

S. HRG. 117-4

**NOMINATION OF HON. ANTONY J. BLINKEN TO  
BE U.S. SECRETARY OF STATE—PART I**

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**HEARING**

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS  
UNITED STATES SENATE**

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

—————  
JANUARY 19, 2021  
—————

Printed for the use of the Committee on Foreign Relations



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**NOMINATION OF ANTONY J. BLINKEN  
TO BE SECRETARY OF STATE—PART I**

**TUESDAY, JANUARY 19, 2021**

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:04 p.m. Russell Senate Office Building, Room 301, and via Webex, Hon. James E. Risch, chairman of the committee, presiding.

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

Also Present: Senator Durbin.

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

The CHAIRMAN. The United States Senate Foreign Relations Committee will come to order.

We have an important—an important hearing this afternoon, obviously, as we talk about the president-elect's nomination of Antony J. Blinken to be secretary of state, and we will get to that very quickly.

As a matter of personal privilege for just two minutes, every time I am sworn in for a new term I kind of think back. This is my—as I start my forty-first year as a member of the Senate body, I have learned some things over that period of time.

I spent 28 years in our state senate, over two decades as leading it, and now 13 years here, and some things I have learned I can make, very briefly, an observation. If we treat each other with kindness and respect, we get things done. One of the best friends I had during my time in the state senate was the Democrat leader. We are still close personal friends. My wife and I stay with him when we travel to north Idaho.

He consults with me frequently and gives me advice even when I do not want it, and we have become and stayed very, very good friends over the years. We always got things done in Idaho, and I hope that, as we go forward, that we will do likewise here. It is not only beginning of my forty-first year in the Senate body, this will be my fifty-third year married to my wife and my—after completing 36 elections I consider that all quite the accomplishment.

So with that, we are going to proceed to hear from Mr. Blinken after we make our opening statements. But Senator Durbin has

very, very important matters that he must attend to and we are honored to have him come and address this august body.

And, Senator Durbin, the floor is yours.

**STATEMENT OF HON. RICHARD J. DURBIN,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM ILLINOIS**

Senator DURBIN. Chairman Risch, thank you very much. It is great to be back in the committee, which I served on many years ago, and, Senator Menendez, thank you for your leadership and all of you who have gathered here today.

I have been asked and I am honored that Mr. Blinken asked me to come before the committee and make an introduction. I am not going to do what most do and reread his entire biography, which you have all seen, I am sure, are impressed with as I am.

I just want to make a few points about the job he seeks and the moment he seeks it.

On September 12th, 2001, just hours after the 9/11 terrorist attack on the United States, the leading French newspaper, *Le Monde*, published a front-page headline of four words: *Nous sommes tous Américains*. We are all Americans.

With those four words, the people of France acknowledged the danger and pain in the United States and quite simply said, we will stand with you.

Despite many differences on many issues, that is what friends are for. That is the reason that alliances count. With the end of the Trump administration, we face a stark choice. Does America first mean America alone? Does our nation still need friends and allies?

Over the past four years, many of the strongest bonds between America and our allies have been strained, lifelong friends have been shunned, and authoritarian adversaries have been embraced.

The role of the United States and the world, its values, its allies, its adversaries, are in question. The world is waiting for a clear policy from our new president, and our new president has chosen one man to lead that effort, Tony Blinken.

When you take a look at his background, it starts with the State Department, it includes service as staff director on this committee, with the National Security Council, working as deputy secretary of state. It is an amazing background. And there is also a moment, which I am sure you all have seen—we have seen over and over again. There was that iconic photograph in the Situation Room when approximately 12 people were gathered with the president and vice president of the United States and secretary of state to see if finally we would capture Osama bin Laden.

Tony Blinken was in that room. It tells you that he was more than just a peripheral staffer. He was an integral part of the security decisions of the United States of America. He is ready for this job and we know it.

There is one thing that we discussed before we walked in here that I think is a critical element, and that is the fact that he inherited a great department and many men and women who have dedicated their lives to the security of the United States of America.

We need them. We see their expertise wherever we travel in every corner of the world, sometimes at great personal sacrifice.



They are representing this country and, literally, risking their lives to do so.

It is his job and he understands to thank them for their efforts and to make sure that the morale is at the highest level so that America continues to be well represented around the world.

It is my honor to introduce Tony Blinken today as the next secretary of state.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Senator Durbin. I know you have another things to do so we will excuse you and I will—what we are going to do here today is I am going to give some opening remarks. I am then going to turn it over to Senator Menendez for his opening remarks, and after that we will do a round of questioning.

Each senator will be given 10 minutes. I will do it on a seniority basis, unlike our usual early bird process that we use. But because of the size of this I think that it is important that we have—we do it on the seniority basis.

So with all that said, today's hearing is, unquestionably, significant. The secretary of state is one of, if not the, most important nominations that a president makes. He represents our interests abroad and is also looked to for defining America's role and posture in the world.

Over the past several decades we have watched nations with authoritarian ideologies and imperial tendencies increasingly attempt to grow their influence on the world stage and, unfortunately, that has happened with some success on their part.

These countries challenge the very principles on which the United States was founded, democracy and the rule of law. As the Biden administration begins tomorrow, there are several key foreign policy issues that need immediate attention.

My most important concern, as Mr. Blinken and I talked about a few—in my office not long ago, is Iran, and the president-elect's promise to return to the JCPOA.

President Obama thought the JCPOA would empower Iran moderates and see Iran abandon its nuclear weapons program. But this notion proved to be misplaced. The Iranian regime cannot separate itself from its revolutionary ideology.

The JCPOA provided very beneficial sanctions relief for Iran. Yet, it failed to eliminate Iran's support for terrorist proxies, therefore, allowing them to fund terrorism across the region.

The deal also included very shortsighted sunsets on Iranians' conventional weapons and ballistic missile programs, and allowed Iran to continue enriching uranium.

Any new deal with Iran must address all the facets of Iranian behavior including its ballistic missile program and ending support for terrorism.

I fully understand and I fully comprehend that people want to focus on their nuclear ambitions. But these people have other bad activities that they are involved in that also need to be addressed.

Unfortunately, the Iranian regime thinks it has successfully waited out the maximum pressure program that we have had in place. Only time will tell if they are right. At the time, President Obama used the extensive sanctions regime Congress created as a

leverage to begin the JCPOA talks, and so he should have. President-elect Biden should take advantage of the significant leverage that has been provided to the maximum pressure program and negotiate a new deal with—that includes Iran’s regional aggression. A policy of containment rather than appeasement is the only approach that will be successful. Our very discussions with Iran should begin and end with our allies in the region. Israel and many of our other Gulf allies felt the United States abandoned them and their security concerns during the JCPOA negotiations.

With U.S. leadership over the last four years, our relations were rebuilt and paved the way for the Abraham Accords. The Abraham Accords signed last year were a significant step in fundamentally improving the security, economic, and diplomatic environment in the Middle East. But they also underscored the significant threat that Iran poses to our regional partners. I would hope future negotiations with Iran would include extensive consultations with not just Congress but also Israel and our Gulf partners, and given its significant implications any new deal should also be submitted as a treaty for Senate ratifications. I understand that that is a controversial issue. But if we are going to have the support of the United States, it cannot just be one branch of government. It needs to be all branches of government.

I hope that the Biden administration will adhere to these conditions before and during any engagement with Iran, and I sincerely appreciate, Mr. Blinken, your offer that prior to beginning or ending all of these negotiations there will be significant consultation with this committee. I greatly appreciate that. Another area of serious concern with the new administration, obviously, is China, which I believe will be our greatest foreign policy challenge of this century.

On a personal note, I want to thank you, Mr. Blinken, for having read the 143-page report that I published just recently, and I also appreciate the kind words that you had for the conclusions and suggestions in that report. China is a strategic and global competitor of the United States and the Chinese Communist Party routinely engages in economic coercion, military aggression, human rights abuses, and influence operations. Its policies deliberately damage U.S. interests and values. In the face of the Chinese Communist Party’s dangerous goals, the United States must maintain a strong competitive stance.

Rising to the challenge is now a sprint and a marathon that will require sustained political will, expanded cooperation with allies and partners, and properly aligned resources and personnel.

Last year, I introduced STRATEGIC Act, the first comprehensive legislative proposal to compete with China effectively. This bill was written with Democratic senators’ input and other Democrat organizations around this city who are in the think tank business, along with Republican think tanks.

And it should be noted that China is not a partisan issue. It is an American issue. I know Senator Menendez has strong concerns in this regard also and I hope we will work together as we move forward with those challenges. I hope and expect that the Biden administration will pursue bipartisan cooperation on challenges proposed by the Chinese Communist Party.

One of those challenges is Taiwan. The PRC's obliteration of Hong Kong's autonomy last year makes the question of Taiwan's future all the more urgent and serious. China's military modernization and expansion has dramatically shifted the balance of power in the Indo-Pacific.

This is eroding conventional deterrents, putting the U.S. military as well as Indo-Pacific allies and partners at risk. Taiwan is among the strategically consequential issues and should remain a key strategic priority.

Finally, the COVID-19 pandemic has evolved into the largest most destructive global health emergency in more than a century. More than 83 million people have been infected and 1.8 million people have died.

Economies have been upended, schools and offices closed, and livelihoods destroyed. It will take years to recover from this global health catastrophe. There is a lot we still do not know about COVID-19 but two things are clear.

Its global spread was accelerated by catastrophic failures at all levels of the existing global health security architecture, and unless we do something now it will happen again.

Last year, I introduced an effort to help the United States and our international partners get ahead of the next pandemic.

I, along with my committee colleagues, pressed the WHO to launch an independent interim review of its response to the outbreak so we could figure out what worked, what did not, and how to prepare for future outbreaks. WHO, ultimately, followed our suggestion.

If confirmed, I am committed to working with you, Mr. Blinken, to advance reforms at the WHO that will help restore public confidence and enable it to more effectively respond to crisis in real time. I, along with Senator Murphy, Cardin, and Portman also introduced bipartisan legislation to strengthen the ability of the United States and our international partners to detect, prevent, and respond to outbreaks before they become pandemics.

I am well aware that Senator Menendez also has a strong interest in this area and I look forward to working with him and with the committee as we move legislation forward.

This bill, the Global Health Security and Diplomacy Act, provides much needed leadership and direction for U.S. global health security efforts overseas and incentivizes greater leadership and investment by others.

I am also eager to work with you, Mr. Blinken, if confirmed, to further redefine and enact this important legislation. Over the last five years, the world has seen dramatic change and it is imperative policies are updated to reflect these new realities.

I look forward to hearing your thoughts on these important issues and I thank you for being here today and I thank you and your family for the willingness to take on the sacrifice to serve in this important position. With that, Senator Menendez, the floor is yours.

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

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let me, first of all, start off by saying I appreciate your efforts to work with me to get this hearing up today to expedite the consideration of one of the most important national security positions in our government, the secretary of state. So thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. You are welcome, and I think all of us have a very strong interest in seeing that the president has in place as rapidly as possible his national security team. Thank you for that.

Senator MENENDEZ. I will say amen to that and I appreciate this and also, hopefully, if everything works out well the expeditious consideration at a committee meeting to vote out the nominee.

Let me just say one remark. I will save my remarks about our future work together as a committee when the gavel changes. But as someone who has met our lovely wife, you are an incredibly fortunate man to have had over a half a century with her as a partner.

The CHAIRMAN. No one knows better than I. Thank you, Senator.

Senator MENENDEZ. Congratulations to you on such a great long time together. She is just an incredibly charming person.

Mr. Blinken, congratulations on your nomination. You are superbly qualified and prepared to be our next secretary of state and you have impressed us all over the years with your intellect, your dedication, and your humanity, including during your successful tenure as deputy secretary of state, deputy national security advisor, and as staff director of this committee. Now, while tomorrow's inauguration is a time for healing and renewal, I am nonetheless compelled to speak about the insurrection at the Capitol on January 6th.

The images from that day are permanently seared in our collective conscience. Terrorists defiling the Capitol with Confederate flags and Nazi images, seeking to take hostage or perhaps kill our democratically elected leaders, savagely beating police officers, and in that respect my heart goes out to the family of New Jersey native and Capitol police officer Brian Sicknick who succumbed to the those injuries, and the family of Capitol police officer Howard Liebengood as well as dozens of other officers injured in the attack.

This attack on the very foundation of our democracy delivered a tragic reminder, that our ability to project power abroad is inextricably linked to the health and strength of our democracy.

This does not mean that we cannot talk about the importance of democracy abroad, no, but, rather, we must show that senators and all other leaders in this country have a duty to stand up for democracy, for the Constitution, for the rule of law.

There can be no exceptions, and I expect that from the Biden administration and, based on my experience, I know, Mr. Blinken, you will do so in word and deed.

Now, if confirmed, your task will be to repair and restore America's place in the world. You will face complex challenges all over the globe.

The world is on fire. Rebuilding alliances, restoring American leadership at international institutions, tackling problems that define our times and defy borders like climate change, migration, and

COVID-19, and you will need to re-center our foreign policy around the core American values of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. But you will need to do so thoughtfully.

Over the past year, the world has watched the United States completely falter on a national response to COVID-19, continue its overdue reckoning with systemic racism, and struggle with the president's obsession with thwarting the peaceful transfer of power, pushing disinformation, and attacking a free press.

As we work to advance American interests around the globe and seek to create a more democratic, prosperous, and secure world, we have to redouble our efforts at home to secure a more perfect union for all Americans.

Now, as you are likely aware, North Korea, Russia, and Turkey require some immediate attention. Over the past four years, North Korea's nuclear and missile programs have continued to grow unchecked. In other words, the United States and our allies are more at risk now than after four years of President Trump than when he took office.

A revanchist Russia continues to threaten the United States and our allies including to the recent SolarWinds cyber-attack, the spread of disinformation, and efforts to silence and murder political opposition. And Turkey continues to be destabilizing by supporting Azerbaijan's aggression in Nagorno-Karabakh and to its own aggressive behavior in the eastern Mediterranean against our democratic allies Greece and Cyprus.

From a broader regional perspective, one of your most important challenges will be to forge a coherent strategy for the Indo-Pacific, one led by our values, centered on our allies and partners, and implemented with consistency. As you know, I believe that while the Trump administration got some of the questions about the region right, they came up with the wrong answers.

At a time when we should have been strengthening our alliances, building new partnerships, empowering a multilateral architecture, expanding commercial ties, and ensuring the vitality of democracy and the rule of law, the Trump administration in almost every case did the exact opposite, and after four years of the Trump administration we are in a worse position to effectively compete with China than before.

So I am interested in hearing more about what your top priorities will be if confirmed in approaching the Indo-Pacific region and how our China policy nests within this larger framework.

We also have a number of ongoing challenges in the Middle East, perhaps none so pressing as Iran. As you know, I was not a proponent of the JCPOA, but I also believe the Trump administration's decision to withdraw without a serious strategy involving our allies would ultimately leave us less safe and Iran emboldened.

Unfortunately, Iran's continuing aggression across the Middle East and its recent nuclear activity that has dramatically advanced its capabilities has vindicated that prediction. Now, I understand the Biden administration is interested in returning to a diplomatic path, which I support. But I fear returning to the JCPOA without concrete efforts to address Iran's other dangerous and destabilizing activity would be insufficient. I believe there is bipartisan support to find a comprehensive diplomatic approach with Iran that in-

cludes working closely with our European and regional partners if we take those other issues into consideration. Closer to home, political crises in Latin America have caused human rights and humanitarian disasters on an unprecedented scale. Simply put, addressing rampant crime, weak governance, corruption, climate-related displacement in the Northern Triangle must be a top priority for the country and deeply impacts the security and economic well-being of Americans. Further south, I am encouraged by the Biden administration's plans to renew our commitment to the multilateral efforts we must lead in order to improve the effectiveness of international sanctions and humanitarian aid as we pursue a diplomatic solution to the Venezuelan crisis.

Maduro's campaign of crimes against humanity and attacks against interim president Juan Guaidó and democratic civil society, which I hope the administration will recognize interim President Guaidó, all have serious implications for U.S. national security and regional stability.

And, Mr. Blinken, I also hope you support Ambassador Bill Richardson's efforts to free the six Americans who have been unjustly detained in Venezuela.

I am confident that, if confirmed, you will do everything you can to repair and restore American leadership abroad. Foundational to that effort will be rebuilding and reinvigorating the State Department itself. As you well know, our career foreign and civil servants are incredibly talented and dedicated. Over the past few years, however, they have been treated with disdain, smeared, and forced out of public service.

There has been a stunning loss of expertise, steep declines in morale, little accountability for those at the top, and the State Department still has not achieved a workforce that comes close to reflecting the diversity of our country. This state of affairs has impacted relationships across the globe, the department's ability to engage in the interagency process, and in its relationship with Congress.

So the challenges you will be facing are immense but I have confidence in your experience and expertise. I look forward to hearing your testimony, and upon confirmation I look forward to working with you to restore America's place in the world and to repair and rebuild our relationships and our institutions. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Menendez.

Mr. Blinken, after our conversations earlier today and after hearing our opening statements, Senator Menendez's input in that regard, as you can see, there isn't a whole lot of daylight between us on most of these issues, certainly, almost none whatsoever when it comes to objectives, strategy, and how to get there is, obviously, something that needs to be negotiated and all of our best heads put together to try to get to that position. So we are interested in hearing that. Obviously, as Senator Menendez said, Iran is at the top of the list. China and Russia are right behind that. We have serious problems in Turkey. North Korea is on the list and there is lots and lots of challenges.

But we will do better if we all pull the wagon together, and I think we are headed in that direction right now.

So with that, again, thank you for your willingness to serve and the floor is yours.

**STATEMENT OF ANTONY J. BLINKEN, OF NEW YORK,  
NOMINATED TO BE SECRETARY OF STATE**

Mr. BLINKEN. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much, and to you, to Ranking Member Menendez, to all the members of this committee, thank you for the opportunity to be here today and I greatly appreciate everything you have done to make this hearing possible at this time. And I want to thank Senator Durbin in absentia for his very kind introduction.

It is, truly, the honor of a lifetime to appear before this committee as President-elect Biden's nominee to be secretary of state, and it is an honor that carries special significance for me for two reasons.

First, as you have noted, I had the privilege of serving as the Democratic staff director of this committee for six years, working alongside a distinguished group of senators, including several still on the committee today, to advance diplomacy and safeguard the interests of the American people.

That experience gave me an abiding respect for this committee, for its finest bipartisan traditions, for the caliber of its members and staff, for the essential work it does to strengthen U.S. leadership around the world.

If I have the honor of being confirmed, those lessons that I learned in my years with this committee will guide my approach to our work together.

The second point of significance for me is a little bit more personal. In addition to my own confirmation as deputy secretary of state, this committee confirmed my wife, Evan Ryan, who is here with me today, as assistant secretary of state for education and cultural affairs, confirmed my uncle, Alan Blinken, as ambassador to Belgium, and confirmed my father, Donald Blinken, as ambassador to Hungary. I hope I do not break the streak today.

My family, especially my wife and our children, John and Lila, is my greatest blessing. Our tradition of public service is the source of tremendous pride. I view that tradition as something of a sacred duty, payment on the debt that our family owes to the nation that gave so many of my relatives refuge and extraordinary opportunities across the generations.

My grandfather, Maurice Blinken, found refuge in America after fleeing Russian pogroms. My father's wife, Vera Blinken, found refuge in America after fleeing the communist regime in Hungary, and my late stepfather, Samuel Pizar, found refuge in America after enduring the horrors of the Holocaust.

Sam was the only survivor among his immediate family and school of 900 children in Bialystok, Poland, after four years in the concentration camps.

At the end of the war, he made a break from a death march into the Bavarian woods, and from his hideout he heard the rumbling sound of the tank, and as he looked out, instead of seeing the dreaded iron cross, he saw a five-pointed white star.

And so he ran to the tank and got to it. The hatch opened. An African-American GI looked down at him. He fell to his knees and

said the only three words that he knew in the English language that his mother had taught him before the war, “God bless America.” The GI lifted him into the tank, into freedom, into America.

That is who we are. That is what we represent to the world, however imperfectly, and what we can still be when we are at our best. If I have the honor of serving as secretary of state, that is the vision that I will pursue, a vision articulated often by President-elect Biden, doubtlessly informed by his time on this committee when he said that the United States is a nation that leads not only by the example of our power but by the power of our example.

If confirmed, three priorities would guide my time as secretary of state. First, I will work with you to reinvigorate the Department of State, investing in its greatest asset, the Foreign Service officers, the civil servants, the locally-employed staff who animate American diplomacy.

I know from firsthand experience their passion, their energy, their courage, often far from home, away from loved ones, sometimes in dangerous conditions exacerbated now by the pandemic. They deserve our full support. If I am confirmed as secretary, they will have it.

I am committed to advancing our security and prosperity by building a diplomatic core that fully represents America in all its talent and in all its diversity, recruiting, retaining, promoting officers with the skills to contend with 21st century challenges, and who look like the country we represent, sparing no effort to ensure their safety and well-being, demanding accountability starting with the secretary of state, for building a more diverse, inclusive, and nonpartisan workforce.

Second, working across government and with partners around the world, we will revitalize American diplomacy to deal with and take on the most pressing challenges of our time.

We will show up again, day in and day out, whenever and wherever Americans’ prosperity and security is at stake, and we will engage the world not as it was but as it is, a world of rising nationalism, receding democracy, growing rivalry from China and Russia and other authoritarian states, mounting threats to a stable and open international system, and a technological revolution that is reshaping every aspect of our lives, especially in cyberspace.

But for all that has changed, I believe some things remain constant. American leadership still matters. The reality is the world simply does not organize itself.

When we are not engaged, when we are not leading, then one of two things is likely to happen. Either some other country tries to take our place but not in a way that is likely to advance our interests and values, or, maybe just as bad, no one does and then you have chaos.

Either way, that does not serve the American people. I believe that humility and confidence should be the flip sides of America’s leadership coin; humility, because we have a great deal of work to do at home to enhance our standing abroad, and humility because most of the world’s problems are not about us in the first instance, even as they affect us, and no single country acting alone, even one as powerful as the United States, can fully and effectively address these problems.



But we will also act with confidence, with the confidence that America at its best still has a greater ability than any country on earth to mobilize others for the common good.

Guided by these principles, I believe we can and we will overcome the COVID crisis, the greatest shared challenge since World War II.

We can out-compete China and remind the world that a government of the people, for the people can deliver for its people. We can take on the existential threat posed by climate change.

We can revitalize our core alliances, force multipliers of our influence around the world. Together we are far better positioned to counter threats from Russia, Iran, North Korea, and to stand up for democracy and human rights.

And in everything we do around the world I believe that we can and we must ensure that our foreign policy is actually working to deliver for American working families here at home.

Let me conclude, if I may, Mr. Chairman, with a word about this institution, whose resilience and determination were on full display in the aftermath of the senseless and searing violence in these halls. But the president-elect and I believe that we have to restore Congress' traditional role as a partner in our foreign policy-making. In recent years, across administrations of both parties, Congress' voice in foreign policy has been diluted and diminished.

That does not make the executive branch stronger. It makes our country weaker. President-elect Biden believes, and I share his conviction, that no foreign policy can be sustained without the informed consent of the American people. You are the representatives of the American people. You provide that advice and consent. We can only tackle the most urgent challenges we have if we work together, and I am dedicated to doing just that.

And so if I am confirmed, my commitment is to work with each and every one of you on behalf of all Americans.

Thank you for the time. Thank you for the consideration. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Blinken follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. ANTONY J. BLINKEN

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Menendez, and members of the committee—thank you for the opportunity to be here today.

And thank you, Senator Durbin, for your kind introduction.

It is the honor of a lifetime to appear before this committee as President-elect Biden's nominee for Secretary of State—and an honor which carries special significance for me for two reasons.

First, I had the privilege of serving as staff director of this committee for six years—working alongside a distinguished group of Senators, including several who remain on the committee today, to advance American diplomacy and safeguard the interests of the American people.

That experience gave me an abiding respect for this committee—for its finest bipartisan traditions, for the caliber of its members and staff, and for the essential work it does to strengthen U.S. leadership around the world.

If I have the honor of being confirmed, those lessons I learned in my years with this committee will guide my approach to our work together.

The second point of significance is more personal. In addition to my own confirmation as Deputy Secretary of State six years ago, this committee confirmed my wife Evan Ryan as Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs, my uncle Alan Blinken as Ambassador to Belgium, and my father Donald Blinken as Ambassador to Hungary.

My family—especially my wife and our children, John and Lila—is my greatest blessing. Our tradition of public service is a source of tremendous pride.

I view that tradition as a sacred duty—payment on the debt our family owes to the nation that gave us refuge and extraordinary opportunities across the generations.

My grandfather, Maurice Blinken, found refuge in America after fleeing the Russian pogroms.

My father’s wife, Vera Blinken, found refuge in America after fleeing the communist regime in Hungary.

And my late step-father, Samuel Pisar, found refuge in America after enduring the horrors of the Holocaust.

Sam was the only survivor among his immediate family and school of 900 in Bialystok, Poland after four years in the concentration camps.

At the end of the war, he made a break from a death march into the Bavarian woods. From his hiding place, he heard the rumbling sound of a tank. Instead of an Iron Cross, he saw a five-pointed white star.

He ran to the tank. The hatch opened. An African American GI looked down at him. He fell to his knees and said the only three words he knew in English that his mother had taught him: God Bless America. The GI lifted him into the tank, into America, into freedom.

That’s who we are. That’s what we represent to the world, however imperfectly, and what we can still be at our best.

If I have the honor of serving as Secretary of State, that is the vision I will pursue—a vision articulated often by President-elect Biden, and doubtlessly informed by his long service to this committee, of a nation that leads “not only by the example of our power, but by the power of our example.”

If confirmed, three priorities will guide my time as Secretary.

First, I will work with you to reinvigorate the Department by investing in its greatest asset: the foreign service officers, civil servants, and locally employed staff who animate American diplomacy around the world.

I know from firsthand experience their passion, energy, and courage. Often far from home and away from loved ones, sometimes in dangerous conditions exacerbated by the global pandemic—they deserve our full support. If I am confirmed as Secretary, they will have it.

I am committed to advancing our security and prosperity by building a diplomatic corps that fully represents America in all its talent and diversity. Recruiting, retaining, and promoting officers with the skills to contend with 21st Century challenges and who look like the country we represent. Sparing no effort to ensure their safety and well-being. Demanding accountability—starting with the Secretary—for building a more diverse, inclusive and non-partisan workplace.

Second, working across government and with partners around the world, we will revitalize American diplomacy to take on the most pressing challenges of our time.

We’ll show up again, day-in, day-out whenever and wherever the safety and well-being of Americans is at stake. We’ll engage the world not as it was, but as it is. A world of rising nationalism, receding democracy, growing rivalry with China, Russia, and other authoritarian states, mounting threats to a stable and open international system, and a technological revolution that is reshaping every aspect of our lives, especially in cyberspace.

For all that has changed, some things remain constant.

American leadership still matters.

The reality is that the world doesn’t organize itself. When we’re not engaged, when we don’t lead, then one of two things happen: either some other country tries to take our place, but probably not in a way that advances our interests or values. Or no one does, and then you get chaos. Either way, that does not serve the American people.

Humility and confidence should be the flip sides of America’s leadership coin.

Humility because we have a great deal of work to do at home to enhance our standing abroad. And humility because most of the world’s problems are not about us, even as they affect us. Not one of the big challenges we face can be met by one country acting alone—even one as powerful as the U.S.

But we’ll also act with confidence that America at its best still has a greater ability than any country on earth to mobilize others for the greater good.

Guided by those principles, we can overcome the COVID crisis—the greatest shared challenge since World War II.

We can outcompete China—and remind the world that a government of the people, by the people, can deliver for its people.

We can take on the existential threat posed by climate change.

We can revitalize our core alliances—force multipliers of our influence around the world. Together, we are far better positioned to counter threats posed by Russia, Iran, and North Korea and to stand up for democracy and human rights.

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Let me conclude with a word about this institution, whose resilience and determination was on full display in the aftermath of senseless and searing violence in these halls. Both the President-elect and I believe we must restore Congress's traditional role as a partner in our foreign policy making.

In recent years, across administrations of both parties, Congress's voice in foreign policy has been diluted and diminished.

That doesn't make the executive branch stronger—it makes our country weaker.

President-elect Biden believes—and I share his conviction—that no foreign policy can be sustained without the informed consent of the American people. You are the representatives of the American people. You provide that advice and consent. We can only tackle the most urgent problems our country faces if we work together, and I am dedicated to doing that.

If confirmed, I will work as a partner to each of you on behalf of all Americans.

Thank you for your consideration—I look forward to answering your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Blinken, and, of course, your words about working with us is music to our ears. We will be happy to be a partner with you in that regard.

So with that, we will proceed to a round of questions, 10 minutes per senator. I am going to reserve my time and I am going to yield to Senator Menendez.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Blinken, thank you for your statement. During our meeting yesterday, we discussed the department will need to repair and rebuild its relationship with this committee.

I think it is after 28 years of doing public foreign policy in the House and the Senate I have never seen a moment like this in terms of our relationship with the State Department. So, and having heard your opening statement, I am confident you understand the importance of a constructive relationship between the department and Congress.

So I just have a few quick questions I have always asked the secretary of state nominee. I would like to ask you. You can answer yes or no. I would appreciate it.

Do you agree that the State Department is accountable to Congress and the American people?

Mr. BLINKEN. Yes.

Senator MENENDEZ. Do you commit that the department will keep this committee fully and currently informed on the department's activities?

Mr. BLINKEN. I do.

Senator MENENDEZ. Do you understand and agree that a constructive relationship between the department and this committee requires meaningful engagement and consultation with the committee while policies are being developed, not after the fact, and can you commit to ensuring that type of meaningful engagement?

Mr. BLINKEN. Yes, I do, and I can.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you very much.

Let me turn to Iran. This is going to be one of the most difficult challenges early on because Iran has accelerated. The maximum pressure campaign did not stop it from its acceleration.

We were broken away from our allies. We could not even get from our traditional allies a vote at the United Nations on the—

continuing the arms embargo and that is not a good recipe to counter Iran.

So I think there is a will to work together in a serious diplomatic engagement with Iran. But some of our concerns about the JCPOA, obviously, time has lapsed. The sunset is closer. Some of the other issues are now—have come to the fore in terms of the JCPOA, and then you have all of Iran's other destabilizing activities. So some of us have worked—Senator Graham, a member of the committee, and I have worked along with others in thinking about how something along the lines of returning to the JCPOA but with a commitment, a process by which the Iranians would have to deal with some of the challenges left by the JCPOA and other issues, looking at the possibility of a regional fuel bank so that not only the Iranians but those in the Gulf would be able to participate to receive nuclear fuel for domestic peaceful consumption but not enrichment. It could defuse a tinderbox in the region if all these countries are looking now to enrich. Those are some ideas, not the totality of it. Can you give us a sense of where you are looking at with reference to Iran, and as part of that, are you going to proactively reach out to Congress in order to forge such a consensus that can move us together with one voice towards meeting Iran as a challenge?

Mr. BLINKEN. Thank you very much, Senator. Let me answer the last question first, in terms of reaching out, and the answer is yes, absolutely, especially on a policy as challenging as the one that we have to deal with when it comes to Iran.

We are much better off if we can try to work through and think through these issues together and you have my commitment that we intend and will do that, and I look forward to the consultations and conversations that we have.

When it comes to Iran, a couple of things. First, President-elect Biden is committed to the proposition that Iran will not acquire a nuclear weapon and we share, I know, that goal across this committee.

An Iran with a nuclear weapon or on the threshold of having one or the capacity to build one on short order would be an Iran that is even more dangerous than it already is when it comes to all of the other malicious activities that it is engaged in, whether it is support for terrorism, whether it is fueling and feeding its proxies, whether it is destabilizing the region.

An Iran with a nuclear weapon or with the threshold capacity to build one is an Iran that would act, potentially, with even greater impunity than it already is.

So I think we have an urgent responsibility to do whatever we can to prevent Iran from acquiring or getting a weapon or getting close to the capacity to having the fissile material to break out on short notice.

In my judgment, the JCPOA, for whatever its limitations, was succeeding on its own terms in blocking Iran's pathways to producing fissile material for a nuclear weapon on short order.

It also featured, and a feature that continues, the most intrusive inspections and monitoring regime in the history of arms control. The challenge we face now is that we pulled out of the agreement. Iran is now taking steps to undo the various constraints that were imposed on it by the agreement. And so it has increased its stock-

pile of low-enriched uranium. It is now enriching at a higher level. It is deploying centrifuges in ways that were prohibited under the agreement.

The result is, based on public reporting, the breakout time, the time it would take Iran to produce enough fissile material for one weapon, has gone from beyond a year, as it was under the JCPOA, to about three or four months, based at least on public reporting, and that potentially brings us right back to the crisis point that we were reaching before the deal was negotiated.

And so the president-elect believes that if Iran comes back into compliance we would, too. But we would use that as a platform with our allies and partners who would once again be on the same side with us to seek a longer and stronger agreement and also, as you and the chairman have rightly pointed out, to capture these other issues, particularly with regard to missiles and Iran's destabilizing activities. That would be the objective.

Having said that, I think we are a long way from there. We would have to see, once the president-elect is in office, what steps Iran actually takes and is prepared to take.

We would then have to evaluate whether they were actually making good if they say they are coming back into compliance with their obligations, and then we would take it from there. But in the first instance, the last thing I will say on this, sir, is that yes, we absolutely will consult with you and not only with you, I think, as the chairman suggested, it is also vitally important that we engage on the take off, not the landing, with our allies and with our partners in the region to include Israel and to include the Gulf countries.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you.

Now, so I am all for stronger and longer and very much glad to hear that these other issues also will—the administration will look forward to engage and challenge Iran on. I think those are important.

Let me turn to China. Many of us, certainly, Senator Romney, since my first meeting with him when he came to the Senate, has made China one of the focal points and he is right about the challenge that China poses. The chairman talked about his initiative.

We, meaning Democrats, introduced a couple of months ago the America LEADS Act, which brought all of the relevant committees—finance, on trade, commerce, on technology, armed services, just about everybody—in a comprehensive national strategy to deal with China, which deals with both investments here at home because some of us believe we must not only confront China, we must compete with China to be successful—diplomacy, alliances, security, values, and trade to create a truly competitive approach, and I believe this is one of the most significant national security challenges we will have, as well as economic challenges.

Can you speak a little bit about to—how do you see that?

Mr. BLINKEN. First of all, I have read and applaud the LEADS Act and I have also read the very good report that the chairman did on China and applaud virtually everything that is in it.

I think there is a very strong foundation there upon which to build a bipartisan policy with regard to China. As we look at China, there is no doubt that it poses the most significant chal-

lenge of any nation state to the United States in terms of our interests, the interests of the American people.

There are, as I see it, rising adversarial aspects to the relationship, certainly, competitive ones, and still some cooperative ones when it is in our mutual interest.

I think as we are thinking about how to deal with China, and I think this is reflected in the work that the committee has done, we have to start by approaching China from a position of strength, not weakness, and the good news is our ability to do that is, largely, within our control. A position of strength when we are working with, not denigrating, our allies—that is a source of strength for us in dealing with China. A position of strength when we are engaged and leading in international institutions, not pulling back and ceding the terrain to China to write the rules and norms that animate those institutions.

A position of strength when we stand up for our values when human rights are being abused in Xinjiang or when democracy is being trampled in Hong Kong.

Our ability to make the investments in ourselves, as you pointed out, that is a source of strength, investments as necessary in our military to make sure that we can deter any aggression.

All of these things are fully within our control, and if we come together and do them I think we can then deal with the specific challenges that China poses from that position of strength, not a position of weakness.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Menendez.

Senator JOHNSON?

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Blinken, welcome. Let me start out by saying I got a phone call from a former contact in the Obama/Biden administration. I won't name the individual because I do not want to get that person in trouble. But it was a very welcome phone call.

I think the—to summarize it, it started out saying that we are really in an unsustainable position in this country. We are so grossly divided, and particularly in areas of foreign policy.

The standard saying in politics ought to end at the water's edge. I hope that can be true. I do not think it ever has been completely true. But I think there are some really good areas of agreement.

And so it is a very sincere attempt to reach out and say, let us try and focus on areas of agreement, and, by the way, as chairman, ranking member on the European Subcommittee with this Nord Stream 2, the European Energy Security and Diversification Act with Senator Murphy, we found those areas of agreement.

So I really want to focus on that because I think that is one of the areas—one of the ways we can try and narrow that divide, which I think is just completely unsustainable in this nation.

I think one of the areas I think we can all agree on is the world is a very dangerous and complicated place, and there is just no doubt about it. There is not a whole lot of black and white.

There is black and white, but there is a lot of gray areas and how you address whether it is Iran or North Korea or China or Russia is difficult situations.

So I have no doubt that you have just a wealth of knowledge, as did Secretary Kerry. I think there is a difference between knowledge, though, and judgment. And so in all sincerity, I just really want to talk to you about judgment and, again, I know you take a look at the Trump administration and it is, like, all bad.

I do not think that is true, and so let me start out what I think are our foreign policy accomplishments and whether you see whether or not you agree.

First of all, we did get our NATO partners to invest more in NATO, and that is a good thing, right? Do you have any reservations about that?

Mr. BLINKEN. I do not.

Senator JOHNSON. I think the peace or the agreements between Israel and Bahrain and UAE and Sudan and Morocco, those are good things. You are going to want to build on that, correct?

Mr. BLINKEN. I very much agree.

Senator JOHNSON. Just a quick aside, again, knowledge versus judgment. It is something that Secretary Kerry thought was not possible whatsoever. Again, that is a judgment call. I understand that.

But it has been proven wrong, and I guess I am kind of looking for an acknowledgment that maybe past judgments have been overtaken by new knowledge and as times we have moved on.

One thing pretty near and dear to my heart is the agreement, the economic agreement between Kosovo and Serbia. Wess Mitchell sent me over to Serbia and Kosovo a number of times and, you know, I do not want to take blame for this but the situation was not improving until Ric Grenell got involved and came up with the idea, let us—okay, a lot of these things they are not going to agree on but what they can agree on is economic advancement since we got an agreement. That is a good thing, correct?

Mr. BLINKEN. I agree.

Senator JOHNSON. What kind of troubles me about the past record of the Obama/Biden administration, again, dealing with difficult situations. But I just want to give you the opportunity to discuss whether you have had any second thoughts on, for example, what happened in Libya.

That is where—and you talked about American leadership—that is where President Obama famously said, “We are going to lead from behind,” and, you know, the world community kind of blew up Libya.

It did not turn out so well. We had Benghazi. Do you have any second thoughts in terms of what happened with Libya?

Mr. BLINKEN. I do, and let me—before I address that, Senator, I would like to say I believe that no one, no party, has a monopoly on good ideas, and I hope that, working together, we can pool all the good ideas from both sides of the aisle to try to advance the security and well-being of the American people abroad. I welcome doing that. Second, very quickly, I think there are a number of things, from where I sat, that the Trump administration did beyond our borders that I would applaud. You mentioned a couple of them. The Abraham Accords, absolutely. Now, there are certain commitments that may have been made in the context of getting those countries to normalize relations with Israel that I think we

should take a hard look at, and I imagine the committee feels the same way. But the work that was done to push forward on normalization with Israel I applaud. It makes Israel safer. It makes the region safer. It is a good thing, and yes, I would hope that we could build on that as well.

You mentioned the work on Kosovo and Serbia. I applaud that as well. The president-elect, as you know, spent a lot of time on those countries in the past and I think he shares your conviction that there are things we can do to help move Kosovo forward and also, hopefully, move Serbia forward. And, certainly, getting our NATO allies to invest more is a good thing. I think that is shared across administrations and across parties. And finally, let me just say that I also believe that President Trump was right in taking a tougher approach to China. I disagree very much with the way that he went about it in a number of areas, but the basic principle was the right one and I think that is actually helpful to our foreign policy.

Senator JOHNSON. No, I think—I think President Trump opens everybody's eyes in terms of China's malign intent.

Again, I want to kind of quickly go through—

Mr. BLINKEN. But on Libya—

Senator JOHNSON [continuing]. Libya, Syria—

Mr. BLINKEN. Sure.

Senator JOHNSON [continuing]. You know, not providing lethal defensive weaponry to Ukraine. Are those things you have given second thoughts to?

Mr. BLINKEN. Yes. With regard to Libya, here was the situation we faced. We had Muammar Gaddafi saying that he was going to slaughter like rats those opposing him, including all of the inhabitants of Benghazi, and we faced what looked like the potential for a mass atrocity that was heading our way, and what was unique about the moment was the United Nations supported doing something about it—the Security Council. The partners and allies in the region did, and our allies in Europe did, too. Having said that, and so I think the good news from where I sat—and I supported that effort. In fact, I think it has been written about.

I was the president-elect's national security advisor at the time and he did not agree with that course of action and so—but he—we had the kind of relationship where I was able to say what I thought and, as you have noted, we intervened.

Here is what I think we misjudged. First, we did not fully appreciate the fact that one of the things Gaddafi had done over the years was to make sure that there was no possible rival to his power and, as a result, there was no effective bureaucracy, no effective administration in Libya with which to work when he was gone. That made things much more challenging than I think we understood—

Senator JOHNSON. Okay. So, again, because I want to—so basically, there was no plan afterwards? That is something—that is the lesson you have learned?

Mr. BLINKEN. I think there was a—I think there was a plan that ran into—ran into some reality, that, unfortunately, the result has been that there has been more space in Libya for extremist groups who filled some of the vacuum left by Gaddafi.



Senator JOHNSON. Okay. One of the things that Congress did unanimously is we approved \$300 million of lethal defensive weaponry for Ukraine the Obama administration never implemented. The Trump administration did.

Do you still disagree with providing that lethal defensive weaponry or do you think, you know, over time now that has been proven to be the correct decision by Congress and the Trump administration?

Mr. BLINKEN. Senator, I support providing that lethal defensive assistance to Ukraine. In fact, I had the opportunity to write exactly that in The New York Times about three years ago.

Senator JOHNSON. One of the comments, and this is—to prepare for this hearing, and I am not going to enter this into the record but my staff did provide me Senator McCain's 2014 floor speech, which I am sure you have read. It was—

Mr. BLINKEN. I know it well.

Senator JOHNSON [continuing]. Pretty blistering. It is one of the reasons I thought I would kind of give you the opportunity to maybe respond. But the Chairman also provided a list of questions and one of the questions he asked about Soleimani.

I mean, is it a good thing that Soleimani is off the battlefield? And I was surprised because you remained adamant that it did not improve our national security. I mean, I would take the opposite side of that viewpoint.

Do you want to try and explain that one? I mean, I think because—because he was a mastermind, because he was so effective, because he was responsible for hundreds of American lives lost. I do not see how you cannot agree that that was—that enhances our national security.

Mr. BLINKEN. No one is shedding a tear for the demise of Qasem Soleimani and, certainly, when I was last in office I saw firsthand the blood that he had on his hands.

So no one regrets the fact that he is no longer there. I think from where I sat, Senator, the question is not whether taking him out was the right thing to do. It was gaming out what might be the consequences and asking ourselves whether, on balance, we would be left safer or not in taking that action.

Previous administrations, including the Bush administration and the Obama administration, concluded that we would not be, and I think what we saw after his death, including attacks on our positions in Iraq that left dozens if not hundreds of Americans with brain injuries, the fact that our forward posts in Iraq that were there to prevent the reemergence of ISIL had to pull back because of concerns that Iranian-backed militia after Soleimani's death would attack them, the fact that we are talking about, apparently, closing our embassy in Baghdad again for fear of the actions of these militia, and the fact that we have seen Iran acting out in a whole variety of ways because we are not the only actor in this drama, I think, on balance that that action actually left us less safe, not more safe.

Senator JOHNSON. Okay. Well, he was in Baghdad for a reason, probably to plan further attacks. We do not know what he might have done, but I appreciate your answer.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Let us move to—Senator Cardin, I believe, is joining us online. Senator Cardin, are you there?

Senator CARDIN. I am with you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you very much, and to Mr. Blinken, first, thank you for your public service. Thank you for your willingness to serve in this critically important position at this time in American history.

I very much appreciate on a personal basis having the opportunity to learn from you during my first two years on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee when you were the Democratic staff director, and I still remember those first two years. So I thank you very much for your public service.

I want to ask you some questions in regards to a troubling trend we have seen globally on the decline of democracy. Freedom House has observed that in 2019 we had the fourteenth consecutive year of the decline in global freedom.

Human Rights Watch says that the—in its 2021 report that the Trump administration was a disaster for the protection of human rights, and President-elect Biden observed that democracy is under more pressure than any time since the 1930s.

So my question to you is whether you are prepared to make the preservation of democracy, good governance, human rights, and anti-corruption a priority—a top priority within the State Department? Which requires the use of resources devoted to protecting democracy, whether it is at USAID or whether it is the resources in our missions in each of our countries, which will be made a priority to help preserve democracies around the world and the protection of human rights and anti-corruption activities.

Mr. BLINKEN. Senator, first of all, it is good to see you, and the short answer is yes, absolutely. The president-elect has been very clear that our charge would be to put democracy and human rights back at the center of American foreign policy and we intend to do just that.

That is a question of resources. It is a question of focus. It is a question of commitment. Of course, a lot of this begins at home.

Our ability to be a strong leader for and defender of democracy and human rights also depends to a large extent on the strength of our own democracy here at home, and as we have already discussed, we have some work to do on that account.

You are absolutely right when you cite the backsliding we have seen. Freedom House has been tracking this, as many of you know, for decades and of the 40 or so countries that were ranked, consistently ranked, fully free in the '80s, '90s, and early 2000s, fully half of them have been backsliding on democratic metrics, and so this poses a real challenge.

One of the goals that the president-elect has set for us is to try to convene a summit of democracies within the first year of his administration to bring democratic countries together, to think together, both about some of the challenges that we face at home that are common to democracies including rising populism, but also to think about a common agenda as we are dealing with the work of defending and advancing democracy around the world to include combating corruption, to include standing up more effectively freedom and rights, to include having a united voice in calling out abuses of democracy or abuses of human rights.

This is something that I hope we will be able to put together toward the end of this year and something that we would very much welcome the participation of members of Congress and particularly members of this committee.

Senator CARDIN. I thank you for that. I would also urge you to be as aggressive as you can with the budget director as to resources being devoted to democracy, because it has been a very small slice of USAID's budget and we just—and the mission support is not as strong as I think it should be.

I want to talk about one of the tools that has gotten the most international attention and that is the Magnitsky sanctions. It was interesting that it has been recorded that was the first issue brought up by Mr. Putin when he met with President Trump.

Are you committed to working with us to strengthen the Magnitsky global sanction regime to go against those actors that are not held accountable in their own states for gross violations of human rights and corruption?

Mr. BLINKEN. Yes, I am, and I should just add that I think this has been a great achievement, Senator, of yours and of this committee. We have gone from Magnitsky to Global Magnitsky to different countries now adopting their own Magnitsky like laws, and now just recently the European Union.

So I think this has been a tremendous success story in actually bringing the democratic countries of the world together and giving them an effective tool to actually push back against abuses of democracy and human rights.

Senator CARDIN. I plan to introduce legislation shortly in regards to Magnitsky to deal with the sunset that is provided in the statute currently, to remove that, but also to strengthen some of the areas.

There are ways that we can strengthen the Global Magnitsky through the State Department—getting more countries to adopt Global Magnitsky statutes, to make sure they are comprehensive and include corruption, and to make sure you have adequate staffing so that you can implement the law fully.

I would also recommend that you follow the leads given to us by NGOs that, in many cases, have information that otherwise would not be made available to us to hold abusers accountable.

I think these are all suggestions that could help strengthen the Magnitsky statute and our messages against the international human rights violators.

I want to mention one other area where I think we can make tremendous progress during your tenure, and that is on anti-corruption. We have all acknowledged that corruption is a national security threat.

Corruption exists in every country, but unless you have a plan to deal with corruption, it becomes very corrosive to the underlying fabric of any democratic society.

So I have introduced legislation with Senator Young that would use the model of the trafficking in persons that we do, where we evaluate every country in the world, including the United States, as to how well they are dealing with ridding trafficking of humans.

We set up a similar regime for corruption, where we identify the problems we have in countries with corruption and put them on a tier rating with consequences.

I have talked to the—to the Biden transition team about this. This is legislation that did pass our committee and pass the Senate in the last Congress. It was not enacted into law.

Will you work with us so that we can have a very strong position in making it clear that every country can do better with fighting corruption, that there are certain standards that need to be met?

Mr. BLINKEN. Yes, absolutely. I welcome that if confirmed and, beyond that, we want to elevate the work in combating corruption at the State Department. That is something I would welcome talking to you about.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you. I want to cover, if I might, your strategies in regards to the U.S.-Israel relations. We know that there has been strong support for the special relationship between Israel and the United States.

We know that we need to maintain America's leadership in regards to that relationship because Israel has been marginalized in so many places and so many organizations around the world.

You already mentioned the Abraham Accords. How do you intend to try to get back on track the Israel-Palestinian negotiations, where we know the only way for lasting peace in the Middle East is two states living side by side in peace, a Jewish state and a Palestinian state?

Mr. BLINKEN. Thank you, Senator.

First, let me start with this very basic proposition, which is that our commitment to Israel's security is sacrosanct and this is something that the president-elect feels very strongly.

His very first trip when he was a member of this committee as a senator—his first foreign trip was to Israel.

He met with a prime minister by the name of Golda Meir. She had a young aide by the name of Yitzhak Rabin, and he has worked with every Israeli prime minister since then. And so the foundation of our relationship is support for Israel's security. Having said that, the president-elect believes and I share this conviction that the best way and maybe the only way to ensure Israel's future as a Jewish democratic state and to give the Palestinians the state to which they are entitled is through our other so-called two-state solution, obviously, a solution that is very challenged at this moment. I think, realistically, it is hard to see near-term prospects for moving forward on that. In the first instance, what would be important is to make sure that neither party takes steps that make the already difficult proposition even more challenging and, certainly, avoids unilateral actions that makes that more challenging and then, hopefully, to start working to slowly build some confidence on both sides that create an environment in which we might once again be able to help advance a solution to the Israel and Palestinian relationship.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, and, of course, you have strong support in Congress, as you have seen by our actions, and I do think that with Congress working with the administration we should be able to advance the process.

One last question dealing with Central America. You talked about corruption. Senator Biden, Vice President Biden, had a game plan to try to deal with the corruption in Central America in a way for good governance that provided opportunities that would help

against the migration, people wanting to leave because of fear of gangs, et cetera. Is there a game plan for how we are going to deal with Central America?

Mr. BLINKEN. There is, and I think, as you rightly point out, at the—at the end of the Obama/Biden administration, toward the end, then Vice President Biden worked very closely with Congress, with this committee, to develop a plan to deal with the challenges posed by the systemic and endemic problems in the Northern Triangle countries, in Honduras and Guatemala and El Salvador, and these drivers, of course, were the primary drivers of the migration crisis that continues to challenge us to this very day.

So getting at some of the root causes that are causing people to make that incredibly difficult decision to pick up one day, leave everything they know behind, leave their families, their country, their culture, their language behind because life is simply not tolerable in its present circumstance.

If we do not help these countries address those causes, it is going to be very hard to get at the—at the root of the problem. And so there was a bipartisan plan put forward the past Congress with about \$800 million to help countries in the Northern Triangle, but not simply throwing money at them but tying the assistance we were providing to concrete reforms that they would take in the criminal justice system, in combating corruption, in creating greater economic opportunity, et cetera. And we began to see some, I think, progress in each of those countries as a result of this assistance and coordination. Unfortunately, that plan went into abeyance in the last few years, and we will come forward to talk to you about a renewed effort at a bigger scale that involves assistance for the Northern Triangle countries but, again, assistance tied to concrete demonstrable reforms.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you very much. I appreciate it, and, again, thank you for your service.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Cardin. Senator Romney?

Senator ROMNEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to be associated also with the comments you made at the opening of this session, also the comments Ranking Member Menendez as well as the questions which he asked, and I would like to indicate my concurrence also with the comments made by Mr. Blinken as he began.

A number of things stood out. One was his conviction, which I share, that we be involved in the world because the world is a safer place if we are involved in the world, and I think something we sometimes lose in our discussion of this involvement is that that does not mean necessarily military engagement in the world.

It means promoting our values, our economic interests, and so forth, and we are involved in the world because it is good for America. Not just good for the world, but it is good for us and for the people of America and I applaud that recognition.

I want to begin with some thoughts about China and think for the committee as well as for the American public that is watching this if you would perhaps describe for us what China has described as their ambition over this century, what they intend to achieve

and how the world would be different if they were successful in doing so.

Mr. BLINKEN. Thank you very much, Senator.

China had a policy for decades of, as they described it, hiding their hand and biding their time in terms of asserting their interests beyond China's borders, leaving aside what they were doing within their borders.

And I think what we have seen in recent years, particularly since the rise of Xi Jinping as the leader, has been that the hiding and biding has gone away and they are much more assertive in making clear that they seek to become, in effect, the leading country in the world, the country that sets the norms, that sets the standards, and to put forward a model that they hope other countries and people will ascribe to.

And, Senator, my own conviction is that there are many, many very apparent weaknesses that China continues to try to hide when it comes to projecting its model. But in the absence of an alternative, they may do better than we think. And so I think our obligation is to demonstrate that the vision that we have, the policies we pursue, and the way we do it is much more effective in actually delivering for our people as well as for people around the world, to make sure that our model is the one that carries the day.

If we are pulling back from the world, if we are pulling back from the institutions, if we are pulling back from playing that lead role and shaping the rules and the norms, that gives them a free field to redefine the century more on their terms than on ours.

One of the ways—this is just one example, but I think one of the ways we see this acutely is there is an increasing divide between what you might call techno democracies—that is, technologically sophisticated countries that are also democracies—and techno autocracies like China, and whether the techno democracies or the techno autocracies are the ones that get to define how technology is used, the technology that dominates all of our lives, I think, is going to go a long way towards shaping the next—the next decades.

We have a very strong interest in making sure that the techno democracies come together more effectively so that we are the ones who are doing the shaping of those norms and rules, and to the extent technology can be infused with values that these are more our values than theirs.

But there is no doubt that I think China would like to recapture its extraordinary past but to do so in a way that is, potentially and very practically, as we are seeing already, inimical to our own values and our own interests.

Senator ROMNEY. Yeah, I think—my own view is that their ambition is to become the geopolitical leader of the world as well as the economic leader of the world, the military leader of the world and, ultimately, to impose their authoritarian views in such a way that would put in great risk the freedom and liberty of people here and around the world.

How does Taiwan and our commitments to Taiwan figure in your thinking with regards to our interests in the region?

Mr. BLINKEN. There has been a strong and long bipartisan commitment to Taiwan, Taiwan Relations Act, also the communiqués with China, and part of that commitment is making sure that Tai-

wan has the ability to defend itself against aggression, and that is a commitment that will absolutely endure in a Biden administration. We will make sure that Taiwan has the ability to do that.

I would also like to see Taiwan playing a greater role around the world including in international organizations. When those organizations do not require the status of the country to be a member, they should become members.

When it does, there are other ways that they can participate, and I think our own engagement with Taiwan should be looked at and, indeed, that is being done. As you know, some regulations were promulgated by the outgoing secretary of state. We are going to take a hard look at those pursuant to the Taiwan Assurance Act and we will—we will look at that.

I had the opportunity, Senator, when President Tsai was running for office, to actually receive her as a candidate at the State Department when I was last there. I spoke to her a number of times when she became president and I was deputy secretary of state. But the commitment to Taiwan is something that we hold to very strongly.

Senator ROMNEY. India has, perhaps, begun to see China in a new light, not only because of the border dispute which led to the death of many Indian military individuals. They have indicated an openness to work with us with actually military preparations as well and war games.

How can we strengthen our ties with India and strengthen their resolve to defend democratic interests in the region?

Mr. BLINKEN. I think India has been very much a bipartisan success story over successive administrations. It started with toward the end of the Clinton administration after the nuclear tests when relations were put back on a better—a better footing.

Under President Bush, we secured a peaceful nuclear cooperation agreement with India. Then Senator Biden led the efforts at this committee to get that through Congress. And then I think during the Obama administration we deepened cooperation with India particularly in the defense procurement area, also on information sharing, and I think the Trump administration has carried that forward including with this concept of an Indo-Pacific and to make sure that we were working with India so that no country in the region, including China, could challenge its sovereignty and also working with it on concerns that we share about terrorism.

So I think there are many ways in which we can deepen that cooperation to pursue the path that successive administrations have put us on. One area, I think, that has a lot of promise and maybe even necessity is actually climate. At the current rate things are going, India is poised over the next two or three decades to catch up to China in terms of emissions that it produces. At the same time, as you know, Prime Minister Modi has been a very strong advocate for looking at renewable energy and different technologies. I think there is a very strong potential for our countries to work together in that area.

Senator ROMNEY. Thank you. That does raise the question of what it is going to be like to serve in an administration where former Secretary Kerry is going to be working with you. I hope you are never tempted to give in in your strategy with regards to China

in order to obtain a climate advantage that Secretary Kerry might be promoting. So your State Department commitment to confront China, I think, is a great—of great significance and, hopefully, the priority.

Let me turn to another topic which was raised by Senator Johnson, appropriately, which is the number of accomplishments of the Trump administration shouldn't be lost and—in the foreign policy arena.

One of those that is, perhaps, questionable by members in this committee relates to the JCPOA with regards to Iran. I, like Senator Menendez, was not supportive of the JCPOA and wrote a column suggesting that it was a mistake to enter into. My concern was that it allowed Iran to eventually have a nuclear weapon or have the capacity to have a nuclear weapon, and my view was that an agreement should only be reached if it prevented Iran forever from having a nuclear weapon. And I would only suggest that before the administration takes a posture with regards to the JCPOA that there be a very careful review of intelligence to determine just what the state is of Iran right now with regards to the health of its leaders, with regards to the fragility of its economy, because there may well be a potential to take a more aggressive stance than might have been anticipated and hope that you will give due consideration to not just reversing policies of the prior administration but, perhaps, taking advantage of some things done by the prior administration that may prevent an opportunity that we might otherwise not be able to recognize.

Mr. BLINKEN. I welcome having the opportunity to do that, to plunge into the intelligence, if confirmed, and then also to working on that with you and other members of this committee.

Senator ROMNEY. Thank you, Mr. Blinken.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Shaheen?

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Blinken, thank you for being willing to consider being nominated to this important post at this critical time and for being here today.

One of the things we have heard in the last few days is President-elect Biden's interest in resuming the United States' position in a number of international alliances from—everything from the Paris Climate Accords to the WHO.

But, clearly, it is going to take more than that to rebuild our relationships around the world. So what else do we need to do and what are you thinking about as—if you are confirmed that you think is going to be important to restoring those relationships?

Mr. BLINKEN. Senator, I think we have a, and several members of the committee have already alluded to this, we do have a big task ahead of us in restoring, revitalizing those relationships. I do think it starts, to use a colloquial term, with showing up again, with being present, with having our diplomats engaged in the painstaking, sometimes not very glamorous hard work of day in day out diplomacy and being in the room, not pulling back from it.

And I know sometimes that sounds trite but I just think that we are so much better off, even in institutions and organizations that are, clearly, imperfect and need reform, we are, as a general rule, much better off being at the table than being outside the room if



we are going to try to influence those institutions and organizations and move them in a better direction.

So I think you will see in a Biden administration that kind of engagement, that kind of leadership. I think it is also fair to say that some of our allies and partners question the sustainability of our commitments, based on the experience of recent years, and that is going to be a hard hill to climb and they are going to have to make their own calculations about that.

But I think it comes down to this. One is, and maybe this is an obligation that I think all of us share who are in this line of work, part of our challenge, I think, is to connect what all of us are doing to the—to the lives of the American people, because if we want to have their support for American leadership and American engagement in the world, we have to demonstrate that it is actually making an improvement in their lives or preventing something bad from happening. And I think COVID-19, to some extent, has maybe brought that home as nothing else has in recent years, going back to 9/11. But there are so many other areas where what we are doing around the world connects directly to the lives that our fellow citizens are leading and I think we need to make those connections.

That will give us a stronger foundation upon which to build an engaged foreign policy and, in turn, one that is, I think, sustainable and that our partners and allies recognize as such.

Last word on this. I think one of the things that we all have in common with our democratic partners and allies is the recognition that most of the challenges we face, as I mentioned earlier, simply cannot be addressed effectively by any one country acting alone, even the United States.

And so whether it is a global pandemic, whether it is a change in climate, whether it is the spread of bad weapons, you name it, all of these things demand international cooperation and coordination and I believe that if we are stepping up and playing the role that we played in the past but focused on the problems of today and tomorrow, we will actually get a receptive audience to work with us.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, I certainly agree with that and agree with the importance of robust diplomatic efforts, and given the discussion about China this afternoon, it seems to me that we ought to look at what China is doing in terms of their increase in investments and diplomacy, their opening consulates around the world, their focus on economic assistance for other countries, because right now they are eating our lunch and we better do better if we are going to be able to compete—continue to compete.

When you and I had the opportunity to talk a couple of weeks ago, which I very much appreciated, but one of the things we talked about were the attacks on our diplomatic personnel in Cuba and China and some other locations, and I and a number of other senators have continuously asked the State Department and Secretary Pompeo to provide information about those attacks, about what caused them, about our response to them to make sure that our personnel are all treated fairly, and we were able to get some language into the defense bill that passed this year to do that.

But we still have not seen all of the information that is available. Will you commit to be transparent with us about what is going on with those attacks and getting to the bottom of who is responsible and sharing that information with Congress and with the public where it is appropriate?

Mr. BLINKEN. Yes, absolutely. And, Senator, if I can just say, first, that your leadership on this issue and that of Senator Rubio I know has been deeply appreciated within the department.

I had some opportunity to get briefed on a few issues during this transition and nomination period, and one of the ones I asked for immediately was to get everything we knew about the so-called Havana syndrome and these attacks.

And so I have read the reports. I was briefed on it. I welcome an opportunity to come and, if confirmed, to talk to all of you about it.

Priority is making sure that our diplomats are safe and secure but also that we find out who is responsible, if a state actor or others are responsible, having accountability and making sure that we put the protections in place so that our folks are safe and secure. I would welcome working with the committee on that.

Senator SHAHEEN. Good. I hope, Senators Risch and Menendez, that we can make that happen with this committee in the next month or so.

Another topic we talked about briefly was the importance of ensuring that women are part of our foreign policy agenda, and I am very proud to have worked on legislation to try and include women at the table when we are negotiating conflicts and to ensure that they are part of those efforts because the data shows us that when that is the case those kinds of peace negotiations have a 35 percent chance of lasting 15 years or longer. Thirty-five percent better chance of lasting 15 years or longer.

So it is something that makes sense, and I would hope, again, that the State Department would take a more robust effort to be engaged in that. The Defense Department has, I think, been more proactive in that and I hope that State will join in those efforts in the coming year.

But one of the areas where it is, clearly, an issue is in Afghanistan, and we have not gotten any commitment from the Taliban on the role of women in any future Afghan state post peace talks. So I wonder if you could talk about what you think we should be saying to the Taliban.

Mr. BLINKEN. Well, first, Senator, I could not agree more with the larger points you were making and that is very much the lens that we would intend to put on our foreign policy and on the work with the State Department and, again, would welcome the opportunity to work with you on that.

When it comes to Afghanistan, we have a real challenge there, to state the obvious. First, yes, we want to end this so-called forever war. We want to bring our forces home.

We want to retain some capacity to deal with any resurgence of terrorism, which is what brought us there in the first place, and we have to look carefully at what has actually been negotiated—I haven't been privy to it yet—particularly with regard to the agreement that was reached in the first instance between the

United States and the Taliban to understand fully what commitments were made or not made by the Taliban, and then to see where they get in their negotiations with the Government of Afghanistan.

I do not believe that any outcome that they might achieve, the Government of Afghanistan and the Taliban, is sustainable without protecting the gains that have been made by women and girls in Afghanistan over the last 20 years when it comes to access to education, to health care, to employment.

And so I think we have a strong interest if that agreement is actually—if there is an agreement if it is going to hold up to do what we can to make sure that those rights are preserved. But I would acknowledge to you that is—I do not think that is going to be easy. But we will work on it.

Senator SHAHEEN. Yeah. No, I appreciate that and I intend to ask General Austin the same question at his hearing this afternoon.

Can you, finally—I know I am almost out of time—but can you talk about what our response to Putin's taking into custody Mr. Navalny should be and how we continue to put pressure on Russia?

Mr. BLINKEN. It is extraordinary how frightened Vladimir Putin seems to be of one man. I think that speaks volumes, and Mr. Navalny is a voice, I think, for millions and millions and millions of Russians and their voice needs to be heard in Russia, and the attempts to silence that voice by silencing Mr. Navalny is something that we strongly condemn and we have spoken to it and will continue to do so.

I would say, more broadly, this is probably a subject for ongoing conversation. We have talked about a number of challenges, but the challenge posed by Russia across a whole series of fronts is also one that is urgent.

I have to say that I think members of this committee, particularly Senator Romney, have been very prescient when it comes to the challenge posed to us by Russia. There is a lot to be discussed and talked about there. But this is very high on the agenda for an incoming administration.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Shaheen.

Senator Rubio?

Senator RUBIO. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Blinken, for being here. Thanks for your willingness to step back in and serve our country. Really should appreciate that for anyone who is willing to step up and do it. Obviously, everyone is asking about all the different parts of the world. I care about a lot of them so I am going to focus, if I can, on the Western Hemisphere for a moment—two specific things.

The first is, as you are well aware, in Cuba there are very small, but not real large or substantial, small private businesses. The bulk of the economic activity in that country is controlled by a holding company named GAESA, which controls, basically, anything that makes money and they have actually—any time they figure out something might make money they pull it into that.

GAESA is controlled by the Cuban military and military officials, and the current administration, the Trump administration, put in

place a policy that prohibits financial transactions with any of those companies that are controlled by that holding company owned by the Cuban military.

And so, theoretically, if the Cuban Government would allow it, an independent Cuban can open up a restaurant, a hotel, or business and have transactions but not a company controlled by the Cuban military as identified through that holding company. Is that a policy that you would recommend to the Biden administration that we keep or not?

Mr. BLINKEN. Senator, I would—I would propose to review that very, very quickly. In terms of the objectives that you cite, that makes very good sense to me.

I think the question is, and I do not know enough to form a full judgment, is to whether it is, in fact, achieving those objectives and are there any other costs or consequences that we might want to look at.

But certainly, the objective strikes me as exactly the right one. I would welcome an opportunity, if confirmed, to actually talk to you about that and, by the way, about our approach to Cuba, more broadly.

Senator RUBIO. On the issue of—as a matter of theory, because, obviously, the Cuban Government control—we can open up whatever we want to them but the Cuban Government controls what they allow and what they do not allow.

So, as an example, if an individual Cuban decided to borrow money from a relative in the United States and open up a business, they get to do so under existing law, potentially, depending on how the transaction was structured. But the Cuban Government would not allow it. In fact, they would crack down on that.

So I think we could agree, could we not, that to the extent that it involves economic independence for Cuban individuals or companies that they are allowed to start, that is one thing.

But when it comes to these entities that are not state controlled entities, they are oligarchs that control it, basically, one individual, largely, because they want to be not just a politically totalitarian state but also an economic totalitarian state, that it would further the national interest to the United States to encourage more economic independence for the individual and less dependence on the state that gives them all this leverage over them. So I do sincerely hope that just because these were Trump policies, and I am not claiming that that is what you are saying, that we do not just throw the whole thing out and say, let us go back into the Obama policy that even some of the architects of it have since conceded could have been structured a little differently because they were unilateral and did not lead to some of the results we thought.

I do think as you carefully review many of those steps that have been taken there was a logic and a rationale behind each of them that I hope you will—that will be taken into account. I think it serves our national interest to do so.

On Venezuela, I am sure you are well aware that Maduro has repeatedly over the course of the last five to seven years utilized negotiations as a delay tactic.

It is so egregious that even the Vatican says, we are not having any more negotiations. In fact, in a very strongly-worded letter from the Pope to him, said, do you remember the last time we met?

I am paraphrasing. Remember the last time we met you agreed to things. You never did any of them. There is no purpose in meeting anymore. Effort after effort to negotiate with Maduro's regime for whatever have all resulted in nothing. He uses it to buy time and to delay, and he uses it to divide the opposition, and, unfortunately, multiple players have fallen into that trap.

The reality of it is that he will agree to all sorts of short-term reversible things—you know, release a political prisoner, what have you. But at the end of the day, he is not ever going to agree to free and fair elections because he cannot win them.

Is it your view that our stance towards Venezuela should change? In essence, that we should no longer recognize Juan Guaidó and enter into negotiations with Maduro?

Mr. BLINKEN. No, it is not. I very much agree with you.

Senator, first of all, with regard to a number of the steps that were taken toward Venezuela in recent years, including recognizing Mr. Guaidó, recognizing the National Assembly as the only democratically-elected institution in Venezuela, seeking to increase pressure on the regime led by a brutal dictator in Maduro, as well as to try to work with some of our allies and partners.

The hard part is that for all of those efforts, which I support, we, obviously, have not gotten the results that we need and one of the things I would really welcome doing if confirmed is to come and talk some of that through with you and with others on this committee because we need an effective policy that can restore Venezuela to democracy, starting with free and fair elections, and how can we best advance that ball.

I think there are some things that we can look at, particularly, better stronger coordination and cooperation with like-minded countries. Maybe we need to look at how we more effectively target the sanctions that we have so that regime enablers really feel the pain of those sanctions, and, certainly, I believe there is more that we need to try to do in terms of humanitarian assistance, given the tremendous suffering of the Venezuelan people, as well as helping some of the neighboring countries that have borne the brunt of refugees from Venezuela.

But I would welcome an opportunity, if confirmed, to talk to you about that.

Senator RUBIO. I would just encourage that every time we talk about issues like Venezuela that it is important we point to the direct national interest of the United States in the matter because I think we—sometimes people start to get the imagery that this is about nation building or picking sides in an internal dispute.

The reason why the U.S. cares about what is—we care about democracy. We care a lot about human rights. But there is a direct national interest to the United States involved. You have a regime that openly houses and gives safe harbor to multiple terrorist organizations like the FARC and the ELN that traffic drugs that, in turn, threaten to destabilize and even, potentially, topple at some point or seriously threaten the Government of Colombia, which

would be a massive blow to regional stability and, ultimately, impacts us as well.

It is already having a migratory pressure on this country but on countries in the region, in Peru and Brazil and Colombia which, ultimately, also impacts us.

They have very friendly relations, military and otherwise, with the Russians and increased evidence of Iranian interest and activity including the sale of oil or gasoline in exchange for gold that they are stealing from their reserve.

So I just encourage to constantly point to the fact that this is not just a do-gooder effort here. There is a direct national security interest to the United States involved in what happens there.

You may have been asked this already but I think it is important. Would you acknowledge, as I think a growing number of people have, that there was once here a bipartisan consensus on China that once they got rich and they got prosperous they would become more like us. Mr. BLINKEN. Yes.

Senator RUBIO. That consensus was flawed?

Mr. BLINKEN. I think we found that out in practice. Yes, I think there was a broad consensus that economic liberalization in China would lead to political liberalization. That has not happened.

Senator RUBIO. Beyond the political liberalization, their intent was never—it goes deeper, that it goes to a dangerous imbalance it has now developed in the relationship on a commercial front, on—and on a geopolitical front and, increasingly, potentially, on a military front.

You have seen a massive expansion on military capability both technological and particularly in the asymmetric abilities that they have that really have no precedent, and it is now clear that they are making the argument to the world and, frankly and unfortunately, we, domestically, have helped to make this argument, that American style democracy is too chaotic and that what we have here, them, the Communist Party of China, is much more stable and a much better model to follow.

The bottom line is, and I know that this is a—you know, people like to throw around phrases like cold war. I think this is very different than the Cold War.

But do you have any doubt in your mind that the goal of the Chinese Communist Party is to be the world's predominant political—a geopolitical, military, and economic power and for the United States to decline in relation?

Mr. BLINKEN. I do not.

Senator RUBIO. You have no doubt?

Mr. BLINKEN. I have no doubt.

Senator RUBIO. Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Rubio.

I am told that Senator Coons is with us electronically. Is that true?

Senator COONS. That is correct, Mr. Chairman. Can you hear me?

The CHAIRMAN. I can hear you. I cannot see you. Oh, now I can see you. There you are.

Welcome, Senator Coons. The floor is yours.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Menendez. Thank you so much for a chance to be with you.

Tony, it is great to be with you again. Thank you to you and your family, to Evan and John and Lila, for your willingness to serve once again.

Given your previous experience as deputy secretary of state, deputy national security advisor, as the staff director of this important committee, you have excellent experience and credentials, and in your opening statement you, once again, reinforced the ways in which your life experience, your values, reinforce all the ways in which you will be an excellent secretary of the state—secretary of state for this nation.

I am sorry not to be with you in person. I was here for the send-off celebration as the president-elect departed Delaware and headed towards Washington to begin the inauguration.

But it has been exciting to me to have a chance to hear my colleagues, both Democrats and Republicans, raise challenging issues and to hear your engaged and thoughtful and forward-looking answers. We gather today at a moment when it is a real challenge for all of us that the events of last Wednesday highlighted some of the deep divisions in our country and some of the challenges our democracy faces, and I am hopeful that after a national day of service yesterday celebrating Martin Luther King Day, after this evening's national reflection on all the American lives that have been lost in this COVID pandemic, and after tomorrow's inauguration, that we can begin the work of investing in our democracy, rebuilding our bipartisan consensus around some of the challenges facing us in the world and to do that in partnership with you.

Let me, first, start with something that has been the topic of many questions from colleagues, the U.S.-China relationship and how that in many ways will define this century.

I very much look forward to working with the incoming chairman and ranking member of this committee, with you, Mr. Blinken, and with many of my colleagues and figuring out how we craft a durable, a sustainable, and effective and a bipartisan strategy with regards to China.

You have made reference, Tony, to the techno democracies and techno autocracies of the world and the ways in which there is an intersection between concerns about digital privacy, a digital promotion of democracy, intellectual property, and ways in which China's bad behavior on the world stage with regards to IP is laying the groundwork for them to successfully export their model of digital authoritarianism.

Do you think in confronting China's digital authoritarianism we should make that a part of the agenda of our convening a global group of digital democracies, something like the D-10 that Prime Minister Boris Johnson has proposed, or do you think we should pursue something with more weight, a regional structure like a digital free trade zone of democracies aligned like the United States in order to help keep emerging technologies free and available and open to the world?

Mr. BLINKEN. So my sense is everything should be on the table. It may be something that requires multiple steps to get to the destination in the first instance, bringing concerned countries to-

gether—the digital democracies together. An appropriate forum, I think, is the place to start.

And I do not want to minimize the job. We, obviously, have disagreements among democracies about a lot of profound questions about how technology is used. So we have got some work to do just to get our own collective house in order.

But I think you start there and then some of the more expansive ideas, Senator that you alluded to is something that we might be able to get to and work toward.

Senator COONS. I would be excited to do that work with you.

Senator Menendez, Senator Risch, a number of colleagues raised concerns about Iran and Iran's aggressive pursuit both regionally of influence of their ballistic missile program and of their restarting their more robust enrichment program and the threat that that poses to the region and to our security.

I also just want to renew my commitment to the U.S.-Israel relationship and to trying to pursue some positive path towards a two-state solution.

The Middle East as a region remains as unsettled and unstable as it has ever been. Although there was progress in some of the normalization aspects of the Abraham Accords that you have recognized, the administration will face real challenges in assessing Iran's willingness to negotiate in good faith and the path forward.

I look forward to working with you on this challenge and making sure that we build a framework with our core allies in Europe that can take into account these broader destabilizing actions by Iran.

Let me ask, quickly, about two other things going on in the region that haven't been addressed so far. Recently, outgoing Secretary Pompeo designated the Houthi movement in Yemen as a foreign terrorist organization.

Many humanitarian leaders including the head of the World Food Program and senators on both sides of the aisle denounced that designation as something that may well create now a humanitarian crisis of greater scale.

The president-elect has said he would end U.S. support for the war in Yemen and that U.S. support for humanitarian relief is critical.

What steps do you think we can or should immediately take with regards to Yemen? How can the Senate help and how do you see this as a piece of that broader regional puzzle of working through, pushing back on Iran's projection of force through proxies while still reexamining some of our relationships in the region that have become more complicated by their human rights records?

Mr. BLINKEN. First, Senator, we need to be clear eyed about the Houthis. They overthrew a Government in Yemen. They engaged in a path of aggression through the country. They directed aggression toward Saudi Arabia. They have committed atrocities and human rights abuses, and that is a fact.

What is also a fact, though, is that the Saudi-led—[Technical issue.]

Mr. BLINKEN.—in Yemen—[Technical issue.]

Mr. BLINKEN.—Houthi aggression has contributed to what is by most accounts the worst humanitarian situation that we face anywhere in the world, and one aspect of that situation is that about



80 percent of the Yemeni population right now is in areas controlled by the Houthis.

And whether we like it or not, we have to find ways to get assistance to them if we are going to do anything about addressing this situation. And so my concern, deep concern, about the designation that was made is that, at least on its surface, it seems to achieve nothing particularly practical in advancing the efforts against the Houthis and to bring them back to the negotiating table while making it even more difficult than it already is to provide humanitarian assistance to people who desperately need it. So I think we would propose to review that immediately to make sure that what we are doing is not impeding the provision of humanitarian assistance even under these difficult circumstances.

I recognize that some have talked about carve outs for American providers of humanitarian assistance. The problem there is that if the carve outs do not apply to everyone around the world, it is not going to get the job done because most of the humanitarian assistance provided to Yemen is not coming from the United States. It is coming from other countries. So I think we have got a very specific and concrete problem that we need to address very quickly if we are going to make sure we are doing everything we can to alleviate the suffering of people in Yemen.

Senator COONS. Thank you for that answer. I need to move forward, given the limitations of time.

I was proud to have a chance to work with a number of colleagues on this committee in 2018 to help pass the BUILD Act that created the new Development Finance Corporation, in 2019 the Global Fragility Act, which set a new process and framework for looking at fragile states, borrowing from the lessons of Plan Colombia.

One of the areas, as we both know, the president-elect has been passionate about is the Northern Triangle and finding ways to build a sustained long-term strategy—[Technical issue.]

Senator COONS.—secure stability in a region that has long known fragility.

And at the end of last year, we passed a bipartisan package that creates the Nita Lowey Middle East Partnership for Peace Fund to provide support for a partnership between Palestinians and Israelis to provide for economic ventures and opportunity. Are these three tools that you look forward to working with us on and that you will embrace in your leadership role as the Biden administration looks for new tools to use in advancing our broader objective?

Mr. BLINKEN. Yes.

Senator COONS. And can you help me understand how you view the challenge of combating fragility and putting prioritization in place between diplomacy, defense, and development?

Mr. BLINKEN. So first thing, I think the Fragility Act is a terrific foundation upon which to do this. I have had some conversations with the president-elect about exactly this and it is very much on his mind, that is, the risks that continue to be posed emanating from fragile states and the national security interests that we have as well as—[Technical issue.]

