGs. There are 29 of them. By the way, I wish they would also provide the 18 SU-25s, some of which are dual bomber fighters, because they could use those, too. I wish Slovakia

would do the same thing with their 11 MiGs and Bulgaria has 13 MiGs, as far as we know. Maybe more.

I hope that you will commit today, and I suppose this is in the form of a question—do you commit to do everything possible to make this arrangement work, whatever it takes?

The response that I have gotten from some in the Administration is we are not sure—it might make Putin mad. He has invaded his neighbor and he is killing innocent people, and everything makes him mad. I mean, he has said the sanctions are an act of war. He gets mad over the Javelins and the Stingers.

Are you going to do everything you possibly can to get these airplanes that the Ukrainians want badly? We have heard it directly from the president. We have heard it from other Ukrainian officials.

Can we get these planes into Ukraine to begin to provide some protection for these innocent civilians?

Ms. NULAND. Senator, as I committed yesterday, I will continue to convey the very strong bipartisan view of this committee that these planes need to get to Ukraine.

As we discussed in another setting, there are a number of factors to consider here and there are some mixed views among allies and even within the Administration.

Obviously, I will convey your strong views and the strong views of everybody that we have spoken today on this issue.

Senator PORTMAN. My time is clicking here, but it is not really a concern to me that there is some disagreement in the Administration because all it requires is for the President and his team to decide this is the way we are going to go.

Finally, the oil was blocked today or will be blocked. That is great, but it took a long time. Took too long.

On sanctions, so many questions for you. The most favored nation—I think we should use our Article 21 ability under the WTO to revoke that. If you have thoughts on that, I would appreciate it. We should seize assets, not just freeze assets.

Specific question about U.S. sanctions against Russia's biggest banks, including VTB Bank. They do not apply to energy transactions, we are told, until June 24. Is that true?

Ms. NULAND. All of the things that you listed are things that we are looking at. As I said in my opening statement, we are not done with sanctions if he is not done with this war, and we will continue to escalate. You named a number of the things that we are and will look at.

With regard to VTB, as you know, part of the strength—the strength of sanctions is when we can do them multilaterally and, particularly, transatlantically with our European allies and partners in Japan.

Because of the energy dependency of a number of our European allies, we did agree to a phase-in of some of the VTB sanctions to allow energy processing for Europe and that will fade out over time.

Senator PORTMAN. June 24—why that late date? By June 24, it may be too late.

Ms. NULAND. It was part of our building of this package with the Europeans to have a 90-day wind-down on this energy carve out so that is—was part of the deal that we struck to maintain unity.

Senator PORTMAN. My time has expired. So many other questions. Penetrating the Kremlin's information firewall, it seems to me, is a critical step here to allow the Russian people to know the truth.

Ms. NULAND. I agree with you, Senator.

Senator PORTMAN. Anything we can do in that regard to be helpful I would like you to follow up with us on that, please.

Ms. NULAND. I will.

Senator PORTMAN. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Kaine.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and, thank you, Secretary Nuland.

I add my words to those of my colleagues to just commend the cooperation of the United States and the leadership of the United States with other nations.

If the world wanted to see what U.S. leadership in assembling a coalition of democracies could produce, I believe the world has seen that, and for anyone who has questioned the value of alliances or NATO, I think they understand it now.

My colleagues have asked many of my questions so this is maybe more of a comment. There is 195 countries in the world. Two have Jewish heads of state—Israel and Ukraine. Two other nations—Panama and Latvia—have heads of state who have Jewish family members.

Vladimir Zelensky is a particular case. His great grandfather and many siblings were murdered in the Holocaust. His grandfather fought with the Red Army against the Nazis.

Yet, he has been subject to three assassination attempts, by public reporting, by this invasion, by war criminal Vladimir Putin, and the Russian missile strikes have hit Babyn Yar, the ravine in Kyiv that was the site of the largest single massacre of Jews during World War II in September of 1941.

I mention these facts because you were asked by Senator Romney how Vladimir Putin was justifying his actions and you said he has kind of put it out there, and one of the things that is amazing—this is the person we are dealing with—he said that this invasion was needed to denazify Ukraine.

So he is attempting to decapitate a government that is led by one of two Jewish heads of state in the world who is the survivor of a family of those who were killed in the Holocaust and he is doing it in a way where he is putting at risk sacred sites that are known throughout the world and across history for the massacre of Jews during World War II.

This is the person that we are dealing with. Just that simple phrase “I am trying to denazify Ukraine” suggests that he is thinking about this as if we are living in 1945 or 1941, rather than 2020.

He is willing to repeat the big lie, “I am going to denazify this country” by killing one of two Jewish heads of state in the world and decapitating the government, repeating the big lie over and over again, and even willing to attack the sites like Babyn Yar and also there is Russia attacks in Odessa going on, and the

massacre of Jews in Odessa was even larger later in the war than the massacres at Babyn Yar in 1941.

We have got to win. Democracies have to win this. The challenge, I think, that we are really grappling with is that the strategies that this Administration has put together with other democracies are showing great resolve and the Ukrainian people are showing even greater resolve, and there are early signs of resistance in Russia—runs on ATMs and banks and protests, despite repeated arrests that are ongoing.

Nations that we would not have expected to participate with NATO—Sweden and Finland, non-NATO members—delivering weapons to Ukraine. Germany, which has had this post-World War II policy of not putting weapons into a war zone, willing to deliver weapons into Ukraine. Moldova, which has much to fear, announcing just last week that they desperately want to be members of the EU.

What Vladimir Putin did in the 2014 invasion of Ukraine and the establishment of these puppet states in Donetsk and Luhansk, everyone could look at those states and see the grim Stalinist camps they were becoming from what had been thriving cities and realize, we do not want any part of that.

Vladimir Putin is chasing many nations that were not previously leaning toward the EU or leaning toward NATO. He has done the best possible job to chase them in to a Western orientation.

We need to continue to harvest that. Yet, the challenge of all of that is that may not be enough to change Vladimir Putin's calculation. There does not seem to be easy off ramps, and we talked about this during the classified hearing that we had yesterday and I do not need you to comment further on it.

If the world wants to know the character of this individual there are a lot of ways to measure it. Someone who would attempt to decapitate the government of one of two nations in the world led by a Jewish head of state whose family perished in the Holocaust and claiming that the motivation behind that is denazification of Ukraine this tells you the kind of person we are dealing with.

That is all I have to say, Mr. Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Young.

Senator YOUNG. Welcome, Under Secretary.

I wanted to follow up on the enquiries of the ranking member and Senator Murphy. Like them, I, too, am extremely concerned with reports Russia is attempting to link Iran deal negotiations to sanctions imposed on Russia for its invasion.

This situation looks to me more like Russia is trying to blackmail the United States, hoping the Administration is going to sacrifice Ukraine in a misguided effort to finalize an Iran deal at all costs.

Reports indicate that Lavrov has requested written guarantees from the U.S. with regard to sanctions relief for transactions between Russia and Iran for the negotiations to continue as a precondition for closing out those negotiations.

My question is this, Under Secretary. Has the Administration provided any written guarantees to Russia that its trade investment or military cooperation with Iran will not be subject to sanctions?

Ms. NULAND. No.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you. Has anything about your negotiations with the Russians changed as a result of their invasion of Ukraine?

Ms. NULAND. Senator, in this open setting, I will simply say that you are right, Russia is trying to up the ante and broaden its demands with regard to the JCPOA, and we are not playing “Let’s Make a Deal.”

Senator YOUNG. I look forward to following up this line of inquiry in a closed setting. Before I move on, in light of the gravity of this dynamic, how can the Administration negotiate in good faith with Russia in these Iranian talks? Would not any announced deal be immediately undermined by Russia’s ongoing behavior?

Ms. NULAND. Senator, we are not negotiating with Iran—with Russia vis-à-vis Iran. As we talked about earlier, Russia, for its own reasons, has chosen to be a participant in these negotiations because it wants to see Iran’s ability to get a nuclear weapon constrained.

This is one of those rare instances where we have the same strategic objective and, I would argue, as I did earlier, that for us that strategic objective becomes even more important because we do not want a nuclear Iran and a rampaging Putin in Ukraine at the same time.

Senator YOUNG. I am not sure we still do have the same strategic objective. That argument might have been made until just the recent days when the Iranian—rather, the Russian negotiator put himself on the internet, indicating that his position was, indeed, shaped not by—if I recall, he said that his position was shaped by the current circumstances in Ukraine—the recent developments.

Is that accurate, that the dynamics have changed on account of this intervention? If so, does Russian participation undermine the negotiations?

Ms. NULAND. What I can say in this open setting is that there may be some in Russia seeking to get extra benefits for their cooperation and participation in seeking to get Iran back into the JCPOA, but they are not going to be successful.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you, Under Secretary.

I am going to move on just another couple of questions here I will bundle together in light of time.

China is watching this entire Ukraine conflict with close interest and, surely, seeking to make the most of the situation.

Can you provide more details on the Saturday call between Secretary Blinken and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang? Specifically, what did Foreign Minister Wang mean when he stated that the situation in Ukraine has, “reached a point that China did not wish to see”?

Ms. NULAND. I am going to let the Chinese side speak for themselves. I will simply say what I said earlier in this hearing, that our intention in our regular engagement with China, including Secretary Blinken’s call with his counterpart, was to underscore that this war is not good for China—that we want to see China use its influence with Russia to get this war ended, and, at a minimum, to help get these humanitarian corridors going and that if they are concerned about their economic situation, as they should well be



with the lowest growth rates in 15 years, that this war is contributing to it.

Senator YOUNG. I am out of time. Thank you, Under Secretary. Ms. NULAND. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Markey.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for your great work, Madam Secretary.

As you may remember, you and I discussed in a hearing before this committee in December the fact that the United States cannot preach temperance from a bar stool when it comes to Russian energy.

At the same time as many voices were railing against Europe for their reliance on Russian natural gas, American fossil fuel companies were importing nearly \$20 billion of Russian oil just last year.

At that hearing we discussed the fact that American consumers were unwittingly financing the ill-gotten gains of Putin and his inner circle, the same "oil-ligarchs" responsible for enabling Putin's human rights abuses within Russia and now the unjustified invasion of Ukraine.

President Biden made the right decision today and I applaud him for that. Now we need to make it a permanent ban to build on the steps that the President announced today.

We have to permanently wean ourselves off of corrupt foreign oil and gas by investing in a clean energy revolution. I introduced legislation, the SPIGOT Act, last week to do just that and I think we should enact it so that we have that permanent ban.

Madam Secretary, do you agree that there would be value in a comprehensive United States Government report that lifts the veil on oil and gas oil-ligarchs and their involvement in a vast array of Russian human rights abuses?

Ms. NULAND. Senator, I love the word "oil-ligarchs." It sounds like a very good idea to me.

Senator MARKEY. Excellent. The reality is, though, that the only way that we can do that and make it sustainable is if we can prevent these fossil-fueled conflicts by ending our own addiction to oil.

It happened in the Middle East. It is happening here, and President Biden acknowledged in making today's announcement that we cannot wait for big oil to do the right thing or we will be waiting for as long as it takes for carbon to become a fossil fuel. We have to act as a Senate in order to take those steps.

On the question of the nuclear power plants in Russia, how is the United States supporting efforts by the International Atomic Energy Agency to ensure the continued safe operation of all 15 Ukrainian nuclear plants?

Ms. NULAND. Senator Merkley, I think you know that the IAEA is trying to negotiate some rules of the road between Russia and Ukraine as Russia tries to seize physical control of all of these plants even as it insists that the Ukrainian operators continue to operate the plants for them.

I think the attack on Zaporizhzhia was a wakeup call for not only Ukrainians and Russians, but for the whole world about the danger of close combat near these facilities.

We are strongly supporting this effort to negotiate safe practices and, as you know, at Zaporizhzhia the Ukrainian operators per-

formed magnificently in closing down all, but that last bit of power that is needed to keep the core from melting down such that it was less subject to an accident.

I think that also speaks to all the work that they have done since Chernobyl on nuclear safety. They are some of the best in the world now, frankly, with our support over many decades.

Senator MARKEY. President Biden nominated Laura Holgate to be his ambassador to the International Atomic Energy Agency. Given the potential threat to the safe operation of Ukraine's reactors and Ukraine's overall energy security, how important is it that Ambassador Holgate be confirmed by the United States Senate without delay, given what we are seeing in Ukraine right now?

Ms. NULAND. Extremely important. Laura is a friend of 20 years and an excellent specialist.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you. I agree with you, and I hope we can get it on the committee's agenda very promptly.

How concerned are you that Ukraine's other nuclear facilities could be in the crossfire or be subject to a deliberate attack?

Ms. NULAND. I think we are all concerned that the Russians want to gain physical and military control, at least of the outskirts and so, again, we are continuing to work with the Ukrainians on safe procedures and we are supporting this IAEA initiative to get some rules of the road going. We will see if the Russians do more than pay lip service to it.

Senator MARKEY. I agree with you 100 percent. We just have to move very, very rapidly if we are going to deal with these threats as they are unfolding.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Cruz.

Senator CRUZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Under Secretary Nuland, thank you for testifying today.

We are sitting here watching the most significant military conflict in Europe unfold since 1945—since the end of World War II, and I am sorry to say that this war, I believe, is the direct result of repeated mistakes made by President Biden and the Biden administration, two mistakes in particular: number one, the disastrous withdrawal in Afghanistan and surrender to the Taliban that emboldened our enemies across the globe, but then, number two, with respect to Russia and Ukraine, very specific mistakes. You and I have talked at great length about Nord Stream 2.

As you know, this committee and the Congress won a bipartisan victory stopping Nord Stream 2 in 2019. I authored that legislation.

As a result, Putin was deterred from invading Ukraine. When Joe Biden became President, he came in bound and determined to surrender the Nord Stream 2 pipeline to Russia and Putin, notwithstanding the enormous risks that came from it.

When President Biden surrendered to Putin on Nord Stream 2, waived the sanctions that had been passed by Congress, at that time Ukraine told us, if you do this Russia will invade Ukraine.

At that time, Poland told us, if you do this Russia will invade Ukraine. At that time, I told the Administration and others on this committee told the Administration if you do this Russia will invade Ukraine. We will see tanks in the streets of Kyiv.

I wish those predictions had proven wrong. This weekend all hundred senators were on a video conference call with President Zelensky from Ukraine. President Zelensky told us if the United States Government had put sanctions in place last year on Nord Stream 2, Putin would not have invaded Ukraine.

Yet, the Administration was bound and determined to continue surrendering to Russia even as Russian troops massed on the border of Ukraine, so much so that the White House put political pressure and forced 44 Democrats to vote to support Russia and Putin just weeks before this invasion.

Now, after the invasion, finally, once there were Russian troops invading Ukraine, finally then the Biden administration was dragged kicking and screaming to implementing sanctions on Nord Stream 2. As soon as you did, Nord Stream 2 declared bankruptcy and fired its employees.

In my judgment, Putin does not believe any promise from Joe Biden to maintain sanctions on Nord Stream 2 is credible. I think Putin is gambling that when the crisis passes the sanctions will be lifted and Nord Stream 2 will be turned on.

I have introduced legislation to make Nord Stream 2 sanctions permanent. In your judgment, do you believe sanctions on Nord Stream 2 should be permanent or should the pipeline be allowed to be turned on?

Ms. NULAND. Senator, I think Nord Stream 2 is now dead, and as you have said, it is a hunk of metal at the bottom of the sea. I do not think it will ever be revived.

Senator CRUZ. So you do not think it will. So let me reiterate my question. Should the sanctions be permanent as a matter of law, in your judgment?

Ms. NULAND. I do not think it matters one way or the other. I think the pipeline will never come back.

Senator CRUZ. You are testifying you have no objections then and State has no objections to Congress making the sanctions permanent?

Ms. NULAND. We have not looked at what this would do. I do not think it is relevant one way or the other.

Senator CRUZ. It is relevant because Biden waived them once in the face of massive congressional pressure—

Ms. NULAND. Senator, if I may—

Senator Cruz:—and put politics ahead of national security, and I believe Putin believes Biden will do it again.

Ms. NULAND. Senator—

Senator CRUZ. When the Administration announced sanctions on Russia, it glaringly exempted energy from those sanctions.

This morning, the Biden administration listened to calls for me and from many others to finally include a boycott of Russian oil and gas. That was the right thing to do, but it should have been done at the outset.

Europe continues to rely on Russian energy. In your judgment, will our European allies follow suit and also boycott Russian energy?

Ms. NULAND. As you have made clear, Senator, and as we all know, the Europeans have a much higher level of dependence today to heat their homes, to keep the lights on. They are—

Senator CRUZ. Is the Biden administration pressing the Europeans—

Ms. NULAND. May I finish?

Senator CRUZ. —to end their reliance on Russia and is the Biden administration pressing them to rely on alternative sources, including American energy, which is abundant and does not fuel a dictator like Putin?

Ms. NULAND. Among the things that we have done as this crisis was emerging and since it started was to ship more American LNG and to create more global alternatives to Putin's gas going into Europe, as you know, including working with our—

Senator CRUZ. There are six applications pending with the Biden administration to export LNG. None of them have been approved. Do you have any expectations that any of them will be?

Ms. NULAND. The European LNG terminals right now are at full capacity to receive.

Senator CRUZ. Okay. You are not answering my question.

Ms. NULAND. One of the things that we are pressing Europe—

Senator CRUZ. Are you going to answer the question?

Ms. NULAND. Can I try to answer the question?

Senator CRUZ. You can answer the question.

Ms. NULAND. Can I try to answer the question?

We have taken advantage of this tragedy to, again, speak to Europe about its over reliance on Russian energy and to say to them—

Senator CRUZ. The question was simple. Do you anticipate the applications to export LNG will be approved? You are not answering that question.

Ms. NULAND. I, frankly, do not do LNG licensing. I expect that licenses will be approved for as much LNG as can be shipped.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Ms. NULAND. That is what I expect. I do not have responsibility for that so I do not actually know how it works.

Senator, I have to say to you President Putin was going to launch this vicious, brutal war with or without Nord Stream 2.

Senator CRUZ. That is not what Zelensky told us.

Ms. NULAND. That is my opinion.

Senator CRUZ. That is also not what you said when you testified before the Senate.

The CHAIRMAN. The time of the senator has expired.

Senator Merkley.

Senator MERKLEY. Ambassador Nuland, thank you for being with us today.

Reflecting on the fact that the people of Ukraine in 2004 launched the Orange Revolution to, essentially, say an unfair rigged election had been held and insisted on a new election being held and they got that, that new election, and 10 years later the people of Ukraine launched the Revolution of Dignity and the result was that the leader, Yanukovich, who was subjecting Ukraine to the shadow of Russia, fled the country and was impeached, and in 2019, a patriot named Zelensky proceeded to win by a landslide campaigning against corruption.

Time after time, the people of the Ukraine have said, we choose government by the people, not the Russian model of government by

a dictator, and perhaps nothing is more threatening to Putin than having a neighbor—a close cousin, if you will—choosing government by the people.

So here we are today with Putin determined to crush Ukraine, engaging in siege tactics, bombardment, and shelling of population centers. Untold numbers of civilians will die. A thousand residences have been destroyed. Two hundred schools have been destroyed.

I anticipate, but I ask this as a question, that we are going to continue to see this siege strategy by Russia attacking population centers, killing civilians, and driving millions of people out of the country.

Is that a fair expectation?

Ms. NULAND. I do not think that Russia's tactics will become less brutal, Senator Merkley. I worry that they will become more brutal as they become more desperate that their vicious military campaign is slowing, is stalling, is not succeeding because, as you said, the Ukrainian people again and again and again have stood up for their freedom, have stood up for their choice and now, when it is a matter of life and death, they are doing it again, and not just for them, but for all of us.

Senator MERKLEY. Seeing the determination of the Ukrainian people to resist Russian strategy and Russian oppression, it seems like we can anticipate that Russia will face a longstanding insurgency of all kinds, of proceeding to smuggle weapons in, anti-tank weapons, anti-plane weapons, and improvised explosive devices and in combination we are seeing the current sanctions having a huge impact on the Russian economy.

Is the combination, the fact that Russia is going to face an enormously determined insurgency and crushing economy give us hope that there is a deal to be struck or is—with time, or is Putin so determined to bet his presidency, his office, on crushing Ukraine that this—there is nothing that is going to stop this train until he is removed?

Ms. NULAND. Senator Merkley, only President Putin knows if sanity will ever prevail inside his own head. It is clear that Russia will lose this conflict. Whether they lose it quickly or whether they lose it extremely slowly, it is only—it is a matter of time.

The problem is that if this can be lost quickly, many, many, many lives will be saved, which is why we have to continue to pour on the economic pressure. We have to continue to support the defensive needs of the Ukrainian people and help them to resist because, as we have said, they are fighting for themselves, but they are also fighting for us and our way of life.

Senator MERKLEY. Our strategy is maximum support for the Ukrainian patriots in their opposition to Russian military occupation and forces, massive humanitarian assistance, massive economic pressure on the Government of Russia, and I fully support that threefold strategy and just to accentuate the need to do everything we can to coordinate the world to support it, and I praise the Biden administration for having brought together such a significant coalition of freedom-loving nations to be engaged in supporting Ukraine.

So I just want to close by noting this is such a representation of the challenge we face worldwide and the vision of authoritarian control of people with control of the press, control of freedom speech.

We see Russia crushing every form of free press in its nation. Shutting down every form of social media can prevent the Russian people from knowing what is going on, and then we see Ukraine, which embraced government of, by, and for the people.

We have to stand with the people of Ukraine, and thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Barrasso.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is good to see you again. Thanks for spending time with us in closed session yesterday.

Earlier today Ukrainian President Zelensky asked the Parliament of the United Kingdom to designate Russia as a terrorist country. Is Russia a state sponsor of terrorism?

Ms. NULAND. Senator, we had not put it that way before. I have to tell you that every day that goes by, as they commit these egregious brutal acts on the ground, it is something we should look at.

Senator BARRASSO. One of the things we visited about a little bit last night in closed session—I want to go to an open session now—and that is the Russians involved with the Iranian nuclear deal and negotiations there.

It does seem, as I mentioned, in Congress, to me, that we would be dealing with Russia as a—somewhat of a partner in coming up with an Iran deal at the same time what we see is this brutal, terrorist murderer, Vladimir Putin, killing people.

So I have a lot of problems with that decision regularly. I see the Russian envoy recently bragged about how much they helped Iran get much more than they would have expected in this Iranian deal with the United States, and Ulyanov stated, “Realistically speaking, Iran got more than, frankly, I expected or others expected.” So that is from us, the United States.

The people on this side of the aisle are not for this Iran deal at all. We think it is a mistake for our nation and our nation’s security. Reports indicate Russia worked to secure Iran’s rights for nuclear energy, to—and to remove sanctions.

So how much money is Iran going to get from these proposed sanctions relief as part of the Biden administration Iran deal that they are cutting now while Russia is in the middle of attacking Ukraine?

Ms. NULAND. As you know, Senator, if Iran comes back to the JCPOA and we come back into the deal and stop their nuclear development and stop their ability to get a bomb in the short run, they will get access to some of the funds that have been frozen. That is part of the deal.

That said, Russia is not doing this out of the goodness of its heart. It is doing it because it, too, worries about an Iran that lives closer to Russia than they do to us having a bomb that could threaten them.

Senator BARRASSO. When John Kerry negotiated the last deal he said, well, of course, some of this money is going to be used for ter-

rorism and we know that Iran did use some of the money for terrorism.

Do you expect some of this sanctions relief is going to be funneled to terrorist proxies and activities by Iran?

Ms. NULAND. We are working as hard as we can in the crafting of this deal to ensure that the money is used for the needs of the Iranian people and not for external aggression.

Senator BARRASSO. In terms of the Black Sea, and as we had a chance to look at some maps last night and we think about an overview of the Black Sea, I think about what NATO did very successfully with the Baltic Air Policing Mission to safeguard the integrity of the NATO alliance members a number of years ago in terms of airspace, I am wondering if that could serve as a model for efforts to maintain a robust NATO presence in the Black Sea.

What are your views on NATO establishing a Black Sea maritime patrol mission—a regular rotational maritime presence in the Black Sea?

Ms. NULAND. I, personally, have been in favor of it for a long time and, as you know, NATO has a regular exercise schedule, as does the U.S.

I think what we have not done is taken appropriate account of what it meant when Putin seized Crimea and then began putting all kinds of advanced weaponry on it and that gave him the capacity to close aspects of the Black Sea in a way that we cannot tolerate, and we need to get back to that business.

Senator BARRASSO. In terms of energy security and the decision made by the President today, which I agree with the decision, I think that energy to replace what we have gotten from Russia ought to be coming from the United States.

I think it is a mistake to go and ask Iran for more energy, a mistake to go to Venezuela for more energy, which is what seems to be what this Administration is doing, going from one dictator thug to another.

Can I get your thoughts on that?

Ms. NULAND. Senator Barrasso, in the context of, first of all, high energy prices even before we got into this conflict, then the impact of the war on energy prices and then the impact of sanctions, as the President said today, there is going to be some pain in this for us.

What we are doing is going all around the world, working with partners and organizations and entities to try to increase the amount of oil on the market.

Russia, I think you know, 70 percent of the oil that it puts on the market has already been constrained by a combination of sanctions, but also self-sanctioning of trading entities. So that is a massive loss to the global need.

Frankly, we have got to look everywhere that we can, including in terms of increased U.S. production, Canadian production, Mexican production. The Japanese are shipping gas now to Europe.

We have got to all work together to increase the supply so that the pain of all of this goes primarily on Russia, which is losing revenue and dumping product, in fact, and paying a high price for that, and less on us and the American consumer and the European consumer.

Senator BARRASSO. I appreciate your comments that energy prices were high prior to all of this and that, to me, is a direct result of the policies of this Administration as John Kerry, former Secretary of State, said he hoped that what was happening in Russia and in—by Russia in Ukraine did not distract from his climate agenda, and I think that is a very terrible mistake to be the position of the United States.

Thanks. Thanks, Madam Secretary.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Booker.

Senator BOOKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It is so good to see you. Thank you for staying for this long hearing.

Ms. NULAND. Thank you.

Senator BOOKER. You are at the tail end here.

We talked yesterday in the classified briefing about food issues and this data you know, but Russia and Ukraine account for, roughly, 14 percent of the global wheat production and even more so about 30 percent of the global share of exports.

We are already seeing an unprecedented increase in global food insecurity around the globe due to COVID-19 and, of course, climate change impacts which we are seeing in places like Afghanistan.

The World Food Programme has already issued before the Ukraine crisis a special appeal for \$6 billion to cover the increase in assistance that is going to be providing to, literally, the tens and tens of millions of people, including millions of children, to save them from starvation and death in places like Afghanistan and the Horn of Africa.

The crisis is already having an impact on what is an already dire situation with making it worse, wheat prices jumping almost 50 percent and hitting record highs.