Mr. BLINKEN.—what we can to help strengthen fragile states and prevent fragile states from becoming failed states.

And I think you put in place a very good foundation for thinking about that and, of course, part of this is making sure that our development programs are fully and thoroughly integrated into our foreign policy, making sure that they are delivering and effective because we are conscious that we are using the taxpayers' money in advancing them but also making sure that we put these front and center, that they are not an afterthought. They are actually the first thought, along with our diplomacy in our foreign policy.

Senator COONS. Thank you, and I think the Development Finance Corporation provides a critical new tool as long as it is a development finance corporation.

Let me just—a number of colleagues have referenced Russia and the tragic arrest of Navalny and the importance of advancing human rights and supporting the fight for democracy, whether it is in failed authoritarian states like Venezuela or it is in Putin's Russia or it is elsewhere in the world.

You know my long concern for Africa. There was just a flawed—a deeply flawed election in Uganda where Museveni has again held on to power in no small part by engaging in a blatant disregard for human rights.

There are other countries of real concern in Ethiopia, the violence in the Tigray region, in Sudan, on the other hand, where there has been an encouraging transition to democracy recently.

How do you plan to better support the fragile transition in Sudan while pushing back on those countries that are backsliding on their commitment to democracy like Uganda or, as some would argue, Ethiopia?

Mr. BLINKEN. So I think it starts with our very active engagement, not being AWOL from the problems that emerged in Ethiopia. I share your deep concerns.

We have seen a number of deeply, deeply concerning actions taken including atrocities directed both at people in Tigray, directed at Eritrean refugees in Ethiopia.

We, I think, need to see much greater access to the region, accountability, an effort to put a dialogue in place so that the issues that cause the conflict can actually be discussed and litigated as opposed to dealt with through violence.

We need to see restoration of communications. We need access for humanitarian assistance in the region, and I worry as well that what started there has the potential to be destabilizing throughout the Horn of Africa.

So I would like to see American diplomacy fully engaged in trying to contend with this—with this challenge. You cited a number of other places where we have—I share your concerns about the elections in Uganda, concerns in Cameroon recently, particularly violence directed at the Anglophone population.

So there are a whole series of places where we have challenges where, I think, the United States can help make a difference and that starts with being engaged.

Senator COONS. Thank you. Mr. Chairman, thank you for your indulgence. If I can just, in closing, say I share your commitment to a diverse workforce in the State Department and to ensuring that the State Department has the resources it needs to do its job well. I could not agree more, Tony, with your statement that we

have to connect foreign policy to the lived daily concerns of average working people across this country. You will be an excellent leader in doing so and I very much look forward to supporting your nomination and to working with you.

Thank you for your indulgence, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Coons.

Next up is Senator Graham, and after that will be Senator Murphy. However, between the two and after Senator Graham we are going to take a humanitarian break for about 10 minutes, since we have been at it for a couple of hours.

So you are holding up well, Mr. Blinken, but we do not—we do not want you to wither. So we will take a break after Senator Graham's—his usual poignant questions.

Senator Graham?

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you. I will try to make sure that I do not violate the Geneva Convention here.

The one thing I want to say is I think you are an outstanding choice by President-elect Biden. I have known you for a long time and I think you are loyal to the president and I think you understand the world.

We have different viewpoints on certain issues, but to me, the whole point of this is to nominate qualified people, get them in place as quickly as possible, reach agreement where you can and disagree when you must.

So Senator Coons and I are going to be working together on the State Department appropriations account. You have my complete support. The people at the State Department are incredibly patriotic. They live in dangerous places doing very dangerous things. They do not get the notoriety they deserve.

So I am just a big fan of soft power in foreign policy. The military has a very limited ability to change things and they know it more than anybody else.

So I think you are an outstanding choice. I intend to vote for you but we are going to quickly go around the world and try to get a 30,000-foot view of where we—where we start this new administration. Do you still consider Iran the largest state sponsor of terrorism?

Mr. BLINKEN. I do.

Senator GRAHAM. Okay. Do you consider Israel a racist nation?

Mr. BLINKEN. No, I do not.

Senator GRAHAM. Okay. That is a good start.

Afghanistan. Do you agree that what—I agree totally with Senator Shaheen that if we abandon the Afghan women, who fought so hard to have a say about the future of their children, it will affect our children's future. Do you agree with that?

Mr. BLINKEN. I do.

Senator GRAHAM. If we have learned anything from Afghanistan, taking your eye off the ball does not really work well, and having 100,000 troops over there and spending trillions of dollars really does not work well, either.

We are down to 2,500, a residual force with a counterterrorism mission. Do you think that is responsible at this point?

Mr. BLINKEN. I know the president-elect wants to make sure that even as we pull back our forces that we retain the capacity to deal with any reemerging—

Senator GRAHAM. And anything would be conditions based?

Mr. BLINKEN. That is correct.

Senator GRAHAM. Do you trust the Taliban to police al-Qaeda and ISIS regarding attacking Americans?

Mr. BLINKEN. Trust is not a word that I would apply.

Senator GRAHAM. Yeah. No, that is right. I agree with you. So any agreement that trusts the Taliban to police al-Qaeda and ISIS without us having some say, I think, would be a bad deal. I appreciate that very much.

On immigration, you are soon going to be secretary of state with, hopefully, a good bipartisan vote. I think you deserve it. What would you tell the people in a caravan coming toward America?

Mr. BLINKEN. I would say do not—do not come.

Senator GRAHAM. Yeah, I think that is a good message. We are going to work on comprehensive immigration reform. I will try to help where I can. But just do not come. That creates more problems than it solves.

When it comes to asylum, asylum seekers have been staying in Mexico under the Trump administration. Do you find value in that program?

Mr. BLINKEN. I have issues with that program, Senator. I think that we need to make sure that we are approaching what we do when it comes to those seeking asylum, seeking protection, in this country in line with the finest traditions that this country has shown from generation to generation.

Part of that is the ability that is both, I believe, a legal one and a moral one, from where I sit, to allow people to make asylum claims and to deal with those claims expeditiously. People who need protection should get it. Those who do not meet the criteria should, with dignity, be removed.

But our problem is that we are not resourced adequately to do this, and that is what we need to work on.

Senator GRAHAM. I could go a bit further. I think it has been gamed. I mean, I would like to increase the number of people that come here seeking asylum. There are troubled parts of the world. A lot of people come here for economic reasons. They realize that if they get one foot in the United States and claim asylum, they will be given a hearing date in the future and most of them do not show up.

Do you think we need to make sure that that narrative does not restart?

Mr. BLINKEN. I agree, and we need a humane, a fair, and an orderly system. That is imperative. And I know you heard the president-elect talk about the—

Senator GRAHAM. Some people on the left have been saying that we should decriminalize entry into the country. Do you agree with that?

Mr. BLINKEN. Not my jurisdiction, but I disagree.

Senator GRAHAM. Okay. All right.

China. Secretary Pompeo designated the Chinese Communist Party as having engaged in genocide regarding the Uighur Muslim population. Do you agree with that designation?

Mr. BLINKEN. That would be my judgment as well.

Senator GRAHAM. You do agree?

Mr. BLINKEN. Yes.

Senator GRAHAM. We are on a good start here.

[Laughter.]

Senator GRAHAM. So this—really, I just very much appreciate that. Do you believe that the Chinese Communist Party misled the world about the coronavirus?

Mr. BLINKEN. I do.

Senator GRAHAM. What price, if any, should they pay?

Mr. BLINKEN. When it comes to China's role in the virus, I think we already—we want a—there is a, as you know, an investigation—

Senator GRAHAM. Yeah.

Mr. BLINKEN [continuing]. That is ongoing. We, obviously, want to see the results of that investigation. But there are some things we already know.

Senator GRAHAM. If they do not cooperate, what should we do?

Mr. BLINKEN. That we have to look at very hard because that cooperation—this is really the point, I think, of where we need to go on this.

What we do know already with regard to China and the virus is that they did not provide transparency. They did not share information. They did not give access when it mattered most in the early days of this virus.

Had they done so, it is possible that the course of the virus would have been different and we could have dealt with it sooner and more effectively. My sense, Senator, going forward is that what we should be focusing on—I know people talk about the punitive. I would be very focused on the preventative, which is to say—

Senator GRAHAM. Sure.

Mr. BLINKEN [continuing]. What steps will China take, going forward.

Senator GRAHAM. Sure, like wet markets. Right.

Mr. BLINKEN. For example, yes, a very good example.

Senator GRAHAM. Yeah. I agree with that.

When it comes to Taiwan, it has been the policy of the United States to, basically, for lack of a better term, to guarantee Taiwanese democracy. What is your view of that?

Mr. BLINKEN. My view is we have an abiding and long-standing and bipartisan commitment to Taiwan and to the Taiwan Relations Act. We need to make sure that they have the means to deter aggression, to defend themselves.

I would like to see them, Taiwan, even more engaged in the world. It is, in many ways, a model democracy, a strong economy, and a technological powerhouse, and of course, the way they have dealt with COVID-19 has a lot of lessons to teach us.

Senator GRAHAM. But if the Chinese Communist Party decided to use military force against the population in Taiwan, that would create great upheaval throughout the world and they would pay a heavy price. Is that fair to say?

Mr. BLINKEN. That would be a grievous mistake on their part.  
 Senator GRAHAM. Hong Kong. Seems to be that they are not really paying much attention to what Congress is doing and what this administration is doing regarding Hong Kong. What can we do to get their attention that we are not doing?

Mr. BLINKEN. So I wish we had taken some steps earlier. The national security law, the crackdown on media, the crackdown on free speech, on assembly—all of that has, I think, put in tatters the notion of real freedom and autonomy in Hong Kong, which were guarantees in the handover.

One of the things—this is not going to fix the problem, but I would like see us, for example, be able to take in some of those fleeing Hong Kong and fleeing the repression, for standing up for their democratic rights, and I know there is some legislation that looks at doing that.

But I think we have to take a hard look about what our position should be on the presence of institutions and companies there.

Is it going to remain a hub and a financial center? Does Beijing then get both sides of the benefit? We should take a hard look at that.

Senator GRAHAM. I think the first thing we have to do is send a stronger message, because they are, clearly, not listening to this Congress. And this administration's efforts, which I applaud, have fallen short and it is very difficult.

When it comes to Turkey, the Congress has been pretty tough on Turkey for continuing to purchase Russian weapons and the S-400. Do you believe that Turkey needs to continue to be sanctioned until they change their behavior?

Mr. BLINKEN. So I have looked at some of the so-called CAATSA sanctions. I think that what Turkey has done as a NATO ally in acquiring the S-400s is unacceptable.

The idea that a strategic—so-called strategic partner of ours would actually be in line with one of our biggest strategic competitors in Russia is not acceptable.

I think we need to take a look and see the impact that the existing sanctions have had and then determine whether there is more that needs to be done.

Senator GRAHAM. Okay. I think this administration may have yesterday, I do not know, lifted a travel ban from Europe and other areas with a high COVID-19 infection rate. Are you considering restoring that ban?

Mr. BLINKEN. So right now that is—

Senator GRAHAM. I would encourage you to.

Mr. BLINKEN [continuing]. That is—it is above my pay grade.  
 So—

Senator GRAHAM. I would encourage you to. The reasons—you know, the caravans have multiple level problems and it would be odd to just keep a travel ban in Europe but, you know, allow people to mass on our border.

So I hope we do not—I hope we, you know, continue to fight the illness and prevent transmission. Finally, so many people wonder where our biggest threat is. I am going to just end with this thought. China is a problem—multiple layer problem. Russia is up to no good.

There is two groups out there that I worry the most about. I think if the Iranians had a nuclear weapon they would use it.

I think the ayatollah is a religious Nazi. Will you agree to at least talk to me and Senator Menendez about an alternative to the JCPOA when it comes to Iran?

Mr. BLINKEN. I welcome talking to both of you and members of this committee about the way forward on Iran.

Senator GRAHAM. Okay. And, finally, this is the 20th anniversary of 9/11. September this year will be 20 years. I think they are going to remind us that they are still out there.

Do you agree with me that the worst thing that America could do is have a false sense of security when it comes to radical Islam?

Do you agree with the following proposition, the only reason they haven't killed more of us is they cannot find a way to do it and we have pretty much kept our foot on their throat?

Mr. BLINKEN. I share your concerns about the ongoing threat posed by what is left of al-Qaeda, ISIS, other extremist groups that target the United States.

Senator GRAHAM. Finally, do you believe if they had a nuclear or chemical weapon, if they could acquire one, they would use it?

Mr. BLINKEN. I think that is a—there is a high probability that if they had access to such a weapon, certainly, in the past they would have and, going forward, something to be concerned about.

Senator GRAHAM. Twenty years later, where do we stand regarding the fight against al-Qaeda and ISIS?

Mr. BLINKEN. I think we have demonstrably made significant progress in different parts of the world against them when it comes to al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, the original threat. They are still a problem.

They are still a presence. They are still a relationship with the Taliban. It is much diminished from what it was.

But precisely to your point, if we take our eye off that ball there is a risk that it comes back. ISIS, I think, actually across two administrations we succeeded in taking away its geographic caliphate in Iraq and in Syria.

But there, again, we cannot take our eye off the ball and, of course, we have seen affiliates of both groups spread to different parts of the world.

So we still have our work cut out for us.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you. I look forward to working with you.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. I think all of us agree with those comments and, particularly, right now for whatever reason, the Sahel seems to be their preferred place to reemerge. So that is something that is going to need your attention.

With that, Senator Murphy, you have been incredibly patient from the very beginning but I am going to ask you to be patient for a little longer, and we will take a 10-minute humanitarian break.

The committee will be at ease subject to the call of the chair.

[Recess.]

The CHAIRMAN. The committee will come to order.

Senator Murphy, you are up.

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

Good to see you, Tony. Thank you for sharing that really wonderful story about your stepfather out the outset. You know, we are not a perfect nation. We have been flawed from the beginning. We are always seeking perfection.

But I imagine at that moment America looked perfect and it is a reminder of the unique power that this country has to effect change and be a force for good in the world. Thanks for beginning us with that inspirational story.

I wanted to come back to this question of the war in Yemen for a moment. I thank Senator Coons for beginning this conversation. It has been just a national security disaster for the United States. Over a hundred thousand children have died of starvation and disease.

AQAP, to Senator Graham's point, may be the arm of al-Qaeda with the clearest intentions to hit the United States, remains active, controlling territory and, I would argue, has strengthened Iran the longer that it has gone on.

President-elect Biden made a commitment during the campaign to end our military support for the Saudi-led coalition and I wanted to ask you to speak to that commitment but then also maybe to step back and talk about what this—what our work through this coalition has taught us about the path forward in our relationship with Saudi Arabia. This is an important ally, a strategic partner, but one that has begun to act very differently and Yemen is an example of a set of behaviors that has gone off the rails in many ways and probably argues for us to take a different approach to an ally but an ally whose interests often do not align with ours any longer.

So the specific question of military support for the coalition and then a broader look at the alliance.

Mr. BLINKEN. Thank you very much, Senator.

The president-elect had made clear that we will end our support for the military campaign led by Saudi Arabia in Yemen, and I think we will work on that in very short order once the president-elect is president for the reasons that you have cited.

We have seen Yemen become the worst humanitarian situation in the world and, of course, as we were discussing earlier, the Houthis bear significant responsibility for what has happened in Yemen. But the way the campaign has been conducted has also contributed significantly to that situation and so our support should end. We, of course, as you cited, have a partnership with Saudi Arabia. We, I believe, should do what we need to do to help defend Saudi Arabia against aggression directed at Saudi Arabia including from Yemen and from the Houthis.

But, again, as you have said, we have real concerns about some of the policies that our Saudi partners have pursued and, accordingly, the president-elect has said that we will review the entirety of the relationship to make sure that as it stands it is advancing the interests and is respectful of the values that we bring to that partnership.

Senator MURPHY. You made, I think, an interesting and, I think, very candid comment in response to Senator Johnson's query about Libya, that we were met with realities on the ground that we did not expect. You could probably tell a very similar story about our



engagements in most Middle Eastern theaters of war, that we had a plan and then once we got on the ground that plan was met with realities that we did not expect, whether it is the ability of Iran and al-Qaeda to fill vacuums in Iraq, the difficulty of finding moderate vetted rebels in Syria to train.

They could be effective in pushing back against Bashar al-Assad, and I think there is probably a lot of reasons for the series of mistakes we have made. Hubris is probably one of them, and so I appreciate your comment about humility.

But I also think it is due to the—I think a secondary role that State has played often in many of these strategic conversations over the years because of a lack of capacity that State has.

In Syria, when we put 2,000 troops on the ground we had, at time, only one diplomat, one State Department personnel, there even though every single general came before us and told us that there was no military solution inside Saudi Arabia—inside Syria.

And so this leads me to two connected questions. One, what are the capacities that State does not have today that it needs to be able to compete? If the threats that are posed to the United States in the next 50 years are by and large not conventional military threats, what does State need to be able to respond?

And second, especially in these really dangerous fragile places how do we get the State Department out of its bunker? Especially in the wake of Benghazi, the walls have gone up, and so 18-year-old Marines are out doing the work of diplomats.

So what kind of capacities do we need? How do we get State out on the front lines?

Mr. BLINKEN. I really appreciate the question. I think it goes to the heart of the mission I would have responsibility for if I am confirmed to this job.

First, in terms of State capacity, in the first instance, we have, as a result of attrition, as a result of morale, we have seen a drop off in the State personnel where we are about—now about a thousand short of the numbers we were at just four years ago. That in and of itself is a problem.

But it is not simply a matter of bringing people back, filling the slots that are now empty. It is making sure that to the best of our ability we are building a workforce that has a skill set to deal with the incredibly complex challenges that we are facing that are very different than the challenges we faced in previous generations. We have some authority. I suggest we probably need more that give us the flexibility to bring talent in in different ways at different times to meet some of those needs. We need to have the expertise in global health. We need to have the expertise in climate. We need to have the expertise in technology, given the dominant role that it plays and that is something that, if confirmed into this job, I am going to spend some real time on and working with this committee to make sure that we have the ability to do that. Part of this is about spreading the message that this is a wonderful career to have and a good place to be. I have been distressed by the fact that applications to take the Foreign Service exam dropped significantly. So that is something we need to repair.

And then, finally, on this point, Senator—we talked about this a little bit earlier—the skill set, the talent set, that is usually impor-

tant. But the workforce also has to look like the country it purports to represent, and so one of the things that I am determined to focus on, if confirmed, is on making good on building that kind of workforce, making sure that we are recruiting, we are retaining, and we are accountable for a workforce at State that looks more like the country it represents. And I think there is a lot of things that we can do to achieve that and make real progress.

Senator MURPHY. I think you are right, this is about capabilities. I do think it is also just about a finite number of resources. It does not make sense to me, given the threats presented in the United States today that we have more military band members than we do diplomats, and we have to watch what China is doing.

2019 was the first year in which they had more diplomatic posts around the world than the United States did. If we are going to meet them on a playing field even strength then we need to reconcile—

Mr. BLINKEN. Like I said, I very much agree with that and my colleagues will probably take this out on me for saying it, but when I look at the fact that the last requested increase for the Defense Department, the increase over its existing budget, equaled the totality—

Senator MURPHY. Right.

Mr. BLINKEN [continuing]. Of the State foreign operations budget, I think something is out of whack.

Senator MURPHY. In the minute I have remaining, I would love to turn to a subject we haven't touched upon and that is Ukraine.

Obviously, the subject of much consternation and discussion in the United States Congress over the last two years, but a country that is still enormously fragile and a country that is in need of a much more stable friendship from the United States.

The focus here has been, largely, around this question of lethal arms. I came around to support that notion. At the same time, I do not think Putin has any intention of actually marching an army to Kiev. He wants to disempower that nation economically and politically so that eventually they just give up and hand the keys back to a Kremlin-friendly government.

And so it is really a question of can we give them the political tools and the economic health in order to stay sovereign and independent, and I would love your quick thoughts on the path forward with Ukraine.

Mr. BLINKEN. I spent a lot of time on Ukraine when I was last in government. I share your—both your commitment to trying to help it, particularly to stand up against the aggression that we have seen from Russia, both with regard to the attempted annexation of Crimea and, of course, what is happening—the conflict in the Donbas in eastern Ukraine.

And I very much agree with you that we have to have a comprehensive approach. I supported the provision of lethal defensive assistance to Ukraine. But to the extent that Russia is the threat from without, the threat from within is corruption.

The threat from within is a lack of institutions that can effectively manage the country, and we have to help the Ukrainians deal with that, too, because even if we are successful in at least keeping—helping them keep Russia at bay, if that threat from

within continues then it is going to be very difficult for them to build a viable democracy.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you for your candid conversation with us today. Notwithstanding all of that agreement with Lindsey Graham earlier, I look forward to supporting your nomination.

Thank you, Tony.

Mr. BLINKEN. Thank you, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Murphy. I think with that, we will move to Senator Barrasso.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Blinken, I appreciate your being here today to testify. We all value your willingness to serve the country. The role of the secretary of state is vitally important to protecting our national security as well as advancing American interests and our values across the globe.

With this in mind, your nomination to me raises concerns. It is critically important our nation not return to a strategy of leading from behind. Many of us have spoken about the failed foreign policies of the Obama/Biden administration.

Robert Gates, the former secretary of defense under President Obama, noted that Joe Biden, he said, quote, “has been wrong on nearly every major foreign policy and national security issue over the past four decades.”

And I bring this up because you were an integral part in advising both Biden and Obama on these failed foreign policy decisions. Even with years of experience in foreign policy, when it came time to make the right decisions, in your own words you say you failed.

On Syria, the Obama/Biden foreign policy failed. You admitted, quote, “We failed in preventing a tragic loss of life as well as millions of people made into refugees or internally displaced, and that is something that we will have to live with.”

You also went on to say, “In Syria, we rightly sought to avoid another Iraq by not doing too much, but we made the opposite error of doing too little.”

On Libya, the Obama/Biden foreign policy failed. Again, you admit it. You said, “Libya is a particularly challenging one and I have to acknowledge that we, obviously, did not succeed in the Obama/Biden administration and getting that right.”

In Iraq, the Obama/Biden foreign policy failed. Unfortunately, you continue, I believe, to mistakenly call the withdrawal of U.S. troops in Iraq a success. But the rest of the world knows that the failure to get a status of force agreements in Iraq created a vacuum, which led to the rise and creation of ISIS.

In 2014, Senator John McCain, who was a member of this committee, raised these issues. Went to the Senate floor to speak against your nomination to be deputy secretary of state. I ask, Mr. Chairman, that his statement be submitted to the record.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection.

[The information referred to in located at the end of this transcript.]

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

He raised concerns with your actions, statements, and decisions regarding Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, and Ukraine based on that

record of failed foreign policy decisions. Senator McCain said, “Not only is Mr. Blinken unqualified but he is,” he said, “I believe a threat to the traditional interests and values that embody the United States of America.”

So once you were confirmed, what happened? You helped negotiate the terrible Iran nuclear deal. These botched decisions have serious consequences. I believe they embolden terrorist organizations around the globe.

These failures put the lives of the men and women who serve our nation at risk and I think it would be a grave mistake to confirm a secretary of state who has a demonstrated track record of repeatedly making the wrong decisions when it comes to American foreign policy and national security.

In your opening statement, you talked about the Chinese Communist Party, who continues to commit terrible human rights abuses. I want to talk about that.

You have confirmed that you believe it is genocide that the Uighurs, a religious and ethnic minority in China, has experienced, as you know, brutal repression at the hands of the Chinese Government.

What do you plan to do with the first—within the first 30 days to address what Joe Biden has described as a genocide committed by the Chinese Government?

Mr. BLINKEN. Thank you, Senator. I was tempted to start by saying it is good to see you again.

[Laughter.]

Mr. BLINKEN. So on the—on the Uighurs, I think we are very much in agreement, and the—forcing men, women, and children into concentration camps, trying to, in effect, reeducate them to be adherents to the ideology of the Chinese Communist Party, all of that speaks to an effort to commit genocide. And so I agree with that finding.

I think we have to look at the tools that we have available to us including some of the tools that the Congress has provided to see what actions we can take.

So, for example, I think we should be looking at making sure that we are not importing products that are made with forced labor from Xinjiang. That is one such thing. We need to make sure that we are also not exporting technologies and tools that could be used to further their repression. That is one place to start.

Senator BARRASSO. In your opening statement, and I agree with it, you said that strengthening Congress’ traditional role with—in foreign policy would be helpful and the U.S. Constitution provides the Senate the power to approve or reject treaties. But treaties have to be submitted to Congress before we can approve them or reject them.

So whether it is the Paris Climate Agreement or the Iran nuclear deal, the Obama/Biden administration disregarded the important role of the Senate. They refused to submit the agreements to the Senate for its advice and consent.

So the Obama/Biden administration did an end run around us, attempted to draft them in a way to avoid the ratification process.

So, if confirmed, is it going to be continuation to disregard the will of the American people by negotiating international agree-

ments and then refusing to submit them to the Senate? Or will we go by what you said in your opening statement, which is more of a partnership?

Mr. BLINKEN. I think two things. First of all, with regard to any of these issues, any of these agreements in whatever form they are, my strong commitment to you and to this committee is that we will engage in genuine consultations. Not notification, real consultations, real dialogue on the take-off, not on the landing so we can try to work these things through together.

When it comes to various arms control agreements, there is a long history, as you know, of many agreements not being treaties. Whether it is the Nuclear Suppliers Group, whether it is the Proliferation Security Initiative, and then in other areas like the Helsinki Final Act, none of these were treaties.

There are sometimes good reasons, in fact, reasons that advance our national security for why a treaty is not advisable. There is international treaty law that sometimes makes it more difficult to take action against a country that is not complying with its obligations under a treaty than it is under a nontreaty agreement.

So I think we have to look at this on a case by case basis. With regard to Iran, of course, there is the INARA legislation. We will, certainly, make sure that we are in compliance with that legislation and its requirements. Many of the reporting requirements, of course, have fallen by the wayside once we got out of the agreement.

At a minimum, those would—those would resume and we will have to look at what the obligations under the law would be if there is any forward movement with Iran.

Senator BARRASSO. You brought up the arms control agreement. As our country continues to face threats from around the world, we should not take any action, I believe, that is going to hinder our missile defense options.

The United States must always remain in charge of our missile defense system, not Russia, not any other country. So I have concerns about efforts of Russia to limit our own missile defense and actions that the Obama administration took on this issue.

So can you commit to us that in any arms control discussion with Russia for which you are responsible that the United States will never agree to any limiting of our own missile defense programs?

Mr. BLINKEN. It is hard to see a circumstance in which we would do that.

Senator BARRASSO. So the New START expires February 5th, coming up, 2021—

Mr. BLINKEN. Right.

Senator BARRASSO [continuing]. In less than a month. There are only a few weeks before the arms reduction treaty between us ends. Does the Biden administration plan to extend the treaty and, if so, for how long?

Mr. BLINKEN. Senator, I think we are going to seek an extension. I say I think because we have been very focused on observing one president at a time, a tradition and rule. And so this is something that the president-elect I know will have to take up almost immediately upon assuming office for the very reasons that you cited.

We have an agreement that is expiring in just 16 days or so. So what I can tell you is that I know we will be coming to you very quickly, almost immediately, to discuss that and what I can say at this point is that yes, we will seek to extend it.

Senator BARRASSO. President-elect Biden has pledged to treat U.S. allies with respect and consideration. One of our most important allies is our neighbor to the north, Canada.

Today, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau urged the incoming administration to consider any potential efforts to sabotage—to reconsider any potential efforts to sabotage the Keystone XL Pipeline.

President-elect Biden has made comments or I understand from the news that he wants to shut that down. Alberta Premier Jason Kenney raised concerns about reports of plans to cancel this valuable project, saying, quote, “Doing so would kill jobs on both sides of the border, would weaken the critically important Canada-U.S. relationship, would undermine U.S. national security by making the United States more dependent on OPEC oil imports in the future.”

So I strongly oppose any effort by the Biden administration to cancel or delay the Keystone XL Pipeline project. It creates jobs. It helps grow the economy. It improves our nation’s energy security.

I think taking action to cancel it would eliminate jobs for thousands of Americans and undermine economic stability for many.

So how does revoking permits for the Keystone XL Pipeline without consultation or deliberation show respect and consideration to Canada, one of our closest allies?

Mr. BLINKEN. So this would be a decision for the president to make. He has—the president-elect has said that he does intend to rescind the permit.

What I can say with regard to the State Department and its role and my potential role if I am at the State Department is anything going forward we would address with absolute objectivity and professionalism to make sure that any proposed permit or agreement that comes before us advances the national interest and national security.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Barrasso.

Senator Kaine?

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and to Mr. Blinken, congratulations on the nomination. You are very well qualified for the position.

Let me begin with something that I think is really important. The secretary of state, by longstanding norm, not law, has been one of the least political of the Cabinet secretaries.

Generally, the attorney general, secretary of state, secretary of Treasury, secretary of defense do not engage in partisan political activity, and that pretty much goes back decades and decades.

Your successor pretty much broke that practice in some fairly significant ways. Your predecessor. Your predecessor has an office of legal advisor. The office of the legal advisor gave wise advice to all in State and elsewhere.

In a December 2019 memo, the legal advisory reminded all political appointees that they were, quote - “they were prohibited from”,

quote, “engaging in political activity in concert with a partisan candidate, political party, or partisan political group,” and specifically indicated that, quote, “Senate-confirmed presidential appointees may not even attend a political party convention or a convention-related event.”

Your predecessor stressed that in a cable to State Department employees in December: Quote, “It is important that the department’s employees do not improperly engage the Department of State in the political process and that they adhere to the Hatch Act and department policies in their own political activities.”

Despite that, your predecessor appeared and gave a campaign speech at the Republican National Convention, violating policy that he and the legal advisor had laid, clearly, down.

I want to ask you about the words of another secretary of state, Colin Powell, who said, “As secretary of state, I am obliged not to participate in any way, shape, fashion, or form in parochial political debates. I have to take no sides in the matter,” he said in 2004 when he skipped the Republican National Convention.

Will you follow the Powell practice that has been the practice of the State Department and the secretary of state for decades or will you follow the Pompeo practice and turn the secretary of state into a partisan political position?

Mr. BLINKEN. I strongly agree with Secretary Powell and that is the model I would follow.

Senator KAINE. That is—I will be extremely disappointed if I see you showing up at partisan events for Democrats, including the president and vice president, the president who has appointed you.

If I see you doing campaign events for anybody on my side of the aisle, I will be very disappointed. I know you are not going to, but I wanted to put that on the record.

Mr. BLINKEN. And I would welcome you holding me to that. I have to tell you, Senator, I could not agree more strongly that with regard to the State Department, it has to be and if I have anything to say about it, it will be a nonpartisan institution that is seeking only to advance the national interest.

And I might add, I have had—I started my career in Washington at the department in 1993, and I have been working with the men and women of the Foreign Service, the civil service, for the better part of 25 years.

And I could not begin to tell you for nine out of 10 and maybe even 10 of 10 if the person is a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what. They are simply professionals who are working to advance the national interest, and if the person who purports to lead them is not doing the same thing I think we have got a problem.

Senator KAINE. Let me ask a related question. The norm, over time, in the State Department for ambassadors has been that about 70 percent are career and 30 percent are political.

There is nothing magic about that number. But administrations, both Democratic and Republican, have generally sort of adhered to that ratio. The Trump administration changed that ratio pretty significantly. It was about 55 percent career and 45 percent political, 50 percent higher in terms of the political appointees than the norm.

As you have had dialogue with President-elect Biden about his thoughts about the State Department, do you think you will see us go back to the norm? Political appointees are often very, very important. I get it. And that is why the 30 percent is important.

But do you think we will go back to the norm and see that two to one or 70 to 30 is a more likely path forward?

Mr. BLINKEN. Yes, I do.

Senator KAINE. Thank you for that.

I am very worried. There has been questions about issues in the Western Hemisphere and I am worried that we just pay attention to the Western Hemisphere when there is a crisis.

If there is a caravan, we are going to be paying attention to it or, you know, significant drug trade from Colombia we are going to pay attention to it. But then we sort of lose attention and we tend to look at the world as if it has an east-west axis and not a north-south axis. President-elect Biden, I think, starts with some real good will in the region because when he was vice president he did spend significant time working with our State Department and other professionals to sort of build relations in the Americas.

I still think there is just tremendous upside in this. It is hard for the U.S. of 330 million to sort of match up all the time with nations a China with a billion people. But the Americas, from Tierra del Fuego to Patagonia—Tierra del Fuego to the Yukon would have about a billion. So the more we can do in tandem with other nations in the Americas, the more we can advance our own economic and security interest. I do not think we should do it just because China and Russia and Iran are getting involved in the region, but that should make us worry.

Talk to me a little bit about your big picture perspective and that of the Biden administration on sort of an all-Americas policy or focus on our own—our own back yard.

Mr. BLINKEN. Thank you—thank you for raising that. You know, you are right. This has actually been an area of focus for the president-elect.

I went back and counted not so long ago and I think he made 16 trips to countries in our hemisphere as vice president, and even before that when he was a member of this committee he was very focused on a number of issues in the hemisphere, starting with Colombia, Plan Colombia, and what followed, and then as vice president a real focus on Mexico, on the Northern Triangle countries and, for that matter, issues throughout the hemisphere.

And he has a strongly-held view that we have a strong national interest in doing what we can to advance the future for our hemisphere that is democratic, that is middle class that is secure. And there is a lot that we can and should be doing as partners with countries throughout the hemisphere to advance that vision.

So in terms of the way we are resourced, in terms of the way we are focused, I feel confident that this is going to get sustained attention, not what you rightly described as sort piecemeal attention.

Senator KAINE. Episodic.

Mr. BLINKEN. Yeah, episodic.

Senator KAINE. I look forward to working with you on that. Let me ask you a question about Israel and Palestine, which has come up already. The two-state solution—this has been U.S. policy since



Truman in one way or another, certainly since the Oslo Accords, and yet sometimes I feel like our policy is to say two-state solution is our policy.

But it has been hard for us to find a meaningful path forward. I paid my first visit to Israel in 1998. I have been to Israel more times than I have been to Ireland and I have relatives in Ireland.

I really value the U.S.-Israel relationship. But the prospects for a peaceful Israel and Palestine existing side by side are worse today than they were in 1998 when I first visited and I find that tragic.

Mr. BLINKEN. Yeah.

Senator KAINE. And what is the challenge of not having a meaningful two-state solution? Let us just talk about COVID. There is a vaccination campaign going on right now that in Israel is viewed as one of the, you know, leading and most innovative in the world in terms of vaccinating high percentages of people.

But virtually no one in Palestine has been vaccinated, and the Israeli health minister says, when we are done with our citizens then we will focus attention on our neighbors. So the Palestinians are in this odd space where they are sort of not in or of their own country. They are in a country but they are not considered citizens. They are considered neighbors.

This is the kind of thing that suggests we really do need to find a path forward. I do believe the Trump administration's success in the Abraham Accords is notable and I applauded it right out of the gate.

How might we use the improved relations between nations in the Arab world with Israel to help advance the prospect, finally, since the late 1940s, the prospect of a two-state solution?

Mr. BLINKEN. Well, first of all, I very much share the premise of your comment and question, which is, as I see it, the two-state solution, however distant it may appear, is still the best and probably the only way to truly assure Israel's future as a Jewish and democratic state and, of course, to give the Palestinians the state to which they are entitled.

The challenge, of course, is how to—how to move forward on that at a time when you rightly said seems more distant than it has ever been, at least since Oslo.

I hope that the progress that was made with the Abraham Accords, which I applaud, the steps that countries are taking to normalize relations with Israel is an extremely positive development and one that we would hope to build on, if given the opportunity. I hope that also might create a greater sense of confidence and security in Israel as it considers the—its relationship with the Palestinians because whether we like it or not, whether they like it or not, it is not just going away.

Senator KAINE. And these nations that have now normalized relations can play an important role in both economic support for Palestinians but also providing security assistance, and they may be more willing to do that now that they have normalized relations in this way.

Well, Mr. Blinken, thank you. My time is up. I do want to work with you and the State Department on issues about war powers, the cleaning up of the various authorizations from 1991 and 2001

and 2002 that are still floating out in space with no time or geographic limit.

I look forward to working with the State Department and the White House on that.

Mr. BLINKEN. I would welcome that. Thanks, Senator.

Senator KAINE. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Kaine. Appreciate that.

Senator Portman is up next but I am told that he is indisposed at the moment, which turns to you, Senator Paul. We will get back to Senator Portman.

Senator Paul?

Senator PAUL. Thank you. Like Joe Biden and Hillary Clinton, you have been a consistent supporter of military intervention in the Middle East, from the Iraq war, the Libyan, to the Syrian civil war.

Some on your side of the aisle, including the president-elect, have said, well, we were given bad intelligence. They misled us on the intelligence on Iraq. That is a very specific reason. There is probably some truth to it. But I think it misses sort of the lesson of the Iraq war.

Likewise, your justification for maybe coming to a new approach on the Libyan civil war is, well, maybe we overestimated the idea of having viable successors there.

To me, it seems like we are still missing the point because even after Libya you guys went on to Syria wanting to do the same thing again, and you have argued, well, maybe we just did not do enough. If we would have done more, we could have toppled Assad and we could have had real regime change in Syria.

Well, you got it in Iraq, you got it in Libya, and it is a disaster. The lesson of these wars is that regime change does not work. People say, oh, we are going to get rid of the iron fist and Thomas Jefferson is going to rise from the ashes. Well, that, you know, is a naive notion to believe that Thomas Jefferson or his like live in Libya or live in Iraq. Their tradition is so much different than ours. I mean, we have been fighting against centralized power in the English tradition for a thousand years.

The revolution in England was 350 years ago. Ours was 250 years ago. That tradition they do not have. They have tribal existence. You trade one for another.

But, mostly, what you have gotten through the policies you have advocated and Joe Biden has advocated and, frankly, John Bolton has advocated this idea of regime change has been a disaster for the Middle East. We complain—everybody around here is concerned, Iran, Iran, Iran. Well, why is Iran stronger? Who is their best friend in the region now? Iraq. You know, we did that. We had a balance of power.

It wasn't perfect but we had somewhat of a balance of power in the Middle East and you guys messed it up. You got rid of the one bad guy and another bad guy got stronger. And so then you went to Libya and did the same thing, and then you said, well, maybe Libya is a one off.

Well, maybe there is a rule here. Maybe there is something we can learn about regime change and maybe we can learn that humility would be. Then maybe we shouldn't be choosing every government in the Middle East.

I would argue that instead of always choosing the Government, maybe we should not reward the bad ones. You know what I mean?

So, for example, with Saudi Arabia, I despise the regime. I would probably still trade with them. I probably would not cut them off completely. I would not sell them any more arms, and after they killed Khashoggi they shouldn't have gotten one bit of our armament.

But both sides advocate for this. On UAE we tried to stop that because UAE has a terrible human rights record. Both sides support it. The problem around here is we have bipartisan consensus.

The problem isn't lack of consensus. The problem is too much consensus, but the consensus is for regime change. Are any of the lessons you have learned from the failure of Iraq war, Libyan war, the chaos, the vacuum, and more terrorism that occurred and more lives that were lost, and then to go on to Syria, I do not get that there has been a lesson learned. Is there any kind of lesson learned on your part that regime change may not be the best thing for us in the Middle East?

Mr. BLINKEN. Senator, I think we, and I certainly have an absolute obligation to try to learn from everything we have done, advocated, to take into the account the results and to make that inform how we think about these problems, going forward, and I have done a lot of hard thinking about some of the very situations you mentioned. I am proud of the fact that I have spent all of my career during the times I have been in government for the better part of 25 years, working to advance our diplomacy, to do everything we possibly can to make sure that diplomacy is the first answer, not the last answer, and that war and conflict is a last resort.

Senator PAUL. The next step was Syria. The next step was the Syrian civil war, which looks a lot like the Iraq war and the Libyan war.

Mr. BLINKEN. Well, in Syria—in Syria there were those who were advocating for a repeat of Iraq, which is to say a whole scale intervention. That is something that I did not agree with. When we were looking at what to do in Afghanistan—

Senator PAUL. But here is the problem in Syria. It is—there was a predictable result there. Had you gotten rid of Assad, who were the fiercest fighters over there? Al-Nusra and al-Qaeda. The most—the more radical you were the better fighters you were.

The program that you started with Hillary Clinton, that program that trained these—the moderate rebels, we spent \$250 million. We trained about 60. We sent 10 of them into battle and they were captured in the first 10 minutes.

It was a complete disaster. This whole idea that there were moderates over there that we were going to support—doctors and lawyers and stuff—there were, but I do not think they were out there fighting.

The ones out there fighting were jihadists, al-Qaeda, Al-Nusra, and if they would have taken over the country—Assad is a terrible person but I am not positive that these people would have been better.

So, I mean, it is the same lesson. Our humility has to be let us quit toppling regimes over there. Let us do not support the bad ones, but let us not presume enough that if we topple them that

in the vacuum Thomas Jefferson is going to arise, because it never seems to happen.

With regard to advise and consent, and this is a little bit on Senator Barrasso's—extension of his question on treaties—it really isn't so much a solicitous move to say well, we just cannot pass these treaties so we are going to make all these agreements and not coming to you.

But I would argue even more importantly on war, you have argued when you have been part of administrations that oh, yes, you know, we would like—like Senator Kaine's, a more narrow AUMF but we do not really need it.

And you are not alone. That sort of, I think, arrogant executive sort of attitude comes from both parties. Every president for the last 50 years have—in fact, they all probably believe this. They believe they have absolute power.

It is called this absolute Article 2 authority, and this runs on both sides. But it runs through the extremes on our side. The John Bolton's on our side believe in this absolute Article 2 authority.

The AUMF from 9/11 had nothing to do with people in Somalia. Do you think the AUMF from 9/11 authorizes you to continue the war in Somalia?

Mr. BLINKEN. I think the AUMF from 9/11 has been used in countries and against groups that were not contemplated or cited in the AUMF, which is the very strong reason why we should revisit it.

Senator PAUL. But it is very specific. It says people who organize to attack us. It does not mention—you know, and people say, well, they say and associated forces. That is not in it. That is—somebody dreamed that up later and sort of said that it is in.

It is not in there. It does not say associated forces. There is no authorization for war in Somalia, Mali, Yemen, which the Obama administration originally did support. So there really isn't. I am not for a more narrow one. I am just for no more war over there.

I am tired of all the war. I am tired of all the nation building. Look, I love the rights of women as much as anybody. But if our goal is going to be that we are going to keep women in power, like in Saudi Arabia we are going to go to war with Saudi Arabia because they do not have women ministers of health and stuff, you know, it really isn't exactly our national security you are talking about. You are talking about something different.

Now, from the point of view of the secretary of state, there are things you can do through soft power to advocate for the principles we believe in.

But overthrowing governments to instill women's rights or to continue with women's rights and to continue a military presence there and fight battles for it is really not something that is in the purview of the secretary of state or, really, under the Constitution to anyone in our government.

With regard to NATO, you have advocated for expanding NATO. Do you still support putting Georgia in NATO?

Mr. BLINKEN. If a country like Georgia is able to meet the requirements of membership and if it can contribute to our collective security, yes, the door should remain open.

Senator PAUL. So if you are successful, then we would be at war with Russia now?

Mr. BLINKEN. I actually think just the opposite. I think that, Senator, with regard to NATO membership, there is a very good reason that Russia has proved aggressive against countries that are not actually in NATO and under the umbrella and a good reason why it has chosen not to—

Senator PAUL. This would be adding Georgia that is occupied—this would be adding Georgia that is occupied to NATO. Under Article 5, then, we would go to war.

Mr. BLINKEN [continuing]. Well, I think we have seen, again, in the past that countries that have joined NATO have not been the same target of Russian aggression that we have seen.

Senator PAUL. Yeah, I know. But if we were talking about 20 years ago we might have a valid argument now. Russia occupies Georgia. Russia occupies or proxy troops occupy part of Ukraine.

So I think adding either of them to NATO not only is provocative but you would have to think what comes next. I mean, if we are obligated to defend our NATO allies, I mean, basically, we would be voting for war.

So I would not vote to add Georgia to NATO, not on your life, unless I am ready to send my kids and your kids to go fight in Georgia. You know, the complicated fights and wars and occupation around, and I just think that we need to think these things through, and I think for every provocation there is a response as well. So we cannot look at it in a vacuum. People say, I do not care what Russia thinks, or, I do not care what Tehran thinks. But if we do not understand our adversaries enough to think how they will respond, then I do not think we are doing our job.

Mr. BLINKEN. I agree with you.

Senator PAUL. But as you can tell, I am not excited about more military intervention in the Middle East. I think there has been some chastening on the part of the incoming administration over previous failures.

But I do not think you have completely gotten the idea that regime change has been a terrible disaster that has created vacuums, chaos, and actually more terrorism throughout the region.

So I hope you will consider that. It is important not just for the philosophic point but it is important for our kids. I mean, we are sending these kids over to fight in these wars that go on forever and ever and ever, and somebody has got to stand up, and I hope you will be somebody brave enough to stand up and stop some of this.

Mr. BLINKEN. I appreciate what you said.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Paul.

Next up is Senator Markey, who, I am told, is joining us electronically. Senator Markey, are you with us?

Senator MARKEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, very much. Can you hear me, Mr. Chairman?

The CHAIRMAN. I can hear you, Senator Markey. I cannot see you but—

Senator MARKEY. Okay.

The CHAIRMAN [CONTINUING]. WELL HEARD HERE.

Senator MARKEY. Okay. Thank you. Much appreciated. Let me ask this question. Aside from rejoining the WHO, which President-elect Biden has already committed to doing, what will the Biden administration do to ensure that the vaccine is disseminated quickly and fairly so that every country has a chance to protect their citizens regardless of their wealth?

Mr. BLINKEN. Thank you, Senator. The president-elect has said that we are committed to making sure that, to the best of our ability, the vaccine is distributed properly and equitably. We intend to join COVAX.

We believe strongly that we can do that, ensure that every American gets the vaccine but also help make sure that others around the world who want it have access to it.

The WHO is a very imperfect organization in need of reform. But one of the reasons that the president-elect has determined we should get back into the WHO is that we are going to be in a much more effective position to advance that reform of the WHO if we are there at the table than if we are outside the organization.

So I think the combination of rejoining, taking part in COVAX, and then looking at how we can help make sure that the vaccine is equitably distributed is something that we are going to take on.

I would say that, you know, in addition to that, we are seeing now the potential for a lot of COVID tails to wag the COVID dog around the world in ways that will come back, potentially, to hurt us. We are seeing the potential for a debt crisis among emerging economies and developing economies.

We are seeing public health crises in country after country because COVID has made it more difficult to provide other health services, and we are seeing state fragility increase, not decrease, as a result of many of the challenges that COVID has exacerbated or, in some cases, led to.

So we have a national interest in helping and in doing our part to make sure that as the vaccine becomes available we help get it out there as quickly and as effectively as we can.

Senator MARKEY. So is the Biden administration committed to seek additional funding for the Global Fund and other programs meant to respond to the massive public health needs related to COVID-19?

Mr. BLINKEN. In short, yes. One of the things, though, that I should say is that Congress has done a very good service, I think, in providing the funding that is already on the table in terms of COVAX and that initiative. But I think that additional resources are likely to be needed.

Senator MARKEY. Okay. Thank you.

Moving on to North Korea, if we could, in moving forward towards the goal of ultimately denuclearizing, would you support an attempt to achieve a phased agreement that offers tailored sanctions relief to North Korea in exchange for a verifiable freeze or other restrictions on North Korea's WMD programs?

Mr. BLINKEN. I think we have—I am sorry. Go ahead.

Senator MARKEY. That is the question.

Mr. BLINKEN. I think we have to review and we intend to review the entire approach and policy toward North Korea because this is a hard problem that has plagued administration after administra-

tion, and it is a problem that has not gotten better. In fact, it has gotten worse. But I begin by acknowledging the fact that it was a hard problem to begin with.

So I think one of the first things we would do, and we would welcome being able to consult on that, is to review the entire approach.

Look at what options we have and that can be effective in terms of increasing pressure on North Korea to come to the negotiating table as well as what other diplomatic initiatives may be possible.

But that starts with consulting closely with our allies and partners, particularly with South Korea and with Japan and others, and reviewing all of the bidding. And so we will start there and we would welcome a conversation on that.

Senator MARKEY. Okay. And if I can just follow up.

And I agree with you, we have to increase enforcement so that China and Russia abide by the sanctions meant to target the regime.

But we also have to ensure that we do not inadvertently harm the North Korean people, particularly as they suffer from famine and the effects of a complete lockdown of their borders due to the pandemic. When North Korea reopens its borders, will you support easing some of the restrictions to allow legitimate humanitarian assistance to reach the North Korean people?

Mr. BLINKEN. I think in North Korea and in other similarly situated places we have to have an eye clearly on the people of the country in question and on doing what we can to alleviate their suffering and even if we have a strong grievance with the regime or with the government and that we are taking action to do something about that.

We, to the best of our ability, try to do so in a way that, in the first instance, isn't harmful to the people of the country. And so we will take a hard look at that in the past, as previous administrations have engaged the North Korean nuclear challenge.

They have found ways to make sure that humanitarian assistance, medical assistance, et cetera, could, in fits and starts, get to the North Korean people. So we do want to make sure that in anything we do we have an eye on the humanitarian side of the equation, not just on the security side of the equation.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you so much.

You know, and we have heard a lot today about the JCPOA in Iran. The bottom line is that the single greatest existential threat in the region is a nuclear Iran, and we must take that off the table before we look to making the agreement longer and stronger, as you say.

Would you commit to reentering the JCPOA without any preconditions as a starting point so long as the Iranians return to all of their commitments as well?

Mr. BLINKEN. What the president-elect has said on that, Senator, is that if Iran returns to compliance with the JCPOA, we would do the same thing and then use that as a platform, working with our allies and partners to build a longer and stronger agreement to also capture some of the other issues that need to be dealt with regard to missiles, with regard to Iran's activities and destabilizing activities in the region.

Having said that, I think we are some ways from even that. There is a lot that Iran would need to do to come back into compliance. We would then have to evaluate whether it had actually done so. So I do not think that is anything that is happening tomorrow or the next day.

Senator MARKEY. Okay. Thank you.

Saudi Crown Prince Bin Salman's declaration that the kingdom may illegally seek a nuclear bomb makes the task of returning Iran to compliance with the JCPOA all the more urgent.

Will you press the Saudis to come clean about their reported ballistic missile cooperation with China and assist that they adopt the additional protocol which would give the IAEA the same type of access it has in Iran?

Mr. BLINKEN. We want to make sure that to the best of our ability all of our partners and allies are living up to their obligations under various nonproliferation and arms control agreements and, certainly, in the case of Saudi Arabia that is something we will want to look at.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you.

And on the New START agreement, is the administration going to extend it by a full five years?

Mr. BLINKEN. So we had an opportunity to talk about this just a little bit earlier. What the president-elect has said is that very cognizant of the fact that we have one president at a time and that we could not really engage on this issue during the transition.

We have the challenge because, as you know, the deadline to act or not on an extension comes upon us very, very quickly. We have got just a couple of weeks to do that. So I think this is something that we will be coming to you on pretty much immediately after the president is sworn in, and I know that he does intend to seek an extension and we have to—he will have to make a decision as president about what duration we would seek.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you. I think it is very important. I am looking forward to working with you on that. I just think that is an incredibly important historic moment.

And, as you know, the Trump administration rolled back much of the United States' previous efforts to support and promote LGBTI rights around the world and I am thrilled that you and President-elect Biden have indicated that you are going to support and appoint a new special envoy for human rights on LGBTI people, a position that I have been pushing to make permanent through my International Human Rights Defense Act but which was left vacant in the Trump years.

After four years of Trump administration efforts to specifically marginalize, minimize, do damage to the rights of the LGBTI people, I think it is going to be vital to appoint a seasoned expert on those issues.

Are you going to move forward towards a speedy appointment towards an LGBTI envoy and would you consider raising it to ambassadorial level?

Mr. BLINKEN. The answer to both questions is yes, absolutely. This is a matter, I think, of some real urgency. We have seen violence directed against LGBTIQI people around the world increase.



We have seen, I believe, the highest number of murders of transgender people, particularly women of color that we have seen ever. And so I think the United States playing the role that it should be playing in standing up for and defending the rights of LGBTQI people is something that the department is going to take on and take on immediately.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you. And will you repudiate the findings of the report of the Commission on Unalienable Rights and reaffirm the United States' acceptance and adherence to the human rights laid out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and will you ensure that ambassadors are able to fly the Pride flag at our embassies once again around the world?

Mr. BLINKEN. Yes to both.

Senator MARKEY. Beautiful. Thank you.

And one final question on Rohingya. If confirmed, will you commit to overseeing an interagency process to make the determination as to whether the crimes committed against the Rohingya in Burma constitute genocide?

Mr. BLINKEN. Yes, I would.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you. And, by the way, thank you for all of your work on climate change. I think it is just a huge historical change of direction and congratulations on having John Kerry be named as your partner on those issues.

How quickly is the department going to be able to move onto make sure that we have made climate change a top issue and that we put climate justice at the center of what we are advocating for globally?

Mr. BLINKEN. Well, given Secretary Kerry's leadership, I suspect immediately.

Senator MARKEY. Excellent. And climate justice?

Mr. BLINKEN. As well. This is something that we will very much factor into what we are—what we are doing around the world.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you so much.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Markey.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you. Looking forward to working with you, Mr. Secretary.

Mr. BLINKEN. Thanks. Thank you very much, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Markey.

And I am told now that Senator Portman has extricated himself from whatever was more important than this hearing, and so I am going to recognize him at the present time.

Senator Portman, are you with us?

Senator PORTMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am with you. Nothing could be more important than the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and I have been watching the hearing throughout the afternoon.

And, Mr. Blinken, I also appreciate the time you spent with me on the phone talking about your plans for the department and how you would change some of the positions of the previous administration but also build on some of those.

And I would just say in listening today it seems to me there are opportunities for us to build on some of the successes. I think about the Abraham Accords.

I think about much of our policy toward Russia as an example of being able to provide, as we did this year at a record level, lethal weapons for self-defense in Ukraine. I think about what we have done in Belarus to try to promote democracy.

I think about standing up to China, and I think that from what I have heard today that you would be interested in engaging on that issue even more, particularly as it relates to human rights and the Uighurs and other ethnic minorities and, generally speaking, you know, how to deal with Iran. We are going to have some differences of opinion, it sounds like, but I think you are fairly clear eyed on what the challenges are with regard to Iran and not being trusting of them and the way they are headed.

Today, Mr. Chairman and to Ranking Member Menendez, there are five hearings going on. I have been in three of them, chairing one of them, and I think that is great.

I think it is good that we are moving quickly with some of the key appointments including secretary of state but also secretary of defense, homeland security, director of DNI, Treasury, all important roles, and I hope we can get these nominations to the floor for a vote and then we will, you know, let the chips fall where they may.

But I am actually supportive of us moving quickly and, Mr. Chairman, I know this happened because you were willing to do it in this interim period.

As we discussed last week, Mr. Blinken, I have got lots of interest in this issue of disinformation and propaganda and how we push back against it. I think it is kind of the new warfare of the 21st century.

Not that we do not have kinetic battles still but a lot of this is happening online and through disinformation. The Global Engagement Center was established at the State Department to deal with this.

Senator Murphy spoke earlier and he and I have worked closely over four years now to try to strengthen the GEC, the Global Engagement Center, and give it the ability to push back disinformation operations by our adversaries. These tactics are inexpensive, and there is a lot of deniability associated with it. It is easy for them to do, and when you combine it with economic and political subversion it can be devastating to some of the nascent democracies we are trying to help.

So thanks to the work of the Global Engagement Center, I think we now have the beginnings of an effective organization to deal with that and, again, I hope that is something that you would be willing to build on.

Could you speak to that briefly and also talk about your commitment to the funding level? We were able to get \$60 million in this year. That is half of what we wanted—less than half of what we wanted.

But compare that to China, which, according to a hearing that Senator Booker and I had on combating disinformation recently, China spends over \$10 billion a year in state-sponsored disinformation operations. I wonder if you could comment on the Global Engagement Center and the challenge we face.

Mr. BLINKEN. Thank you, Senator. I could not agree more with your comments and with the work that you have done on this. This is the—perhaps a primary battlefield that we have to fight on, and even as we manage to deter aggression and kinetic action by adversaries, every single day we are experiencing aggression of one kind or another in the misinformation and disinformation realm, and we need to engage that and we need to engage that effectively.

And, indeed, you are right, that is why the GEC was formed. I will tell you, I had the, you know, experience in the early days of the Ukraine conflict and Russia's aggression there in dealing with Russia using—weaponizing information in increasingly effective ways and, of course, little did we know what would come after that.

But you will recall the downing of the Malaysian airliner and Russia was extraordinarily effective in mixing up and muddying the waters using misinformation and disinformation as to their culpability and responsibility.

And out of some of these experiences there has been an effort at the State Department to give ourselves the tools and the resources to engage in this fight and the Global Engagement Center is exactly that.

So I am determined to make sure that if I am confirmed that it is resourced adequately and appropriately. As well, I think we need to make sure that we are bringing in the talent, the expertise, to be able to use it effectively because these are specialized skills that, in some cases, many of us do not have.

And to make sure that we have continuity because this is an ongoing battle every single day, we have conveyed the message that we would welcome the current leader of the GEC to stay on to make sure that we do not have any dropped balls in the weeks and months ahead.

Senator PORTMAN. Well, I thank you. Lea Gabriel has done a good job. I think Senator Murphy and I agree with that. I know both of us have weighed in with you and we thank you for that commitment to getting a sustainable funding level that is higher so they can do their job.

I think \$138 million is what we asked for this year. We got \$60 million, and a lot of members of this committee are interested in ensuring it has the capability. And then the hiring authority—we need to extend our hiring authority so they can bring in some expertise from outside the department to deal particularly on the social media front.

So thank you for that commitment. We look forward to working with you. On Ukraine, since you mentioned it, I was there in 2014 with Senator Cardin as an election monitor. It was right after the Revolution of Dignity.

In the Maidan, the central area where the Revolution of Dignity occurred, was still smoldering. I mean, it was—it was fresh, and they have had some successes and we have had some setbacks.

You know, Russia illegally annexed Crimea, which was a setback, and that Crimea annexation, by the way, is something we need to continue to stand up to, even as others in the region seem to be, you know, less aggressive about promoting, you know, the legitimate Ukrainian interest.

We have seen what has happened in the Donbas, the displacement of thousands of civilians, deaths of a lot of brave Ukrainian soldiers. I am sure you have been to Kiev and gone to the memorial to those soldiers, as many of us have.

But in 2019, we had free fair elections and President Zelensky and his party won by an overwhelming majority, and I know he has got an interest in working with you all.

One thing that I am very interested in is the Ukrainian Security Assistance Initiative. This is something that is providing military aid to them but also training and, as you know, General Dayton has been very involved with that. So I guess two questions for you. One, are you supportive of continuing to provide the weapons to the Ukrainians to defend themselves, and second, with regard to the Ukrainian Security Initiative, are you willing to continue to work on that and, specifically, can you speak to General Dayton, who has been before this committee and, you know, made it out of committee—never made it to the floor—as the potential next ambassador to Ukraine?

Mr. BLINKEN. I very much support the continued provision to Ukraine of lethal defensive assistance and, indeed, the training program as well.

I very much agree with you that this has actually been a real—a real success, and to the extent that across a couple of administrations we have been able to effectively train and as well as assist in different ways.

The Ukrainians have made a material difference in their ability to withstand the aggression they have been on the receiving end of from Russia. And as to General Dayton, I have high regard from him and, certainly, will take a close look at that.

Senator PORTMAN. Well, I appreciate it. Again, he has gone through this committee already, a nonpartisan guy who has a great deal of experience but also respect in Ukraine.

With regard to China, I know there has been discussion today of the importance of the U.S.-China relationship and I know there was discussion in the last question about working with China on global climate change and other issues, global health.

I just—I just hope that in all of this we keep in mind the fact that China continues to irresponsibly and very systematically target U.S. researchers, U.S. research that is paid for by taxpayer dollars, and steal it, in effect—take it to China and use it for their own purposes.

It has helped fuel the Chinese economy but also the Chinese military over the past two decades. We do have legislation that is bipartisan that came out of an investigation here in Congress that I chaired with Senator Carper.

It is called Securing American Innovation Act. It deals with five specific areas, but one has to do with the State Department. And you and I did not get a chance to talk about this much earlier but I think you know the issue, generally.

It provides the State Department with the authority to deny visas to foreign researchers whose problematic affiliations like to the PLA or to the Communist Party, for that matter, and access to export control technologies through fundamental research raised national security concerns.

This is a balanced bill. We have support from a lot of the university community because we did take a balanced approach. And yet, we are interested in, and I think this bill would accomplish this, really tightening up our research enterprise here in this country so that we are not continuing to lose researchers and research to China through things like the Thousand Talent programs that we were able to investigate.

Can you speak to that? Do you agree that we need these new visa authorities and can you talk about how we can better protect taxpayer-funded research, intellectual property, from China and others?

Mr. BLINKEN. So, Senator, I very much welcome looking into that and looking into that quickly. I haven't had a chance to read the legislation. So I want to make sure that I do that—do that first.

But I would welcome an opportunity to talk to you about that as soon as I have an opportunity to do so. I think the basic proposition I very strongly agree with. We need to make sure that we are protecting the intellectual property that is produced in this country.

We need to make sure that we are protecting the technology that—if going to the wrong place that undermine our security, and we need to make sure that we have the tools to do that. So I welcome a chance to look at the legislation and talk to you about it.

Senator PORTMAN. Great. Your career folks at State Department have been very involved in it and, in fact, we had a fellow from the State Department who helped us put together the legislation, who was very helpful, from the visa division at the State Department.

Israel. We talked about building on the Abraham Accords, some of the positive things that happened recently. I would like to hear your comments on that, but also with regard to global boycotts of Israel, Senator Cardin and I have worked together on this over the years to try to oppose the global BDS movement—boycott, divestments, and sanctions—against Israel, essentially, a double standard for Israel.

And then Senator Booker and I have worked on the anti-normalization laws—in other words, adding to the efforts that you make every year to, you know, require countries to include their annual human rights records, also adding to that their people-to-people engagement with Israeli citizens and residents to try to normalize relations between the Arab world and Israel to the extent that we can.

Can you talk about those two issues and how you feel about them and what your priority would be with regard to Israel?

Mr. BLINKEN. Senator, yes, as we had a brief opportunity to discuss, I support the Abraham Accords. I applaud the work that was done to achieve them.

I think they have significantly advanced the security for Israel and for the countries involved. It opens new perspectives and prospects with regard to travel, to business, to trade, all of which is very, very positive and I would hope that we have an opportunity to build on them, going forward.

With regard to BDS, the president-elect and I firmly share this conviction, is resolutely opposed to BDS for the reasons that you cite. It unfairly and inappropriately singles out—singles out Israel.

It creates a double standard and a standard that we do not apply to other countries. And so I think we are very much in the same place on that.

Of course, we fully respect and will always respect the First Amendment rights of Americans to say what they believe and think, but BDS itself is something that we oppose.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Portman.

Senator PORTMAN. Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Mr. Blinken.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. I am told Senator Merkley is with us. Is that correct?

Senator MERKLEY. Indeed. Greetings, everyone, and thank you so much, Tony, for your testimony. The advantage of coming near the end is that every topic I had planned to ask you about has been discussed to some degree, but I will invite you to explore, perhaps, a little more in depth starting with New START.

One of the questions is how one extends New START and the advantages of a shorter period of extension or a longer period and how that might play in to possibly watching the negotiations to address some of the evolving threats in strategic nuclear weapons.

Your thoughts?

Mr. BLINKEN. Well, thank you, Senator. In the first instance, I think that for all of the challenges we have seen in certain arms control agreements with Russia, particular INF as well to some extent is Open Skies, I think based on what I have seen, based on what the Trump administration reported when it comes to New START, Russia was making good on its obligations and this—and New START is not some kind of gift we give to the Russians.

It is manifestly in our self-interest in terms of giving us a predictable cap on the core of Russia's nuclear arsenal as well as giving us tremendous access to data and inspections that we otherwise would not have.

And so, in our judgment, it is certainly in the national interest to extend it. As we discussed this a little bit earlier, because of our focus on making sure that we respect the principle of one president at a time, we—this is something that we will have to tackle but only when we—when the president-elect becomes president tomorrow. But it is also something we are going to have to engage very, very quickly because the deadline is very fast upon us. I think we will have 15 or 16 days left.

So it would be our intention to come immediately to this committee and other committees to consult on our plans for the way forward. So but I can tell you right now we will seek the extension. The president-elect has to decide on the—on the duration.

Senator MERKLEY. Thank you.

Turning to China, I had authored a provision that required the administration, whichever administration, to respond by April to evaluate China's actions with the treatment of the Uighurs, and that has now been done with today's determination by the administration, by Secretary Pompeo, that it constitutes genocide, which I know you have spoken to and you said you agree with.

You also mentioned you would like to see us stem the tide of products—imported products coming that are manufactured in that, essentially, slave economy.

We have a bill—Senator Rubio and I have a bill, the Uighur Forced Labor Prevention Act. It has a lot of sponsors in the Senate on both sides of the aisle. I mentioned it when we spoke before and you said you would take a look at it.

I want to check in and see, among the millions of things you have prepared for, if you have been able to take a look at it and if this strategy, trying to keep the U.S. supply chain free of products tainted by forced labor, is one you can support.

Mr. BLINKEN. Senator, I am afraid I haven't had a chance to actually read the legislation. But I would be more than pleased to do so quickly, if confirmed.

And, as you note, the decision today, the finding today, I think only underscores the urgency of engaging on this issue. So I commit to doing that quickly, if confirmed, and getting back to you.

Senator MERKLEY. As well as something to a separate meeting, I believe you confirmed to Senator Markey that you would look into the expiration of genocide in regard to Burma's treatment of the Rohingya.

Mr. BLINKEN. That is correct.

Senator MERKLEY. And I appreciate that Aung San Suu Kyi had invited, in her U.N. speech following the horrific massacres in August several years ago, to come and see for yourselves. So I led a congressional delegation to see for ourselves.

The Burmese Government blocked us from going to the villages as they did with virtually every other group in the world, and, certainly, I think our failure to call it out as genocide has been an encouragement to dictatorial aggressive regimes around the world with what they might be able to do against a disliked minority. And so I appreciate that you are willing to deal with that very directly.

I also appreciate you also addressed the issue of exploring asylum for those in Hong Kong who have been politically persecuted for defending democracy, and it is another place where we can really help stand up for democracy.

But, again, I missed your comments but I believe you addressed this and expressed support for exploring providing such asylum.

Mr. BLINKEN. I did.

Senator MERKLEY. Thank you.

I wanted to turn to the Northern Triangle. It was Vice President Biden who went down to try to work out an economic package to assist the Northern Triangle quite a few years ago. He asked Senator Carper to oversee how this was going.

I traveled down to the Northern Triangle with Senator Carper about a year and a half ago, and I cannot say it was real encouraging, in part because of the multiple challenges of taking on, assisting nations where drug enterprises have become so incredibly powerful that they tend to corrupt everything.

President-elect Biden has supported a renewed significant economic package. Can we deliver such economic help without, in essence, strengthening or feeding corruption in those countries, and if so, any insights on how we do that?

Mr. BLINKEN. The short answer, Senator, is I think that we can but I do not want to minimize the difficulty. When we did the initial package during the Obama/Biden administration and this was,

again, I think, a real bipartisan achievement in getting that support, the vast bulk of the assistance did not go through or to the governments in question.

It went, typically, through third parties and it was tied very explicitly to concrete reforms on the part of these countries in criminal justice, in policing, in combating corruption, in creating economic opportunity, et cetera, dealing with all of the drivers of migration. And, you know, the problem, of course, is that the—as you very well describe, this is not simply flipping a switch. These are systemic and endemic problems that take a lot of time as well as resources to try to turn around. But we did start to see, I think, some results in the Northern Triangle countries, and now we have what is admittedly an ambitious plan to pursue this but to do it in a way that does not send money for—not tied to concrete reforms and that is making sure that we are working with parties that will not use it for the—for inappropriate purposes and are not plagued with corruption.

So I think it is doable. Anecdotally, I can tell you that the first time around one of the leaders of one of those countries was complaining to then Vice President Biden that he was not a direct recipient of this funding and it was going around him, and he said, why is that. And the vice president said to him, because you are corrupt, and that was the end of the conversation. But the program went forward.

So having said all that, I think this is, again, an area where it would be very profitable for us to try to work together to make sure that if we are dedicating taxpayer dollars to this we are doing it in a way that is getting results.

Senator MERKLEY. Well, one thing we heard repeatedly was one of the most effective things we did was provide extensive training and assistance to their positions that were equivalent to an attorney general.

Mr. BLINKEN. Yes.

Senator MERKLEY. There is also prosecutions and all sorts of investigative powers and capabilities they did not have. There was also an area where the governments were pushing back enormously, strongly, trying to stop that assistance because you had former presidents and—who had been arrested and current presidents under investigation and close friends and brothers and so on and so forth.

Right now, we have in Honduras President Juan Orlando Hernandez, who has been named as a co-conspirator in three corruption and drug trafficking cases. Now, what is our—what should our posture be towards a president in that situation?

Mr. BLINKEN. We were talking a little bit about this earlier. When we look at just generically the problem of corruption, it is without question one of the main drivers of conflict around the world.

It is being weaponized as a tool by some of our adversaries. It is also, at the same time, the soft underbelly of a number of our adversaries. And so across the board we need to be better focused and better resourced, and I am determined that we will be, to combat corruption. I think there are very case-specific hard issues that



we have to look at when it comes to individuals and individual leaders.

But this is something that I think would bear focus, attention, resources, and collaboration with the committee.

Senator MERKLEY. Will we terminate the so-called Safe Third Country Agreements with the Northern Triangle countries?

Mr. BLINKEN. I am sorry. Could you repeat that?

Senator MERKLEY. Yes. Will we terminate the Safe—so-called Safe Third Country Agreements with the Northern Triangle countries?

Mr. BLINKEN. So, so far, as I understand it, it is only being implemented in Guatemala. I do not see it as an effective answer to the challenge.

We would—we will be coming forward and we have already started to come forward with both an immigration reform plan in the United States itself but then other very specific ideas for how to make sure that our border is humane, orderly, and fair, and we have to deal with the drivers of migration, which we just talked about, particularly with regard to the Northern Triangle.

We also have to make sure that we have, at least in my judgment, an asylum process that meets our highest traditions and I think also meets our legal and moral obligations.

But that requires significantly more resources to make sure that we can adjudicate asylum claims on the spot and make sure that people who are deserving our protection get it and those who are not are removed in a dignified manner.

Senator MERKLEY. I am going to interrupt you there, Tony, just because I am just about out of time and I want to close on climate, and one of the things that—tools that we have internationally is to express the use of international finance to support a conversion to renewable energy around the world, and we are all at risk if we fail in this effort.

And will the administration push the international lending institutions that we participate in to stop funding new fossil fuel projects?

Mr. BLINKEN. Yes. This is an area we want to focus on. We want to make sure that we are not doing anything to facilitate countries exporting dirty technology around the world, including something we see from China, which is in part through the Belt and Road Initiative and by other means, getting this technology around the world. It should not benefit from international financing to do that.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator.

Senator MERKLEY. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Young?

Senator YOUNG. Mr. Blinken, welcome to the committee. I enjoyed our conversation just days ago and I would like to pick up one of the threads of that conversation here as I begin to pose some questions to you.

But and it pertains to the president's authority to make war and also existing legal authorities on the books pertaining to authorizations of the use of military force.

I am jealous of congressional prerogatives. I know former Senator Joe Biden was jealous of those prerogatives as well and so he has longstanding and, I think, well established views on this topic

and, frankly, I believe that the president-elect and I see very much eye to eye on this. That was my sense during our conversation.

Could you kindly explain to the committee whether existing legal authorities through the '91 and '02 Iraq war authorizations still apply today?

Mr. BLINKEN. I think it is long past time that we revisit these and review them. I think in many instances they have been cited and used in countries or against groups that were not part of the original authorization.

And so this is—it is long past time that we do this, and I would welcome an opportunity to work with the committee on doing just that.

I think as we talked about a little bit, one of the challenges in the past is we did try to do this a few years ago, and it is not easy to get—to get to yes. For some, the porridge is too hot. For others, the porridge is too cold and can we get a consensus around what is just right.

But I would be determined and committed to working on that and as well for the reasons you cite the president-elect feels very strongly about this.

Senator YOUNG. Well, thank you. I will personally look forward to working with you and I would be remiss if I did not mention Senator Tim Kaine has been toiling on this effort for a number of years and I hope he will be a walking point on this as well.

Last week, you no doubt saw that Secretary of State Pompeo made remarks pertaining to Iran, characterizing it as al-Qaeda's new home.

Mr. BLINKEN. Mm-hmm.

Senator YOUNG. And the implications for the 2000 AUMF is something I would like to explore with you. Do you believe, based on the connection that Secretary Pompeo makes between Iran and al-Qaeda that a Trump or a Biden administration would have authority to strike Iran, or do you instead adopt the interpretation that if it is deemed necessary to engage in any sort of military action it would be the president of the United States need to instead come before this body for authorization?

Mr. BLINKEN. It would certainly—it would be the latter. We would—we would, I believe, need to and should, in any event, come before the Congress in that situation.

With regard to the statement the secretary made, that is something I intend to look into, if confirmed, very, very promptly. I haven't had a chance to see what the underlying basis is for that.

But, obviously, that is something we would have to take very, very seriously. Al-Qaeda leadership has been in Iran for some time. At various points, it was—did not have full freedom of movement. At other points, it may have had the leash taken off a little bit.

But the—what Secretary Pompeo cited publicly is something that I would be very concerned with. But I have to look at what is underneath that.

Senator YOUNG. In the past, Mr. Blinken—I am going to pivot to China and economic statecraft as it relates to China. You have indicated, I think, rightly that China and the Chinese Communist Party is, arguably, presents the greatest challenge geopolitically, geoeconomically, to the United States of America, but also techno-

logically, militarily, and diplomatically. And I think you would agree that we need to push back on each of those different fronts vis-a-vis the Chinese Communist Party. On the economic front, however, I have said, I have written, I have been arguing for a number of years now that though it has been encouraging not see this issue elevated in our popular discourse, I think our approach has been, shall I say, lacking in the sense that we have engaged in what I would characterize as defensive measures, defensive countermeasures against the Chinese Communist Party—tariffs, for example—and we have engaged in those defensive countermeasures unilaterally as opposed to gaining more leverage by working with our partners and allies.

So sort of two points. Do you agree that we need to engage more robustly our partners and allies so that we have more leverage? I suspect it is almost a rhetorical question.

Mr. BLINKEN. Yes, I strongly do, and to your point, very quickly, as you know, when we are acting alone against Chinese excesses in the commercial area, we are about 25 percent of world GDP. When we have got allies and partners with us, depending on who it is, it is 50 or 60 percent.

It is a much heavier weight for China to have to ignore. And so there is tremendous benefit in the effectiveness of pushing back on China when we are doing this with other similarly-aggrieved countries.

Senator YOUNG. So that is encouraging. So you and I are, blessedly, in agreement as it relates to that. I also think the United States needs to—for the lack of a better term, we need to play off that.

We need to up our game. We need to out innovate, outcompete, and outgrow the Chinese Communist Party, and we have done this before. I mean, this is, arguably—this was the catalyst for our success in the Cold War.

So how quickly we forget, and to that end, I have introduced legislation along with Senator Schumer called the Endless Frontier Act. You and I had an opportunity to briefly discuss that.

The effort here is to spark innovation in what I will characterize is frontier sort of platform technologies like artificial intelligence, robotics, advanced manufacturing, things that may have a nexus with national security but, regardless, will grow our economy at a more rapid rate and, therefore, has geo-economic implications.

So do you believe that the United States Government should be investing in these sorts of key frontier technologies, partnering with our allies and partners where appropriate so that we can lead the world in their development and broaden our innovation base?

Mr. BLINKEN. I do. I think we can play a catalytic role. We have done that, as you say rightly, in the past. Part of this, at least in my judgment, is about making sure that we are unleashing the private sector to really focus on these issues, focus on these areas, and give it some support if it needs to have that support in order to do it.

But, yes, I very much agree, and we had a chance to talk about this earlier. I am very appreciative of the work that this committee has done in a whole variety of areas but focused pretty much on

the same objective when it comes to the LEADS Act, when it comes to the report that the chairman issued.

I think there are a lot of common denominators. And to your point, Senator, I just could not agree more. This is, ultimately, about us, and when we are thinking about China and the competition with China, whether it is the adversarial nature of the relationship, the competitive nature, or even, in some cases, the cooperative one, ultimately, it begins with us and it is, in some cases, less about the growth of the Chinese threat and more sometimes about our own self-inflicted weaknesses. If we can get our own act together we can do a lot better.

Senator YOUNG. I agree with that. Oftentimes, and this happened in the Cold War, we were called by an adversary, what Ronald Reagan characterized as an evil empire, to become a better version of ourselves, and I see this as an opportunity for our country. Let us invest in ourselves

Mr. BLINKEN. Very much agree.

Senator YOUNG. Let us become a better version of ourselves, and very good then.

More broadly, moving beyond China, with this, you know, of course, of paramount importance, do you think we need a written plan, a written plan that lays out what our economic strategy is from a national security lens? Just as we have derivative of the National Security Strategy, we have a National Defense Strategy?

Mr. BLINKEN. Yeah, I think that is a good idea. As you say, we have a National Security Strategy. We have a National Defense Strategy. Folks labor hard on this. I have spent some time on a few of those in the past, and I think we would benefit from the same in the economic realm.

Senator YOUNG. Well, should you be confirmed, and I suspect you will be, would you be willing to dialogue with myself and Senator Merkley—

Mr. BLINKEN. Yes.

Senator YOUNG [continuing]. On the global economic security strategy that we have that would affect this sort of change? Thank you

Mr. BLINKEN. Absolutely, with pleasure.

Senator YOUNG. Last thing, I am going to turn to Yemen, and this has been explored by a number of my colleagues so I am not going to revisit many of the issue or questions that they posed to you. It has, indeed, been characterized as the worst humanitarian disaster, I think, rightly so, but it is also a major national security threat, seeing as it is the home of AQAP, arguably, the most dangerous branch of al-Qaeda.

And what has not, I think, been discussed here is the dimension of soft power as it relates to Yemen. If the United States of America is partnering with Saudi Arabia and there have been violations of international humanitarian law—as I have argued, there were with respect for our military involvement in Yemen—do you think that undermines our argument when we talk publicly about the Chinese and their human rights violations as it relates to, say, the Uighur Muslims and the tension of Muslim organ extraction?

Mr. BLINKEN. I do. I do.

Senator YOUNG. Okay. I agree with that. Another lesson I think we could—we could learn from this situation in Yemen is—relates to what happens when you deprive people of essentials—food, medicine—which is, effectively, what has occurred in Yemen in addition to the bombing of school buses and other publicized matters.

So do you agree that the deprivation of essentials leads to the radicalization of individuals, as extensive literature shows, and that that could help al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and other groups like ISIS recruit more members?

Mr. BLINKEN. Yes, I do. It is, certainly, a contributor and it certainly creates an environment in which recruiting people to extremism is facilitated.

Senator YOUNG. Okay. Well, I look forward to partnering with this administration and improving our efforts in Yemen on the economic issues, on China, and all the other issues that we addressed.

Thank you, sir.

Mr. BLINKEN. I would welcome that. Thank you, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Young.

Senator Booker?

Senator BOOKER. Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I am witnessing remarkable endurance, and not to you. It is actually your wife is showing extraordinary endurance and I think you owe her big time.

Mr. BLINKEN. You have no argument from me on that.

Senator BOOKER. All right. You went to the Stanford of the East, right? Harvard? Is that right?

Mr. BLINKEN. That is correct.

Senator BOOKER. Harvard Business School did a great report that diverse teams are much better teams in terms of their private sector performance.

And I have been stunned in my travels around the world as a United States Senator when I go in country and meet with the State Department teams and see a shocking lack of diversity, not just ethnic and racial diversity but also religious diversity.

And I really appreciate you talking about that in your opening statement. I heard the engagement I think you had—I think it was Chris Murphy and you had some discussions about it.

I would like just to hear—I know your heart and I know your commitment to focus on these issues, but I would love to hear more specifics about how can you take a department that does not fully represent the rich diversity, the value of diversity of our country. How can you make the State Department and help to create it to be more reflective?

Mr. BLINKEN. Senator, first, let me say that if I am confirmed to this job, I will view it as a significant measure of whether I succeeded or failed, however long I am in the job, whether or not we have finally put in place the real foundations to make sure that we have a workforce at the State Department that looks like the country it represents.

And I say foundations because yes, we are going to make progress, real demonstrable progress on that. But as you know very well, it is not simply a matter now of appointing a diverse group of people to different jobs.

We have to put in place much more systematically a recruitment process that stands the test of time and that reaches out into different communities in ways that we haven't done before.

We have to have a retention process, because one of the problems that we have seen in the department is even when we have been able to recruit people from diverse groups we have often had trouble retaining them because we have not been sufficiently attentive or sensitive to some of the specific concerns that they have.

And, finally, we have to have accountability, starting with the senior leadership, starting with the secretary of state, to make sure that we are following through on these commitments, and one way that we are going to do that, if I am confirmed to this, is I will appoint very, very soon a chief diversity officer who will ensure that we have benchmarks and that will ensure that we have transparency, including information that we will share with this committee, to make sure that there is a way of holding accountable the senior leadership.

Senator BOOKER. Well, I think—I think that is really important, and as Senate Democrats—Senator Schatz and myself went to Chuck Schumer and asked him to publish every office's diversity statistics and, amazingly, that public accountability has shown the number of diverse members of Senate offices go up on the Democratic side considerably.

I would also say that there is other issues. You know, there are unpaid internship programs at the State Department which really do select for certain people—

Mr. BLINKEN. And even paid. I think—and I know that there has been some work done to make sure that we actually have some resources for paid internships.

Senator BOOKER. Yeah, and that is what I am saying. We should be looking at more paid opportunities that—

Mr. BLINKEN. Yes, absolutely.

Senator BOOKER [continuing]. For people and I am doing some work on that, and I look forward to connecting with you on it. I was really appreciative of the dialogue that you and Senator Coons had about the Horn of Africa.

I think we see what is beginning to look like a civil war in Ethiopia. I think the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam conflict is growing and, could, potentially boil over. Sudan and Ethiopia have growing tension and growing conflicts.

As you know, the Horn of Africa is of extraordinary importance. We have seen humanitarian disasters there before of staggering human toil. We also have one of the more important shipping lanes where about 10 percent of all global cargo goes by.

You said that you want to have diplomatic active engagement. What does that mean?

Mr. BLINKEN. Well, in the first instance, it means actually showing up at the—at the right levels to use what diplomatic weight we have with the Government, with the leadership in Ethiopia, in the first instance, and there are a number of things that I think at the very least would need to be done on short order.

Senator BOOKER. Can I interrupt you?

Mr. BLINKEN. Yeah, of course.

Senator BOOKER. So I actually think that all that is great but can I just ask you why not appoint a special envoy to the Horn of Africa? Does that seem like something that might—

Mr. BLINKEN. I will take a very quick look at that for the reasons that you cite. I do—I share the concern that you have that this is something that—the instability that was sparked by the aggression and events in Tigray.

Now we have Eritrean refugees who are on the receiving end of atrocities. We have Eritrea possibly getting in. We have other states that are now being affected, and the potential for this to spill over is a real concern. And so yes, I will take a look at that.

Senator BOOKER. And waiting for the deputy secretary. I do not know how fast we will get things confirmed for Africa, overall. I just think that this might be something that merits that because it could end up being another international disaster.

I think I mentioned to you that I had one of the more amazing trips of my life with Senator Flake as well as some of my colleagues like Chris Coons to Africa. One of the first things that jumped out at me as we were flying to Zimbabwe to meet with President Emmerson Mnangagwa and talk to him about U.S. sanctions on his country, that he was flying back at that time from China. The headlines were China does not care about Zimbabwe's suppression of minorities or their political processes.

The expansion of Chinese influence is stunning to me and I think that that is something that is far greater than, I think, people realize, and I will give you an example of this and I would like to hear your thoughts on the DRC as well. Clearly, we have another refugee crisis there. We have a tremendous makings of a humanitarian crisis.

But I was stunned, and I think it was 2019—correct me if I was wrong—that 37 countries, including the DRC, signed a letter defending China's treatment of the Uighurs.

I mean, imagine that. I have heard my colleagues talk about calling it concentration camps and genocide, and here you have China's influence has expanded so much that you have 37 ambassadors to the United Nations, including countries like the DRC that have been so thoroughly engaged by China that they are defending something as horrific as that.

And so that, to me, especially in the continent of Africa, is something that should send alarms to all of us in terms of the global competition between two—freedom and democracy and a totalitarian or authoritarian governments that suppress minorities and wreak havoc, frankly, in terms of the humanitarian disasters.

And I just want to hear more from you, perhaps, about how we are going to meet that specifically in the context of Africa in the context of—from the Horn of Africa to the DRC to challenges we have seen in the Sahel region. How do we begin to combat that Chinese competition?

Mr. BLINKEN. So, look, I could not agree more with you and I think we are seeing in China's commercial diplomacy clear strategic intent that goes beyond the simple commercial proposition that may lie originally at the heart of what they are doing.

But we have a couple things to work with. One is the fact that the way China engages in commercial diplomacy tends to be actu-

ally a pretty bad deal for the recipients except, possibly, for the—a leader, who may benefit from the corrupt aspect of that.

So when China is coming in and it is saddling countries with debt in a way that they cannot possibly afford so that, ultimately, it either owns the asset when they cannot repay it or resources are taken away from the people to pay off this debt that winds up being a bad news story.

When they bring in Chinese workers instead of using local workers to actually build the projects, no environmental standards, and then the corruption that comes with it, I think more and more countries that have been on the receiving end of China's largesse have come to regret it.

That is one piece of it, and I think shining a bright light on the way China engages in commercial diplomacy, juxtaposing that to the way we do it is one way to help.

The other thing is I think most—as I have seen it and it comes up in the polling, most people in most countries in Africa would prefer, if given the choice, to be engaged with us.

Senator BOOKER. Absolutely, and that is why my hope is, again, often we have these silos of State Department, Commerce, Trade often, that aren't working in a cohesive plan, and what we are seeing happening in places like DRC where we have rare earth metals and other sort of business interests is we do not have a holistic plan that, ultimately, could strengthen the economy of a lot of African countries that play into our sense of larger purpose.

I have six seconds. I will use it just to sound off to you about my frustrations in this global pandemic, that which is directly related to the economy, and so you have America seeing that first hand, the suffering.

But we will be vaccinated if things continue on this pace, this nation will be vaccinated. This pandemic will be behind us.

But in developing nations like in Africa, I have seen projections that until 2024 it could take to end that, which not only means a grievous loss of life globally but also means that the economic crises we are already seeing in these very poor nations will grow dramatically worse.

If we are not saying this now and finding ways with global pharmaceutical companies to find a way, then we are relegating developing nations to a level of death, carnage, and economic collapse that is shameful, and I would hope, if you could just give me some assurances that you are aware of this and are committed to doing something about it.

Mr. BLINKEN. Yes, absolutely. We are very concerned. We were talking about this a little bit earlier about the various tails that risk wagging the COVID dog and those are among the most concerning.

Senator BOOKER. Thank you very much. From a guy who went to a safety school you turned out all right. I look forward to supporting you.

Mr. BLINKEN. Thank you, Senator.

Senator BOOKER. And Mr. Chairman, thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Booker.

Senator Cruz?

Senator CRUZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Blinken, welcome.



Mr. BLINKEN. Good to see you, Senator.

Senator CRUZ. Congratulations.

Mr. BLINKEN. Thank you.

Senator CRUZ. And congratulations on making it to the end of a long hearing. And I suspect over the next several years there may be a number of issues on which we have disagreements. But let us start on some areas where we may have some common ground, and in particular, I want to start by talking about Nord Stream 2.

In the last 18 months in the Senate, we have seen remarkable bipartisan agreement when it comes to Nord Stream 2.

I have authored two separate pieces of legislation jointly with Senator Shaheen, bipartisan legislation, both of which have passed into law imposing strong sanctions to prevent the completion of Nord Stream 2. The first of those we passed in December, a little over a year ago, the second of those we passed just a little over a month ago.

And, as a consequence, a pipeline that was on the verge of being completed halted in its tracks, and when we first started taking up the Nord Stream 2 sanctions legislation the pundits and observers all said there was no chance the sanctions would stop the pipeline.

That has now been proven categorically false. The pipeline has stopped and, of course, a pipeline that is 95 percent complete is a pipeline that is zero percent complete because it is not operational. Just this morning, the State Department announced sanctions specifically on entities, one involving a specific vessel, the Fortuna that has been involved in Russians' attempts to complete the pipeline.

Now, worryingly, there have been suggestions out of Moscow and out of Berlin that the Biden administration would reduce pressure and reduce efforts to stop Nord Stream 2.

I would tell you, in terms of the Senate the sanctions legislation we passed—in order to get it passed it received the support of virtually every member on this committee.

It has received the support of both the chairman and ranking member of this committee. It received the support of both the chairman and ranking member of Senate Armed Services, the chairman and ranking member of Senate Banking, the Senate majority leader and the Democratic leader, and it received the support of the same leadership in the House.

And so when it comes to congressional opposition to Nord Stream 2, congressional commitment to stopping that pipeline from ever being complete, it is virtually universal and it is bipartisan.

Can you commit to this committee today that the Biden administration will hold the line, will keep the sanctions, and will prevent the Nord Stream 2 pipeline from being completed?

Mr. BLINKEN. Two things, if I may, Senator. First of all, the president-elect strongly agrees with you that Nord Stream 2 is a bad idea and he has been very clear about that. I need to look at the actual legislation. I am determined to do whatever we can to prevent that completion, the last hundred yards, I very much agree.

I do need—I would need to consult with the president-elect—I haven't had a chance to talk to him about this—when he is president to make a determination on sanctions. In an ideal world and

we probably do not live in one—in an ideal world, we will engage very quickly with our partners and allies in Europe and I think we would try to seek to convince them to stop this.

But if that does not succeed, I think the tools that we have, including the tools that you provide, are something we would have to look very seriously at. I just cannot commit right now to doing that because I haven't had a chance to talk to president-elect about it.

Senator CRUZ. Well, I will note the European Union, in terms of our partners and allies in Europe, when they voted to condemn the Nord Stream 2 project the vote was something like 400 to 100. It was overwhelmingly to condemn the project.

That being said, Angela Merkel and Germany have leaned in vigorously in support of it and this is, clearly, the number-one energy priority for Putin and Russia and it represents billions of dollars that fund Putin's aggression.

Would a Biden administration be willing to stand up to German pressure? The Germans are going to press you and you are not going to convince Merkel to change her mind on this. And so will a Biden administration be willing to stand up to that pressure, particularly when the rest of Europe recognizes how damaging completing this pipeline will be?

Mr. BLINKEN. I know his strong conviction that this is a bad idea, the Nord Stream 2. That much I can tell you. I know that he would have us use every persuasive tool that we have to convince our friends and partners, including Germany, not to move forward with it.

But what I do need to do is make sure that I have actually consulted with him on the specifics of that.

Senator CRUZ. Well, I look forward to working with you on that, and I would note that both sets of sanctions we passed are mandatory and not discretionary, and so I will look forward to continuing to work with you on that.

Let us shift to a second area where we may or not get agreement. You mentioned earlier in this hearing the importance of strengthening regional allies to stand up to China, and I have long believed that China poses the single greatest geopolitical threat facing the United States for the next century.

One of those important regional allies is Taiwan. When you were at the State Department, rules were put in place concerning Taiwan that put restrictions on Taiwan that no other country faced, and in particular, that prohibited the display of symbols of Taiwanese sovereignty on U.S. federal property.

I have been a vocal critic of those policies and in recent weeks the State Department announced that it was rescinding those policies. I think that is the right thing to do, and that Taiwan we should respect and treat with respect and I think strengthening Taiwan helps both the region and America stand up to China.

What are your views today and would you seek to go back to the old policy that has been reversed?

Mr. BLINKEN. So a couple things on that. I had a chance to mention this earlier. When President Tsai was running for office, I actually received her at the State Department, had a great conversation.

This is some years ago. And then when she became president, I talked to her on a number of occasions and that in and of itself, I think, is important.

There is the—the Taiwan Assurance Act and its requirements that I think is what, in part, triggered what the State Department and Secretary Pompeo have done. I want to see that process through to conclusion, if it hasn't been concluded, to make sure that we are acting pursuant to the mandate in the Act that looks at creating more space for contact.

Senator CRUZ. All right. Let us shift to another part of the world where I suspect we will have more significant disagreements, and that is Iran. You are a vocal proponent of the Obama/Biden Iran nuclear deal.

I believe that was a catastrophically misguided deal. In the four years since the Obama administration was in office, the United States has, of course, withdrawn from that deal.

Not only that, we now know a number of facts we did not know at the time the deal was being negotiated. One of the things—and in particular, we know the involvement of the IRGC with terrorism directly targeting Americans and murdering American servicemen and women.

In 2016, Congress overwhelmingly passed CAATSA, which imposed mandatory terrorism sanctions on Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, and we have since discovered the vast money in Iran that is intertwined with the IRGC, in particular, the financial sector, including Iran's Central Bank, and the energy sector, including the national Iranian oil company.

Both of these sectors and entities have now been sanctioned under the terrorism authorities for funneling money to the IRGC. The Pentagon also has assessed that the IRGC is responsible for killing at least 603 Americans in Iraq.

Do you believe it is in America's national security interest to lift those terrorism sanctions and to allow billions of dollars to go once again to funding terrorist activities?

Mr. BLINKEN. I do not, and I think that there is nothing, as I see it, inconsistent with making sure that we are doing everything possible, including the toughest possible sanctions to deal with Iranian support for terrorism, its own engagement in that, and the nuclear agreement.

And we said from the outset and we are serious about it, that the nuclear agreement was one thing but continuing and even strengthening our ability to push back and to deal effectively with Iran's egregious behavior including in the terrorism realm was something that we needed and should do.

Part of the challenge now I think we have, Senators, because we have had this divorce, to some extent, from some of our allies and partners who, ideally, would be with us in pushing back against Iran's malicious activities, as a result of disagreeing over getting out of the nuclear deal, we are less effective than we might otherwise be in those other areas if we were working together.

I think one of the benefits, should Iran choose to come back into compliance and we wind up doing the same thing is that we would at least be back on the same page with allies and partners, and that might make us more effective in dealing with these problems.

Senator CRUZ. You mentioned it was a priority defending LGBT rights.

Mr. BLINKEN. Mm-hmm.

Senator CRUZ. Iran's record concerning the LGBT community is horrific.

Mr. BLINKEN. I agree with you.

Senator CRUZ. They put to death, they execute people for the crime of being homosexual.

Mr. BLINKEN. I agree with you.

Senator CRUZ. As long as they maintain that barbaric and inhumane policy, do you think it is appropriate for a Biden administration to allow billions of dollars to go to that regime?

Mr. BLINKEN. The challenge that I think we face and, of course, we have—the biggest problem that we face with Iran, and I think that we, unfortunately, continue to face and it may get worse again, is that with regard to all of the egregious actions that Iran takes that you rightly point out, across all of these areas, an Iran that has a nuclear weapon or has the capacity to develop one or the material for one in very short order risks acting with even greater impunity than it already does.

So I think the first order of business has to be to get that back in the box. That puts us in a much better position to try to deal with some of these truly egregious actions.

Senator CRUZ. And a final question because my time has expired, do you agree that Jerusalem is the capital of Israel?

Mr. BLINKEN. Mm-hmm.

Senator CRUZ.—and do you commit that the United States will keep our embassy in Jerusalem?

Mr. BLINKEN. Yes and yes.

Senator CRUZ. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Cruz.

Let me try to wrap this up with just a couple of quick questions. You made reference way, way back some hours ago that the new administration was going to withdraw the support for the Saudi war in Yemen. Did I characterize that correctly?

Mr. BLINKEN. That is correct, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. What does that look like?

Mr. BLINKEN. I think it looks like, first and foremost, making sure we understand exactly what support we are actually currently providing and which we need to look at, and then withdrawing that support.

But I want to make clear I think we have to be in close contact with Saudi Arabia, with our partner there. We need to be very clear about what we are doing, why we are doing something, and talk it through.

But the main point is that for reasons that we have discussed we believe that continuing that support is not in the national interest.

The CHAIRMAN. I hear what you are saying. I think the Saudis themselves would like to be in that position. I think they are having trouble getting away from the tar baby that they have been involved in for some time.

What does that mean as far as recognizing who is the legitimate governance of Yemen, or haven't you crossed that bridge yet?

Mr. BLINKEN. I do not think we have crossed the bridge. There is a recognized government in Yemen that is, basically, in exile. It is not operating from Yemen. I had some dealings with it in the past.

There is, as you know, a U.N. process that seeks to restore a national Government in Yemen. But the hard reality is, as we were talking earlier, you know, 80 percent of the people live in areas controlled by the Houthis at this point. So we are a long way from that.

The CHAIRMAN. That is fair.

One thing we did not talk about, or I guess Senator Cruz may have alluded to this briefly, is there is significant amount of cash that is frozen again that is—Iran lays claim to. I think it is about \$15 billion in three different countries, including South Korea. Are you aware of those funds or not?

Mr. BLINKEN. Mr. Chairman, are these the funds from—the proceeds of oil sales that have been frozen, or something else?

The CHAIRMAN. You know, I cannot—I cannot answer that. All I saw was that they are funds that are frozen that we had frozen because of our sanctions but that Iran wants their hands on. And I guess my encouragement would be that there not be any unfreezing of these funds or anything to try to get the Iranians to the table or anything like that.

Mr. BLINKEN. I agree with that.

The CHAIRMAN. We had a really bad experience with the pallets of cash, as you know, that—the infamous pallets of cash that were transferred. So I would urge you strongly in that regard.

And then we also did not talk about bringing the American citizens home who Iran have. I am assuming you are all on board with that and that is something that if, indeed, we wind up negotiating with them, that—to me, that has really got to be in the first wave, I would think. So I would put that on your plate. Any comments on that?

Mr. BLINKEN. Mr. Chairman, I feel very strongly that I would have, as secretary of state, first and foremost, the priority of making sure that our personnel, wherever they are, are safe and secure but very high up in the—in a hierarchy of things that I need to be responsible for, doing everything we possibly can to bring any American home who is being unjustly detained anywhere in the world who is a hostage, including in Iran. That has to be a priority.

I had an opportunity as I was getting some briefings during the transition to make sure that one of the briefings that I asked for and got was from the current leader of our effort to bring unjustly detained Americans home, Roger Carstens, and I got a—we had a terrific conversation.

I am very impressed with the work that he has been doing and, indeed, have—we have asked him to stay on for some time.

The CHAIRMAN. That is good. Thank you. I appreciate that.

I have to tell you, I am—I am greatly encouraged by our conversations earlier today before we came in here and then again today as your commitments regarding the Iran situation. I think it is—certainly, China is a bigger problem.

But Iran, as I explained to you, I think, is a—is a flashpoint that could get out of hand very, very quickly because they are notorious

for making bad judgments and pushing the envelope. I feel strongly in that regard.

I feel strongly about how we go about this, and I know we meet regularly and talk with our friends from Israel. They want to get their two cents worth in substantially more than they did last time. So I appreciate your commitments in that regard.

With that, Senator Menendez?

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and just some final questions, and you have had an extraordinary tour de force here. I think it shows not only, as I said at the opening statement, your intellect but the demeanor in which you come to all of these issues and the engagement with the committee. So just some final questions, because the world watches your hearing and I do not want some parts of the world to think they are getting away without some attention, so to speak. So Russia. Navalny, his poisoning and his arrest. SolarWinds, bounty on U.S. soldiers, election interference, the use of chemical weapons to assassinate opponents in different parts of the world.

Clearly, clearly, Russia must face consequences for its actions, otherwise, it thinks they can continue to violate the international order. During the last four years, Congress had to assume a policy and leadership role in this regard.

I authored CAATSA. In part, it was to deal with the Russians. What do you view as—well, first, well, do you agree that Russia has to have consequences for these actions and would we expect the Biden administration to pursue those consequences?

Mr. BLINKEN. Yes and yes. You laid it out very powerfully and very succinctly when you just—the things you mentioned are egregious in so many ways. The president-elect has been very clear that there need to be costs and sustained consequences for some of these actions.

It is worth—it would be worth, you know, when we have the opportunity spending the time on each one because they merit a deep conversation. I think, thanks to this committee, thanks to Congress, we have some tools in our—in our toolbox, whether it is CAATSA, whether it is Magnitsky, whether it is other authorities that we have including the authorities that were created during the Ukraine crisis that are extremely helpful in being able to impose some of these costs and consequences.

The president-elect, in the context of talking about election interference, said that, you know, he has determined to make sure that there are costs and sustainable consequences and, of course, we need to look at that at a time and a place and the manner of our choosing.

But this cannot go on unanswered.

Senator MENENDEZ. I appreciate that. I did not even mention the annexation of Crimea and the continuing invasion of Ukraine. So I appreciate that, and I would just offer that if you believe you do not have authorities that you could use, then please come back to the committee because I think you would find a bipartisan welcome to try to pursue those.

Let me turn to Turkey. You know, Turkey, as the—what we aspired of Turkey, the bridge between East and West, the secular na-

tion, the strong NATO ally, has not been realized under President Erdogan.

The purchase of the S-400, which is a violation, clearly, of CAATSA, the engagement that it has had in destabilizing actions in Syria, the invading into the territorial waters of Cyprus in terms of its exclusive economic zone and seeking to drill there—Cyprus, a member of the European Union—a claiming of a whole area of what would be Greece's exclusive economic zone all the way leading to Libya, the support that Erdogan had for Azerbaijan and the engagement in its aggression in Nagorno-Karabakh, which cost so many lives and I believe there are war crimes involved there by the Azerbaijanis—all of this and so much more I hope we will not have under the incoming administration.

President Trump, in my opinion, coddled Erdogan and he continued to move forward in all of these pejorative ways, including Libya, which I did not mention.

I hope we have a clear view, a policy, as to what Erdogan is, what he is doing, when you can say about Turkey that more lawyers and journalists are under arrest in Turkey than in any other part of the world, and that is saying something considering some parts of the world. So are we clear eyed about Turkey under Erdogan?

Mr. BLINKEN. We are very clear eyed, and the bottom line is that Turkey is an ally that in the many ways you cited is not acting as an ally should, and this is a very, very significant challenge for us and we are very clear eyed about it.

Senator MENENDEZ. Just one or two more.

In your response to Senator Rubio, you mentioned Juan Guaidó. Would we expect that the Biden administration would recognize interim President Juan Guaidó as such, by virtue of the National Assembly?

Mr. BLINKEN. That would be my expectation. I think what we want—what we very much want to do is, following up on what Senator Rubio was saying, is to come pretty quickly and talk to you about the way forward in Venezuela.

I have to tell you, I am just not satisfied that anyone has a good plan that we think can deliver the results that we all share and seek. So that is something I would really welcome talking about very early on.

Senator MENENDEZ. As you—as you know, over 50, maybe more, nations including most of the European Union recognize interim President Guaidó.

The problem is we never took that national—international recognition and internationalized our efforts on Venezuela, and that takes the hard work of diplomacy. So that would be one thing I hope we would look at is internationalizing with our partners, and also I think the people who are fighting for freedom and then, ultimately, have to flee temporary protective status for Venezuelans here in the United States should—

Mr. BLINKEN. Absolutely. The president-elect is committed to that.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, that is fantastic to hear.

Senator Booker, my colleague from New Jersey, raised diversity with you. I raised it privately. I am not going to pursue it any

more, other than to say I take you at your word that success in part of your term as the secretary of state will be how well we do in that regard.

This is a long 20-year effort that I have been leading from the House and the Senate and, unfortunately, it is probably the worst department of all of the federal government's as it relates to diversity.

So I hope that under your leadership we finally make progress and show the face to America—I mean, to the world of America that it is.

You know, when I was in China and met with the gentleman from our embassy that was involved with human rights in China, he was an African-American who had actually engaged in the civil rights movement.

That is a powerful message to Chinese—you know, those who are suffering and trying to create human rights in China. It was so powerful. I am paraphrasing what happened in the whole experience I had when I was there. But that is the type of message that I think we need to send.

I hope that President Biden will follow on his pledge to recognize the truth of the Armenian genocide as the Senate did when it—when we passed my resolution in December of 2019. The House has done the same. I think this is an appropriate action to take in recognition. I find it so difficult to have our ambassadors to Armenia go to a genocide observance but never say the word genocide, and that is something that I hope will change.

Lastly, this committee has jurisdiction over arms sales and the arms sales process—the informal arms sales process under the current State Department has totally broken apart.

I have no—speaking for myself, I have no ideological problems with arms sales of U.S. makers to other countries abroad when those countries observe the human rights and international law that we aspire to uphold globally. When they do not, then I have problems with it and that is where dialogue has to come in place with the State Department.

Can I rely upon you to reengage in that informal process with the committee on arms sales?

Mr. BLINKEN. Yes, you can. We will come back to regular order.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I have received a plethora of letters in support of Mr. Blinken's nomination and I would ask at this point unanimous consent to enter them into the record, and in light of COVID precautions, my staff would email those letters to the committee.

The CHAIRMAN. That is acceptable. Without objection.

[The information referred to is located at the end of this transcript.]

Senator MENENDEZ. My thanks to you, Mr. Chairman. I hope we can get Mr. Blinken confirmed either by unanimous consent on the floor and that, if not, at the earliest possible date which I believe if it is not unanimous consent maybe Monday of next week.

The CHAIRMAN. I think we join in that. Just two quick things, Mr. Blinken. First of all, I want to associate myself with the remarks regarding Turkey. The expressions that the—that Senator



Menendez has laid out have been conveyed by me and I think by him also to the—every diplomat we get from Turkey and including by myself to Mr. Erdogan directly.

And as far as Venezuela is concern, I am glad to hear your ideas on that. We want to hear some ideas on that because I think everybody is frustrated with what we thought was going to move very quickly and has not moved quickly. So that demands our attention.

And so I would ask unanimous consent that all responses to pre-hearing and advance policy questions be added to the record. If there is no objection, so ordered.

And then, lastly, for additional questions for the record, we have gone back and forth on this. Your staff wanted 9:00 a.m. My staff wanted 5:00. I think probably an appropriate compromise is 1:00 o'clock tomorrow afternoon, if that is agreeable with you. So with that, I will order that all questions for the record—the record will remain open but close at 1:00 o'clock tomorrow afternoon. And with that, again, gosh, what great patience you have with us and great stamina. Thank you so much, and especially for your wife sitting there through all this. That is great, too.

So thank you.

Mr. BLINKEN. Mr. Chairman, thank you—thank you for your courtesy. I deeply appreciate it.

Thank you, Member Menendez. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. You are very welcome. And with that the committee will be adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 6:32 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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**Additional Material Submitted for the Record**

**Statements Submitted to the Committee Supporting  
Hon. Antony J. Blinken's Nomination  
to be Secretary of State**

[SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ]

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**Letter Supporting the Nominations of Hon. Antony J. Blinken and Hon. Linda Thomas-Greenfield—Signed by Former U.S. Ambassadors**

As former ambassadors, we are proud to affirm our strong support for the nominations of Mr. Antony Blinken as Secretary of State and Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield as U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations. Many of us have served with one or both of these exceptional nominees and can attest not only to their foreign policy capabilities but also to their strength of character. We urge the Senate to swiftly confirm these highly qualified and experienced officials so that they are ready to serve on day one of the Biden Administration.

Mr. Blinken and Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield's combined decades of experience in foreign affairs and national security make them more than qualified for these vital roles. Their deep knowledge of State Department operations has prepared them for the essential job of revitalizing a workforce that has suffered from budget cuts, unexplained attacks by foreign adversaries, and even questions about their necessity to U.S. policymaking in recent years. They are crisis-tested experts who will renew American leadership, rebuild our alliances and partnerships, and restore our credibility on the world's stage.

Mr. Blinken — having held top foreign affairs posts on Capitol Hill, in the White House, and as Deputy Secretary of State — is an experienced leader who will hit the ground running with crucial know-how and indispensable relationships with leaders around the world. He knows the State Department, understands the challenges it faces, and has a vision for both investing in its workforce and revitalizing American diplomacy.

Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield, having served for 35 years in the Foreign Service across four continents, is one of America's most experienced diplomats. She has tackled complex foreign policy challenges, including her service as the top State Department official in charge of Africa policy during the Ebola crisis. She also brings more than a decade of experience working on refugee and migration policy, including work on the frontlines of multilateral diplomacy during her service at the U.S. Mission to the UN in Geneva.

Mr. Blinken and Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield are the leaders our country needs to meet the challenges of this century — not just the last one. That is why we're urging the Senate to act as quickly as possible and confirm both nominees to begin the work of restoring American leadership and credibility.

Signed,

**Gina K. Abercrombie Winstanley**  
Ambassador to Malta (2012-2016)

**Charles C. Adams**  
Ambassador to Finland (2005-2007)

**Cynthia H. Akuetteh**  
Ambassador to Gabon (2014-2018); Ambassador to São Tomé and Príncipe (2014-2018)

**Bernadette M. Allen**

Ambassador to Niger (2006-2010)

**Frank Almaguer**

Ambassador to Honduras (1999-2002)

**Carolyn Patricia Alsup**

Ambassador to The Gambia (2015-2018)

**Alexander Arvizu**

Ambassador to Albania (2010-2015)

**Mark L. Asquino**

Ambassador to Equatorial Guinea (2012-2015)

**Liliana Ayalde**

Ambassador to Brazil (2013-2016); Ambassador to Paraguay (2008-2011)

**Daniel Baer**

Ambassador to the OSCE (2013-2017)

**Robert Cushman Barber**

Ambassador to Iceland (2015-2017)

**Shirley Elizabeth Barnes**

Ambassador to Madagascar (1998-2001)

**Adrian Basora**

Ambassador to Czechoslovakia and then to Czech Republic (1992-1995)

**Leslie A. Bassett**

Ambassador to Paraguay (2015-2017)

**Michael A. Battle**

Ambassador to the African Union (2009-2013)

**Denise Campbell Bauer**

Ambassador to Belgium (2013-2017)

**Robert M. Beecroft**

Ambassador and Head of Mission, OSCE Peacekeeping Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (2001-2004)

**Colleen Bell**

Ambassador to Hungary (2014-2017)

**Bruce G. Berton**

Ambassador and Head of Mission, OSCE Mission to Bosnia-Herzegovina (2017-2019)

**Donald Sternoff Beyer Jr.**

Ambassador to Switzerland and Liechtenstein (2009-2013)

**John R. Beyrle**

Ambassador to Russia (2008-2012); Ambassador to Bulgaria (2005-2008)

**Clyde Bishop**

Ambassador to Republic of the Marshall Islands (2006-2009)

**James K. Bishop**

Ambassador to Somalia (1990-1991); Ambassador to Liberia (1987-1990); Ambassador to Niger (1979-1981)

**Robert D. Blackwill**

Ambassador to India (2001-2003)

**Robert Blake**

Ambassador to Indonesia (2013-2016); Ambassador to Sri Lanka (2006-2009)

**John William Blaney**

Ambassador to Liberia (2002-2005)

**Hon. Jeffrey Bleich**

Ambassador to Australia (2009-2013)

**Peter W. Bodde**

Ambassador to Libya (2015-2017); Ambassador to Nepal (2012-2015); Ambassador to Malawi (2008-2010)

**Michele Thoren Bond**

Ambassador to Lesotho (2010-2012)

**Amy Laura Bondurant**

Ambassador to the OECD (1997-2001)

**Carol Moseley Braun**

Ambassador to New Zealand and Samoa (1998-2001)

**Aurelia E. Brazeal**

Ambassador to Ethiopia (2002-2005); Ambassador to Kenya (1993-1996); Ambassador to The Federated States of Micronesia (1990-1993)

**James (Wally) Brewster**

Ambassador to the Dominican Republic (2013-2017)

**Pamela E. Bridgewater**

Ambassador to Jamaica (2010-2013); Ambassador to Ghana (2005-2008); Ambassador to Benin (2000-2002)

**Kenneth C. Brill**

Ambassador to Cyprus (1996-1999); Ambassador to the IAEA and the UN Office in Vienna (2001-2004)

**Nancy Goodman Brinker**

Chief of Protocol of the United States (2007-2009); Ambassador to Hungary (2001-2003)

**Timothy Broas**

Ambassador to the Netherlands (2014-2016)

**Kenneth L. Brown**

Ambassador to Ghana (1992-1995); Ambassador to Cote d'Ivoire (1989-1992); Ambassador to the Republic of the Congo (1981-1984)

**Sue K. Brown**

Ambassador to Montenegro (2011-2015)

**Steven A. Browning**

Ambassador to Uganda (2006-2009); Ambassador to Malawi (2003-2004)

**George Bruno**

Ambassador to Belize (1994-1997)

**A. Peter Burleigh**

Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations (1997-1999); Ambassador to Sri Lanka and the Maldives (1995-1997); Ambassador for Counter-Terrorism (1991-1992)

**Nicholas Burns**

Ambassador to NATO (2001-2005); Ambassador to Greece (1997-2001)

**Dwight L. Bush**

Ambassador to Morocco (2014-2016)

**Luis C. deBaca**

Ambassador-at-Large, Trafficking in Persons (2009-2014)

**John Campbell**

Ambassador to Nigeria (2004-2007)

**Piper Anne Wind Campbell**

Ambassador to Mongolia (2012-2015)

**David L. Carden**

Ambassador to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (2011-2013)

**Timothy Carney**

Ambassador to Haiti (1998-1999); Ambassador to Sudan (1995-1997)

**Johnnie Carson**

Ambassador to Kenya (1999-2003); Ambassador to Zimbabwe (1995-1997); Ambassador to Uganda (1991-1994)

**Phillip Carter III**

Ambassador to Guinea (2007-2008); Ambassador to Cote d'Ivoire (2010-2013)

**Judith B. Cefkin**

Ambassador to Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Tonga, and Tuvalu (2015-2018)

**Robert F. Cekuta**

Ambassador to Azerbaijan (2015-2018)

**Wendy J. Chamberlin**

Ambassador to Pakistan (2001-2002); Ambassador to Laos (1995 -1998)

**Peter R. Chaveas**

Ambassador to Sierra Leone (2001-2004); Ambassador to Malawi (1994-1997)

**Mark Childress**

Ambassador to Tanzania (2014-2016)

**Herman J. Cohen**

Ambassador to Senegal (1977-1980)

**James Collins**

Ambassador to Russia (1998-2001)



**Elinor G. Constable**

Ambassador to Kenya (1986-1989)

**Frances D. Cook**

Ambassador to Oman (1996-1999); Ambassador to Cameroon (1989-1993); Ambassador to Burundi (1980-1983)

**Frederick Bishop Cook**

Ambassador to the Central African Republic (2007-2010)

**J. Gary Cooper**

Ambassador to Jamaica (1994-1997)

**Cindy Courville**

Ambassador to the African Union (2006-2008)

**Ertharin Cousin**

Ambassador to the United Nations Agencies for Food and Agriculture and Chief of Mission to the UN Agencies in Rome (2009-2012)

**Ryan Clark Crocker**

Ambassador to Afghanistan (2011-2012); Ambassador to Iraq (2007-2009); Ambassador to Pakistan (2004-2007); Ambassador to Syria (1998-2001); Ambassador to Kuwait (1994-1997); Ambassador to Lebanon (1990-1993)

**James B. Cunningham**

Ambassador to Afghanistan (2012-2014); Ambassador to Israel (2008-2011); Ambassador to the UN (1999-2004)

**Walter L. Cutler**

Ambassador to Saudi Arabia (1988-1989); Ambassador to Saudi Arabia (1984-1987); Ambassador to Tunisia (1982-1984); Ambassador to Zaire (1975-1979)

**Ivo Daalder**

Ambassador to NATO (2009-2013)

**Glyn T. Davies**

Ambassador to Thailand (2015-2018); Ambassador to UN Organizations in Vienna (2009-2011)

**Ruth A. Davis**

Ambassador to Benin (1992-1995)

**Jeffrey DeLaurentis**

Ambassador to the UN for Special Political Affairs (2011-2014)

**Greg Delawie**

Ambassador to Kosovo (2015-2018)

**Christopher Dell**

Ambassador to Kosovo (2009-2012); Ambassador to Zimbabwe (2004-2007); Ambassador to Angola (2001-2004)

**Miguel H. Diaz**

Ambassador to the Holy See (2009-2012)

**Kathleen Ann Doherty**

Ambassador to the Republic of Cyprus (2015-2019)

**Eileen Donahoe**

Ambassador to the UN Human Rights Council (2010-2013)

**Shaun Donnelly**

Ambassador to Sri Lanka and Maldives (1997-2000)

**Joseph R. Donovan Jr.**

Ambassador to Indonesia (2016-2020)

**Thomas Dougherty**

Ambassador to Burkina Faso (2010-2013)

**David B. Dunn**

Ambassador to Togo (2006-2008); Ambassador to Zambia (1999-2002)

**William C. Eacho III**

Ambassador to Austria (2009-2013)

**William A. Eaton**

Ambassador to Panama (2005-2008)

**Eric S. Edelman**

Ambassador to Turkey (2003-2005); Ambassador to Finland (1998-2001)

**Norman Eisen**

Ambassador to Czech Republic (2011-2014)

**Harriet L. Elam-Thomas**

Ambassador to Senegal (2000-2003)

**Susan M. Elliott**

Ambassador to Tajikistan (2012-2015)

**Edward E. Elson**

Ambassador to Denmark (1993-1998)

**Nancy Ely-Raphel**

Ambassador to Slovenia (1998-2001)

**John B. Emerson**

Ambassador to Germany (2013-2017)

**Gregory W. Engle**

Ambassador to Togo (2003-2005)

**John L. Estrada**

Ambassador to Trinidad and Tobago (2016-2017)

**Kenneth J. Fairfax**

Ambassador to Kazakhstan (2011-2013)

**John Feeley**

Ambassador to Panama (2016-18)

**Gerald M. Feierstein**

Ambassador to Yemen (2010-2013)

**Lee Feinstein**

Ambassador to Poland (2009-2012)

**Jeffrey Feltman**

Ambassador to Lebanon (2004-2008)

**David C. Fields**

Ambassador to the Marshall Islands (1992-1995); Ambassador to Office of Foreign Missions (1990-1992); Ambassador to Central African Republic (1986-1989)

**Kathleen M. Fitzpatrick**

Ambassador to Timor-Leste (2017-2020)

**Robert Ford**

Ambassador to Syria (2011-2014); Ambassador to Algeria (2008-2010)

**Jendayi Frazer**

Ambassador to South Africa (2004-2005)

**Laurie S. Fulton**

Ambassador to Denmark (2009-2013)

**Julie Furuta-Toy**

Ambassador to Equatorial Guinea (2016-2019)

**Edward Gabriel**

Ambassador to Morocco (1997-2001)

**Peter W. Galbraith**

Ambassador to Croatia (1993-1998)

**Anthony Gardner**

Ambassador to the European Union (2014-2017)

**Patrick Gaspard**

Ambassador to South Africa (2013-2016)

**Michelle Gavin**

Ambassador to Botswana (2011-2014)

**Robert S. Gelbard**

Ambassador to Indonesia (1999-2001); Ambassador to Bolivia (1988-1991)

**Gordon D. Giffin**

Ambassador to Canada (1997-2001)

**Mark D. Gilbert**

Ambassador to New Zealand and Samoa (2014-2017)

**Donald H. Gips**

Ambassador to South Africa (2009-2013)

**Edward W. Gnehm Jr.**

Ambassador to Jordan (2001-2004); Ambassador to Australia (2000-2001); Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN-NY (1994-1997); Ambassador to Kuwait (1991-1994)

**Christopher E. Goldthwait**

Ambassador to Chad (1999-2004)

**Gary A. Grappo**

Ambassador to Oman (2006-2009)

**Gordon Gray**

Ambassador to Tunisia (2009-2012)

**David A. Gross**

Ambassador and US Coordinator for International Communications and Information Policy (2002-2009)

**Lino Gutiérrez**

Ambassador to Argentina (2003-2006); Ambassador to Nicaragua (1996-1999)

**Howard Gutman**

Ambassador to Belgium (2009-2013)

**Nina Hachigian**

Ambassador to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (2014-2017)

**Pamela K. Hamamoto**

Ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva (2014-2017)

**S. Fitzgerald Haney**

Ambassador to Costa Rica (2015-2017)

**Anthony Stephen Harrington**

Ambassador to Brazil (1999-2001)

**Patricia M. Hawkins**

Ambassador to the Togo (2008-2011)

**Bruce Alan Heyman**

Ambassador to Canada (2014-2017)

**Douglas T. Hickey**

Ambassador to Expo Milano (2014-2016)

**Heather Hodges**

Ambassador to Ecuador (2008-2011); Ambassador to Moldova (2003-2006)

**Karl Hofmann**

Ambassador to Togo (2000-2002)

**Laura S. H. Holgate**

Ambassador to International Atomic Energy Agency (2016-2017)

**Genta Hawkins Holmes**

Ambassador to Australia (1997-2000); Ambassador to Namibia (1990-1992)

**Michael Stephen Hoza**

Ambassador to Cameroon (2014-2017)

**Vicki J. Huddleston**

Ambassador to Mali (2002-2005); Ambassador to Madagascar (1995-1997)

**David Huebner**

Ambassador to New Zealand (2009-2014)

**Marie T. Huhtala**

Ambassador to Malaysia (2001-2004)

**Harriet W. Isom**

Ambassador to Cameroon (1993-1996); Ambassador to Benin (1990-1993)

**Robert Porter Jackson**

Ambassador to Ghana (2016-2018); Ambassador to Cameroon (2010-2013)

**Jeanine Jackson**

Ambassador to Malawi (2011-2014); Ambassador to Burkina Faso (2006-2009)

**Susan Jacobs**

Ambassador to Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu (2000-2003)

**Janice Jacobs**

Ambassador to Senegal and Guinea-Bissau (2006-2007)

**Tracey Jacobson**

Ambassador to Kosovo (2012-2015); Ambassador to Tajikistan (2006-2009); Ambassador to Turkmenistan (2003-2006)

**Bonnie Jenkins**

Ambassador, Coordinator for Threat Reduction Programs (2009-2017)

**Howard F. Jeter**

Ambassador to Nigeria (2000-2003); Ambassador to Botswana (1993-1996)

**Dennis Jett**

Ambassador to Peru (1996-1999); Ambassador to Mozambique (1993-1996)

**David T. Johnson**

Ambassador to the OSCE (1998-2001)

**Beth Jones**

Ambassador to Kazakhstan (1995-1998)

**Deborah Jones**

Ambassador to Libya (2013-2015); Ambassador to Kuwait (2008-2011)

**James R. Jones**

Ambassador to Mexico (1993-1997)

**Mosina H. Jordan**

Ambassador to the Central African Republic (1995-1998)

**Arma Jane Karaer**

Ambassador to Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu (1997-2000)

**Allan J. Katz**

Ambassador to Portugal (2010-2013)

**Richard D. Kauzlarich**

Ambassador to Bosnia and Herzegovina (1997-1999); Ambassador to Azerbaijan (1994-1997)

**Kenton W. Keith**

Ambassador to Qatar (1988-1992)

**Craig Kelly**

Ambassador to Chile (2004-2007)

**Laura E. Kennedy**

Ambassador to the Conference on Disarmament (2010-2013); Ambassador to Turkmenistan (2001-2003)

**Patrick F. Kennedy**

Ambassador for Management and Reform, USUN (2001-2005)

**Caroline Kennedy**

Ambassador to Japan (2013-2017)

**Kristie A. Kenney**

Ambassador to Thailand (2010-2014); Ambassador to Philippines (2006-2010); Ambassador to Ecuador (2002-2005)

**David Killion**

Ambassador to UNESCO (2009-2014)

**Hans Klemm**

Ambassador to Romania (2015-2019); Ambassador to Timor-Leste (2007-2010)

**Karen Kornbluh**

Ambassador to the OECD (2009-2012)

**John C. Kornblum**

Ambassador to Germany (1997-2001); Ambassador to OSCE (1991-1994)

**Eleni Kounalakis**

Ambassador to Hungary (2010-2013)

**Thomas Krajewski**

Ambassador to Bahrain (2011-2014); Ambassador to Yemen (2004-2007)

**Lisa Kubiske**

Ambassador to Honduras (2011-2014)

**Daniel Kurtzer**

Ambassador to Israel (2001-2005); Ambassador to Egypt (1997-2001)

**Joyce E. Leader**

Ambassador to Guinea (1999-2000)

**Alfonso E. Lenhardt**

Ambassador to Tanzania (2009-2013)

**Jeffrey D. Levine**

Ambassador to Estonia (2012-2015)

**Suzan LeVine**

Ambassador to Switzerland and Liechtenstein (2014-2017)

**Delano E. Lewis Sr.**

Ambassador to South Africa (1999-2001)

**Dawn Liberi**

Ambassador to Burundi (2012-2016)

**Hugo Llorens**

Ambassador to Honduras (2008-2011)



**Carmen Lomellin**

Ambassador to the OAS (2009-2014)

**Lewis Lukens**

Ambassador to Senegal and Guinea-Bissau (2011-2014)

**Douglas Lute**

Ambassador to NATO (2013-2017)

**John F. Maisto**

Ambassador to the Organization of American States (2003-2006); Ambassador to Venezuela (1997-2000); Ambassador to Nicaragua (1993-1996)

**Deborah R. Malac**

Ambassador to Uganda (2016-2020); Ambassador to Liberia (2012-2015)

**Eileen A. Malloy**

Ambassador to Kyrgyzstan (1994-1997)

**Robert Mandell**

Ambassador to Luxembourg (2011-2015)

**Steven R. Mann**

Ambassador to Turkmenistan (1998-2001)

**Edward Marks**

Ambassador to Guinea-Bissau (1986-1989); Ambassador to Cape Verde (1986-1989)

**R. Niels Marquardt**

Ambassador to Madagascar and the Comoros (2007-2010); Ambassador to Cameroon (2004-2007); Ambassador to Equatorial Guinea (2004-2006)

**Dennise Mathieu**

Ambassador to Namibia (2007-2010); Ambassador to Niger (2002-2005)

**Marshall Fletcher McCallie**

Ambassador to Namibia (1993-1996)

**Deborah McCarthy**

Ambassador to Lithuania (2013-2016)

**Terence P. McCulley**

Ambassador to Côte d'Ivoire (2013-2016); Ambassador to Nigeria (2010-2013); Ambassador to Mali (2005-2008)

**Stephen G. McFarland**

Ambassador to Guatemala (2008-2011)

**Michael McFaul**

Ambassador to Russia (2012-2014)

**C. Steven McGann**

Ambassador to Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Tonga, and Tuvalu (2008-2011)

**James D. McGee**

Ambassador to Zimbabwe (2007-2009); Ambassador to Comoros Islands (2006-2007); Ambassador to Madagascar (2004-2007); Ambassador to Swaziland (2002-2004);

**David McKean**

Ambassador to Luxembourg (2016-2017)

**P. Michael McKinley**

Ambassador to Brazil (2017-2018); Ambassador to Afghanistan (2014-2016); Ambassador to Colombia (2010-2013); Ambassador to Peru (2007-2010)

**Elizabeth Davenport McKune**

Ambassador to Qatar (1998-2001)

**James D. Melville Jr.**

Ambassador to Estonia (2015-2018)

**William Milam**

Ambassador to Pakistan (1998-2001); Ambassador to Bangladesh (1990-1993)

**Thomas J. Miller**

Ambassador to Greece (2001-2005); Ambassador to Bosnia (1999-2001); Cyprus Negotiator (1997-1999)

**David Charles Miller, Jr.**

Ambassador to Zimbabwe (1984-1986); Ambassador to Tanzania (1981-1984)

**Derek Mitchell**

Ambassador to Burma (2012-2016)

**Patricia Newton Moller**

Ambassador to Guinea (2009-2012); Ambassador to Burundi (2006-2009)

**Roderick W. Moore**

Ambassador to Montenegro (2007-2010)

**George E. Moose**

Ambassador to the UN Office in Geneva (1998-2001); Ambassador to Senegal (1988-1991);  
Ambassador to Benin (1983-1986)

**Luis G. Moreno**

Ambassador to Jamaica (2014-2017)

**Carlos Moreno**

Ambassador to Belize (2014-2017)

**Richard Morningstar**

Ambassador to Azerbaijan (2012-2014); Ambassador to the EU (1999-2001)

**Stephen D. Mull**

Ambassador to Poland (2012-2015); Ambassador to Lithuania (2003-2006)

**Cameron Munter**

Ambassador to Pakistan (2010-2012); Ambassador to Serbia (2007-2009)

**Allan Mustard**

Ambassador to Turkmenistan (2015-2019)

**Larry C. Napper**

Ambassador to Kazakhstan (2001-2004); Ambassador to Latvia (1995-1998)

**David D. Nelson**

Ambassador to Uruguay (2010-2011)

**Wanda L. Nesbitt**

Ambassador to Namibia (2010-2013); Ambassador to Cote d'Ivoire (2007-2010); Ambassador to  
Madagascar (2002-2004)

**Ronald E. Neumann**

Ambassador to Afghanistan (2005-2007); Ambassador to Bahrain (2001-2004); Ambassador to  
Algeria (1994-1997)

**Thomas M. T. Niles**

Ambassador to Greece (1993-1997); Ambassador to the European Union (then the European Community) (1989-1991); Ambassador to Canada (1985-1989)

**Crystal Nix-Hines**

Ambassador to UNESCO (2014-2017)

**Victoria Nuland**

Ambassador to NATO (2005-2008)

**Richard Olson**

Ambassador to Pakistan (2012-2015); Ambassador to the UAE (2008-2011)

**Susan D. Page**

Ambassador to South Sudan (2011-2014)

**Larry L. Palmer**

Ambassador to Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean (2012-2016); Ambassador to Honduras (2002-2005)

**Joseph R. Paolino Jr.**

Ambassador to Malta (1994-1996)

**Maurice S. Parker**

Ambassador to Swaziland (2007-2009)

**Anne W. Patterson**

Ambassador to Egypt (2011-2013); Ambassador to Pakistan (2007-2010); Ambassador to Colombia (2000-2003); Ambassador to El Salvador (1997-2000)

**David D. Pearce**

Ambassador to Greece (2013-2016); Ambassador to Algeria (2008-2011)

**June Carter Perry**

Ambassador to Sierra Leone (2007-2009); Ambassador to Lesotho (2004-2007)

**Robert C. Perry**

Ambassador to the Central African Republic (1999-2001)

**Mary Ann Peters**

Ambassador to Bangladesh (2000-2003)

**Nancy Bikoff Pettit**

Ambassador to Latvia (2015-2019)

**John R. Phillips**

Ambassador to Italy (2013-2017)

**Thomas R. Pickering**

Ambassador to Russia (1993-1996); Ambassador to India (1992-1993); Ambassador to the United Nations (1989-1992); Ambassador to Israel (1985-1988); Ambassador to El Salvador (1983-1985); Ambassador to Nigeria (1981-1983); Ambassador to Jordan (1974-1978)

**Steven Pifer**

Ambassador to Ukraine (1998-2000)

**Joan M. Plaisted**

Ambassador to the Marshall Islands and Kiribati (1995-2000)

**Michael C. Polt**

Ambassador to Estonia (2009-2012); Ambassador to Serbia and Montenegro (2004-2007)

**Azita Raji**

Ambassador to Sweden (2016-2017)

**Charles A. Ray**

Ambassador to Zimbabwe (2009-2012); Ambassador to Cambodia (2002-2005)

**Helen Patricia Reed-Rowe**

Ambassador to Palau (2010-2013)

**Charles H. Rivkin**

Ambassador to France and Monaco (2009-2013)

**Thomas Robertson**

Ambassador to Slovenia (2004-2007)

**John V. Roos**

Ambassador to Japan (2009-2013)

**James C. Rosapepe**

Ambassador to Romania (1998-2001)

**Leslie Rowe**

Ambassador to Mozambique (2009-2012); Ambassador to Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu (2006-2009)

**Robin Renee Sanders**

Ambassador to Nigeria and the ECOWAS Regional Organization (2007-2010); Ambassador to the Republic of the Congo (2002-2005)

**Janet A. Sanderson**

Ambassador to Haiti (2006-2009); Ambassador to Algeria (2000-2003)

**Teresita C. Schaffer**

Ambassador to Sri Lanka (1992-1995)

**Andrew H. Schapiro**

Ambassador to the Czech Republic (2014-2017)

**J. Thomas Schieffer**

Ambassador to Japan (2005-2009); Ambassador to Australia (2001-2005)

**Rockwell Schnabel**

Ambassador to the EU (2001-2005); Ambassador to Finland (1986-1989)

**Brenda Brown Schoonover**

Ambassador to Togo (1998-2000)

**James Schumaker**

OSCE Ambassador to Ukraine (2005-2008)

**Kyle Scott**

Ambassador to Serbia (2016-2019)

**Theodore Sedgwick**

Ambassador to Slovak Republic (2010-2015)

**Thomas A. Shannon Jr.**

Ambassador to Brazil (2010-2013)

**Daniel B. Shapiro**

Ambassador to Israel (2011-2017)

**Mattie R. Sharpless**

Ambassador to the Central African Republic (2001-2003)

**David B. Shear**

Ambassador to Vietnam (2011-2014)

**Derek Norcross Shearer**

Ambassador to Finland (1994-1997)

**Sally Shelton-Colby**

Ambassador to the Eastern Caribbean (1979-1981)

**Robert A. Sherman**

Ambassador to Portugal (2014-2017)

**David Shinn**

Ambassador to Ethiopia (1996-1999); Ambassador to Burkina Faso (1987-1990)

**Thomas L. Siebert**

Ambassador to Sweden (1994-1998)

**Douglas A. Silliman**

Ambassador to Iraq (2016-2019); Ambassador to Kuwait (2014-2016)

**Lawrence Robert Silverman**

Ambassador to Kuwait (2016-2019)

**Emil Skodon**

Ambassador to Brunei Darussalam (2005-2008)

**Dana Shell Smith**

Ambassador to Qatar (2014-2017)

**Nancy Soderberg**

Alternate Representative to the United Nations (1997-2001)

**Alan Solomont**

Ambassador to Spain and Andorra (2009-2013)

**Pamela L. Spratlen**

Ambassador to Uzbekistan (2015-2018); Ambassador to Kyrgyzstan (2011-2014)

**Sylvia Gaye Stanfield**

Ambassador to Brunei Darussalam (1999-2002)

**George M. Staples**

Ambassador to Cameroon (2001-2004); Ambassador to Equatorial Guinea (2001-2004);  
Ambassador to Rwanda (1998-2001)

**Cynthia Stroum**

Ambassador to Luxembourg (2009-2011)

**Louis B. Susman**

Ambassador to the United Kingdom (2009-2013)

**William Lacy Swing**

Ambassador to Democratic Republic of Congo (1998-2001); Ambassador to Haiti (1993-1998);  
Ambassador to Nigeria (1992-1993); Ambassador to South Africa (1989-1992); Ambassador to  
Liberia (1981-1985); Ambassador to Republic of Congo (1979-1981)

**Francis X. Taylor**

Ambassador at Large for Counterterrorism (2001-2002)

**Teddy B. Taylor**

Ambassador to Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu (2009-2012)

**Richard W. Teare**

Ambassador to Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu (1993-1996)

**Frankie Reed**

Ambassador to Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Tonga, and Tuvalu (2011-2015)

**Patrick N. Theros**

Ambassador to Qatar (1995-1998)

**Harry K. Thomas Jr.**

Ambassador to Zimbabwe (2018-2020); Ambassador to the Philippines (2010-2013);  
Ambassador to Bangladesh (2003-2005)

**David Thorne**

Ambassador to Italy and the Republic of San Marino (2009-2013)

**Kurt W. Tong**

Ambassador to APEC (2009-2011)

**Robert H. Tuttle**

Ambassador to the United Kingdom (2005-2009)



**Charles Twining**

Ambassador to Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea (1996-1998); Ambassador to Cambodia (1991-1995)

**Melanne Verveer**

Ambassador for Global Women's Issues (2009-2013)

**Edward S. Walker**

Ambassador to Israel (1997-2000); Ambassador to Egypt (1994-1997); Ambassador to USUN (1993-1994); Ambassador to UAE (1989-1992)

**Marc Wall**

Ambassador to Chad (2004-2007)

**Jake Walles**

Ambassador to Tunisia (2012-2015)

**James Donald Walsh**

Ambassador to Argentina (2000-2003)

**Mary Burce Warlick**

Ambassador to Serbia (2010-2012)

**Alexander F. Watson**

Ambassador to Peru (1986-1989)

**Linda E. Watt**

Ambassador to Panama (2002-2005)

**Earl Anthony Wayne**

Ambassador to Mexico (2011-2015); Ambassador to Argentina (2006-2009)

**Barry L. Wells**

Ambassador to The Gambia (2007-2010)

**Alice G. Wells**

Ambassador to Jordan (2014-2017)

**Alexa Wesner**

Ambassador to Austria (2013-2017)

**Joseph Westphal**

Ambassador to Saudi Arabia (2014-2017)

**David Bruce Wharton**

Ambassador to Zimbabwe (2012-2015)

**Barry B. White**

Ambassador to Norway (2009-2013)

**Pamela A. White**

Ambassador to Haiti (2012-2015); Ambassador to The Gambia (2010-2012)

**Sharon Wilkinson**

Ambassador to the Republic of Mozambique (2000-2003); Ambassador to Burkina Faso (1996-1999)

**Swing William**

Ambassador to Democratic Republic of Congo (1998-2001); Ambassador to Haiti (1993-1998); Ambassador to Nigeria (1992-1993); Ambassador to South Africa (1989-1992); Ambassador to Liberia (1981-1985); Ambassador to Republic of Congo (1979-1981)

**Bisa Williams**

Ambassador to Niger (2010-2013)

**Clint Williamson**

Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes Issues (2006-2009)

**Duane E. Woerth**

Ambassador to International Civil Aviation Organization (2010-2013)

**John Wolf**

Ambassador to APEC (1997-1998); Ambassador to Malaysia (1992-1995)

**Kenneth Yalowitz**

Ambassador to Georgia (1998-2001); Ambassador to Belarus (1994-1997)

**Mary Carlin Yates**

Ambassador to Ghana (2002-2005); Ambassador to Burundi (1999-2002)

**Larry Greenwood**

Ambassador to APEC (2001-2003)

**Daniel W. Yohannes**

Ambassador to OECD (2014-2017)

**Johnny Young**

Ambassador to Slovenia (2001-2004); Ambassador to Bahrain (1997-2001); Ambassador to Togo (1994-1997); Ambassador to Sierra Leone (1989-1992)

**Marie Yovanovitch**

Ambassador to Ukraine (2016-2019); Ambassador to Armenia (2008-2011); Ambassador to the Kyrgyz Republic (2005-2008)

**Joseph Yun**

Ambassador to Malaysia (2013-2016)

**James Peter Zumwalt**

Ambassador to Senegal and to Guinea-Bissau (2015-2017)



Jay Timmons  
President and CEO

January 22, 2021

The U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the National Association of Manufacturers, the largest manufacturing association in the United States and voice for the more than 12 million women and men who make things in America, I write to strongly support the nomination of Antony Blinken to be Secretary of State.

Mr. Blinken brings substantial experience to the critical role of America's top diplomat, having served in senior roles during the Obama and Clinton administrations and as Democratic Staff Director for the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. Throughout Mr. Blinken's career, he has demonstrated a strong commitment to America's highest ideals, which will make him a welcome presence on the world stage.

We appreciate Mr. Blinken's statement at his hearing before the Committee on Foreign Relations on the need to "revitalize our core alliances, force multipliers of our influence around the world." For manufacturers, U.S. global leadership is critical, and we must leverage our voice at international organizations, such as the United Nations, World Trade Organization and World Health Organization, to advance our interests and promote practical reforms to ensure these organizations can deliver on their core mission and promise.

In that spirit, we also welcome Mr. Blinken's comment that the United States must be "working with, not denigrating, our allies" to ensure that the United States is "approaching China from a position of strength." Manufacturers need a comprehensive, strategic approach to China, working domestically, bilaterally and multilaterally to strengthen manufacturing competitiveness, protect national security and human rights through targeted policy interventions and encourage China to halt market-distorting behaviors that prevent manufacturers from competing freely and fairly in the United States, China and around the world.

As manufacturers in the United States continue to lead the nation's economic recovery and renewal, we look forward to working with Mr. Blinken to ensure the continued expansion of American manufacturing production and jobs through more U.S. global engagement.

Sincerely,

Jay Timmons  
President and CEO  
National Association of Manufacturers

January 16, 2021

Senator Jim Risch  
483 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Risch,

The signatories of this letter are Republicans who did not endorse Joe Biden's candidacy for President. We do, however, support his nomination of Antony Blinken for Secretary of State, and we hope the Senate will approve his nomination.

We believe that, as a former Deputy Secretary of State, Mr. Blinken has the foreign policy expertise and management experience necessary to effectively conduct U.S. foreign policy and direct the operations of the Department of State. As a former Democratic Staff Director of the Committee on Foreign Relations, we believe he has the necessary sensitivity to and respect for the prerogatives of Congress in foreign policy matters. And, most importantly, based on our observations of him over the years, we believe he has the sound judgment necessary to be entrusted with the responsibilities of the office to which he has been nominated.

As Republicans, we certainly understand the temptation of some in your conference to accord President Biden's nominees for high office the same treatment that was routinely accorded to President Trump's nominees. The "resistance" culture is a corrosive one, however, and we urge the Senate not to succumb to it, particularly when the President puts forward a highly-qualified nominee like Mr. Blinken, who we know is committed to working across the aisle to advance American values and interests.

We believe Mr. Blinken is a fine choice for Secretary of State, and we urge the Senate to confirm him.

Sincerely,

**Michael Allen**

*Former Senior Director for Legislative Affairs, and for Counterproliferation Strategies, National Security Council Staff; Former Staff Director, House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence*

**Tom Callahan**

*Former Senior Professional Staff Member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*

**Ambassador Paula Dobriansky**

*Former Under Secretary of State for Global Affairs*

**Jim Dyer**

*Former Staff Director, House Committee on Appropriations*

**Peter Feaver**

*Former Special Advisor for Strategic Planning and Institutional Reform, National Security Council Staff*

**Peter Flory**

*Former Assistant Secretary of Defense; Former NATO Assistant Secretary General*

**Steve Hadley**

*Former National Security Adviser to President George W. Bush*

**Stuart Holliday**

*Former Assistant Secretary of State*

**Will Imboden**

*Former Senior Director for Strategic Planning, National Security Council Staff*

**Bruce Jackson**

**Mark Kirk**  
*Former U.S. Senator*

**Cliff May**  
*Former Commissioner, U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom; Former Communications Director, Republican National Committee*

**Caleb McCarr**  
*Former Senior Professional Staff Member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*

**Lester Munson**  
*Former Staff Director, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*

**Roger Noriega**  
*Former Assistant Secretary of State; Former Senior Professional Staff Member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*

**Margaret Peterlin**  
*Former Chief of Staff to Department of State; Former National Security Adviser to House Speaker Dennis Hastert*

**Danielle Pletka**  
*Former Senior Professional Staff Member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*

**Stephen Rademaker**  
*Former Assistant Secretary of State; Former National Security Adviser to Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist*

**Walker Roberts**  
*Former Deputy Staff Director, House Committee on Foreign Affairs*

**Dan Runde**  
*Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Assistance*

**Randy Scheunemann**  
*Former National Security Adviser to Senate Majority Leaders Bob Dole and Trent Lott*

**Gary Schmitt**  
*Former Executive Director, President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board*

**Henry Sokolski**  
*Former Deputy for Nonproliferation Policy, Department of Defense*

**Dan Vajdich**  
*Former Professional Staff Member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*

**Kurt Volker**  
*Former U.S. Ambassador to NATO*

**Ken Weinstein**  
*Former Ambassador-Designate to Japan*

**Todd Womack**  
*Former Chief of Staff and Staff Director, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

MYRON A. BRILLIANT  
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT AND  
HEAD OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

1615 H STREET, NW  
WASHINGTON, DC 20062-2000  
202/463-5489

January 19, 2021

The Honorable James E. Risch  
Chairman  
Committee on Foreign Relations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bob Menendez  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Foreign Relations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Risch and Ranking Member Menendez:

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce strongly supports the nomination of Antony Blinken to be Secretary of State. He is an exceptionally well-qualified nominee, and, from the perspective of the U.S. business community, he is admirably prepared to tackle the national security and international economic policy challenges facing the U.S.

Blinken's prior service as Deputy Secretary of State, Deputy National Security Advisor, and Staff Director for the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations represents an invaluable body of experience upon which he can draw as America's top diplomat. During his earlier service, he took into account the perspectives of a variety of stakeholders, including the U.S. business community, and we are confident he would do so if confirmed as Secretary of State.

The work of the U.S. Department of State is critical to national security, the advancement of American values around the globe, and to supporting U.S. economic and trade interests. The diplomats who direct the Department's work fulfill an indispensable role helping partners and allies abroad to build stronger political, legal, and economic policy systems. This in turn helps these nations to become more reliable trading partners, promoting their prosperity and our own.

The economic statecraft directed by the Secretary of State is vital to the U.S. business community, and Blinken's long record of accomplishment demonstrates that he understands this. The Chamber urges the Committee on Foreign Relations to consider his nomination favorably and expeditiously.

Sincerely,



Myron Brilliant

cc: Members of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations



December 22, 2020

The Honorable James Risch, Chairman  
The Honorable Bob Menendez, Ranking Member  
United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
423 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510-6225

Dear Chairman Risch and Ranking Member Menendez:

I am writing in support of the nomination of The Honorable Antony Blinken to serve as the 71<sup>st</sup> United States Secretary of State. Mr. Blinken's career is marked by honors of high distinction, serving our nation in senior foreign policy and national security posts, both in the executive and legislative branch. During his tenure, he showed the principled sound judgment, leadership, toughness, strategic vision, and decision-making ability necessary to promote the national interest as Secretary of the U.S. State Department.

BCIU has been a key private sector partner of the State Department since our founding by President Eisenhower. If confirmed, Mr. Blinken will go far in strengthening the Department's key institutional directive to serve as a forceful advocate for the global interests of American companies and workers. This renewed effort will be essential in helping to rebuild the economy here at home by supporting the international business growth of U.S. companies, manufacturers, and exporters. In addition, the thousands of dedicated Foreign Service Officers who serve in posts across the globe and in Washington will have in place a leader with a deep understanding of world affairs, an appreciation for their commitment to national service, and a respect for their independence in the work that they do to advance American interests.

BCIU is a nonprofit organization of experts, educators, and advisors working to expand international trade and commerce, and cultivate sustainable partnerships between businesses and governments around the world. For sixty-five years, we have believed in progress and shaping the future by helping to address some of the world's most complex challenges. Through bespoke, transformative services, BCIU provides ways for its partners to deepen economic cooperation and enhance international understanding.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my views to the Committee, and thank you for your work and contribution to the productive development of foreign policy in the United States. I urge your support, and that of the full Senate, in favor of Mr. Blinken's nomination.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Tichansky". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

Peter Tichansky  
President & CEO



As former senior national security officials from both Democratic and Republican administrations, we urge the Senate to swiftly confirm the national security Cabinet nominees put forth by President-elect Biden. Alejandro Mayorkas, Antony Blinken, Avril Haines, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, and Lloyd Austin represent the best of America: our patriotism, our diversity, our commitment to excellence, and our values. Our nation needs these highly qualified and experienced officials in office and ready to serve on day one of the Biden-Harris administration.

America's allies and adversaries alike are closely watching this period of transition between administrations. Given the many challenges facing the country, the smooth transfer of power in departments and agencies that are essential for national security is critical. As Republicans and Democrats, we should come together and empower these qualified leaders to assume their critical new responsibilities.

Many of us have been privileged to work with these nominees in the past, and we are proud to affirm that President-elect Biden has chosen an outstanding team to help him execute his foreign policy strategy. A President must be able to trust that his Cabinet will provide wise counsel and candid, strategic guidance. With this slate of national security leaders, President-elect Biden has surrounded himself with seasoned experts who have demonstrated their commitment to defending America's ideals and interests. We urge the Senate to continue the long-standing bipartisan tradition of confirming the President-elect's national security team on day one.

Signed,

*Madeleine K. Albright*  
*Former Secretary of State (1997-2001)*  
*Former U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. (1993-1997)*

*Hillary Rodham Clinton*  
*Former Secretary of State (2009-2013)*

*William J. Perry*  
*Former Secretary of Defense (1994-1997)*

*William S. Cohen*  
*Former Secretary of Defense (1997-2001)*

*Leon E. Panetta*  
*Former Secretary of Defense (2011-2013)*  
*Former Director of the CIA (2009-2011)*

*Charles T. Hagel*  
*Former Secretary of Defense (2013-2015)*

*Ash Carter*  
*Former Secretary of Defense (2015-2017)*

*Tom J. Ridge*  
*Former Secretary of Homeland Security (2003-2005)*

*Michael Chertoff*  
*Former Secretary of Homeland Security (2005-2009)*

*Janet Napolitano*  
*Former Secretary of Homeland Security (2009-2013)*

*Jeh C. Johnson*  
*Former Secretary of Homeland Security (2013-2017)*

*James R. Clapper*  
*Former Director of National Intelligence (2010-2017)*

*Thomas R. Pickering*  
*Former U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. (1989-1992)*

*Governor Bill Richardson*  
*Former U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. (1997-1998)*  
*Former Secretary of Energy (1998-2001)*

*George J. Tenet*  
*Former Director of Central Intelligence (1996-2004)*

*John E. McLaughlin*  
*Former Director of the CIA (2004)*

*Michael Hayden*  
*Former Director of the CIA (2006-2009)*  
*Former Director of the NSA (1999-2005)*

*Michael Morell*  
*Former Director of the CIA (2011, 2012-2013)*

*John Brennan*  
*Former Director of the CIA (2013-2017)*



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**ADL Foundation**  
 Glen S. Levy, President

January 18, 2021

The Honorable James E. Risch  
 Chairperson  
 Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
 423 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
 Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Bob Menendez  
 Ranking Member  
 Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
 528 Hart Senate Office Building  
 Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairperson Risch and Ranking Member Menendez:

In advance of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee confirmation hearings, we write to express the ADL’s strong support for Antony Blinken to serve as Secretary of State. We believe that as a result of his deep expertise and experience, Mr. Blinken is an excellent choice to represent America to the world. He has a proven track record of professionalism, strong strategic and execution abilities, and he has served well and honorably in roles that prepared him for this one. We note also Mr. Blinken’s deep commitment to national security, democracy, the rule of law, and fair treatment to all.

Confirming a qualified Secretary of State is especially crucial as the world continues to grapple with the worst pandemic in generations, along with the associated economic disaster, scapegoating, and violent unrest. In the wake of the deadly insurrection at the U.S. Capitol earlier this month, the world is looking for reassurance that America remains committed to our alliances, principles, and a responsible international leadership role, for example to coordinate a multilateral effort to combat violent white supremacy and conspiracy theorists. The combination of strategic ability to meet an unprecedented moment in history along with a steady head and hand at the helm is essential.

Of course, the Senate has a crucial role to play in raising important policy questions of all nominees. We certainly urge you to do everything in your power to facilitate such serious conversations, while also ensuring a timely process – and course, we sincerely hope with a maximum of bipartisanship and a minimum of political posturing.

I had the personal privilege of working with Mr. Blinken in government and can confidently attest to his integrity, diligent service, and meticulous care. His deep foreign affairs experience on Capitol Hill, in the White House, and at the State Department have prepared him thoroughly for this job, and I know he can be counted on to defend American interests, to support our allies, and to support vulnerable communities around the world against antisemitism, hate, xenophobia, extremism, and terrorism of all kinds.

I particularly appreciate Mr. Blinken’s heartfelt articulation that “a secure Jewish homeland in Israel is the single best guarantee to ensure that never again will the Jewish

people be threatened with destruction.”<sup>1</sup> And that America “opposes any effort to delegitimize or unfairly single out Israel, whether it’s at the United Nations or through the BDS movement” and must “never walk away from Israel’s security.”<sup>2</sup>

Iran will pose one of Mr. Blinken’s greatest tests in this regard. He has repeatedly emphasized the importance not just that Iran “retur(n) to strict compliance” with the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action but, crucially, that it must also be bound by “longer and stronger” prohibitions. ADL too believes such longer and stronger prohibitions are urgent and imperative. Mr. Blinken also has committed to strengthening the international coalition to “effectively push back against Iran’s other destabilizing activities,” which unfortunately continue. These include support for terrorism and widespread and virulent antisemitic and anti-American propaganda which remain hateful, violent, and widespread. As such they constitute a preeminent danger to peace or even stability in the region, as well as an ongoing lethal threat to countless lives of Americans and civilians and our allies in the region.<sup>3</sup>

By his own telling, one of the principles that guides Mr. Blinken’s philosophy of public service is the lesson forged from his family’s terrible experience of the Holocaust. That experience infuses his vision that America has a moral obligation to make the world a better place, to stand up against tyranny and to protect the most vulnerable from abuse and atrocities. He knows that when dictators and extremists threaten another Holocaust, that they need to be taken deadly seriously. And he knows America must rally the free world against such threats.

At this time of such difficult challenges, we believe Mr. Blinken is an excellent nominee for Secretary of State. We have confidence he will serve our nation with distinction.

We urge the Committee to act promptly and favorably on this nomination.

Sincerely,



Jonathan A. Greenblatt  
CEO and National Director

<sup>1</sup> Jacob Magid, “Biden Aide on UAE F-35 Sale: Only Israel was Meant to Have those Jets in Region,” *Times of Israel*, November 1, 2020. (<https://www.timesofisrael.com/biden-aide-on-uae-f-35-sale-only-israel-was-meant-to-have-those-jets-in-region/>)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. and Ali Harb, “Biden Will Oppose ‘Singling Out Israel’ at UN, Campaign Tells Arab Activists,” *Middle East Eye*, July 10, 2020. (<https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/biden-will-oppose-singling-out-israel-un-campaign-tells-arab-activists>)

<sup>3</sup> For example, Antony Blinken, “Foreign Policy Choices for 2021 and Beyond,” Remarks at Aspen Security Forum, August 5, 2020. (<https://www.e-span.org/video/2474516-7/aspen-security-forum-deputy-secretary-state-antony-blinken>)



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**Remarks Made in the Senate by Senator John McCain  
Opposing the Confirmation of Antony J. Blinken  
to be Deputy Secretary of State<sup>1</sup>**

[SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY SENATOR JOHN BARRASSO]

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<sup>1</sup> CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, December 16, 2014, pp. S6892–S6694.





REMARKS DELIVERED ON THE SENATE FLOOR  
BY SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN (R-AZ)

DECEMBER 16, 2014

MR. MCCAIN. Madam President, I rise to discuss my opposition to the pending vote concerning Mr. Anthony “Tony” Blinken, who is not only unqualified, but, in fact, in my view, one of the worst selections of a very bad lot that this President has chosen.

I hope that many of my colleagues will understand that I do not come to the floor to oppose a nomination of the President of the United States often because I believe that elections have consequences. In this case, this individual has actually been dangerous to America and to the young men and women who are fighting and serving our country.

Mr. Blinken has been a foreign policy adviser to Vice President Biden since his days in the Senate, but as Robert Gates has noted, Mr. Biden has been “wrong on nearly every major foreign policy and national security issue over the past four decades.”

At the Special Operations Fund Annual Meeting on May 6, 2013, Mr. Blinken discussed a number of the administration’s achievements, including, one, ending the war in Iraq responsibly; two, setting a clear strategy and date for the withdrawal from Afghanistan; three, decimating Al Qaeda’s senior leadership; and four, repairing our alliances and restoring America’s standing in the world.

That is as Orwellian as any statement I have ever heard. Each and every issue—the conditions are a far cry from the so-called achievements that Mr. Blinken describes.

In his capacity as an assistant to the President and Deputy National Security Adviser, Mr. Blinken has been a functionary and an agent of a U.S. foreign policy that has made the world much less safe today.

Let’s review some major elements of that policy, and in particular, Mr. Blinken’s role in conceptualizing and furthering it.

U.S. foreign policy is in a shambles. It is, at best, astrategic, and at worst, antistrategic. It lacks any concept of how to obtain our foreign policy goals. This has led to countless foreign policy failures, including the continued slaughter of the Syrian people by President Bashar al-Assad; the Russian reset that culminated with President Putin’s invasion of Ukraine; the betrayal of our key allies, especially in Central Europe, not to mention Israel; failing to achieve a status-of-forces agreement that would help to maintain Iraqi security and stability; following similarly unwise strategies in Afghanistan—we will see the same movie in Afghanistan that we saw in Iraq if we have a date-driven withdrawal rather than a status-driven, conditions-driven situation; and our feckless position in negotiations with Iran on nuclear weapons that has failed to produce any progress towards an agreement.

I could go into many other failures, such as the vaunted Geneva Convention of 40 nations that was supposed to arrange for the transition of power from Bashar al-Assad and the object failure of the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks, and what will either be an imminent failure of an Iranian nuclear weapons agreement or an agreement that will be disastrous in the long run.

There are two common sayings by the administration officials, not me, that have defined the President’s approach to foreign policy: “Leading from behind,” and “Don’t do stupid [stuff].” These approaches have resulted in a failed foreign policy that has made America and Americans less safe.

Even President Obama’s most strident supporters have begun to question the President’s foreign policy decisions.

In an article entitled “Damage to Obama’s Foreign Policy Has Been Largely Self-Inflicted,” the Washington Post’s David Ignatius, a key supporter of the administration’s foreign policy goals, wrote, “At key turning points—in Egypt and Libya during

the Arab Spring, in Syria, in Ukraine, and, yes, in Benghazi—the administration was driven by messaging priorities rather than sound, interests-based policy.”