I am seeing already this omnibus shape up and I have a lot of concerns that it is not going to be anywhere near meeting the crisis. The spending bill that we are seeing is going to include billions of dollars for humanitarian assistance that can be used by the State Department in Ukraine, but also, with some flexibility, I am being told, around the globe, and I expect a substantial portion of these funds will be provided through the Migration and Refugee Assistance Program.

I guess, with your earlier comment to Senator Coons where you said that a lot of the resources we are putting there will not even—I think the quote, “will not even have half of what we need,” given the growth of this refugee crisis that is going to probably come.

I am wondering, do you think the State Department will have the ability to really use any portions of these emergency MRA funds to meet the needs of refugees not just in Ukraine, but also around the globe?

Ms. NULAND. Senator Booker, I want to thank you for raising these issues yesterday. I have already taken them back with regard to what it means when a Ukraine at war may not be able to plant this season and what it means to global food insecurity, and a lot of smart people had apparently already been thinking about this.

We are meeting on it and planning on it, including how to use some of this support that the Congress is looking at giving us not



just in Ukraine, but for the larger impacts globally of that breadbasket not being able to supply.

We will work with you on all of these issues.

Senator BOOKER. I am so grateful.

I am wondering, is there a plan already in place, given our—how much our infusion of resources was propping up the Afghani economy for 20 years and then pulling us out and all the other military, civilian, diplomatic corps out of there, crashing their economy in addition to climate change, in addition to COVID?

We know that, right now, unless something changes, roughly, 1 million children will die alone of famine, and I am just wondering what is our ongoing commitment to that crisis?

Ms. NULAND. We have been engaged in a lot of different efforts to get humanitarian support—appropriate humanitarian support directly to the Afghan people, including increasing licensing for humanitarians, both our own and other internationals, increasing our own contributions to U.N. agencies that are active in Afghanistan, as well as trying to create banking flexibilities for remittances and other things that are going to alleviate the cash crunch.

We can arrange a separate session for you if that is—yes.

Senator BOOKER. I would appreciate that.

In my 1 minute I just—I know you are on top of this issue, but I really would like your testimony.

Obviously, we have seen reports that refugees from ethnic and racial minorities—

Ms. NULAND. Yes.

Senator BOOKER. —in Ukraine are experiencing discrimination as they try to flee Ukraine. Many of them, we have seen images of them being blocked from the ability to enter other countries or, in many ways, get the kind of resources other Ukrainians are.

Can you just tell me what the State Department is doing about this to encourage our European allies to process all refugees coming from Ukraine equally and what is the State Department doing to ensure that our assistance is being used in ways that adheres to our humanitarian assistance principles—neutrality, impartiality, and independence?

Ms. NULAND. Senator Booker, it was a very acute problem, as you know, in the first days of the conflict as a number of students and workers from other countries as well as Ukrainian Africans and others tried to get out across the borders and faced significant discrimination, primarily on the Ukrainian side, out of local ignorance, I will tell you, and Secretary Blinken took that issue up immediately with Foreign Minister Kuleba, and within hours we began to see the situation improve.

We have also done advocacy for specific groups that have gotten trapped—groups of African students, Indian students—who we helped to get on a bus to get out of Ukraine when we had some advocacy from the Ukrainian—from the Indian Government.

We will continue to take on those cases as we see them. We are, largely, not seeing the problem in EU countries. I think we were dealing with quite a bit of early ignorance at the local level in Ukraine.

Senator BOOKER. Great. I just want to say, you can see from both sides of the aisle this is a very emotional and as well as patriotic

interest and passion. We are putting a lot of time here. I know you and your team have the same deep feelings, have the same passion, patriotism, and concern.

I can only imagine you all are working around the clock and I just want to give you my gratitude for that commitment and the incredible work you all are putting in and the hours, I am sure, as well.

Ms. NULAND. Thank you, Senator.

I just want to say that on behalf of the men and women of the State Department, who I am proud to have been a part of for most of my life, to see folks in every generation of service and all around the world jump in and say, what can I do, and to participate and put their intellectual capital, their time, into this has just been amazing and it is the best of America and the best of the State Department.

Senator BOOKER. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Schatz.

Senator SCHATZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Secretary, for your service and thank you for being here for such a long hearing.

I have three basic questions. The first is what is the status of the negotiation as it relates to the humanitarian corridors? We are reading different things. I am wondering what is real and what is not and what is possible.

Ms. NULAND. On the humanitarian corridors, I think you know we are on our third day of disappointment where we thought we had something agreed. U.N. agencies have been the main negotiators—ICRC and UNHCR—and in those—the first two attempts we actually had local firing by Russian forces on folks seeking to flee.

We are now attempting, or they are now attempting to try again in Mariupol. We also had in those first two rounds very cynical Russian response—sure, you can have a corridor up to Russia, but not into the rest of Ukraine, which was, obviously, rejected.

We are trying—they are trying again now in Mariupol and we will see how that goes.

Senator SCHATZ. So there were sort of two issues. One was the ridiculous, sure, you can get a corridor back to Russia. The other—I guess I am wondering whether that was a sort of command and control problem where the locals—so that is not your assessment? Your assessment is they were violating it from the jump.

Ms. NULAND. I cannot say whether it was local malfeasance or more general malfeasance on the part of the Russian military. Neither would be beyond comprehension. It was egregious and yet another violation of human rights in Ukraine.

Senator SCHATZ. Absolute atrocity. A war crime.

Belarus—is the free world doing enough to punish Belarus?

Ms. NULAND. We have now imposed sanctions on Belarus that match what we have done in Russia. That was part of the package that we imposed last week, and we are continuing to look at other ways to squeeze the economy that fuels Lukashenko's rule and we are continuing to look at leaders in Belarus.

I would note here that it is pretty clear that Russia would have liked to have seen more Belarusian military participation in this

conflict, and there has been a lot of lack of enthusiasm for that and even desertion.

Senator SCHATZ. When you say lack of enthusiasm, at all levels? At the sort of soldier level all the way up to government leaders?

Ms. NULAND. Certainly at the soldier level.

Senator SCHATZ. Fair enough. We are seeing a lot of resistance from countries that have traditionally had a close relationship with Russia, certainly, over the past decades—Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, outright refusing to participate in this invasion, and my assessment is that they do not want to stipulate to the legitimacy of what is happening because they may, in fact, be next.

So what is the State Department's view of those relationships and how do we—without sort of overplaying our hand, how do we be supportive or become more supportive of Uzbekistan, of Kazakhstan, of these countries that very well could be next if this becomes a successful precedent?

Ms. NULAND. Since their independence, we have had very—we have had relations with all of those countries. I would say that in the last year we have really accelerated our work with them collectively, what we call the C5+1, but also our effort to work with them individually.

As you know, in the aftermath of the withdrawal from Afghanistan there were a lot of issues. They collaborated and helped us in getting some of—some Americans and LPRs across. We have other things that we work with them on.

We are also working with them intensively on having diversity of economic options, diversity of political options, and in the aftermath of the events in Kazakhstan of a couple of months ago, the Kazakhs have come back to us and said that they are not interested in getting involved in Ukraine, as have another—a number of the other countries there, and we think that any effort by Putin to involve the CSTO, collectively, will also fail in this conflict because, as you say, they have their own independent interests and it is not an easy decision for them because they are also very dependent.

Senator SCHATZ. Final question—and I can take this for the record if you do not want to do this off the top of your head—I just want to be reassured that we are constantly assessing and reassessing and reestimating the number of refugees that we expect.

I have seen this sort of range of between 1 and 5 million. That, I am sure, was based on some analysis. It seems to me that that analysis has to change in real time if we are already approaching 2 million as of today or around that number.

I just want to be reassured that people are not going to stick with the 5 million if it looks like we are going to break through that threshold.

Ms. NULAND. I will say, Senator Schatz that we, unfortunately, internally estimated 5 million from the beginning and before the invasion even started just based on how broad it was or it could—it looked like it was going to be.

Obviously, we will have to reassess if it goes above that.

Senator SCHATZ. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Van Hollen.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Madam Secretary. I am grateful for your wisdom and experience and passion on this issue. Thank you for the briefing last night in a classified setting.

Let me associate myself with the comments others have made about the efforts to transfer the Polish MiG-29s to Ukrainians and Ukrainian pilots.

I wanted to raise another effort in the defense of Ukraine, which was the first item that the Ukrainian parliamentarians mentioned in this letter they sent to members of Congress today, which had to do with missile defense.

Because as we have seen in published reports, we do not see that many Russian planes in the air these days, but we do see a lot of missiles—their incoming. In fact, published reports I have seen estimate over 600 missiles.

Here is the number-one ask from the Ukrainian parliamentarians: “Military assistance suitable for countering Russian attacks and military advances. Ukraine needs surface-to-air missile systems such as Iron Dome or NASAMS to protect civilian areas from incoming Russian missiles. We implore the United States to work with all allies and partners to provide Ukraine with these life-saving missile defense systems immediately.”

Can you talk to both the systems that they have requested there and what the status of our efforts to secure those would be?

Ms. NULAND. Senator, what I would rather do is talk to you about the specifics in a classified setting. I will tell you that we have provided a large number of counter battery radars and we are looking at some of these other things, as I mentioned at the top, that you mentioned.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Let me ask you this. Are there any political obstacles to moving forward with either of the systems that were mentioned?

Ms. NULAND. I would only say with regard to Iron Dome, you cannot just snap your fingers and you have an Iron Dome. It takes training. It takes the ability to emplace it and all of those kinds of things, but there are other things on your list and their list which we think that we can do.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Good.

Ms. NULAND. I will leave it at that.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Okay. I look forward to following up with you on this.

Now, on the sanctions front and, again, I applaud the Administration for the approach you have taken—the sanctions and the efforts with our allies to make sure that to the extent possible we can do that in unison and in a coordinated way, and the fact that you have imposed the same sanctions on Belarus.

I looked at that U.N. vote. It was impressive, 141—35 abstentions, 5 noes. Probably the noes we expected.

I will say among the 35 abstentions there were many disappointments, many countries that we consider our friends and fellow democracies who stood on the sidelines at an important moment.

In terms of the sanctions, many of those countries that abstained are not joining us right now in terms of the sanctions, and I do understand that the arms export control sanctions have a long arm

effect so that it is not necessarily their choice as to whether to comply.

When it comes to banking sanctions they do not have the long arm effect unless we apply secondary sanctions. So the Administration has the authority to apply secondary sanctions. I do not think you need any more authority or hoops you need to jump through in order to justify not imposing them in certain circumstances.

With respect to countries that are participating in allowing Russia relief from our banking sanctions, are you considering applying secondary sanctions in those cases?

Ms. NULAND. You are talking about some of the no votes on the list there, I assume?

Senator VAN HOLLEN. I am talking about countries who are not currently voluntarily participating with us in our economic—the banking sanctions.

Ms. NULAND. I would say—

Senator VAN HOLLEN. The good news was the EU is with us. Other countries are with us, but there are other major countries that Russia could turn to as a sort of off-ramp on some of those sanctions.

Ms. NULAND. Senator Van Hollen, our first choice is to try to persuade those countries that this is not a moment to try to be neutral or sit on the fence, and to join us in sanctions.

That will be far better, far better for their sustainability, et cetera, and far better in terms of ensuring that those countries themselves do not become havens for dirty Russian money.

That is the case that we are making. All of us are working very hard on that with, I am going to guess, the same countries of concern to you.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. I appreciate that. I just think that the major step was to have the major economic powers on board—the European community. You did that.

Ms. NULAND. And the Asians. Asian—

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Japan and Singapore and South Korea and Australia. All really good.

Ms. NULAND. Yes. New Zealand.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. There are, as you just indicated, we know, big exceptions. So it seems to me at some point all of the countries that are already in—

Ms. NULAND. Yes.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. —would have an interest in joining with us in putting pressure on those who are still out.

Ms. NULAND. We have been making that point as well. The President did in his conversation yesterday with other major country leaders, and we are trying to get the support of the G-7 to broaden this community as much as we possibly can, and I think you will see us making some forays to some of those places in the days and weeks ahead.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. I hope you are successful.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Ms. NULAND. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Risch.

Senator RISCH. Thank you. In following up on what Senator Van Hollen said, first of all, I have no difficulty at all with you guys trying to persuade other countries to go along.

If he is suggesting what I think he was suggesting, and that is that secondary sanctions ought to be on the table and you ought to have them at the ready in the toolbox to use if it is necessary to help these other countries get to where they need to be, I hope you are all in on that.

I, certainly, am and I suspect maybe that is what Senator Van Hollen was suggesting. If he is, I want to associate myself with those remarks.

Let me turn to another subject, just briefly. We have got a vote started and so I will try to make this brief.

You and I are, obviously, in a different place on JCPOA, as we have discussed over the many years. Let us see if we can get some stuff with that we do agree with.

Let us set JCPOA aside. Let us say it never happened or it is never there. Is there a major impediment for Iran to be able to finish the completion of a nuclear weapon?

Ms. NULAND. For it to be able to finish the completion of the nuclear—

Senator RISCH. Weapon.

Ms. NULAND. Is there a major impediment?

Senator RISCH. Yes. Let me suggest this. Would you agree with me that the country of Israel is a major impediment for them to be able to complete a nuclear weapon?

Ms. NULAND. I would agree with you that Israel has regularly and frequently taken matters into their own hands with regard to trying to slow or stop a weapon.

I would not—

Senator RISCH. Indeed, they are the only ones that have, really.

Ms. NULAND. I do not think I would agree with that, but we can talk about that in a classified setting.

Senator RISCH. All right. That is fine.

Ms. NULAND. I would not say that I believe that that is achievable as a complete end state in the short run by Israel alone.

Senator RISCH. I would disagree with you on that, but I would agree that it is an arguable point.