What has Mr. Blinken had to say about all of these issues, my friends? I will give you a few examples.

On Iraq, at the Center for American Progress, on March 16, 2012—I am not making this up—Mr. Blinken said:

*What’s beyond debate is that Iraq today is less violent, more democratic and more prosperous—and the United States more deeply engaged there—than at any time in recent history.*

Less violent, more democratic, and more prosperous.

At a White House briefing on March 16, 2012, Mr. Blinken said:

*President Obama and Vice President Biden came to office with this commitment: To end the Iraq war responsibly.*

*Both parts of that sentence are critical.*

*End the war.*

*Responsibly.*

*Under the leadership of President Obama and Vice President Biden, who the President asked to oversee our Iraq policy—and who has made 8 trips to Iraq since being elected—we have followed that path to the letter.*

He went on to say:

*At every significant step along the way, many predicted that the violence would return and Iraq would slide backward toward sectarian war.*

Get this. He said:

*Those predictions proved wrong.*

He went on to say:

*Over the past three years, violence has declined and remains at historic lows—even after we completed the drawdown of U.S. forces late last year.*

Remember, he said this in 2012.

*Weekly security incidents fell from an average of 1,600 in 2007-2008 to fewer than 100 today.*

He went on to say:

*And in December, after more than eight wrenching years, President Obama kept his promise to end the war—responsibly.*

*And, while Iran and Iraq will inevitably be more intertwined than we, and many of its neighbors, would like, one thing we learned, over more than eight years in Iraq is that the vast majority of its leaders, including the Prime Minister—*

Who at that time was Prime Minister Maliki—

*—are first and foremost Iraqi nationalists and resistant to outside influence from anywhere—starting with Iran.*

Everybody knows that the Iranians are probably the most influential nation in Iraq, certainly under Maliki.

On foreign policy, December 27, 2013, he said:

*If we still had troops in Iraq today, the numbers would have been very small. They would not have been engaged in combat. That would not have been their mission, so the idea that they could or would have done something about the violence that is going on now in Iraq seems, to me, detached from the reality of what the mission would have been had they stayed in any small number.*

Now you don’t have to take my word for it. Take the word of Secretary Gates, Secretary Panetta, Ambassador Crocker, and any knowledgeable person about Iraq, and I will insert their quotes for the record, including Ambassador Crocker, who said: “Of course we could have left a residual force behind.” Both Panetta and Gates said the same thing.

At no time was there a public statement by the President of the United States or Mr. Blinken that they wanted to very seriously. In fact, they trumpeted the fact that the last American troop at that time—now we have many troops back—left Iraq and bragged about what a great day it was.

On Fox News with Chris Wallace, September 28, 2014:

Wallace:

*Finally, President Obama spoke to the U.N. this week, but I wanted to ask you about his speech to the U.N., saying— general assembly last year, in*

*which he said we are ending a decade of war. How could the President have been so wrong?*

Blinken:

*The president was exactly right. What we're doing is totally different than the last decade. We're not sending hundreds of thousands of American troops back to Iraq or Afghanistan or anywhere else. We're not going to be spending trillions of American dollars.*

Wallace:

*Mr. Blinken . . . he said all our troops left Iraq. In fact, he has just sent at least 1,600 troops back into Iraq. He said we've dismantled the core of al Qaeda. [And yet,] the Khorasan group which you struck in the first day is an offshoot of the core of al Qaeda, and, in fact, follows the direct orders of the leader of al Qaeda, Ayman al Zawahiri.*

Blinken:

*Chris, they fled. Because we were so successful and effective in Afghanistan and Pakistan, they fled, because we decimated the core of Al Qaeda. They removed themselves. They went to Syria.*

At the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace on October 30, 2014:

*The White House "sought to leave a limited residual force" in Iraq, but the Iraqi Government simply refused to agree to legal protections for such troops, said then-Deputy National Security Adviser Tony Blinken, who argued the final decision to withdraw all U.S. troops "was not the result of a failure to negotiate."*

*"It's something we worked very hard," he said. "But . . . after a 10-year 'occupation,' the Iraqi body politic did not want us to stay in Iraq. That's what happened" . . . We were focused and acting on ISIL and the threat that it posed more than 1 year before the fall of Mosul, but the problem began to outrun the solution fueled by the conflict in Syria, Iraqi reluctance, and renewed sectarianism in Iraq in advance of elections with politicians on all sides playing to their bases.*

Statements such as these are so divorced from reality, one can only draw one of two conclusions: either that Mr. Blinken is abysmally ignorant or he is simply not telling the truth for whatever motive there is.

By the way, here is what Ryan Crocker said on Iraq:

*As a former ambassador to Iraq from 2007 to 2009, do you think it was a mistake not to push hard for the Status of Forces agreement with Iraq before the U.S. pullout?*

I would remind my colleagues, Ryan Crocker—probably the most respected member of our diplomatic corps alive today—said:

*I do. We could have gotten that agreement if we had been a little more persistent, flexible, and creative. But what really cost us was the political withdrawal. We cut off high-level political engagement with Iraq when we withdrew our troops. There were no senior visits, very few phone calls. Secretary of State John Kerry made one visit prior to this current crisis, mainly to lecture the Iraqis on how bad they were being for facilitating Iranian weapon shipments to Syrian president Bashar al-Assad. And we left them to their own devices, knowing that left to their own devices, it would not work out well.*

So we have Mr. Blinken's comments, and juxtapose them with those of Ambassador Crocker.

Here is what Leon Panetta, Democrat, Secretary of Defense said:

*It was clear to me—and many others—that withdrawing all our forces would endanger the fragile stability then barely holding Iraq together.*

That is from Secretary Leon Panetta's book.

Then he went on to say:

*My fear, as I voiced to the President and others, was that if the country split apart or slid back into the violence that we'd seen in the years immediately following the U.S. invasion, it could become a new haven for terrorists to plot attacks against the U.S. Iraq's stability was not only in Iraq's interest but also in ours. I privately and publicly advocated for a residual force that could provide training and security for Iraq's military.*

Then he went on to say, talking about the Pentagon:

*Those on our side viewed the White House as so eager to rid itself of Iraq that it was willing to withdraw rather than lock in arrangements that would preserve our influence and interests.*

That is a statement by Leon Panetta.

I will move on to Afghanistan.

Mr. Blinken said:

*We have been very clear. We have been consistent. The war will be concluded by the end of 2014. We have a timetable, and that timetable will not change.*

This is why I am so worried about him being in the position he is in, because if they stick to that timetable, I am telling my colleagues that we will see the replay of Iraq all over again. We must leave a stabilizing force behind of a few thousand troops or we will see again what we saw in Iraq.

So let's move on to Syria.

In an MSNBC interview in 2014, responding to a question about President Obama's comment in August 2014 calling it "a fantasy" to say that arming the Syrian rebels 3 years ago would have helped the situation, Blinken:

*Fantasy was the notion that had we started to work with these guys—*

Talking about the Free Syrian Army—

*six months earlier, that that somehow would have turned the tide.*

Blinken:

*Candy, you know, Assad has been a magnet for the very extremism we're now fighting against. And it is inconceivable to think of Syria being stable with Assad as its leader. He has forfeited his legitimacy. ISIL right now is the wolf at the door. But the answer to both Assad and ISIL actually is the moderate opposition. They need to be built up, so that they can be a counterweight to Assad. In the near term, they need to be built up so they can work on the ground to help deal with ISIL.*

Candy Crowley:

*So ISIS is the wolf at the door now, but Assad, as far as the U.S. is concerned, is the next wolf at the door?*

Mr. Blinken:

*We have been very clear that there needs to be a transition in Syria, that as long as Assad is there, it's very hard to see Syria being stable, and he will continue to be a magnet for the extremists we are fighting.*

Crowley:

*But a transition is not the same as, we will actively help you bring this guy down.*

Blinken:

*The best way to deal with Assad is to transition him out so that the moderate opposition can fill the vacuum. That's what we have been working on. The more you build them up, the more you make them a counterweight, the more possible that becomes.*

Let me just remind my colleagues of what has happened. There is a guy named Caesar who about a year and a half ago smuggled out thousands of pictures. These pictures are the most gripping and horrifying I have ever seen. They were actual pictures which have been authenticated of the atrocities committed by Bashar Assad. They are wrenching, they are heartbreaking, and they are terrible.

Now, 200,000 people have been butchered in Syria, and 3.5 million are refugees; 150,000 are still in Bashar Assad's prison experiencing atrocities such as this. These are little children here. These are little children. They have been massacred by Bashar Assad.

What have we done? What have we done in response to this? First of all, amazingly, these photographs have been authenticated by this guy Caesar. He did testify before the House Foreign Affairs Committee. It didn't seem to rise to the interest of the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee or the American people or this administration.

I was at a refugee camp in Jordan where at that time there were, I think, 75,000 refugees. I was being taken around by a young woman who was a schoolteacher, and she said:

*Senator McCain, do you see all of these children?*

I said: Yes.

*She said: Those children believe that you have abandoned them, Senator McCain, that you Americans have abandoned them, and when they grow up, they are going to take revenge on you.*

So here we are, this incredible slaughter, massacre, torture taking place, and what is this administration doing? It is trying to make a deal with the Iranians and leaving Bashar Assad to wreak havoc on the Syrian people who are still able to fight, butchering them with barrel bombs. Most of my colleagues know what a barrel bomb is. It is a huge cylinder, and it is packed with explosives and nuts and bolts and pieces of shrapnell. Bashar Assad, unimpeded, flies his helicopters and they drop these barrel bombs. Then, when they capture these people, this is what is done to them.

Today it is clear that what is happening is that we are attacking ISIS in Syria. We are not attacking Bashar Assad, this butcher. In fact, Bashar Assad has intensified his attacks on the Free Syrian Army—intensified them. Not surprisingly, the morale of the Free Syrian Army is very low.

So General Allen and others have recently proposed a no-fly zone or an aircraft exclusion zone, an idea we have been arguing for, for about 3 years. This President still refuses to do it. It is heartbreaking. It is heartbreaking and it is tragic and it will go down in American history as one of the most shameful chapters because of our failure and the President's personal decision not to arm the Free Syrian Army when all of his key national security advisers—his Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton; the head of the CIA, General Petraeus; and Secretary of Defense, Secretary Panetta all strongly recommended providing arms to the Free Syrian Army.

I will move on to Ukraine. Mr. Blinken:

*What Putin has seen is the President mobilizing the international community both in support of Ukraine and to isolate Russia for its actions in Ukraine, and Russia is paying a clear cost for that.*

*The notion that this is somehow the result of Syria makes very little sense to me. . . . That's because this is not about what we do or say in the first instance, it's about Russia and its perceived interests.*

What Mr. Blinken doesn't understand is that weakness in one place translates throughout the world.

When I tell my colleagues, when I tell my fellow citizens that we will not supply the Ukraine people with defensive weapons, they don't believe me. They have watched the country dismembered. They have watched Crimea go. They have watched the shoot-down on an airliner that nobody talks about anymore, and they continue to create unrest and killing in eastern Ukraine, and we will not even supply the Ukrainians with weapons with which to defend themselves.

I see that I am nearly out of time. I would like to say I wish Mr. Blinken's words were matched by his deeds.

At the Holocaust Museum, October 6, 2014, he said:

*A new notion is gaining currency: the "Responsibility to Protect." It holds that states have responsibilities as well as interests—especially the responsibility to shield their own populations from the depraved and murderous. This approach is bold. It is important. And the United States welcomes it and has included it as a core element of our National Security Strategy, along with our commitment to prevent genocide and hold those who organize atrocities accountable.*

No one can look at those pictures, the thousands, and believe that we have held Bashar Assad responsible.

He ended up by saying:

*Endorsing the responsibility to protect is one thing; acting on it is another. All of us in the international community will have to muster the political will to act— diplomatically, economically, or, in extreme cases, militarily— when governments prove unable or unwilling to prevent the slaughter of their citizens.*

That is a remarkable statement from an individual whose actions have clearly contradicted that at every turn in literally every corner of the Earth.

I know we will probably lose the vote, but I believe history will hold this administration accountable. History will hold those individuals who are part of this administration, who allowed these slaughters to go on—a dismemberment of a country called Ukraine, the first time a European country has been departitioned since World War II; the needless slaughter of thousands and thousands of Ukrainian men, women, and children, and the thousands and thousands of Syrian children. The list goes on and on.

Now we are going to promote this individual to replace probably the finest diplomat I have known, Secretary Burns. Not only is Mr. Blinken unqualified, but he is, I believe, a threat to the traditional interests and values that embody the United States of America.

Madam President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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**Responses to Questions  
Submitted Prior to the Hearing of  
January 19, 2021 to Hon. Antony J. Blinken  
by Senator James E. Risch**

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**PRE-HEARING QUESTIONS FOR THE HONORABLE ANTONY BLINKEN**  
**Senate Foreign Relations Committee Majority Staff**  
**December 11, 2020**

For the questions below, the following definitions apply: A.

“Foreign person” includes both:

- 1) a natural person who is not a United States citizen or an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence to the United States; and
- 2) an entity not organized under the laws of the United States or any jurisdiction within the United States.

B. “Foreign government” includes any agency or instrumentality of such government.

C. “WestExec” refers to WestExec Advisors, LLC, each of its predecessors, successors, divisions, subsidiaries, and affiliates, and all present and former directors, officers, employees, agents, consultants, or other persons acting for or on behalf of any of them.

WestExec Advisors, LLC, of which you are a co-founder and where you have served as managing partner, describes itself on its website with the following description:

**WestExec Advisors** is a strategic advisory firm that offers unique geopolitical and policy expertise to help business leaders make the best decisions in a complex and volatile international landscape. We are an unrivaled, bipartisan team of senior national security leaders with the most recent experience and unmatched networks in defense, foreign policy, intelligence, economics, cybersecurity, data privacy, and strategic communications. We create significant advantages for our clients by providing unparalleled expertise on the external factors and relationships that affect businesses – from geopolitical trends and risks, to economic developments, to an evolving technological landscape, to changes in Washington and in other capitals around the world.

**Part I: WestExec Foreign and Foreign-Owned or Controlled Clients**

1. Since its founding, has WestExec provided services to any of the following?
  - a. Foreign government



- b. Entity owned or controlled by a foreign government
  - c. Foreign person
  - d. Entity owned or controlled by a foreign person
2. Please provide a list of each government, person, and entity covered by Question 1, including the dates of services provided to each and a description of services provided.
  3. Please describe any services personally provided by you with respect to any of the governments, persons, or entities covered by Questions 1 and 2.

**Part I Answer:**

As a matter of policy, WestExec does not work for any foreign government or entity owned or controlled by a foreign government. The firm has performed work for a handful of foreign corporations.

I personally worked for three companies that are either foreign-incorporated or U.S. affiliates of foreign companies:

- SoftBank: I advised SB Group, U.S., Inc. -- the U.S. subsidiary of Softbank -- from January 2019 to July 2020 on geopolitical risks and trends.
- Lazard: I advised Lazard Freres & Co. LLC from December 2018 to January 2019 on geopolitical risks and trends.
- Royal Bank of Canada: I advised the U.S. Equities Research division of Royal Bank of Canada Capital Markets and other RBC stakeholders from March 2018 to March 2019 on geopolitical risks and trends.

**Part II: WestExec Contact or Engagement with Foreign Governments or Entities**

1. Since its founding, has WestExec contacted or engaged with any of the following on behalf of a client?
  - a. Foreign government
  - b. Entity owned or controlled by a foreign government
  - c. Foreign political party

- d. International organization (including international treaty organizations such as the European Union)
  - e. Entity of an international organization (including international treaty organizations such as the European Union)
2. Please provide a list of the contacts and engagements covered by Question 1, including:
- a. An identification of:
    - i. Each government or entity contacted or engaged with;
    - ii. Each applicable WestExec client
  - b. The dates of each contact or engagement; and
  - c. A description of each contact or engagement.
3. Please describe any services personally provided by you with respect to any of the contacts or engagements covered by Questions 1 and 2.

**Part II Answer:**

Individuals at WestExec may, on occasion, contact or engage with foreign governments or political parties or international organizations as part of their work advising clients on geopolitical risks and trends and business strategy. While I was at WestExec, I had the following contacts with officials from foreign countries to promote U.S. client business interests and thought leadership:

- In July 2018, I arranged and attended lunch with the Jordanian Ambassador to the United States and representatives of Boeing and discussed global current events.
- In September 2018, on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly, I spoke at a large reception hosted by Microsoft on cyber peace issues that was attended by a number of United Nations and foreign officials, as well as representatives of businesses and civil society organizations. I also attended a dinner hosted by Microsoft that was attended by officials from academia, business, and non-governmental organizations, as well as officials from the United Nations, Chile, France, Finland, India, Mexico, Singapore, and Switzerland.
- In October 2018, I arranged and attended lunch with the Australian Ambassador to the United States and representatives of Boeing and discussed global current events.
- In November 2018, I attended meetings with Japanese government officials in Tokyo on behalf of Uber in connection with Uber's efforts to expand its business in Japan.

- In December 2018, I arranged and attended lunch with the Spanish Ambassador to the United States and representatives of Boeing and discussed global current events.
- In December 2018, I contacted the president of the Paris Peace Forum on behalf of Microsoft regarding the 2018 Paris Peace Forum.
- In April 2019, I contacted a senior French Foreign Ministry Official on behalf of Microsoft to learn more about the G7 digital agenda for the 2019 G7 summit in Biarritz.
- In July 2019, I contacted the Iraqi Ambassador to the United States to obtain his view as to whether the Iraqi government would be interested in selling excess military aircraft to a Blackstone portfolio company, Draken International, for use by the U.S. military for training and exercises. Iraq was not interested.
- In September 2019, on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly, I spoke at a large reception hosted by Microsoft on cyber peace issues that was attended by a number of United Nations and foreign officials, as well as representatives of businesses and civil society organizations.

**Part III: WestExec Advice, Counsel, or Other Services Provided About How to Contact or Engage with Foreign Governments or Entities**

1. Since its founding, has WestExec advised, counseled, or otherwise provided services to a client about how to contact or engage with any of the following?
  - a. Foreign government
  - b. Entity owned or controlled by a foreign government
  - c. Foreign political party
  - d. International organization (including international treaty organizations such as the European Union)
  - e. Entity of an international organization (including international treaty organizations such as the European Union)
2. Please provide a list of the clients covered by Question 1, including:
  - a. An identification of the government or entity with respect to which advice, counsel, or other services was provided;

- b. A description of the advice, counsel, or other services provided by WestExec; and
  - c. The dates on which the advice, counsel, or other services were provided.
3. Please describe any services personally provided by you with respect to any of the advice, counsel, or other services covered by Questions 1 and 2.

**Part III Answer:**

WestExec advises clients on geopolitical risks and trends, which can include how to engage foreign markets and assessments of political and regulatory developments. I recall advising three WestExec clients (Boeing, Microsoft, and Uber) on engaging with officials as described below.

- In July 2018, I arranged and attended lunch with the Jordanian Ambassador to the United States and Boeing executives and discussed current global events.
- In September 2018, on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly, I spoke at a large reception hosted by Microsoft on cyber peace issues that was attended by a number of United Nations and foreign officials, as well as representatives of businesses and civil society organizations. I also attended a dinner hosted by Microsoft that was attended by officials from academia, business, and non-governmental organizations, as well as officials from the United Nations, Chile, France, Finland, India, Mexico, Singapore, and Switzerland.
- In October 2018, I arranged and attended lunch with the Australian Ambassador to the United States and representatives of Boeing and discussed global current events.
- I advised Uber in connection with meetings with Japanese officials and business people in Tokyo that I attended with Uber between October 30 and November 2, 2018, regarding Uber's efforts to expand its business in Japan.
- In December 2018, I arranged and attended lunch with the Spanish Ambassador to the United States and representatives of Boeing and discussed global current events.
- In September 2019, on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly, I spoke at a large reception hosted by Microsoft on cyber peace issues that was attended by a number of United Nations and foreign officials, as well as representatives of businesses and civil society organizations.

**Part IV: WestExec Expertise or Other Services Provided Regarding the Conduct of Business in or with Citizens or Entities of Certain Jurisdictions**

1. Since its founding, has WestExec provided geopolitical or policy expertise or any other services for a client regarding the conduct of business in, or with a foreign person that is a citizen of, headquartered in, or that maintains a principal place of business in any of the following?
  - a. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela
  - b. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea
  - c. The Islamic Republic of Iran
  - d. The People's Republic of China
  - e. The Republic of Cuba
  - f. The Russian Federation
2. Please provide a list of the clients covered by Question 1, including:
  - a. A description of the expertise or other services provided by WestExec; and
  - b. The dates on which the expertise or other services were provided.
3. Please describe any expertise or services personally provided by you with respect to any of the expertise or services covered by Questions 1 and 2.

**Part IV Answer:**

While at WestExec, I advised clients -- principally U.S. companies -- on geopolitical risks relating to countries around the world, including those listed above.

I have not had clients at WestExec who are citizens of, headquartered in, or that maintain a principal place of business in any of the countries listed above. Nor have I advised clients about how to conduct business in the Bolivian Republic of Venezuela, the Democratic People's Republic of North Korea, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Cuba, or the Russian Federation.

I provided broad strategic advice to FedEx and Gilead Sciences on how to engage in business in China while maintaining core American principles.

**Part V: WestExec Contact or Engagement with the U.S. Department of State or Interagency Bodies**

1. Since its founding, has WestExec contacted or engaged with any of the following on behalf of a client?
  - a. U.S. Department of State
  - b. Interagency body of the U.S. Government on which the U.S. Department of State is represented (including the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States)
2. Please provide a list of the contacts and engagements covered by Question 1, including:
  - a. An identification of:
    - i. The entity contacted or engaged with;
    - ii. Each applicable WestExec client;
  - b. The dates of each contact or engagement; and
  - c. A description of each contact or engagement.
3. Please describe any services personally provided by you with respect to any of the contacts or engagements covered by Questions 1 and 2.

**Part V Answer:**

My work at WestExec primarily consisted of advising clients on geopolitical risks and trends. I have not had contacts with interagency bodies of the U.S. government on behalf of a client. During my time with the company, I recall the following contacts with State Department officials:

- In September 2018, I attended a dinner hosted by Microsoft (described in Sections II and III) that was attended by the Acting Chief of Staff at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations.
- During a trip to Japan on behalf of Uber from October 30 to November 2, 2018, I attended meetings with Uber and officials from the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo in connection with Uber's efforts to expand its business in Japan and its meetings with Japanese officials and business people.

- In October 2019, during a lunch with the Deputy Secretary of State, I discussed Microsoft's work on cyber peace issues.
- In January 2020, I held a phone call with the U.S. Ambassador to Greece in support of Draken International's business related to the provision of aviation services and training for the U.S. military.

**Part VI: WestExec Advice, Counsel, or Other Services Provided About How to Contact or Engage with the U.S. Department of State or Interagency Bodies**

1. Since its founding, has WestExec advised, counseled, or otherwise provided services to a client about how to contact or engage with any of the following?
  - a. U.S. Department of State
  - b. Interagency body of the U.S. Government on which the U.S. Department of State is represented (including the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States)
2. Please provide a list of the clients covered by Question 1, including:
  - a. An identification of the entity with respect to which advice, counsel, or other services was provided;
  - b. A description of the advice, counsel, or other services provided by WestExec; and
  - c. The dates on which the advice, counsel, or other services were provided.
3. Please describe any services personally provided by you with respect to any of the advice, counsel or other services covered by Questions 1 and 2.

**Part VI Answer:**

My work at WestExec primarily consisted of advising clients on geopolitical risks and trends. I was generally not engaged by clients for purposes of advising them how best to contact personnel at the State Department or at a U.S. government interagency body, and I do not recall doing so. Part V lists interactions I had on behalf of clients.

**Part VII: WestExec Statements Regarding China-Related Services**

1. An article in The Washington Free Beacon dated December 2, 2020, and entitled “Biden-Linked Firm WestExec Scrubs China Work from Website” reported that:

The Washington, D.C., consulting firm cofounded by President-elect Joe Biden’s secretary of state nominee, Antony Blinken, has removed from its website details of its China-related business as the firm’s work has drawn scrutiny following Biden’s election victory.

Please address the allegations in this article and explain why any references to the firm’s China-related business were deleted. Please also describe what involvement you had in the decision, or knowledge you had of the decision, to delete references to any China-related business from the website.

2. The WestExec website states that WestExec worked on behalf of a “major U.S. manufacturing firm” to help it “[c]ontinue to provide capability to and remain a trusted partner of the [United States Government] while pursuing commercial activities in China.” Specifically, the website asserts that WestExec:

... provided recommendations to improve [a] company’s strategy for reducing IP-related risk, provided independent analysis in evaluating specific business cases, advised on a communications strategy for engagements with U.S. national security officials, and offered a strategic assessment of U.S.-China relations with specific implications for the company’s business strategy.

Please identify the “major U.S. manufacturing firm” referenced in this description and describe the services provided to that firm in further detail. Please also describe what involvement you had with respect to the services provided to this firm.

**Part VII Answer:**

As part of WestExec’s strategy to help U.S. companies mitigate geopolitical risk abroad, the company previously offered a service aimed at U.S. research universities to help them avoid inadvertently becoming involved with the Chinese government. WestExec no longer offers this service, which is why it was removed from the website. I was not involved in the decision to change the language on the website. I did not represent the client referenced in question two.



**Part VIII: Pine Island Capital Partners**

WestExec's website lists Pine Island Capital Partners LLC (hereafter "Pine Island"), a private equity firm, as a "strategic partner" of WestExec. You are also listed as a "D.C. Partner" of Pine Island. The Pine Island website describes the role of its D.C. partners:

Capitalizing on their influential networks and drawing on their deep industry knowledge and experience, Pine Island's Washington, D.C. partners work in tandem with the investment team to source deals, conduct analyses, win bids, close transactions, and directly advise the companies in which we invest.

1. Please describe the relationship between WestExec and Pine Island.
2. Please describe the services you have provided to Pine Island.
3. Please identify the dates of your service provided to Pine Island.
4. Has Pine Island invested in any of the following while you served as a D.C. Partner of the firm?
  - a. Foreign government
  - b. Entity owned or controlled by a foreign government
  - c. Foreign person
  - d. Entity owned or controlled by a foreign person
5. Please describe any involvement you had with respect to any investments covered by Question 3.

**Part VIII Answer:**

WestExec is a strategic partner to Pine Island, providing analysis, insight and expertise. In 2017, I was involved in the formation of Pine Island, but I did not take part in the firm's day-to-day operations, fundraising, or investment decisions. Pine Island has not made investments in foreign governments, entities, or persons or entities owned or controlled by foreign persons during the time I have been involved with the firm.

If confirmed, I will divest of any remaining interest in Pine Island that I hold through WestExec.

**Part IX: Recusal**

1. Have you ever recused yourself from any matters at either WestExec or Pine Island? If so, please describe the nature of and details surround any recusal.
2. If confirmed as Secretary of State, how would you plan to recuse yourself from matters that could present conflicts of interest or the appearance of conflicts of interest given your involvement with and benefit from matters and clients you worked for while at WestExec and Pine Island.

**Part IX Answer:**

I have recused from matters when appropriate. When I began consulting for the Biden for President campaign, I determined not to participate in any campaign deliberations, decisions or actions that could affect my WestExec clients' interests.

If confirmed, I will leave the firm and sever ties to my former clients. I will also sell my stake in the company. I will make client disclosures consistent with the federal financial disclosure rules and will consult with agency ethics officials and follow relevant government ethics rules, including recusals when appropriate.

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**Responses to Follow-Up Questions  
Submitted Prior to the Hearing of  
January 19, 2021 to Hon. Antony J. Blinken  
by Senator James E. Risch**

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**FOLLOW-UP AND ADDITIONAL PRE-HEARING QUESTIONS FOR  
THE HONORABLE ANTONY BLINKEN  
Senate Foreign Relations Committee Majority Staff  
January 5, 2021**

**FOLLOW-UP TO PRE-HEARING QUESTIONS SUBMITTED ON DEC. 11, 2020**

**Parts I through VI:**

Thank you for your answers regarding clients with whom you had personal involvement while at WestExec Advisors, LLC. However, the questions submitted in Parts I through VI ask not only about the services personally provided by you on behalf of clients, but also about WestExec's involvement as a whole with respect to each category of questions. As a founder and managing partner of WestExec, you had responsibility for all clients of the firm. Therefore, we ask that you update your answers to include the requested information regarding clients of and services provided by WestExec, particularly with respect to Parts I and IV.

**Response:**

As I noted previously, as a matter of policy, WestExec does not work for any foreign government or entity owned or controlled by a foreign government. In my previous responses, I disclosed my work for the U.S. affiliates or subsidiaries of three foreign-owned companies (SoftBank, Lazard, Royal Bank of Canada). In addition, I disclosed my contacts with foreign officials on behalf of clients and the nature of my work, which required each of those clients to grant a waiver of confidentiality agreements. It is my understanding that those responses go beyond what any previous nominee, including those who founded or held an equity interest in their firms, has provided to this Committee about work for private clients, and that no previous nominee has been required to disclose work done by others at their consulting or law firm with which they were not involved.

I have committed to leave the firm and sever ties to my former clients if confirmed. I will also sell my stake in the company. I will make client disclosures consistent with the federal financial disclosure rules and will consult with agency ethics officials and follow relevant government ethics rules, including recusals when appropriate.

**Part I**

*Politico Transition Playbook* reported on January 4, 2021, that a spokesperson for SoftBank said that WestExec advised the conglomerate on "Brexit, India and China's relationship with the U.S." Please provide in more detail the services you and WestExec provided to Softbank and all other clients with respect to China.

**Response:**

My work at WestExec primarily consisted of advising clients on geopolitical risks and trends, which naturally included analysis of U.S.-China relations — e.g., with regard to trade, dealing with China's abusive practices concerning IP theft and technology transfer, and strategic perspectives on the relationship — and China's actions on the world stage, including the Belt & Road Initiative. I regularly provided such analysis to SoftBank and a number of my clients as part of routine discussions of global events.

**Part IV:**

- Part IV asks about both WestExec and your personal involvement regarding expertise or other services provided regarding the conduct of business *with* a foreign person that is a citizen of, headquartered in, or that maintains a principal place of business in any of the jurisdictions listed, regardless of the geographic location where the conduct of such business may have occurred. Please update your answer to address this aspect of the questions in Part IV.

**Response:**

I did not advise clients regarding the conduct of business with a foreign person that is a citizen of, headquartered in, or that maintains a principal place of business in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the Democratic People's Republic of North Korea, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Cuba, or the Russian Federation. My advice to Gilead and FedEx, as described in my previous response, included broad strategic advice about how to engage in business in China.

- In your answer to Part IV, you state that you provided "broad strategic advice" to FedEx and Gilead Sciences on how to engage in business in China. Please provide more detail on the "broad strategic advice" provided. Please also provide the dates of when such advice was provided, as requested in Question 2 of Part IV.

**Response:**

My strategic advice included analysis of U.S.-China relations, and assessments on how each company should think about political risk. I advised FedEx from April 2019 to July 2020 and Gilead from November 2018 to January 2019.

- In your answer to Part IV, you also state that you provided advice on how to engage in business in China using "core American principles." Please explain what you mean when you refer to "core American principles."

**Response:**

By "core American principles," I meant such principles as freedom of speech.

**Part V:**

In your answer to Part V, you state that you had a phone call with the U.S. Ambassador to Greece “in support of Draken International’s business related to the provision of aviation services and training for the U.S. military.” You also do not list any interactions with Greek government officials regarding this issue in your answer to Part II. Please confirm that you did not engage with any Greek government officials regarding this issue.

**Response:**

I did not.

**Part VII:**

Question 2 of Part VII asks that you identify the “major U.S. manufacturing firm” referenced on the WestExec website and describe the services provided to that firm in further detail. Please update your answer to Part VII to be responsive to this question.

**Response:**

I did not represent the company referenced in Question 2 of Part VII.

**Part VIII:**

- Your answers to Questions 1, 2, and 3 of Part VIII provide incomplete descriptions of the relationship between WestExec and Pine Island and of the services you have provided to Pine Island. Please update your answer to respond in greater detail to the inquiries posed in Questions 1, 2, and 3. In particular, please specify:
  - What is the financial relationship between WestExec and Pine Island?
  - How have you split time between the two entities?
  - How much time have you spent working for each of the two entities?
  - What specific services have you provided to Pine Island?
  - What dates have you provided services to Pine Island?

**Response:**

WestExec Advisors (WEA) has no financial relationship with Pine Island. WEA’s sister company, WestExec Capital Partners, LLC (WEC), has acquired my interest in Pine Island. I spent substantially all of my time working for WEA and a de minimis amount of time advising Pine Island. I provided limited advisory services to Pine Island. I was not

involved in its day-to-day operations, decision making or investments. I have been an advisor to Pine Island from January 2017 to the present.

- In your answer to Question 5 of Part VIII, you state that you will divest any remaining interest that you hold in Pine Island through WestExec. Please describe in detail the interest you currently hold in Pine Island through WestExec.

**Response:**

I sold my interest in Pine Island to WEC for my original investment of \$50,000. I now hold an interest in WEC, which was formed to purchase interests in Pine Island. My interest in WEC is not publicly traded and therefore does not have a value determined by the market, but which we estimate is now worth between \$15,000 and \$50,000.

**Part IX:**

Question 1 of Part IX asks for details regarding any recusals from any matters at either WestExec or Pine Island. You stated that you "have recused from matters when appropriate" which indicates that you have recused from one or more matters to date. Please update your answer to provide details of these particular recusals at either firm.

**Response:**

My previous response was a reference to the fact that, in addition to determining that I would not participate in any Biden campaign matters that would affect my WestExec clients' interests, when I began consulting for the Biden campaign in May 2019, I notified all of my WestExec clients that I would not provide them with any non-public information relating to campaign views, decisions, policies, or other matters.

**PRE-HEARING QUESTIONS REGARDING FINANCIAL DISCLOSURES AND ETHICS AGREEMENT**

1. Please describe the relationship between WestExec and the limited liability companies listed in your Ethics Agreement and copied below:

- WestExec Ventures, LLC,
- WestExec Capital Partners, LLC
- WestExec Investments, LLC

**Response:**

These three limited liability companies were formed as sister companies alongside WEA as vehicles for owning private investments for principals of WEA. The equity member units in these three sister entities are held by the founders as separate investment entities and those entities own underlying portfolio investments, which are listed on my 278e. For example, WestExec Investments LLC holds stock in Pine Island Acquisition Corp., which in turn is a "SPAC" ("special purpose acquisition corporation") that is in the process of raising capital.

2. Your ethics agreement discloses that you have a limited partnership interest in The Social+Capital Partnership, LLC. What does this firm do and what was your role in this partnership? Please provide details.

**Response:**

Social+Capital is a private investment fund that invests in companies in various sectors, including technology, life sciences and other businesses. My role was as an advisor to the board of the management company, principally concerning global issues.

3. Have you provided services to any of the following on behalf of The Social+Capital Partnership, LLC? If so, please provide details.

- a. Foreign government
- b. Entity owned or controlled by a foreign government
- c. Foreign person
- d. Entity owned or controlled by a foreign person

**Response:**

No. I provided services to the board of the California-based management company of Social+Capital, not to foreign governments or foreign persons or entities.



4. In your ethics agreement, you also list a position with Meridiam, an infrastructure investment fund. What does this fund do, in what countries does it operate, and what was your role in this fund? Please provide details.

**Response:**

Meridiam is a global investment and asset management company with various infrastructure investment funds. The company focuses on three sectors in infrastructure investment: mobility, energy transition and environment, and social. It specializes in public and community infrastructure, including developing, financing and managing infrastructure projects.

According to its website, Meridiam has nine offices worldwide in the following locations: Paris, France; New York, NY, USA; Istanbul, Turkey; Toronto, Canada; Dakar, Senegal; Luxembourg, Luxembourg; Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; Vienna, Austria; and Amman, Jordan. It is my understanding that Meridiam is or has been involved with infrastructure projects in various countries across Europe, North America, South America, Africa, and the Middle East. For example, it played a leading role in the modernization of New York's Laguardia Airport.

From 2017 to 2020, I served as a member of Meridiam's Supervisory Board. In that role, I took part in three or four meetings annually. I advised Meridiam on geopolitical risks and international relations.

5. Have you provided services to any of the following on behalf of Meridiam? If so, please provide details.
- Foreign government
  - Entity owned or controlled by a foreign government
  - Foreign person
  - Entity owned or controlled by a foreign person

**Response:**

No. I provided advisory services to Meridiam itself, not to other entities on its behalf.

6. Your OGE Form 278e lists Blackstone, another investment management firm, as a source of income exceeding \$5,000 in a year. What is the nature of the advisory services you provided to this firm? Please provide details.

**Response:**

I advised Blackstone on geopolitical risk and global trends. I also advised its portfolio company Draken as outlined in Part II and Part V of my previous answers to pre-hearing questions.

7. Your OGE Form 278e lists Facebook as a source of income exceeding \$5,000 in a year. What advisory services did you provide to Facebook? Please provide details, including dates of services provided.

**Response:**

My work for Facebook consisted of providing insights on geopolitical risks and trends and also on the establishment of an outside, independent oversight board. That work occurred from October to December of 2017 and April to October of 2019.

8. Your OGE Form 278e lists sources of income exceeding \$5,000 in a year from a host of speaking engagements, including GLG, Berkshire Partners, New York Life Insurance Company, Can Manufacturers Institute, Imran Khan, the Center for Strategic and International Studies, the Washington Speakers Bureau, Boise State University, the Carlyle Group, Brown Advisory, and Bank of America.

For the period covering January 20, 2017, through the present, please list all of the speaking engagements for which you received income, including a detailed description of the:

- a. Date;
- b. Location;
- c. Purpose;
- d. Audience; and
- e. Content of each speaking engagement.

If available, please provide a copy of each set of remarks. Please also include the amount received in compensation for each engagement. For the Imran Khan engagement in East Hampton, New York, and the Bank of America engagement in Beijing, China, please explain in detail the purpose and contents of your remarks.

**Response:**

As noted in my questionnaire, I typically did not speak from prepared remarks. My speeches, except where noted below, usually centered around the theme "Walls or Bridges: What Will Define America's Engagement in the World." As part of those remarks, I would survey the landscape of global events, discuss the rise of nationalism in the United States and abroad, and argue that turning inward would ultimately harm U.S. interests. I would contend that the absence of U.S. leadership creates a vacuum that would be filled by either no one or, worse, countries whose interests and values run counter to ours. Finally, I would outline thoughts on how the U.S. should move forward: by defending the work the U.S. does abroad and investing at home as the country did after World War II (e.g., reducing the cost of college, offering apprenticeships, and increasing investments in science and research).

For most speeches, I would make variations or additions to account for the audience or current events. I have noted the speeches below that centered around this theme by titling them as "Walls or Bridges."

To the best of my abilities, I have taken steps to recall and report the speeches and other remarks I have delivered. Per the committee's request, I have contacted the host of each event to ask if there are audio or video recordings available. If additional materials are identified, those materials will be reported promptly to the Committee.

Finally, GLG was a WestExec client, not a source of separate speaking income.

List of speaking engagements for which I received income:

**Carlyle Investment Management.** Washington, DC. 4/5/17. \$24,000. "Walls or Bridges."

**Ally Law.** Washington, DC. 4/11/17. \$5,000. "Walls or Bridges."

**Dartmouth College.** Hanover, NH. 4/16/17. \$7,500. "Walls or Bridges." Video is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2gwGc0yxEO0&feature=youtu.be>

**Global Cybersecurity Summit.** Kiev, Ukraine. 6/14/17. \$7,500. Addressed cybersecurity challenges and followed a written text. I have attached a copy of the text as prepared for delivery. Video is available at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TCyacoL2pO8&feature=emb\\_title](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TCyacoL2pO8&feature=emb_title)

**Brown Advisory Annual Meeting.** London, United Kingdom. 7/17/2017. \$24,000. Interviewed by the Vice Chairman of Brown Advisory and discussed America's changing relationship with Asia and the Middle East. Video is available at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_xpOz0a5N\\_4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_xpOz0a5N_4)

**Korea Economic Institute of America.** Washington, DC. 7/25/17. \$500. "Walls or Bridges."

**Institute of International Finance.** Washington, DC. 10/19/17. \$5,000. "Walls or Bridges."

**Bank of America Merrill Lynch 2017 China Conference.** Beijing, China. 11/8/2017. \$24,000. Remarks addressed U.S.-China relations and largely tracked a piece I wrote for the *New York Times* on November 8, 2017 (previously noted in my questionnaire and available here: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/08/opinion/trump-china-xi-jinping.html>).

**Nexus Conference.** Amsterdam, The Netherlands. 11/18/2017. \$7,500. Participated in a panel discussion on foreign policy. Video is available at:  
<https://nexus-instituut.nl/activity/the-last-revolution/>

**Colony Club.** Washington, DC. 5/1/18. \$300. "Walls or Bridges."

**Can Manufacturers Institute.** Washington, DC. 5/11/18. \$15,000. "Walls or Bridges."

**New York Life.** New York, NY. 6/26/18. \$11,378. "Walls or Bridges."

**College of the Atlantic Summer Conference.** 7/17/18. \$1,500. "Walls or Bridges."

**Center for Strategic and International Studies Conference.** Washington, DC. 9/21/18. \$5,000. Participated in a workshop on gray zone conflict.

**Frank Church Lecture, Boise State University.** Boise, ID. 9/24/18. \$20,000. "Walls or Bridges."

**Khan Gathering.** East Hampton, NY. 10/3/2018 - 10/5/2018. \$7,500. The Khan Gathering was a gathering of thought leaders convened by the entrepreneur Imran Khan. My remarks addressed "Walls or Bridges."

**University of Texas Conference.** Austin, Texas. 11/30/18. \$1000. Participated in a panel discussion on national security issues. Video is available at:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nRLccY33YEQ>

**Berkshire Partners.** Boston, MA. 5/2/19. \$27,500. "Walls or Bridges."

**PRE-HEARING QUESTIONS REGARDING QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES**

In your answer to the SFRC Questionnaire Part A, Question 16 (page 9), you say that none of the speeches you have given related to foreign policy or national security during the past two years “were reduced in full to writing or transcribed” to the best of your knowledge.

- Are these speeches available for review in any other medium, including audio or video? If so, please provide a copy or otherwise provide an appropriate means for the committee to review these speeches.
- If you do not have access to such recordings, we request you ask each applicable organization if they have a copy and confirm with the Committee that either 1) no such copy exists, or 2) provide a point of contact at the relevant organization so that the Committee may request a copy of the recording.
- Regardless of whether a final as-delivered copy of the speech is available, please provide the following information for any speech or any other remarks on a topic related to foreign policy or national security delivered since January 20, 2017:
  - a. Date;
  - b. Location;
  - c. Purpose;
  - d. Audience; and
  - e. Content of each speaking engagement or other remarks.

**Response:**

In addition to the speeches listed in the previous section, I have given the following speeches and other remarks since January 20, 2017:

**Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies Sixth Annual Asia Conference.** Washington, DC. 3/31/17. Remarks on U.S.-Asia Relations. Video is available at:

<https://www.c-span.org/video/?426296-1/antony-blinken-examines-effectiveness-obama-administrations-asia-pivot>

**National Committee on American Foreign Policy.** New York, NY. 5/24/17. “Walls or Bridges.”

**Aspen Security Forum.** Aspen, CO. 7/21/17. Participated in a panel discussion on the JCPOA. Video is available at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KDAAnwPQDjE&feature=youtu.be>

**Goldman, Sachs, Talks at GS.** New York, NY. 9/11/17. Interviewed by the Chief Information Officer of Goldman Sachs. Video is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Cjw4hWk7y8>

**Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies David Calleo Lecture Series.** Washington, DC. 9/5/17. "Walls or Bridges."

**Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies.** Washington, DC. 9/13/17. Interviewed regarding the state of American Diplomacy. Video is available at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CU4A\\_zfL\\_NY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CU4A_zfL_NY)

**Off the Record (a women's foreign policy lecture forum).** New York, NY. 9/20/17. "Walls or Bridges."

**McKinsey Global Risk Conference.** Amsterdam, the Netherlands. 12/6/17. Remarks on top geo-political challenges and hot spots (e.g., cyber threats, mass migration, global tech cold war.)

**Council on Foreign Relations.** 1/9/18. Participated in a panel discussion on foreign policy threats. Video is available at: <https://www.cfr.org/event/what-worry-about-2018>

**McKinsey Global Risk Conference.** London, UK. 4/9/18. Remarks on top geo-political challenges and hot spots (e.g., cyber threats, mass migration, global tech cold war.)

**Common Good Forum.** New York, NY. 5/21/18. Discussed Trump Administration policy towards North Korea and Iran before turning to "Walls or Bridges" and a discussion of U.S. competition with China. Video is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bsLWUQpuEO0>

**Columbia Law School.** New York, NY. 6/13/18. Interviewed regarding law school, foreign policy, and other issues. Video is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xbXsU7eyWl0>

**Aspen Security Forum.** Aspen, CO. 7/19/18. Participated in a panel discussion on foreign policy issues. Video is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ndBegyW5054&feature=youtu.be>

**Council on Foreign Relations.** Washington, DC. 12/18/18. Participated in a discussion about the foreign policy outlook for 2019. Video is available at: <https://www.cfr.org/event/what-worry-about-2019>

**University of Delaware.** Newark, DE. 2/22/19. Remarks to a university class about a career in foreign policy.

**Columbia University.** New York, NY. 4/24/19. Remarks on foreign policy to approximately thirty graduate students.

**Atlantik-Brücke Dinner, Munich Security Conference.** Munich, Germany. 2/14/19. “Walls or Bridges.”

**Democracy Journal Dinner.** Washington, DC. 4/20/19. Remarks on revitalizing US leadership.

**The European Commission.** Brussels, Belgium. 5/14/19. “Walls or Bridges.”

**LinkedIn Annual Offsite Meeting.** New York, NY. 8/14/19. Participated in a moderated conversation on national security issues.

**Chatham House.** Via Zoom. 4/29/2020. Participated in discussion regarding U.S. foreign policy in a post COVID-19 world. Video is available at: <https://www.chathamhouse.org/events/all/research-event/webinar-us-foreign-policy-post-covid-19-world>

**Meridian.** Via Zoom. 5/19/20. Participated in a discussion regarding national security issues and the 2020 presidential election. Video is available at: <https://www.meridian.org/project/antony-blinken%E2%80%AFon-u-s-foreign-policy/>

**Democratic Majority for Israel.** Via Zoom. 5/18/20. Spoke about foreign policy and the 2020 presidential election.

**TruCon19.** Washington, DC. 6/14/19. Participated in a panel discussion on national security and the 2020 presidential election at the Truman National Security Project’s annual conference. Video is available at: <https://www.c-span.org/video/?461760-2/foreign-policy-campaign-2020>

**American Jewish Committee Debate.** Via Zoom. 6/17/20 Debated national security policies as part of the 2020 presidential election in conjunction with the American Jewish Committee Global Forum. Video is available at: <https://www.ajc.org/news/election-2020-debating-american-values-and-interests-the-max-fisher-annual-program>

**Harvard Club of New York, H84 Speaker Series.** Via Zoom. 6/24/20. Participated in a conversation about foreign policy and the 2020 presidential election.

**Hudson Institute.** Via Zoom. 7/9/20. Participated in a conversation about foreign policy and the 2020 presidential election. Video is available at: <https://www.c-span.org/video/?473735-1/hudson-institute-discussion-deputy-secretary-state-antony-blinken>

**Aspen Security Forum.** Via Zoom. 8/5/20. Participated in a conversation on foreign policy and the 2020 presidential election. Video is available at:

<https://www.c-span.org/video/?474516-7/aspens-security-forum-deputy-secretary-state-antony-blinken>

**Washington Institute.** Via Zoom. 10/1/20. Spoke about foreign policy and the 2020 presidential election.

**AIPAC Engage.** Via Zoom. 10/2/20. Spoke about foreign policy and the 2020 presidential election. Video is available at:  
<https://aipac.hubs.vidyard.com/watch/JH6ybmW723XmpUdAt7X193> (Password protected; will provide the Committee with the password under separate cover.)

**Phoenix Committee on Foreign Relations.** Via Zoom. 10/6/20 Spoke about foreign policy and the 2020 presidential election. Video is available at:  
<https://asu.zoom.us/rec/share/0C1lMaOAUJGH9JH21MdJVJBN9uGY7R1fBnXZiMYqWur-fsviLVNl75fdcBoOfsI.ynOl36483s4U-5tg> (Password protected; will provide the Committee with the password under separate cover.)

**U.S. Global Leadership Coalition.** Via Zoom. 10/14/2020. Spoke about foreign policy and the 2020 presidential election. Video is available at:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CmjFKjbsZ\\_A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CmjFKjbsZ_A)

**Robin Hood Investors Conference.** Via Zoom. 10/22/20. Participated in a discussion on U.S.-China relations. Video is available at:  
<https://air.inc/a/b8N15MvSo/c/25f5a19a-43c6-4196-a7b1-91696b87e624> (Password protected; will provide the Committee with the password under separate cover.)

**Democrats Abroad.** Via Zoom. 10/30/2020. Spoke about foreign policy and the 2020 presidential election. Video is available at:  
<https://www.facebook.com/197843195004/videos/650591235639064/>



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**Questions Submitted to Hon. Antony J. Blinken  
by Senator James E. Risch <sup>1</sup>**

[QUESTIONS AS ORIGINALLY SUBMITTED—QUESTIONS ONLY]

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<sup>1</sup>These are the questions as originally formatted and submitted. Secretary-Designate Blinken's responses are not included here.

**QFRs – SECRETARY OF STATE NOMINEE ANTONY BLINKEN**

**AFRICA**

**Regional/General**

**State Department**

1. There are several vacant ambassadorial posts in Sub-Saharan Africa without a named nominee to be considered by the Foreign Relations Committee, including such high-priority posts as Sudan. Many other posts will become vacant in the coming year.
  - a. As Secretary of State, are you committed to working with the White House to ensure that Ambassadorial positions in Sub-Saharan Africa are filled by qualified, experienced nominees in a timely manner?
  - b. Under your leadership as Secretary of State, what actions will you pursue to ensure that hard to fill posts in Sub-Saharan Africa are sufficiently and consistently staffed?
  - c. In your opinion, is Africa fully integrated into the Department’s strategic frameworks and strategy documents?
  - d. Do you believe that Africa is adequately represented in the State Department’s Indo-Pacific strategy?
  - e. How can the Department better leverage the Bureau of African Affairs and encourage better coordination with the Bureau of Near East Affairs on Red Sea Corridor issues?
2. The Department of State’s Office of the Inspector General issued a report in September 2020 on the audit of the Bureau of African Affairs Monitoring and Coordination of the Trans-Saharan Counterterrorism Partnership Program (TSCTP), which identified \$201.6 million in potentially “wasteful spending due to mismanagement and inadequate oversight.” The OIG explicitly questioned approximately \$109 million in program funds with “invoices that lacked supporting documentation.”

If confirmed as Secretary of State, how will you ensure that the Bureau of African Affairs has the requisite capacity, including sufficient numbers of trained contract officers and staff, to ensure that it can implement, monitor, and conduct appropriate oversight of TSCTP and other programs?

**Security Assistance**

3. The proliferation and activities of violent extremist organizations (VEOs) across sub-Saharan Africa increasingly pose a national security threat to the United States, as evidenced by the

attack on American and Kenyan personnel by Al-Shabaab at Camp Simba in Manda Bay, Kenya in January 2020.

- a. What is your perspective on the decision announced by the Pentagon in December 2020 to withdraw U.S. troops from Somalia?
  - b. Do you plan to coordinate with the Secretary of Defense and other relevant U.S. government departments and agencies to develop a comprehensive, continent-wide strategy to address the terror threat posed by ISIS-affiliated and other VEOs active in the Sahel, Lake Chad Basin, Somalia, the Swahili Coast (Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)?
  - c. Of the security assistance tools available to the Department of State, which are the most underutilized in Sub-Saharan Africa, and how do you intend to rectify such imbalances?
4. The activities of armed groups in sub-Saharan Africa pose a growing threat to stability, democratic governance, and economic development on the continent, and armed groups control large swaths of territory in places like the Central African Republic (CAR).
- a. How can the Department of State, in coordination with other relevant departments and agencies, support our African partners to better manage the activities and impacts of armed groups?
  - b. How can the Department of State better address the cross-border movement of armed groups, including through the development and execution of regional approaches?
  - c. How can the Department of State, in coordination with other relevant departments and agencies, enhance its work with African partners to disrupt the illicit financial and resource flows of armed groups, including the smuggling of natural resources across borders?

#### **U.S.-Africa Partnership & Priorities**

5. With 49 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, there are myriad opportunities and challenges to the security, economic, health and humanitarian interests of the United States. The U.S. government is presently engaged on a variety of fronts.
- a. What is the number-one threat posed to the United States in Africa? What is the greatest opportunity for the U.S. in Africa?
  - b. Please list the near-term challenges and opportunities that the United States must engage in during your first 60, 90, and 180 days, if confirmed, as Secretary of State.

- c. In the early days of your tenure as Secretary of State, if confirmed, how will you make clear inside the Department, across the administration and externally, that Africa is a priority for the Biden Administration?
- d. How will you ensure the United States respects and values our African partners, while also representing our values and interests, particularly as it relates to respect for the rule of law, protecting human rights, and advancing democracy?
- e. Sub-Saharan Africa is experiencing a massive “youth bulge.” While programs like the Young African Leaders Initiative and its Mandela Washington Fellowship are vital, what can the United States do to expand its reach and effectively engage with Africa’s enormous youth population?

#### **Trade & Investment**

- 6. In 2019, Africa accounted for just 1.4% of U.S. global trade and received 0.7% of U.S. foreign direct investment. Such shares have declined relative to their historical highs a decade or so ago.
  - a. What are your views on the role trade and investment could and should play in building stronger ties between the United States and the African continent? How should U.S.-African trade and investment initiatives factor into the U.S. global strategy to counter China, particularly in Africa?
  - b. How can the U.S. government better promote African countries as destinations for U.S. private sector foreign investment? How can the United States improve access for African firms seeking to do business here? How can we best engage the U.S. African diaspora?
- 7. Like Prosper Africa, several past U.S. efforts in Africa have sought to expand U.S.-Africa trade and investment by enhancing U.S. inter-agency coordination and fostering private sector transaction activity centered on such ends. Other previous initiatives, including the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), USAID’s Africa trade hubs, and the Obama Administration’s Trade Africa and Doing Business in Africa (DBIA) initiatives, reflect a long line of U.S. initiatives in this sphere with mixed results.
 

Is Prosper Africa the appropriate vehicle to significantly boost two-way trade and investment between the United States and Africa? Do you intend to continue or modify the existing Prosper Africa initiative? If so, how?
- 8. One vital area of Prosper Africa that requires greater emphasis is improving the enabling environment within African partner countries to better attract U.S. business investment. Improvements in anti-corruption initiatives, human rights, the rule of law, and overall good governance would create better conditions for U.S. investment conditions. Such enhancements would also counterbalance efforts by Chinese firms and the Chinese Communist Party to undermine free-market competition in African markets to their advantage.

How can the U.S. government most effectively support efforts to improve the enabling environment for competitive foreign investment by U.S. firms in Africa? What types of partnerships work best, and how can the United States best incentivize reforms and other actions necessary to foster economic opportunity and expand two-way trade and investment with the African continent?

9. On May 30, 2019, the framework agreement establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) entered into force. While trading under the AfCFTA framework is not expected to occur until mid-2021, the AfCFTA, if fully realized, would cover 54 countries (the largest of any regional trade bloc), creating a market encompassing 1.2 billion people with combined economic output in 2018 of \$2.5 trillion.
  - a. How can market integration under AfCFTA best incentivize U.S. trade and investment in the region?
  - b. How can the United States best support the successful implementation of the AfCFTA, while also pursuing bilateral trade deals, such as the ongoing trade talks with Kenya? Would such bilateral trade initiatives conflict with or improve AfCFTA negotiations and implementation?
  - c. How should we prioritize varying U.S. trade policy goals in the region? How may the AfCFTA affect these competing policy priorities?

#### **Democracy and Governance**

10. Across Sub-Saharan Africa, democratic gains are under threat as long-serving rulers manipulate constitutional and electoral processes to remain in power while stifling dissent and limiting opposition parties and candidates' activities. In 2020 alone, several African ruling parties and incumbent leaders applied authoritarian tactics that manipulated democratic processes and frameworks, including in Cameroon, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.
  - a. If confirmed as Secretary of State, will reinforcing democratic institutions and norms in Africa be a priority?
  - b. Will you commit to ensuring that messaging from the Department of State and its embassies and leadership consistently reinforces the U.S. democratic values and interests, including the need to respect democratic institutions and norms, advance human and political rights, and enhance citizen responsive governance?
  - c. What is your perspective on balancing competing U.S. priorities in the areas of security, democracy, and human rights in Sub-Saharan Africa, especially when some of our top security partners – including Uganda, Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Mali – periodically or consistently engage in undemocratic practices? In your view, which should take priority in Africa?

11. In the last two years, Sudan and Ethiopia have embarked upon unexpected democratic transitions. While the United States was, and continues to be, eager to support these transitions, rapidly mobilizing adequate resources has been a challenge in both cases.

If confirmed, how would you prepare the Department to respond to rapid democratic transitions and opportunities that emerge unexpectedly?

**Transatlantic Partnership vis-à-vis Africa**

12. The United States and France share several overlapping priorities in Sub-Saharan Africa and work together on many fronts, including fighting the terror threat in the Sahel. However, American and French interests in the region do not always align, including with regard to the ongoing conflict in northwest and southwest Cameroon.
- a. If confirmed, how will you engage our French partners to ensure that we employ a mutually-beneficial partnership across the Sahel and West and Central Africa that reflects the various points of leverage and capability the United States and France each bring to the table?
  - b. How can the United States better coordinate with France to holistically address security threats and improve diplomatic engagements in the Sahel and West and Central Africa from a holistic perspective?
  - c. How can the United States better coordinate and collaborate with the European Union, as well as individual European governments, including the U.K., to enhance policy consistency and advance mutually-beneficial opportunities for trade, investment, development, and security cooperation with the African Union, regional bodies, African governments, and private sector partners?

**The African Union**

13. How can the United States better leverage its Ambassador to the African Union and Ambassador to the United Nations (UN) to encourage constructive African engagement on democracy, human rights, corruption, and the rule of law?
14. If confirmed, what will be your priorities for engagement with the African Union and sub-regional institutions, including the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Southern African Development Community (SADC), East African Community (EAC), and Economic Community of Central African States (CEEAC)?

**Russian Malign Activity**

15. Russian malign activity in Africa is of increasing concern, particularly given credible reports of elections interference across the continent and deployment of Russian mercenaries, including through the Wagner Group, in Northern Mozambique, and nontransparent

transfers of weapons and training through Russian security sector support to the Touadera Administration in the Central African Republic (CAR).

From your perspective, in addition to sanctions, how can the United States better engage with our African partners to limit the malign activities and influence of Russia generally, and more specifically, of Yevgeny Prigozhin and affiliated mining and security companies (like the Wagner Group) in Africa?

### Central Africa

#### **Burundi**

16. Political and ethnic tensions and violence in Burundi have contributed to instability, human rights abuses, and humanitarian crises in central Africa's Great Lakes region for decades. On June 9, the government of Burundi announced that sitting President Pierre Nkurunziza (age 55) died suddenly of "cardiac arrest," two and a half months before he was expected to step down following general elections on May 20, 2020. Nkurunziza's elected successor, CNDD-FDD party head Evariste Ndayishimiye, was inaugurated in late August, after the constitutional court upheld his victory with 68% of the vote in the May 2020 elections.
- a. How optimistic are you about deepening ties with the new Burundian administration under President Ndayishimiye?
  - b. What reforms are most needed for Burundi and what should be the U.S. approach toward engaging the Ndayishimiye administration on a reform agenda?
  - c. Under what conditions would you advocate for changes to the U.S. sanctions program for Burundi and/or aid restrictions? Will you commit to reviewing incidents of human rights abuses among actors by the Nkurunziza regime who are currently serving in President Ndayishimiye's government?
  - d. How should President Ndayishimiye approach exiled Burundian opposition groups? What role can and should the United States play in facilitating reconciliation between the Burundian government and opposition groups?
  - e. How would you evaluate the performance of Burundian troops in AMISOM? How can the United States better monitor their human rights record in Somalia?

#### **Cameroon**

17. The Anglophone conflict in Cameroon is one of the world's most neglected yet intensely brutal conflicts. The United States has employed many of the diplomatic tools at its disposal, including the suspension of most security assistance and AGOA eligibility, yet the conflict rages on.

- a. What other tools does the United States have at its disposal to encourage a peaceful and enduring resolution to the Anglophone conflict in Cameroon? If confirmed, what tools would you intend to deploy?
- b. Will you consider imposing targeted sanctions on individual government and separatist leaders "responsible for extrajudicial killings, torture, or other gross violations of internationally recognized human rights"?
- c. How can the United States more effectively encourage France to use its significant leverage in Cameroon to encourage the government to engage in meaningful dialogue and end the conflict?
- d. Will you commit to continuing to limit U.S. security assistance to Cameroon and ensure that U.S. training and equipment is not being used to commit or enable human rights abuses in the Northwest and Southwest regions or the Far North?
- e. Do you commit to making Cameroon a priority in the UN Security Council? How can the United States work with like-minded Security Council members to raise the Anglophone conflict's profile and get it placed on the Security Council agenda?
- f. Will you commit to encouraging both government and Anglophone stakeholders to engage in constructive and inclusive dialogue, including with the involvement of an independent international mediator, to address the root causes of the Anglophone conflict and support sustainable peace and reconciliation?

#### **Central African Republic**

18. How can the United States most effectively counter malign Russian influence and activities in the security and mining sectors in the Central African Republic (CAR)? What policies should the United States pursue to ensure that the increasing competition for influence between Russia and France does not have long-term detrimental effects on a country already facing a dire humanitarian situation and overcoming decades of civil conflict?

#### **Democratic Republic of Congo**

19. Following controversial elections in 2018 elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the United States publically and adamantly backed President Tshisekedi and supported efforts to reform and challenge the status quo established by former President Kabila.
  - a. What is your perspective on the performance of the Tshisekedi Administration to date?
  - b. Is it your assessment that the Tshisekedi Administration is in a position to continue to advance reforms, including in the areas of anti-corruption and in the security and mining sectors?



- c. In your view, how can the United States continue to support democratic reforms in the DRC, including by enhancing prospects for free, fair, and transparent elections in 2023?
- d. If confirmed, do you commit to supporting the legitimate victor of a free and fair electoral process in 2023?
- e. In your view, what is the Privileged Partnership for Peace and Prosperity (#PP4PP)? Is this an initiative you plan to continue if confirmed?
- f. In your perspective, what should the United States, our European allies, and the UN peacekeeping mission (MONUSCO) be doing to support a peace process and help facilitate the end of the conflict in Eastern Congo?
- g. In your opinion, how can the Department of State and Department of the Treasury better coordinate on sanctions for corruption and human rights abuses in the DRC, including as they relate to existing sanctions on Dan Gertler and his affiliated interlocutors and entities in the DRC's mining sector?

#### East Africa

##### **Horn of Africa**

20. The Greater Horn of Africa—including Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, and Uganda—sits at the crossroads of Africa, the Middle East, and the wider Red Sea Region. This diverse group of countries reflects a region where the United States can and should have a more comprehensive approach toward advancing diplomatic, development, and defense interests. The scramble for influence by both global and regional powers in the Greater Horn of Africa has contributed to rising levels of insecurity and political instability.

Would you agree or disagree that U.S. national security interests in the region would be better served if we had a more comprehensive and coordinated interagency approach toward the Greater Horn of Africa?

21. If confirmed, would you be inclined to support the appointment of a U.S. Special Envoy for the Greater Horn of Africa to focus on our collective diplomatic, development and defense interests in this fragile yet strategically important region of Eastern Africa?

##### **Kenya**

22. The United States views Kenya as a strategic partner in the region. While Kenya is not a major U.S. trade partner globally, it is one of Africa's most dynamic economies and the second-largest beneficiary of AGOA's tariff benefits, excluding crude oil. On February 6, President Trump and President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya announced their intent to begin free trade agreement (FTA) negotiations. If successful, it would be the first U.S. FTA with a country in sub-Saharan Africa.

- a. Do you believe the U.S.-Kenya FTA talks support or undermine regional trade initiatives and agreements under the pan-African AfCFTA and sub-regional trade initiatives under the East African Community?
- b. Do you support continuing to prioritize FTA negotiations with Kenya? If not, why not? If so, would your approach to negotiations differ from that of the Department under the Trump Administration? If so, how?
- c. How would you seek to position a future U.S.-Kenya FTA to build upon AGOA objectives and expand U.S. trade and investment ties with Africa?

#### **Rwanda**

23. Rwanda is frequently considered by partners inside and outside of Africa as an economic development model in the region to which they should aspire and model. However, serious concerns exist about Rwanda's activities in the broader Great Lakes region, as well as its democratic record domestically.

If confirmed, how will you engage Rwanda and encourage the Kagame administration to play a more constructive role in the Great Lakes region, especially given ongoing political transitions in the DRC and Burundi and troubling democratic declines in neighboring Uganda and Tanzania?

24. Paul Rusesabagina, the political dissident and protagonist depicted in the movie *Hotel Rwanda*, is currently on trial in Rwanda for "terrorism" and other charges. Mr. Rusesabagina, a Belgian citizen and American permanent resident, said he was kidnapped and forced onto a plane in Dubai that was bound for Kigali in August 2020. While the facts surrounding both how he ended up in Rwanda and the charges lodged against him by the Rwandan government are not fully verified, the Rwandan government must adhere to their stated commitments. They must treat Mr. Rusesabagina humanely and afford him a fair and transparent judicial process.

Will you commit to following Paul Rusesabagina's case and provide leadership to hold the Rwandan government to their commitments for a fair trial and due process for Mr. Rusesabagina?

#### **Somalia**

25. The United States has emphasized the need for one person-one vote direct elections in Somalia and provides support through USAID and other channels toward that end. However, Somalia's leadership recently decided, again, that the country will pursue an indirect selection process for members of parliament and the office of the president, instead of a direct election.
  - a. What is your view of prospects for democratic direct elections in Somalia in the future, particularly given Somalia's persistent security and governance challenges?

- b. Do you believe the United States has held overly ambitious expectations for Somalia since 2016/2017, given the circumstances on the ground?
- c. UNSOS/AMISOM's mandate is up for renewal in February 2021. In your view, how can the United States most effectively engage in the mandate-renewal process, including with the penholder (the United Kingdom), to have frank discussions about what UNSOS/AMISOM can reasonably achieve and enhance mission efficiency?

#### **South Sudan**

26. South Sudan has been a U.S. priority issue for decades. Throughout this troubled history, the United States has provided strong support for the peace process in an attempt to resolve Sudan and then-Southern Sudan's decades-long civil war, preparations for South Sudan's separation and independence from Sudan, and the provision of extensive U.S. humanitarian and development assistance (upwards of \$1 billion per year). This includes the years since the outbreak of South Sudan's civil war in 2013.
- a. Given that the United States is a significant stakeholder in ensuring that South Sudan achieves sustainable peace and development, what diplomatic investments would you make as Secretary of State bilaterally, regionally, and with multi-lateral institutions?
  - b. What is your perspective on the ongoing U.S. assistance review, announced in 2018, for South Sudan? If confirmed, how would you support a timely conclusion to the assistance review and enable action on its findings?
  - c. Would you support a reorganization of the State Department's Office of the U.S. Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan (USSESSS), such that it is better streamlined and integrated within the Department's Africa Bureau?
  - d. Do you support the use of separate U.S. Special Envoys for Sudan and South Sudan? How can the United States better approach providing specific high-level diplomatic attention to South Sudan while also ensuring that broader regional diplomatic issues are considered and leveraged as necessary for a more comprehensive policy toward the Sudans and the surrounding countries?

#### **Sudan**

27. The ouster of longtime President Omar al-Bashir in April 2019 and installation of a power-sharing government between the Transitional Military Council and the civilian Forces for Freedom and Change served as a historic moment not just for the Sudanese people but also the U.S.-Sudan bilateral relationship. The United States has since served as one of Sudan's closest transition partners. The Trump Administration's formal rescission of Sudan's designation as a State Sponsor of Terrorism (SST) in December 2020, the pledged exchange of ambassadors between the United States and Sudan, and a near settlement of claims between Sudan and American victims of terrorism have created a new impetus for

deepening what has been for decades a turbulent bilateral relationship under former President Bashir.

- a. If confirmed, what approach will you take to ensure that the United States continues to prioritize normalizing relations with Sudan's fragile yet historic civilian-led transitional government? Will you commit to supporting the nomination of a capable U.S. ambassador to Sudan as one of your early actions as Secretary? Furthermore, will you work to ensure that U.S. relationships with Sudan are managed through the civilian leadership of the transitional government?
- b. How should the United States prioritize its assistance to Sudan? Will you ensure that sufficient assistance is given to support U.S. democracy and governance strengthening initiatives in Sudan?
- c. Do you support the bilateral deal signed between the United States and Sudan on resolving outstanding terrorism claims, and will you commit to resolving any outstanding issues to ensure that Sudan achieves legal peace and American victims of terrorism are properly compensated?
- d. Given the planned drawdown of the African Union-UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) through 2021, what policies will you pursue to ensure necessary protection of civilians in Darfur? Do you believe that the existing UN arms embargo and other sanctions should remain in place in Darfur until the Sudanese government demonstrates that it can and will adequately protect civilians? If confirmed, how would you ensure that justice is pursued regarding atrocities committed against the Sudanese people, particularly in Darfur and "the Two Areas" of Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile?

#### Southern Africa

##### **Mozambique**

28. Leaders representing several countries in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) resolved in late November 2020 to develop a "comprehensive regional response" to the growing Islamist insurgency in the northern Cabo Delgado Province of Mozambique.
  - a. Do you support SADC's planned regional efforts to counter northern Mozambique's Islamist insurgency? How can the United States effectively support SADC efforts to deal with Mozambique growing security problem?
  - b. How can the United States better coordinate with international partners in supporting the Mozambican government through military, humanitarian and development assistance in northern Mozambique? How can we best de-conflict and minimize 'assistance fatigue' as more international and regional actors crowd this space in an effort to curb the Islamist insurgency in northern Mozambique?

**Zimbabwe**

29. While there was hope that the end of Mugabe's 37-year reign as president of Zimbabwe would usher in democratic and economic reforms and enable the beleaguered country to cast off its pariah status, the three years of leadership under President Mnangagwa have demonstrated a continuation, if not worsening, of human rights abuses, economic mismanagement and kleptocratic behavior of the ZANU-PF regime.
- a. From your perspective, what tools (including those currently underutilized) does the United States have at its disposal that are underutilized to encourage democratic and economic reforms in Zimbabwe?
  - b. What is your perspective on the Zimbabwe Sanctions Program and its efficacy in encouraging reforms?
  - c. An area of considerable debate has been the value of reincorporating political party programming into the portfolio of U.S. democracy assistance to Zimbabwe. Do you commit to reviewing the Department of State's posture on political party support in Zimbabwe?
  - d. If confirmed, would you support the investment of resources into enhancing investigative journalism and research to better understand Zimbabwe's corruption and kleptocratic networks?
  - e. What role can South Africa and the wider Southern African Development Community play in helping Zimbabwe end its political and economic crises? What actions can the United States take to encourage greater regional engagement?

**West Africa****The Sahel**

30. If confirmed, what would be your priorities in the Sahel region?
31. What are your views on a dedicated U.S. Special Envoy for the Sahel Region? Do you support calls by some to create an additional U.S. Special Envoy to Nigeria or for the Lake Chad Basin?
32. How could the United States better coordinate and implement its policies and strategies in the Sahel region?
33. What is your perceived impact of a drawdown of AFRICOM in the Sahel region?
34. How can the United States better work with its European partners to ensure effective burden sharing and mission success to counter VEOs in the region?

**Liberia**

35. The United States shares a “special relationship” with Liberia reflecting a shared history and the investment of significant U.S. assistance, including helping Liberia emerge from conflict, build democratic institutions, and overcome the West Africa Ebola outbreak (2014-2016). Liberia endured two brutal civil wars from 1989-1996 and 1999-2003, both characterized by gross human rights violations, war crimes and crimes against humanity, to include rape, massacres (including in places of worship), torture and the use of child soldiers. While Liberia has experienced peace for 17 years and the transfer of power from President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf to President George Weah in 2018, the country still experiences significant development challenges and trauma. While the deposed Liberian despot Charles Taylor was convicted of crimes against humanity committed in neighboring Sierra Leone by the Special Court in Sierra Leone, and others have been convicted in foreign countries, including the United States, to date, Liberia itself has not prosecuted anyone for crimes committed during its civil wars.
- a. From your perspective, what role does the combination of rampant corruption, including at the highest levels of government, and the legacy of violent conflict play in Liberia’s development and economic outlook?
  - b. In your view, has the United States done enough to encourage Liberia to pursue justice and reconciliation for crimes committed during its civil wars?

**Mali**

36. Mali is central to U.S. efforts to counter VEOs in the Sahel. Yet, the ouster of Mali’s elected president by the Malian army in August 2020 heightened political uncertainty in the country amid severe security, governance, and humanitarian challenges. Under the leadership of retired military officer and former defense minister Bah N’Daw as President, Mali’s civilian-led transitional government is expected to organize elections in 18 months and work towards more sustainable peace in Mali. These are monumental tasks, particularly in light of the complex security and political dynamics in the country, to say nothing of severe economic pressures.
- a. How can the United States best assist Mali through this transition? Would you agree or disagree that Mali serves as the most vital component of the U.S. security and counterterrorism strategy in the region? What role should the United States play in marshaling regional and international support for Mali’s transition, to include democratic elections?
  - b. How do you view the UN peacekeeping mission in Mali, MINUSMA? Does its current mandate serve its intended peacekeeping purpose? Should the United States support efforts to re-examine and reorient the UN presence in Mali, to include MINUSMA, to ensure its mission is focused and adaptable to changing circumstances on the ground?

**Nigeria**

37. In December 2020, Secretary Pompeo designated Nigeria as a Country of Particular Concern under the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998, citing the country for “systematic, ongoing, egregious violations of religious freedom.”
- What is your assessment of the appropriateness of Nigeria for this designation?
  - Are concerns about religious freedom among your top priorities for engagement with Nigeria?
  - What is your assessment of the drivers of conflict in Nigeria? How do the drivers of conflict in Nigeria differ across geographical regions?

**ASIA****Indo-Pacific – General**

38. The Indo-Pacific is the most important region for U.S. security and economic growth. It represents nearly half of the global population and is home to some of the most dynamic economies in the world, but is also home to security challenges that threaten to undermine U.S. national security interests, regional peace, and global stability. The Trump Administration articulated a strategy to advance a “free and open Indo-Pacific,” and has expanded partnerships with regional countries and implemented multiple initiatives in the region to support this goal.
- Do you agree with the core tenants of a vision for the “free and open Indo-Pacific” strategy advanced over the last several years? If so, what should the State Department’s role be in this strategy? If not, why not?
  - Do you support the continued use of the term “Indo-Pacific” to describe the region?
  - What should be our objectives in the region?
  - What specific policy and funding priorities for the State Department would it require to advance a successful Indo-Pacific strategy?
39. The Trump Administration advanced a “free and open” Indo-Pacific strategy, emphasizing the importance of the values we’d like to see in the region. Thus far, President-elect Biden has used “secure and prosperous” to describe U.S. goals for the Indo-Pacific.
- While certainly laudable goals, why make this change?

- b. Is this change in language a preview of substantial shifts to come in President-elect Biden's strategy in the Indo-Pacific?
  - c. If confirmed, what major policy changes do you intend to make in U.S. strategy towards the region?
40. Over the last four years, the Department of State has established a number of new initiatives and expanded partnerships under the Indo-Pacific strategy related to infrastructure, energy, digital economy and smart cities, public health, education, democracy, anti-corruption, and the Mekong Region, among others. Despite the overall narrative that the Trump Administration hurt U.S. position and reputation, such initiatives have delivered concrete outcomes on the ground.
- a. If confirmed, what are the key principles, initiatives, and other elements of the Trump Administration's Indo-Pacific strategy would you intend to retain and continue? How would you build on these initiatives?
  - b. What other policies, initiatives, and priorities would you pursue to advance U.S. interests in the Indo-Pacific region?
41. The State Department recently realigned 288 positions at posts to better serve the U.S. strategic interest of competing with China. This is a welcome a step.
- a. Will you commit to initiating a rigorous assessment of the State Department's personnel footprint to ensure it is aligned with the strategic imperatives of competing with China, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region?
  - b. Will you commit to initiating this review as soon as you assume your position, if you are confirmed?
42. The United States has only a handful of free trade agreements with Indo-Pacific partners.
- a. If confirmed, will you commit to prioritizing agreements with key Indo-Pacific economic partners in executing a robust trade agenda?
  - b. What are your views on the United States joining the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership agreed to by 11 other nations in 2019?
43. The Trump Administration emphasized human capital development initiatives with partners in the Indo-Pacific, particularly through the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). This included preserving and expanding assistance programs that provide concrete technical assistance and capacity-building for emerging and established leaders in partner governments, the private sector, and civil society. These programs build stronger nations that become better economic and security partners to the United States, more responsive to their own citizens, and more resilient to external coercion.



- a. Do you believe that the United States should invest in nations that actively seek out opportunities to educate their leaders in areas such as management of key economic sectors, government transparency and accountability, and effective civic engagement?
  - b. If confirmed, will you commit to working with Congress on advancing initiatives in this area that uphold shared interests of the United States and our Indo-Pacific partners?
44. The 2018 National Defense Strategy states that “great power competition, not terrorism, is now the primary focus of U.S. national security.”
- a. Do you agree with the Defense Department’s assessment?
  - b. How do you believe U.S. diplomacy should change to reflect a greater emphasis on China and Russia?
45. Of the \$5.57 billion of Foreign Military Finance requested for FY 2021, \$5.19 billion was for the Middle East – leaving \$85.9 million for the East Asia & Pacific (1.5% of the total request) and \$170 million for Europe (3% of the total request). While we still need to maintain our commitments to Israel in particular, U.S. security assistance priorities require a serious re-evaluation.
- a. Will you commit to working with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee toward reshaping priorities surrounding U.S. security assistance to ensure it is aligned with imperatives of great-power competition, especially with China but also with Russia?
  - b. In your view, is the Department’s Foreign Military Financing budget sufficient to meet our strategic interests?

### China

#### **General**

- 46. The objectives and policies being advanced by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) present the greatest foreign policy challenge facing the United States today and will continue to do so into the future. Therefore, it must be our top foreign policy priority. If not, why not? What do you think is the greatest foreign policy challenge for the United States?
- 47. In your view, what are the Chinese government’s primary objectives domestically, in the Indo-Pacific region, and globally? How would you describe its primary political, economic, military, and technological objectives?
- 48. China touches upon a wide variety of U.S. interests and policy issues, both foreign and domestic. If confirmed, how will China policy be coordinated, particularly amongst yourself, the National Security Advisor, Special Envoy John Kerry, and the head of the Domestic Policy Council? Does President Biden intend for other Cabinet secretaries, such as those at Commerce, Treasury, and Justice, to place a high priority on China issues?

**Climate Change & China**

49. Former Secretary of State John Kerry, whom you worked for as Deputy Secretary of State, has been named a special presidential envoy for climate.
- a. How would responsibilities between yourself and Mr. Kerry be divided when it comes to negotiating any climate-related agreements?
  - b. Will Mr. Kerry have authority to raise with China issues other than climate that are relevant to either the bilateral relationship or as regards U.S. policy in the Indo-Pacific region?
  - c. Since Mr. Kerry is reporting directly the president given his new Cabinet-level role, how will you, the Department of State, and subsequently Congress, remain apprised of what he is negotiating with China?
  - d. If confirmed, how will you ensure that climate agreements negotiated by Mr. Kerry are consistent with broader U.S. interests and goals when it comes to China?
  - e. If a climate agreement is negotiated in such a way that does not keep broader interests in mind, what will you do to remedy this situation?
  - f. Do you commit to keeping this committee informed of developments in any climate negotiations with China? Will President Biden make Mr. Kerry available to the committee to answer questions on his discussions with China?
50. The incoming Administration is putting climate change at the forefront of its agenda, including cooperation on climate change with China. In December, Mr. Kerry called China “a partner on climate as we competed with them at other things during the Obama administration” and that “if we don't work as a primary extraordinary effort on climate, we're all cooked.” He's been described as viewing climate change as the most important issue in the U.S.-China relationship.
- a. Do you agree that reaching a climate agreement should be the top priority in our dealings with China? If so, why? If not, what should be our top priority instead?
  - b. Do you believe that all other issues in the U.S.-China relationship should be subordinate to this priority?
51. China has a history of breaking its promises, and its words on climate change often do not match its actions. We should not trade key U.S. interests away for cooperation on climate change. We must also not stand down in pursuing other interests to preserve such an agreement. Will you commit:

- not to enter into an agreement or advise the President to enter into an agreement with the People's Republic of China (PRC) that trades key U.S. interests away for cooperation or future promises by Beijing on climate change; and
- not to recommend any the following policies to either secure or preserve a climate change agreement with the PRC:
  - Decreasing freedom of navigation exercises in the South China;
  - Making changes in our defense relationships with any U.S. ally, or our overall defense posture in the Indo-Pacific region;
  - Delaying arms sales to Taiwan, or pulling back from any form of U.S.-Taiwan cooperation;
  - Deciding not to pursue policies that safeguard the U.S. economy from Beijing's anti-competitive trading practices;
  - Terminating sanctions against individuals or entities of the PRC, or removing a PRC company from the Entity List;
  - Dropping U.S. policies that hold CCP officials and companies accountable for egregious human rights abuses, including those conducted in Xinjiang?

#### **Anti-Competitive Economic Practices**

52. The challenges presented by a non-market economy such as that of the PRC that has captured such a large share of the global market are unprecedented. How would you assess the impact of China's ecosystem of economic and industrial policy, driven by "socialism with Chinese characteristics," on the free market, capitalist system constructed and maintained by the United States and its democratic allies for seventy years?
53. Of the extensive and systemic economic and industrial policies pursued by the PRC, the mass subsidization of Chinese firms, intellectual property theft, and forced technology transfer are among the most damaging to the global economy.
- a. If confirmed, what policies would you pursue with interagency partners to expose the full scope and scale of intellectual property theft and mass subsidization of Chinese firms, and the resulting harm to the United States, foreign markets, and the global economy? Please be specific.
  - b. If confirmed, how will you use your role to rally like-minded market economies to reinforce long-standing principles on fair market practices such as non-discrimination and competition on a commercial basis without unjust government subsidies and support?
  - c. If confirmed, what steps will you take to advance these important market principles and uphold fair competition?
  - d. In your view, what are the best options for affected United States persons to address and respond to unreasonable and discriminatory CCP-directed industrial policies?

- e. If confirmed, what policies would you pursue to strengthen the protection of critical technology and sensitive data, while still fostering an environment that provides incentives for innovation and competition?
54. China is advancing a “corporate social credit system,” which uses existing financial credit systems, public records, online activity, government licenses and registrations, and other information to collect, aggregate, and integrate data regarding corporate entities that come within the jurisdiction of the PRC, including United States companies operating in the PRC to evaluate and rate certain financial, social, religious, or political behaviors of the entity and its key personnel, and punish or reward the entity based on that rating.
- a. What is your assessment of the “corporate social credit system” and its impact on U.S. companies conducting business in China?
  - b. How will you work to support private sector entities subject to coercion by the PRC, whether by the “corporate social credit system” or by other means?
  - c. Will you encourage U.S. companies, either publicly or privately, not to sacrifice key American values, even under intense pressure by the CCP?
55. Americans can invest directly in numerous Chinese companies listed on U.S. stock exchanges or through mutual funds and exchanged traded funds that include such companies. Some of these companies support the People’s Liberation Army, while others are tied to horrific human rights abuses committed by the Chinese government. The Trump Administration moved to restrict engaging in transactions in publicly traded securities of certain Chinese companies with ties to the People’s Liberation Army, and President Trump signed a law that would require the delisting of foreign company shares from U.S. exchanges if those foreign companies do not comply with U.S. audit inspection requirements for three consecutive years.
- a. If confirmed, how would you contend with this challenge?
  - b. What specific policies would you advocate?
56. The Department of State possesses a wellspring of expertise among economic officers who will continue to play a critical role in fostering a more level playing field for U.S. companies, helping them compete with Chinese companies and succeed despite anti-competitive economic practices employed by China.
- a. Do you commit to fostering a strong corps of economic officers within the Department, including through providing tools and training they need to succeed in addressing issues related to China’s unfair economic practices?
  - b. Do you commit, through issuing All Diplomatic and Consular Posts (ALDAC) cables and via other means, to making sure economic officers prioritize among their various duties

active economic and commercial diplomacy, including providing tangible support to U.S. companies as appropriate, tracking China's anti-competitive economic policies, and developing associated recommendations?

- c. Do you commit to ensuring that economic diplomacy is a top priority of every U.S. ambassador, and that performance of ambassadors will be evaluated in part on their commitment to advancing economic and commercial diplomacy?
57. China's biggest export is not a particular product, but rather corruption. A 2018 study in the *Journal of Public Economic Studies* found that local corruption was higher around known development finance projects in Africa being overseen by Chinese actors. If confirmed, will you commit to highlighting corrupt Chinese practices and prioritize assistance to help counter corruption, including corruption caused or exacerbated by the Chinese government or Chinese companies?

#### **People's Liberation Army**

58. Before the U.S. presidential election in November, then-candidate Biden said on *60 Minutes* that Russia was the greatest "threat" to the United States, while China was the greatest "competitor." My understanding is that he was speaking in terms of the military.
- a. What is your assessment of the respective challenges posed to the United States by the Russian and Chinese militaries?
  - b. Which country poses the greater military challenge, and why?
  - c. Do you believe that the military challenge presented by the People's Liberation Army (PLA) is an urgent, or long-term, challenge? Please explain your position.
59. There have also been concerns about Chinese-Russian coordination, particularly in the military sphere in terms of arms sales and joint exercises.
- a. How would you characterize the China-Russia relationship? What areas of the China-Russia relationship are you most concerned about?
  - b. How do these concerns fit into your broader policy goals to prevent an erosion of U.S. military advantage?
  - c. How do we effectively compete against China and Russia without driving them together?
60. There is widespread and bipartisan agreement that the military balance in the Indo-Pacific is becoming more unfavorable to the United States, and that this presents a grave danger: the erosion of conventional deterrence.
- a. Do you agree that this situation presents a major challenge to United States interests?

- b. How can the Department of State, working in concert with the Department of Defense, support the objective of maintaining a favorable military balance and bolstering deterrence?
61. In June, the United States suspended the entry into the United States of any PRC national on an “F” or “J” visa to study or conduct research in the United States where the individual’s academic or research activities are likely to support a PRC entity that implements and supports the CCP “military-civil fusion” strategy. This policy prevents U.S. research and technological innovation from falling into the hands of our most serious military competitor. Do you commit to retaining this policy?
  62. In December, Chinese military representatives failed to attend a dialogue scheduled with the United States pursuant to the Military Maritime Consultative Agreement—an agreement designed to improve operational safety and review previous unsafe encounters. It is one of multiple mechanisms between the United States and China to limit the risk of military miscalculation and conflict. China has a pattern of suspending military-to-military communications when bilateral tensions increase. Will you prioritize encouraging and pressing China to participate in dialogues designed to reduce miscalculation and avoid conflict, even when bilateral tensions increase?
  63. The PLA has established its first overseas military base in Djibouti. The Department of Defense assesses that the Chinese government is considering other locations on the African continent for future military bases and logistics facilities.
    - a. How will the State Department under the Biden Administration ensure the PLA does not gain a foothold in strategic nodes in Africa, including through diplomatic engagement with our partners?
    - b. What support or initiatives can the United States offer to African nations to make such agreements less attractive?

#### **Human Rights**

64. Last year, Beijing implemented the “National Security Law” in Hong Kong, which effectively put Hong Kong’s legal system and law enforcement under Beijing’s control and severely undermined China’s international treaty obligations to respect Hong Kong’s autonomy and the rights protected in the Basic Law.
  - a. How will the Biden Administration address these violations of international law?
  - b. Will you commit to continue imposing costs on Beijing for its actions in Hong Kong?
65. Millions of Uyghurs and other ethnic Muslims have been detained and disappeared into internment camps or put into forced-labor situations. This includes family members of U.S.-based Uyghurs, who have been advocating for the release of their family members

and highlighting the horrific abuses in Xinjiang and across China. One example is Ekpar Asat, the brother of a U.S. permanent resident. Mr. Asat disappeared in China in 2016 only a few weeks after participating in the Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program.

- a. What can the Biden Administration do to advocate for the immediate and unconditional release of these individuals?
  - b. If confirmed, will you commit to raising this issue, and specific cases, with the Chinese government immediately?
66. Several countries have forcibly returned Uyghurs fleeing persecution and abhorrent human rights abuses by the Chinese Communist Party. How will you and interagency partners work with other nations to discourage, and eventually end, this practice?
67. The major rivers of Asia that flow from the Tibetan Plateau are subject to current and potential dam and diversion projects by China. This has severe environmental, economic, and societal consequences for Tibet. These projects are planned and implemented without the proper involvement of all stakeholders, including the Tibetan people. India and other governments in Asia are increasingly worried about China damming rivers originating in Tibet which serve over a billion people downstream.
- a. Would you commit to raising with Chinese officials the need to fully involve all stakeholders in the preservation of Tibet's fragile watershed?
  - b. Would you call on the Chinese authorities to engage China's neighbors for the development of a regional framework on water security?
68. The Dalai Lama is in his 80's and his successor is yet to be chosen. Beijing has declared that it will involve itself in the succession process, even though the Dalai Lama himself makes such a decision in accordance with traditions of Tibetan Buddhism. How will you promote religious freedom for Tibetans in China and around the world so that they may practice their religion without interference from the Chinese government?
69. The Chinese government continues to "Sinicize" religions, which the Congressional Executive Commission on China describes as "a campaign that aims to bring religion in China under closer official control and into conformity with officially sanctioned interpretations of Chinese culture." These policies affect Christians, Muslims, Han Buddhists, Taoists, and many others. What can the Biden Administration do to support freedom of religious practice for the people of China, free from interference and enforced conformity?
70. In 2019, the Chinese government continued to persecute human rights defenders, such as lawyers who represent defendants accused of political crimes. What can the Biden Administration do to support human rights defenders in China on day one?

71. The Vatican recently extended an agreement with the Chinese government that establishes a process for appointing bishops in China. Under the Agreement, bishops in China are in communion with Rome but also approved by the Chinese government. The details of this agreement have never been made public. Despite the agreement, Catholic bishops not affiliated with the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association continue to face persecution. Will you and whomever is confirmed as Ambassador to the Vatican prioritize religious freedom issues in China in your diplomatic engagements with Vatican officials?

#### **China and Europe**

72. Chinese influence in Europe continues to grow. It has invested billions across Europe and has sought to acquire strategic infrastructure and companies in Europe. European countries are starting to take a much more robust approach to China across the board, including on investment and human rights.
- What is your assessment of China's objectives in Europe and with regard to the transatlantic alliance?
  - How should the United States respond to growing Chinese influence in Europe?
  - What are the areas you think are most ripe for cooperation between the United States and Europe when it comes to China?
73. After years of negotiations, on December 30th, 2020—nearly the final day of the German Council presidency—the European Union (EU) announced it had reached an agreement with China on an investment deal. I am very concerned that this agreement will slow momentum on cooperation among the United States, Europe, and other democracies on our shared challenges related to China.
- What is your view of the EU's decision to conclude this agreement at this moment?
  - What are the economic and geopolitical implications of this agreement? Please be specific. Will it affect the EU's willingness to push back on China for its malign behavior, such as using the EU's new human rights sanctions regime? Do you believe that this agreement will affect, negatively or positively, U.S. attempts to hold China accountable for its malign trade and investment practices?
  - The deal is not yet final, as the European Parliament must ratify it. Will you engage the European Parliament on the investment agreement and, if so, what will be your main messages to them?
74. Last year, I published a report on how the United States and Europe can cooperate on shared challenges related to China, including a chapter on contending with China's anti-competitive economic practices. I argued that the United States and Europe should revitalize trade negotiations, continue important initiatives at the World Trade Organizations such U.S.-EU-Japan efforts on subsidies, fix current sticking points like



ongoing disputes between Boeing and Airbus, coordinate on export controls, and strengthen supply chain resilience. How would you advance these goals? What additional areas would you prioritize?

75. The United States passed legislation regarding export controls in 2018 and has implemented other regulatory changes recently, including changes related to ensuring U.S. products do not support China's military-civil fusion policies. The EU is also starting to advance reforms to its export controls measures. It is important to have multilateral export controls for national security reasons as well as economic ones.
- a. How would you work to build diplomatic consensus for multilateral alignment on export controls that safeguard national security and protect human rights?
  - b. How would you work to ensure a broad agreement that would provide parameters not only to U.S. companies but also companies based in other countries?
76. China is investing heavily in emerging and dual-use technology research and development to become a "scientific and technological superpower". The United States, Japan, and Europe are each individually investing in certain technologies, but they would be much stronger if they were to coordinate research; reduce barriers to joint development; coordinate regulatory practices, and increase shared usage of such technologies.
- a. If confirmed, how will you coordinate with our allies on technology research and development?
  - b. What will your priorities in this sphere look like?
77. The Trump Administration has expanded cooperation with other allies and partners, such as those in Europe, to work together on issues in the Indo-Pacific, including joint Freedom of Navigation Operations, joint statements on the Chinese government's human rights abuses, and joint support for countries negatively affected by China's predatory economic statecraft.
- a. Do you welcome a greater European role in the Indo-Pacific?
  - b. What are concrete priorities and issue areas those allies and partners from outside of the Indo-Pacific can work with the United States to address in this region?

#### CCP Influence

78. Competition with the PRC requires the United States' skillful adaptation to the information environment of the 21st century. If confirmed, how will you coordinate and advance United States public diplomacy and messaging efforts effectively to promote the value of partnership with the United States, highlight the risks and costs of entanglement with the PRC, and push back on CCP propaganda and disinformation?

#### **State and Local Governments**

79. The FBI has found that CCP and PRC intelligence organizations target, infiltrate, and attempt to influence U.S. local, state, and even national-level politicians and certain government organizations, including by hacking into government databases to steal information on U.S. government personnel. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo gave several speeches on this issue during his tenure, including to the National Governors Association.
- a. What is the Biden Administration's plan to inoculate our political system from this malign influence?
  - b. What specific steps will the Biden Administration, including the State Department, engage with state and local political leaders and their staffs on these issues?

#### **Disinformation**

80. At the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic, the CCP intentionally suppressed information about the virus's origins and spread disinformation about the virus across nearly every continent. This is just one example of how harmful CCP disinformation can be to the world.
- a. What can the United States do to combat CCP disinformation?
  - b. How can the United States work with its allies and partners who have shown great resiliency to CCP disinformation, such as Taiwan, to tackle this shared challenge?

#### **Hollywood**

81. Xi Jinping has emphasized the desire to ensure that Hollywood filmmakers use their position to "tell China's story well". This translates into Beijing's overreach into and censorship of Hollywood films through explicit censorship requirements for the Chinese market, boycotts and economic pressure, and acquisitions of industry corporations by Chinese companies. As Hollywood director Judd Apatow recently said, "Instead of us doing business with China and that leading to China being more free, what has happened is that China has bought our silence with their money."
- a. Will the Biden Administration, including yourself and other senior State Department officials, engage the film industry regarding the pernicious impact of censorship by the Chinese government and other authoritarian governments on freedom of expression and other principles that are fundamental to the political system of United States?
  - b. What steps will the Biden Administration take to monitor and stop efforts by Beijing to censor film narratives about China and put pressure on the U.S. film industry and other U.S.-based media?

- c. What are your views on the implications and consequences of Beijing's tactics in Hollywood for the PRC's overall strategy to exercise malign influence across various types of U.S. media? What other types of media in the United States are at risk of being subjected to tactics we are seeing used by Beijing to influence Hollywood?
- 82. In 2019, the Chinese government executed a significant pressure campaign on the National Basketball Association (NBA) over a personal tweet by the Houston Rockets manager supporting democracy advocates in Hong Kong. While certainly not the first, this incident captured the attention of the U.S. public and shed light on the lengths to which the Chinese government is willing to go to silence its critics and shape a favorable environment for the continuation of its repressive policies.
  - 83. In your view, what are the implications of China being able to pressure and punish U.S. persons and companies into accepting or at least not pushing back on the political positions of the Chinese government, even when those positions undermine the fundamental political principles and values of the United States?
  - 84. What can and should private sector actors do about this challenge? What about the U.S. government's role, and how will the Biden Administration address this issue?

**“One Belt, One Road”**

- 85. There has been much written about how China's “One Belt, One Road” initiative (OBOR) as a means by which to increase the economic influence of state-owned Chinese firms in global markets, engender undue PRC political leverage with governments around the world, create a China-centric technology regime, secure dependence on supply chains centered on Chinese companies, export corrupt business practices, and provide greater access to strategic nodes for the People's Liberation Army.
  - a. In your view, what are the goals of the OBOR?
  - b. If confirmed, what actions would you take and what partnerships would you seek to execute concrete economic projects to compete with or reduce the influence of OBOR?
- 86. The United States is seeking to deepen its engagements with emerging partners in Southeast Asia, Africa, and Latin America that are already heavily involved in or welcoming of OBOR projects and investment. In addition to the detrimental impacts of unsustainable or sovereignty-reducing OBOR projects, the enmeshment of these nations with OBOR and PRC influence generally also complicates U.S. efforts to cooperate with them, given their vulnerability to PRC pressure. An example of the kind of country I'm talking about is Cambodia.
  - a. How will the United States approach engagement with countries that fall into this category?

- b. For those countries that have already decided to enmesh themselves with China to a significant extent, to what extent should the United States prioritize helping to build countries' resiliency to Chinese economic pressure through OBOR, or other forms of pressure? How can and how should we be doing so?

#### **5G and Beyond**

- 87. The Trump Administration undertook a major push to keep products from China's Huawei out of 5G networks in countries across the world, especially in allied nations in Europe. Despite criticisms of the style of the approach, multiple countries have chosen to exclude Huawei from their emerging 5G networks, including the United Kingdom, Czech Republic, Poland, Sweden, Estonia, Romania, Denmark, and Latvia.
  - a. Is your approach to keeping 5G networks clean from Chinese equipment and the consequent security hazards going to be different from that of the Trump Administration? How so?
  - b. Looking beyond 5G, what other emerging technologies do you think would create risks for the United States and its allies if we have an undue reliance on untrusted vendors? Are there areas that you will prioritize, and how so?
  - c. The previous Administration began to advance a Clean Networks initiative to "address long-term threats to data privacy, security, human rights and principled collaboration posed to the free world from authoritarian malign actors, including the Chinese Communist Party." What is your view of this initiative?
- 88. Huawei Marine is becoming bigger player in the market to construct, own, and operate undersea cables, which carry \$10 trillion in global business transactions each day, and at least 95 percent of total digital communications. Huawei Marine is owned by Hengtong Group, which has close ties to the People's Liberation Army. The Trump Administration has engaged in financing the construction of undersea cables for Pacific Island partners, as well as engaging with allies and partners considering PRC bids on the security risks.
  - a. What is your view on the challenges presented by greater presence of Huawei Marine in constructing undersea cables?
  - b. How would you use diplomacy to address this issue?

#### **South China Sea**

- 89. The South China Sea continues to be a hotbed of tension and potential escalation in the Indo-Pacific.
  - a. President Biden has said he'd retain the U.S. Freedom of Navigation Operation Program. Do you commit for advocating for regular Freedom of Navigation Operations, even if it raises tensions with China?

- b. What other steps are you planning to take with our allies and partners in the region, including ASEAN, to boost maritime security in this area?
  - c. Do you commit to maintaining the policy that any armed attack on Philippine forces, aircraft, or public vessels in the South China Sea will trigger our mutual defense obligations?
90. ASEAN countries and China are negotiating a South China Sea Code of Conduct. China is pushing ASEAN countries to disallow the presence of outside countries in the South China Sea, and to commit to not conducting certain types of military exercises with its partners. Making such demands are a clear infringement on the sovereignty of our Southeast Asian partners and contrary to U.S. interests.
- a. What are your views on the effort to conclude a code of conduct?
  - b. Do you believe that China has any intent to negotiate a code of conduct in good faith?
91. There have been widespread concerns over China building military bases on artificially constructed islands in the South China Sea. In the coming months or years, China could build a similar military base on Scarborough Reef is currently an unoccupied feature. If confirmed, you could face a renewed crisis with a strategic competitor in the South China Sea, one of the most important waterways in the world.
- a. To what degree do you view the Chinese construction of a military base on Scarborough Reef as a national security challenge for the United States?
  - b. How would you attempt to deter such an action and what would be your approach to addressing a Chinese fait accompli? What would be your broader strategy?
92. For any potential escalation in the South China Sea, the United States at a disadvantage because our basing in the Indo-Pacific is heavily concentrated in Northeast Asia.
- a. How can the State Department, through its diplomatic efforts, help to ensure we are appropriately postured for a potential South China Sea contingency?
  - b. How important are our partners in Southeast Asia to securing a First and Second Island Chain from Chinese dominance and control?

#### **East China Sea**

93. The Chinese Coast Guard continues to maintain a constant presence around the Senkaku Islands, under the administrative control of Japan. The Chinese Air Force has sent large numbers of its planes to the East China Sea throughout 2020, causing great stress to the Japanese Air Self Defense Force. In his call with Prime Minister Suga in November 2020, President-Elect Biden underscored U.S. commitments under Article 5 of our mutual

defense treaty with Japan. Does that reaffirmation include the previous commitments made by Presidents Obama and Trump regarding the Senkaku Islands?

#### **China and Global Health Cooperation**

94. The incoming Administration has stated that global health cooperation with China will be a major priority. The United States invested a lot of resources and personnel over many years to pursue health cooperation with China. That included a close relationship between the U.S. CDC and China's CDC, including co-location arrangements where they worked side-by-side for many years. While co-location arrangements ceased because of concerns about the physical security of U.S. diplomats, cooperation still continued. However, in the world's hour of need at the beginning of a serious pandemic originating in China, the Chinese government's response proved that global health cooperation would always take a back seat to the standing and reputation of the CCP.
- a. While some level of cooperation may be necessary, how can we have confidence in these initiatives without reciprocal good faith efforts by Chinese government interlocutors?
  - b. How will you overcome this fundamental challenge, and why should the American people trust that use of taxpayer dollars and other resources will bear fruit?
  - c. What areas of health cooperation will the incoming Administration prioritize with China? What will be the role of the State Department in this regard?

#### **U.S. Alliances and Partnerships**

##### **Treaty Allies**

95. Among the first calls President-Elect Biden made were to Japan, Australia, and South Korea, where Mr. Biden said he wanted to strengthen cooperation even further in new areas. For each of these allies – Japan, Australia, and South Korea – what are the new areas that the Biden Administration would like to see expanded diplomatic engagement and cooperation? Please be specific.
96. Sustainable alliances require fair burden sharing arrangements. Our host nation support agreements – called Special Measures Agreements – with the Republic of Korea and Japan both need to be renegotiated. If confirmed, will you advocate for reasonable increases in the contributions by the ROK and Japan and also for expanding the cost categories to which they contribute?
97. A rocky Japan-ROK relationship continues to hinder trilateral cooperation in the region, to the detriment of U.S. interests and shared interests among our three countries.
- a. If confirmed, will you prioritize overcoming this challenge?

- b. How will you approach it? What are priority areas of cooperation among the United States, Japan, and the ROK?
98. Do you consider the Philippines to be a strategically important ally of the United States? Please explain your position.
99. The United States military currently cooperates with the Armed Forces of the Philippines on counterterrorism and maritime security. Multiple members of Congress have proposed limiting or cutting off U.S. security assistance to the Philippine military because of concerns over human rights abuses.
- a. Do you believe that taking such a step is in U.S. interests?
  - b. Do you believe that taking such a step would improve human rights conditions in the Philippines?
100. Will you ensure that the U.S. Department of State consults with Congress before taking action on issues that could jeopardize U.S. access to or create significant tensions in our relationships with key defense partners in the Indo-Pacific, especially those in Southeast Asia?
101. Cooperation between the United States and Japan on technology development and regulations is crucial to adapting to, in the words of Hirokazu Hokazono, the chief defense scientist at Japan's Ministry of Defense's Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics Agency, a "security environment [that] is changing at extremely high speed." To counter threats posed by this security environment, the U.S. and Japan will need to adapt quickly to defense technologies such as robotics that originate in the commercial sector.
- a. How can the U.S. and Japan further cooperation between its militaries, private technology industries, and academia to better integrate its civilian and defense technology development?
  - b. How will the Biden administration work with its Japanese counterparts to expand such technology cooperation with other democratic allies, such as Australia and the EU?

#### **Taiwan**

102. A change in the status quo for Taiwan would have huge implications for U.S. strategy and objectives in the region.
- a. If confirmed, what would you do on the diplomatic front to strengthen our relationship with Taiwan and bolster deterrence?
  - b. Would you advise the President to send high-level visitors to Taiwan, boost defense ties, explore negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement, strengthen the economic partnership set up by the Trump Administration, and advocate for Taiwan in international organizations?

- c. Do you commit to fully adhering to the requirement under the Taiwan Relations Act to provide Taiwan with arms of a defensive character?
  - d. China's actions in Hong Kong have accelerated the timeline for the Chinese Communist Party to unify with Taiwan. What will you do now to help ensure the PRC does not use violence or coercion against Taiwan and help Taiwan avoid the same fate as Hong Kong?
103. The previous Administration authorized many critical capabilities via arms sales to Taiwan over the last several years, including fighters to replace and augment those being worn out from Chinese Air Force incursions, ground-launched anti-ship missiles, mobile artillery rocket systems, and surveillance drones.
- a. Do you commit to fulfilling these arms sales with speed and urgency so that the capabilities get to Taiwan in a timely manner?
  - b. Do you commit to ensuring that the Department of State adheres to a regularized process with regard to Taiwan arms sales, including avoiding the practice of bundling?
104. Last year, Assistant Secretary of State David Stilwell gave a speech called, "The United States, Taiwan, and the World: Partners for Peace and Prosperity."
- a. Do you agree with and reaffirm the statements made in this speech? Please explain your position.
  - b. Do you commit to engaging with allies in the Indo-Pacific and Europe to develop support for the U.S. position that Taiwan's future should be determined peacefully and without coercion?
105. Japan's State Minister of Defense Yasuhide Nakayama recently said, "There's a red line in Asia - China and Taiwan. How will Joe Biden in the White House react in any case if China crosses this red line? The United States is the leader of the democratic countries. I have a strong feeling to say: America, be strong!" This statement, which is unprecedented for Japan, reflects that country's significant concerns about Taiwan and the future of U.S. policy.
- What is your response to Minister Nakayama's question? Do you commit to consulting with Japan consistently and extensively about U.S. policy on Taiwan in general and about responding to a Taiwan scenario in particular?
106. Last Congress, Congress passed and the president signed into law the Taiwan Assurance Act, which requires the Department of State to review all guidance documents with respect to our relationship with Taiwan. Shortly thereafter, the State Department declared all "should consider all 'contact guidelines' regarding relations with Taiwan previously issued by the Department of State under authorities delegated to the Secretary of State to be null and void."



- a. Do you plan to sustain this action taken by the Department of State? If not, why not? Please explain your position in detail.
- b. Do you commit to ensuring that any documents related to U.S. Executive Branch engagement with Taiwan are crafted with the intent to deepen and expand United States-Taiwan relations, and that are based on the value, merits, and importance of the United States-Taiwan relationship?
- c. Do you commit to ensuring that any documents related to U.S. Executive Branch engagement with Taiwan are not crafted or implemented in such a way that defers to the preference of the CCP to limit the U.S.-Taiwan relationship?
- d. If the Department of State creates a new “Guidelines of Relations with Taiwan” memorandum, do you commit to sharing that document with appropriate congressional committees as required by the Taiwan Assurance Act?

**South and Southeast Asia**

107. The Indo-Pacific Strategy enshrined the principle of ASEAN centrality in pursuing U.S. objectives in Southeast Asia. ASEAN also published an “Indo-Pacific Outlook” that aligns with the U.S. Indo-Pacific Strategy.
- a. Do you agree that ASEAN should be a central element to U.S. strategy in the region?
  - b. What will be your top priorities for strengthening U.S. partnerships with ASEAN member states and institutions?
  - c. Will you continue initiatives with ASEAN started by the previous Administration, such as the U.S.-ASEAN Smart Cities Partnership and U.S.-ASEAN Health Futures, as well as cooperation with ASEAN on human capital development objectives?
  - d. Do you agree that it is in our national interest to strengthen our security cooperation with Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Thailand? If so, please elaborate specifically on the U.S. interests it serves. If confirmed, what specific steps will you take to advance security partnerships with these nations, including your views on continuing arms sales, engaging in capacity-building, and cooperating on advanced technology with South and Southeast Asian partner countries facing China’s coercion and growing military power?
108. Implementation of the Countering America’s Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) is an important check on Russian defense and intelligence entities. At the same time, CAATSA contains a waiver authority to avoid undue damage to U.S. partners such as India, Vietnam, and Indonesia.

Please explain your position regarding the implementation of CAATSA on critical U.S. partners who purchase Russian defense equipment, and your understanding of whether existing waiver authority is sufficient to protect U.S. partnerships.

**Burma**

109. The United States supports a peaceful, prosperous, and democratic Burma that respects the human rights of its people.
- a. What will the Biden Administration do to support Burma's democratic transition, especially following its November 2020 election?
  - b. In addition to the persecution of Rohingya Muslims, what other issues will be the Biden Administration's top priorities in terms of the human rights situation in Burma?

**India**

110. India is a crucial U.S. economic and security partner in the Indo-Pacific. Under the past administration, U.S.-India relations strengthened significantly with frequent high-level visits, deepened defense cooperation, and a mutual commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific.
- a. How will the Biden Administration continue to build on this momentum to deepen relations with India? Will you make that a priority?
  - b. Now that the United States and India have signed all the relevant defense-enabling agreements, what should be the top priorities for growing our security partnership?
  - c. What will you do to navigate the ongoing trade disputes and human rights issues with India, and how can the United States balance legitimate concerns about India's trade practices and human rights policies with other priorities in the relationship?
111. Tensions between China and India flared last summer, resulting in casualties on both sides. Will the Biden Administration continue to provide diplomatic and intelligence support to India and accelerate requests for defense articles to India?
112. The United States and India remain locked in a dispute about Lincoln House. Various Indian government ministries are preventing the U.S. government from completing a years-old transaction to sell the property. This is an unnecessary irritant in bilateral ties.
- a. Do you commit to making the resolution of the Lincoln House issue a priority with India, and to directing the U.S. Ambassador to India to do the same?
  - b. The Indian Ministry of Defense is also involved in this issue. Do you commit to ensuring relevant U.S. Department of Defense officials are briefed on the issue, and to ensuring they raise it with their own counterparts as well?

113. India has greatly increased its role in the Indo-Pacific region, including through the Quad and by deepening partnerships with Southeast Asia.
- a. What role do you envision for U.S.-India cooperation to advance regional objectives in the Indo-Pacific?
  - b. What are some areas you believe are ripe for U.S.-India cooperation with other partners in the region?

**The Quad**

114. The Quad is an increasingly important part of the U.S. cooperation structure in the Indo-Pacific. The Quad has held regular discussions over the last several years on a wide range of issues, such as countering disinformation, strengthening supply chain resiliency, and coordinating efforts to support countries vulnerable to malign and coercive economic actions in the Indo-Pacific region. Working with our partners in and through the Quad will be crucial to U.S. interests, and helps establish habits of cooperation amongst democracies against hostile authoritarian powers in the Indo-Pacific.
- a. Do you commit to prioritizing the Quad as means to advance U.S. interests and expand collaboration with partners in the Indo-Pacific?
  - b. In the coming year especially, what will be the Biden Administration's priorities for the Quad?
  - c. Will the Biden Administration pursue a Quad meeting of the presidents and prime ministers of the United States, Australia, Japan, and India?
  - d. Besides more high-level summits, how can the United States build on the momentum of the last few years and increase collaboration amongst Quad members?
115. In 2016, the Obama Administration labeled India a "major defense partner," a designation supported by Congress in the Fiscal Year 2017 National Defense Authorization Act. Some have called for an amendment to the Arms Export Control Act to facilitate more defense sales to India and help solidify it as a Major Defense Partner. Does the Biden Administration support such a step?
116. The Obama Administration launched the Defense Technology and Trade Initiative with India promote joint co-development and production of defense systems. Thus far, that objective has not been realized.
- a. To what do you attribute this?
  - b. Will the Biden Administration pursue greater cooperation under DTTI with India? If so, what will be the Administration's key priorities?

- c. Will the Biden Administration advocate for India’s membership in the UN Security Council and in the Nuclear Suppliers Group?
- d. How will the Biden Administration cooperate with India on 5G, digital security, and other emerging technology issues? Please be specific.

**Pacific Islands**

- 117. What will the Biden Administration do to ensure long-term sustainable relationships and policies in the Pacific Island region?
- 118. What role do the Pacific Islands play in broader U.S. strategy goals in the Indo-Pacific?
- 119. Will the Biden Administration prioritize renegotiating compacts with the three Federated American States in the Pacific Islands?
- 120. The Pacific Islands region has become an increasingly contested area between the United States and China. In your assessment, what are the implications for U.S. interests of more pronounced presence and influence by China in the Pacific Islands? What forms of influence are we seeing from China that could have a negative impact on U.S. interests?

**North Korea**

- 121. The threat of North Korea’s nuclear and ballistic missile programs has been an intractable problem for the United States across Republican and Democratic administrations.
  - a. Please describe the major elements of the policy you will pursue with respect to North Korea. Please describe in detail in what ways the Biden Administration’s approach will differ from that of the Trump Administration.
  - b. In light of evidence of continued work at its nuclear sites and on its missile capabilities, do you believe that North Korea has any intention of giving up its nuclear weapons and related missile programs? Why or why not?
  - c. How will you approach the challenge of North Korea’s nuclear weapons and ballistic missile program? Will the Biden Administration pursue negotiations with North Korea for the purposes of reaching an agreement with respect to its nuclear weapons program and/or missile programs?
  - d. Do you believe that the stated goal of U.S. policy should continue to be denuclearization? If not, why not?
  - e. Alternatively, will you pursue and advocate for a more limited arms control-style agreement? One that does not require North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons and long-range missiles?

122. Please answer the following with respect to North Korea's nuclear program and U.S. policy on denuclearization.
- a. Do you see dismantlement of the fissile material production facilities at Yongbyon as the right first step in a denuclearization process?
  - b. Do you see the dismantlement of any other sites, including currently undisclosed sites, as important to continuing the denuclearization process?
  - c. How important is a full Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) declaration of its nuclear facilities and stockpiles? Do you believe that should be part of any agreement with North Korea?
  - d. Do you see disclosure of all missile sites as an essential component of an agreement with North Korea on its weapons programs?
  - e. In your view, what are the essential elements of any verification and enforcement mechanisms on an agreement with North Korea regarding its nuclear program? How will the Biden Administration overcome previous obstacles to verification and enforcement of the North's commitments?
123. The Iran deal included sunset provisions on Iran's conventional arms embargo (in 2020) and nuclear-related ballistic missile activity (in 2023). The Iran deal also had no 'end use monitoring' scheme in place to ensure sanctions relief did not lead to support for the Iranian nuclear program.
- a. Would you advocate for or pursue a deal with North Korea that included similar sunsets? Why or why not? Please explain your position.
  - b. Would you advocate for or pursue a deal with North Korea that did not include robust 'end-use monitoring' for sanctions relief? What, in your view, are the essential elements of a robust 'end use monitoring' program?
124. Calling for denuclearization is one thing, but it is quite another to verify that steps towards denuclearization have been taken. An effective verification and enforcement regime for an agreement with North Korea would likely require an unprecedented level of time and resources from the United States, its allies, and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in one of the most secretive and restrictive environments in the world.
- a. Will there be a primary role for U.S. inspectors in any verification agreements with North Korea?
  - b. How do you plan to include IAEA inspectors for verification, and for what functions?

125. In his 2019 New Year's speech, Kim Jong-un spoke of developing the DPRK's civilian atomic energy capabilities. Do you support a civilian nuclear program or a civilian space launch program in North Korea? Why or why not? Please explain your position.
126. The South Korean government has been supportive of the United States' decision to engage the highest level of the North Korean regime to resolve the nuclear issue, rather than attempting to engage at lower working levels.
- What are your views on pursuing leader-to-leader diplomacy with North Korea? Will you continue it or pursue something different? Why?
  - Regardless of whether the Biden Administration keeps engaging with North Korea at a high official level, what role will necessary working-level discussions—such as those on technical disarmament—play in your diplomatic framework towards the DPRK?
  - If confirmed as Secretary of State, do you commit to engage with South Korea, Japan, and other relevant partners on Korean Peninsula issues prior to and following high-level engagements with the DPRK?
127. Secretary Pompeo appointed a Special Representative solely in charge of North Korea policy.
- If confirmed, what will be your staffing arrangement at the Department of State regarding North Korea?
  - Who will be managing day-to-day North Korea policy at the State Department?
128. Despite ample evidence that North Korea continues to develop its weapons programs, China and Russia have called for sanctions relief and increased economic ties. Though the U.S. has supported improved inter-Korean ties, South Korean requests for sanctions relief also caused concern among U.S. officials.
- What are the goals of the United States' and the United Nations' sanctions regimes on North Korea? Please describe your understanding.
  - In your view, should the United States and the United Nations lift any sanctions on North Korea at this time? Why or why not? Please explain your position in detail.
  - If confirmed, under what circumstances would you consider lifting sanctions on North Korea, either in whole or in part?
  - If confirmed, under what circumstances would you consider pursuing an incremental easing of sanctions over time?
  - Do you think that providing sanctions relief to North Korea to get them back to the negotiating table is an effective strategy? Why or why not? Please explain your position.

129. Please answer the following with respect to the impact of sanctions on North Korea.
- a. What evidence, if any, is there that sanctions are having a significant impact on North Korea's domestic economy?
  - b. What measures, if any, would enable sanctions to cause North Korean leaders to agree to abandon its nuclear and missile programs?
130. The Obama Administration failed to secure congressional support for the Iran deal.
- a. If confirmed, and if the Biden Administration pursues an agreement with North Korea regarding its weapons programs, do you commit to regular briefings at both the Member and staff levels in advance of and following negotiations with North Korea?
  - b. If confirmed, and if the Biden Administration pursues an agreement with North Korea regarding its weapons programs, do you personally commit to appear before this committee prior to the completion of any such agreement for public hearings on the matter?
  - c. Do you believe that an agreement with North Korea regarding its weapons programs should be submitted to the Senate as a treaty for the Senate's consent to ratification? If no, please explain in detail.
131. Any agreement the United States pursues with North Korea will have a direct impact on the security of South Korea and Japan. If confirmed, and if the Biden Administration pursues an agreement with North Korea regarding its weapons programs, do you commit to coordinating with and consulting South Korea and Japan before making any binding commitments in an agreement with North Korea?
132. The Trump Administration cancelled or postponed U.S.-ROK military exercises in an effort to create diplomatic stakes for denuclearization talks with North Korea.
- a. Do you agree with this policy? Why or why not? Please explain your position.
  - b. Would you agree to limit U.S.-ROK military activities if the ROK recommended doing so?
133. Are you willing to impose sanctions on or take other economic action against Chinese government entities if they are implicated in sanctions evasion?
134. In 2017, you wrote that China was the "most visible component" of the Obama Administration's efforts to put pressure on North Korea, and that this was because China had finally demonstrated some willingness to uphold UN sanctions and curb its exports to the North. However, China is at best an inconsistent partner, and it is once again evading sanctions and pushing for their removal.

- a. How will the Biden Administration engage with China on the North Korea issue, generally? Is China a reliable partner on North Korea? Please explain your position in detail.
  - b. Should U.S. strategy really depend on China's willingness to put pressure on the North given its track record of sanctions evasion?
135. North Korea routinely engages in cyberattacks and other cyber operations to fund its weapons program, evade sanctions, and promote disinformation about the Kim regime. In 2019, the UN noted it was investigating at least 35 instances of North Korean cyberattacks across 35 countries, and 2020 has demonstrated North Korea's continued commitment to this form of financial and cyber-crime.
- a. How will the Biden Administration prioritize building resiliency against and stopping North Korean cyberattacks?
  - b. Do you commit to ensuring that North Korean cyberattacks are an issue that will be addressed in any denuclearization talks with North Korea?

## EUROPE

### Transatlantic Security

#### North Atlantic Treaty Association (NATO)

136. For years, both Republicans and Democrats alike pushed NATO allies to increase their defense spending for their own protection and for the well-being of the alliance. During President Trump's tenure, NATO allies increased their defense spending by more than \$100 billion, and nine allies meet the spending benchmarks, up from only three in 2014. This re-investment demonstrates a strong commitment to NATO and is a win for the United States and the alliance.
- a. Will you continue to press our allies to prioritize their own defense and our mutual security, including by ensuring allies are spending on equipment and not just personnel?
  - b. There has been a lot of focus on the NATO Wales Summit pledge that all allies would spend 2% of their GDP on defense and 20% of that amount on equipment. How useful is the two percent spending pledge as a metric of an ally's defense readiness and commitment to NATO?
  - c. Should NATO re-negotiate a better metric? What other metrics would you suggest?



**European Sovereignty/PESCO**

137. Do you view the various European attempts to establish a sovereign Europe and a European army, or PESCO, as complimentary of, or a threat to, NATO? How specifically will these efforts benefit the United States and NATO and how will they threaten or harm them?
138. How will you ensure Europe understands the importance of participation by non-EU allies in these new defense institutions?

**U.S. Troop Levels in Europe**

139. The Trump Administration sought to re-evaluate the number of U.S. service members in the European theater, as well as the location of EUCOM and AFRICOM headquarters. While this final decision will be taken by the Department of Defense, the decision to move troops to or from an allied country has foreign policy implications both for our allies and our adversaries.
- a. Do you believe that the decision to decrease troop levels in Europe is a good decision for overall U.S. foreign policy? What role should the State Department and diplomacy have in making future decisions about troop posture?
  - b. Countries in NATO's south and east have stated that they would be interested in additional U.S. troops. What is your view on placing additional troops in these regions? Would the Administration consider allies that border the Black Sea, such as Romania?

**China, Europe, and the United States**

140. Europe has begun to wake up to the threat posed by the People's Republic of China (PRC). Last fall, I published a report recommending strong engagement with our European allies on China. The EU High Representative for Foreign Policy proposed a U.S.-EU dialogue on China, and Secretary Pompeo wisely accepted. However, this is just the start, and many challenges remain.
- a. How will the Biden Administration maintain this momentum on cooperation with our European allies?
  - b. If confirmed, on what China-focused issues do you intend to initially engage Europe? Which do you see as most ripe for potential success?
  - c. It is not just greater military presence, investment in ports, 5G telecommunications networks, and other critical infrastructure that pose mutual security risks to the United States and Europe. It is also CCP political influence in our education systems, media, and local and national politics. What is the Biden Administration's plan to work with the Europeans to protect our societies from this malign influence? How will the Biden Administration work to ensure we share the same threat assessments with our European and

other democratic allies? Is additional diplomatic engagement or intelligence sharing necessary?

### Russia & the Arctic

#### **Russia**

141. The U.S. relationship with Russia is at its lowest point in decades. Many of the traditional channels of dialogue have been slowly severed. At the same time, Russia has positioned itself, at the center of many of the world's current conflicts: Syria, Nagorno-Karabakh, Ukraine, and Libya.
- a. What is the most productive way to demonstrate U.S. objections to Russia's bad behavior?
  - b. What role should sanctions play in pushing back on Russia? How effective has our sanctions regime been in curtailing Russian malign behavior? Have they inadvertently helped Russia? And how can we design sanctions to ensure we have a deterrent effect without helping Putin accomplish other goals?
  - c. It is very important that we implement a comprehensive Russia strategy, in which we have multiple tracks, including dialogues. What will be the Biden Administration's comprehensive Russia strategy? What will you emphasize?
  - d. The past several U.S. Administrations have tried to "reset" the U.S. relationship with Russia, and each has failed. French President Macron is currently attempting a reset with Russia to the dismay of Europe and NATO's eastern allies who are beefing up their defenses with an eye toward Russia. Will this Administration attempt a "reset" with Russia?
  - e. How will you work with the Europeans, who have differing perspectives on Russia, to ensure that NATO and the EU maintain a united view of the Russian threat and a united response?
  - f. What is your stance on disinformation campaigns and cyberattacks against the U.S. and the Central and Eastern European nations from sources within Russia and elsewhere? What role, if any, do you see for the U.S. in stemming Kremlin misinformation flowing to the Russian people about the U.S. and its allies? In this vein, what do you see as the role of the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty?
  - g. Do you support more dialogues between the Russian and American people? How do you propose we strengthen U.S.-Russia people-to-people ties? Is that possible at the current moment or in the near future?
142. On January 17, 2021, Russian opposition politician Alexei Navalny returned home to Russia from Germany, where he had spent the last five months being treated for poisoning with a nerve agent from the Novichok family. This poisoning was almost certainly organized and perpetrated by the Russian government under the leadership of Vladimir

Putin. Immediately upon his return to Russia, Mr. Navalny was arrested and has been put into prison for at least 30 days after a rushed, sham trial.

- a. After his arrest, Mr. Navalny's team released a list of eight people close to Vladimir Putin that they would like to see sanctioned. Do you believe that the United States and its allies should take up Mr. Navalny's request? Would doing so set a negative or positive precedent for the future use of sanctions?
- b. How much support, and of what kind, do you believe that the United States should give to Mr. Navalny and other Russian opposition figures?

#### **The Arctic**

143. Russia has militarized much of its Arctic coastline, and China has claimed to be a "near Arctic" state. Meanwhile, the effects of a changing climate greatly worry our fellow members of the Arctic Council.
  - a. If confirmed, will your State Department look at the Arctic through a climate lens or a security lens?
  - b. To what extent will engagement in and with the Arctic Council be a priority for the Administration?
  - c. What role do you believe that NATO should play in the Arctic?
  - d. Are there areas in which the United States can work with Russia to accomplish shared goals in the Arctic? Do you see the Arctic as an area where we could have a productive relationship with Russia?

#### **Eastern Europe**

#### **Eastern Europe**

144. President Biden has said a goal of his Administration would be to "Build Back Better" the U.S. relationship with our allies in Europe. I welcome efforts to work with our allies to resolve our differences and tackle today's and tomorrow's challenges. While this push is geared toward our tense relationships with Germany and France, maintaining strong ties with our partners and allies in Eastern Europe, like the Baltics, Greece, and Romania, is critical.
  - a. Do you commit to supporting and prioritizing our allies in the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea, and Central and Eastern Europe?
  - b. Will the Administration develop a Black Sea strategy to push back on Russia and coordinate U.S. allies and partners that reside in this strategic region?

**The Black Sea**

145. With Russia's illegal annexation and militarization of Crimea and the emergence of Turkey's Blue Homeland doctrine, the strategic Black Sea region has grown increasingly important and unstable.
- What more do we need to do to protect allies in the Black Sea and help them protect themselves?
  - How can we encourage more collaboration between U.S. allies and partners in the Black Sea?
  - What equipment or technical assistance is needed to ensure our allies and partners are stable and secure?

**Three Seas Initiative**

146. If confirmed, how will the Department interact with the Three Seas Initiative? Do you see it as an economic initiative, or a geopolitical one?

**Hungary**

147. Hungary, an EU member and NATO ally known in part for its 1956 revolution against its Soviet occupation, has grown increasingly autocratic under Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and his political party, Fidesz. In what Orbán calls an "illiberal democracy," he and his affiliates have captured and consolidated the media, pressured civil society, forced one of the country's top universities to leave the country, cozied up to Russia and China, and increased corruption by Orbán-linked companies and Hungarians. The pressure on independent media has gotten so bad that RFE/RL re-opened its Hungarian service last year to ensure that citizens had at least one independent news outlet.
- The Obama Administration policy of shunning Hungary did not and will not solve the problem of the country's democratic backsliding. Neither did the Trump Administration's policy of hugging Hungary closer. What do you believe is the right balance between carrots and sticks for Hungary?
  - What should be the U.S. role in ensuring Hungary remains a democracy and how should the U.S. work with the EU on this issue?
  - Will the United States put diplomatic support behind the EU's efforts to tie the rule of law to disbursement of EU funding?
  - If confirmed, will you ensure the President appoints an Ambassador to Hungary that will have the backing from Washington that is necessary to stand up to Orbán and Fidesz?

**Bulgaria**

148. In December, Bulgaria vetoed the opening of EU accession talks with North Macedonia over a bilateral language and cultural dispute. While the dispute is bilateral, this veto has wider geopolitical impacts for the region, the EU, and the United States. It is in the interest of the United States for the Balkan countries, especially North Macedonia which has made many difficult reforms and changes to reach this point, to be rewarded for these reforms and given what it was promised. It is also in the interest of the EU and the United States to have Balkan countries join the West rather than rely on Russia, China, and other malign actors for economic and political support.

How involved should the United States be in this process? If confirmed, what will you do to push Bulgaria and North Macedonia to resolve their disputes outside of the EU process?

**Kosovo-Serbia**

149. Resolving the Kosovo-Serbia dispute would go a long way toward advancing stability and security in the Western Balkans. In an effort to support this, the Trump Administration appointed two Special Envoys, one for Serbia-Kosovo Dialogue and another for the Western Balkans. An EU-led Kosovo-Serbia Dialogue is also underway, led by EU Special Representative Miroslav Lajčák. U.S. and EU efforts to reconcile Kosovo and Serbia have recently seemed at odds with each other, not complimentary. The Trump Administration was able to secure an economic agreement between the two, but a full compromise agreement has yet to be secured.

- a. How does the Biden Administration plan to engage in the current Kosovo-Serbia dialogue?
- b. If confirmed, would your State Department appoint a Special Envoy to this dispute? If so, how will you assign that work? Will you look to an outside envoy or to someone within the Foreign Service? If a Foreign Service Officer, how will he or she be politically empowered to take on this role?
- c. If you do intend to appoint a Special Envoy to Kosovo-Serbia, how would you instruct him or her to interact with EU Special Representative Lajčák?
- d. What support, political or otherwise, does the Biden Administration plan to give to the process? What carrots and sticks can be used to incentivize each side to compromise?

**Bosnia & Herzegovina**

150. Last year marked the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Dayton Peace Accords, which brought peace to Bosnia in 1995. The Accords currently serve as the basis for the country's constitution, and scholars and policy-makers—including President-elect Biden—agreed in a statement released on Dayton's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary that reforms in Bosnia are incomplete, and that the process is no longer working for the country and its people. Its leaders are corrupt and under sanction, its youth are migrating to Europe for a better life, and global malign actors

are using Bosnia as a gateway to Europe. President Biden's statements about Bosnia during the 2020 presidential campaign and throughout the transition (as President-elect) seem to indicate that the country will be a priority of his Administration.

- a. What are President Biden's and your plans to help bring stability and good governance to Bosnia and its people?
- b. Will the Biden Administration, alongside the EU, put political efforts into securing a more permanent constitution for Bosnia and Herzegovina?

#### **Belarus**

151. Since the August 9th presidential election, Belarusians have peacefully protested in unprecedented numbers to contest the official results, which fraudulently awarded Alexander Lukashenka another term. The government has responded to these peaceful protests with violence, initiating a campaign of disappearances, arrests, torture, and violence against the protestors and journalists.
  - a. At the end of 2020, the Senate confirmed Julie Fisher to be U.S. Ambassador to Belarus—our first ambassador in the country in 12 years. What will you instruct her to prioritize during her time in Minsk? How do we ensure that her presence in country is not used as a signal of support for the Lukashenka regime?
  - b. Since the protests began, the United States has increased its support of civil society in Belarus. What more can the United States, along with European allies, do to assist Belarusian advocates of democracy?
  - c. Are U.S., EU, UK, and Canadian sanctions having an effect on the regime? If not, what are our other options?

#### **Georgia**

152. Since its independence, Georgia has generally made good progress toward democracy and implementing market-based economic reforms. Georgia has also been a strong U.S. partner with ambitions to join the Euro-Atlantic community through the EU and NATO. However, over the past few years, the country has suffered democratic backsliding and oligarchic capture of the judiciary, media, and the ruling political party.
  - a. What levers can be used to push Georgians, including and especially the ruling party Georgian Dream, to reform Georgia's judiciary and complete electoral reforms?
  - b. Has the political and governance situation in Georgia reached the point at which we should re-evaluate our relationship with the country, including by conditioning certain aid to Georgia?

- c. Would a revival of the U.S.-Georgia FTA discussions incentivize Georgia and its political elites to relinquish power and support reforms, or would it reward bad behavior?
- d. Should the United States work to revive the Anaklia port project? How much should security and geopolitics factor in to projects like the Anaklia port?
- e. What mechanisms does the United States have to encourage the opposition to reform and consolidate itself in an effort to serve as a more effective check on the pro-Russian ruling party?
- f. How will the United States engage the Europeans and the EU to present a united front in Georgia and jointly apply pressure towards the reforms?

#### **Nagorno-Karabakh**

- 153. During the two month war between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the Nagorno-Karabakh region, both sides were documented committing human rights violations. Verified videos showed the decapitation of captives, the desecration of bodies, and extrajudicial executions. While Russia brokered a ceasefire, a long-term peace agreement was not reached.
  - a. If confirmed, how will you engage with both Armenia, Azerbaijan, and regional stakeholders such as Russia and Turkey to ensure that these crimes are subject to accountability?
  - b. As a co-chair of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group, what should the United States do differently to push the two countries to agree to a resolution of this conflict?

#### **Ukraine**

- 154. You served in the Obama Administration during Russia's 2014 invasion of Ukraine.
  - a. What lessons did you take from that experience?
  - b. Was the U.S. response in the initial days of Russia's invasion of Crimea adequate? In retrospect, what steps, if any should have been taken to move convincingly convince Putin to reverse course, early in that crisis and before Russia invaded eastern Ukraine?
- 155. Ukraine continues to fight two wars: one with the Kremlin and its various attempts to undermine Ukraine's freedom and independence; and the other with its own demons, particularly the entrenched corruption that has so often undermined Ukraine's democratic transition and Euro-Atlantic ambitions.
  - a. If confirmed, will your State Department support the continued provision of lethal and non-lethal military equipment to the Government of Ukraine to support the defense of their territory against Russian-orchestrated fighters in the east of the country? Do you believe the

current level of U.S.-provided training for Ukraine's military should increase, decrease, or remain the same?

- b. What pressure and leverage do we have on the Ukrainian government to ensure they continue their anti-corruption reforms?
- c. Should the United States continue to condition certain types of assistance on continued economic and anti-corruption reforms? Should existing conditions for aid be expanded? What further incentives does the United States, along with our European partners, have to encourage Ukraine to complete its land reform, decentralization, privatization of state-owned enterprises, and creation of an independent and responsive judiciary?

#### Crimea

- 156. In 2018, Secretary Pompeo issued his Crimea Declaration reaffirming U.S. policy of non-recognition of Russia's illegal claims over Crimea. If confirmed, will you uphold this declaration?
- 157. Many have expressed grave concerns about Russia's human rights violations in Crimea, including a crackdown on the Crimean Tatar community. If confirmed, what additional actions will you take to hold Russian authorities accountable for their human rights abuses in Crimea?

#### Turkey

- 158. Turkey—once thought to be a secular democratic example to its neighbors in the Middle East—has become increasingly authoritarian and belligerent. Our NATO allies are growing increasingly worried that Turkey is no longer a good and reliable member that will work together within NATO for a common defense. Its dalliances with Russia, support for the authoritarian regime in Azerbaijan, dishonest actions on refugees, drilling for oil in Cypriot waters, behavior in Libya, and constant violations of the airspace of its neighbor and fellow ally, Greece, all seem to confirm this fear.
  - a. How should NATO deal with a member nation who no longer wants to play by the rules, be it Turkey today or another ally in the future? How will you instruct your ambassador to NATO to address this problem?
  - b. Do you agree with Congress on the necessity for the United States to sanction Turkey for their purchase of the Russian-made S-400 air defense system? If not, what steps would you have preferred to see in response to this purchase?
  - c. What concerns do you have about the emerging nexus between Turkey and Russia? Should the U.S. actively work to undermine that relationship? If so, how? Should this relationship and alliance flourish, what risks would that condominium pose for the U.S. and its interests in the region and around the world? In such an instance, do you believe that actions should be taken to remove Turkey from NATO?



- d. If confirmed, would your State Department commit to continuing to support the cases of the three locally-hired U.S. embassy and consulate employees who have been accused, detained, and in some cases convicted, of involvement in the attempted presidential coup in 2016?
- e. In addition to jailing U.S. embassy employees, Turkey is the second worst jailer of journalists in the world, falling behind only China. How does the Biden Administration plan to make clear to Turkey that these violations of democratic freedoms are fundamentally incompatible with the Euro-Atlantic community of which Turkey purports to be a member? What consequences should Turkey face if it does not change course?
- f. Turkey's arrests and abuses of academics, political opponents, and religious and ethnic minorities have also become increasingly common and concerning. What steps would you take to ensure Turkey fully meets its obligations under international human rights and religious freedom laws? How will your State Department confront the various issues faced by the Ecumenical Patriarchate of the Orthodox Church, which is based in Istanbul?

#### Central Asia

159. The five post-Soviet Central Asian republics, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, or C5, have often not been prioritized in U.S. foreign policy. During the past twenty years, the United States has largely seen these nations exclusively through a counter-terrorism or Afghanistan lens, despite their general lack of terroristic activities. The Defense Department has lumped them in with the Middle Eastern nations in CENTCOM, while the State Department's South and Central Asia grouping separates the five countries from China and Russia.
- a. If confirmed, what elements will be the focus of your Central Asia policy?
  - b. In a world that is shifting from the earlier focus on counterterrorism to a focus on great power competition, how do you believe the State Department should interact with the C5?
  - c. The C5 countries have poor human rights records. However, as Russia and China jockey for influence in the region, some worry that a singular focus by the United States on human rights would likely alienate the C5, as it has in the past. In your assessment, what is the proper balance between human rights, economics, and security in U.S. engagement with the C5?

#### Western Europe

##### **Germany**

160. The U.S.-Germany relationship has been increasingly strained over the past years. Among our points of disagreement are the NordStream II pipeline, military spending, attitudes towards China, and questions of the use of nuclear weapons.

- a. What steps will you hope to take to improve the U.S. relationship with Germany? Would you recommend that the U.S. return its troops to Germany and maintain its combatant commands for Europe and Africa in Germany?
- b. Under German leadership, the European Union just concluded an investment deal with China. How do you view the German government's attitudes towards China, doing business with China, and their recently published Indo-Pacific Strategy?
- c. Do you believe that the NordStream II pipeline should be completed? Do you commit to following the law and implementing the Protecting Europe's Energy Security Act and the Protecting Europe's Energy Security Clarification Act?

#### **Greece**

161. The U.S.-Greece relationship is currently as strong as it has ever been. Greece resides in a tumultuous and tense Eastern Mediterranean neighborhood, with daily Turkish violations of its airspace, thousands of migrants arriving on Greek territory, and increased Russian and Chinese activity in the region's waters and on land. In response to this growing pressure, an Eastern Mediterranean alliance is emerging between Greece, Israel, and Cyprus on defense and energy. Egypt has even joined the Mediterranean Gas Group.
- a. What will the Biden Administration do to continue to strengthen our relationship with Greece? Will the Administration give support to the emerging Eastern Mediterranean alliance?
  - b. Greece has expressed strong interest in purchasing F-35s, but it may not be able to outright afford them. Should Greece have these planes and what mechanisms should the United States use to assist with this purchase?
  - c. Even before COVID-19, but especially after, Greece needs foreign direct investment (FDI) in several sectoral areas. They would prefer investment from the West rather than China. How will the Biden Administration encourage American companies to invest in Greece to support our strong bilateral relationship, benefit both of our economies, and prevent additional malign investment in such an important partner?

#### **UK/Brexit**

162. In December, the United Kingdom and the European Union agreed to a free trade deal that would prevent the UK from crashing out of the bloc. While the agreement prevented the worst economic and geopolitical outcomes, there are likely to be disagreements and problems with the deal's implementation in the coming years.
- a. What opportunities does the UK's new relationship with the EU present for the United States? What risks and obstacles does the new arrangement present for the U.S.?

relationships with both the EU and UK? Opportunities and risks for NATO and the transatlantic relationship?

- b. The UK recently increased its defense spending and is due to publish its Integrated Security and Defense Review in the near future. How will you engage the UK on the future of their foreign and defense policy? What are your priorities for the future of the U.S.-UK defense relationship?
  - c. If confirmed, how will you and the Administration engage the UK and Ireland to ensure the Good Friday Agreement remains upheld and the government of Northern Ireland remains functioning?
163. While the UK has been negotiating its divorce from the EU, it has simultaneously been negotiating a free trade agreement with the U.S. It has already concluded trade agreements with Japan and Singapore.
- a. Do you support concluding a free trade agreement with the UK? What role will you play in the process?
  - b. How will a U.S.-UK FTA affect the United States strategically and geopolitically?

#### European Union

##### **Trade Disputes**

164. I support the Biden Administration's efforts to re-engage and coordinate with our European allies, but while the tone of the United States towards Europe has changed, difficulties and disagreements in the transatlantic relationship remain.
- a. The dispute between Boeing and Airbus must be resolved as soon as possible. How will the State Department work with other U.S. departments and agencies to solve the dispute and remove a huge irritant from the transatlantic relationship?
  - b. Will the Biden Administration lift the Section 232 tariffs from our allied partners? How will the Biden Administration use this tool to confront shared national security threats, such as China, in the future?

##### **Tech Policy**

165. The EU and certain members within it have been pushing for "strategic autonomy" and "digital sovereignty," that would give Europe much more power to decide how tech companies – most of which are American and Chinese – are allowed to operate in that hugely important region. The EU also aims to bolster a European tech sector that has lagged behind. However, initial proposals would seem to create barriers to entry for U.S. companies in the form of taxes, tariffs, fines, and anti-trust legislation, which, in effect, creates a decoupling from the United States. This outcome would be damaging both for the

EU and the United States, and would severely hinder our joint ability to compete with the PRC as it seeks to become a scientific and technological superpower.

- a. What can the United States and the EU do to stay on the same page regarding tech policy? Is there room for a compromise between the two?
- b. If confirmed, will you prioritize convincing the Europeans that it is both of our interests to align our digital policies and strategies to compete with China? How so?
- c. If confirmed, what areas of potential cooperation would you prioritize?

**United States-EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA)**

166. A free trade agreement between the EU and the United States could be an economic and strategic win for both sides of the Atlantic if negotiated carefully. However, the abandoned Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (T-TIP) demonstrated the difficulties of this effort. Given China's coercive and dishonest economic practices, a carefully considered trade agreement between our two sides could potentially bolster market-based economics practices and help set global standards.
  - a. If confirmed, as a senior member of President Biden's foreign policy team, what are your views regarding a Biden Administration attempt to revive EU-U.S. trade agreement negotiations? If the U.S. were to pursue such a course, what areas should be prioritized?
  - b. Many barriers to trade include non-tariff barriers, such as differing regulations and standards. These differences don't just have economic consequences they may give rise to strategic challenge, as well. How can we work to resolve differences in standards and regulations with the EU, UK, and other democratic, market-oriented partners in goods trade and also in the digital and services sectors?

**Anti-Corruption/Rule of Law**

167. In the FY21 National Defense Authorization Act, the U.S. Congress passed significant beneficial ownership legislation. The EU has also been working on a rule-of-law mechanism to link EU funds to good governance, as well as cracking down on "golden visas." European countries have found themselves at both ends of this corruption cycle.
  - a. Will collaborating with our democratic allies to tackle corruption in our financial systems be a priority for the Biden Administration? How does the Biden Administration plan to fulfill President Biden's proposal of a "Summit of Democracies?" What are the immediate priorities for that Summit?
  - b. What concrete actions will you take as Secretary of State to push countries to reform their systems and crackdown on corruption?

- c. The Department of Justice, through its Office of Overseas Prosecutorial Development, Assistance, and Training (OPDAT) and International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP) initiatives, plays a significant role in helping partner countries to promote the rule of law and combat corruption. Will you prioritize coordinating with the Department of Justice and supporting these programs?
  - d. How important is it that the United States and its European allies take steps to make our own systems less friendly to kleptocracy and less penetrable by dirty money?
168. Several members of the EU's eastern bloc have experienced a rise in corruption, a decline in rule of law, and a strain on democratic institutions. Free and independent media in Poland, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria has been reduced and persecuted. Ruling parties have consolidated power in important industries and in the government. This past year, Bulgaria saw large anti-corruption protests sweep the country. The EU has implemented rule-of-law conditionality to disbursement of EU funding as a means to combat this trend.
- a. Does the United States have a role to place in EU and EU member states' anti-corruption efforts? If yes, what is that role?
  - b. As an EU member and a NATO ally, what will you do to push anti-corruption efforts in Bulgaria to ensure stability and security in the country and prevent malign actors from gaining footholds in the country and hence in the EU and NATO?
169. China sees the EU's periphery as a gateway into Europe. As a result, it has followed Russia's example and invested economically and politically in several countries, including Serbia, Ukraine, and Belarus, as well as several EU countries. These investments prey on corrupt officials and entities and utilize corruption as a geopolitical tool.

Will the Biden Administration make a concerted push on anti-corruption in the EU and its periphery with the dual purpose of benefitting European citizens and making it more difficult for malign actors like Russia and China to gain a foothold?

#### **Assault on Free Media in Europe**

170. In recent years, many European countries, including several in the EU, have seen elements of their democracies eroded. One major theme of this erosion is the shrinking space for media freedom in countries like Malta, Slovakia, Poland, Hungary, Belarus, Georgia, and Bulgaria. Independent media has been taken over by the state, purchased by pro-government oligarchs, and journalists have been threatened, harassed, and jailed by law enforcement or government agencies. Horrifically, several journalists have been killed in recent years. Chinese companies are quietly acquiring stakes in European media. And Turkey, a member of NATO that is ostensibly applying for EU membership, is the second worst jailer of journalists in the world. In reaction to this backsliding, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) recently reopened offices in Romania, Bulgaria, and Hungary. The EU adopted a mechanism to tie funding to upholding the rule of law.

- a. How important is this issue to the Biden Administration? What will the U.S. do to support the EU's efforts to uphold rule of law, the independent journalists' efforts to report the news, and the remaining media outlets continued operations?
- b. Under your leadership, how will the State Department work together with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and United States Agency for Global Media (USAGM) to further the cause of free speech and free media in Europe and Central Asia?

#### FOREIGN ASSISTANCE

##### Development and U.S. National Security

171. If development, diplomacy, and defense are co-equal legs of the U.S. national security stool, pursuing “development for development’s sake” is not a viable policy. The recent merger of the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development into the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, to “unite [their] aid with [their] diplomacy”, suggests that our British allies would agree.
- a. Should U.S. international development efforts be linked to U.S. national security interests? If not, why not?
  - b. If confirmed, how will you structurally address development issues within the interagency and ensure that U.S. development, diplomacy, and defense priorities are, in fact, effectively aligned and coordinated?
  - c. In addition to elevating the Administrator of USAID to a cabinet-level position, do you support calls to elevate USAID to a Cabinet-level agency and to create a development directorate on the National Security Council? If so, how would that change the current arrangement, whereby USAID serves under the foreign policy direction of the State Department?
  - d. If confirmed, you will sit on the boards of the Millennium Challenge Corporation and the Development Finance Corporation. How do these agencies fit into the national security architecture? How do you intend to balance their development mandates with U.S. national security priorities?

##### Global Health Security and Diplomacy

172. Initially fueled by non-transparency and unchecked travel, then exacerbated by deliberate disinformation, a deadly novel coronavirus that should have been contained at its source in China instead has been allowed to spread across international borders, sicken over 70 million people, claim over 1.6 million lives, shutter schools and businesses, and wreak

havoc upon the global economy. The impact of this pandemic will be felt for generations to come.

The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare two critical truths: (1) infectious diseases do not respect borders and a threat anywhere can quickly become a threat everywhere; and (2) the global architecture for global health security is woefully ill-equipped and underprepared.

I requested information from the Trump Administration about the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic, and will share with you the contents of that request. If confirmed, will you commit to fully investigating the origins of the pandemic, including with regard to the safety protocols at the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV) and associated research facilities, and to sharing that information with this committee in a timely manner?

#### **The World Health Organization**

173. The World Health Organization (WHO), as the guardian of the International Health Regulations and as the clearinghouse of global health data and best practices, plays a key role in advancing global health security. From combatting polio and eradicating smallpox, its record for addressing long-simmering global health challenges is remarkable. Yet, its record for responding to sudden onset emergencies is remarkably poor.

Much like the sudden onset global health emergencies that preceded it, including the 2013-2014 Ebola outbreak in West Africa, the WHO was either unwilling or unable to mount an effective emergency response to the COVID-19 outbreak in Wuhan, China. Not only did it fail to use its bully pulpit to press the Chinese government for access and information in the critical first days of the outbreak, but the WHO provided political cover for China's reckless response, publicly validated disinformation, and condemned travel controls designed to mitigate the global spread.

- a. Do you agree that the WHO is badly in need of reform? If so, what specific reforms are necessary to restore its credibility among the American people and the world? Will you seek to build upon and advance the reform agenda previously put forward by the Trump administration, which had won the support of the G-7 prior to the U.S. withdrawal?
- b. Will you seek to leverage U.S. contributions to the WHO to incentive reforms? If not, how will you secure necessary reforms?
- c. Should the WHO be given authority to enforce state obligations under the International Health Regulations – including for inspections and data transparency – or should enforcement be assigned elsewhere?
- d. Should the WHO be given greater *emergency response* capacity (including through the rapid recruitment and deployment of emergency responders within 24 to 48 hours of an outbreak), or should it focus its energies on strengthening *emergency preparedness* in partner countries while emergency response is assigned elsewhere?

- e. If confirmed, will you ensure that by joining COVAX, the vaccines pillar of the WHO-supported Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator, the United States will not subsidize the distribution of the CoronaVac vaccine, developed by the Beijing-based Sinovac, or similarly substandard Chinese COVID-19 vaccines with an efficacy rate of just 50 percent?

**Closing Gaps in Global Health Security and Diplomacy**

174. How can the United States best incentivize greater commitment and investment in closing gaps in global health security within countries at high risk of outbreaks with pandemic potential?
175. Do you support the concept of an international incentive fund, as proposed in the Global Health Security and Diplomacy Act of 2020?

**U.S. Leadership on Global Health Security**

176. Lack of strategic direction, embittered competition, and poor communication between the two principal implementers of U.S. global health assistance –USAID and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) – have long plagued U.S. global health programs. This is why, when authorizing the greatest commitment by any country to combat a single disease in history, Congress placed the responsibility for coordinating the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) within the Department of State. The PEPFAR program is now recognized as the most successful U.S. foreign assistance program since the Marshall Plan and has saved millions of lives, strengthened health systems and supply chains, and advanced key U.S. diplomatic, economic, and security goals.

Recognizing the success of the PEPFAR model – but also understanding that PEPFAR would eventually need to be transitioned – the Obama Administration in 2009 sought to launch a 6-year, \$63 billion Global Health Initiative (GHI). Managed by the Coordinator of U.S. Government Activities to Combat HIV/AIDS and Special Representative for Global Health Diplomacy at the Department of State, the GHI proposed to take an evidence-based approach toward strengthening health systems and enhancing global health security. Though the GHI never found its footing, the compelling need to close gaps in global health security while also mitigating the need for disease-specific initiatives justifies taking another look.

- a. Do you agree that the PEPFAR model, to include the coordinating role played by the Department of State, has been successful?
- b. What is the future of PEPFAR? With an increasing number of partner countries reaching epidemic control and taking greater responsibility for managing their own epidemics, is it time to look at transitioning PEPFAR into a broader global health security program?
177. The COVID-19 pandemic originated and accelerated in higher-income countries, where USAID does not maintain a regular presence and where diplomatic engagement proved



critical to securing access for global health experts on the one hand, and the evacuation of American citizens on the other.

- a. Who is responsible for coordinating and executing U.S. foreign policy in Washington, DC, to include diplomatic engagement to advance U.S. global health security interests overseas – the Department of State, USAID, or CDC?
- b. Who is responsible for the execution of U.S. foreign policy at overseas posts, to include diplomatic engagement to advance U.S. global health security interests in countries of all income categories – the Department of State, USAID, or CDC?
- c. Who is best placed to coordinate the execution of a comprehensive U.S. global health security strategy overseas, including by resolving conflicts between implementing agencies and organizations – the Department of State, USAID, or CDC?
- d. Is the recreation of a global health directorate on the National Security Council sufficient to address the day-to-day diplomatic challenges of implementing, monitoring, and evaluating U.S. global health security assistance in the field?

#### **Office of Foreign Assistance**

178. What is the role of the Office of Foreign Assistance (F) at the U.S. Department of State? Is F meant to create policy or to serve as a clearinghouse of foreign assistance data, metrics and standards?

#### **Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability**

179. Congress passed the Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act (FATAA) in 2016 to enhance Congressional and public oversight of U.S. foreign assistance. Among other requirements, the legislation requires the 22 Federal departments and agencies implementing U.S. foreign assistance programs to publish timely, detailed data about such programs on a publicly available, fully searchable, online platform. It also calls for the consolidation of existing, competing platforms—[www.foreignassistance.gov](http://www.foreignassistance.gov) and [www.dec.usaid.gov](http://www.dec.usaid.gov), for example—into a single, comprehensive platform. Today, few Federal departments are complying with the timely publication requirements (with the Department of State serving as a leading offender) and a consolidated platform has yet to be established.
  - a. If confirmed, will you bring the Department into compliance with FATAA?
  - b. If confirmed, will you ensure sufficient resources are set aside to create a single, consolidated, publicly available digital platform for foreign assistance data?

**Humanitarian Assistance**

**Food Aid**

180. The United States is the single most generous provider of humanitarian assistance in the world, both financial and in-kind, thus saving hundreds of millions of lives and promoting the growth of healthier, more stable societies. Yet today, an estimated 690 million people are food insecure, of which 270 million are facing starvation. As needs outpace the ability of donors to respond, it is imperative that the Department and USAID be enabled to stretch U.S. humanitarian resources farther, including by modernizing U.S. international food aid.

Historically, the flagship U.S. food aid program – Food for Peace – required that 100 percent of the food provided under the Act be purchased in the United States, of which 50% must be shipped on U.S. flagged vessels. According to the GAO, the shipping requirement, in particular, has added significant time and cost to emergency food aid, even while failing to fulfil its statutory purpose. Three consecutive administrations have thus proposed changes—ranging from setting aside 20 percent of the budget for local and regional procurement to eliminating Food for Peace entirely. The Global Food Security Act (as re-authorized through FY2023) and the 2018 Farm Bill did include modest reforms, but more needs to be done.

- a. Do you agree that agricultural cargo preference requirements have outlived their statutory purpose and thus add unnecessary time and expense to U.S. food aid?
- b. Should U.S. cargo preference requirements continue to be applied to international food aid, or should humanitarian assistance in all forms be exempted while the Department of Defense continues, refines, or expands its own efforts to maintain sealift capacity?
- c. If confirmed, will you carry forward the food aid reform efforts of your predecessors, including under the Obama Administration?

**Global Fragility**

181. More than 80 million people are currently displaced around the world. This number has doubled in just the past decade, as a result of growing global conflicts and disasters. Importantly, Congress passed the bipartisan Global Fragility Act in 2019, mandating the creation and implementation of a Global Fragility Strategy to address the root causes of fragility and prevent future humanitarian crises.

- a. What is the role of foreign assistance in tackling the drivers of state fragility and humanitarian crises?
- b. How would you work to ensure the U.S. government effectively implements the Global Fragility Act?

**Humanitarian Assistance Exemptions**

182. Under what circumstances should humanitarian assistance be exempted from sanctions restrictions? How will the State Department, including through the new Office of Sanctions Coordination, work with the Treasury Department to ensure our sanctions programs are designed to shape behavior without exacerbating humanitarian crises around the world?

**Branding**

183. Should humanitarian assistance be branded? If not, why not?
184. Should all U.S. foreign assistance be branded? If not, why not?
185. If confirmed, will you uphold President Trump's Executive Order on branding U.S. foreign assistance and the USAID Branding Modernization Act (P.L. 116-334)? Would you delegate authority to brand assistance implemented by USAID to the Administrator, consistent with the P.L. 116-334? If not, why not?

**Foreign Assistance Reviews, Suspensions, and Withholdings****Statutory Restrictions**

186. The Siljander, Helms, and Kemp-Kasten Amendments, in addition to the Mexico City Policy, have been instrumental in defending life in U.S. foreign assistance. What are your views on these abortion-related restrictions in U.S. foreign assistance?
187. Other statutory restrictions, such as Trafficking in Persons (TIP) restrictions, have proven effective in influencing other governments to change poor behavior. However, if not implemented carefully, these restrictions can have unintended consequences and backfire on U.S. foreign policy interests.
- a. Do you commit to working with Congress to apply such restrictions on assistance in a deliberative and effective manner?
  - b. Do you commit to working with Congress to enact and execute any necessary waivers for these restrictions so that they do not harm those they are not intended to affect?

**Non-Statutory Restrictions**

188. In certain situations, the actions of foreign governments, international organizations, or other entities may necessitate the suspension or termination of U.S. foreign assistance absent an explicit directive in law. This may be done, for instance, to incentivize or punish.
- a. Beyond regular statutory restrictions on assistance, under what circumstances would the withholding or termination of U.S. foreign assistance to a country, international organization, or other entity be appropriate?