You have heard Israel, as I have, probably face-to-face, as I have, over and over, state in very plain simple language, they will never permit Iran to develop a nuclear weapon of which could threaten their existence. Is that a fair statement?

Ms. NULAND. They have said that, and they have said that across two Administrations.

Senator RISCH. Do you believe them?

Ms. NULAND. I believe that that is their intent. I think there is a question of—I think we should—yes, talk about this probably in another setting.

Senator RISCH. That is fair. I agree with that.

I, for one, believe them. I have long said if you believe them, that threat for Iran is a significantly stronger threat than anything the JCPOA could put on the table. In any event, at least part of this we agree on. Let me ask another question, see if you agree with this.

Ms. NULAND. I always like it, Ranking Member Risch, when we can find places to agree.

Senator RISCH. I could not agree more. So let us see if we can find one more area and then I will let this be. Did you watch the debates of the 18 Republican candidates for President in the last election?

Ms. NULAND. I sure did, to the extent I could stand it.

Senator RISCH. Yes. What did they say—including one of them who was just sitting here—what did they say they were going to do with the agreement the first day they were in office?

Ms. NULAND. Rip it up, I guess.

Senator RISCH. Yes, that is what they said. Indeed, the successful person actually did that. My guess is that we are going to have 18 again here in a few years and my guess is that they are probably all going to take the exact same position that happened last time.

Do you think that that is more likely than not?

Ms. NULAND. Senator, I do not think I want to get out my crystal ball with regard to where your colleagues and your fellow party members might be.

I would hope that if the—if we come back into the agreement and it begins to prove its worth that we will not have that debate again. We will see where the world turns.

Senator RISCH. Yes. I would like to be that optimistic about it, but I cannot be inasmuch. I know a number of those people and I know what they are going to do.

Ms. NULAND. I am a diplomat. I am paid to be an optimist.

Senator RISCH. Yes. That is the difficulty with this whole thing. I cannot tell you how many times I had to deal with people—and you probably did, too—who say, well, you Americans, you broke the deal. You breached the date.

I said no. No. No. No. No. You had no deal with us. Our Constitution is crystal clear. If you want to deal with America, it has got to be done by submitting it to the United States Senate and get a two-thirds vote, at which point their eyes glaze over and say, I do not know about that. I said, but you did have an agreement with Barack Obama. I will agree with that. This time, they will have an agreement with Joe Biden.

You would agree with me that the efficacy of the agreement with the President without Senate ratification will have the same legal effect the previous JCPOA had on the next Administration. Would you agree with that?

Ms. NULAND. I mean, obviously, whenever you have an agreement that has Senate ratification that tends to indemnify it better against being ripped up by one side or the other, but not always, as we have seen with some treaties.

Senator RISCH. Thank you very much, and I am glad we found some common ground.

[Laughter.]

Ms. NULAND. Thank you, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. Madam Secretary, one final question. You have been extraordinarily insightful here for the better part of 2 hours. Is it fair to say that Ukraine is the epicenter in Europe of oil and gas lines?

Ms. NULAND. You mean the main crossing point? I mean, technically speaking, I think there are more lines that cut through Germany than Ukraine. Ukraine is an essential node, if that is what you mean.

The CHAIRMAN. Right.

Ms. NULAND. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. So if Putin were to achieve his conquest of Ukraine, Nord Stream 2 would be insignificant to him?

Ms. NULAND. Yes, of course. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes. Because he would have all of these pipelines that he could control. So I just find it—everybody is welcome to their opinion, but they are not welcome to their facts.

To believe that Nord Stream is the reason that Vladimir Putin invaded Ukraine is—it is a bit of a stretch, to say the least.

I do think that the incredible importance of this issue is exemplified by the fact that 19 of 22 members have been here today, asking questions and engaging with you. That is not always the case on the subject matters that we have before the committee, but it just shows the intensity on both sides of the aisle.

I want to send a message to our friends across the globe who did not join us at the United Nations and who are not joining us in some of the actions they could be taking.

You really should rethink what side of history you want to be on. You really should think, again, about what side of history you want to be on, because the world is watching and we are watching.

Then, lastly, I hope that the 44 nominees before the committee and the 22 that are pending on the floor can see swift justice in terms of getting a vote because we need everybody on the fields to make sure that Putin loses, at the end of the day.

I am thankful with the ranking member for those who have gotten out today, but we need to do more.

With that, the record for this hearing will remain open until the close of business on Wednesday, March the 9th. Please ensure the questions for the record are submitted no later than Wednesday.

With the deep thanks of the committee for your appearance and all of the insights, this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 5:17 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

#### ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

##### RESPONSES OF MS. VICTORIA NULAND TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JIM RISCH

*Question. U.S. Government Policy Towards Russia:* Given Russia's recent invasion of Ukraine, are there any areas that remain in which we might be able to work with the Russian Federation?

Answer. The United States has been clear that President Putin and his enablers are solely responsible for isolating Russia from the international community by launching his further invasion of Ukraine. Ultimately, it is up to Russia to determine whether they want to end this isolation and work together in a rules-based international order.

*Question.* How successful do you consider Russia's efforts around the globe to sway public opinion in favor of their invasion of Ukraine?

Answer. While many Russian disinformation efforts are ineffective and easily ignored by audiences, the Department has conducted overseas audience research that indicates Kremlin disinformation narratives about its invasion of Ukraine have had some effect in eroding perceptions of the United States and the West in some loca-



tions. This data indicates that Kremlin disinformation can weaken U.S. favorability and the perception that the U.S. wants peace, while also decreasing the proportion of respondents who perceive Russia as the aggressor. Similar patterns exist across all regions.

*Question.* Is the U.S. doing enough to counter Russia's efforts to sway public opinion in favor of their invasion of Ukraine?

Answer. Our biggest challenge with audiences farther from the war zone is not countering Russia's efforts to sway public opinion in its favor, but rather countering Russia's efforts to cause people to become confused about or apathetic to the human devastation that the Kremlin has wrought from Bucha to Grozny to Aleppo. It is this disengagement and apathy that opens the door to Russian narratives. The United States is working overtime with Allies and partners to shine a light on the atrocities and humanitarian disaster for which Putin is responsible, but we need to keep these stories in front-page news in every corner of the world.

*Question.* How can the U.S. improve its efforts to counter Russia's actions to sway public opinion in relation to the invasion of Ukraine?

Answer. By working with and through allied and partner voices we illuminate the human consequences of Putin's war of choice and remind audiences around the world of the values and concerns they share with the Ukrainian people and other victims of unprovoked Russian aggression. U.S. Government senior leaders and all our embassies around the world are giving a steady stream of interviews to journalists in all regions, including in Russia, to help get out the truth. We are also developing and implementing projects with local civil society organizations, journalists, and governments to build whole of society resilience to identify and counter Russian disinformation narratives targeting their media space.

*Question. Sanctions on Russia:* What do you see as the main goal of this most recent round of sanctions on Russia?

Answer. The United States has taken significant and unprecedented action to respond to Russia's further invasion of Ukraine by imposing severe economic costs that will have both immediate and long-term effects on the Russian economy and financial system. These actions are specifically designed to impose immediate costs and disrupt and degrade future economic activity, isolate Russia from international finance and commerce, and degrade the Kremlin's future ability to project power. We have been able to take these efforts in a comprehensive multilateral manner with our partners. We will continue to impose economic costs on the Russian Government for its brutal war.

*Question.* It is early yet, but how do you assess the effectiveness of the sanctions placed on Russia since February 24, 2022?

Answer. The United States and more than 30 allies and partners across the world have imposed severe and immediate costs on Russia for its unprovoked aggression against Ukraine. We will continue to impose costs on Russia so long as it continues on its current path. Experts predict Russia's GDP will contract up to 15 percent this year, wiping out the last 15 years of economic gains. Moody's downgraded Russia's long-term government bond rating to "junk" or "non-investment grade status." A major portion of the Central Bank of Russia's reserves are frozen. Major state-owned companies have lost between 70–90 percent of their market capitalization. More than 600 multinational companies across a wide variety of sectors have suspended operations in Russia. The Russian Government has had artificial success at stabilizing the ruble and the Russian financial sector, but only at considerable cost, to include strict capital controls, and expense by the Central Bank. We are monitoring the situation closely for signs that Russia is adjusting to our sanctions pressure, and for sanctions evasion globally.

*Question.* Have some Western sanctions had unintended positive effects on Russia and its economy?

Answer. Since the imposition of our sanctions as well as those of our partners, we have further isolated Russia from the global financial system and limited access to a major part of its foreign currency reserves. While Russia has worked to stabilize the ruble, its emergency adjustments will not stop economic pressure from building over time, particularly as wind-down licenses issued by the U.S. Department of the Treasury expire.

*Question.* What effect would further sanctions have on the Russian economy?

Answer. Experts predict Russia's GDP will contract up to 15 percent this year, wiping out the last fifteen years of economic gains. Russia has had to implement

extensive capital controls to prevent money from fleeing the country, further cutting itself off from the global financial system. Moody's downgraded Russia's long-term government bond rating to "junk." Continuing to impose sanctions would further isolate Russia from the global financial system and increase pressure on institutions that are systemically significant to Russia's economy and those that have benefited from Putin's kleptocracy. Prospects for an economic recovery remain limited for the foreseeable future. The Administration will continue to assess all options to impose costs on the Russian economy.

*Question.* What effect would further sanctions have on Putin's regime?

*Answer.* We need to continue imposing economic costs on Putin, those around him, and his regime as long as his war in Ukraine continues. Continuing to impose sanctions will increase pressure on the Russian economy, including institutions that are systemically significant to Russia's war machine and technological advancement, and those that have benefited from Putin's kleptocracy. The impact of our sanctions will grow with every passing day, and we will continue to increase pressure against his regime until Putin withdraws from Ukraine.

*Question.* As of today, U.S. sanctions targeting the Central Bank of Russia (CBR) and Sberbank come with no secondary sanctions. These institutions are not on Treasury's Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List (SDN) list. That leaves many countries open to doing business with Russia. Will the Administration consider a full secondary sanctions designation for the CBR and Sberbank?

*Answer.* As of April 6, 2022, Sberbank has been added to the SDN list, subject to full blocking sanctions, and is also subject to restrictions by the UK, EU, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, and the Bahamas. The UK, EU, Japan, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Switzerland, and Singapore have joined the United States in imposing restrictions on the CBR. These restrictions severely limit where Sberbank and the CBR can do business. We also are prepared to take action against sanctions evaders, including those providing material support to sanctioned Russian entities.

*Question.* Secondary sanctions on entities that continue to do business with sanctioned Russian companies, banks, and financial institutions are key to shuttering Russia's economy. Why has the Administration not imposed secondary sanctions on such entities?

*Answer.* In order to maximize the impact of sanctions imposed by the United States, our allies, and partners, it is critical to maintain unity on our actions. In that context, we are coordinating closely with our partners and allies on the potential use of secondary sanctions. We have made clear to countries considering sanctions evasion schemes and backfilling that we are ready to use our discretionary authority to sanction those that provide material support to sanctioned persons and entities, if necessary. We are conducting outreach around the world to stress the importance of countering evasion activities, as well as the provision of material support to sanctioned persons, wherever those activities occur.

*Question.* What conditions must be met for the Administration to consider secondary sanctions on such entities?

*Answer.* We continue to monitor the situation on the ground, and as the President has stressed, no options are off the table. Presently, the United States and our partners and allies have taken significant and unprecedented action to respond to Russia's further invasion of Ukraine, while also seeking to minimize the impact on our own economies wherever feasible. Maintaining this unity will remain critical to ensuring our collective sanctions remain impactful. We continue to coordinate closely with our partners on additional steps we can take to close sanctions gaps, prevent backfilling, address sanctions evasion, and strengthen sanctions enforcement.

*Question.* What waiver authorities would the Administration need to responsibly impose secondary sanctions and mitigate collateral damage to U.S. and friendly economies?

*Answer.* Executive Order 14024 provides authority for the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Treasury (subject to the relevant consultation) to impose sanctions on individuals or entities that have materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services to or in support of, individuals or entities sanctioned under the executive order. Maintaining flexibility and discretion to impose such sanctions is critical to ensuring that our actions do not fray existing unity around sanctioning Russia for its actions in Ukraine and that they remain impactful.

*Question.* How is the Administration making it clear to the Russian people that the destruction of Russia's economy is directly linked to Putin's malign leadership?

Answer. As long as Vladimir Putin continues this war, the United States and our Allies and partners are committed to ensuring the Kremlin feels the compounding effects of our current and future economic sanctions. While the Russian economy continues to deteriorate, we continue to push public messages into Russia by all means possible to ensure that the Russian people understand that the Kremlin is fully responsible for this unjust war. We continue to reiterate what President Biden has said: that we hold President Putin and his enablers solely responsible for this unjust war and its repercussions, not the Russian people.

*Question.* How is the State Department working to debunk the narrative that the West is sanctioning Russia because we want to hurt the Russian people?

Answer. Our sanctions are specifically designed to impose immediate costs on Putin's regime, disrupt and degrade future economic activity, isolate Russia from international finance and commerce, and reduce the Kremlin's future ability to project power. Our sanctions are carefully calibrated to allow for humanitarian activities including trade in medicine, medical devices, and agricultural commodities. In particular, the Department of the Treasury has issued general licenses to authorize transactions in important areas that would otherwise be blocked such as humanitarian goods (including food, agricultural products, and COVID-19 related items) and personal telecommunications to maintain the Russian people's access to information.

*Question.* Has the Administration considered imposing unilateral sanctions measures on Russia in order to persuade our allies to do the same?