- b. If confirmed, do you commit to consulting Congress prior to suspending or terminating U.S. foreign assistance for any reason other than the application of U.S. law?

**Journey to Self-Reliance**

189. Former USAID Administrator Mark Green spearheaded the agency's "Journey to Self-Reliance" initiative in an effort to provide strategic focus to U.S. foreign assistance, including by taking a data-based approach toward building partner country capacity to achieve and sustain development results. In contrast with China's development model, which creates dependence, Administrator Green argued that America should seek to foster self-reliance and responsibility among its friends.
- a. While distinct from "diplomatic" assistance, do you agree that the purpose of development assistance is to end the need for its existence? Is USAID's mission to deliver assistance, or to help countries stand on their own two feet?
- b. Do you intend to work with USAID to continue the "Journey to Self-Reliance" initiative, whether in name or in spirit?

**Countering China**

**Countering Chinese Influence Fund**

190. In 2019, the FY2020 State & Foreign Operations appropriations bill created the Countering Chinese Influence Fund (CCIF) to counter malign Chinese influence around the world and increase transparency and accountability associated with the Belt and Road Initiative.
- a. Do you support the goals and objectives of the CCIF?
- b. Are there particular regions or sectors that you believe the CCIF should prioritize?
- c. Do you commit to directing an official at the Assistant Secretary level or above to oversee the obligation of these funds, to ensure that they are obligated strategically and in a manner that advances U.S. interests?

**Development Finance Corporation (DFC)**

191. The BUILD Act of 2018 significantly restructured U.S. assistance for development finance, transforming the Overseas Private Investment Corporation into the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) and incorporating the development finance activities of USAID. The DFC's primary mission is to harness the power of the American private sector to foster inclusive, market-based economic growth in low- and middle-income countries.
- a. What is the DFC's role in our strategic competition with China?

- b. Are there particular countries, regions, or sectors that the DFC should focus on?
- c. Should the DFC be authorized to establish offices and operate in high-income countries if doing so would “counter Chinese influence,” beyond what is currently authorized by law? Or should the DFC remain focused on its core mission of promoting economic growth in low- and middle-income countries while the CCIF is tapped for this form of strategic assistance in higher-income areas?

#### **Power Africa**

Access to reliable power is a prerequisite for economic growth and health security. Power Africa, authorized by Congress and advanced by the Obama and Trump administrations, has proven to be a valuable tool in expanding access to electricity in Sub-Saharan Africa, and the program should be continued. Imposing overly-restrictive mandates on the program in the name of climate sensitivity, however, would neither advance African growth *nor* measurably reduce total global carbon output.

#### **Commitment to Energy Growth in Africa**

192. Power Africa has helped alleviate energy poverty on the continent by connecting over 17 million homes and businesses to electricity. Yet, Africa is undergoing urbanization faster than anywhere else on the planet, and so needs much larger energy systems to support job creation, big cities, and industry. If confirmed, how will the United States promote abundant, affordable energy at scale across Africa?

#### **Power Sources**

193. The U.S. approach to promoting energy in emerging markets has been technology-inclusive. Power Africa has supported diverse types of energy investments, and the DFC recently lifted a prohibition on nuclear power. This flexible approach has enabled countries to find their own cost-effective path to an energy solution that supports their development goals. Additionally, U.S. flexibility has helped to level the playing field for American firms against Chinese and Russian competitors. Unfortunately, some European countries are now restricting overseas investments in natural gas on climate grounds. If confirmed, would you support Power Africa and DFC continuing to be able to support and invest in a flexible range of technologies, including natural gas?

**HUMAN RIGHTS AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

**Human Rights**

194. Around the world, political dissidents, activists, journalists, and human rights advocates have been victims of repression, torture, detention, abuse, and arbitrary killing, for solely exercising their right to freedom of expression.
- a. If confirmed, what would you do to bolster and reiterate the U.S. Government’s commitment to protecting and advocating for those on the frontlines, including civil society organizations?
  - b. How would you direct the State Department to enhance global protections for freedom of expression and the press?
  - c. How would you prioritize a “whole-of-government” approach to human rights policy and its application in regional and functional diplomatic relationships?
  - d. There is serious concern about the state of press freedom around the world. If confirmed as Secretary of State, what actions will you take to curb suppression of press freedom and support independent journalists around the world?
195. Everyone should be able to practice their faith however they choose, including in places like China, India, and Uzbekistan.
- a. If confirmed, how will international religious freedom factor into your priorities as Secretary of State?
  - b. What do you believe is the role of the U.S. Government in advocating on behalf of religious minorities?
196. The International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (IRFA) defines Countries of Particular Concern (CPC) as countries where the government engages in or tolerates “particularly severe” violations of religious freedom. The statute, as amended by the Frank Wolf International Religious Freedom Act of 2016 (Frank Wolf Act), also defines the State Department’s Special Watch List (SWL) for countries where the government engages in or tolerates “severe” violations of religious freedom.

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) released a report in mid-2020 that outlined their recommendations for CPC and SWL designations. Of note, USCIRF recommended that Burma, China, Eritrea, Iran, North Korea, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan—as well as five others—India, Nigeria, Russia, Syria, and Vietnam be designated as CPCs. In December, only Burma, China, Eritrea, Iran, Nigeria, the DPRK, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan were re-designated.

- a. Do you believe this list encompasses all of the violators of religious freedom globally? Do others deserve to be placed on the CPC list?
- b. Do you pledge to not allow political concerns to interfere with the CPC designations?

**Women, Peace and Security**

- 197. 2020 marked the 20th anniversary of the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. How will you prioritize women in peacekeeping and in security efforts both at the UN and within US programming abroad?
- 198. Conflict and crisis have significant implications for women and girls. In contemporary conflicts, as much as 90 percent of casualties are among civilians, most of whom are women and children. Women are the first to be affected by infrastructure breakdown, as they struggle to keep families together and care for the wounded. How do you believe the United States and the UN should approach and prioritize the protection of women and girls in conflict settings?

**Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor**

**Atrocity Prevention**

- 199. Under President Obama and as continued under President Trump, the Atrocity Early Warning Task Force (formerly the Atrocity Prevention Board) is tasked with tracking potential behaviors that could amount to atrocities in foreign countries. The task force, while noble in cause, lacks adequate resources to accomplish the stated goal.
  - a. If confirmed, how will you appropriately fund, staff, and train personnel serving on this task force in the new administration?
  - b. Will you bolster training efforts to continue empowering Foreign Service Officers, Locally Employed Staff, and contractors to detect and report on the warning signs of atrocities?
  - c. Please describe efforts you intend to take to bolster the interagency approach to preventing atrocities through this task force.

**Internet Freedom**

- 200. Internet freedom around the globe is waning as authoritarian states continue to suppress dissent, silence critics, and oppress populations through online censorship and repeated or prolonged internet shutdowns. Current programmatic efforts in Asia, Central Asia, and the Middle East aim to combat this issue.
  - a. How will you prioritize Internet Freedom within the Democracy, Human Rights and Labor bureau and across the Department?

- b. Do you believe that internet shutdowns are a threat to human rights?

**The United States and the United Nations**

- 201. What is your view of the relationship between the United States and the United Nations (UN)?
- 202. My constituents are concerned about the lack of “return on investment” at the UN. How will you work to enhance U.S. return on investment at the UN considering we are the top donor to the entire UN system?
- 203. Does the UN play a role in determining U.S. participation in military conflicts? Do you believe that a UN resolution creates a legal obligation for U.S. military involvement in resolving a foreign conflict, including under UN doctrine relating to the responsibility to protect civilians? Does a UN resolution serve as a substitute for an authorization of the use of force from the U.S. Congress?
- 204. I introduced the Multilateral Aid Review Act to assess the value of U.S. taxpayer investments in multilateral entities, including the UN and its affiliated agencies. If confirmed, would you support a comprehensive review of U.S. investments in multilateral organizations?
- 205. There have been efforts to have the United States rejoin the World Tourism Organization. If confirmed, would you support the re-entry of the United States to the World Tourism Organization? What benefits would the United States enjoy for re-joining this organization?

**UN Security Council**

- 206. There have been a number of proposals to increase the size of the UN Security Council, to include the expansion of the number of permanent members of the Council.
  - a. How do you believe U.S. interests would be affected by the expansion of the Council’s size or by the addition of more permanent members?
  - b. Changes in the composition of the Security Council would require an amendment to the UN Charter, which in turn would require the advice and consent of the Senate. Do you commit to consulting with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in advance of pursuing any proposals to change the composition of the Council?

**UN Management Reform**

- 207. What are your views on the need for management reform at the UN?
- 208. How will you work to address barriers to advance UN management reforms, especially those created by the different priorities among member states?



209. How will you measure success in implementing management reforms at the UN?
210. What policies need to be implemented to maintain fiscal responsibility and accountability within the UN system?
211. While the UN has taken steps to improve its efficiency, operational effectiveness, and accountability, the continuing need for reform is obvious to most observers, including strong supporters of the institution. The UN Secretary-General has committed to an agenda of reform. The U.S. push for reform is one of the main drivers behind the progress to date.
- a. In your opinion, what are the top three reforms that the UN could undertake in the coming two years that will have the greatest impact?
  - b. How will you explain to the Secretary-General and the member states that continued reform is a precondition for full U.S. support of the UN?
  - c. What tactics would you use if reform efforts falter or lack urgency?

#### **UN Entities**

212. The United States is the largest donor to the World Food Programme, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, and other UN agencies. Will you continue this pattern of voluntary donations to address some of the world's most pressing issues?

#### **The International Criminal Court//International Criminal Law**

213. The United States is not a party to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and has been unfairly targeted by the Court. The Trump Administration took a harder line on US involvement in the ICC after the Prosecutor opened an investigation into U.S. service members.
- a. Does the Biden Administration support the United States becoming a party to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court?
  - b. Under what circumstances should the United States cooperate with the ICC?
  - c. Do you believe that the ICC should be investigating alleged actions of US service members and officials in Afghanistan? If yes, please explain.
  - d. Do you believe that the ICC has jurisdiction to investigate or bring to trial United States service members, officials, or other United States citizens? If yes, please explain.
  - e. Do you believe that the ICC should be investigating a case involving alleged Israeli actions in the Palestinian territories? If yes, please explain.

- f. Do you believe that the ICC has jurisdiction to investigate or bring to trial Israeli service members, officials, or other Israeli citizens? If yes, please explain.
- g. Do you believe the ICC's reputation has been diminished by recent attempts to prosecute United States and Israeli nationals? If no, please explain.
- h. Do you believe that an ICC prosecution of United States services members and public servants would deny those U.S. citizens fundamental due process protections to which all Americans are guaranteed under the U.S. Constitution, such as a right to trial by jury? If no, please explain.
- i. Do you believe the United States has an obligation to protect U.S. citizens who have served or are currently serving in Afghanistan against criminal prosecution by the ICC? If yes, as Secretary of State, what specific actions would you take to ensure that US service members, officials, and citizens are not subject to ICC prosecutions? If no, please explain.
- j. Beyond the ICC, what international accountability mechanisms do you support? Please provide examples of special courts or tribunals which have worked well as well as examples of special court or tribunals which did not work well.
- k. What is your vision for the Office of Criminal Global Justice's role in the Department of State?

***UN Relief Works and Agency (UNRWA)***

- 214. Do you support the United States reinstating its financial support for UNRWA? If so, what reforms would you recommend UNRWA undertake in order to re-gain support from the United States?
- 215. As of submittal of these questions, there are approximately 26 million refugees globally, including "5 million refugees under the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA)." To address this challenge in 2020, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) employed 17,324 staff across 135 countries, and UNRWA employed 27,841 staff.
  - a. Why does UNRWA require 10,000 more staff to advocate its regional mission than UNHCR to advance its global mission?
  - b. Do you believe UNRWA should be absorbed by UNHCR, given UNHCR's efficiency and infrastructure?
  - c. If confirmed, will you commit to working with the appropriate Congressional committees prior to any consultations for resumption of U.S. contributions to UNRWA?

**UN Human Rights Council**

216. What is the position of the Biden Administration regarding the UN Human Rights Council?
- a. Will the Biden Administration seek to become a member of the Council at its next opportunity?
  - b. What reforms will the Biden Administration seek at the UN Human Rights Council?
  - c. Will the Biden Administration commit to securing necessary reforms prior to rejoining the UN Human Rights Council?
  - d. Does the Biden Administration believe the Council devotes a disproportionate amount of attention to criticizing Israel while ignoring more pressing human rights crises?
  - e. Understanding that the Human Rights Council has been “broken,” in large part, by allowing human rights abusers to obtain seats on the Council, do you believe that conditioning U.S. participation on reform is beneficial?
217. There have been credible allegations that the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights shared the names of Chinese dissidents who were attending UN Human Rights Council sessions with the Chinese Government.
- a. If confirmed, how will you investigate these allegations?
  - b. What reforms will you seek to ensure that this practice never happens again?

**UN Peacekeeping**

218. The United States is the single largest financial contributor to UN peacekeeping activities. Congress authorizes and appropriates U.S. contributions, and it has an ongoing interest in ensuring such funding is used as efficiently and effectively as possible.
- a. Do you believe that any country, including the United States, should pay more than 25% of the peacekeeping budget?
  - b. What is your position on repayment of current U.S. peacekeeping arrears?
  - c. Are there any specific steps you believe the UN should take to reduce the overall size of the UN peacekeeping budget? If so, what are they?
  - d. Are there any specific UN peacekeeping missions you would support reducing or terminating? If so, what missions do you believe should be reduced or terminated?

### The UN and the Palestinians

219. The UN maintains several particular bodies and departments that focus on the Palestinians. These including the Division on Palestinian Rights (DPR), the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP), and UN Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL). Will you work to challenge the existence and funding of these departments?
220. Recently, the Palestinians threatened action to circumvent ascension protocols and seek a change in their status at the UN.
- a. Do you believe this action promotes the Middle East peace process and serves the needs of the Palestinian people?
  - b. In your view, what consequences should the Palestinians face if they continue to attempt to gain membership in UN agencies?
221. The United States lacks a veto over membership decisions in UN specialized agencies that the Palestinians could target for membership. When the Palestinians apply for membership, the United States is required to cut funding to that organization pursuant to two laws enacted by a Democratic-led Congress in the early 1990's. To this end, Title 22, Section 287e of the U.S. code states:
- “No funds authorized to be appropriated by this Act or any other Act shall be available for the United Nations or any specialized agency thereof which accords the Palestine Liberation Organization the same standing as member states.”  
(Adopted as Public Law 101-246 in 1990.)
- “The United States shall not make any voluntary or assessed contribution: (1) to any affiliated organization of the United Nations which grants full membership as a state to any organization or group that does not have the internationally recognized attributes of statehood, or (2) to the United Nations, if the United Nations grants full membership as a state in the United Nations to any organization or group that does not have the internationally recognized attributes of statehood, during any period in which such membership is effective.” (Adopted as Public Law 103-236 in 1994.)
- The language in these provisions is clear and provides no discretion or waiver authority. If confirmed, will you support their enforcement?
222. Over the past several years, the Palestinian Authority has received votes in various UN bodies to upgrade its status. Such attempts undermine the long-held belief that peace between Israel and the Palestinian Authority can only come about as a result of direct negotiations.
- a. What is your plan to stop initiatives like this from even coming before UN entities, or the General Assembly, for a vote?

- b. How will you address future attempts by the Palestinian Authority to achieve statehood through the UN?

**Israel at the UN**

223. The United States has a long maintained a policy of opposing many one-sided Security Council resolutions that more often than not, criticize Israel, but fail to address other issues such as Palestinian terrorism.
- a. Do you support the use of an American veto to block one-sided anti-Israel resolutions in the Security Council?
  - b. What do you believe should be the standard employed in deciding whether to veto or not?
  - c. Do you believe that there is a disproportionate focus on Israel at the UN? How would you counter this at the UN?

**Elections at the UN**

224. I introduced the STRATEGIC Act to advance a comprehensive U.S. policy for competition with China. The legislation authorizes the Office of UN Integrity that the Trump Administration stood up within the Bureau of International Organizations.
- a. If confirmed, would you support the sustainment and authorization of such an office?
  - b. Additionally the STRATEGIC Act establishes a Special Envoy for Integrity within the UN System. If confirmed, will you appoint a Special Envoy for UN Integrity to examine malign influence in UN elections and UN bodies? If not, why not?
225. China has focused intensely on securing leadership roles in various UN agencies, particularly those overseeing technical standards that will shape the future. In many cases, these leaders have overtly advanced Chinese Communist Party goals, instead of acting independently to advance the global good. It is clear the United States has had mixed success with elections for heads of International Organizations in the past, and is taking more robust and coordinated steps to advocate for qualified and independent candidates in UN bodies?
226. If confirmed, will you prioritize robust strategies to secure the election qualified and independent candidates to lead UN/IO bodies, especially highly specialized agencies?

**Peace Corps**

227. Due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, the Peace Corps evacuated roughly 7,000 American citizens from posts abroad. Mission China was scheduled to close in 2021, but due to the uncertain nature of the virus, was closed early.

- a. Do you believe that the Peace Corps should re-enter China?
- b. Do you believe China meets the criteria for a country to establish or maintain such a mission?
- c. The Peace Corps began deploying small cohorts of volunteers to countries that had begun to open in early 2021. How will you work with the Director of the Peace Corps to ensure a safe re-entry for American Citizens as they return to service?

**Refugees and Migration**

228. The Trump Administration has reduced the ceiling on the number of refugees to be granted entry into the United States each fiscal year (FY), setting it at 45,000 for FY2018; 30,000 for FY2019; and 18,000 for FY2020 respectively. These ceilings are much lower than in previous years. Actual refugee admissions in FY2020, which were negatively impacted by the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, totaled 11,814. On October 28, 2020, President Trump issued a Presidential Determination (PD) setting the refugee ceiling for FY2021 at 15,000.
- a. Does the Biden Administration plan to raise the refugee ceiling? If so, do you plan to consult with Congress before doing so? What will you recommend to President Biden with regard to any new refugee ceiling?
  - b. If you do intend to recommend an increase to the refugee ceiling, how do you plan to allow entry without overburdening a slimmed-down system?
  - c. President Trump re-categorized potential claims for refugee seekers in the United States. Will the Biden Administration adhere to or alter these categories?
  - d. Do you believe that refugees who have been persecuted or have a well-founded fear of persecution based on religion should remain a priority for U.S. admission?
  - e. In a July 2020 Executive Order, President Trump promised an increase in admissions for refugees from Hong Kong to the United States. To our knowledge, there have been no refugee applications from Hong Kong. How do you evaluate this policy given the political climate in Hong Kong?

**Special Immigration Visas (SIVs)**

229. Protecting U.S. national security in relation to the issuance of Special Immigrant Visas (SIVs) remains a major concern, including both Iraqi and Afghan SIV programs. All applicants for entry into the United States are subject to security checks conducted by the Department of State and the Department of Homeland Security, a process that also involves coordination with other agencies. Former officials have stated that the vetting process for SIVs is particularly rigorous and must go through the interagency process.

- a. How will you streamline the system for SIVs while protecting U.S. national security?
- b. Do you believe that current protocols effectively accomplish the goal of admitting Iraqis and Afghans who assisted the U.S. government overseas, provided that they do not pose security risks?

**American Citizens Abroad**

230. Bringing home detained Americans was a top U.S. foreign policy priority for the Trump Administration that yielded many successes, including Michael White, and Joshua Holt, who were among the more than 50 people released from 22 countries during its tenure. Unfortunately, there are others who have not returned home, including Robert Levinson, and we will continue to seek to hold those accountable for his disappearance.
- a. How will you empower the Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs to leverage relationships to continue to bring Americans home?
  - b. What concrete steps will you take to ensure the release, immediately, of all of these Americans who have been away from their families for far too long?
  - c. What concrete steps will you take to bring home Trevor Reed and Paul Whelan who are being illegally detained in Russia?
  - d. What concrete steps will you take to bring home U.S. citizen Kai Li who is being illegally detained in China?
  - e. What concrete steps will you take to bring home Siamak Namazi, Baquer Namazi, and Morad Tahbaz who are being illegally detained in Iran?
  - f. What concrete steps will you take to bring home the Citgo6 who are being illegally held in Venezuela?

**Mission Turkey Employees**

231. The Turkish government is currently targeting three U.S. Consulate employees with a variety of baseless charges. How will you work to ensure that these charges are dropped against these U.S. government employees?

**Tibet**

232. Will the Biden Administration continue public presidential meetings with, and support for, the Dalai Lama as conducted by the Trump Administration? Will you commit that the Department of State will meet with the Dalai Lama's representatives, as the Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor did in 2020?

233. Recently, due to a vacancy, the Special Coordinator for Tibet was filled by the Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. In past practice, the Special Coordinator was filled by the Under-Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy and Human Rights. If confirmed, do you pledge to fill the Special Coordinator position at the level of Under-Secretary? Do you pledge to fill the position in a timely manner once a confirmed Under Secretary is in place?

**Taiwan**

234. If confirmed, would you re-affirm the U.S. policy to support Taiwan's World Health Assembly observer status? Could you describe steps that you would take to advance this objective?
235. What specific steps do you intend to take to secure such meaningful participation for Taiwan in such international organizations as the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)?

**Human Rights around the World**

**Uyghur Human Rights**

236. Do you consider the human rights abuses committed by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) against the Uyghurs and other religious and ethnic minorities, including forced sterilization, to constitute a genocide? If not, please explain.
237. If confirmed, how do you plan to confront the Chinese government on the human rights violations taking place in Xinjiang?
238. Due to the massive amounts of human rights abuses being committed by the CCP, do you believe they should be allowed to host the Olympics in 2022?
239. Legislation currently under consideration proposes a human rights briefing for the Olympic athletes on Team America. The briefing would help inform athletes about major human rights abuses committed by the government hosting the Olympics, and alert them to narratives that the government pushes to deflect or deny such abuses. Do you support such a proposal? Would you devote Department of State resources and personnel toward working with the International Olympic Committee and other relevant stakeholders to ensure such briefings are provided to as many American athletes as possible prior to the 2022 Olympics?

**Hong Kong Human Rights**

240. The CCP has cracked down on the most basic rights of the people of Hong Kong. How will you address the human rights abuses occurring in Hong Kong?

**Saudi Arabia Human Rights**



241. Saudi Arabia has a long record of arbitrarily detaining its own citizens and U.S. dual nationals, including prominent women's rights activists.
- If confirmed, how will you secure the unconditional and immediate release of these women, including Loujain al-Hathloul, Samar Badawi, Nassima al-Sada, Nouf Abdulaziz and Maya'a al-Zahrani?
  - What strategies will you use in the Saudi-U.S. bilateral relationship to bolster human rights in country?
  - What steps will you take to ensure all detainees are given fair trials and proper detention conditions?

#### **Egypt Human Rights**

242. The Egyptian government has a less-than-stellar record on human rights, including recent arbitrary detentions of human rights activists, impunity for security services, deplorable detention conditions, suppression of fundamental freedoms, and more. It is important that the United States seek to bolster human rights and civil society in Egypt. What tools will you use to address these human rights abuses and end impunity for those committing them?

#### **Rohingya Human Rights**

243. Recently, the government of Bangladesh forcibly moved Rohingya refugees from Cox's Bazaar to Bhasan Char, an island in the Bay of Bengal. This was undertaken without advance consultation with donor and international organizations, who were thus left unprepared to support critical assistance and protection measures. If confirmed, do you commit to discussing this action with Bangladeshi government officials? Do you commit to pressing the Bangladeshi officials to ensure no further relocations are undertaken before the UN conducts a thorough, independent, and technical assessment to determine the safety, feasibility, and desirability of relocating refugees to Bhasan Char?

#### **International Child Abduction**

244. If confirmed, how will you encourage foreign governments to act in accordance with the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction, which requires the prompt return of abducted children to their country of habitual residence?
245. Will you commit to raising the issue of international parental child abduction in high-level meetings with foreign governments, including with Japan, Costa Rica, India, etc'?
246. How will you build an effective interagency process with other federal agencies—including the Department of Justice and Homeland Security—on ways to prevent and resolve cases of international child abduction?

**International Child Adoption**

247. The number of children who are being adopted from overseas has declined in recent years.
- a. If confirmed, how will you ensure that international child adoption processes are run smoothly, transparently, and in accordance with legal commitments?
  - b. Will you commit to raising issues with international child adoption in high level meetings with your foreign counterparts?

**Trafficking in Persons**

248. The recommendation of the State Department Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking and Slavery (JTIP) regarding tier rankings in its annual Trafficking In Persons (TIP) Report are frequently overridden by regional bureaus or embassies with priorities other than the eradication of trafficking. Anti-trafficking experts have repeatedly raised concerns about “grade inflation” within the tier ranking process. If confirmed, will you work to reduce the influence of political concerns on the tier ranking system?
249. Countries that receive a Tier 3 rating in the TIP Report are subject to non-humanitarian, non-trade related foreign aid restrictions. The President has the option of exercising a national security waiver for countries who receive Tier 3 status. Since 2004, successive presidents have used the waiver, either partial or full, for a host of countries.
- a. How effective do you believe these aid restrictions are in influencing countries to improve their human trafficking policies?
  - b. What is the impact of granting national security waivers on the effectiveness of the aid restrictions and the fight against human trafficking?

**THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA****Iran Policy****JCPOA and INARA**

250. The Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act (PL 114-17) (“INARA”) requires the President to provide to Congress the text and related materials of any agreement with Iran relating to the nuclear program of Iran within five days of reaching the agreement. Additionally, INARA stipulates that the administration certify that such an agreement is not “inimical to or constitute an unreasonable risk to the common defense and security.”
- a. Would the requirements of INARA cited above apply to any future nuclear deal with Iran?

- b. Would the requirements of INARA cited above apply to any process of rejoining or reaffirming U.S. participation in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action?
- c. What is your definition of “an unreasonable risk to the common defense and security”?
- d. Would a resurgent Iranian ballistic missile program constitute “an unreasonable risk to common defense and security”?
- e. Do you believe that the United States is a “JCPOA participant” as described in UN Security Council Resolution 2231 (2015)?

#### **Iran and China**

251. In recent years, China has become Iran’s preeminent oil and trading partner, providing Iran with crucial technological support to help develop its energy resources and other forms of infrastructure. In June 2020, China and Iran allegedly entered into a ‘Comprehensive Strategic Partnership’, which includes a maximum investment of \$400 billion to improve Iran’s oil, gas, and transportation infrastructure.
- a. What impact does Chinese economic investment have on the efficacy of the international sanction regimes against Iran? What gains does China receive from such investment?
  - b. How would the Chinese government, or Chinese-based companies, benefit from the lifting of U.S. sanctions against Iran?
  - c. How does the United States drive a wedge between or shape CCP-Iranian relations?
  - d. Beyond economic considerations, China and Iran have also furthered their strategic and defense cooperation. China, and Chinese-based entities, are known to have supplied Iran’s missile, nuclear, and conventional weapons programs. How does Chinese support to the development of Iran’s nuclear program impact U.S. interests and objectives with respect to Iran?
  - e. The People’s Liberation Army’s presence in Djibouti, coupled with Chinese investments across the Red Sea region, have prompted growing concern about malign Chinese influence in the Middle East and North African region. How do you plan to contend with the growth of Chinese commercial and strategic expansion, including its coercive economic statecraft?
  - f. Is there a strategy for engagement when it comes to Chinese cooperation with U.S. partners and allies in the region? What messages do you plan to send them? What tools do you see as being at your disposal to thwart nefarious Chinese ambitions in the region, and in what context would you be willing to deploy them?

**Israel – Palestinian Policy**

**Abraham Accords**

252. Please provide your view of the Abraham Accords and their impacts for regional security, economic cooperation, and prosperity in the region.
253. If confirmed, how do you and the Biden administration plan to expand on the Abraham Accords to broker additional normalization agreements and ensure that existing agreements reap tangible economic and security benefits?
254. Some argue that the Trump administration's exit from the nuclear deal and maximum pressure against Iran coupled with its clear pro-Israel policies set the conditions for normalization under the Abraham Accords. Please provide your perspectives on this argument.

**Palestinian Status and Associated Issues**

255. In 2016 John Kerry argued that there would be no "separate peace" between Israel and Arabs without first solving the issue of Palestinian statehood.
- a. What are your views on Palestinian statehood and its ties to additional normalization agreements?
  - b. Doesn't re-inserting Palestinian statehood back into the peace process hinder prospects of further normalizations with Israel?
  - c. What is your assessment of Palestinian leadership and its ability to reach consensus between Gaza and the West Bank on issues of statehood and support for terrorism?
  - d. In your view, how do Israeli-Arab normalization agreements affect the prospects for Israel-Palestinian peace negotiations?
  - e. What are your views on the Trump Administration's plan for Middle East peace and requirements that the Palestinian Authority must cease terrorist activity and cease martyr/prison payments in order to achieve statehood? Can you commit to rejecting any offer of Palestinian statehood until concerns about the PA's extremist behavior are addressed?
256. Please provide your views on the relocation of the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem, recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, and United States recognition of Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights. What is your view on the reversibility of these U.S. policies?
257. Please provide your views on the relative benefits and risks of ESF and INCLE expenditures targeted towards the Palestinian people and security forces.

**Iraq Policy**

**Strategic Iraq Objectives**

258. At great cost, the United States has worked to support a sovereign independent Iraq, reframe the US-Iraq bilateral relationship, and foster regional stability.
- a. How do you plan to continue to further U.S. interests in Iraq?
  - b. What are your priority lines of effort linked to U.S. national security interests?
  - c. What role will institutional reform and anti-corruption efforts play in this strategy?
  - d. What role will countering Iranian influence play in this strategy?
  - e. How do you plan to address the presence of Iranian-backed militias?

**Preventing an Islamic State Resurgence**

259. Critics point to President Obama's withdrawal from Iraq in 2011 as one of the biggest errors of his presidency. The Obama Administration departed without securing a Status of Forces Agreement, allowed the Iraqi Security Forces to atrophy, did not adequately address the abuses of the Maliki government, and failed to address Sunni disenfranchisement that ultimately set conditions for the Islamic State's unchecked movement across the Iraqi border in 2014.
- a. Please provide your perspectives on the root causes of the rise of the Islamic State in Iraq as they related to U.S. policies, views on current troop levels as they relate to State Department objectives, and recommendations on key State Department initiatives for preventing an Islamic State resurgence.
  - b. How appropriate are current bilateral diplomatic agreements (exchange of notes) for a sustained diplomatic and security cooperation mission?

**The Future of Iraqi Security Assistance**

260. Iraq's security apparatus remains dependent on DoD-administered Counter-ISIS Train and Equip Fund (CTEF) and congressionally-appropriated foreign military financing (FMF). Additionally, nearly 50% of Iraq's FMF expenditures are consumed with maintaining existing contracts. Please provide your thoughts on transitioning Iraq from CTEF to more traditional forms of Title 22 security cooperation, and 'right sizing' the Iraqi Security Forces in a manner that the government of Iraq can sustain given current budget shortfalls.

**Embassy Baghdad Staffing**

261. The State Department has significantly reduced manning at key posts in Afghanistan and Iraq, often simultaneously with Department of Defense troop reductions. Arguably, as the DoD winds down its presence in these locations towards the end of major combat operations, diplomacy is paramount to ensure a durable peace. Can you commit to consultations with Congress before any decisions are made to reduce Embassy Staffing, particularly in Iraq and Afghanistan?

**Syria Policy****National Security Objectives**

262. Please outline United States national security interests and objectives in Syria.

**U.S. Role in Syria**

263. In July you tweeted, “When Joe Biden is president, we will restore U.S. leadership on humanitarian issues [in Syria].” However, lack of United States engagement and enforcement of chemical weapons ‘redlines’ during the Obama administration opened the door to increased Russian involvement and allowed the civil war and abuses against the Syrian people to continue unabated. Current progress towards a political reconciliation under UNSCR 2254 have similarly stalled.
- a. Please provide your views on the United States’ role in Syria and accelerating progress on UNSCR 2254.
  - b. U.S. Syria policy is broadly governed by UNSCR 2254 and associated sanctions regimes. Does Bashar al Assad’s expanded military control alter the prospects of a political settlement under UNSCR 2254? Do we need a new construct for Syria policy?
  - c. What is the linkage between U.S. troop levels in Syria, countering the Islamic State, blunting Iranian designs, influencing Turkish and Russian Syria calculus, and associated impacts on political UNSCR 2254 discussions?
  - d. What relative effect would a U.S. troop withdrawal have on U.S. influence over future negotiations?

**The Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act**

264. *The Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act* is intended to prevent rehabilitation of the Assad regime, seek accountability for the regime’s atrocities, and advance a political solution to the conflict. Please provide your views on the role of this legislation in furthering U.S. objectives in Syria.

**Turkey in Syria**

265. Turkey's objectives in northeast Syria run counter to U.S. interests while we tacitly support their activities in the northwest.
- a. How do we reconcile and balance Syria and Turkey policy?
  - b. Can you balance Syria-Turkey policy without finding a Kurdish solution?

**Libya Policy****U.S Role in Libya**

266. Current United States policy relies on Europe and other actors to lead on Libya stabilization. Is there an argument for a more muscular U.S. role?

**Foreign Actors Contributing to Libya's Instability**

267. A recent UN expert report on Libya accused the warring parties and their international backers — the United Arab Emirates, Russia and Egypt on one side and Turkey and Qatar on the other — of violating the arms embargo with total impunity.
- a. How do you plan to address reported violations of the UN arms embargo?
  - b. How do you impose costs on arms embargo violators without harming U.S. objectives in other areas?

**Russian Involvement in Libya**

268. While current policy has been to publicize Russian adventurism in Libya, how does the United States impose costs for Russia's use of private military contractors, *i.e.*, Wagner, in Libya?
269. What are the risks of a greater Russian role in Libya to U.S. interests in North Africa, including U.S. counterterrorism efforts?
270. What are the threats of Russia successfully gaining a foothold in Libya, which borders NATO's southern flank?

**Egypt Policy****U.S. Egypt Relationship**

271. 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?

272. How have the Obama Administration's decisions to place various holds on military aid to Egypt affected Egypt's relationship with Russia and the United States? More broadly, is FMS or FMF an effective lever to modify conduct?
273. 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?
274. 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*?

#### **Middle East Security and Diplomatic Constructs**

##### **Potential Multilateral Approaches to the Middle East**

275. Have the Abraham Accords set conditions for a renewed Middle East Strategic Alliance (MESA) or a derivative? What multilateral structures would a Biden Administration suggest to maintain stability in the Middle East while simultaneously reducing U.S. commitment?
276. Would these multilateral structures force the United States to rely on imperfect partners with imperfect human rights records? How does the United States strike the appropriate balance between U.S. presence and reliance on imperfect partners to maintain security and accomplish U.S. national security interests?

#### **Saudi Arabia Policy**

277. During a November 2019 primary debate, President-elect Biden said he would limit arms sales to Saudi Arabia and make them the "...pariah that they are." Isolating Saudi Arabia would likely have negative consequences for US-Saudi counterterrorism cooperation, would diminish U.S. efforts to improve Saudi Arabia's human rights record, and would eliminate Saudi Arabia's potentially helpful role in a broader Middle Eastern multilateral security construct.
- a. How do you interpret President-elect Biden's 'pariah' comments and how would you frame the U.S.-Saudi relationship in a Biden Administration?
- b. What are the implications for U.S.-Saudi CT cooperation and regional stability?
278. The United States provides very limited support to the Saudi-led coalition (SLC) in Yemen primarily focused on countering the threats from Houthi ballistic missiles and drones. A Biden Administration has telegraphed that it would end U.S. support for the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen.



- a. How would limiting support to the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen impact regional security?
- b. How would a reduction in U.S. support impact U.S. efforts to curb SLC civilian casualty rates?
- c. How do you anticipate such a move would affect UN-led peace efforts in Yemen and U.S. ability to influence the prospects for a lasting, and inclusive settlement in Yemen?

**United Arab Emirates Policy**

**UAE's Role in the Middle East**

279. UAE has served as an important U.S. partner in the Middle East and Afghanistan. UAE-led efforts to normalize diplomatic ties with Israel under the Abraham Accords, and has a deep economic relationship with the United States.
- a. What is the UAE's role in the broader Middle East vis-a-vis U.S. national interests?
  - b. What role might it play in a Middle Eastern multilateral construct?
  - c. How does the United States moderate UAE's often expeditionary Muslim Brotherhood-oriented foreign policy and encourage it to take a more productive role?

**UAE, Russia and China**

280. Despite being a key U.S. partner in the region, and central to normalization efforts with Israel, UAE also has a history of deepening cooperation with Russia and China that runs counter to U.S. interests. How does the department plan to address the UAE's partnership with Russia and China?
281. As a part of arms sales to UAE following the Abraham Accords, the UAE agreed to several conditions that were pending state-to-state codification. Please provide an update on the conditions of sale.

**UAE and Libya**

282. In your assessment, how closely are the Emiratis coordinating with the Russian state, as well as its subsidiaries like Wagner, in Libya? What forms does this coordination take? Are there instances in which it has escalated into concrete and tangible support, whether that be to the Russian state or Russian-aligned operators?

**UAE and Syria**

283. There is growing concern over the prospect of the UAE normalizing ties with Bashar al-Assad.

- a. Do you share this concern?
- b. Are there tools the United States can employ to prevent the UAE from normalizing relations with the Assad regime, including with respect to potential UAE provision of reconstruction funds to Syria?

**Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Rift**

284. The GCC rift has posed a serious obstacle to regional security and stability and splintered a unified front against Iranian aggression. The recent agreement at Al-Ula, however, may signal a thawing of relations and a potential end to the Gulf Rift.
- a. Given the Al-Ula agreement, what are the prospects that the dispute can be resolved in an enduring manner, and what would be the best approach for doing so?
  - b. Would your State Department plan to support and advance Kuwaiti led mediation efforts? If so, how?
  - c. What lesser confidence building measures would you consider to build on the Al-Ula agreement and ensure a lasting end to the Gulf dispute?

**Yemen Policy**

**Yemen Political Resolution**

285. In your assessment, is there more the United States can do diplomatically to end the war in Yemen? If so what?
286. In October 2020, then-candidate Biden suggested that, “under a Biden-Harris Administration, we will reassess our relationship with the Kingdom [of Saudi Arabia], end U.S. support for Saudi Arabia’s war in Yemen.” How do you anticipate ending U.S. support to the Saudi-led coalition will affect U.S. efforts to reach a comprehensive and inclusive settlement in Yemen?
287. What are the U.S. interests in ending the conflict in Yemen? Can you ensure U.S. equities will be taken into account in a final settlement if the United States reduces, restricts, or cuts off support to the Saudi-led coalition (SLC)?
288. Do you believe UNSCR 2216 properly reflects the current context in Yemen? Will the new Administration seek to modify this UNSCR?

**The Role of the Houthis in Yemen**

289. What role do you see the Houthis playing in perpetuating conflict? Do you have concern about Houthi military and human rights abuses? How do you plan to address said abuses?

290. To what extent do the Houthis pose a legitimate security threat to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia? How does your administration plan to address this threat to the Kingdom, as well as all U.S. citizens residing therein?
291. What is your position on the designation of the Houthis as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO)? How will this designation impact diplomatic efforts to end the war as well as U.S. efforts to address the humanitarian crisis?
292. Will you seek to revoke the designation of the Houthis as a FTO? If so, how quickly do you expect this process to play out and what steps would you take to ensure U.S. national security interests are taken into account?
293. The recent designation of the Houthis as a FTO could have significant humanitarian consequences for the civilian population in Yemen. This is in part because the U.S. Government lacks the ability under U.S. law to issue a license that gives safe harbor from criminal exposure to commercial or humanitarian entities providing humanitarian supplies to civilians. Do you think the U.S. Government should have the ability to issue such a license?
294. How do you plan to mitigate the impacts of the FTO designation, given the limitations of U.S. law? Can you commit to working with the NGO community, private sector businesses, and international financial institutions to provide guidance regarding what criminal or civil exposure they would or would not face?
295. How will the Department of State coordinate with the Departments of Justice and Treasury before any future FTO designations are made? What about USAID?
296. What means can the United States employ to get the Houthis to engage in peace talks in good faith and reduce interference in aid operations?

**The Role of Other Countries in Yemen**

297. It has been widely reported that the United Arab Emirates, despite withdrawing a majority of its military support for the Saudi-led coalition, continues to provide important diplomatic support to the pro-separatist Southern Transitional Council (STC).
- a. Can you commit to pressuring the UAE to ceasing this support, and using its influence to press the STC to work towards implementing the Riyadh agreement? Are there other ways the US can work successfully to resolve the divisions in the anti-Houthi coalition?
  - b. Can you commit to pressuring other countries to increase financial pledges to the UN's Humanitarian response plan for Yemen?
  - c. What role has Yemen's economic decline played in exacerbating the humanitarian crisis in Yemen? Should the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and others support the liquidity of Yemen's

Aden-based Central Bank? Should the State Department make addressing Yemen's economic deterioration a priority in its efforts to end the conflict?

### Lebanon Policy

#### **Overall Lebanon Policy**

298. Despite the August 4, 2020, explosions in Beirut and unrest that followed, Lebanon's political elites have continued to cling to power. Current policy has been to withhold broader financial assistance absent reforms targeting corruption and transparency. Please describe a Biden Administration's policy objectives in Lebanon and how they differ from previous approaches.

#### **Financial Reforms and Sanctions**

299. What conditions would Lebanon need to meet in order to qualify for U.S. financial support? Will a Biden administration continue sanctions against corrupt and Lebanese Hezbollah (LH) linked officials to advance reforms?

300. Can you commit to working to ensure the \$11 billion in CEDRE, IMF, and World Bank funding earmarked for Lebanon remains contingent on key reforms, including reforms to the electricity/natural gas sector, increased transparency, and an audit of the central bank?

#### **Lebanese Armed Forces**

301. Many in Congress see the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) as a vital counterweight to the influence of Lebanese Hezbollah (LH) and Lebanon's legitimate security guarantor. What role do you see for the LAF in Lebanon?

302. Do you commit to providing continued FMF assistance to the LAF, barring information that indicates otherwise?

303. Will you commit to consulting with Congress before modifications to LAF assistance?

### China in the Middle East

#### **China in the Middle East**

304. Despite efforts to the pivot to the Pacific, competition with China must also occur outside the Indo-Pacific region and on a global scale. China's Belt and Road initiatives are prospering in Africa, South Asia, and are making lasting inroads in the Middle East.

a. Given a likely diminished U.S. commitment to the Middle East under a Biden administration, how do you plan to contend with the growth of Chinese strategic expansion?

- b. How does the United States remain the partner of choice in the Middle East given CCP encroachment and lack of Chinese focus on human rights issues?

**China and Israel**

305. The United States has growing concerns with China's economic relationship with Israel. Given the relative weakness on Israel's committee on foreign investment and issues highlighted by the CCP's involvement in Haifa port, how do you effectively decouple the CCP from Israel?

**The Islamic State**

306. Experts contend that the Islamic State is at a strategic inflection point. While the physical caliphate in Iraq and Syria has been dismantled, the terror group continues efforts to reconstitute and remains a threat to the United States and its partners. The Department of Defense recently disbanded the Defeat ISIS Task Force and dismissed the Task Force Director. Similarly, State Department eliminated the Special Envoy to Counter ISIS (SECI) as an independent entity and placed the office under the CT Bureau. What are your views on the threat posed by ISIS? What are your views of the SECI organizational changes at the State Department and associated impacts on counter ISIS activities?
307. Thousands of foreign terrorist fighters and their families remain in Syrian Democratic Forces prisons or makeshift camps in Syria. Repatriation efforts to return these fighters and families to their countries of origin have been wildly unsuccessful. These fighters and their families represent a strategic vulnerability to the region.
- a. How will you address repatriation, de-radicalization, and demobilization efforts?
- b. What civilian security, democracy, and human rights programs would you highlight or pursue to address the seeds of conflict that led to the Islamic State's rise and allure and have not been effectively addressed?

**Afghanistan Policy**

**Taliban Commitments under February 29th Agreement and Intra-Afghan Talks**

308. As Secretary of State, you would have purview over the Special Representative for Afghan Reconciliation (SRAR). On February 29 of 2019, SRAR brokered an agreement with the Taliban to reduce U.S. forces in exchange for Taliban counterterrorism commitments, agreements to reduce violence, and enter into an intra-Afghan dialogue. In November, the Trump Administration reduced troop levels to approximately 2,500.
- a. What is your understanding of the Taliban's compliance with their commitments?
- b. Does the Taliban's record of compliance warrant further troop withdrawals below 2,500?

- c. Ongoing intra-Afghan negotiations will likely determine whether Afghanistan remains an Islamic republic or is turned into an Islamic emirate. What are the risks to U.S. interests linked to the outcomes of the intra-Afghan negotiations?
- d. Troop withdrawals have reduced the Afghan government's leverage in negotiations with the Taliban. How can the State Department and Biden Administration provide additional leverage to the Afghan government in its ongoing negotiations?
- e. What are your views on the UN delisting the Taliban?

#### **State Department Oversight in Afghanistan**

- 309. United States diplomatic presence and ability to move freely throughout Afghanistan is linked to Department of Defense presence and assets.
  - a. Given further troop reductions, how does the State Department maintain critical oversight of the millions of taxpayer funded assistance dollars that remain in the Afghanistan pipeline?
  - b. What conditions would a Biden Administration place on future assistance to Afghanistan?

#### **Human Rights in Afghanistan**

- 310. In addition to vital counterterrorism interests, U.S. efforts in Afghanistan have dramatically improved conditions for women, minority and youth. How would your State Department safeguard the gains made for Afghan women, minority and youth?

#### **The Role of Other Countries in Afghanistan**

- 311. What roles do Pakistan, China, and Russia play in Afghanistan and how will the State Department engage with these and regional actors to foster peace and stability?

### **POLITICAL MILITARY AFFAIRS**

#### **Arms Control**

- 312. The Trump Administration has reported that China has embarked on the single greatest expansion of a nuclear arsenal since the dawn of the Cold War. Do you agree with this assessment? Why or why not?
- 313. More than half of our NATO allies have expressed concern over the growth of China's nuclear arsenal, and its unwillingness to join arms control talks. Do you share the concerns of these allies?

314. Is China in compliance with its Article VI obligations under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty?
315. The United States and Russia have for many years implemented risk reduction measures regarding their nuclear arsenals, but the China has not joined such arrangements. Were it to move to a launch on warning posture, would that increase the need for risk reduction with China? How might we best engage China regarding risk reduction?
316. In your assessment, do the actions of Vladimir Putin and the available intelligence about him support an assessment that he agrees with the Reagan-Gorbachev statement that, "A nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought?" Does Russian doctrine, force posture and operational planning indicate that Russia under Putin believes that a nuclear war cannot be won?
317. Do you commit to having your incoming nuclear negotiator tour current U.S. nuclear enterprise facilities, to ensure they are fully aware of all issues regarding current U.S. nuclear weapons production that may be affected by arms control agreements?
318. Please assess the risk of an arms race between Russia and China as China moves to at least double its nuclear arsenal.

#### **The New START Treaty**

319. The Resolution of Ratification to the New START Treaty obligated the Obama Administration to pursue follow-on negotiations with Russia regarding its tactical nuclear weapons.
- a. How can the United States best constrain Russia's tactical nuclear weapons, which fall outside of New START?
  - b. New START does not include China, which is in the midst of a dramatic upgrade and expansion of its nuclear arsenal, which the Intelligence Community assesses will at least double by 2030. How can the United States best constrain China's growing and capable arsenal?
  - c. What can be done to ensure that Russia's so-called "exotic" strategic delivery systems, three of which Russia says are outside New START, are constrained by arms control obligations?
  - d. Do you support the requirement, as called for in the New START Resolution of Ratification, to, "modernize or replace the triad of strategic nuclear delivery systems: a heavy bomber and air-launched cruise missile, an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), and a ballistic missile submarine (SSBN) and submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM)?"
  - e. The Russian Foreign Ministry released a statement in October agreeing to extend New START for one year and to freeze warheads, before retreating from that position as the U.S. elections approach. This marked the first ever occasion that Russia has voiced any agreement to

limiting all warheads, and marked a major walk-back from Russia's previous refusal to consider anything short of a five year extension. Do you commit to pursuing the one year/warhead freeze option for New START extension, and to build off of those negotiating efforts to codify an agreement that accounts for all warheads, and sets conditions for multilateral engagement in the future?

**Declaratory Policy**

320. The Obama Administration debated changing U.S. declaratory nuclear policy, but decided to retain the long-standing policy of ambiguity.
- a. Why did the Obama Administration decide not to change U.S. declaratory policy?
  - b. Has the international security environment improved since 2016? What significant improvements have occurred that would warrant a change in U.S. declaratory policy?
  - c. Russia and China have modernized and expanded their nuclear arsenals, and embarked on military aggression against their neighbors. Given the increasing threats from Russia and China, how is a change to a no first use or sole purpose doctrine justifiable?
  - d. Do U.S. allies support the U.S. adoption of a no first use or sole purpose nuclear declaratory policy?
  - e. Do you commit to consulting closely with the Congress and with U.S. allies before any change in U.S. declaratory policy?
  - f. What impact would a sole purpose nuclear declaratory policy have on the ability of the United States to offer extended deterrence in support of allies?

**Extended Deterrence**

321. One of the key justifications for the full nuclear modernization program of record, as first put forward by the Obama Administration, is to provide extended deterrence to U.S. allies and achieve associated U.S. objectives regarding assurance allies and promoting nonproliferation.
- a. Do you see a risk of damaging extended deterrence if the United States not modernize its nuclear enterprise?
  - b. Do you commit to consulting with Congress and with allies regarding any such risks?

**NATO Nuclear-Sharing**

322. The NATO Secretary General released a statement earlier this year noting that, "Our solidarity is our strength and the ultimate expression of that solidarity remains our nuclear deterrent." How damaging would it be to the solidarity of the NATO alliance for a member



to demand the withdrawal of U.S. nuclear weapons? Would it call that member's NATO membership into question?

**The Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty**

323. In 2019, NATO strongly supported the finding of the United States that Russia was in material breach of its obligations under the INF Treaty, and said that it was up to Russia to preserve the INF Treaty.
- a. Do you agree with NATO's assessment that Russia violated the INF Treaty, and was responsible for its termination?
  - b. I do not believe that it is possible to return to the INF Treaty without a new ratification by the Senate. Do you agree? Please explain. If you do not, do you commit to consulting with Congress before attempting to return to the treaty?
  - c. Given the massive growth in numbers and capability of the People's Liberation Army Rocket Forces, I do not believe that any future treaty covering intermediate-range missiles is in the interests of the United States if it does not include China. Do you agree?

**The Open Skies Treaty**

324. I do not believe that it is possible to return to the Open Skies Treaty without a new ratification by the Senate. Do you agree? Please explain. If not, do you commit to consulting with Congress before attempting to return to the treaty?

**The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)**

325. Under the CWC, any member state can request a challenge inspection without delay to resolve questions regarding non-compliance. Do you commit to requesting a challenge inspection of Russia regarding the poisoning of Alexei Navalny?

**Other Arms Control Agreements**

326. Do you support the United States joining the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons? Why or why not?
327. Do you support the United States joining the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty? Why or why not?
328. Do you support the United States joining the Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty? Why or why not?
329. Do you support the United States joining the Arms Trade Treaty? Why or why not?

**Non-Proliferation****Iran's Nuclear Program**

330. Rafael Grossi, Director of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), recently stated that reviving the Iran nuclear deal would require a new agreement setting out how Iran's breaches of the deal should be reversed. I agree with Director Grossi's assessment. Do you?
331. I view any Iranian limitations on IAEA inspectors as a redline, and see Iran's obfuscation and refusal to answer questions to the IAEA regarding its undeclared sites as unacceptable. In your mind, are limits on IAEA inspectors a redline?

**Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act**

332. How do you plan to balance the requirement to hold the Russian defense and intelligence enterprise accountable with the need to avoid undue damage to U.S. alliances and partnerships, especially given the competition for partners?
333. If we deny requests to sell arms to U.S. allies and partners, should we then sanction those allies or partners if they acquire Russian defense equipment for what they see as their own legitimate defense requirements?

**Political-Military Affairs****Arms Sales**

334. Do you commit to respecting Congress's role in the arms sales process, and to adhering to the informal notification process as established for decades with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and House Foreign Affairs Committee?
335. Do you commit to restricting the informal arms sales review process to only SFRC and HFAC, and not to allow informal review by other Congressional committees?

**Security Assistance**

336. In the decades since 9/11, the Department of Defense has acquired more and more authorities and resources for what were previously State Department-led security assistance activities.
- a. Has that dynamic gone too far? Is it time for the State Department to take the lead in security assistance once again?
  - b. Is the State Department organized and equipped to lead security assistance efforts for the U.S. Government? What are the obstacles to the Department effectively leading these efforts? What changes are necessary to enable the Department to best lead these efforts?

**Burden-Sharing**

337. The Trump Administration has pushed our allies to contribute more to host nation support activities, expanding the scale of their expected contribution and the scope of activities that are expected to be covered. Some of these allies apparently believe the Biden Administration will not seek any additional contributions, and will return to status quo ante discussions of such topics.

Should Korea, Japan, Germany and others discard those considerations now? Are they off the hook for contributing more to support the deployment of U.S. forces?

**India**

338. In a March 2020 event at the Hudson Institute, incoming Coordinator for the Indo-Pacific Dr. Kurt Campbell said, "I do not think there is a relationship that's more important for the United States to invest in over the course of the next 10 to 15 years than India." Do you agree? Why or why not

**THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

**Management**

**COVID-19**

339. If confirmed, how do you plan to responsibly return the Department's workforce to the office as the COVID-19 situation improves in certain countries?

- a. Will you continue the Trump Administration's phased approach?
- b. After the pandemic has subsided, should the Department return 100 percent of its workforce to the office full-time?

340. Recent discussions with State Department staff indicated that the Department has mishandled its vaccine rollout. For example, on New Year's Eve, the Bureau of Medical Services (MED) was scrambling to find any employee in the National Capital Region to receive the vaccine because it had doses that were going to spoil. This transpired after MED staff told my staff two weeks earlier that the Department was set to receive one-tenth the number of doses it had requested and expected to receive.

- a. Do you pledge to improve the Department's vaccine rollout?

- b. Do you intend to address the mistakes that MED has made in its vaccine roll-out and hold accountable those within the Department who made mistakes with such a valuable resource not available to most Americans?
- c. Do you intend for the Department to vaccinate all or parts of the workforce? If so, which parts and in what order? Should LES staff be included?
- d. Recent reports have suggested that as of January 11th, over 1,000 State Department employees had already been vaccinated, while zero USAID employees had received the vaccine. Do you agree that this inequity is unacceptable? If confirmed, will you seek to ensure that all employees of USAID, over which the Department currently exercises foreign policy direction, have equitable access to vaccines?

**Reimagine Task Force**

- 341. The Department recently completed its “Reimagine Task Force” that aims to study lessons learned and then implement best practices.
  - a. Do you agree with the conclusions of the Reimagine Task Force?
  - b. If confirmed, do you intend to implement all of the currently planned changes?
  - c. If yes, which ones? If no, which are you choosing not to implement?
  - d. Do you intend to reverse any of the changes that have already been implemented?

**Organization**

- 342. The Department had proposed creating a Bureau of Contingency and Crisis Management. Do you support the creation of this bureau?
- 343. Do you intend to seek the advice and consent of the Senate for the State Department’s Chief of Protocol?

**Special Envoys**

- 344. If confirmed, which special envoy or other similar positions at the Department do you intend to keep?
  - a. Which ones do you believe are not necessary?
  - b. Do you plan to create any new special envoy positions at the Department?

**Internal Processes**

345. How do you assess the D Committee chief of mission selection process? Are there areas in which you would like to make changes?
346. During the last Congress, the D Committee concentrated first-time chiefs of mission in certain geographic areas, often without any regional expertise. Do you commit to making the distribution of first-time ambassadors more equal among regions as well as emphasizing experience in the region?
347. The State Department has an infamously slow and difficult paper clearance process that reduces Department efficiency and effectiveness.
- Do you believe that this process is in need of reform?
  - If yes, do you intend to address the paper clearance process?
  - If yes, how do you intend to do so?
348. The Department has frequently complained to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee about the number of congressionally-required reports it produces. Yet, the Department has refused to provide me or my staff with what it views as the comprehensive list of its requirements.
- Do you commit to providing what the Department views as a comprehensive list of congressionally-required reports?
  - Would you support reducing the number of congressionally-required reports?
  - If yes, would you commit to working with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on reducing the number of reports and identifying exactly which reports you seek to reduce?

**Morale**

349. As in any other workforce, high morale among the State Department's employees is vital to attracting and retaining talent.
- Is morale at the Department a problem?
  - If yes, how do you intend to improve and maintain morale at the Department?
  - Are there specific areas of morale (or bureaus) that you believe need immediate attention?

**CODELs/Staffdels**

350. CODELs and staffdels are important to the formulation of and support for U.S. foreign policy in Congress. These trips often spur or incubate ideas for Members and staff. However, CODELs and staffdels are often given to low-ranking junior officers and treated as a burden rather than an opportunity for discussion and collaboration.
- a. Do you commit to emphasizing the importance of CODELs and staffdels?
  - b. Do you commit to pressing posts to assign higher ranking officers to support these critical missions?
  - c. Do you commit to emphasizing to posts the need to engage with CODELs and staffdels in policy discussions or ideas that would improve the State Department's interests in the local area or region?

**Overseas Building Operations (OBO)****General**

351. Do you believe it is important to build U.S. diplomatic posts in areas near host government buildings and other diplomatic missions in order to support the activities of U.S. diplomats?
352. Do you commit to placing greater emphasis on ease of diplomatic access in choosing the location for future diplomatic posts?
353. The Bureau of Overseas Building Operations is moving to a more efficient and effective approach.
- a. Do you commit to continuing to expand the pool of contract bidders?
  - b. Do you commit to lowering building costs through standardization?
  - c. Do you commit to following industry standards like design-build?

**Public Diplomacy****Undersecretary for Public Diplomacy (R)**

354. Should the Undersecretary for Public Diplomacy be empowered to create and execute Department-wide public diplomacy strategies? If yes, how would you do so?
355. Should the Undersecretary for Public Diplomacy control public diplomacy down to the embassy/PAO level?

356. How should the Department balance between the local knowledge of PAOs at posts and the overall public diplomacy messaging coming from the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy?
357. In 2019, the Department committed to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that it would move to a “shared EX” model in the R Family. Do you intend to honor that commitment?
358. Should the Department, through the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, continue to build its alumni network to provide additional tools for advancing U.S. foreign policy?
359. I introduced legislation designed to enhance State Department and Congressional oversight of Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act (MECEA) programs with the People’s Republic of China. If you plan to reinstate these programs in the future, how will the Department exercise greater scrutiny of these programs given potential counterintelligence risks and their use as propaganda tools for the Chinese Communist Party?
360. There were press reports that Embassy Budapest was not supportive of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty’s (RFE/RL) decision to open a bureau in Budapest. Do you support RFE/RL’s Budapest bureau? Would you instruct the chief of mission to support it?

#### Security

##### **FY 2019 National Defense Authorization Act Section 889**

361. Recently, legal restrictions—commonly referred to as section 889—have come into effect that severely limit the types of telecommunications networks that U.S. government departments and agencies can use overseas. However, many countries’ networks are so saturated by prohibited telecommunications equipment that complying with section 889, absent a waiver, would severely limit the ability of our posts to operate abroad.
- a. How do you assess the burden placed on the Department by these restrictions?
  - b. Will the Department be able to implement these restrictions fully without diminishing its ability to operate abroad?
  - c. Are there costs to the Department associated with these restrictions?
  - d. Would the Department be able to operate without the waivers currently granted by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) to the Department?
  - e. Do you plan to request an extension of waivers?
  - f. Do you intend to request a blanket waiver authority for the Secretary of State that would allow the Department to adjudicate its own waivers?

- g. Do you commit to working with Congress to find a long-term solution to this situation that ensures secure, reliable communications while encouraging foreign governments to move away from the prohibited Chinese technology?

**Security and Effective Diplomacy**

362. One troubling trend my staff and I have identified during our travels during the previous congress is that many of our diplomats are not getting out from behind embassy walls and meeting with the local population or even other diplomats. Frequently, we are told that the security requirements are too tight and sacrifice advancing U.S. interests for airtight security.
- a. Does the inability of State Department diplomats to leave the embassies at which they are currently stationed put the Department at a strategic disadvantage?
  - b. Do Chinese, Russian, and Iranian diplomats face similar restrictions to those placed on U.S. diplomats?
  - c. Do you support getting our diplomats back outside posts? If yes, how so?
  - d. Do you intend to emphasize to the Bureau of Diplomatic Security your desire to do so?
  - e. Should security concerns always take precedence over the ability of our diplomats to operate abroad?
  - f. How should diplomacy be weighed in relation to security concerns, particularly regarding embassy security?

**Cuba/Havana Syndrome**

363. Between late 2016 and May 2018, the State Department found that certain U.S. Embassy community members suffered a series of unexplained injuries, including hearing loss and cognitive issues.
- a. If confirmed, will you commit to continuing the investigation into the circumstances surrounding the sonic attacks?
  - b. Will you seek to ensure the safety and security of U.S. diplomatic personnel in Havana and other posts where personnel were injured?
  - c. Is it in the national interest of the United States to assign an ambassador to Cuba before the Cuban government fully and credibly explains the targeted attacks on U.S. diplomats in Havana?



- d. If confirmed, do you commit to supporting all State Department employees and their families who were injured by these sonic attacks, including those employees who have since left the Department?
- e. If confirmed, do you commit to work constructively with other government agencies on finding the cause of the attacks as well as on how best to support those U.S. government employees who have been injured?
- f. If confirmed, do you commit to regularly sharing new information, including updates on any live investigations, to Congress?

**Cyber**

**Organization**

- 364. Should the Chief Information Officer report directly to the Secretary? If so, why? If not, to whom should they report?
- 365. Do you support continuing to have cyber responsibilities split between the Bureau of Information Resource Management and Diplomatic Security?
- 366. The Department has been advocating for the creation of a Bureau of Cybersecurity and Emerging Technologies (CSET), to be based in the T Family.
  - a. Do you support the creation of CSET?
  - b. Do you believe it should be in the T Family?
  - c. Do you believe a cyber bureau should include all elements of cyber, to include e-commerce and privacy issues?
  - d. Should a cyber bureau include regular consultations with U.S. private sector actors to receive external views and leverage outside expertise?
  - e. Given the massive cyber hack that was reported in December 2020, how important is cybersecurity to the State Department and U.S. diplomacy?
  - f. What cybersecurity challenges does the Department currently face?
  - g. How do you intend to improve cybersecurity at the Department?

**Diplomacy**

**Security Risks and Effective Diplomacy**

367. Many of the Department's employees work in dangerous settings abroad, and their health and safety should be protected. However, diplomacy is an inherently dangerous profession and a "risk nothing" approach does not make for an effective foreign policy.
- Do you believe that the Department has allowed too much of a "bunker mentality" to set in?
  - Do you believe that the Department should encourage, not discourage, personnel to get outside of the embassy walls and be more proactive diplomats?
  - Do you believe that the Department needs to adopt a culture of risk management as opposed to risk avoidance?
368. When terrorist groups or rogue states make threats against our posts abroad, it is obviously a cause for serious concern.
- What message does it send to our adversaries if we withdraw the vast majority of our Chief of Mission personnel in response to these threats?
  - Is it possible that by responding to threats with diplomatic drawdowns, the State Department has actually rewarded those who threatened and have encouraged them to threaten further our interests?

#### **Diplomatic Investment**

369. Are there any regions or countries where you believe the department is underinvesting?
- In what regions does the Department need to "staff up"?
  - Equally as important: where could we "slim down" our presence?
  - Does the Department have enough economic officers to promote U.S. business interests abroad and to help the U.S. private sector compete against Chinese government promotion of Chinese businesses?

#### **General**

370. Do you believe that chiefs of mission should generally be the U.S. government lead authority in a country? If yes, how do you intend to reinforce the primacy of chiefs of mission in country?

#### **Global Engagement Center (GEC)**

371. Do you believe that the Global Engagement Center (GEC) has a vital role to play in our great power competition with Russia and China, and in countering our adversaries in Iran and North Korea?

- a. If so, will you commit to providing the GEC with the resources and authority it needs to succeed?
- b. How would you work to expand the GEC's influence within the interagency?
- c. How would you grow the GEC within the Department?
- d. If confirmed, will you appoint a qualified Coordinator that demonstrates the importance of the GEC?

### Human Resources

#### **Diversity**

- 372. If confirmed, what steps would you take to improve the diversity of the Department's workforce?
- 373. What is the relative importance of traditional recruiting efforts versus focused initiatives like the Rangel Fellowship?
- 374. How can leadership within the State Department use their roles to be more proactive in pipelining diverse talent for senior positions?
- 375. What steps can the State Department take to increase support for women and minorities seeking promotions?
- 376. How can State modify its current testing and recruitment process to make it more accessible for historically underrepresented communities?
- 377. Currently, Foreign Service oral assessments are held in Washington, DC, throughout the year and once in San Francisco, CA.
  - a. Is geographic diversity important in building a Department that "looks like America"?
  - b. Do you think making it easier and more cost effective for Americans outside of the Washington, DC, and northern California areas to take the Foreign Service oral assessments would encourage a more geographically diverse Foreign Service?
  - c. Do you commit to expanding the number of places the Foreign Service oral assessment is administered?

#### **The Foreign Service**

- 378. Is it important for Foreign Service Officers to have a strong understanding of the history of international relations/foreign policy?

379. Are strong language skills an essential to success for Foreign Service Officers serving abroad?
380. Do you believe it is important for Foreign Service Officers (FSO) to take external assignments throughout the interagency or in Congress to bring a greater understanding of those organizations back to the Department?

**Civil Service Officers**

381. There are many fewer job opportunities for Civil Service Officers at the GS-14, GS-15, and SES levels relative to the equivalent ranks of the Foreign Service, particularly in the "Foreign Affairs Officer" job series.
- Is having a strong cadre of Civil Service Officers important to the Department? If yes, in what ways?
  - How can the Department retain and grow top Civil Service Officer talent given the lack of opportunities for growth beyond the GS-13 level?
  - Do you support expanding opportunities for Civil Service Officers to work at Department posts abroad, particularly in filling spots that are currently unoccupied for Foreign Service Officers?

**Lateral Entry**

382. In 2017, Congress passed into law a lateral entry pilot program for the Foreign Service that the Department has yet to implement. Do you commit to starting the program in 2021 and to design it as Congress intended?

**Embassy Growth**

383. Currently, when the Department builds a new embassy or consulate, it assumes 10% growth in seats needed for the duration of the post, a one-size-fits-all solution that clearly is deficient. Do you commit to changing the process to include a realistic, informed estimate based on current and estimated future conditions?

**"Schedule F"**

384. The Trump administration issued an executive order requiring the State Department to produce a list of "schedule F" positions filled by civil service officers who advocate for or determine external policy. Do you agree with the re-designation of State Department civil service officers to "schedule F"?

**State Authorization/Oversight****Legislation and Congress**

385. Do you support Congress passing a State Department authorization bill?
386. Do you believe it is important that the Department be explicitly authorized outside of the appropriations process consistently?
387. If confirmed, do you commit to instructing Department personnel to play a constructive, supportive, and timely role with Congress in writing and passing a State Department authorization bill?
388. How can the Department better support Congress in passing a State Department authorization bill?
389. Do you believe that the role the Senate Foreign Relations Committee is important in providing congressional oversight?
390. Do you commit to making Department personnel available for timely briefings upon request?
391. Do you believe that the Foreign Service Act should be updated?

**WESTERN HEMISPHERE****General**

392. If confirmed, how will you organize and mobilize the resources of the State Department to counter malign Russian government behavior and influence in the Western Hemisphere.
393. If confirmed, how will you organize and mobilize the resources of the State Department to counter malign Chinese government behavior and influence in the Western Hemisphere?
394. Are China's growing commercial ties and investments in Latin America a security threat to the United States?
395. If confirmed, your responsibilities will include overseeing the activities of the Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. Several ballot measures in the November 2020 elections involved the legalization of illicit narcotics in the United States, including a measure in Oregon legalizing the personal possession of cocaine, heroin, oxycodone and methamphetamine. Please explain your views on the impact these measures have on United States efforts to combat transnational criminal organizations.

**JCPOA**

396. What are the implications of sanctions relief tied to JCPOA re-entry for Iran's malign activities in the Western Hemisphere?

**North America**

**Canada**

397. What is your assessment of the strategic threat China presents in the Arctic? If confirmed, what strategies would you employ to strengthen bilateral efforts with Canada to deter and compete with China in the Arctic region?
398. What is your assessment of the strategic threat Russia presents in the Arctic? If confirmed, what strategies would you employ to strengthen bilateral efforts with Canada to deter and compete with Russia in the Arctic region?
399. In 2024 key provisions of the United States' Columbia River Treaty with Canada are set to expire. The Columbia River Treaty provides the northwest region stable flood control, hydroelectric power, and water flow throughout each year. The State Department has been engaged in modernizing the treaty since 2018.
- a. Will you commit to making the renegotiation of the treaty a priority to the State Department?
  - b. As treaty renegotiations enter their fourth year, will you commit to allowing talk to move forward within their current scope? Or do you plan to expand the treaty areas of interest?

**Mexico**

400. In 2008, Mexico enacted landmark judicial reforms moving from a closed inquisitorial system to an adversarial model, yet continues to face some challenges in implementation.
- How can the United States best tailor support within the Merida initiative to ensure our assistance for the judicial sector is most effective in addressing U.S. interests?
401. Mexico has increased the pace of extraditions to the United States, with over 60 extraditions this past year, yet Mexico has taken actions recently that diminish our law enforcement efforts.
- a. If confirmed, what efforts will you make to further increase the pace of extraditions and promote robust law enforcement cooperation between the United States and Mexico?
  - b. How would you message the importance of maintaining robust law enforcement cooperation with Mexican government officials?

- c. What mechanisms can the United States employ to support strengthening Mexico's ability to defend and protect its southern border from transitional criminal activities?
402. In December 2020, Mexico approved reforms to the national security law, limiting the power and restricting operations of foreign law enforcement agents in the country. If confirmed, what efforts will you make to maintain continuity in United States-Mexico law enforcement cooperation as Mexico implements this law?
403. According to the 2019 National Drug Threat Assessment, fentanyl and other highly potent synthetic opioids continue to be the most lethal category of illicit substances in the United States. The 2020 DEA report on fentanyl flows to the United States highlights that China remains the primary source of fentanyl and fentanyl-related substances trafficked into the United States, increasingly through Mexico. Mexican transnational criminal organizations are producing increased quantities of fentanyl and cartels such as the Sinaloa and the New Generation Jalisco cartel are the primary trafficking groups responsible for smuggling fentanyl into the United States from Mexico.
- a. If confirmed, how do you intend to communicate these concerns about fentanyl production and trafficking to the Mexican government?
  - b. What specific actions would you encourage Mexico to meaningfully tackle transitional criminal activities through its territory, including trafficking of illicit narcotics?

#### Central America

404. In September 2019, then-(Acting) Assist. Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs Michael Kozak described to this Committee how, despite years of programmatic successes, the U.S.-Central America Strategy had failed to muster the political will necessary for aid-recipient countries to effectively combat endemic corruption, economic protectionism, and rampant criminality that have generated wave after wave of illegal migration from the region.
- a. Do you agree with his assessment?
  - b. Please explain how the Biden Administration will build sustained political will in Central America to tackle the push factors of illegal migration.
405. The Strategy for Engagement in Central America was designed to promote economic prosperity, security, and good governance in order to deter illegal migration from the region. Pursuant to that strategy, Congress has placed multiple conditions on aid to these countries.
- a. To what extent have legislative conditions contributed to policy changes in the recipient nations?

- b. How do you plan to incentivize needed reforms if the recipient countries fail to meet conditions set by Congress, and those failures prompt restrictions on assistance?
406. President-elect Biden has proposed a four-year \$4 billion strategy for Central America.
- a. Can you describe the importance of concrete and verifiable benchmarks in any strategy toward the region and what these benchmarks would look like?
  - b. Can you describe the type of investment and specific reforms you are seeking from individual governments for this strategy to reduce illegal migration from the region? What is the off-ramp for this strategy?

#### Nicaragua

407. Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega, Vice President Rosario Murillo, and the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) party have taken aggressive measures to silence and punish independent organizations and dissent. These measures include a “foreign agents law” and a special law on cybercrimes, among others. Can you describe what these repressive laws stipulate and how they violate fundamental freedoms essential for preserving democracy?
408. Nicaraguan exports to the United States have increased by approximately 70 percent since the Dominican Republic-Central America Free Trade Agreement (DR-CAFTA) went into effect in 2006. DR-CAFTA requires important reforms of the domestic legal and business environment that encourage competitive business development and investment, protect intellectual property rights, and promote transparency and the rule-of-law in the trade partners.
- a. Is it your assessment that Nicaragua has instituted reforms that promote transparency and the rule-of-law over the last 15 years since the trade deal has gone into effect?
  - b. Is Nicaragua abiding by its commitments to DR-CAFTA?
  - c. How has DR-CAFTA benefitted the government of Nicaragua?
409. The Nicaragua Human Rights and Anticorruption Act of 2018 (PL 115-335) requires the United States to oppose any loan or financial or technical assistance by international financial institutions to the government of Nicaragua for a project in Nicaragua, except those provided to address basic human needs or to promote democracy in Nicaragua. In exercising that discretion, the Trump administration ensured that COVID assistance provided to Nicaragua in July 2020 did not flow to the government of Nicaragua, but rather to trusted non-governmental organizations. Do you commit to continue this practice as the Biden administration manages United States participation in international financial institutions?



410. According to the 2019 State Department’s Report on Human Rights in Nicaragua, “there were numerous reports that the government or its agents committed arbitrary or unlawful killings” in response to the April 2018 pro-democracy protests, where the government’s violent crackdown left at least 325 people dead, over 2,000 injured, hundreds illegally detained, tortured, and disappeared, and more than 80,000 exiled in neighboring countries. An Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) team concluded in July 2018 that the Nicaraguan security forces’ actions could be considered crimes against humanity. The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights describes Nicaragua as suffering from a “climate of widespread terror.” If confirmed, would you support an investigation into serious human rights abuses and crimes against humanity committed by the Ortega regime?
411. In November 2019, the Organization of American States (OAS) High Level Commission on Nicaragua concluded that the government’s actions “make the democratic functioning of the country impossible,” in violation of Nicaragua’s obligations under Article 1 of the Inter-American Democratic Charter.
- a. If confirmed, what instructions would you give the U.S. Ambassador to the OAS to encourage greater international pressure on the situation in Nicaragua?
  - b. Should Nicaragua be suspended from the OAS?
412. What direct role do foreign powers—particularly Russia and Cuba—play in Nicaragua? What are Russia’s and Cuba’s strategic objectives in Nicaragua?
413. What strategies would you employ to improve the capacity of the democratic forces to coalesce and become a credible challenge to Ortega ahead of the November 2021 general elections?

### The Caribbean

#### **Cuba**

414. For decades, the Cuban government has harbored a number of U.S. fugitives of justice, including: Joanne Chesimard, on the FBI’s Most Wanted Terrorists List for executing New Jersey state trooper Werner Foerster in 1973; Ishmael LaBeet, convicted of killing eight people in the U.S. Virgin Islands in 1972; and Charles Lee Hill, charged with killing New Mexico state policeman Robert Rosenbloom in 1971; among others. The government of Cuba continues to refuse Colombia’s request to extradite members of the U.S.-designated Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) National Liberation Army (ELN) living in Cuba after the group claimed responsibility for the January 2019 bombing of a Bogota police academy that killed 22 people and injured more than 60 others. These instances underscore how Cuban government support of the Maduro regime has created a permissive environment for international terrorists to live and thrive within Venezuela.

- a. Does Cuban provision of food, housing, and medical care for these U.S. fugitives constitute support for international terrorism? If confirmed, do you commit to prioritizing the extradition of all fugitives from U.S. law enjoying safe harbor in Cuba? Should Cuba be removed from the list of state sponsors of terrorism (SST) while they continue to harbor U.S. fugitives? Would you advise establishing diplomatic relations with Cuba while it continues to provide safe harbor to fugitives from the U.S. justice system?
  - b. Does Cuba's refusal of Colombia's extradition request constitute support for international terrorism?
  - c. If confirmed, would you support Cuba's removal from the SST list without verifiable assurances that it would cease to foster a permissive environment for international terrorists in Venezuela?
  - d. Please describe your role in the State Department assessment that recommended the removal of Cuba from the SST list in April 2015.
  - e. Please list the specific assurances provided by the government of Cuba in relation to its removal from the list in 2015.
415. During your last confirmation hearing before this Committee in November 2014, you testified that, "[a]t least in my judgment, unless Cuba is able to demonstrate that it is taking meaningful steps to move forward, I don't see how you move forward in the [bilateral] relationship." Within two weeks, President Obama announced a dramatic shift in U.S. policy towards Cuba.
- a. Please provide a record of your guidance as Deputy Secretary of State in relation to the series of Cuba policy shifts that occurred between December 2014 and January 2017.
  - b. Please describe your involvement in the decision by President Obama to visit Cuba in March 2016.
  - c. Please explain your involvement in the September 2016 decision to name a United States Ambassador to Cuba.
  - d. Please describe the "meaningful steps" taken by the Cuban regime between November 2014 and March 2016 that merited President Obama's shift in Cuba policy.
  - e. Please describe the conditions under which you would recommend the re-establishment of diplomatic relations with Cuba.
416. In your November 2014 confirmation hearing, you said, "anything that might be done in the future on Cuba would be done in full consultation, with the real meaning of consultation, that I just alluded to, with this Committee." In a January 2015 hearing before this Committee, just three months later, you said that you "regret" not consulting members of the Committee during White House negotiations to normalize relations with Cuba.

Specifically, you stated with regard to your confirmation hearing that, “I did not live up to the standard I set during that hearing,” and that “I think that I could have done a better job in engaging with you and in consulting with you in advance, and I regret that.”

If confirmed, do you commit to conduct meaningful consultations with me, my office, and the rest of the Committee before and during any negotiations with Cuba?

417. There is well-documented evidence of Cuba’s support for the Maduro regime in Venezuela.
- a. Please describe the trajectory of Cuban involvement in Venezuela between November 2014 and January 2020.
  - b. Do you agree that Cuban military and intelligence support is the linchpin to Maduro’s survival in Venezuela?
  - c. Please describe your views on the most effective approach to persuade the Cuban regime to play a more positive role in Venezuela.
  - d. If confirmed, how would you lead an international coalition of like-minded democracies to put pressure on Cuba regarding its involvement in Venezuela?
  - e. Is it in our nation’s interests to reestablish diplomatic relations with Cuba before the Cuban government measurably and meaningfully reduces its presence in Venezuela?
  - f. Do you commit to the full and faithful implementation of the 1996 LIBERTAD Act?
  - g. Please describe your understanding of the conditions set by the LIBERTAD Act for the United States to normalize relations with Cuba.
  - h. Please describe your understanding of the role of military-controlled firms in the Cuban economy.
  - i. Is it in the national interest of the United States to facilitate or allow financial transactions that benefit military-controlled firms in Cuba? If so, how and why?
  - j. If confirmed, how will you work to ensure that U.S. public and private engagement in Cuba does not disproportionately benefit the Cuban military, intelligence, or security services or personnel at the expense of the Cuban people?
418. In February 2016, the United States Department of Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) allowed the Cuban regime to register the Havana Club rum brand in the United States.
- a. Please describe the economic windfall that this decision has had for the Cuban regime since 2016.

- b. Should the U.S. Government rescind the 2016 OFAC license given to Havana Club rum?
  - c. What conditions and/or circumstances would need to be met before you would formally nominate a United States Ambassador to Cuba?
419. According to the State Department, in 2019, the government of Cuba maintained an estimated 50,000 medical personnel in more than 60 countries under conditions that represent forced labor. The United States, the United Nations, independent media outlets, and non-governmental organizations have all documented and called out the Cuban regime's exploitative and coercive practices toward its doctors participating in its overseas medical programs.
- a. Can you describe your understanding of how Cuban doctors are forced to participate in the Cuban medical program, sent to a foreign country, and the conditions in which they are forced to live while participating?
  - b. Can you describe how these programs only serve to benefit the Cuban government at the expense of the Cuban people?
  - c. Do you consider the Cuban regime's overseas medical missions to be exploitative human trafficking efforts?
  - d. Do you commit to instructing United States embassies in countries that accept Cuban medical missions to communicate to host governments the realities of the forced labor practices employed by the Cuban regime?
420. In the *Mais Medicos* program, which ran from 2013-2018, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) facilitated the deployment of thousands of Cuban doctors to Brazil, some of whom subsequently alleged misconduct and abuse.
- a. How should PAHO be held accountable for its role in this program?
  - b. If confirmed, do you commit to working to ensure PAHO implements necessary governance changes to ensure increased oversight of future projects or programs such as *Mais Medicos*?
421. The State Department's 2019 Human Rights Report for Cuba painted a dismal picture of human rights abuses by the Cuban regime, to include accounts of disappearances; torture and other cruel, inhumane, or degrading treatment or punishment; harsh prison and detention center conditions; arbitrary arrests and detentions; denial of fair public trial; and political prisoners and detainees. The regime also has cracked down on freedom of expression, limited internet freedom, and restricted freedoms of peaceful assembly and association.
- a. Will you commit to calling out human rights violations by the Cuban government?
  - b. How will you work to support democratic activists and human rights defenders in Cuba?

422. In President Obama's reversal of longstanding United States policy toward Cuba, the Castro regime released a U.S. intelligence agent in exchange for three Cuban agents which our United States agent helped to capture.
- Do you believe this was a fair exchange?
  - Do you believe this man's sacrifice was served with the return of the agents he helped capture?
423. In 2014, when President Obama first announced his plans to normalize relations with the Castro regime, he said a presidential visit to Havana was "not in the cards." Then in December 2015, Obama expressed desire to visit Cuba but drew a "red line" declaring he would only visit Cuba if the government makes "progress on civil liberties," and that he was not "interested in validating the status quo."
- Do you believe progress was made on civil liberties by the time of Obama's visit?
  - Do you believe the human rights situation in Cuba worsened during the period of normalization?

#### **Haiti**

424. Legislative elections are more than a year overdue, there is not a functioning parliament, and the president is ruling by decree. If confirmed, what efforts would you make to support strengthening Haiti's technical capacity to hold elections?

#### **South America**

##### **Colombia**

425. Coca production in Colombia has been steadily increasing since 2013, reaching 212,000 hectares in 2019. In March 2020, the United States and Colombia announced a joint action plan to reduce coca cultivation and cocaine production by 50 percent by the end of 2023. The plan would make full use of all available tools, including rural development, interdiction, as well as manual and aerial eradication.
- Would you agree that achieving this goal by 2023 would deliver significant health and security benefits for Americans here at home?
  - If confirmed, what tools and policies would you implement to ensure that our two nations meet this goal?
  - Please explain the level of prioritization you would give to the use of aerial eradication in order to achieve this goal by 2023.

- d. Would you support the provision of United States technical assistance to Colombia for aerial eradication programs once Colombia has satisfied its domestic legal requirements to do so?
426. Colombia is a critical United States ally in the Western Hemisphere. In 1997, the United States designated the National Liberation Army (ELN) and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) as foreign terrorist organizations (FTOs), responsible for hundreds of thousands of deaths and millions of displacements during the half century-long conflict, most of whom are still displaced today.
- a. If confirmed, do you commit to keeping these entities listed as FTOs?
  - b. Please describe your understanding of the links between the Maduro regime and the Ejercito de Liberacion Nacional (ELN).
  - c. Please describe your understanding of the extent of Cuba's support for the ELN.

**Venezuela**

427. In your view, is the humanitarian crisis in Venezuela the result of political and security conditions in that country, or are they the cause of them?
- a. Can the humanitarian crisis be resolved on Maduro's watch?
  - b. Please describe your understanding of Iran's interests in the survival of the Maduro regime.
  - c. Is it in the interests of Iran for the Maduro regime to end?
  - d. If confirmed, what specific steps will you recommend as Secretary of State to diminish Iranian influence in Venezuela?
428. Please describe your understanding of Russia's interests in the survival of the Maduro regime.
- a. Is it in the interest of President Putin for the Maduro regime to end?
  - b. If confirmed, what specific steps will you recommend as Secretary of State to diminish Russian influence in Venezuela?
429. Please describe your understanding of Cuba's interests in the survival of the Maduro regime.
- a. Is it in the interest of the Cuban regime for the Maduro regime to end?
  - b. If confirmed, what specific steps will you recommend as Secretary of State to diminish Cuban influence in Venezuela?

430. Please describe your understanding of China's interests in the survival of the Maduro regime.
- a. Is it in the interest of China for the Maduro regime to end?
  - b. If confirmed, what specific steps will you recommend as Secretary of State to diminish Chinese influence in Venezuela?
431. In a January 2019 editorial, you credited the Trump Administration for isolating the Maduro regime, but criticized the alleged absence of a "comprehensive strategy" or a "Plan B if Mr. Maduro digs in or lashes out."
- a. Please explain your comprehensive strategy to advance a peaceful transition in Venezuela.
  - b. Please explain your "Plan B if Mr. Maduro digs in or lashes out."
  - c. There have been more than a dozen failed attempts at negotiating with the Maduro regime. They have occurred in an environment of engagement during the Obama Administration, and under the pressure of punitive measures implemented by the Trump Administration.
  - d. Please describe the lessons learned from your tenure as Deputy Secretary of State in negotiating with the Maduro regime.
  - e. Please describe your views on the conditions under which there can be successful negotiations with the Maduro regime resulting in a peaceful transition to democratic rule in Venezuela.
  - f. Please explain how the United States could work more closely with the European Union—and specifically Spain—to increase economic pressure on Maduro.
  - g. If confirmed, do you commit to not supporting or promoting negotiations without previous and meaningful behavior change by the Maduro regime?
  - h. Do you commit to not settling for inadequate conditions under which free and fair presidential, legislative, and local elections would be conducted?
432. In September 2020, the UN Independent International Fact Finding Mission on Venezuela cited evidence of unlawful executions, forced disappearances, arbitrary detentions and torture in the country since 2014, amounting to crimes against humanity.
- a. Do you believe the perpetrators of these crimes against humanity have been held accountable?
  - b. If confirmed, what tools will you use to ensure every person responsible for crimes against humanity in Venezuela is brought to justice?

433. In December 2020, the General Secretariat of the OAS raised concerns about the failure by the chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) to take swift action following a UN report documenting evidence that Nicolas Maduro and senior members of the regime ordered or contributed to what amounted to crimes against humanity.

Do you support the ICC opening a formal investigation into allegations that the government of Nicolas Maduro committed crimes against humanity?

434. In December 2020, U.S. Southern Command Commander, Navy Admiral Craig S. Fallor stated that, “We are seeing growing Iranian influence in [Venezuela] to include the Quds force, which is alarming and concerning, and some weapons ties ... It’s not just oil shipments. It’s arms shipments as well ... We saw an uptick in that this year. We’re watching the rate of change very carefully to see if it connects to any other Iranian malfeasance around the globe.”

- a. Please describe your understanding of Iranian influence in Venezuela?
  - b. To what extent are Iran and Venezuela working together, and what does each country have to gain from the partnership?
  - c. What security risks does Iranian presence in Venezuela present for the U.S. and the Western Hemisphere more broadly?
  - d. What are the intentions of Iran-backed Hezbollah in Venezuela?
435. Foreign maritime operators continue to facilitate tanker travel to Venezuela despite U.S. sanctions and employ new strategies to avoid detection. At least 17 oil tankers have traveled to Venezuela in recent months, facilitating crude exports to Cuba, China, India, Malaysia, and Spain.
- a. If confirmed, what strategies would you employ to prevent Venezuela from evading sanctions through Iranian operators?
  - b. Do you believe the Venezuela crisis poses the greatest national security threat in the Western Hemisphere? Where does Venezuela fall on your list of priorities in the Western Hemisphere?
436. Please explain your understanding of how the Maduro regime operates as a narco-terrorist regime. Can you describe the role of the Venezuelan military in narcotics trafficking? Can you explain the relationship between the Maduro regime and United States-designated foreign terrorist organizations, FARC and ELN? Do you believe the United States should negotiate with narco-terrorists?
437. Please explain your understanding and view of the humanitarian exemptions outlined in United States sanctions toward Venezuela that allow for humanitarian support to the Venezuelan people. If confirmed, what instruction would you give to the United States



ambassador to the OAS to encourage greater international pressure to promote a transition to democracy in Venezuela?

**Brazil**

438. The tri-border area (TBA) between Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay has long been considered a hub for criminal activities including arms and drug trafficking, smuggling, money laundering, and terrorist financing, notably involving Iran-backed Hezbollah.
- a. What is the extent of Hezbollah's presence in the TBA and what are its main objectives in the region?
  - b. What is the connection between terrorist groups and organized crime in the TBA?
  - c. How can the United States support and strengthen counterterrorism efforts with countries in the region that currently do not have the capacity to enforce a terrorist designation?
  - d. If confirmed, what strategies would you employ to put pressure on Iran to limit its support for Hezbollah's activities in the Western Hemisphere?

**Ecuador**

439. In July 2020, more than 350 Chinese fishing boats were detected conducting Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing activities off the coasts of Ecuador, Chile, and Peru in the Pacific Ocean. There are concerns about similar Chinese IUU activities in the South Atlantic Ocean off the coasts of the Falkland Islands.
- a. Please describe your views about Chinese Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing in the waters of the Western Hemisphere?
  - b. If confirmed, what policy tools would you employ to support Western Hemisphere partners threaten by these malicious activities?

**CLIMATE**

**Paris Climate Accord**

440. For the purposes of U.S. domestic law and Article VI of the U.S. Constitution, does the Paris Climate Accord have the status of a treaty, yes or no?
- a. If the Paris Accord has the domestic law status of a treaty, does the President intend to transmit it to the Senate for its consideration?

- b. What is the nature of the Paris Climate Agreement? Is it an executive agreement, a treaty, or an agreement negotiated under ex ante agreement authority provided by the Congress? Should it have been a treaty or an agreement based on ex post congressional authorization? If not, why not?
- c. Is the U.S. still a party to the Paris Climate Agreement? If not, can President Biden take actions to have the US rejoin the Paris Climate Agreement? Under what authorities can he recommit the U.S. to the agreement?
- d. The word “shall” appears in the text of the Paris Climate Accord at least 117 times. In which places does the word “shall” create a binding commitment on the United States? If “shall” does not create a binding commitment, which provisions of the Paris agreement are, in the view of the Department, binding on the United States as a matter of international law?
- e. Is the U.S. nationally determined contribution (NDC) of a commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to “26-28 per cent below its 2005 level in 2025 and to make best efforts to reduce its emissions by 28 percent a binding commitment on the U.S. or is it aspirational? Can the U.S. redefine its NDC downwards if circumstances warrant it?

441. Article 4.3 of the Paris Climate Accord states:

“Each Party’s successive nationally determined contribution will represent a progression beyond the Party’s then current nationally determined contribution and reflect its highest possible ambition, reflecting its common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in the light of different national circumstances.”

- a. Is this so-called “ratchet up” provision binding upon the U.S. or merely aspirational?
- b. President Obama claimed he had sufficient existing authority to substantially, if not fully, implement the Paris Climate Accord. Do you agree with that assessment that the President continues to have sufficient executive and congressionally mandated authority to implement the Paris Climate Accord? Please cite the specific authority relied upon to implement.
- c. Did President Obama make the claim that he had the authority to implement the Paris accord using only the authorities in the UNFCCC, executive authorities under Article II, and existing statutory authority, such as the Clean Air Act? Do you agree with that claim?

#### **Green Climate Fund**

442. The Green Climate Fund (GCF) is a multiyear, multibillion dollar effort that will lend and provide support to private and public sector borrowers. The Obama Administration pledged \$3 billion to the GCF.
- a. What does the Biden Administration intend to pledge?

- b. The GCF is intended to support a range of climate investment, including investments in the private sector such as technology development. How will the Biden Administration ensure that such investments are complementary and do not crowd out the private sector?
443. The GCF could be investing in projects around the globe in both the public and private sector space. The UNFCCC and COP process envisions some \$100 billion annually spend on mitigation and resilience with the GCF as an important part of that effort. In fact, in practice, the GCF will look a lot like a Bretton Woods statute bank, like the IDB or the African Development Bank.
- a. Do you agree that it is appropriate that Congress should have oversight over U.S. contributions to the GCF?
  - b. Should the GCF be authorized by Congress as other similarly situated development banks, such as the World Bank or regional development banks are?
  - c. Should the U.S. representative to the GCF, as a senior official overseeing billions in climate investments, be presidentially-appointed and Senate confirmed?
  - d. Is the GCF performing as well as expected? Should the U.S. fund pledges to the GCF?
  - e. Should the U.S. demand proper safeguards at the GCF to prevent waste and corruption, improper intrusion into private market lending, lending to repressive regimes such as North Korea, Cuba, and Sudan? Does the GCF currently have those safeguards? Will you commit to working with the Congress to ensure such safeguards are in place?

## ENVIRONMENT

### Climate

444. President Biden has announced that his administration will place climate issues at the forefront of his policy priorities. He has stated his intention to rejoin the Paris Climate Agreement on "Day One" of his administration. As part of this emphasis, he has announced that former Secretary of State John Kerry will serve as his climate envoy to the world.
- a. As Secretary of State, will you commit to work on climate issues in a bipartisan manner? Or do you intend to work around those with differing views?
  - b. As Secretary of State, how will you ensure that the priorities of the State Department will not be overrun by the former Secretary of State's specific portfolio?
  - c. What resources will Mr. Kerry be provided to meet his objectives and what limitations will be placed on him and his resources?

- d. As the two of you travel and meet with world leaders to discuss foreign policy, how will these leaders know which of you represents the final say on U.S. policy?

#### **Wildlife/Pandemics**

445. The United States is currently struggling to overcome a health and economic crisis caused by a previously unknown virus that jumped from wildlife to humans – who had no previous immunity to it. According to the CDC website, scientists believe that 3 out of every 4 new or emerging infectious diseases in people come from animals, and most of these originate in wildlife. Many of the most well-known pandemics and epidemics have started when these kinds of diseases have spilled over from wildlife to people, including SARS, Ebola, HIV, and of course, COVID-19. Scientists also believe that these spillover events are becoming more frequent and are closely linked to human-wildlife interactions involving trade in wildlife species that are likely to transmit these diseases and the destruction of forests and other habitats where these species live. This is particularly true in places like Southeast Asia and Central Africa.
- a. Given the massive harm that this pandemic has caused the U.S. in term of loss of life and economic damage. What do you think the role of the State Department should be in trying not just to respond to these kind of spillover events after they happen but to prevent them from happening in the first place?
  - b. How should we work with countries around the world to address the root causes of these events – such as high-risk trade in wildlife or the destruction or fragmenting of tropical forests due to human development and infrastructure?
  - c. Do you think funding to support these activities should be part of our response to the current pandemic, and efforts to prevent the next one?

#### **Wildlife/Illegal Trade**

446. In the developing world in particular, natural resources make up bread and butter of many countries' economies, in addition to supporting the jobs, nutrition, and health needs of local communities. They can also be highly sought after – whether by our global competitors, such as China, or by bad actors who may rob them for profit or to finance criminal and even violent activities. In the 1990s we heard a lot about “blood diamonds” in Africa that financed war in west Africa and the Congo Basin. Over the past decade, the same has been true of elephant ivory and illegal timber, that have helped fund militias and even terror groups like the Lord's Resistance Army and al Shabaab. And of course, when natural resources become scarce, like food and water, that can feed into extremism and create recruitment opportunities for groups like Boko Haram in the Sahel, or the rise in piracy we saw off the coast of Somalia due to overfishing by foreign fleets from China and elsewhere. The United States has been a leader on issues like stopping wildlife trafficking and illegal fishing, and Congress has been consistently supportive of these efforts in a bipartisan way. We have also passed laws such as the Global Fragility Act, and these issues involving

scarcity of food, water and other resources clearly play a role in the fragility or stability of countries and regions.

What sort of priority do you hope to place on these kinds of issues as Secretary of State, and how can they be better integrated into our approach to U.S. foreign policy and national security policy?

#### **Natural Resources**

447. Over the past year, we've heard a lot of discussion of the importance of protecting forests around the globe. The fires in the Amazon clearly focused the world's attention, and bipartisan bills in Congress have been introduced to encourage tree-planting and the efforts to protect and restore forests around the world. At the same time, illegal logging and the trade in illegal timber in many countries around the world isn't just destroying forests, it's also hurting the American forestry industry and its workers by depressing prices for timber on the global market. A good portion of that illegal timber also flows through China after being logged in places like the Russian Far East or Southeast Asia, and then making its way into the United States. Estimates are that these kinds of illegal activities are costing the U.S. forestry sector between half a billion and a billion dollars a year in lost revenue. And illegal clearing of forests for agriculture has a similar impact on U.S. commodity producers, when imported products are produced more cheaply on illegally deforested lands.

President-elect Biden has talked about wanting to support renewed international efforts to protect forests like the Amazon. What role do you see for the State Department in supporting these efforts, and what can we do diplomatically and by using carrots and sticks to stop the kinds of illegal activities that are destroying these forests and harming American workers?

### **TRADE, TECHNOLOGY, AND ENERGY**

#### **Supply Chains**

448. The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the fragility of "just in time" inventories and the United States' reliance on foreign nations for critical personal protective equipment, disinfectants, and other items important to national security.
- a. As Secretary of State, how will you work to address this challenge?
  - b. Should the United States move to broaden and diversify its supply chains, with which countries should we increase trade and with which should we decrease trade?

#### **Trade Agreements**

449. A significant number of nations wish to negotiate trade agreements with the United States.

- a. With which countries should the United States prioritize negotiating trade agreements?
  - b. What are the blocks of nations that you would prioritize negotiating multilateral agreements?
450. There are eleven countries that are members of the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement. This agreement could be an important network for U.S. trade and an influential group of countries to counter Chinese actions. Should the United States work to join the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement?
451. What specific steps would you propose to increase U.S. trade interaction with lower-volume trading partners?
452. American and other foreign companies have experienced significant and growing regulatory challenges in Mexico under President Lopez Obrador by his administration, creating regulatory challenges for U.S. investors that include increasing difficulties in getting permits for a range of activities. These actions are contrary to USCSMA. What steps and actions will you take as Secretary of State to ensure that Mexico abides by the commitments that it has made as part of USCSMA?
453. What is your stance on continuing or expanding State-led initiatives such as Asia EDGE, which has helped support demand creation for U.S. energy exports through work to create more open, efficient, rule-based and transparent energy markets and the construction of energy infrastructure?
454. President-elect Biden has said he will not “make any immediate moves” to lower or eliminate tariffs on U.S. imports from China, but rather freeze the current policy while he and his administration conduct a thorough review of the U.S.-China relationship. This decision has the merit of ensuring that Beijing does not get used to the idea that we will grant them concessions in exchange for nothing. However, our approach must also take into account that thousands of U.S. businesses are burdened by these tariffs, through no fault of their own, with no relief in sight and no process to be considered for exclusion. If confirmed, you will likely play a leading role in this review. Do you commit to including a Section 301 tariff exclusion process that provides a clear path to U.S. businesses seeking tariff relief, which is especially important in light of the COVID-19 pandemic?

#### **Technology**

455. The United States has been the world leader in innovation and technology for the past century. China has adopted the method of using U.S. technology, largely without compensation, to further their own economic, social, and foreign policy objectives. China has expressed a desire to move its economy up the global supply chain by dominating industries critical to U.S. national security such as semiconductor production, artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and autonomous vehicles, among others.
- a. What priority will you assign to this economic aggression among matters with China?

- b. How will you determine which industries are critical to the future of the United States and how will the State Department work to protect the U.S. competitive advantage?
- c. Under your leadership, how aggressively would the State Department defend U.S. intellectual property? What specific actions will you take to defend U.S. intellectual property?

#### **Energy**

456. The majority of increased energy demand in the near future is most likely to come from emerging nations, India, and China. U.S. industry and the State Department will have a role in supporting these nations in meeting the demand for this additional energy. A recent Center for Strategic and International Studies report concluded that U.S. exports of nuclear power is in steep decline, while Russia and China are increasing domestic production as well as international exports.
- a. What benefits, if any, do you believe the United States accrues by exporting nuclear technology to foreign markets?
  - b. Is it a priority for the United States to continue support for nuclear research and development in order to export those technologies to foreign markets?
  - c. What role do you see for United States foreign assistance in promoting access to energy in emerging nations?
  - d. In the Biden-Sanders Unity Task Force Recommendations, President-elect Biden supports technology neutral clean energy programs and next generation nuclear power. Will the priorities outlined in the Biden-Sanders Unity Task Force Recommendations apply to the State Department's international efforts as well?
  - e. Specifically, what programs and other agencies will the Department utilize to advance these goals?
  - f. How will you prioritize resources for wind, solar, nuclear, or other sources of carbon free power when evaluating support for energy production projects?

#### **Tariffs**

457. President-elect Biden has said he will not "make any immediate moves" to lower or eliminate tariffs on U.S. imports from China, but rather freeze the current policy while he and his administration conduct a thorough review of the U.S.-China relationship. This decision has the merit of ensuring that Beijing does not get used to the idea that we will grant them concessions in exchange for nothing. However, our approach must also take into account that thousands of U.S. businesses are burdened by these tariffs, through no fault of their own, with no relief in sight and no process to be considered for exclusion.

If confirmed, you will likely play a leading role in this review. Do you commit to including a Section 301 tariff exclusion process that provides a clear path to U.S. businesses seeking tariff relief, which is especially important in light of the COVID-19 pandemic?

#### SPECIAL ENVOYS

##### Nature of Position

458. On November 23, 2020, then-President-elect Joe Biden announced that he intended to appoint former Secretary of State John Kerry to be a "Special Presidential Envoy for Climate." The announcement stated that Secretary Kerry:

will fight climate change full-time as Special Presidential Envoy for Climate and will sit on the National Security Council. This marks the first time that the NSC will include an official dedicated to climate change, reflecting the president-elect's commitment to addressing climate change as an urgent national security issue.

- a. What is the chain of command for this new position and to whom will the officeholder report?
- b. What will the role of the Secretary of State be with respect to this position?
- c. Will this position be located within the Department of State?
- d. Does the use of special envoys have the potential to create duplication of effort within the Department? If so, how would you avoid such duplication? If not, why not?
- e. Does the use of special envoys have the potential to create confusion within the Department in terms of overlapping authorities and unclear organizational charts? If so, how would you avoid such confusion? If not, why not?
- f. Does the use of special envoys have the potential to create confusion within foreign governments about which official(s) have the lead on different issues? If so, how would you avoid such confusion? If not, why not?
- g. Does the use of special envoys have the potential to undermine morale among State Department employees in offices where their work has been supplanted by a new special envoy?
- h. Should the Department consult with this committee before the creation of any new special envoy or similar position at the Department? Why or why not?



- i. Do you believe that the Department should first look to its extant workforce before creating special envoys?
- j. Do you believe that an assistant secretary should have responsibility for every element of their bureau's portfolio?
- k. In general, what circumstances would merit the creation of a special envoy?
- l. How will Mr. Kerry's portfolio differ from the Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of Oceans, Environment, and Science?
- m. Will the OES assistant secretary report to Mr. Kerry?
- n. How will OES and Mr. Kerry's team de-conflict any overlap in their portfolios?
- o. Do you commit to ensuring that there is no duplication of effort among Mr. Kerry's staff and the rest of the Department?

#### **Constitutional Requirements**

459. Article II, Section 2 of the U.S. Constitution provides that the President:

shall nominate, and by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, shall appoint Ambassadors, other public Ministers and Consuls, Judges of the supreme Court, and all other Officers of the United States, whose Appointments are not herein otherwise provided for, and which shall be established by Law: but the Congress may by Law vest the Appointment of such inferior Officers, as they think proper, in the President alone, in the Courts of Law, or in the Heads of Departments.

Under this provision, all "Officers of the United States" not otherwise provided for in the Constitution may only be appointed "with the Advice and Consent of the Senate." The U.S. Supreme Court has interpreted the meaning of "Officers of the United States" to include "any appointee exercising significant authority pursuant to the laws of the United States." *Buckley v. Valeo*, 424 U.S. 1, 125-26 (1976).

- a. In your view, would Secretary Kerry, as Special Presidential Envoy for Climate, be "exercising significant authority pursuant to the laws of the United States"? Please explain your answer.
- b. Does President Biden intend to submit a nomination for Secretary Kerry to the Senate for its advice and consent regarding his appointment as Special Presidential Envoy for Climate?

- c. Do you commit to advising President Biden that he should submit a nomination for Secretary Kerry's appointment to the Senate for its advice and consent before Secretary Kerry takes office?
- d. Do you commit to advising President Biden that he should submit a nomination for any appointee who will be "exercising significant authority pursuant to the laws of the United States" to the Senate for its advice and consent before the appointee takes office?

#### SANCTIONS

460. On December 27, 2020, President Trump signed into law the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021. This legislation includes a provision that I supported which establishes an Office of Sanctions Coordinator within the State Department.
- a. If confirmed, do you commit to give this new office the attention, support, and resources needed to ensure its success and the fulfillment of its statutory mandate?
  - b. If confirmed, do you commit to ensuring that this new office will fulfill its mandate vis-à-vis other offices and bureaus within the State Department to "serve as the coordinator for the development and implementation of sanctions policy" within the State Department?
  - c. If confirmed, do you commit to ensuring that the head of this new office will serve as the lead representative of the United States in diplomatic engagement on sanctions matters?
  - d. If confirmed, do you commit to ensuring that this new office will serve as the lead representative of the State Department in interagency discussions with respect to the development and implementation of sanctions policy?
  - e. If confirmed, do you commit to supporting the nomination of a qualified sanctions professional with expertise in the sanctions field to serve as the Senate-confirmed head of the office?
  - f. If confirmed, do you commit to support the hiring of qualified sanctions professionals with expertise in the sanctions field to work in this office?
  - g. If confirmed, do you commit to work with my office and this committee to ensure that this office succeeds and fulfills its statutory mandate?
  - h. If confirmed, do you commit to direct the State Department to brief my office and this committee in a timely fashion with respect to sanctions policy developments as they occur?

**Global Magnitsky Sanctions**

461. Section 1263(d) of the Global Magnitsky Act requires that the President make a sanctions determination within 120 days after receipt of a joint request from the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (or other relevant committee leadership). If confirmed, will you commit to help ensure Congress receives a specific determination to any such request within 120 days of submission?

**LEGAL****Treaties****Presidential Decision to Suspend, Terminate or Withdraw from a Ratified Treaty**

462. Under the Constitution, the President and the Senate share the treaty-making power. Over the last few decades, the President has increasingly claimed the authority to unilaterally withdraw from treaties with no further action by the Senate or Congress. Reserving the right to object to such a claim of authority to which the Senate has not consented, some have argued that, in recent cases, the President has failed to adequately notify the Senate in advance of such a unilateral withdrawal.
- a. What is your view with respect to the Senate's role in treaty withdrawal? Should the President, acting through the Secretary of State, notify the Senate in advance of any presidential decision to suspend, terminate, or withdraw from any treaty that has received Senate consent to ratification?
  - b. Should the Secretary provide to the Senate, through the Foreign Relations Committee and with adequate advance notice, a detailed written justification for the withdrawal?
  - c. In your view, what does "advice and consent" mean? What is and should be the role of the Senate be with respect to entering into and terminating treaties?
  - d. What is the scope of the President's authority to abrogate a treaty or other international agreement? Is it unlimited? If not, what are the limitations?

**Rejoining a Treaty**

463. In your view, does the President have the authority to re-join a treaty without resubmitting that treaty to the Senate for advice and consent? Please explain.

**"Non-binding" Political Agreements**

464. In testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, expert legal witnesses have suggested that Congress consider requiring the reporting of significant non-binding political

commitments to Congress. Should Congress be informed of these non-binding arrangements? If so, in what form?

**Reporting of Political or Oral Agreements which Create Legally Binding Commitments**

465. The Case-Zablocki statute (22 U.S.C. 112b) requires the Secretary to provide to the Congress the text of international agreements to which the United States has agreed to become a party. The intent of the statute is to ensure Congress is fully informed of executive decisions to create international, legally binding obligations on the United States.

In recent years, presidents have made “political” or “oral” agreements with potentially binding commitments on the United States. Successive administrations appear to have taken the view that such agreements fall outside the scope of Case-Zablocki and therefore do not have to be provided to the Congress.

In testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, expert legal witnesses have suggested that Congress consider requiring the written reporting of significant binding political commitments that have not been reduced to writing to Congress.

- a. What are your views regarding providing the Senate with the written text of any political or oral agreement intended to be binding on the United States under international law?
- b. With respect to any oral international agreement or political commitment that creates or is intended to create a legally binding commitment for the United States under international law, will you commit, if confirmed, to working with Congress to establish a meaningful process for reducing such commitments or agreements to writing and transmitting to the Congress the text of such agreement?

**Periodic Consultations with Congress on Treaties and Other Agreements**

466. Although the State Department’s Circular 175 process calls for consultation with Congress on treaties and agreements, it does not provide much guidance on how such conversations should occur. As a practical matter, no established routine procedure for consultation with the Senate (formal or informal) currently appears to exist, at least from the perspective of the Senate side. In recent years, to the extent they occur, State Department briefings to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations (SFRC) have been ad hoc and by affirmative request of the Committee.

The paucity of information has led some Senators to grow skeptical with respect to treaties presented to the Committee for advice and consent but completed without the opportunity for consultation. This problem is further complicated if the treaty requires implementing legislation on subject matter over which another Senate committee may have jurisdiction. As a result, some Senate Foreign Relations Committee Senators have expressed wariness with taking up such treaties. Avoidable misunderstanding and confusion can result, complicating or preventing required Senate action.

Alternatively, with a more regularized and institutionalized consultation process with SFRC, the Senate and Administration can develop a more dynamic approach to these agreements. Enhanced and meaningful consultation can build support for these agreements and prove valuable in increasing Senate understanding of administration policy objectives over time.

Will you commit to directing the Department to address this oversight and work with the Committee to establish a process under which the Department will, on a regular periodic basis, engage in meaningful, advance consultation with the SFRC regarding the Departments' intention to negotiate significant international agreements and treaties?

**Scope of the “Provisional Application” Doctrine with Respect to Treaty Implementation**

467. In October 1999, the Senate voted to reject the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty by a vote of 51-48.
- a. Setting aside the fact that the United States Senate has not consented to ratification of the Vienna Convention on Treaties, please describe your views with respect to the scope of the “provisional application” doctrine.
  - b. What are your views with respect to the legal effect of a Senate vote to reject a treaty? If rejected, does the President have authority to subsequently implement the provisions of that treaty in spite of that vote? Does such a Senate vote place limits on a future claim of presidential authority to provisionally implement the rejected treaty?

**Reservations, Understandings, and Declarations” and Other Conditions to Consent to Ratification**

468. Please describe your views with respect to the binding legal effect of the Senate’s inclusion of conditions to consent to ratification of a treaty under constitutional advice and consent, such as reservations, understandings, and declarations (RUDs). If the President decides to ratify a treaty to which the Senate has consented but has also included such RUDs in its resolution of consent to ratification, is the President legally bound to implement such conditions as included by the Senate in its consent to ratification resolution?

**Authorizations for the Use of Military Force (AUMF)**

469. The War Powers Resolution requires congressional notifications when United States Armed Forces are introduced into hostilities or into situations where there is imminent involvement in hostilities.
- a. Based on your experience, what do you think the term “hostilities” means?
  - b. Separate from military action authorized under the 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF), do you believe the United States has been or is engaged in ongoing hostilities in Yemen?

470. Under both the Obama and Trump Administrations, certain terrorist detainees held at Guantanamo Bay have not been released for good reason. Do you envision or support a shift in policy with respect to Guantanamo Bay detention?
471. Do you agree with the Trump Administration's use of force pursuant to the 2001 AUMF? Why or why not?
- a. Do you believe that the 2001 AUMF should be repealed or updated? Why or why not?
  - b. Is it possible for Congress to update the 2001 AUMF without negatively impacting current detention authority for terrorist detainees?
  - c. Do you believe that any legislative update to the 2001 AUMF should ensure that detention authority for terrorist detainees is not interrupted? Why or why not?
  - d. Do you believe that any legislative update to the 2001 AUMF should ensure that current military operations against terrorists around the world continue to be authorized?
  - e. Do you believe that the 2001 AUMF authorizes the use of military force against associated forces of Al Qaeda?
  - f. Do you believe that any legislative update to the 2001 AUMF should contain geographic constraints? Why or why not?
  - g. Do you believe that any legislative update to the 2001 AUMF should include a hard sunset? Why or why not?
472. Should the 2002 AUMF be repealed? Why or why not?
- a. How would a repeal of the 2002 AUMF impact current detention operations?
  - b. Do you commit to working closely with this committee and directing your staff to brief the committee on any use of force undertaken pursuant to the 2001 AUMF, 2002 AUMF, or Article II of the United States Constitution?

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**Responses to Questions Submitted  
to Hon. Antony J. Blinken  
by Senator James E. Risch**

SECRETARY-DESIGNATE BLINKEN'S FIRST RESPONSES  
TO SENATOR RISCH'S QUESTIONS<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>These responses were not formatted with the same numbering system as we had submitted them. Certain parts of questions were rearranged into other questions or other parts of the document. Also, entire questions were missing.—*Senator Risch's staff*.

**Responses to Questions for the Record  
Submitted to Honorable Antony J Blinken  
January 21, 2021**

[Questions from Senator Risch are in italic; responses from  
Secretary-Designate Blinken are in bold]

**Chairman Jim Risch**

*There are several vacant ambassadorial posts in Sub-Saharan Africa without a named nominee to be considered by the Foreign Relations Committee, including such high-priority posts as Sudan. Many other posts will become vacant in the coming year.*

- *As Secretary of State, are you committed to working with the White House to ensure that Ambassadorial positions in Sub-Saharan Africa are filled by qualified, experienced nominees in a timely manner?*

**Yes.**

- *Under your leadership as Secretary of State, what actions will you pursue to ensure that hard to fill posts in Sub-Saharan Africa are sufficiently and consistently staffed?*

**If confirmed, I will work with the White House and relevant State Department bureaus and offices to ensure that all posts in Sub-Saharan Africa are sufficiently and consistently staffed with the appropriate personnel.**

- *In your opinion, is Africa fully integrated into the Department's strategic frameworks and strategy documents?*

**I believe there may be more we can do to integrate Africa into the Department's strategic frameworks and strategy documents. If confirmed, I will commit to reviewing this and consulting with Congress.**

- *Do you believe that Africa is adequately represented in the State Department's Indo-Pacific strategy?*

**I believe there may be more we can do to ensure that Africa is adequately represented in the Department's Indo-Pacific strategy. If confirmed, I will commit to reviewing this and consulting with Congress.**

- *How can the Department better leverage the Bureau of African Affairs and encourage better coordination with the Bureau of Near East Affairs on Red Sea Corridor issues?*

**If confirmed, I will closely review existing coordination between the Bureau of African Affairs and the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs on Red Sea Corridor issues and ask senior leadership to identify and implement mechanisms for better coordination.**



*The Department of State's Office of the Inspector General issued a report in September 2020 on the audit of the Bureau of African Affairs Monitoring and Coordination of the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership Program (TSCTP), which identified \$201.6 million in potentially "wasteful spending due to mismanagement and inadequate oversight." The OIG explicitly questioned approximately \$109 million in program funds with "invoices that lacked supporting documentation."*

- *If confirmed as Secretary of State, how will you ensure that the Bureau of African Affairs has the requisite capacity, including sufficient numbers of trained contract officers and staff, to ensure that it can implement, monitor, and conduct appropriate oversight of TSCTP and other programs?*

**If confirmed, I will work with leadership of the Bureau of African Affairs to review existing capacity and identify any necessary increases in resources to implement, monitor, and conduct appropriate oversight of TSCTP and other programs.**

*Security Assistance*

*The proliferation and activities of violent extremist organizations (VEOs) across sub-Saharan Africa increasingly pose a national security threat to the United States, as evidenced by the attack on American and Kenyan personnel by Al-Shabaab at Camp Simba in Manda Bay, Kenya in January 2020.*

- *What is your perspective on the decision announced by the Pentagon in December 2020 to withdraw U.S. troops from Somalia?*

**The Biden-Harris administration will seek to address the threat posed by al-Shabaab and adopt a tailored, effective, and sustainable strategy to achieve our interests in Somalia and East Africa. If confirmed, I will work with relevant interagency counterparts to review our posture in the region, looking especially closely at the safety of U.S. personnel operating in the country and the current terrorist threat in the region.**

- *Do you plan to coordinate with the Secretary of Defense and other relevant U.S. government departments and agencies to develop a comprehensive, continent-wide strategy to address the terror threat posed by ISIS-affiliated and other VEOs active in the Sahel, Lake Chad Basin, Somalia, the Swahili Coast (Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)?*

**If confirmed, I plan to coordinate with the Secretary of Defense and other relevant U.S. government departments and agencies to develop an effective strategy to address this threat and will consult with Congress.**

- *Of the security assistance tools available to the Department of State, which are the most underutilized in Sub-Saharan Africa, and how do you intend to rectify such imbalances?*

**If confirmed, I will conduct a review of all current security assistance tools being utilized by the Department in Sub-Saharan Africa and identify any imbalances that must be addressed. I look forward to consulting with Congress on this.**

- *The activities of armed groups in sub-Saharan Africa pose a growing threat to stability, democratic governance, and economic development on the continent, and armed groups control large swaths of territory in places like the Central African Republic (CAR).*
- *How can the Department of State, in coordination with other relevant departments and agencies, support our African partners to better manage the activities and impacts of armed groups?*

**If confirmed, I will work with the Department of Defense, USAID, and other agencies to assess how we can better address the challenges of armed groups in CAR. I look forward to consulting with Congress on this.**

- *How can the Department of State better address the cross-border movement of armed groups, including through the development and execution of regional approaches?*

**I believe there may be additional steps the Department can take to work with the UN, regional actors, and other partners to assess what type of regional engagement can be brought to bear.**

- *How can the Department of State, in coordination with other relevant departments and agencies, enhance its work with African partners to disrupt the illicit financial and resource flows of armed groups, including the smuggling of natural resources across borders?*

**The United States will work with our partners and allies and seek to lead a global fight against corruption. Nowhere is this more important than in Africa, including in CAR. We look forward to working with you on additional tools to combat corruption around the world.**

*U.S.-Africa Partnership & Priorities*

*With 49 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, there are myriad opportunities and challenges to the security, economic, health and humanitarian interests of the United States. The U.S. government is presently engaged on a variety of fronts.*

- *What is the number-one threat posed to the United States in Africa? What is the greatest opportunity for the U.S. in Africa?*
- *Please list the near-term challenges and opportunities that the United States must engage in during your first 60, 90, and 180 days, if confirmed, as Secretary of State.*
- *In the early days of your tenure as Secretary of State, if confirmed, how will you make clear inside the Department, across the administration and externally, that Africa is a priority for the Biden Administration?*

- *How will you ensure the United States respects and values our African partners, while also representing our values and interests, particularly as it relates to respect for the rule of law, protecting human rights, and advancing democracy?*
- *Sub-Saharan Africa is experiencing a massive "youth bulge." While programs like the Young African Leaders Initiative and its Mandela Washington Fellowship are vital, what can the United States do to expand its reach and effectively engage with Africa's enormous youth population?*

**Africa is a priority for the Biden Administration. We intend to engage African countries early and often as partners in pursuing our shared interests and values — from security, global health, climate change, freedom and democracy, and shared prosperity. Senior level engagement on a consistent basis will be a signal of our commitment. Our policy priorities include strengthening democratic institutions, advancing lasting peace and security, promoting economic growth, trade, and investment; and promoting health and sustainable development. We will reinvigorate and restore our partnerships across the continent — building substantive, reciprocal partnerships with African governments, institutions, and publics based on shared interests and respect. We will work with African governments, the U.S. private sector, and international financial institutions to restore economic growth across the continent to help return African economies to some of the fastest growing in the world and open new opportunities for American businesses. With a population of 1.3 billion people whose median age is 19 years old, one of Africa's most important resources is its youth. By supporting the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI), we intend to work with public, private sector, and civil society partners across the continent to develop initiatives and economic opportunities to harness the innovation and energy of Africa's youth. Assessing ways to expand YALI and our engagement with Africa's youth will be a priority for the Africa Bureau. U.S. engagement in Africa keeps Americans and Africans safe. We will take a holistic approach to security challenges, ensuring that U.S. security and governance approaches are mutually reinforcing and sufficiently comprehensive. Working with our partners at DOD and the intelligence community, we will review all of our deployments, including in Africa, to ensure they are right-sized and necessary to assist partners confront a serious terrorism threat as we work to help Africans advance their own security.**

#### *Trade & Investment*

*In 2019, Africa accounted for just 1.4% of U.S. global trade and received 0.7% of U.S. foreign direct investment. Such shares have declined relative to their historical highs a decade or so ago.*

- *What are your views on the role trade and investment could and should play in building stronger ties between the United States and the African continent? How should U.S.-African trade and investment initiatives factor into the U.S. global strategy to counter China, particularly in Africa?*

**Increasing trade and investment is critical to building stronger ties between the United States and Africa. The reality is that China is our most serious competitor, and competition**

**with China is one of the central challenges that will define the 21st century. In Africa, we compete with China by ensuring that American companies can compete on an even playing field, providing a meaningful alternative to China's economic approach, promoting entrepreneurship and fair practices.**

- *How can the U.S. government better promote African countries as destinations for U.S. private sector foreign investment? How can the United States improve access for African firms seeking to do business here? How can we best engage the U.S. African diaspora?*

**Using our economic diplomacy and the tools of the DFC, USAID, MCC and Treasury, our team will work with the U.S. private sector, African governments, and international financial institutions to increase trade and investment in Africa and promote U.S. business. We also intend to consult with Congress early to discuss the road ahead for renewing and updating the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) and, looking further down the road, determine the prospects for the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) and other trade preference programs.**

*Like Prosper Africa, several past U.S. efforts in Africa have sought to expand U.S.-Africa trade and investment by enhancing U.S. inter-agency coordination and fostering private sector transaction activity centered on such ends. Other previous initiatives, including the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), USAID's Africa trade hubs, and the Obama Administration's Trade Africa and Doing Business in Africa (DBIA) initiatives, reflect a long line of U.S. initiatives in this sphere with mixed results.*

- *Is Prosper Africa the appropriate vehicle to significantly boost two-way trade and investment between the United States and Africa? Do you intend to continue or modify the existing Prosper Africa initiative? If so, how?*

**Increasing trade and investment to and from Africa has been a shared bipartisan priority across administrations. The new administration, the State Department and other engaged departments and agencies, will examine Prosper Africa to assess whether it should be continued or modified.**

*One vital area of Prosper Africa that requires greater emphasis is improving the enabling environment within African partner countries to better attract U.S. business investment. Improvements in anti-corruption initiatives, human rights, the rule of law, and overall good governance would create better conditions for U.S. investment conditions. Such enhancements would also counterbalance efforts by Chinese firms and the Chinese Communist Party to undermine free-market competition in African markets to their advantage.*

- *How can the U.S. government most effectively support efforts to improve the enabling environment for competitive foreign investment by U.S. firms in Africa? What types of partnerships work best, and how can the United States best incentivize reforms and other actions necessary to foster economic opportunity and expand two-way trade and investment with the African continent?*

**The United States has an interest in Africa's success and sustainable development; we want to be partners in creating climate-friendly trade that secures good livelihoods for both African and American workers. We know that U.S. companies are already working to take advantage of these opportunities and benefitting from these market opportunities.**

*On May 30, 2019, the framework agreement establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) entered into force. While trading under the AfCFTA framework is not expected to occur until mid-2021, the AfCFTA, if fully realized, would cover 54 countries (the largest of any regional trade bloc), creating a market encompassing 1.2 billion people with combined economic output in 2018 of \$2.5 trillion.*

- *How can market integration under AfCFTA best incentivize U.S. trade and investment in the region?*
- *How can the United States best support the successful implementation of the AfCFTA, while also pursuing bilateral trade deals, such as the ongoing trade talks with Kenya? Would such bilateral trade initiatives conflict with or improve AfCFTA negotiations and implementation?*
- *How should we prioritize varying U.S. trade policy goals in the region? How may the AfCFTA affect these competing policy priorities?*

**By 2050, one of every four people in the world will live in Africa. The continent has the world's youngest population and workforce. If successful in implementing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the region will create the fifth-largest economy in the world. At the same time, Africa has slipped into a recession for the first time in 25 years due to the impacts of COVID-19, stalling growth and threatening years of progress in reducing extreme poverty. Using our economic diplomacy and the tools of the DFC, USAID, MCC and Treasury, our team will work with the U.S. private sector, African governments, and international financial institutions to increase trade and investment in Africa and promote U.S. business. We also intend to consult with Congress early to discuss the road ahead for renewing and updating the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) and, looking further down the road, determine the prospects for the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) and other trade preference programs. We are committed to a trade policy that promotes American workers. We are committed to strengthening alliances with our key partners, like Kenya. We intend to closely review the status of ongoing negotiations with Kenya.**

#### *Democracy and Governance*

*Across Sub-Saharan Africa, democratic gains are under threat as long-serving rulers manipulate constitutional and electoral processes to remain in power while stifling dissent and limiting opposition parties and candidates' activities. In 2020 alone, several African ruling parties and incumbent leaders applied authoritarian tactics that manipulated democratic processes and frameworks, including in Cameroon, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.*

- *If confirmed as Secretary of State, will reinforcing democratic institutions and norms in Africa be a priority?*

Yes.

- Will you commit to ensuring that messaging from the Department of State and its embassies and leadership consistently reinforces the U.S. democratic values and interests, including the need to respect democratic institutions and norms, advance human and political rights, and enhance citizen responsive governance?

Yes.

*What is your perspective on balancing competing U.S. priorities in the areas of security, democracy, and human rights in Sub-Saharan Africa, especially when some of our top security partners – including Uganda, Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Mali – periodically or consistently engage in undemocratic practices? In your view, which should take priority in Africa?*

- **There has been worrying backsliding in democracy and human rights, especially in West Africa. We are concerned about these trends. Our administration will restore democracy and human rights to the center of U.S. foreign policy, including in Africa. In our diplomatic engagements, we will pay close attention to term limits, democratic norms, media freedom, and the health of civil society. We must pay attention both to security concerns and democracy and human rights.**

*In the last two years, Sudan and Ethiopia have embarked upon unexpected democratic transitions. While the United States was, and continues to be, eager to support these transitions, rapidly mobilizing adequate resources has been a challenge in both cases.*

- *If confirmed, how would you prepare the Department to respond to rapid democratic transitions and opportunities that emerge unexpectedly?*

**There are significant consequences for U.S. interests in Africa when governance challenges fester; opportunities for democratic transitions demand a quick response. Working within the Department and with other departments and agencies, we will look to see how we can respond more effectively to emerging opportunities.**

*Transatlantic Partnership vis-à-vis Africa*

*The United States and France share several overlapping priorities in Sub-Saharan Africa and work together on many fronts, including fighting the terror threat in the Sahel. However, American and French interests in the region do not always align, including with regard to the ongoing conflict in northwest and southwest Cameroon.*

- *If confirmed, how will you engage our French partners to ensure that we employ a mutually-beneficial partnership across the Sahel and West and Central Africa that reflects the various points of leverage and capability the United States and France each bring to the table?*

- *How can the United States better coordinate with France to holistically address security threats and improve diplomatic engagements in the Sahel and West and Central Africa from a holistic perspective?*
- *How can the United States better coordinate and collaborate with the European Union, as well as individual European governments, including the U.K., to enhance policy consistency and advance mutually-beneficial opportunities for trade, investment, development, and security cooperation with the African Union, regional bodies, African governments, and private sector partners?*

**If confirmed, I will ensure that we work with our French partners to ensure that we employ a mutually beneficial partnership in Africa. Coordination and collaboration are essential, and we must work to align our approaches to holistically address the security and governance challenges across the Sahel, West Africa, and Central Africa. I am also committed to working with our European partners to advance our shared interests in Africa.**

*The African Union*

*How can the United States better leverage its Ambassador to the African Union and Ambassador to the United Nations (UN) to encourage constructive African engagement on democracy, human rights, corruption, and the rule of law?*

**Our administration intends to elevate human rights and democracy issues across our foreign policy, including in our relationships with our African partners. If both confirmed, Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield and I will work to encourage constructive African engagement on democracy, human rights, corruption, and rule of law at the United Nations. Our Ambassador to the AU will also encourage this type of engagement.**

- *If confirmed, what will be your priorities for engagement with the African Union and sub-regional institutions, including the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Southern African Development Community (SADC), East African Community (EAC), and Economic Community of Central African States (CEEAC)?*

**President Biden recognizes that many of the biggest threats we face are transnational in nature and must be worked collectively, including through international organizations. This is nowhere more true than in Africa – the African Union and sub-regional institutions play an incredibly important role on governance, economic, and security issues across the continent. If confirmed, I will look forward to working with Congress to ensure increased U.S. engagement with the African Union and other sub-regional bodies across the range of America’s national security interests.**

**Russian Malign Activity**

*Russian malign activity in Africa is of increasing concern, particularly given credible reports of elections interference across the continent and deployment of Russian mercenaries, including through the Wagner Group, in Northern Mozambique, and nontransparent transfers of weapons*

and training through Russian security sector support to the Touadera Administration in the Central African Republic (CAR).

- From your perspective, in addition to sanctions, how can the United States better engage with our African partners to limit the malign activities and influence of Russia generally, and more specifically, of Yevgeny Prigozhin and affiliated mining and security companies (like the Wagner Group) in Africa?

**Diplomatic and security engagement with U.S. partners in Africa can advance our interests and values, while highlighting the dangers associated with dealing with Russia. Enhancing our alliances and partnerships in Africa through diplomatic, development, and security initiatives will enable us to better protect and secure U.S. interests in Africa.**

### Central Africa

#### Burundi

*Political and ethnic tensions and violence in Burundi have contributed to instability, human rights abuses, and humanitarian crises in central Africa's Great Lakes region for decades. On June 9, the government of Burundi announced that sitting President Pierre Nkurunziza (age 55) died suddenly of "cardiac arrest," two and a half months before he was expected to step down following general elections on May 20, 2020. Nkurunziza's elected successor, CNDD-FDD party head Evariste Ndayishimiye, was inaugurated in late August, after the constitutional court upheld his victory with 68% of the vote in the May 2020 elections.*

- How optimistic are you about deepening ties with the new Burundian administration under President Ndayishimiye?
- What reforms are most needed for Burundi and what should be the U.S. approach toward engaging the Ndayishimiye administration on a reform agenda?
- Under what conditions would you advocate for changes to the U.S. sanctions program for Burundi and/or aid restrictions? Will you commit to reviewing incidents of human rights abuses among actors by the Nkurunziza regime who are currently serving in President Ndayishimiye's government?
- How should President Ndayishimiye approach exiled Burundian opposition groups? What role can and should the United States play in facilitating reconciliation between the Burundian government and opposition groups?
- How would you evaluate the performance of Burundian troops in AMISOM? How can the United States better monitor their human rights record in Somalia?

**If confirmed, I will need to assess the current U.S. approach to reform in Burundi, including the approach of the new administration under President Ndayishimiye. This will include a review of the sanctions program for Burundi, assessing the current approach to accountability, the role of justice and reconciliation in the political dialogue, and the human rights records of the Burundian military.**

#### Cameroon



*The Anglophone conflict in Cameroon is one of the world's most neglected yet intensely brutal conflicts. The United States has employed many of the diplomatic tools at its disposal, including the suspension of most security assistance and AGOA eligibility, yet the conflict rages on.*

- *What other tools does the United States have at its disposal to encourage a peaceful and enduring resolution to the Anglophone conflict in Cameroon? If confirmed, what tools would you intend to deploy?*
- *Will you consider imposing targeted sanctions on individual government and separatist leaders "responsible for extrajudicial killings, torture, or other gross violations of internationally recognized human rights"?*
- *How can the United States more effectively encourage France to use its significant leverage in Cameroon to encourage the government to engage in meaningful dialogue and end the conflict?*
- *Will you commit to continuing to limit U.S. security assistance to Cameroon and ensure that U.S. training and equipment is not being used to commit or enable human rights abuses in the Northwest and Southwest regions or the Far North?*
- *Do you commit to making Cameroon a priority in the UN Security Council? How can the United States work with like-minded Security Council members to raise the Anglophone conflict's profile and get it placed on the Security Council agenda?*
- *Will you commit to encouraging both government and Anglophone stakeholders to engage in constructive and inclusive dialogue, including with the involvement of an independent international mediator, to address the root causes of the Anglophone conflict and support sustainable peace and reconciliation?*

**I am concerned about continued violence in Cameroon, and condemn the recent deadly attacks against civilians in the Anglophone region. An end to violence, and accountability for its perpetrators, is needed. It is important that children attend school and that aid can be delivered. More broadly, political dialogue is needed to resolve this ongoing conflict and to improve respect for human rights. If confirmed, I will review the different tools we have to press for a resolution of this conflict and to hold human rights violators' accountable, including sanctions.**

*Central African Republic*

- *How can the United States most effectively counter malign Russian influence and activities in the security and mining sectors in the Central African Republic (CAR)? What policies should the United States pursue to ensure that the increasing competition for influence between Russia and France does not have long-term detrimental effects on a country already facing a dire humanitarian situation and overcoming decades of civil conflict?*

**If confirmed, I will assess what more can be done to counter malign Russian influence in the CAR mining and security sectors. I am concerned about the humanitarian situation and the ongoing conflict in CAR, and we will engage with our partners in the region and in Europe, as well as in the UN.**

Democratic Republic of Congo

*Following controversial elections in 2018 elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the United States publically and adamantly backed President Tshisekedi and supported efforts to reform and challenge the status quo established by former President Kabila.*

- *What is your perspective on the performance of the Tshisekedi Administration to date?*
- *Is it your assessment that the Tshisekedi Administration is in a position to continue to advance reforms, including in the areas of anti-corruption and in the security and mining sectors?*
- *In your view, how can the United States continue to support democratic reforms in the DRC, including by enhancing prospects for free, fair, and transparent elections in 2023?*
- *If confirmed, do you commit to supporting the legitimate victor of a free and fair electoral process in 2023?*
- *In your view, what is the Privileged Partnership for Peace and Prosperity (#PP4PP)? Is this an initiative you plan to continue if confirmed?*
- *In your perspective, what should the United States, our European allies, and the UN peacekeeping mission (MONUSCO) be doing to support a peace process and help facilitate the end of the conflict in Eastern Congo?*
- *In your opinion, how can the Department of State and Department of the Treasury better coordinate on sanctions for corruption and human rights abuses in the DRC, including as they relate to existing sanctions on Dan Gertler and his affiliated interlocutors and entities in the DRC's mining sector?*

**Across administrations, the United States has worked to end violence in DRC, prevent conflict, promote economic development, and advance democracy and human rights. We will work with the Tshisekedi government and our civil society partners towards real economic and security reform and accountability. Continued U.S. engagement through our ambassador and at the United Nations is needed.**

East AfricaHorn of Africa

*The Greater Horn of Africa—including Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, and Uganda—sits at the crossroads of Africa, the Middle East, and the wider Red Sea Region. This diverse group of countries reflects a region where the United States can and should have a more comprehensive approach toward advancing diplomatic, development, and defense interests. The scramble for influence by both global and regional powers in the Greater Horn of Africa has contributed to rising levels of insecurity and political instability.*

- *Would you agree or disagree that U.S. national security interests in the region would be better served if we had a more comprehensive and coordinated interagency approach toward the Greater Horn of Africa?*

**I agree.**

- *If confirmed, would you be inclined to support the appointment of a U.S. Special Envoy for the Greater Horn of Africa to focus on our collective diplomatic, development and defense interests in this fragile yet strategically important region of Eastern Africa?*

**As part of our strategy, I will review whether an envoy is needed.**Kenya

*The United States views Kenya as a strategic partner in the region. While Kenya is not a major U.S. trade partner globally, it is one of Africa's most dynamic economies and the second-largest beneficiary of AGOA's tariff benefits, excluding crude oil. On February 6, President Trump and President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya announced their intent to begin free trade agreement (FTA) negotiations. If successful, it would be the first U.S. FTA with a country in sub-Saharan Africa.*

- *Do you believe the U.S.-Kenya FTA talks support or undermine regional trade initiatives and agreements under the pan-African AfCFTA and sub-regional trade initiatives under the East African Community?*
- *Do you support continuing to prioritize FTA negotiations with Kenya? If not, why not? If so, would your approach to negotiations differ from that of the Department under the Trump Administration? If so, how?*
- *How would you seek to position a future U.S.-Kenya FTA to build upon AGOA objectives and expand U.S. trade and investment ties with Africa?*

**The Biden-Harris administration is committed to a trade policy that promotes American workers. We are committed to strengthening alliances with our key partners, like Kenya. We intend to closely review the status of ongoing negotiations with Kenya. I will work with the U.S. Trade Representative and the other economic departments and agencies to develop a broader approach to AfCFTA and trade and investment.**

Rwanda

*Rwanda is frequently considered by partners inside and outside of Africa as an economic development model in the region to which they should aspire and model. However, serious concerns exist about Rwanda's activities in the broader Great Lakes region, as well as its democratic record domestically.*

- *If confirmed, how will you engage Rwanda and encourage the Kagame administration to play a more constructive role in the Great Lakes region, especially given ongoing political transitions in the DRC and Burundi and troubling democratic declines in neighboring Uganda and Tanzania?*

**If confirmed, I will assess what more the United States can do to engage Rwanda and other regional partners to play a constructive role in the Great Lakes region. We will pay**

**particular attention to the political transitions in DRC and Burundi. I share your concern about democratic declines in Uganda and Tanzania.**

*Paul Rusesabagina, the political dissident and protagonist depicted in the movie Hotel Rwanda, is currently on trial in Rwanda for "terrorism" and other charges. Mr. Rusesabagina, a Belgian citizen and American permanent resident, said he was kidnapped and forced onto a plane in Dubai that was bound for Kigali in August 2020. While the facts surrounding both how he ended up in Rwanda and the charges lodged against him by the Rwandan government are not fully verified, the Rwandan government must adhere to their stated commitments. They must treat Mr. Rusesabagina humanely and afford him a fair and transparent judicial process.*

- *Will you commit to following Paul Rusesabagina's case and provide leadership to hold the Rwandan government to their commitments for a fair trial and due process for Mr. Rusesabagina?*

**Yes. If confirmed, I will make clear that the human rights of all prisoners, including Paul Rusesabagina, should be respected. Our administration will work to ensure that a trial is conducted fairly and transparently. This is a case our team will follow closely.**

#### Somalia

*The United States has emphasized the need for one person-one vote direct elections in Somalia and provides support through USAID and other channels toward that end. However, Somalia's leadership recently decided, again, that the country will pursue an indirect selection process for members of parliament and the office of the president, instead of a direct election.*

- *What is your view of prospects for democratic direct elections in Somalia in the future, particularly given Somalia's persistent security and governance challenges?*
- *Do you believe the United States has held overly ambitious expectations for Somalia since 2016/2017, given the circumstances on the ground?*
- *UNSOS/AMISOM's mandate is up for renewal in February 2021. In your view, how can the United States most effectively engage in the mandate-renewal process, including with the penholder (the United Kingdom), to have frank discussions about what UNSOS/AMISOM can reasonably achieve and enhance mission efficiency?*

**The project of addressing terrorist violence and broader instability and supporting Somali governance has continued across multiple administrations. A holistic approach is needed to ensure sustainable gains -- instability and lack of adequate governance cannot be addressed by military means alone. It is important that we engage the Somalis, partners, and other stakeholders, and UN and AU interlocutors on a pathway forward for Somalia. If confirmed, I will review the U.S. approach to the upcoming elections, the peacekeeping mandate, and long-term strategy for democracy and governance in Somalia.**

#### South Sudan

*South Sudan has been a U.S. priority issue for decades. Throughout this troubled history, the United States has provided strong support for the peace process in an attempt to resolve Sudan and then-Southern Sudan's decades-long civil war, preparations for South Sudan's separation and independence from Sudan, and the provision of extensive U.S. humanitarian and development assistance (upwards of \$1 billion per year). This includes the years since the outbreak of South Sudan's civil war in 2013.*

- *Given that the United States is a significant stakeholder in ensuring that South Sudan achieves sustainable peace and development, what diplomatic investments would you make as Secretary of State bilaterally, regionally, and with multi-lateral institutions?*
- *What is your perspective on the ongoing U.S. assistance review, announced in 2018, for South Sudan? If confirmed, how would you support a timely conclusion to the assistance review and enable action on its findings?*
- *Would you support a reorganization of the State Department's Office of the U.S. Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan (USSESSS), such that it is better streamlined and integrated within the Department's Africa Bureau?*
- *Do you support the use of separate U.S. Special Envoys for Sudan and South Sudan? How can the United States better approach providing specific high-level diplomatic attention to South Sudan while also ensuring that broader regional diplomatic issues are considered and leveraged as necessary for a more comprehensive policy toward the Sudans and the surrounding countries?*

**The United States' long history of generosity towards the South Sudanese people -- with bipartisan support -- will continue. We will be engaging other donors and working with international organizations to ensure a robust humanitarian response to recent reports of famine. I share the bipartisan concerns about the implementation of the peace agreement and the need to consider regional challenges. It is imperative that all leaders deliver on the promises they have made to the South Sudanese people to reform and to peace. Our diplomatic efforts will remain focused on ensuring disputes are resolved politically and without violence, ending systemic corruption and instilling economic reforms, reforming the security sector, and pursuing accountability. South Sudan is one of the most dangerous places in the world for aid workers. Violence against humanitarian workers is unacceptable. We will be paying particular attention to this concern.**

#### Sudan

*The ouster of longtime President Omar al-Bashir in April 2019 and installation of a power-sharing government between the Transitional Military Council and the civilian Forces for Freedom and Change served as a historic moment not just for the Sudanese people but also the U.S.-Sudan bilateral relationship. The United States has since served as one of Sudan's closest transition partners. The Trump Administration's formal rescission of Sudan's designation as a State Sponsor of Terrorism (SST) in December 2020, the pledged exchange of ambassadors between the United States and Sudan, and a near settlement of claims between Sudan and American victims of terrorism have created a new impetus for deepening what has been for decades a turbulent bilateral relationship under former President Bashir.*

- *If confirmed, what approach will you take to ensure that the United States continues to prioritize normalizing relations with Sudan's fragile yet historic civilian-led transitional government? Will you commit to supporting the nomination of a capable U.S. ambassador to Sudan as one of your early actions as Secretary? Furthermore, will you work to ensure that U.S. relationships with Sudan are managed through the civilian leadership of the transitional government?*
- *How should the United States prioritize its assistance to Sudan? Will you ensure that sufficient assistance is given to support U.S. democracy and governance strengthening initiatives in Sudan?*
- *Do you support the bilateral deal signed between the United States and Sudan on resolving outstanding terrorism claims, and will you commit to resolving any outstanding issues to ensure that Sudan achieves legal peace and American victims of terrorism are properly compensated?*
- *Given the planned drawdown of the African Union-UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) through 2021, what policies will you pursue to ensure necessary protection of civilians in Darfur? Do you believe that the existing UN arms embargo and other sanctions should remain in place in Darfur until the Sudanese government demonstrates that it can and will adequately protect civilians? If confirmed, how would you ensure that justice is pursued regarding atrocities committed against the Sudanese people, particularly in Darfur and "the Two Areas" of Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile?*

**I intend to nominate a capable U.S. ambassador and support the civilian leadership of the transitional government. I intend to look at the new assistance to support Sudan's democratic transition and review the bilateral agreement to ensure the American victims of terrorism are properly compensated. Conditions have changed in Sudan, but, even with the signing of new peace agreements, violence persists in Darfur and the Two Areas. It will be vital that local voices in these areas are included as the Sudanese navigate their transition. Among other steps, we will be focused on the stand-up of the UN Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS). I will review these other items when in office. Our administration will continue to work to support Sudan's civilian-led democratic transition and economic stability. Continued bipartisan support for Sudan's transition is needed.**

#### Southern Africa

##### Mozambique

*Leaders representing several countries in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) resolved in late November 2020 to develop a "comprehensive regional response" to the growing Islamist insurgency in the northern Cabo Delgado Province of Mozambique.*

- *Do you support SADC's planned regional efforts to counter northern Mozambique's Islamist insurgency? How can the United States effectively support SADC efforts to deal with Mozambique growing security problem?*
- *How can the United States better coordinate with international partners in supporting the Mozambican government through military, humanitarian and development assistance in*

*northern Mozambique? How can we best de-conflict and minimize 'assistance fatigue' as more international and regional actors crowd this space in an effort to curb the Islamist insurgency in northern Mozambique?*

**I will need to look at this recent development when in office, if confirmed. Broadly, we could consider ways to address the root causes of violence and use the Global Fragility Act as a framework to guide our programming and approach.**

#### Zimbabwe

*While there was hope that the end of Mugabe's 37-year reign as president of Zimbabwe would usher in democratic and economic reforms and enable the beleaguered country to cast off its pariah status, the three years of leadership under President Mnangagwa have demonstrated a continuation, if not worsening, of human rights abuses, economic mismanagement and kleptocratic behavior of the ZANU-PF regime.*

- *From your perspective, what tools (including those currently underutilized) does the United States have at its disposal that are underutilized to encourage democratic and economic reforms in Zimbabwe?*
- *What is your perspective on the Zimbabwe Sanctions Program and its efficacy in encouraging reforms?*
- *An area of considerable debate has been the value of reincorporating political party programming into the portfolio of U.S. democracy assistance to Zimbabwe. Do you commit to reviewing the Department of State's posture on political party support in Zimbabwe?*
- *If confirmed, would you support the investment of resources into enhancing investigative journalism and research to better understand Zimbabwe's corruption and kleptocratic networks?*
- *What role can South Africa and the wider Southern African Development Community play in helping Zimbabwe end its political and economic crises? What actions can the United States take to encourage greater regional engagement?*

**If confirmed, I will assess the current U.S. approach to Zimbabwe, including opportunities for greater regional engagement. I will also plan to review the sanctions program as well as our democracy assistance (political party support, anti-corruption work, and support to the media). I will consult with Congress on our assistance programs.**

#### West Africa

##### The Sahel

- *If confirmed, what would be your priorities in the Sahel region?*

**I am concerned about rising violent extremism, growing humanitarian concerns, and increasing governance challenges in the Sahel.**

- *What are your views on a dedicated U.S. Special Envoy for the Sahel Region? Do you support calls by some to create an additional U.S. Special Envoy to Nigeria or for the Lake Chad Basin?*

**If confirmed, I am committed to ensuring that our staffing, including envoys, supports implementation of our strategy.**

- *How could the United States better coordinate and implement its policies and strategies in the region?*

**The Biden-Harris administration will undertake an early interagency review of our diplomatic, security, and other assistance to the region to ensure that we have a strategy that addresses the underlying drivers of violence and extremism. As part of our global counterterrorism and military force posture reviews, we will be working to understand current and future threats in the region and, based on that, evaluating our security approach there.**

- *What is your perceived impact of a drawdown of AFRICOM in the Sahel region?*

**If confirmed, I intend to look at these impacts as part of an interagency broader review.**

- *How can the United States better work with its European partners to ensure effective burden sharing and mission success to counter VEOs in the region?*

**As part of this review, we will determine the best ways to work with our security partners in the region, in Europe, and in multilateral institutions to address extremist violence.**

#### Liberia

*The United States shares a “special relationship” with Liberia reflecting a shared history and the investment of significant U.S. assistance, including helping Liberia emerge from conflict, build democratic institutions, and overcome the West Africa Ebola outbreak (2014-2016). Liberia endured two brutal civil wars from 1989-1996 and 1999-2003, both characterized by gross human rights violations, war crimes and crimes against humanity, to include rape, massacres (including in places of worship), torture and the use of child soldiers. While Liberia has experienced peace for 17 years and the transfer of power from President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf to President George Weah in 2018, the country still experiences significant development challenges and trauma. While the deposed Liberian despot Charles Taylor was convicted of crimes against humanity committed in neighboring Sierra Leone by the Special Court in Sierra Leone, and others have been convicted in foreign countries, including the United States, to date, Liberia itself has not prosecuted anyone for crimes committed during its civil wars.*

- *From your perspective, what role does the combination of rampant corruption, including at the highest levels of government, and the legacy of violent conflict play in Liberia’s development and economic outlook?*



- *In your view, has the United States done enough to encourage Liberia to pursue justice and reconciliation for crimes committed during its civil wars?*

**If confirmed, I am committed to reviewing this with the experts from the Africa Bureau and consulting with Congress. The United States will work with our partners and allies and seek to lead a global fight against corruption and restore democracy and human rights to the center of U.S. foreign policy, including in Liberia.**

#### Mali

*Mali is central to U.S. efforts to counter VEOs in the Sahel. Yet, the ouster of Mali's elected president by the Malian army in August 2020 heightened political uncertainty in the country amid severe security, governance, and humanitarian challenges. Under the leadership of retired military officer and former defense minister Bah N'Daw as President, Mali's civilian-led transitional government is expected to organize elections in 18 months and work towards more sustainable peace in Mali. These are monumental tasks, particularly in light of the complex security and political dynamics in the country, to say nothing of severe economic pressures.*

- *How can the United States best assist Mali through this transition? Would you agree or disagree that Mali serves as the most vital component of the U.S. security and counterterrorism strategy in the region? What role should the United States play in marshaling regional and international support for Mali's transition, to include democratic elections?*
- *How do you view the UN peacekeeping mission in Mali, MINUSMA? Does its current mandate serve its intended peacekeeping purpose? Should the United States support efforts to re-examine and reorient the UN presence in Mali, to include MINUSMA, to ensure its mission is focused and adaptable to changing circumstances on the ground?*

**We are concerned about rising violent extremism, growing humanitarian concerns, and increasing governance challenges in the Sahel, including Mali. We believe we need a more holistic approach to the long-standing governance challenges in the Sahel. We will undertake an early interagency review of our diplomatic, security, and other assistance to the region to ensure that we have a strategy that addresses the underlying drivers of violence and extremism. As part of our global counterterrorism and military force posture reviews, we will be working to understand current and future threats in the region and, based on that, evaluating our security approach there. We will determine the best ways to work with our security partners in the region, in Europe, and in multilateral institutions to address extremist violence. As part of our work in the UN Security Council, we will also review MINUSMA as part of this comprehensive review.**

#### Nigeria

*In December 2020, Secretary Pompeo designated Nigeria as a Country of Particular Concern under the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998, citing the country for “systematic, ongoing, egregious violations of religious freedom.”*

- *What is your assessment of the appropriateness of Nigeria for this designation?*
- *Are concerns about religious freedom among your top priorities for engagement with Nigeria?*
- *What is your assessment of the drivers of conflict in Nigeria? How do the drivers of conflict in Nigeria differ across geographical regions?*

**If confirmed, I am committed to reviewing recent policy decisions to determine if any adjustments are necessary. The stability and prosperity of Nigeria is important to Africa and the United States. Nigeria is confronting a number of challenges, including the terrorist threat by Boko Haram in the north, and the need for police and security sector reform and accountability as demanded by the #ENDSARS protest movement and a growing humanitarian crisis in three regions.**

*Afghanistan Policy*

*Taliban Commitments under February 29th Agreement and Intra-Afghan Talks*

*As Secretary of State, you would have purview over the Special Representative for Afghan Reconciliation (SRAR). On February 29 of 2019, SRAR brokered an agreement with the Taliban to reduce U.S. forces in exchange for Taliban counterterrorism commitments, agreements to reduce violence, and enter into an intra-Afghan dialogue. In November, the Trump Administration reduced troop levels to approximately 2,500.*

- *What is your understanding of the Taliban's compliance with their commitments?*
- *Does the Taliban's record of compliance warrant further troop withdrawals below 2,500?*
- *Ongoing intra-Afghan negotiations will likely determine whether Afghanistan remains an Islamic republic or is turned into an Islamic emirate. What are the risks to U.S. interests linked to the outcomes of the intra-Afghan negotiations?*
- *Troop withdrawals have reduced the Afghan government's leverage in negotiations with the Taliban. How can the State Department and Biden Administration provide additional leverage to the Afghan government in its ongoing negotiations?*
- *What are your views on the UN delisting the Taliban?*

**The Biden-Harris administration will bring the war in Afghanistan to a responsible end. In doing so, we must ensure that terrorist groups – al Qaeda and the Islamic State Khorasan Province – are not allowed to threaten our homeland again. We will support the on-going peace process between the Afghan government and the Taliban with a high-level, robust diplomatic effort. We will carefully and thoroughly assess the U.S.-Taliban agreement, including the nature of the commitments that the Taliban made to cut ties with terrorist groups, including al Qaeda, to reduce violence in Afghanistan, and to participate in meaningful negotiations with the Afghan government. We will assess U.S. commitments,**

**including with regard to delisting at the United Nations. We will carefully review the current and future U.S. military footprint in Afghanistan. In the near-term, we will ensure that our forces have the ability to continue their core missions effectively and safely.**

State Department Oversight in Afghanistan

*United States diplomatic presence and ability to move freely throughout Afghanistan is linked to Department of Defense presence and assets.*

- *Given further troop reductions, how does the State Department maintain critical oversight of the millions of taxpayer funded assistance dollars that remain in the Afghanistan pipeline?*
- *What conditions would a Biden Administration place on future assistance to Afghanistan?*

**We will carefully review our assistance to Afghanistan. It will be important to ensure that we can continue to support our Afghan partners accountably, in an environment in which we have fewer soldiers and civilian staff to monitor our assistance and programming.**

Human Rights in Afghanistan

- *In addition to vital counterterrorism interests, U.S. efforts in Afghanistan have dramatically improved conditions for women, minority and youth. How would your State Department safeguard the gains made for Afghan women, minority and youth?*

**Women, girls, and minority groups in Afghanistan have made extraordinary gains over the past twenty years, and protecting those gains will be a high priority in the Biden-Harris administration. For a peace agreement between the Afghan government and the Taliban to be durable and just, it must account for the rights of women, girls, and minority groups.**

The Role of Other Countries in Afghanistan

- *What roles do Pakistan, China, and Russia play in Afghanistan and how will the State Department engage with these and regional actors to foster peace and stability?*

**The countries in Afghanistan's neighborhood, including Pakistan, China, Russia, India, and Iran have important roles to play in supporting peace and stability in Afghanistan. We all have far more to gain in a peaceful and stable outcome in Afghanistan than in continued war.**

TRADE, TECHNOLOGY, AND ENERGY

Supply Chains

*The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the fragility of “just in time” inventories and the United States’ reliance on foreign nations for critical personal protective equipment, disinfectants, and other items important to national security.*

- *As Secretary of State, how will you work to address this challenge?*
- *Should the United States move to broaden and diversify its supply chains, with which countries should we increase trade and with which should we decrease trade?*

**The U.S. needs to close supply chain vulnerabilities across a range of critical products on which the U.S. is dangerously dependent on foreign suppliers. If confirmed, I look forward to working with other agencies in the U.S. government and with Congress to implement a comprehensive approach to ensure the U.S. has the critical supplies it needs for future crises and its national security.**

Trade Agreements

*A significant number of nations wish to negotiate trade agreements with the United States.*

- *With which countries should the United States prioritize negotiating trade agreements?*
- *What are the blocks of nations that you would prioritize negotiating multilateral agreements?*

**The immediate priority of the Biden Administration is new investments in the American economy. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the U.S. Trade Representative, others in the administration, and Congress on the administration’s economic and trade priorities.**

- *There are eleven countries that are members of the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement. This agreement could be an important network for U.S. trade and an influential group of countries to counter Chinese actions. Should the United States work to join the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement?*

**The immediate priority of the Biden Administration is new investments in the American economy. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the U.S. Trade Representative, others in the administration, and Congress on the administration’s economic and trade priorities.**

- *What specific steps would you propose to increase U.S. trade interaction with lower-volume trading partners?*

**The immediate priority of the Biden Administration is new investments in the American economy. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the U.S. Trade Representative, others in the administration, and Congress on the administration’s economic and trade priorities.**

- *American and other foreign companies have experienced significant and growing regulatory challenges in Mexico under President Lopez Obrador by his administration, creating regulatory challenges for U.S. investors that include increasing difficulties in getting permits for a range of activities. These actions are contrary to USCMA. What steps and actions will you take as Secretary of State to ensure that Mexico abides by the commitments that it has made as part of USCMA?*

**If confirmed, I look forward to working with the U.S. Trade Representative, the Department of Commerce, and others in the administration to ensure that all U.S. trading partners live up to their commitments in trade agreements.**

- *What is your stance on continuing or expanding State-led initiatives such as Asia EDGE, which has helped support demand creation for U.S. energy exports through work to create more open, efficient, rule-based and transparent energy markets and the construction of energy infrastructure?*

**Energy is critical to achieving the administration's economic, national security, and climate goals. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Department of Energy, the Department of Commerce, the U.S. Agency for International Development, the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation, and others in the administration to identify our global energy priorities and to leverage all available tools to advance those goals.**

- *President-elect Biden has said he will not "make any immediate moves" to lower or eliminate tariffs on U.S. imports from China, but rather freeze the current policy while he and his administration conduct a thorough review of the U.S.-China relationship. This decision has the merit of ensuring that Beijing does not get used to the idea that we will grant them concessions in exchange for nothing. However, our approach must also take into account that thousands of U.S. businesses are burdened by these tariffs, through no fault of their own, with no relief in sight and no process to be considered for exclusion. If confirmed, you will likely play a leading role in this review. Do you commit to including a Section 301 tariff exclusion process that provides a clear path to U.S. businesses seeking tariff relief, which is especially important in light of the COVID-19 pandemic?*

**The administration is aware that the Section 301 exclusions related to COVID-19 have been extended until the end of March. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing this issue with the U.S. Trade Representative and others in the administration.**

#### Technology

*The United States has been the world leader in innovation and technology for the past century. China has adopted the method of using U.S. technology, largely without compensation, to further their own economic, social, and foreign policy objectives. China has expressed a desire to move its economy up the global supply chain by dominating industries critical to U.S. national security such as semiconductor production, artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and autonomous vehicles, among others.*

- *What priority will you assign to this economic aggression among matters with China?*
- *How will you determine which industries are critical to the future of the United States and how will the State Department work to protect the U.S. competitive advantage?*
- *Under your leadership, how aggressively would the State Department defend U.S. intellectual property? What specific actions will you take to defend U.S. intellectual property?*

**The economic dimension of U.S.-China competition is crucial. China is stealing intellectual property and engaging in other practices to give it an unfair technological advantage, including forced technology transfer. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with other agencies and with Congress on the administration's priorities with respect to combating these practices using the full array of U.S. tools, as well as to working with allies to hold Beijing accountable.**

#### Energy

*The majority of increased energy demand in the near future is most likely to come from emerging nations, India, and China. U.S. industry and the State Department will have a role in supporting these nations in meeting the demand for this additional energy. A recent Center for Strategic and International Studies report concluded that U.S. exports of nuclear power is in steep decline, while Russia and China are increasing domestic production as well as international exports.*

- *What benefits, if any, do you believe the United States accrues by exporting nuclear technology to foreign markets?*
- *Is it a priority for the United States to continue support for nuclear research and development in order to export those technologies to foreign markets?*
- *What role do you see for United States foreign assistance in promoting access to energy in emerging nations?*
- *In the Biden-Sanders Unity Task Force Recommendations, President-elect Biden supports technology neutral clean energy programs and next generation nuclear power. Will the priorities outlined in the Biden-Sanders Unity Task Force Recommendations apply to the State Department's international efforts as well?*
- *Specifically, what programs and other agencies will the Department utilize to advance these goals?*
- *How will you prioritize resources for wind, solar, nuclear, or other sources of carbon free power when evaluating support for energy production projects?*

**Energy is critical to achieving the administration's economic, national security, and climate goals. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Department of Energy, the Department of Commerce, the U.S. Agency for International Development, the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation, and others in the administration to identify our global energy priorities and to leverage all available tools to advance those goals.**

#### Tariffs

*President-elect Biden has said he will not “make any immediate moves” to lower or eliminate tariffs on U.S. imports from China, but rather freeze the current policy while he and his administration conduct a thorough review of the U.S.-China relationship. This decision has the merit of ensuring that Beijing does not get used to the idea that we will grant them concessions in exchange for nothing. However, our approach must also take into account that thousands of U.S. businesses are burdened by these tariffs, through no fault of their own, with no relief in sight and no process to be considered for exclusion.*

- *If confirmed, you will likely play a leading role in this review. Do you commit to including a Section 301 tariff exclusion process that provides a clear path to U.S. businesses seeking tariff relief, which is especially important in light of the COVID-19 pandemic?*
- **The administration is aware that the Section 301 exclusions related to COVID-19 have been extended until the end of March. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing this issue with the U.S. Trade Representative and others in the administration.**

#### SANCTIONS

*On December 27, 2020, President Trump signed into law the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021. This legislation includes a provision that I supported which establishes an Office of Sanctions Coordinator within the State Department.*

- *If confirmed, do you commit to give this new office the attention, support, and resources needed to ensure its success and the fulfillment of its statutory mandate?*
- *If confirmed, do you commit to ensuring that this new office will fulfill its mandate vis-à-vis other offices and bureaus within the State Department to “serve as the coordinator for the development and implementation of sanctions policy” within the State Department?*
- *If confirmed, do you commit to ensuring that the head of this new office will serve as the lead representative of the United States in diplomatic engagement on sanctions matters?*
- *If confirmed, do you commit to ensuring that this new office will serve as the lead representative of the State Department in interagency discussions with respect to the development and implementation of sanctions policy?*
- *If confirmed, do you commit to supporting the nomination of a qualified sanctions professional with expertise in the sanctions field to serve as the Senate-confirmed head of the office?*
- *If confirmed, do you commit to support the hiring of qualified sanctions professionals with expertise in the sanctions field to work in this office?*
- *If confirmed, do you commit to work with my office and this committee to ensure that this office succeeds and fulfills its statutory mandate?*
- *If confirmed, do you commit to direct the State Department to brief my office and this committee in a timely fashion with respect to sanctions policy developments as they occur?*

- **I believe that sanctions are an important tool to help achieve U.S. foreign policy objectives and I appreciate the emphasis that Congress has put on the State Department’s resources in this area. If confirmed, I commit to consulting closely with Congress on sanctions policy and to working on implementing the provisions of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021.**

Global Magnitsky Sanctions

- *Section 1263(d) of the Global Magnitsky Act requires that the President make a sanctions determination within 120 days after receipt of a joint request from the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (or other relevant committee leadership). If confirmed, will you commit to help ensure Congress receives a specific determination to any such request within 120 days of submission?*

**President Biden and I are committed to using the Global Magnitsky Act to hold violators of human rights accountable. If confirmed, I commit to working with Congress as provided for in the Global Magnitsky Act.**

Reimagine Task Force

*The Department recently completed its “Reimagine Task Force” that aims to study lessons learned and then implement best practices.*

- *Do you agree with the conclusions of the Reimagine Task Force?*
- *If confirmed, do you intend to implement all of the currently planned changes?*
- *If yes, which ones? If no, which are you choosing not to implement?*
- *Do you intend to reverse any of the changes that have already been implemented?*

**If confirmed as Secretary of State, I look forward to being briefed on the results of the Reimagine Task Force, particularly its efforts to streamline telework processes and workforce mobility. The Task Force goals of reimagining and expanding workforce capabilities align with President Biden’s commitment to lead with diplomacy and “build back better.” This will require a more modern, flexible, and responsive State Department, which I intend to support, if given the privilege to serve as Secretary of State.**

Organization

- *The Department had proposed creating a Bureau of Contingency and Crisis Management. Do you support the creation of this bureau?*

**The outgoing administration’s decision to proceed with creation of the Bureau of Contingency and Crisis Management, despite Congressional holds on the issue, warrants careful examination by the Biden Administration. As I noted in my opening statement to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on January 19, 2021, “Both the President-Elect and I believe that we have to restore Congress’s traditional role as a partner in our foreign policy making.” For this reason, if confirmed as Secretary of State, I will pause further**



action on creation of the Bureau of Contingency and Crisis Management in order to address Congressional concerns. Rather than divert energies towards formation of this new bureau in the midst of the global pandemic, I will ensure the component parts of the Office of Medical Services and relevant bureaus and offices collaborate closely to ensure safe and expeditious distribution of COVID-19 vaccines to State Department personnel worldwide, if confirmed as Secretary of State.