Answer. The United States and our partners and allies have taken significant and unprecedented action to respond to Russia's further invasion of Ukraine by imposing severe economic costs that will have both immediate and long-term effects on the Russian economy and financial system. We have coordinated our actions with our partners, and while our actions are similar in most cases, they are often not identical. In a number of cases, the United States has been able to take action first, and others have followed. Maintaining unity among our allies and partners is critical to ensuring our collective sanctions remain impactful on Putin's regime.

*Question. Russia in Syria:* Russia has gained valuable experience in Syria since its intervention in support of the regime of the brutal dictator Bashar al Assad. Russia's intervention, in 2015, helped turn the tide of the conflict decisively in Assad's favor, giving him space to continue to torture, kill, and kidnap Syrian civilians. For Moscow, Syria has proved a fertile training ground. In addition to reports indicating the Russians are recruiting Syrian fighters with urban combat experience to fight in Ukraine, we are also witnessing the same tactics and weapons being replicated in Ukraine with equally devastating cost to civilian lives. As in rebel strongholds like Aleppo and Eastern Ghouta, Russian forces are encircling and besieging Ukrainian cities attempting to bomb the populace into submission, and like Syria, meeting equally with fierce resistance. How can the U.S. Government leverage its expertise related to Russian actions in Syria to help inform its engagement on Ukraine?

Answer. Russia is employing similar tactics in Ukraine to those it used and supported in Syria, including military tactics against urban population centers, the use of disinformation to discredit the opposition, and strikes hitting civilian infrastructure. We are already deploying some of the lessons learned from Syria in Ukraine. These include working to counter disinformation, immediately supporting civil society defenders on the ground, and documenting human rights abuses and violations and possible war crimes now to subsequently pursue accountability. We will continue to share these and other such lessons learned with Ukraine.

*Question.* The international community's failure to hold Russia to account for its actions in Syria, which, according to the UN, amount to war crimes, has provided the Kremlin an opening to rewrite history. What more can the U.S. do to ensure Russia is held to account for its intervention in Syria?

Answer. Promoting accountability for those responsible for past and ongoing atrocities in Syria remains a key component our Syria policy. We are coordinating closely with the UN, allies, and partners, and with Syrian civil society to promote accountability for the most serious crimes committed in Syria. The United States, in close coordination with our allies, successfully helped renew the mandate of the UN's Commission of Inquiry on Syria on April 1. The United States will continue to support the important work of the UN International, Impartial, and Independent Mech-

anism, and will continue supporting civil society organizations that collect, document, and preserve evidence of human rights violations and abuses in Syria.

*Question.* To what extent do you feel the international community's failure to hold Russia to account contributed to President Putin's calculus in authorizing Russia's invasion of Ukraine?

*Answer.* It is unclear what, if anything, could have altered Putin's calculus, which by his own statements is based on highly misguided and false assumptions about the resolve of the Ukrainians, the United States, and the international community to defend Ukrainian sovereignty and uphold the right of states to determine their own future. The Department of State is committed to holding Russia to account for its brutal war in Ukraine and to making crystal clear to Putin and the world that the United States will continue to provide Ukraine with all support necessary to defend its territory and its people from Russian aggression.

*Question.* Do you agree with the UN's assessment that Russian actions amount to war crimes?

*Answer.* Yes.

*Question.* What threat does Russian entrenchment in Syria pose to U.S. strategic interests in the Middle East and beyond?

*Answer.* Russia's military campaign in Syria has led to massive destruction, the death of hundreds of thousands of civilians, and the largest displacement crisis since WWII. The Assad regime, with Russian support, actively obstructs a political resolution to the Syrian conflict, which continues to threaten regional stability and the security of our regional partners, including Israel and Jordan. Russian support denies much of the country access to humanitarian aid. By enabling the regime to continue functioning with impunity, Russia has prolonged the situation that prevents the safe, dignified, and voluntary return of refugees and displaced persons to Syria, which in turn imposes an ongoing and destabilizing refugee burden on neighboring states such as Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan. Russia's support for the regime also prolongs the absence of good governance, policing, and security, and permits the presence of terrorist groups in Syria and the consequent threat to U.S. interests. Russia has also used its UN veto to block international efforts to hold the Assad regime accountable for the ongoing atrocities committed in Syria.

*Question.* Syria plays a central role in the Kremlin's strategy to position itself as a "great power." Through Syria, it's worked to expand its global influence, pointing towards its support for the Assad regime as evidence of its "reliability" as a partner and ally. The Kremlin does so with the objective of undermining American interests in the region. How can the U.S. better position itself to pushback against Russian disinformation in the Middle East, and reassure our regional partners and allies of the U.S.'s long-term commitment to the region?

*Answer.* In Syria, Russia uses its disinformation and propaganda networks to distract from its role in the conflict and the Assad regime's atrocities (as well as its own). The United States is discrediting Moscow's disinformation by demonstrating and delivering upon an affirmative agenda that builds long-term partnerships to promote regional integration, economic investment that drives prosperity and jobs, and people-to-people ties. We also counter Moscow's disinformation through engagement with people in the region on digital literacy training, sharing best practices to the challenges posed by Russian disinformation, and debunking specific Kremlin disinformation in the public sphere, denying Russia the ability to propagate unanswered false narratives.

*Question.* Why, in your view, has Russian propaganda been so successful in penetrating the Arab media landscape?

*Answer.* Moscow takes advantage of existing elite and popular skepticism about U.S. policy and intentions in the Middle East, playing on tropes about Western colonialism and regional interference stemming from U.S. support for Israel and interventions in Libya, Iraq, and Afghanistan. Russia's information operations efforts include overt Russian Government voices, diplomatic missions' platforms, state-funded media, proxy websites, inauthentic or inorganic social media accounts, and partnerships with Arabic media outlets. At the same time, the disinformation ecosystems of Russia, the People's Republic of China (PRC), and Iran opportunistically converge, amplify, and reinforce each other's propaganda and disinformation narratives.

*Question.* What role can, and should, the Caesar Syrian Civilian Protection Act play in any strategy to combat Russian influence in Syria?

*Answer.* Seeking accountability for human rights abuses committed by the Assad regime and its backers and allies in Syria remains a key component of U.S. Syria policy. Our Syria sanctions, including under the Caesar Syrian Civilian Protection Act, are vital tools to press for accountability for the Assad regime and its backers, including Russia, notably with respect to human rights violations and abuses—some of which rise to the level of war crimes—inflicted on the Syrian people. We will continue to use these tools to deter support for the Assad regime’s ongoing atrocities.

*Question.* How does the Caesar Syrian Civilian Protection Act impact Russian influence in the wider Middle East?

*Answer.* In both Syria and Libya, Russian military and paramilitary forces have exploited conflicts for Moscow’s own selfish interests, posing grave threats to regional stability and global commerce. In Syria, the Russian military campaign has led to massive destruction in service of the Assad regime, as well as the death or displacement of hundreds of thousands of civilians. This Administration considers Syria sanctions authorities, including the Caesar Act, to be important tools to pursue accountability for the Assad regime and its enablers. The United States will continue to work closely with our allies and partners to impose further costs on Putin and his enablers until Putin changes course.

*Question.* The international community has long argued that any reconstruction funds in Syria must be tied to tangible progress towards reform by the Assad regime. Reconstruction funds give the international community critical leverage over any final settlement in Syria and must not be extended lightly. There is, however, growing concerns Moscow is successfully undermining international unity on this issue, and blurring the lines between reconstruction funding and early recovery projects. In fact, this Administration by its own admission is supporting UN projects to rebuild hospitals and schools in regime strongholds and cultivating economic development in Russian port cities of Latakia and Tartus. What is the U.S. position with respect to reconstruction in Syria?

*Answer.* This Administration has not changed its policy of opposing reconstruction by or for the Assad regime until there is irreversible progress toward a political resolution to the conflict in line with UN Security Council Resolution 2254, which we have not yet seen. The United States has long supported humanitarian early recovery programs that ensure Syrians in need have access to basic services. Humanitarian early recovery projects are needs-based and conducted by independent and impartial humanitarian agencies, while reconstruction projects are conducted by or for the Assad regime to benefit its own narrow interests. Humanitarian early recovery projects are generally smaller scale than reconstruction, primarily occurring at the individual, family, or community level.

*Question.* How do business development and livelihood support in Assad-held areas further U.S. strategic interests in Syria?

*Answer.* The primary goal of U.S. humanitarian assistance, including livelihood-focused activities, is to save lives and alleviate the suffering of the Syrian people by insuring that vulnerable and crisis-affected individuals receive assistance and protection, regardless of their geographic location. U.S.-supported livelihood-focused activities in areas controlled by the Assad regime help the most vulnerable Syrians become less dependent on U.S. humanitarian aid. They are small-scale and humanitarian in nature, are implemented by impartial and independent organizations, and are based entirely on humanitarian need.

*Question.* How does Moscow stand to gain financially from such initiatives?

*Answer.* The Department assesses that the risk of financial gain to Russia from livelihood-focused humanitarian programs in regime-held areas is low. The Department takes all possible steps to carefully monitor and mitigate against fiduciary and other risks associated with providing humanitarian assistance in all areas of Syria during this period of severe economic deterioration and unprecedented need, including the risks involving any financial gain to malign actors in the region. Humanitarian early recovery programs in regime-controlled areas such as livelihood-focused activities are small-scale and household/community-focused projects implemented by thoroughly screened impartial and independent organizations based on humanitarian needs, not regime demands.

*Question.* Having spent years bombing opposition strongholds into submission, the regime and its Russian backers are now successfully making inroads with our Arab partners, cultivating support to rehabilitate Bashar al Assad and rebuild the country he broke. What steps should the U.S. take to limit our Arab partners from legitimizing the regime and by extension further Russian influence in the region?

**Answer.** The United States will not upgrade its relations with the Assad regime or legitimize the actions of the brutal dictator Bashar al-Assad. This Administration opposes other countries normalizing their relations with Assad's regime, and we have repeatedly made that clear to our Arab partners. The Department has expressed its deep disappointment to those states that have taken actions to legitimize the regime, actions the Department believes are especially inappropriate given the atrocities the regime continues to inflict on the Syrian people. We will continue to convey concern with the signal such actions send. The Department has also cautioned regional partners that economic engagement with the Assad regime risks U.S. sanctions consequences.

**Question.** What are the risks of a greater Russian role in Libya to U.S. interests in Syria?

**Answer.** Russians in Libya benefit from Russian military basing in Syria, but they do not pose a direct threat to U.S. interests in Syria from Libya. A ceasefire in Libya has held since the summer of 2020, and Libyan leaders are seeking to resolve their disputes peacefully. That said, Russia has proven to be a divisive force in Libya, complicating national reconciliation and U.S. efforts to promote a political transition to a sovereign, stable, unified, and secure Libya with no foreign interference. In Libya, as in Syria, Russian military and paramilitary forces have exploited conflicts for Moscow's own selfish interests, posing grave threats to regional stability and global commerce. The Administration believes that stability in Syria and Libya can only be achieved through an inclusive political process facilitated by the UN.

The United States is committed to working with allies, partners, and the UN to ensure that durable political solutions remain within reach in both Libya and Syria.

**Question.** *Russia in Libya:* In Libya, Russia has deployed Wagner mercenaries in support of the rebel commander Khalifa Haftar. According to successive UN reports, Russian affiliated fighters are violating the UN arms embargo with total impunity. How do you plan to address reported violations of the UN arms embargo?

**Answer.** The United States continues to call on all external parties, including Russia, to respect Libyan sovereignty, comply with the UN arms embargo, and respect the October 2020 ceasefire agreement through the full withdrawal of all foreign forces, fighters, and mercenaries. Individuals and entities that have violated or assisted the evasion of the UN arms embargo are eligible for designation for asset freeze and travel ban measures. The United States will work closely with our international partners to implement the UN arms embargo and to consider adopting measures against those who violate it. The United States and our partners continue to explore a range of options for curtailing the influence of Russian-backed paramilitary forces. The United States, the UK, and the EU have sanctioned Wagner and its leader, Yevgeniy Prigozhin, and we have publicized Wagner's extensive links to the Kremlin, and their human rights abuses and other malign activities in Libya.

**Question.** While current policy has been to publicize Russian adventurism in Libya, how does the United States impose real costs for Russia's use of private military contractors, i.e., Wagner, in Libya?

**Answer.** The United States and our partners continue to pursue a range of policies to curtail the influence of Russian-backed paramilitary forces. The United States, the UK, and the EU have sanctioned Wagner and its leader, Yevgeniy Prigozhin, and we have publicized Wagner's extensive links to the Kremlin, and their human rights abuses and other malign activities in Syria, Libya, and sub-Saharan Africa. The U.S. Government also supports the work of the UN Panel of Experts to identify violations of the UN Libya arms embargo. We continue to work with the UN and our international partners to support the Libyan-defined path towards elections, which could pave the way for a new government to establish full control over Libya's entire territory, an essential step for removing foreign forces.

**Question.** What are the risks of a greater Russian role in Libya to U.S. interests in North Africa, including U.S. counterterrorism efforts?

**Answer.** Russia has proven to be a divisive force in Libya, complicating national reconciliation and U.S. efforts to promote a political transition to a sovereign, stable, unified, and secure Libya with no foreign interference. Although terrorist groups have been weakened, Russia-backed paramilitary forces operating in Libya contribute to a volatile security dynamic that enables the possibility that terrorist cells could re-group. Russia has used its position in Libya as a springboard to project power across North Africa and the Sahel, exacerbating the instability that has led to the resurgence and spread of violent extremist groups.

*Question.* What are the threats of Russia successfully gaining a foothold in Libya, which borders NATO's southern flank?