- *Do you intend to seek the advice and consent of the Senate for the State Department's Chief of Protocol?*
- **If confirmed, I intend to seek the advice and consent of the Senate for the State Department's Chief of Protocol, returning to norms in place since 1961. President-elect Biden believes – and I share his conviction – that no foreign policy can be sustained without the informed consent of the American people. You are the representatives of the American people. You provide that advice and consent. We can only tackle the most urgent problems our country faces if we work together, and I am dedicated to doing that.**

Special Envoys

- *If confirmed, which special envoy or other similar positions at the Department do you intend to keep?*
- *Which ones do you believe are not necessary?*
- *Do you plan to create any new special envoy positions at the Department?*

**If confirmed, I will retain the Special Envoy for Holocaust Issues, Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism, and Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Issues positions and will examine other special envoy positions to best align resources with Biden Administration foreign policy priorities. I will fulfill President Biden's commitment to restore the Special Envoy for the Human Rights of LGBTQ+ Persons and Special Envoy for International Disability Rights positions, as part of our commitment to advancing universal human rights, and look forward to working with the new Special Presidential Envoy for Climate to address the global climate crisis.**

Internal Processes

- *How do you assess the D Committee chief of mission selection process? Are there areas in which you would like to make changes?*

**As a former co-chair of the D Committee, I value the integrity and importance of this process to recommend career leaders to serve the American people as chiefs of mission worldwide. If confirmed as Secretary of State, I will examine ways to further optimize the D Committee process, increase transparency of the composition and actions of the Committee, advance diverse and inclusive leadership and fulfill President Biden's pledge to "put U.S. diplomacy back in the hands of genuine professionals."**

- *During the last Congress, the D Committee concentrated first-time chiefs of mission in certain geographic areas, often without any regional expertise. Do you commit to making the distribution of first-time ambassadors more equal among regions as well as emphasizing experience in the region?*

**While the regional distribution of ambassadorships depends on what is open in a particular year, and the President has ultimate prerogative on nominations, I look forward to examining the question of geographic distribution of first-time chiefs of mission, if confirmed as Secretary of State. President Biden has committed to ensuring that his chief of mission nominees are “the best people” and fully qualified for their posts, to include experience in the region in question.**

- *The State Department has an infamously slow and difficult paper clearance process that reduces Department efficiency and effectiveness.*
- *Do you believe that this process is in need of reform?*
- *If yes, do you intend to address the paper clearance process?*
- *If yes, how do you intend to do so?*

**Yes, I believe the paper clearance process is in need of improvement, as part of a larger modernization of the policy coordination and implementation process at the State Department. This effort will require State leadership -- at all levels -- that rewards innovation, respects the career workforce and values transparency, but also challenges dysfunctional status quos where they exist, and drives more agile and effective diplomacy for the future. While encouraging an employee-led effort to optimize the internal policymaking process within the State Department, if confirmed, I also look forward to working with the Committee on legislative authorities and additional funding that may be necessary to rebuild the State Department and modernize U.S. diplomacy.**

*The Department has frequently complained to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee about the number of congressionally-required reports it produces. Yet, the Department has refused to provide me or my staff with what it views as the comprehensive list of its requirements.*

- *Do you commit to providing what the Department views as a comprehensive list of congressionally-required reports?*
- *Would you support reducing the number of congressionally-required reports?*
- *If yes, would you commit to working with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on reducing the number of reports and identifying exactly which reports you seek to reduce?*

**If confirmed, I would ensure the State Department provides a comprehensive list of recommended congressionally-required reports. I would also support close State Department consultation with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to rationalize the number of congressional reports and identify which reports can be streamlined or eliminated.**

*Morale*

*As in any other workforce, high morale among the State Department's employees is vital to attracting and retaining talent.*

- *Is morale at the Department a problem?*
- *If yes, how do you intend to improve and maintain morale at the Department?*
- *Are there specific areas of morale (or bureaus) that you believe need immediate attention?*

**The people who work for the U.S. Department of State are committed public servants who uphold U.S. policies to protect Americans and their interests abroad. The marginalization and exodus of career talent over the last four years has coincided with declines in overall employee job satisfaction in annual workforce surveys as well test takers for the Foreign Service exam. That said, while forces inside and outside of the Department have sought to denigrate their work and limit the impact of diplomacy, the reality is that the nearly 77,000 State Department employees worldwide are resilient. If confirmed, improving and maintaining State Department morale will be my job one, starting with “building back better.” As I stated in my testimony on January 19, I am committed to advancing our security and prosperity by building a diplomatic corps that fully represents America in all its talent and diversity. That means recruiting, retaining, and promoting officers with the skills to contend with 21st Century challenges and who look like the country we represent. That means sparing no effort to ensure their safety and well-being. And that means demanding accountability – starting with the Secretary – for building a more diverse, inclusive and non-partisan workplace.**

*CODELs/Staffdels*

*CODELs and staffdels are important to the formulation of and support for U.S. foreign policy in Congress. These trips often spur or incubate ideas for Members and staff. However, CODELs and staffdels are often given to low-ranking junior officers and treated as a burden rather than an opportunity for discussion and collaboration.*

- *Do you commit to emphasizing the importance of CODELs and staffdels?*
- *Do you commit to pressing posts to assign higher ranking officers to support these critical missions?*
- *Do you commit to emphasizing to posts the need to engage with CODELs and staffdels in policy discussions or ideas that would improve the State Department's interests in the local area or region?*

**As I stated in my remarks on January 19, I had the privilege of serving as the Democratic Staff Director of the Senate Foreign Relations committee for six years, working alongside a distinguished group of senators to advance American diplomacy and safeguard the interests of the American people. Based on my experience, I know full well that CODELs and staffdels provide an opportunity to deepen Congressional knowledge and understanding of foreign policy issues, and they inform legislative decisions impacting American interests abroad and the U.S. government resources charged with advancing**

those missions. If confirmed, I will lead the Department in strengthening our relationship with Congress and will direct my staff in Washington, as well as chiefs of mission and their teams abroad, to elevate their engagement with CODELS and staffdels to do the same.

*Overseas Building Operations (OBO)*

*General*

- *Do you believe it is important to build U.S. diplomatic posts in areas near host government buildings and other diplomatic missions in order to support the activities of U.S. diplomats?*

U.S. diplomatic posts must serve to advance our foreign policy mission and goals while also protecting the people who work there to advance that mission, as well as the local partners we engage. A one-size-fits-all approach, pursued under the standard embassy design until 2011, fails to recognize the nuance of each post's strategic priorities, geographic and security constraints, and level of public engagement. We must take all of these issues into account when identifying a site for construction and expansion, understanding that we must engage people to advance our foreign policy goals while mitigating risk. These considerations will result in some posts at sites nearer to government, economic, and cultural activity centers, and farther in other locations.

- *Do you commit to placing greater emphasis on ease of diplomatic access in choosing the location for future diplomatic posts?*

Increasing U.S. diplomatic staff engagement with foreign public audiences is important to advancing U.S. foreign policy. While we can accomplish public engagement in different ways using new and innovative platforms, nothing replaces face-to-face interactions. If confirmed, I will work with the Overseas Building Operation, Diplomatic Security, and posts to understand and expand how, when, and under what circumstances we can ease diplomatic access to improve dignity and accessibility of future diplomatic posts while also mitigating security and safety risks.

*The Bureau of Overseas Building Operations is moving to a more efficient and effective approach.*

- *Do you commit to continuing to expand the pool of contract bidders?*

I am committed to working with the Bureau of Overseas Building Operations, as well as the Administration Bureau's Office of the Procurement Executive, to ensure the Department maintains transparency and accountability in the contracting processing in compliance with federal law and regulations. This includes ensuring that the bidding process is accessible to expand the pool of bidders, including to small disadvantaged businesses.

- *Do you commit to lowering building costs through standardization?*

- **The one-size-fits-all approach, pursued by the Bureau of Overseas Building Operations under its standard embassy design program until 2011, failed to recognize the nuance of each post's strategic priorities, geographic and security constraints, and level of public engagement. When possible and appropriate for the local context, standardization can reduce costs. However, standardization and short-term costs savings cannot come at the expense of the safety and security of the people staffing the diplomatic posts and the U.S. foreign policy goals that they aim to advance.**
- *Do you commit to following industry standards like design-build?*

**I am committed to working with the Under Secretary for Management, the Bureau of Overseas Building Operations, and the Administration Bureau's Office of the Procurement Executive to examine the impact of design-build processes. I am also committed to having the Deputy Secretary for Management and Resources work with the interagency to examine the appropriate use of design-build contracts. This is an issue that not only impacts the State Department but also other agencies across the federal government. While a design-build is an industry standard that can reduce the time and costs of a contract by eliminating interim bidding steps and consolidating the contracting process, it can also reduce the pool of qualified contract bidders, a result that adversely impacts small disadvantaged businesses.**

Public Diplomacy

Undersecretary for Public Diplomacy (R)

- *Should the Undersecretary for Public Diplomacy be empowered to create and execute Department-wide public diplomacy strategies? If yes, how would you do so?*

**Improving the efficacy of the Undersecretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs (R) will require restoring the State Department's primary role in leading U.S. Government public diplomacy and communications overseas and providing clear structure and mandates to the multiple bureaus responsible for the Department's overall public outreach and press strategies. Incoming Department leadership will need to better clarify missions and functions throughout the R family, including the Planning, Policy and Resources Office (R/PPR), the Global Public Affairs Bureau (R/GPA), the Educational and Cultural Affairs bureau (R/ECA), the Global Engagement Center (R/GEC), and the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy (R/ACPD). The Department must strategically leverage its suite of Public Diplomacy (PD) tools in an increasingly complex global information environment in order to achieve foreign policy objectives and compete against adversaries who are dedicating significantly more resources to messaging and influence campaigns.**

- *Should the Undersecretary for Public Diplomacy control public diplomacy down to the embassy/PAO level?*

**No. The Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy should orient, elevate, and integrate public diplomacy efforts throughout the State Department and across agencies, but not seek to micromanage the operational work of the thousands of public diplomacy officers serving worldwide and domestically.**

- *How should the Department balance between the local knowledge of PAOs at posts and the overall public diplomacy messaging coming from the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy?*

**If confirmed, I look forward to examining how the local knowledge of experienced PAOs and staff members at posts can inform the public diplomacy strategy and messaging formulated and articulated by the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and R family bureaus and offices.**

- *In 2019, the Department committed to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that it would move to a “shared EX” model in the R Family. Do you intend to honor that commitment?*

**If confirmed, I will ensure the senior leadership team examines all commitments made to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, including optimization and consolidation of Executive Office support.**

- *Should the Department, through the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, continue to build its alumni network to provide additional tools for advancing U.S. foreign policy?*

**Yes, the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs should continue to build and maintain its global alumni network. Public diplomacy programs – from Fulbright Scholars to the International Visitor Leadership Programs to the Young African Leaders Initiative – are not one-time events, but rather an initial investment in foreign audiences and a community of potential allies for our foreign policy goals.**

- *I introduced legislation designed to enhance State Department and Congressional oversight of Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act (MECEA) programs with the People’s Republic of China. If you plan to reinstate these programs in the future, how will the Department exercise greater scrutiny of these programs given potential counterintelligence risks and their use as propaganda tools for the Chinese Communist Party?*

**If confirmed, I would support re-examination of the decision to terminate the MECEA programs with China, with vigilance to potential counterintelligence and propaganda risks. Biden Administration efforts are focused on meeting the China challenge from a position of strength. China is our most serious global competitor. The challenges that China poses to our security, prosperity, and values, and how we conduct this competition, will be crucial for defining the 21st century. On the economic front, we must do much more to keep our economic and technological edge by making transformative investments at home in**

**American workers, infrastructure, education, and innovation. We must counter China's aggressive and coercive actions, sustain our key military advantages, defend democratic values, invest in advanced technologies, re-engage robustly in the UN system, and restore our vital security partnerships. We must also make transformative investments at home in American workers, infrastructure, education, and innovation. All of this will require us to work together, across the aisle, across our government, and in close coordination with our allies and like-minded partners. I hope to work with this committee and Congress across the board to ensure this administration meets the China challenge.**

- *There were press reports that Embassy Budapest was not supportive of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's (RFE/RL) decision to open a bureau in Budapest. Do you support RFE/RL's Budapest bureau? Would you instruct the chief of mission to support it?*

**Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty provides a vital platform for independent journalism, countering disinformation that undermines democracy and propaganda from geopolitical strongholds in the region. I am committed to working with the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Embassy Budapest to review the decision and determine a way forward informed by the expertise of our diplomats on the ground.**

*Indo-Pacific -- General*

*The Indo-Pacific is the most important region for U.S. security and economic growth. It represents nearly half of the global population and is home to some of the most dynamic economies in the world, but is also home to security challenges that threaten to undermine U.S. national security interests, regional peace, and global stability. The Trump Administration articulated a strategy to advance a "free and open Indo-Pacific," and has expanded partnerships with regional countries and implemented multiple initiatives in the region to support this goal.*

- *Do you agree with the core tenants of a vision for the "free and open Indo-Pacific" strategy advanced over the last several years? If so, what should the State Department's role be in this strategy? If not, why not?*

**The Biden Administration sees the Indo-Pacific as a vital region that must be a leading priority of U.S. foreign policy.**

- *Do you support the continued use of the term "Indo-Pacific" to describe the region?*

**Yes.**

- *What should be our objectives in the region?*

**Under the Biden Administration, the United States will restore itself as a Pacific Power, and we will seek to keep Asia open, secure, and prosperous.**

- *What specific policy and funding priorities for the State Department would it require to advance a successful Indo-Pacific strategy?*

**If confirmed, I am committed to reviewing the current policy and funding priorities the Department has dedicated to the Indo-Pacific and determine if any adjustments are necessary to advance a successful Indo-Pacific strategy. I look forward to consulting with Congress on this.**

*The Trump Administration advanced a “free and open” Indo-Pacific strategy, emphasizing the importance of the values we’d like to see in the region. Thus far, President-elect Biden has used “secure and prosperous” to describe U.S. goals for the Indo-Pacific.*

- *While certainly laudable goals, why make this change?*

**The Biden Administration agrees that these are laudable goals for one for a region of such critical strategic importance. It will conduct a full policy review before charting its approach.**

- *Is this change in language a preview of substantial shifts to come in President-elect Biden’s strategy in the Indo-Pacific?*

**The Biden Administration will conduct a full policy review before charting its approach to this key region for U.S. foreign policy.**

- *If confirmed, what major policy changes do you intend to make in U.S. strategy towards the region?*

**The Biden Administration will conduct a full policy review before charting its approach, but some aspects are clear. It will depend on working closely with allies and partners around the world -- particularly those who are on the front lines of China’s assertiveness and have too often born the brunt of its coercion -- including Australia, Japan, India, South Korea, and Taiwan. We will also strengthen our competitive capacities at home, making the domestic investments we will need to keep our society vibrant and competitive and the Indo-Pacific region open and dynamic.**

*Over the last four years, the Department of State has established a number of new initiatives and expanded partnerships under the Indo-Pacific strategy related to infrastructure, energy, digital economy and smart cities, public health, education, democracy, anti-corruption, and the Mekong Region, among others. Despite the overall narrative that the Trump Administration hurt U.S. position and reputation, such initiatives have delivered concrete outcomes on the ground.*

- *If confirmed, what are the key principles, initiatives, and other elements of the Trump Administration’s Indo-Pacific strategy would you intend to retain and continue? How would you build on these initiatives?*



**In recent years, and on a bipartisan basis, Congress has taken some important steps on Indo-Pacific strategy. These include the BUILD Act, which established the Development Finance Corporation, which is vital if the United States is to work with partners to advance an alternative, higher-standards infrastructure development model; it includes the Pacific Deterrence Initiative, which improves our regional force posture; and it includes legislation on Hong Kong's status and human rights violations in Xinjiang, which are vital to upholding our values and rule of law in the region. The Biden Administration looks forward to working with Congress to build on these steps.**

- *What other policies, initiatives, and priorities would you pursue to advance U.S. interests in the Indo-Pacific region?*

**The U.S. position in Asia requires us to rebuild our alliances and to work in lockstep with the allies and partners with whom we share interests and values. Allies are our greatest strategic asset, and if we are to maintain a strong position in the region, it must run through them. We will work to mend our longstanding alliances, including with Japan, Australia, and South Korea, moving away from coercive burden-sharing standoffs and returning to cooperation based on mutual respect; and we will deepen our partnerships with countries like India and New Zealand. We will also modernize all of these relationships, pursuing closer cooperation on areas like new technology, democratic resilience, and common responses to the threats of climate change and COVID-19.**

*The State Department recently realigned 288 positions at posts to better serve the U.S. strategic interest of competing with China. This is a welcome a step.*

- *Will you commit to initiating a rigorous assessment of the State Department's personnel footprint to ensure it is aligned with the strategic imperatives of competing with China, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region?*

**Yes.**

- *Will you commit to initiating this review as soon as you assume your position, if you are confirmed?*

**Yes.**

*The United States has only a handful of free trade agreements with Indo-Pacific partners.*

- *If confirmed, will you commit to prioritizing agreements with key Indo-Pacific economic partners in executing a robust trade agenda?*

**The Indo-Pacific is the most dynamic and fastest-growing region on earth; we must prioritize economic ties with Asia because it is in our interest to do so.**

- *What are your views on the United States joining the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership agreed to by 11 other nations in 2019?*

**The Biden-Harris Administration economic policies begin with investment in everyday Americans, equipping them to succeed in the global economy. Any new trade agreements must protect workers, transparency, the environment, and middle class wages. The administration will review and assess the CPTPP agreement accordingly.**

*The Trump Administration emphasized human capital development initiatives with partners in the Indo-Pacific, particularly through the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). This included preserving and expanding assistance programs that provide concrete technical assistance and capacity-building for emerging and established leaders in partner governments, the private sector, and civil society. These programs build stronger nations that become better economic and security partners to the United States, more responsive to their own citizens, and more resilient to external coercion.*

- *Do you believe that the United States should invest in nations that actively seek out opportunities to educate their leaders in areas such as management of key economic sectors, government transparency and accountability, and effective civic engagement?*

**Yes.**

*If confirmed, will you commit to working with Congress on advancing initiatives in this area that uphold shared interests of the United States and our Indo-Pacific partners?*

**Yes.**

*The 2018 National Defense Strategy states that “great power competition, not terrorism, is now the primary focus of U.S. national security.”*

- *Do you agree with the Defense Department’s assessment?*
- *How do you believe U.S. diplomacy should change to reflect a greater emphasis on China and Russia?*

**The 2018 NDS correctly identifies strategic competitions with China and with Russia as the primary challenges animating the global security environment; because of its ascent and the scope and scale of its attempts to exert power, China is the top priority. I am also concerned about transnational threats as the security landscape evolves, including those posed by pandemics, climate change, emerging technologies. U.S. diplomacy must prioritize these leading challenges but be prepared to address them all.**

*Of the \$5.57 billion of Foreign Military Finance requested for FY 2021, \$5.19 billion was for the Middle East – leaving \$85.9 million for the East Asia & Pacific (1.5% of the total request) and \$170 million for Europe (3% of the total request). While we still need to maintain our commitments to Israel in particular, U.S. security assistance priorities require a serious re-evaluation.*

- *Will you commit to working with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee toward reshaping priorities surrounding U.S. security assistance to ensure it is aligned with imperatives of great-power competition, especially with China but also with Russia?*

**Yes.**

- *In your view, is the Department's Foreign Military Financing budget sufficient to meet our strategic interests?*

**The Biden-Harris administration will review the State Department's Foreign Military Financing budget to determine its alignment with our strategic interests.**

#### China

##### General

- *The objectives and policies being advanced by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) present the greatest foreign policy challenge facing the United States today and will continue to do so into the future. Therefore, it must be our top foreign policy priority. If not, why not? What do you think is the greatest foreign policy challenge for the United States?*

**As we look at China, there is no doubt that it poses the most significant challenge of any nation-state to the United States in terms of our interests and the interests of the American people. The challenges that China poses to our security, prosperity, and values, and how we conduct this competition, will be crucial for defining the 21st century.**

- *In your view, what are the Chinese government's primary objectives domestically, in the Indo-Pacific region, and globally? How would you describe its primary political, economic, military, and technological objectives?*
- **China's government is engaged in conduct that hurts American workers, blunts our technological edge, modernizes its military, threatens our alliances and our influence in international organizations, and is designed to make America and its allies more dependent on China, and China less dependent on America and our allies. In these domains and others, China presents a significant challenge to U.S. interests and values.**
- *China touches upon a wide variety of U.S. interests and policy issues, both foreign and domestic. If confirmed, how will China policy be coordinated, particularly amongst yourself, the National Security Advisor, Special Envoy John Kerry, and the head of the Domestic Policy Council? Does President Biden intend for other Cabinet secretaries, such as those at Commerce, Treasury, and Justice, to place a high priority on China issues?*

**The Biden-Harris Administration will coordinate China policy through an interagency process, reflecting a wide range of stakeholders and based on a shared understanding of the challenge that China poses to American interests and values.**

Climate Change & China

*Former Secretary of State John Kerry, whom you worked for as Deputy Secretary of State, has been named a special presidential envoy for climate.*

- *How would responsibilities between yourself and Mr. Kerry be divided when it comes to negotiating any climate-related agreements?*

**As Special Presidential Envoy for Climate, former Secretary Kerry will lead our diplomatic efforts to reassert U.S. climate leadership and raise global ambition to meet the daunting climate challenge. The Envoy's office will be housed at the State Department, and he will maintain a presence at the White House as well. His climate diplomacy work will, of course, be closely coordinated with the Department's and our administration's broader diplomatic engagement.**

- *Will Mr. Kerry have authority to raise with China issues other than climate that are relevant to either the bilateral relationship or as regards U.S. policy in the Indo-Pacific region?*

**The Special Presidential Envoy for Climate Change will lead our diplomatic efforts to reassert U.S. climate leadership and raise global ambition to meet the daunting climate challenge.**

- *Since Mr. Kerry is reporting directly to the president given his new Cabinet-level role, how will you, the Department of State, and subsequently Congress, remain apprised of what he is negotiating with China?*

**The Biden-Harris administration will speak with one voice on China. The Special Presidential Envoy for Climate Change and I will remain in close contact, and his climate diplomacy work will of course be closely coordinated with the Department's and our administration's broader diplomatic engagement. He will also engage in consultations with Congress.**

- *If confirmed, how will you ensure that climate agreements negotiated by Mr. Kerry are consistent with broader U.S. interests and goals when it comes to China?*

**Former Secretary Kerry's climate diplomacy work will of course be closely coordinated with the Department's and our administration's broader diplomatic engagement. He will also engage in consultations with Congress.**

- *If a climate agreement is negotiated in such a way that does not keep broader interests in mind, what will you do to remedy this situation?*

**We will ensure that climate diplomacy is closely coordinated with the Department's and our administration's broader diplomatic engagement and is in line with U.S. interests and values.**

- *Do you commit to keeping this committee informed of developments in any climate negotiations with China? Will President Biden make Mr. Kerry available to the committee to answer questions on his discussions with China?*

Former Secretary Kerry will engage in consultations with Congress.

*The incoming Administration is putting climate change at the forefront of its agenda, including cooperation on climate change with China. In December, Mr. Kerry called China "a partner on climate as we competed with them at other things during the Obama administration" and that "if we don't work as a primary extraordinary effort on climate, we're all cooked." He's been described as viewing climate change as the most important issue in the U.S.-China relationship.*

- *Do you agree that reaching a climate agreement should be the top priority in our dealings with China? If so, why? If not, what should be our top priority instead?*

**The Biden-Harris administration has many priorities for our dealings with China. We must advance our economic interests, counter China's aggressive and coercive actions, sustain our key military advantages, defend democratic values, and restore our vital security partnerships, as we also conduct results-oriented diplomacy with China on shared challenges such as climate change.**

- *Do you believe that all other issues in the U.S.-China relationship should be subordinate to this priority?*

**No.**

*China has a history of breaking its promises, and its words on climate change often do not match its actions. We should not trade key U.S. interests away for cooperation on climate change. We must also not stand down in pursuing other interests to preserve such an agreement. Will you commit:*

- *Not to enter into an agreement or advise the President to enter into an agreement with the People's Republic of China (PRC) that trades key U.S. interests away for cooperation or future promises by Beijing on climate change; and not to recommend any the following policies to either secure or preserve a climate change agreement with the PRC: Decreasing freedom of navigation exercises in the South China; Making changes in our defense relationships with any U.S. ally, or our overall defense posture in the Indo-Pacific region; Delaying arms sales to Taiwan, or pulling back from any form of U.S.-Taiwan cooperation; Deciding not to pursue policies that safeguard the U.S. economy from Beijing's anti-competitive trading practices; Terminating sanctions*

*against individuals or entities of the PRC, or removing a PRC company from the Entity List; Dropping U.S. policies that hold CCP officials and companies accountable for egregious human rights abuses, including those conducted in Xinjiang?*

Yes.

Anti-Competitive Economic Practices

- *The challenges presented by a non-market economy such as that of the PRC that has captured such a large share of the global market are unprecedented. How would you assess the impact of China's ecosystem of economic and industrial policy, driven by "socialism with Chinese characteristics," on the free market, capitalist system constructed and maintained by the United States and its democratic allies for seventy years?*

**China's economic and industrial policies have hurt American workers and blunted our technological edge. China is undercutting American companies by dumping products, erecting barriers, and giving illegal subsidies to corporations. It is stealing intellectual property and engaging in other practices to give it an unfair technological advantage, including forced technology transfer. China's low labor and environmental standards — even including instances of forced labor — create an unfair cost advantage at the expense of its own people. In short, Beijing seeks to get a leg up on dominating the technologies and industries of the future, at America's expense.**

*Of the extensive and systemic economic and industrial policies pursued by the PRC, the mass subsidization of Chinese firms, intellectual property theft, and forced technology transfer are among the most damaging to the global economy.*

- *If confirmed, what policies would you pursue with interagency partners to expose the full scope and scale of intellectual property theft and mass subsidization of Chinese firms, and the resulting harm to the United States, foreign markets, and the global economy? Please be specific.*

**The Biden Administration will be willing to make use of the full array of tools. We will work with interagency partners, including the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, the Department of Treasury, and the Department of Commerce, to develop policies that counter China's abusive economic practices and hold Beijing accountable.**

- *If confirmed, how will you use your role to rally like-minded market economies to reinforce long-standing principles on fair market practices such as non-discrimination and competition on a commercial basis without unjust government subsidies and support?*

**Our approach to China's abusive economic practices to date has been too unilateral — and, as a result, ineffective. A better way to meet the challenge is to build a united front of**

**U.S. allies and partners to confront China's abusive behaviors. On its own, the United States represents about a quarter of global GDP; when we join together with fellow democracies, our strength more than doubles. I will make this a priority.**

- *If confirmed, what steps will you take to advance these important market principles and uphold fair competition?*

**If confirmed, I will make use of the full array of tools to compete with China and rally like-minded market economies to confront China's economic abuses.**

- *In your view, what are the best options for affected United States persons to address and respond to unreasonable and discriminatory CCP-directed industrial policies?*

**If confirmed, I will review this matter to determine the best options for affected United States persons to address and respond to unreasonable and discriminatory CCP-directed industrial policies.**

- *If confirmed, what policies would you pursue to strengthen the protection of critical technology and sensitive data, while still fostering an environment that provides incentives for innovation and competition?*

**Technology is at the center of U.S.-China competition. We have to play a better defense, which must include holding China accountable for its unfair and illegal practices and making sure that American technologies are not facilitating China's military buildup or human rights abuses. President Biden is firmly committed to making sure that Chinese companies cannot misappropriate and misuse American data — and to ensuring that U.S. technology does not support China's malign activities. We also have to play a much better offense, by investing in the sources of our technological strength — supercharging American research and development so that we maintain our innovation edge.**

*China is advancing a "corporate social credit system," which uses existing financial credit systems, public records, online activity, government licenses and registrations, and other information to collect, aggregate, and integrate data regarding corporate entities that come within the jurisdiction of the PRC, including United States companies operating in the PRC to evaluate and rate certain financial, social, religious, or political behaviors of the entity and its key personnel, and punish or reward the entity based on that rating.*

- *What is your assessment of the "corporate social credit system" and its impact on U.S. companies conducting business in China?*

**China's "corporate social credit system" is concerning. We should seek to understand its implications and work to ensure that it does not negatively impact U.S. companies.**

- *How will you work to support private sector entities subject to coercion by the PRC, whether by the "corporate social credit system" or by other means?*

**We will take on the challenge of China's abusive, unfair, and illegal practices, including its coercion of private sector entities. The Biden Administration will be willing to make use of the full array of tools to counter China's abusive economic practices and hold Beijing accountable.**

- *Will you encourage U.S. companies, either publicly or privately, not to sacrifice key American values, even under intense pressure by the CCP?*

**Yes.**

*Americans can invest directly in numerous Chinese companies listed on U.S. stock exchanges or through mutual funds and exchanged traded funds that include such companies. Some of these companies support the People's Liberation Army, while others are tied to horrific human rights abuses committed by the Chinese government. The Trump Administration moved to restrict engaging in transactions in publicly traded securities of certain Chinese companies with ties to the People's Liberation Army, and President Trump signed a law that would require the delisting of foreign company shares from U.S. exchanges if those foreign companies do not comply with U.S. audit inspection requirements for three consecutive years.*

- *If confirmed, how would you contend with this challenge?*

**It is essential to confront China's economic abuses, defend our values, and protect the long-term prosperity and security of the United States. We must shine a light on Chinese companies that support military modernization or commit human rights abuses and impose appropriate restrictions on these firms.**

- *What specific policies would you advocate?*

**We will carefully review the steps taken by the Trump administration, as well as possible additional measures to ensure that Chinese companies linked to China's military modernization and human rights abuses face appropriate restrictions.**

- *The Department of State possesses a wellspring of expertise among economic officers who will continue to play a critical role in fostering a more level playing field for U.S. companies, helping them compete with Chinese companies and succeed despite anti-competitive economic practices employed by China.*
- *Do you commit to fostering a strong corps of economic officers within the Department, including through providing tools and training they need to succeed in addressing issues related to China's unfair economic practices?*
- *Do you commit, through issuing All Diplomatic and Consular Posts (ALDAC) cables and via other means, to making sure economic officers prioritize among their various duties active economic and commercial diplomacy, including providing tangible support to U.S. companies as appropriate, tracking China's anti-competitive economic policies, and developing associated recommendations?*



- *Do you commit to ensuring that economic diplomacy is a top priority of every U.S. ambassador, and that performance of ambassadors will be evaluated in part on their commitment to advancing economic and commercial diplomacy?*

**The economic dimension of U.S.-China competition is crucial and we will take on the challenge of China's abusive, unfair, and illegal practices. If confirmed I will ensure that economic diplomacy is a top priority across the Department.**

- *China's biggest export is not a particular product, but rather corruption. A 2018 study in the Journal of Public Economic Studies found that local corruption was higher around known development finance projects in Africa being overseen by Chinese actors. If confirmed, will you commit to highlighting corrupt Chinese practices and prioritize assistance to help counter corruption, including corruption caused or exacerbated by the Chinese government or Chinese companies?*

**It is essential to confront China's economic abuses, defend our values, and protect the long-term prosperity and security of the United States. If confirmed I will ensure that economic diplomacy is a top priority across the Department.**

People's Liberation Army

*Before the U.S. presidential election in November, then-candidate Biden said on 60 Minutes that Russia was the greatest "threat" to the United States, while China was the greatest "competitor." My understanding is that he was speaking in terms of the military.*

- *What is your assessment of the respective challenges posed to the United States by the Russian and Chinese militaries?*

**The rapid development and operational focus of China's military constitutes a significant and long-term security threat to the United States and to our allies and partners. Russia has used military force and other acts of coercion and intimidation in pursuit of a geopolitical agenda that is contradictory and inimical to the rule of law and U.S. national interests.**

- *Which country poses the greater military challenge, and why?*

**Because of its ascent and the scope and scale of its military modernization, China is the top priority.**

- *Do you believe that the military challenge presented by the People's Liberation Army (PLA) is an urgent, or long-term, challenge? Please explain your position.*

**The military challenges presented by the People's Liberation Army are both near-term and long-term. These challenges are an outgrowth of nearly two decades of intense efforts by China to modernize and reform the People's Liberation Army and other forces into an**

**increasingly capable joint force able to conduct the full range of military operations across every warfighting domain.**

*There have also been concerns about Chinese-Russian coordination, particularly in the military sphere in terms of arms sales and joint exercises.*

- *How would you characterize the China-Russia relationship? What areas of the China-Russia relationship are you most concerned about?*
- *How do these concerns fit into your broader policy goals to prevent an erosion of U.S. military advantage?*
- *How do we effectively compete against China and Russia without driving them together?*

**The growing alignment between Russia and China amplifies the challenges that both countries pose to the United States. This is especially true in the way that Russia is amplifying the China challenge, particularly in the defense and democracy and human rights realms. Beijing is working with Moscow to fill gaps in its military capabilities, accelerate its technological innovation, and complement its efforts to undermine U.S. leadership. The United States will increasingly need to be mindful of this partnership and where possible, take steps to monitor and plan for, and create headwinds to their alignment.**

*There is widespread and bipartisan agreement that the military balance in the Indo-Pacific is becoming more unfavorable to the United States, and that this presents a grave danger: the erosion of conventional deterrence.*

- *Do you agree that this situation presents a major challenge to United States interests?*

**Maintaining and strengthening a military balance in the Indo-Pacific that advances U.S. interests will be a priority for the Biden-Harris administration.**

- *How can the Department of State, working in concert with the Department of Defense, support the objective of maintaining a favorable military balance and bolstering deterrence?*

**If confirmed, I will consult with the Secretary of Defense on how the State Department can best support this objective.**

- *In June, the United States suspended the entry into the United States of any PRC national on an "F" or "J" visa to study or conduct research in the United States where the individual's academic or research activities are likely to support a PRC entity that implements and supports the CCP "military-civil fusion" strategy. This policy prevents U.S. research and technological innovation from falling into the hands of our most serious military competitor. Do you commit to retaining this policy?*

**It is a critical U.S. interest to make sure that we protect the intellectual property that is produced in this country and that, if used to advance China's military modernization, could undermine our security. It is also important that we maintain the openness and attractiveness of the United States, including as a destination for overseas talent. I will review the tools available to address these challenges, including visa policy.**

- *In December, Chinese military representatives failed to attend a dialogue scheduled with the United States pursuant to the Military Maritime Consultative Agreement—an agreement designed to improve operational safety and review previous unsafe encounters. It is one of multiple mechanisms between the United States and China to limit the risk of military miscalculation and conflict. China has a pattern of suspending military-to-military communications when bilateral tensions increase. Will you prioritize encouraging and pressing China to participate in dialogues designed to reduce miscalculation and avoid conflict, even when bilateral tensions increase?*

**Yes.**

*The PLA has established its first overseas military base in Djibouti. The Department of Defense assesses that the Chinese government is considering other locations on the African continent for future military bases and logistics facilities.*

- *How will the State Department under the Biden Administration ensure the PLA does not gain a foothold in strategic nodes in Africa, including through diplomatic engagement with our partners?*

**Diplomatic and security engagement with U.S. partners in Africa can advance our interests and values, while highlighting the dangers associated with dealing with China.**

- *What support or initiatives can the United States offer to African nations to make such agreements less attractive?*

**Enhancing our alliances and partnerships in Africa through diplomatic, development, and security initiatives will enable us to better protect and secure U.S. interests in Africa.**

#### Human Rights

*Last year, Beijing implemented the “National Security Law” in Hong Kong, which effectively put Hong Kong’s legal system and law enforcement under Beijing’s control and severely undermined China’s international treaty obligations to respect Hong Kong’s autonomy and the rights protected in the Basic Law.*

- *How will the Biden Administration address these violations of international law?*
- *Will you commit to continue imposing costs on Beijing for its actions in Hong Kong?*

We are deeply concerned about China's continuing crackdown on Hong Kong -- not only the imposition of the National Security Law, but also the arrests and imprisonment of pro-democracy activists. Hong Kong's democracy movement is a beacon to the world. We must stand united with our allies and partners against China's assault on Hong Kong's freedoms. The President-elect has denounced these moves to undermine Hong Kong's freedoms of expression, assembly, and press as guaranteed in the Basic Law and the high degree of autonomy that set Hong Kong apart from the rest of China. We have been heartened by bipartisan congressional action on Hong Kong and commit to implement the Hong Kong Autonomy Act. We look forward to working with Congress, and with our international partners, to respond to Beijing's actions and to support the fundamental freedoms and human rights of the people of Hong Kong.

*Millions of Uyghurs and other ethnic Muslims have been detained and disappeared into internment camps or put into forced-labor situations. This includes family members of U.S.-based Uyghurs, who have been advocating for the release of their family members and highlighting the horrific abuses in Xinjiang and across China. One example is Ekpar Asat, the brother of a U.S. permanent resident. Mr. Asat disappeared in China in 2016 only a few weeks after participating in the Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program.*

- *What can the Biden Administration do to advocate for the immediate and unconditional release of these individuals?*
- *If confirmed, will you commit to raising this issue, and specific cases, with the Chinese government immediately?*

**Uighurs and other ethnic minorities have suffered unspeakable oppression at the hands of China's authoritarian government. President Biden has been clear — and we are going to work with international partners to condemn China's actions and uphold the human rights of Uighurs and others across China. In my experience, effective diplomatic engagement on such issues requires not only general statements but also raising specific cases like the ones you have highlighted. If I am confirmed, the State Department will incorporate specific cases into our human rights diplomacy.**

- *Several countries have forcibly returned Uyghurs fleeing persecution and abhorrent human rights abuses by the Chinese Communist Party. How will you and interagency partners work with other nations to discourage, and eventually end, this practice?*

**In Xinjiang, China is engaged in gross human rights violations that shock the conscience. Chinese government persecution of Uighurs raises serious refolement concerns when other countries forcibly return Uighurs fleeing such persecution to China. If I am confirmed, the State Department will engage with other governments to discourage forcible returns of Uihgurs to China. The Biden Administration is going to put our democratic values at the center of our foreign policy and stand up for democracy, human rights, and human dignity. We will speak out jointly with**

**allies and partners, impose costs on those responsible, and help those persecuted find safe haven in the United States and other countries.**

*The major rivers of Asia that flow from the Tibetan Plateau are subject to current and potential dam and diversion projects by China. This has severe environmental, economic, and societal consequences for Tibet. These projects are planned and implemented without the proper involvement of all stakeholders, including the Tibetan people. India and other governments in Asia are increasingly worried about China damming rivers originating in Tibet which serve over a billion people downstream.*

- *Would you commit to raising with Chinese officials the need to fully involve all stakeholders in the preservation of Tibet's fragile watershed?*
- *Would you call on the Chinese authorities to engage China's neighbors for the development of a regional framework on water security?*

**Water security is an issue in many regions around the world, and one which, when properly managed, can reinforce regional ties and, when poorly managed, can exacerbate tensions and lead to conflict. Water is not only essential for survival, it shapes the development of economies and cultures. A sustainable approach to the water security issues tied to the Tibetan Plateau should involve and reflect input from the Tibetan people and other stakeholders.**

- *The Dalai Lama is in his 80's and his successor is yet to be chosen. Beijing has declared that it will involve itself in the succession process, even though the Dalai Lama himself makes such a decision in accordance with traditions of Tibetan Buddhism. How will you promote religious freedom for Tibetans in China and around the world so that they may practice their religion without interference from the Chinese government?*

**The Chinese government should have no role in the succession process of the Dalai Lama. If confirmed, I am committed to working with the Special Coordinator for Tibet at the State Department, and with the Ambassador at large for International Religious Freedom to promote religious freedom for Tibetans in China and around the world.**

- *The Chinese government continues to "Sinicize" religions, which the Congressional Executive Commission on China describes as "a campaign that aims to bring religion in China under closer official control and into conformity with officially sanctioned interpretations of Chinese culture." These policies affect Christians, Muslims, Han Buddhists, Taoists, and many others. What can the Biden Administration do to support freedom of religious practice for the people of China, free from interference and enforced conformity?*

**If confirmed, I will work with the professionals in the State Department and in our embassies and consulates around the world to promote international religious freedom. Religious minorities have long faced human rights violations in China, including violations of their religious freedom. We can be most effective in calling attention to these**

**violations and addressing them by working with allies and partners to defend religious freedom and other internationally recognized human rights.**

- *In 2019, the Chinese government continued to persecute human rights defenders, such as lawyers who represent defendants accused of political crimes. What can the Biden Administration do to support human rights defenders in China on day one?*

**The Biden Administration will put our democratic values at the center of our foreign policy and stand up for democracy, human rights, and human dignity. We will speak out jointly with allies and partners and will not hesitate to raise the cause of human rights defenders in meetings with Chinese officials.**

- *The Vatican recently extended an agreement with the Chinese government that establishes a process for appointing bishops in China. Under the Agreement, bishops in China are in communion with Rome but also approved by the Chinese government. The details of this agreement have never been made public. Despite the agreement, Catholic bishops not affiliated with the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association continue to face persecution. Will you and whomever is confirmed as Ambassador to the Vatican prioritize religious freedom issues in China in your diplomatic engagements with Vatican officials?*

**Yes.**

#### China and Europe

*Chinese influence in Europe continues to grow. It has invested billions across Europe and has sought to acquire strategic infrastructure and companies in Europe. European countries are starting to take a much more robust approach to China across the board, including on investment and human rights.*

- *What is your assessment of China's objectives in Europe and with regard to the transatlantic alliance? How should the United States respond to growing Chinese influence in Europe?*
- *What are the areas you think are most ripe for cooperation between the United States and Europe when it comes to China?*

**China poses challenges to our security, prosperity, and values. The most effective way to address the pressing global challenges we face – including China -- is alongside partners who share our values and interests. That is why strengthening and revitalizing the transatlantic alliance will be a key priority for the Biden-Harris administration. We look forward to deepening U.S.-Europe cooperation as we seek to deal with competition with China. We will seek to develop a common agenda when it comes to pushing back against China's abuses in the trade space, in the technology space and in other ways.**

- *After years of negotiations, on December 30th, 2020—nearly the final day of the German Council presidency—the European Union (EU) announced it had reached an*

*agreement with China on an investment deal. I am very concerned that this agreement will slow momentum on cooperation among the United States, Europe, and other democracies on our shared challenges related to China.*

- *What is your view of the EU's decision to conclude this agreement at this moment?*
- *What are the economic and geopolitical implications of this agreement? Please be specific. Will it affect the EU's willingness to push back on China for its malign behavior, such as using the EU's new human rights sanctions regime? Do you believe that this agreement will affect, negatively or positively, U.S. attempts to hold China accountable for its malign trade and investment practices?*
- *The deal is not yet final, as the European Parliament must ratify it. Will you engage the European Parliament on the investment agreement and, if so, what will be your main messages to them?*

**As we look to rebuild our relationship with the EU, one of our first priorities will be consulting on a coordinated approach to China's abusive economic practices, human rights violations, and other important challenges. The EU has made it clear that it is ready and willing to cooperate with the Biden administration on China. If confirmed I look forward to early consultations with our European partners on our common concerns about China.**

- *Last year, I published a report on how the United States and Europe can cooperate on shared challenges related to China, including a chapter on contending with China's anti-competitive economic practices. I argued that the United States and Europe should revitalize trade negotiations, continue important initiatives at the World Trade Organizations such U.S.-EU-Japan efforts on subsidies, fix current sticking points like ongoing disputes between Boeing and Airbus, coordinate on export controls, and strengthen supply chain resilience. How would you advance these goals? What additional areas would you prioritize?*

**We will take on the challenge of China's abusive, unfair, and illegal practices. China is undercutting American companies by dumping products, erecting barriers, and giving illegal subsidies to corporations. It is stealing intellectual property and engaging in other practices to give it an unfair technological advantage, including forced technology transfer. China's low labor and environmental standards — even including instances of forced labor — create an unfair cost advantage at the expense of its own people. In short, Beijing seeks to get a leg up on dominating the technologies and industries of the future, at America's expense. The Biden Administration will be willing to make use of the full array of tools to counter China's abusive economic practices and hold Beijing accountable. And we will build a united front of U.S. allies and partners to confront China's abusive behaviors.**

*The United States passed legislation regarding export controls in 2018 and has implemented other regulatory changes recently, including changes related to ensuring U.S. products do not support China's military-civil fusion policies. The EU is also starting to advance reforms to its export controls measures. It is important to have multilateral export controls for national security reasons as well as economic ones.*

- *How would you work to build diplomatic consensus for multilateral alignment on export controls that safeguard national security and protect human rights?*
- *How would you work to ensure a broad agreement that would provide parameters not only to U.S. companies but also companies based in other countries?*
- *China is investing heavily in emerging and dual-use technology research and development to become a “scientific and technological superpower”. The United States, Japan, and Europe are each individually investing in certain technologies, but they would be much stronger if they were to coordinate research; reduce barriers to joint development; coordinate regulatory practices, and increase shared usage of such technologies.*
- *If confirmed, how will you coordinate with our allies on technology research and development?*
- *What will your priorities in this sphere look like?*

**Both export controls and technology research and development are crucial to out-competing China in technology. The Biden-Harris Administration will make a top priority close coordination with U.S. allies in these crucial areas. We will play defense by building diplomatic consensus for multilateral alignment on export controls that safeguard national security and protect human rights and play offense by coordinating research, reducing barriers to joint development, coordinating regulatory practices, and increasing shared usage of key technologies. Taken together, these efforts will play a crucial role in maintaining and enhancing the U.S. and allied technological edge.**

*The Trump Administration has expanded cooperation with other allies and partners, such as those in Europe, to work together on issues in the Indo-Pacific, including joint Freedom of Navigation Operations, joint statements on the Chinese government’s human rights abuses, and joint support for countries negatively affected by China’s predatory economic statecraft.*

- *Do you welcome a greater European role in the Indo-Pacific?*

**Yes**

- *What are concrete priorities and issue areas those allies and partners from outside of the Indo-Pacific can work with the United States to address in this region?*

**If confirmed, I will consult with allies and partners from outside the region on how to advance shared priorities in the Indo-Pacific region.**

CCP Influence

- *Competition with the PRC requires the United States’ skillful adaptation to the information environment of the 21st century. If confirmed, how will you coordinate and advance United States public diplomacy and messaging efforts effectively to promote the value of partnership with the United States, highlight the risks and costs of entanglement with the PRC, and push back on CCP propaganda and disinformation?*



**China's use of information operations and other coercive and corrupting efforts to undermine and interfere in democracies are a concern for the U.S. and our allies. If confirmed I will lead work with our allies and partners to push back on China's attempts to write the rules of the information age by working with allies to define an affirmative, democratic vision for the global information space and to build resilience against these threats and expose China's malign activity. While we need to push back on China's efforts, we ultimately need to develop better means for the U.S. and our allies to leverage our democratic advantages and resilience.**

#### State and Local Governments

*The FBI has found that CCP and PRC intelligence organizations target, infiltrate, and attempt to influence U.S. local, state, and even national-level politicians and certain government organizations, including by hacking into government databases to steal information on U.S. government personnel. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo gave several speeches on this issue during his tenure, including to the National Governors Association.*

- *What is the Biden Administration's plan to inoculate our political system from this malign influence? What specific steps will the Biden Administration, including the State Department, engage with state and local political leaders and their staffs on these issues?*

**China's use of information operations and other coercive and corrupting efforts to undermine and interfere in democracies are a concern for the U.S. and our allies. If confirmed, I will examine this issue closely alongside interagency partners.**

#### Disinformation

*At the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic, the CCP intentionally suppressed information about the virus's origins and spread disinformation about the virus across nearly every continent. This is just one example of how harmful CCP disinformation can be to the world.*

- *What can the United States do to combat CCP disinformation?*

**We will confront the growing strength of autocratic powers and their efforts to divide and manipulate others, and will push back on their attempts to write the rules of the information age by working with allies to define an affirmative, democratic vision for the global information space. If confirmed, I will lead work with our allies and partners to build resilience against these threats, as we expose China's malign activity and, when relevant, impose costs.**

- *How can the United States work with its allies and partners who have shown great resiliency to CCP disinformation, such as Taiwan, to tackle this shared challenge?*

**Together with allies and partners we will push back on China’s attempts to write the rules of the information age by working to define an affirmative, democratic vision for the global information space. Together we will also develop better means for the U.S. and our allies to leverage our democratic advantages and resilience.**

*Hollywood*

*Xi Jinping has emphasized the desire to ensure that Hollywood filmmakers use their position to “tell China’s story well”. This translates into Beijing’s overreach into and censorship of Hollywood films through explicit censorship requirements for the Chinese market, boycotts and economic pressure, and acquisitions of industry corporations by Chinese companies. As Hollywood director Judd Apatow recently said, “Instead of us doing business with China and that leading to China being more free, what has happened is that China has bought our silence with their money.”*

- *Will the Biden Administration, including yourself and other senior State Department officials, engage the film industry regarding the pernicious impact of censorship by the Chinese government and other authoritarian governments on freedom of expression and other principles that are fundamental to the political system of United States?*
- *What steps will the Biden Administration take to monitor and stop efforts by Beijing to censor film narratives about China and put pressure on the U.S. film industry and other U.S.-based media?*
- *What are your views on the implications and consequences of Beijing’s tactics in Hollywood for the PRC’s overall strategy to exercise malign influence across various types of U.S. media? What other types of media in the United States are at risk of being subjected to tactics we are seeing used by Beijing to influence Hollywood?*

**China’s use of information operations and other coercive and corrupting efforts to undermine and interfere in democracies are a concern for the U.S. and our allies. The Biden-Harris Administration will engage all relevant stakeholders, including the private sector, to ensure that people can engage in commerce and speak freely without worry about surveillance by foreign authoritarians or worry that the businesses that they either work for or purchase from are having to change their practices in fundamental ways to conform to the authoritarian tendencies of other governments. We will always be willing to speak out on behalf of our values and our way of life.**

*In 2019, the Chinese government executed a significant pressure campaign on the National Basketball Association (NBA) over a personal tweet by the Houston Rockets manager supporting democracy advocates in Hong Kong. While certainly not the first, this incident captured the attention of the U.S. public and shed light on the lengths to which the Chinese government is willing to go to silence its critics and shape a favorable environment for the continuation of its repressive policies.*

- *In your view, what are the implications of China being able to pressure and punish U.S. persons and companies into accepting or at least not pushing back on the political*

*positions of the Chinese government, even when those positions undermine the fundamental political principles and values of the United States?*

- *What can and should private sector actors do about this challenge? What about the U.S. government's role, and how will the Biden Administration address this issue?*

**China's use of information operations and other coercive and corrupting efforts to undermine and interfere in democracies are a concern for the U.S. and our allies. The Biden-Harris Administration will engage all relevant stakeholders to ensure that people can engage in commerce and speak freely without worry about surveillance by foreign authoritarians or worry that the businesses that they either work for or purchase from are having to change their practices in fundamental ways to conform to the authoritarian tendencies of other governments. We will always be willing to speak out on behalf of our values and our way of life.**

"One Belt, One Road"

*There has been much written about how China's "One Belt, One Road" initiative (OBOR) as a means by which to increase the economic influence of state-owned Chinese firms in global markets, engender undue PRC political leverage with governments around the world, create a China-centric technology regime, secure dependence on supply chains centered on Chinese companies, export corrupt business practices, and provide greater access to strategic nodes for the People's Liberation Army.*

- *In your view, what are the goals of the OBOR?*
- *If confirmed, what actions would you take and what partnerships would you seek to execute concrete economic projects to compete with or reduce the influence of OBOR?*

**Competition with China is one of the central challenges of the 21st century – and we also need to compete with China's economic statecraft through the Belt and Road Initiative. The Biden-Harris administration will provide an alternative vision that promotes democratic governance and transparency in our global health and development work. We will distinguish ourselves from China's approach to development by ensuring that social and economic safeguards are built into the projects we support. We will focus on partnerships and on strengthening local capacity. In addition, we will work with allies and partners to advocate for the highest environmental, social, and labor standards to promote development investments that are both beneficial and sustainable over the long term.**

*The United States is seeking to deepen its engagements with emerging partners in Southeast Asia, Africa, and Latin America that are already heavily involved in or welcoming of OBOR projects and investment. In addition to the detrimental impacts of unsustainable or sovereignty-reducing OBOR projects, the enmeshment of these nations with OBOR and PRC influence generally also complicates U.S. efforts to cooperate with them, given their vulnerability to PRC pressure. An example of the kind of country I'm talking about is Cambodia.*

- *How will the United States approach engagement with countries that fall into this category?*

- *For those countries that have already decided to enmesh themselves with China to a significant extent, to what extent should the United States prioritize helping to build countries' resiliency to Chinese economic pressure through OBOR, or other forms of pressure? How can and how should we be doing so?*

**If confirmed, I will review these challenges in line with the need to compete with China's economic statecraft and build countries' resilience to Chinese economic coercion and pressure.**

#### 5G and Beyond

*The Trump Administration undertook a major push to keep products from China's Huawei out of 5G networks in countries across the world, especially in allied nations in Europe. Despite criticisms of the style of the approach, multiple countries have chosen to exclude Huawei from their emerging 5G networks, including the United Kingdom, Czech Republic, Poland, Sweden, Estonia, Romania, Denmark, and Latvia.*

- *Is your approach to keeping 5G networks clean from Chinese equipment and the consequent security hazards going to be different from that of the Trump Administration? How so?*
- *Looking beyond 5G, what other emerging technologies do you think would create risks for the United States and its allies if we have an undue reliance on untrusted vendors? Are there areas that you will prioritize, and how so?*
- *The previous Administration began to advance a Clean Networks initiative to "address long-term threats to data privacy, security, human rights and principled collaboration posed to the free world from authoritarian malign actors, including the Chinese Communist Party." What is your view of this initiative?*

**Technology is at the center of U.S.-China competition. China has been willing to do whatever it takes to gain a technological advantage — stealing intellectual property, engaging in industrial espionage, and forcing technology transfer. We have to play a better defense, which must include (1) holding China accountable for its unfair and illegal practices and (2) making sure that American technologies aren't facilitating China's military buildup or human rights abuses. We also have to play a much better offense, by investing in the sources of our technological strength — supercharging American research and development so that we maintain our innovation edge. We need a comprehensive strategy and a more systematic approach that actually addresses the full range of these issues, rather than the piecemeal approach of the past few years. If confirmed I will be engaged in reviewing these issues carefully and will be committed to protecting U.S. data and America's technological edge.**

*Huawei Marine is becoming bigger player in the market to construct, own, and operate undersea cables, which carry \$10 trillion in global business transactions each day, and at least 95 percent of total digital communications. Huawei Marine is owned by Hengtong Group, which has close ties to the People's Liberation Army. The Trump Administration has engaged in financing the construction of undersea cables for Pacific Island partners, as well as engaging with allies and partners considering PRC bids on the security risks.*

- *What is your view on the challenges presented by greater presence of Huawei Marine in constructing undersea cables?*
- *How would you use diplomacy to address this issue?*

**If confirmed, I will review these issues carefully, including in coordination with diplomatic partners, to ensure that we protect U.S. prosperity and security.**

*South China Sea*

*The South China Sea continues to be a hotbed of tension and potential escalation in the Indo-Pacific.*

- *President Biden has said he'd retain the U.S. Freedom of Navigation Operation Program. Do you commit for advocating for regular Freedom of Navigation Operations, even if it raises tensions with China?*

**Yes.**

- *What other steps are you planning to take with our allies and partners in the region, including ASEAN, to boost maritime security in this area?*

**The United States has a national interest in the maintenance of peace and stability, respect for international law, lawful unimpeded commerce, and freedom of navigation in the South China Sea; we will work with regional institutions like ASEAN and East Asia Summit to advance them.**

- *Do you commit to maintaining the policy that any armed attack on Philippine forces, aircraft, or public vessels in the South China Sea will trigger our mutual defense obligations?*

**Our alliance with the Philippines is foundational to the U.S. role in the Indo-Pacific. It is a relationship founded on shared strategic interests, shared history, culture, and most importantly, people. The United States will stand by the Philippines to make sure the alliance can safeguard Filipino interests and territory, and the United States will continue to fly, sail, and operate wherever international law allows and our alliance commitments require.**

*ASEAN countries and China are negotiating a South China Sea Code of Conduct. China is pushing ASEAN countries to disallow the presence of outside countries in the South China Sea, and to commit to not conducting certain types of military exercises with its partners. Making such demands are a clear infringement on the sovereignty of our Southeast Asian partners and contrary to U.S. interests.*

- *What are your views on the effort to conclude a code of conduct?*

- *Do you believe that China has any intent to negotiate a code of conduct in good faith?*

**If confirmed, I will consult with ASEAN partners on this code of conduct to ensure it advances shared interests.**

*There have been widespread concerns over China building military bases on artificially constructed islands in the South China Sea. In the coming months or years, China could build a similar military base on Scarborough Reef is currently an unoccupied feature. If confirmed, you could face a renewed crisis with a strategic competitor in the South China Sea, one of the most important waterways in the world.*

- *To what degree do you view the Chinese construction of a military base on Scarborough Reef as a national security challenge for the United States?*
- *How would you attempt to deter such an action and what would be your approach to addressing a Chinese fait accompli? What would be your broader strategy?*
- *For any potential escalation in the South China Sea, the United States at a disadvantage because our basing in the Indo-Pacific is heavily concentrated in Northeast Asia.*
- *How can the State Department, through its diplomatic efforts, help to ensure we are appropriately postured for a potential South China Sea contingency?*

**We can and should push back on China's coercion and illegal claims in the South China Sea -- including its illegal militarization of features. Countering China's gray zone tactics in the South China Sea is not simply a military problem. It will require a government-wide effort that leads with diplomacy, development, and economic engagement. We will reestablish ourselves as regional diplomatic leaders and standard prepared to rally partners around international law and freedom of navigation.**

- *How important are our partners in Southeast Asia to securing a First and Second Island Chain from Chinese dominance and control?*

**China's military modernization, coupled with its aggressive and coercive actions, presents an increasingly urgent challenge to our vital interests in the Indo-Pacific region and around the world. The Biden administration will view China as our most serious global competitor. Our allies and partners throughout the region will be critical to securing the Western Pacific.**

#### East China Sea

- *The Chinese Coast Guard continues to maintain a constant presence around the Senkaku Islands, under the administrative control of Japan. The Chinese Air Force has sent large numbers of its planes to the East China Sea throughout 2020, causing great stress to the Japanese Air Self Defense Force. In his call with Prime Minister Suga in November 2020, President-Elect Biden underscored U.S. commitments under Article 5 of our mutual defense treaty with Japan. Does that reaffirmation include the previous commitments made by Presidents Obama and Trump regarding the Senkaku Islands?*

- **It has long been the United States' position that Article V of the U.S.-Japan Mutual Defense Treaty applies to the Senkaku Islands. We oppose any unilateral change to Japan's administration of the Senkakus. The US-Japan alliance has never been more important and we stand firmly behind this commitment.**

#### China and Global Health Cooperation

*The incoming Administration has stated that global health cooperation with China will be a major priority. The United States invested a lot of resources and personnel over many years to pursue health cooperation with China. That included a close relationship between the U.S. CDC and China's CDC, including co-location arrangements where they worked side-by-side for many years. While co-location arrangements ceased because of concerns about the physical security of U.S. diplomats, cooperation still continued. However, in the world's hour of need at the beginning of a serious pandemic originating in China, the Chinese government's response proved that global health cooperation would always take a back seat to the standing and reputation of the CCP.*

- *While some level of cooperation may be necessary, how can we have confidence in these initiatives without reciprocal good faith efforts by Chinese government interlocutors?*
- *How will you overcome this fundamental challenge, and why should the American people trust that use of taxpayer dollars and other resources will bear fruit?*
- *What areas of health cooperation will the incoming Administration prioritize with China? What will be the role of the State Department in this regard?*

**If confirmed, I will be willing to test whether China is willing to play a constructive role on certain issues, including on global health but will be clear-eyed about U.S. interests. I will consult with Congress on any potential areas of cooperation.**

#### U.S. Alliances and Partnerships

##### **Treaty Allies**

- *Among the first calls President-Elect Biden made were to Japan, Australia, and South Korea, where Mr. Biden said he wanted to strengthen cooperation even further in new areas. For each of these allies – Japan, Australia, and South Korea – what are the new areas that the Biden Administration would like to see expanded diplomatic engagement and cooperation? Please be specific.*

**The Biden Administration won't just mend our alliances, we will modernize them for the world we face. We are committed to working with allies to combat COVID-19 and climate change; to face down foreign election interference and corruption; to strengthen our defenses in cyber space and to produce and secure the technologies of the future.**

- *Sustainable alliances require fair burden sharing arrangements. Our host nation support agreements – called Special Measures Agreements – with the Republic of Korea and Japan both need to be renegotiated. If confirmed, will you advocate for reasonable increases in the contributions by the ROK and Japan and also for expanding the cost categories to which they contribute?*

**Yes.**

*A rocky Japan-ROK relationship continues to hinder trilateral cooperation in the region, to the detriment of U.S. interests and shared interests among our three countries.*

- *If confirmed, will you prioritize overcoming this challenge?*
- *How will you approach it? What are priority areas of cooperation among the United States, Japan, and the ROK?*

**The decline of relations between Japan and South Korea has been a deeply regrettable result of American diplomatic disengagement over the past four years. If confirmed I will not only reinvest in America's relationships with its allies, but in the relationships among them. None are more important than Japan and South Korea. We will explore opportunities to help them to improve their ties so that we can reinvigorate our cooperation on the North Korea challenge and expand it to new areas, facing down COVID-19, climate change, threats in cyberspace, and working to make our democracies more resilient.**

*Do you consider the Philippines to be a strategically important ally of the United States? Please explain your position.*

**Our alliance with the Philippines is foundational to the U.S. role in the Indo-Pacific. It is a relationship founded on shared strategic interests, shared history, culture, and most importantly, people.**

*The United States military currently cooperates with the Armed Forces of the Philippines on counterterrorism and maritime security. Multiple members of Congress have proposed limiting or cutting off U.S. security assistance to the Philippine military because of concerns over human rights abuses.*

- *Do you believe that taking such a step is in U.S. interests? Do you believe that taking such a step would improve human rights conditions in the Philippines?*

**As friends and partners, it is also incumbent upon us to address with the Philippines those areas of the relationship in which we have concerns, including human rights, freedom of the press, and the extrajudicial killings that have been conducted as part of Manila's war on drugs. We appreciate Congress's close attention to these issues in recent years. We intend to consult closely on the path forward in our relationship with the Philippines.**



- *Will you ensure that the U.S. Department of State consults with Congress before taking action on issues that could jeopardize U.S. access to or create significant tensions in our relationships with key defense partners in the Indo-Pacific, especially those in Southeast Asia?*

**I appreciate Congress's close attention to these issues in recent years. If confirmed I intend to consult closely on the path forward in our relationships.**

*Cooperation between the United States and Japan on technology development and regulations is crucial to adapting to, in the words of Hirokazu Hokazono, the chief defense scientist at Japan's Ministry of Defense's Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics Agency, a "security environment [that] is changing at extremely high speed." To counter threats posed by this security environment, the U.S. and Japan will need to adapt quickly to defense technologies such as robotics that originate in the commercial sector.*

- *How can the U.S. and Japan further cooperation between its militaries, private technology industries, and academia to better integrate its civilian and defense technology development?*
- *How will the Biden administration work with its Japanese counterparts to expand such technology cooperation with other democratic allies, such as Australia and the EU?*

**The U.S.-Japan alliance reminds us how we benefit from having close treaty allies around the world -- Japan is a capable, thoughtful, and dynamic partner who has helped us to secure our interests and values in Asia more effectively than we could do alone. We will work to expand our ties with Japan and other allies to cooperate on developing new technologies and the norms and rules that will govern them.**

#### Taiwan

*A change in the status quo for Taiwan would have huge implications for U.S. strategy and objectives in the region.*

- *If confirmed, what would you do on the diplomatic front to strengthen our relationship with Taiwan and bolster deterrence?*

**If confirmed I will continue U.S. policy to support Taiwan membership in international organizations where statehood is not a requirement and encourage Taiwan's meaningful participation, as appropriate, in organizations where its membership is not possible. We will stand with friends and allies to advance our shared prosperity, security, and values in the Asia-Pacific region -- and that includes deepening our ties with Taiwan.**

- *Would you advise the President to send high-level visitors to Taiwan, boost defense ties, explore negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement, strengthen the economic partnership*

*set up by the Trump Administration, and advocate for Taiwan in international organizations?*

**America's commitment to Taiwan will remain rock-solid. Taiwan is a leading democracy and a critical economic and security partner — its future matters to the United States for all of these reasons. We will continue to strengthen U.S. economic ties with Taiwan as an important priority.**

- *Do you commit to fully adhering to the requirement under the Taiwan Relations Act to provide Taiwan with arms of a defensive character?*

**If confirmed, I will ensure the United States continues to make available to Taiwan the defense articles and services necessary to enable Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability, consistent with the Taiwan Relations Act and our one China policy.**

- *China's actions in Hong Kong have accelerated the timeline for the Chinese Communist Party to unify with Taiwan. What will you do now to help ensure the PRC does not use violence or coercion against Taiwan and help Taiwan avoid the same fate as Hong Kong?*

**If confirmed I will continue to support a peaceful resolution of cross-strait issues, consistent with the wishes and best interests of the people of Taiwan. I will continue to support U.S. policy to meet our commitments to Taiwan and assist Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability.**

*The previous Administration authorized many critical capabilities via arms sales to Taiwan over the last several years, including fighters to replace and augment those being worn out from Chinese Air Force incursions, ground-launched anti-ship missiles, mobile artillery rocket systems, and surveillance drones.*

- *Do you commit to fulfilling these arms sales with speed and urgency so that the capabilities get to Taiwan in a timely manner? Do you commit to ensuring that the Department of State adheres to a regularized process with regard to Taiwan arms sales, including avoiding the practice of bundling?*

**Consistent with the Taiwan Relations Act and our one China policy, the United States continues to make available to Taiwan the defense articles and services necessary to enable Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability. This longstanding policy contributes to the maintenance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait.**

**We will continue to support U.S. policy to meet our commitments to Taiwan and assist Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability. Doing so increases stability both across the Taiwan Strait and within the region.**

*Last year, Assistant Secretary of State David Stilwell gave a speech called, "The United States, Taiwan, and the World: Partners for Peace and Prosperity."*

- *Do you agree with and reaffirm the statements made in this speech? Please explain your position. Do you commit to engaging with allies in the Indo-Pacific and Europe to develop support for the U.S. position that Taiwan's future should be determined peacefully and without coercion?*

**Our commitment to Taiwan is rock-solid. Taiwan is a leading democracy, a major economy, a security partner, a technology powerhouse – and a shining example of how an open society can effectively contain COVID-19. We will continue to support a peaceful resolution of cross-strait issues, consistent with the wishes and best interests of the people of Taiwan. There are many strong supporters of Taiwan in Congress and we look forward to working with members on this crucial issue.**

*Japan's State Minister of Defense Yasuhide Nakayama recently said, "There's a red line in Asia - China and Taiwan. How will Joe Biden in the White House react in any case if China crosses this red line? The United States is the leader of the democratic countries. I have a strong feeling to say: America, be strong!" This statement, which is unprecedented for Japan, reflects that country's significant concerns about Taiwan and the future of U.S. policy.*

- *What is your response to Minister Nakayama's question? Do you commit to consulting with Japan consistently and extensively about U.S. policy on Taiwan in general and about responding to a Taiwan scenario in particular?*

**If confirmed I will commit to working closely with allies to advance our shared prosperity, security, and values in the Asia-Pacific region. That includes deepening our ties with Taiwan.**

*Last Congress, Congress passed and the president signed into law the Taiwan Assurance Act, which requires the Department of State to review all guidance documents with respect to our relationship with Taiwan. Shortly thereafter, the State Department declared all "should consider all 'contact guidelines' regarding relations with Taiwan previously issued by the Department of State under authorities delegated to the Secretary of State to be null and void."*

- *Do you plan to sustain this action taken by the Department of State? If not, why not? Please explain your position in detail.*

**In line with the Taiwan Assurance Act passed by Congress, the State Department has been engaged in a review of contact guidance for our unofficial relations with Taiwan. I agree with Congress that it is time for updated guidance to reflect our commitment to deepening ties with Taiwan — a leading democracy and a critical economic and security partner. For the time being, we will leave the recent revocation of contact guidance in place so that we can complete the review that was already well underway.**

- *Do you commit to ensuring that any documents related to U.S. Executive Branch engagement with Taiwan are crafted with the intent to deepen and expand United States-Taiwan relations, and that are based on the value, merits, and importance of the United States-Taiwan relationship?*
- *Do you commit to ensuring that any documents related to U.S. Executive Branch engagement with Taiwan are not crafted or implemented in such a way that defers to the preference of the CCP to limit the U.S.-Taiwan relationship?*

**If confirmed I will ensure that U.S. support for Taiwan will remain strong, principled, and bipartisan, in line with longstanding American commitments to the Three Communiqués, the Taiwan Relations Act, and the Six Assurances. We will continue to support a peaceful resolution of cross-strait issues, consistent with the wishes and best interests of the people of Taiwan.**

- *If the Department of State creates a new “Guidelines of Relations with Taiwan” memorandum, do you commit to sharing that document with appropriate congressional committees as required by the Taiwan Assurance Act?*

**There are many strong supporters of Taiwan in Congress and we look forward to working with members on this crucial issue.**

#### South and Southeast Asia

*The Indo-Pacific Strategy enshrined the principle of ASEAN centrality in pursuing U.S. objectives in Southeast Asia. ASEAN also published an “Indo-Pacific Outlook” that aligns with the U.S. Indo-Pacific Strategy.*

- *Do you agree that ASEAN should be a central element to U.S. strategy in the region?*
- *What will be your top priorities for strengthening U.S. partnerships with ASEAN member states and institutions?*
- *Will you continue initiatives with ASEAN started by the previous Administration, such as the U.S.-ASEAN Smart Cities Partnership and U.S.-ASEAN Health Futures, as well as cooperation with ASEAN on human capital development objectives?*
- *Do you agree that it is in our national interest to strengthen our security cooperation with Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Thailand? If so, please elaborate specifically on the U.S. interests it serves. If confirmed, what specific steps will you take to advance security partnerships with these nations, including your views on continuing arms sales, engaging in capacity-building, and cooperating on advanced technology with South and Southeast Asian partner countries facing China’s coercion and growing military power?*

**The Biden Administration is committed to ASEAN centrality, and to working through regional fora like ASEAN and the East Asia Summit. We hope to work bilaterally and multilaterally to strengthen these critical partnerships.**

*Implementation of the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) is an important check on Russian defense and intelligence entities. At the same time, CAATSA contains a waiver authority to avoid undue damage to U.S. partners such as India, Vietnam, and Indonesia.*

- *Please explain your position regarding the implementation of CAATSA on critical U.S. partners who purchase Russian defense equipment, and your understanding of whether existing waiver authority is sufficient to protect U.S. partnerships.*

**We plan to review the impact of CAATSA sanctions on U.S. partnerships.**

#### **Burma**

*The United States supports a peaceful, prosperous, and democratic Burma that respects the human rights of its people.*

- *What will the Biden Administration do to support Burma's democratic transition, especially following its November 2020 election?*

**Burma's democratic transition is a reminder that there is rarely a linear path from dictatorship to democracy. The Biden Administration remains committed to Burma's democratic transition, and this will be reflected in our diplomatic engagement with the government of Burma, including State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, encouragement for efforts to achieve democratic constitutional reform that would address the military's role in governance and in the economy, progress for transparency and anti-corruption, and human rights protections that are essential to a successful multi-ethnic democracy.**

- *In addition to the persecution of Rohingya Muslims, what other issues will be the Biden Administration's top priorities in terms of the human rights situation in Burma?*

**Freedom of expression remains a priority, and the work of independent journalists and civil society organizations in particular will continue to be essential in driving forward Burma's democratic transition. Accountability for human rights abuses and corruption are essential foundations for building a democratic society characterized by rule of law. Furthermore, in addition to the persecution of the Rohingya in Rakhine State, Burma falls short on delivering equality under the law to members of other ethnic and religious minorities.**

#### **India**

*India is a crucial U.S. economic and security partner in the Indo-Pacific. Under the past administration, U.S.-India relations strengthened significantly with frequent high-level visits, deepened defense cooperation, and a mutual commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific.*

- *How will the