*Answer.* An official Russian military presence, or a Russia-backed Wagner presence, will undermine political negotiations in Libya and provide a foothold for Russia to expand its destabilizing influence throughout the African continent.

*Question. Egypt Policy:* Egypt is located at a strategic crossroads between the Mediterranean, Middle East, and Africa, remains an important U.S. partner in the region, and is important to Israel's security. However, in light of Egypt's growing cooperation with Russia and reports of potential Su-35 sales, is Egypt pivoting irrevocably towards Russia?

*Answer.* The U.S.-Egypt strategic partnership is strong. In the last year, we have secured nearly \$5 billion in new foreign military sales to Egypt. Egypt has joined the U.S.-led Combined Maritime Forces and will assume leadership of a taskforce on Red Sea security. Egypt has yet to take delivery of any Su-35s. Egypt has consistently voted in favor of resolutions condemning Russia's aggression in Ukraine including at the UN General Assembly and the IAEA Board of Governors. My team will follow up to discuss the Russia-Egypt relationship in further detail.

*Question.* Bearing in mind that a stronger Egypt-Russia relationship poses risks to U.S. interests and human rights concerns in Egypt, how would you and the Biden administration frame or modify U.S. policy towards Egypt?

*Answer.* The Administration has shown that we can balance our security interests and human rights concerns in our relationship with Egypt. The Secretary's decision to condition, and ultimately withhold \$130 million in FY 2020 FMF yielded concrete human rights progress and underscored that we will not compromise our values. At the same time, the Administration has expanded our security, economic, and regional cooperation with Egypt to historic levels, including by holding our first Strategic Dialogue with Egypt since 2015.

*Question.* Would you characterize a potential Egyptian purchase of Su-35s from Russia as a significant transaction as described under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA)?

*Answer.* We are committed to fully implementing the law and have repeatedly cautioned Egypt and all other U.S. partners and allies that any major new purchase of military equipment from Russia, such as Su-35s, would pose a severe risk of triggering CAATSA sanctions or other Russia-related sanctions, as well as damage our bilateral security assistance and cooperation.

*Question. Russia in Latin America:* What do you believe will be the impact of Russia's current economic and geopolitical encumbrances on the survival of the Diaz-Canel regime in Cuba?

*Answer.* Sanctions on Russia for its invasion of Ukraine and atrocities, combined with the broader effects of Russia's pre-mediated and unnecessary war in Ukraine, will negatively impact Cuba's economy through decreased Russian tourism, higher costs for Cuba's food imports from Russia, potential challenges obtaining Russian oil, decreased Russian investment, and international banks' reluctance to engage with countries perceived to support Russia.

The Cuban Government consistently blames Russia's aggression on the United States and NATO and amplifies Russia's disinformation on the war.

*Question.* What do you believe will be the impact of Russia's current economic and geopolitical encumbrances on the survival of the Maduro regime in Venezuela?

*Answer.* The Maduro regime likely feels increased pressure because of Russia's current international isolation and the second order effects of U.S. and European sanctions on Russia. Strains on global supply chains caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine will also increase costs and reduce supplies of numerous products into Venezuela. In addition to Russia, the Maduro regime continues to rely on Cuba, the People's Republic of China, Iran, and others, to seek legitimacy and promote its political and economic survival.

*Question.* Is the Administration seriously considering reopening oil imports from Venezuela and Iran to make up for the supply lost from Russia?

*Answer.* While the Administration has engaged in intensive efforts to address the issue of disruption of oil supplies due to Russia's war in Ukraine, other foreign policy considerations would guide any potential changes in our sanctions posture with respect to Iran's and Venezuela's oil sectors.

A mutual return to full implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is the best available option to constrain Iran's nuclear program and pro-

vide a platform to address Iran's other destabilizing conduct. If Iran were prepared to return to full implementation of the JCPOA's limits on its nuclear program, the United States would be prepared to lift sanctions necessary for JCPOA compliance, including certain sanctions related to Iran's petroleum sector.

Current Venezuela-related sanctions remain in effect. While the Administration does not preview sanctions actions, it has made clear that the United States will review some sanctions policies if the Venezuelan parties make meaningful progress toward a democratic solution.

*Question.* U.S. oil production is better for our economy, better for the environment, and better for our national security, so why is the Administration refusing to increase domestic capacity?

*Answer.* The United States is currently the world's largest producer of both oil and natural gas. President Biden has said, "(Nothing stands) in the way of domestic oil and gas production." The Energy Information Administration predicts U.S. crude oil production will average 12 million barrels per day (bpd) in 2022 and a record-high 12.6 million bpd by 2023. The release of more than 1 million bpd of strategic petroleum reserves for the next 6 months by the United States, allies, and partners will provide time for domestic industry to ramp up. We are working with European allies and partners to accelerate their efforts to end their reliance on Russian fossil fuels. The United States will also accelerate our clean energy transition to combat climate change and enhance energy security.

*Question. Russia-China Collaboration:* The Russian invasion of Ukraine has many of our allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific increasingly worried about the timeline and possibility of a Taiwan contingency scenario. What do you see as the main lessons to learn from the situation in Ukraine?

*Answer.* We continue to work with these allies and partners to ensure that the People's Republic of China and President Xi Jinping learn the right lessons from Russia's brutal and unjustified war against Ukraine, including that launching such an attack will lead to a devastating response from the international community. We continue to engage with our allies and partners on the importance of preserving peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait.

*Question.* Based on that, how can the U.S. better work with Taiwan to deter further Chinese military aggression now, before a contingency occurs?

*Answer.* Our commitment to Taiwan is rock-solid and contributes to the maintenance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait and within the region. We are in regular and close communication with allies and partners who are also committed to preserving this peace and stability in the face of increasing pressure. Consistent with the Taiwan Relations Act, the United States makes available to Taiwan defense articles and services necessary to enable it to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability in a manner commensurate with the People's Republic of China's threat to Taiwan.

*Question.* Does the Administration support increasing defense engagement with Taiwan to prepare for various contingencies? If so, what is the Administration doing in this regard?

*Answer.* Our defense relationship with Taiwan continues to be commensurate with the threat from the People's Republic of China, consistent with our one-China policy.

The U.S. Government supports Taiwan through the acquisition of asymmetric capabilities. The Departments of State and Defense are also coordinating closely with Taiwan on non-material solutions to improve its defenses. This includes working with Taiwan to increase resiliency across the military and non-military domains, including through reserve/mobilization reforms and civil-military integration.

The United States is also working with Taiwan to realize economic resiliency through supply chains that are transparent, secure, sustainable, and diverse.

*Question.* Does the Administration support providing Foreign Military Financing to Taiwan (starting sooner rather than later) as one way to bolster Taiwan's ability to deter Chinese military action? If so, will the Department of State commit to working with Congress to make this happen? If not, why does the Department of State not support it?

*Answer.* The Department of State welcomes the opportunity to discuss security assistance funding with Congress, and we are already engaged in discussions with congressional committees on the proposed Taiwan Deterrence Act and other proposed bills. Historically, the Department of State has not provided any security assistance, including Foreign Military Financing (FMF) and International Military



Education and Training, to Taiwan due to its high-income status and because it can use its own funds for foreign military sales. Approximately 93 percent of the FMF global topline has historically been subject to earmarks and directives, leaving very little flexibility for other emerging priorities. As such, the Department of State would require significant appropriations to support the capabilities Taiwan needs.

*Question.* Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, we have seen Chinese leaders vehemently defend China's relationship with Russia, make no moves to condemn Russia at the United Nations or in its messaging, deploy no sanctions or punitive measures against Russia, and take on Russian propaganda about the war. Given this, what is your assessment of the China-Russia relationship, and how it might be changing?

*Answer.* We have deep concerns about the People's Republic of China's (PRC) alignment with Russia and the potential implications and consequences of that alignment. President Biden was candid and direct with President Xi about this concern during their March 18 call and about the direct reputational costs associated with standing by Putin as he perpetrates this senseless war.

*Question.* What is the Administration's theory of the case that China would be willing to help the United States first to deter Russia's invasion of Ukraine and then to press for Russia to pull back from it?

*Answer.* We have expressed clearly and directly to the PRC the consequences of providing support to Russia as it wages its brutal war against Ukraine—committing atrocities and causing a humanitarian crisis—and flagrantly violates the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity that the PRC claims to stand for.

*Question.* Does the Administration believe that China would be willing to take actions to support the United States and Europe, but could undermine its relationship with Russia?

*Answer.* No.

*Question.* Does the Department of State agree with Josep Borrell's comments with respect to mediation and diplomacy on Russia's invasion of Ukraine? Please describe why or why not: "There is no alternative . . . It must be China, I am sure of that . . . Diplomacy cannot only be European or American. Chinese diplomacy has a role to play here . . . We have not asked for it and neither have they (China), but since it has to be a power and neither the U.S. nor Europe can be (mediators), China could be."

*Answer.* The People's Republic of China (PRC) has failed to use its influence with Moscow to stop Putin's war against Ukraine. We are actively coordinating with our European Union and European partners to increase pressure on the PRC to reconsider its tacit support for Putin's war of aggression.

*Question.* If the Department of State does not agree with comments by Mr. Borrell and other European leaders on China playing a mediation role, are we clearly sending that message to our European allies and partners?

*Answer.* Yes.

*Question.* If so, how are we doing this? If not, why not?

*Answer.* We utilize direct and open lines of communication with European leaders. I will lead the first meeting of the U.S.-EU high-level dialogue on Russia on March 30, where we will also discuss People's Republic of China (PRC)-Russia relations in the context of Putin's war. Additionally, on April 21, Deputy Secretary Sherman and European External Action Service Secretary General Stefano Sannino will meet for their semi-annual U.S.-EU dialogue on China, and the PRC's role in Russia's war against Ukraine is a central agenda item.

*Question.* On February 26, the New York Times reported that the Administration shared intelligence with top Chinese officials on Russia's troop build-up along Ukraine's border, as part of evidence to convince China to help the United States deter a Russian invasion. The article also reported that China shared this intelligence with the Russians. Is the article correct?

*Answer.* I am not going to comment on matters of intelligence in an unclassified setting.

*Question.* If so, in what aspects?

*Answer.* I am not going to comment on matters of intelligence in an unclassified setting.

*Question.* If not, what is incorrect?

Answer. I am not going to comment on matters of intelligence in an unclassified setting.

*Question.* What further details can you provide on these efforts and the intelligence shared in an unclassified setting?

Answer. I am not going to comment on matters of intelligence in an unclassified setting.

*Question.* Will you commit that appropriate officials in the Administration will brief the Foreign Relations and Intelligence committees in a classified space on what was shared with China, what they shared with Russia, and any harm this may have caused to U.S. national security?

Answer. A classified briefing can be requested through the standard channels.

*Question.* The U.S. defense and security assistance budgets are stretched thin as is, and now we are facing multiple active security crises. Do you agree that the United States must ensure our defense resources are up to the task of responding to the Ukraine crisis, while also ensuring we have enough resources to solidify our presence in the Indo-Pacific and deter a future contingency there?

Answer. We must ensure our security assistance resources are sufficient to meet current and projected partner demands and flexible enough to respond to multiple active and emerging security crises. We look forward to ongoing and upcoming discussions with you regarding the balance of security assistance not only to ensure sufficient funds are planned, requested, and appropriated for global defense needs, but also to ensure that the Secretary of State remains the lead with respect to foreign assistance—to include security assistance—as a tool used in support of U.S. foreign policy priorities.

*Question.* If so, what is the State Department doing that achieve this balance and to make sure we continue to prioritize sufficient funding and security cooperation efforts in the Indo-Pacific?

Answer. Approximately 93 percent of the Foreign Military Financing (FMF) global topline has historically been subject to earmarks and directives, which limits the Department's flexibility to use FMF funds for emerging needs, particularly when it comes to the Indo-Pacific. In recent years, the Department of State has allocated to the Indo-Pacific nearly a third (32 percent in FY 2021) of the FMF that is not subject to other earmarks and directives. We look forward to continued engagement with the committees regarding FY 2022 resource allocations in support of the Administration's new Indo-Pacific Strategy, including in upcoming testimony and other engagements on the President's FY 2023 Budget Request.

*Question. Embassy Issues:* What, specifically, is the U.S. Government doing to support the Foreign Service Nationals (FSNs) working for the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development in-and-around Ukraine?

Answer. The Department of State and interagency colleagues continue to pursue multiple initiatives to ensure the safety and well-being of our locally employed (LE) staff both in Ukraine and those who have temporarily relocated outside of Ukraine. Some of the initiatives included making salary advances to all LE staff as well as a one-time supplemental payment and ensuring LE staff have resources to depart Ukraine if they so choose or are able.

*Question.* Has specific guidance been issued to the U.S. Embassy and Mission in Ukraine, regardless of the operative status of such embassy and mission, to indicate that U.S. personnel are expected to make and maintain contact with the FSNs under their management authority?

Answer. Mission Ukraine has implemented routine accountability drills. U.S. supervisors maintain contact with locally employed (LE) staff via email, phone, and/or text message. U.S. Embassy Kyiv's Human Resources Office is tracking locations of all LE staff. Our U.S. staff send updates at least once a week to our LE staff and hold virtual town halls hosted by the chargé d'affaires, with participation by subject matter experts in the Department of State, to explain benefits, processes, and updates.

*Question.* Will FSNs and their dependents who must evacuate Ukraine be prioritized for support by the U.S. Government, or will they be forgotten and left behind, as so many were in Afghanistan?

Answer. The Department of State is doing everything it can legally do to support our Mission Ukraine LE staff. To date, more than 300 locally employed (LE) staff and family members have relocated outside of Ukraine. Most of our staff, even those who remain in country, are outside conflict zones. The Department of State has

shifted and streamlined the processing of special immigrant visas (SIVs) for our Ukrainian LE staff to other posts. A statutory length of service requirement of 15 years must be met. Adjusting the length of service requires a change in legislation.

*Question. Human Rights in Russia:* How can the Administration empower the opposition politicians, leaders and activists remaining in Russia?

Answer. We stand in solidarity with the brave opposition politicians, civil society activists, and human rights defenders who choose to remain in Russia despite the Kremlin's unprecedented efforts to suppress dissent. We will continue to use all platforms to shine a light on the Kremlin's abuses and violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms. We are working to promote accountability through visa restrictions and sanctions authorities for the actions of Russian officials and their widespread suppression of dissent. We also coordinate closely with partners and Allies, bilaterally and multilaterally, to demonstrate our shared support for independent democracy and human rights advocates both in Russia and abroad.

*Question.* How is the Administration supporting independent press and free speech through Putin's current crackdown?

Answer. We strongly condemn the Kremlin's shuttering of independent media outlets and censorship of online platforms, and Russia's adoption of a new law that threatens prison sentences for unbiased reporting on Putin's war. We will continue to speak out in defense of freedom of expression, including as it relates to members of the press in Russia, and to stand with those independent journalists who continue their work at great personal risk. I have given a number of interviews to independent Russian journalists in recent weeks to support their efforts to report truthfully on the war. Together with European partners, we are committed to supporting media freedom and the free flow of information and access to the internet in Russia and the broader region. The people of Russia deserve to know the truth about the suffering that is being inflicted by their government on the people of Ukraine.

*Question. Military Support to Ukraine and NATO Allies:* Has the Administration considered offering Turkey a deal; if Turkey transfers all of its S-400s to Ukraine, the United States will backfill them with Patriot systems and let them back into the F-35 program?

Answer. The Administration has consistently encouraged Turkey to dispose of the S-400 system in a manner that would allow Ankara to comply with U.S. law. The Administration offered to sell Turkey Patriots on multiple occasions and remains willing to providing a similarly capable and competitive offer, as we have done in the past. Turkey's removal from the F-35 program was directed by the Department of Defense. The Department of Defense is best suited to answer questions on a potential return to the F-35 program.

*Question.* I understand Ukraine has pilots trained to fly A-10 Warthogs. Will the United States supply them to Ukraine?

Answer. The Department of Defense is best able to answer if there are qualified Ukrainian pilots who could effectively employ the A-10 in combat and if there are A-10s and the supporting weapons, maintenance, and training support that could be transferred to Ukraine.

*Question.* What is the objective behind the deployment of troops to Romania and Poland?

Answer. The objective of our troop deployment to Romania and Poland is to deter Russian aggression and reassure Allies on the eastern flank—who are geographically closest to Ukraine—that the United States and NATO stand ready to defend them if they are attacked. These deployments demonstrate the United States' ironclad commitment to our NATO Allies. NATO unity is the strongest deterrent against Russian aggression.

*Question.* How will U.S. troop deployments to Eastern European NATO allies scale up in response to Russian advances in Ukraine?

Answer. We defer to the Department of Defense for responses on these issues.

*Question.* Is the United States considering providing Ukraine with the Mi-17 helicopters formerly flown by the Afghan military that are now on the ground in Afghanistan?

Answer. The Administration has already provided five Mi-17 helicopters as Excess Defense Articles to Ukraine. The Administration is reviewing the current stock of other Excess Defense Articles, to include Mi-17s, which may be provided to Ukraine to address a range of operational requirements.

*Question.* What kinds of air defense capabilities is the United States considering sending to eastern European allies?

*Answer.* The Administration has worked with Eastern flank Allies and partners to enhance their air defense capabilities. Recent purchases of Patriot air and missile defense systems, F-16 and F-35 fighters, as well as supporting weapons and training have bolstered the ongoing efforts to transition countries from Russian-origin equipment to modern NATO interoperable systems.

*Question.* In addition to the Patriot systems now on the ground in Poland, is there any possibility to temporarily send MLRS to the Baltic states while they (Estonia) wait for their already-ordered systems to be delivered?

*Answer.* The Administration is actively pursuing options to increase partner capabilities for Baltic state countries, to include increasing MLRS purchases and speeding deliveries. Temporary solutions—in addition to recent rotations of U.S. and partner nation military units—provide capable deterrents as current and future purchases are delivered.

*Question. Ukraine and Humanitarian Concerns:* The Russian Government first agreed to establish “humanitarian corridors” to enable safe passage of civilians, then changed the terms of where such corridors could be established, then ultimately bombarded them anyway. Now the Russian Government reportedly is seeking to further manipulate the internationally protected right of civilians to leave the territory (i.e., evacuate) by forcing them into “green corridors,” which provide passage from besieged areas of Kyiv, Mariupol, and Sumy exclusively to Russia or Belarus. Can you confirm that the Russian Government is, once again, violating the Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocols in Ukraine by forcing civilians who wish to leave besieged areas into so-called “green corridors” that lead such civilians directly toward their aggressors?

*Answer.* We have assessed that members of Russia’s forces committed war crimes. We condemn attacks on civilians and humanitarian efforts. We will continue working with our allies and partners to gather any evidence of war crimes and other atrocities and make it available to the appropriate bodies to hold those responsible accountable. The United States has been clear that all parties to the conflict must abide by obligations under international humanitarian law related to the protection of civilians, including those who are fleeing conflict, and those who are trying to protect and assist them. Humanitarian aid deliveries must be allowed to operate without interference, and humanitarian workers must have safe passage to deliver aid and assistance to those in need.

*Question.* What specific actions are being taken by the Biden administration to enable the safe passage of civilians seeking to leave Ukraine?

*Answer.* The United States is the largest single-country donor of humanitarian assistance to Ukraine, providing nearly \$302 million to independent humanitarian organizations so far this year. This assistance facilitates our humanitarian organization partners’ ability to work tirelessly to provide safe passage for evacuees trying to leave danger after terms are negotiated directly by the parties to the conflict. The United States and our allies continue to call on all parties to the conflict to allow unhindered humanitarian access in Ukraine and to allow people to flee to their country of choice.

*Question.* What specific actions are being taken by the UN to enable the safe passage of civilians seeking to leave Ukraine?

*Answer.* Safe passage agreements are negotiated by the parties to the conflict. Humanitarian organizations are working tirelessly to advise the parties, and when agreement is reached with sufficient detail, humanitarian organizations escort convoys of civilians to safer parts of Ukraine and provide assistance. From there, civilians may choose if they want to stay in Ukraine or seek asylum in a neighboring country. If they choose to leave, transport is provided by local authorities and humanitarian organizations. In addition to the vulnerable Ukrainian citizens who are fleeing conflict in their country, humanitarian organizations are providing support for third-country nationals fleeing the conflict.

*Question.* Ukraine is a major exporter of grains and one of the top sources of wheat for the World Food Program. April is planting season. If the planting season is missed due to the Russian Government’s illegal, unjustified, and immoral invasion of Ukraine, the repercussions for food security could be far-reaching. As we saw during the global food price crisis between 2007–2008, there is a direct correlation between food price spikes, food insecurity, and social and political instability. What

contingency plans have been put in place to mitigate the impact of Russia's invasion of Ukraine on global prices of staple commodities, including wheat?

Answer. To respond to the challenges that Russia has created with its unjustified, brutal invasion of Ukraine, the United States is acting to bolster food security around the globe, in conjunction with allies and partners. One way we are doing this is by supporting the United Nations World Food Program to assist up to 3.1 million conflict-affected individuals in Ukraine, as well as 300,000 crisis-affected individuals in neighboring countries. We are also urging our partners to consider how to expand production of key cereal crops, oil seeds, and associated commodities in a non-trade distorting way, and we remain committed to maintaining strong and open global markets for staple agricultural commodities that feed the world. We will continue to work to mitigate the many harmful effects of Putin's war.

*Question.* Do you agree that the World Food Program, to the greatest extent practicable, should continue to prioritize the local and regional purchase of wheat from Ukraine in an effort not only to meet immediate needs in real time, but also to help promote early recovery of Ukraine's agricultural economy?

Answer. I agree that the World Food Program (WFP) should prioritize the local and regional purchase of wheat from Ukraine, if WFP deems it practicable. WFP sources 50 percent of its wheat from Ukraine. Russia's unprovoked war against Ukraine has severely impacted the planting, harvest, and export of wheat from Ukraine. WFP estimates that Russia's further invasion of Ukraine will cost it \$29-\$50 million more per month in increased wheat costs alone. If WFP determines it can procure wheat from Ukraine in the quality and quantities it needs at a reasonable price and in a reasonable timeframe, it should do so. Ultimately, these decisions rest with WFP.

*Question.* Should the World Food Program halt all purchase of agricultural commodities from Russia? If not, why not?

Answer. Russia's ongoing war against Ukraine has stopped trade in Black Sea wheat and put at risk 50 percent of WFP's wheat supply. WFP estimates that Russia's invasion will cost it \$29-\$50 million more per month in wheat costs alone, hurting the world's most vulnerable people. U.S. sanctions in response to Putin's war are carefully calibrated to allow for humanitarian activities by individuals, companies, and NGOs to continue, including transactions related to agricultural commodities. The goal of allowing trade in these commodities is to mitigate the impact of sanctions on humanitarian conditions around the world. The WFP should exercise discretion when sourcing wheat, noting Russia stands to benefit from the higher prices caused by its war.

*Question.* Should the President seek a global waiver of U.S. purchase and shipping requirements under the Food for Peace Act, so that existing resources can be used for the local and regional procurement of lifesaving food aid commodities, thereby helping to meet needs in areas beset by conflict that are dependent upon Ukraine's exports in real time? If not, why not?

Answer. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) relies on a variety of modalities to meet emergency food assistance needs in an efficient, responsible, and timely manner, to include both local, regional, and U.S. sourcing of commodities. The food and nutrition needs of vulnerable groups vary significantly based on location, market access, food availability, nutritional status, security concerns, and other factors, and thus it is critical for USAID to have flexibility in procurement and shipping requirements in order to appropriately respond to the growing complexity and number of global humanitarian crises. With the disruptions to Ukrainian exports and future production prospects, Title II emergency food assistance funding is an important tool that allows USAID to provide U.S. in-kind commodities to vulnerable people where markets may not be functioning and where food is scarce.

*Question. Non-Ukrainian Refugees Fleeing Ukraine:* Which African governments has the Department of State engaged concerning the challenges their nationals face evacuating from Ukraine?

Answer. The United States advocates that all people should have access to international protection. When we learned third country nationals' fleeing Russia's aggression against Ukraine faced barriers, we engaged the government of Ukraine and Ukraine's neighbors. They immediately took action to ensure protection for third country nationals seeking refuge. The U.S. has engaged with counterparts from the African Union, Nigeria, Uganda, Central African Republic, Chad, Republic of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, and others. We continue to

work with our African and international organization partners to provide protection and assist those who wish to return home.

*Question.* How has the Department of State engaged the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on the challenges being faced by non-Ukrainian refugees fleeing Ukraine?

*Answer.* The United States has regularly engaged with and supported UNHCR, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and other international humanitarian organizations as they respond to the needs of refugee populations, including third country nationals, in coordination with the states neighboring Ukraine. U.S. supported assistance from UNHCR, IOM, and other international organizations specifically addressed the unique protection needs of third country nationals, as well as other groups with additional vulnerabilities. In addition, the United States has allocated \$5.5 million to our international organization partners for the safe and voluntary return of third country nationals to their home countries.

*Question.* Understanding the potential for propaganda and disinformation stemming from the allegations and cases of racism recounted by non-Ukrainians, particularly those from Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia, which messages and public diplomacy tools has the Department of State used to engage on this issue?

*Answer.* We consider it essential that every individual seeking refuge from conflict and violence be treated equitably, with dignity, and with respect for their human rights. We are coordinating closely with allies and partners to help ensure every individual, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability status, crossing from Ukraine into neighboring countries is received with dignity and respect, and with the protection assistance circumstances require. We are encouraging countries in the region to adhere to their respective international refugee law and human rights obligations and to respect the principle of non-refoulement. We are also spreading these messages widely on all Department of State media platforms globally. More broadly, the United States condemns racism in all its forms around the globe.

---

RESPONSES OF MS. VICTORIA NULAND TO QUESTIONS  
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR TODD YOUNG

*Question.* India announced February 25 it was exploring a rupee-ruble payment system to facilitate trade with Russia, despite global sanctions. What is the current status of this project?

*Answer.* The Government of India is discussing a rupee-ruble currency trade arrangement to address payment issues faced by Indian exporters and importers. Indian media reported such an arrangement would focus on sectors not subject to sanctions, including energy, agriculture, and pharmaceuticals, while avoiding the defense sector. The U.S. Government has discouraged India from pursuing payment mechanisms or taking other steps that could undermine the impact of sanctions on Russia.

*Question.* What options is the Administration exploring to reduce Indian dependence on Russian and Belarussian-sourced potash and other agricultural inputs?

*Answer.* The Administration is encouraging allies and partners to implement emergency measures that incentivize domestic producers to temporarily increase fertilizer production and ensure adequate supply. We are also consulting with Multilateral Development Banks, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to encourage financing of projects to expand fertilizer production, as well as increase the efficient use of fertilizer.

*Question.* Given that India has legacy Russian military equipment, is the Administration considering military sales to India that would enable the country to provide its used military equipment to Ukraine?

*Answer.* The Administration values India as a partner and has encouraged India's ongoing efforts to reduce its dependence on Russian military equipment. Total U.S. defense trade with India has grown significantly in recent years, from near zero in 2008 to over \$20 billion in 2021. Indian-Russian defense collaboration goes back to the 1960's, and divestiture from legacy equipment is a slow process. We are working with India on alternatives.

*Question.* What other opportunities are available for India to signal its support for Ukraine and international democratic norms?

**Answer.** In the Joint Statement issued following the April 11 U.S.-India 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue, the United States and India “urged an immediate cessation of hostilities,” “unequivocally condemned civilian deaths,” and “underscored that the contemporary global order has been built on the UN Charter, respect for international law, and the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states.” However, India so far has not publicly condemned Russia’s invasion, which is in clear contravention to the rules-based order India seeks to uphold. India has provided Ukraine with valuable humanitarian assistance, including medical supplies.

**Question.** How have allies and the private sector responded to sanctions imposed to date on Russia? Are there unexpected side effects from our sanctions efforts on allies?

**Answer.** Since the start of the Russia’s war in Ukraine, more than 30 allies and partners have joined us in rolling out sanctions on more than 2,100 Russian and Belarusian targets. Our allies and partners have shown an unprecedented, shared commitment to work together to impose costs on Russia. For example, New Zealand has joined in national sanctions for the first time in its history. Similarly, more than 600 multinational companies have pulled out of Russia. We are continuing our engagement with the private sector in order to answer questions and, along with our Treasury colleagues, are working with our allies and partners on ways to mitigate the impacts of our sanctions on them.

**Question.** Is the Administration considering seizure of frozen Russian-related assets held in U.S. accounts?

**Answer.** We have worked with foreign counterparts on a number of high-profile asset seizures, such as the April seizure in Spain of Viktor Vekselberg’s \$90 million yacht the *Tango*. On April 28, the Administration submitted a comprehensive proposal to expand forfeiture authorities. We will work with our interagency partners to act on these authorities, provided they are granted.

**Question.** The existing licenses are written with remarkably broad language, authorizing transactions across a variety of sectors. Is the Administration considering further restricting the scope of permitted transactions under existing sanctions?

**Answer.** Since Russia’s further invasion of Ukraine, the United States has imposed a rigorous set of sanctions on Russia for Putin’s brutal war. In order to focus the impact of these measures on Russia and avoid inadvertent harm to our allies and partners, we have issued a set of General Licenses which provide for the timely wind down of business activity with the Russian Federation. In addition, the Administration is committed to supporting humanitarian activities and avoiding restrictions on life-essential goods like food and medicine.

**Question.** The company behind Nordstream 2 fired all its employees, but there are conflicting reports as to whether it will declare bankruptcy. What is the latest legal status of the Nordstream 2 companies?

**Answer.** On February 23, Secretary Blinken terminated the waiver and imposed sanctions under the Protecting Europe’s Energy Security Act (PEESA), as amended, on Nord Stream 2 AG (NS2AG), and its CEO, Matthias Warnig. Pursuant to PEESA and Executive Order 14039, the corporate officers of NS2AG are also subject to visa restrictions. On February 28, Swiss Economics Minister Guy Parmelin announced all NS2AG staff were “made redundant.” We have seen—but cannot confirm—media reports of NS2AG’s intention to declare bankruptcy in late March 2022.

**Question.** How will the Administration proceed if the Nordstream 2 assets are liquidated or sold to another party?

**Answer.** The Administration remains committed to implementing sanctions targeting Nord Stream 2, including PEESA, as amended. Individuals and entities knowingly engaged in sanctionable conduct related to Nord Stream 2 face similar sanctions risks. The Administration continues to examine entities potentially engaged in sanctionable behavior. All property and interests in property of persons sanctioned under PEESA, as amended, that are in or come within the United States or are in the possession or control of U.S. persons must be blocked.

**Question.** What is the status of Gazprom oil deliveries to Europe via existing Ukraine pipelines?

**Answer.** Russia continues to deliver oil to Europe including through pipelines that transit Ukraine. The Administration supports European efforts to diversify away from Russian energy supplies, including through the European Commission-U.S. Joint Task Force to Reduce Europe’s Dependence on Russian Fossil Fuels.

*Question.* How is the Administration working with Taiwan in reviewing and learning from the Ukraine war?

*Answer.* Public polling suggests Russia's invasion has focused Taiwan and its leaders on the need to undertake reforms to improve its ability to repel a PRC attack. The U.S. Government has focused extensively on supporting Taiwan through the acquisition of asymmetric capabilities and the Departments of State and Defense are also coordinating closely with Taiwan on non-material solutions to improve Taiwan's defenses. This includes working with Taiwan on increasing its resiliency across the military and non-military domains by looking at its reserve/mobilization reforms and civil-military integration.

*Question.* Does the Administration have any insight into U.S. citizens in Ukraine that are participating as military combatants?

*Answer.* We do not have authoritative numbers of U.S. citizens fighting in Ukraine, as U.S. citizens are not required to register their travel to a foreign country with the Department of State or update us on changes to their travel plans.

U.S. citizens who travel to Ukraine, especially to participate in fighting, face significant risks to personal safety, including the very real risk of capture or death. The Department Travel Advisory for Ukraine states U.S. citizens should not travel to Ukraine and those in Ukraine should depart immediately if safe to do so using commercial or other private available options for ground transportation.

*Question.* Are we providing any diplomatic assistance to U.S. citizens traveling into Ukraine?

*Answer.* The U.S. Government is extremely limited in its ability to provide consular service to U.S. citizens in Ukraine. The Department Travel Advisory indicates that U.S. citizens should not travel to Ukraine and those in Ukraine should depart immediately if it is safe to do so.

The United States is not able to evacuate U.S. citizens from Ukraine, including those U.S. citizens who travel to Ukraine to engage in the ongoing war.

*Question.* What would be the implications of U.S. citizens killed or captured by Russian forces in Ukraine?

*Answer.* The United States expects Russia to respect its obligations under the law of war and other applicable international law. The Department's Travel Advisory states that U.S. citizens should not travel to Ukraine due to, among other reasons, reports of Russian Government security officials singling out U.S. citizens in Ukraine. U.S. citizens who are detained by Russian authorities in Ukraine may be subject to potential attempts at criminal prosecution and may be at heightened risk of mistreatment.

*Question.* How would the Administration respond if Russia claimed private U.S. citizen actions signaled direct U.S. involvement in the conflict?

*Answer.* The United States would respond that it is not a participant in the war and caution Russia not to take further escalatory action. We continue to advise U.S. citizens against travel to Ukraine and that those in Ukraine should depart immediately if it is safe to do so.

*Question.* What is the Administration's assessment of the strength, influence, and role of the Azov Battalion with Ukrainian defense structure?

*Answer.* The militia formed in 2014 that called itself the "Azov Battalion" has not existed for several years.

The unit called the Special Purpose Regiment Azov is part of the National Guard of Ukraine. It reports to President Volodymyr Zelenskyy through the Minister of Internal Affairs. Under martial law, all National Guard units fall under military command. As one unit among many in the National Guard, it does not have any particular influence over the structure or policy of Ukraine's defense forces.

The Special Purpose Regiment Azov, together with Patrol Police and KORD (SWAT) officers and members of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, remain at the Azovstal plant in Russian-besieged Mariupol. Russian forces, many of which are suspected of war crimes, continue to subject the Ukrainian defenders of Mariupol to intensive, daily attacks and bombardment. Mariupol's bravery has become a symbol of Ukraine's determination to resist Russia's subjugation.

*Question.* What steps are the Administration and European allies taking to prevent Azov units from utilizing U.S.-made munitions and weapons?

*Answer.* Since 2014, Embassy Kyiv has routinely performed comprehensive vetting for all security force recipients of U.S.-provided training, equipment, or other security assistance to ensure compliance with the Leahy law. The United States also



provided human rights training as part of the transfer of military equipment. These vetting mechanisms precluded groups like the 2014-era Azov Battalion from being direct recipients of our assistance.

During the ongoing war in Ukraine, Embassy Kyiv personnel retain the capability to conduct Leahy Vetting of security assistance recipients and have been doing so. The Embassy, in coordination with relevant offices in Washington, DC, also conducts regular end-use monitoring in accordance with international law and consistent with agreements and licensing to ensure that security and defense articles are used only for the purpose they were provided for.

The State Department continues to monitor, to the best of our ability during wartime, reports of human rights abuses by groups and entities that could be of concern.

We have also engaged with the Ukrainian Government about steps it can take to avoid playing into Russia's disinformation efforts which conflate the current Azov Regiment—which is not the same entity as the disbanded 2014-era Azov Battalion and groups formerly affiliated with the Battalion.

The Azov Regiment is currently encircled in the Azovstal steel works in Mariupol, where it is defending both the city and its civilian population against attacks by Russia's forces.

*Question.* How is the Administration supporting efforts to document alleged mass atrocity crimes and other forms of civilian harm by Russia?

*Answer.* Given the justice and accountability imperatives Ukraine is facing, the U.S. Government is investing in multiple lines of effort. One flagship program out of the Office of Global Criminal Justice offers direct support to the Office of the Prosecutor General and Mobile Justice Teams that support OPG War Crimes Unit and regional prosecutor efforts to conduct field investigations. Other programs include: training and technical assistance for civil society efforts to gather, document, and report on violations of international humanitarian law; expanding access to justice for victims of atrocities and other abuses; data collection, reporting, and information sharing on atrocities and other human rights abuses including through analysis of satellite imagery and other data feeds; laying the foundation for restorative justice; and enhancing the ability of civil society, journalists, and other partners to safely and securely share information.

*Question.* How is the Administration supporting accountability for Russia including through multilateral investigation mechanisms as well as the collection and protection of evidence of mass atrocity crimes and other human rights violations?

*Answer.* The United States supports international efforts to examine atrocities in Ukraine, including those conducted by the International Criminal Court, the UN, the Experts Mission under the Moscow Mechanism of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and others. We will continue to assist with documentation efforts, including by supporting efforts to ensure that evidence collected can be safely and securely transmitted and stored. We helped establish the Human Rights Council's Commission of Inquiry, ensuring it has a mandate to investigate, document, analyze, and share evidence of violations of international humanitarian law and human rights violations and abuses with appropriate judicial bodies—and to identify the individuals and entities responsible. We will also continue to support the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine to expand its work in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

LETTER FROM RUSLAN STEFANCHUK, PARLIAMENT OF UKRAINE,  
DATED MARCH 8, 2022

## ГОЛОВА ВЕРХОВНОЇ РАДИ УКРАЇНИ

Kyiv, March 8, 2022

To the Members of the Congress of the United States of America

We, the Members of the Parliament of Ukraine, express our utmost gratitude to each and every member of the United States Congress for the unwavering support you have shown for Ukrainian efforts to counter Russian aggression. We have felt this support in different forms since 2014, and today we ask you to stand with us stronger than ever and to double your efforts.

At 5 AM on February 24, 2022, Russian President Vladimir Putin escalated his aggression against Ukraine to unprecedented levels. In the days since, Ukraine has been turned into a battlefield, with almost every town and city burning and bleeding from Russian missiles and bombs.

As you read this, Russian troops are indiscriminately shelling civilians, residential areas, schools and hospitals. The aggressor is using weapons prohibited by the Geneva Conventions and International Humanitarian Law, such as cluster bombs and vacuum (thermobaric) bombs, intended to cause severe suffering to human beings. And when civilians try to escape the combat zones, Russian soldiers shoot at humanitarian "green" corridors, turning them blood red.

The Russian army has been ordered to take control over and destroy critical infrastructure, which includes five nuclear power stations. Fifteen nuclear reactors, if placed in the wrong hands or hit by a missile, could cause a global nuclear disaster of unimaginable scale. Every country and every nation would suffer the consequences.

Faced with the second largest army in the world, it is growing increasingly challenging for the Ukrainian military to keep standing and fighting. As our army, government, and people are doing their best to keep the world a safe place, free of authoritarian empires, we ask the American Congress and government to help us with the following:

1. Military assistance suitable for countering Russian attacks and military advances. Ukraine needs surface-to-air defense systems, such as the Iron Dome or NASAMS, to protect civilian areas from incoming Russian missiles. We implore the United States to work with all allies and partners to provide Ukraine with these life-saving missile defense systems immediately.

2. No fly zone over densely populated cities, humanitarian corridors and nuclear power stations. As a responsible partner, Ukraine is conscious of its inability to keep all of its territory safe from Russian fighter jets, bombs, rockets and missiles. This, we call on our partners to assist in protecting the skies of Ukraine.

3. Procurement of additional aircrafts for the Ukrainian Air Force. As the Russian Air Force attacks intensify, Ukraine is in dire need of fighter jets. Ukrainian Air Force pilots can operate any type of MiG or Sukhoi fighter jets. We would appreciate all efforts to help procure these aircrafts from Eastern European NATO member-states.

4. Further economic sanctions.

All economic relations and trade with Russia are indirect sponsorship of the death of Ukrainian civilians. Money from oil and gas sales remains a key lifeline for Russian President Vladimir Putin and the Kremlin. This money is being used for the needs of the Russian army and for financing the very soldiers who massacre Ukrainians.

Thus, we urge the United States to immediately impose direct sanctions on Russia's oil and gas sector, as well as secondary sanctions on any international banks doing business with Russia.

Colleagues, our list of requests is short, yet vital for the livelihood of a 44 million person nation. As Ukraine fights for her existence, she also fights for the existence of the very concepts of sovereignty and democracy. We fight against the return of empires and authoritarian regimes in Europe, and we fight for the upkeep of the world order as we know it today. And in this struggle we ask for your help as a partner and ally, in the hope that with these united efforts we shall bring an end to Vladimir Putin's terror on the continent of Europe.

Regards,

Ruslan Stefanchuk

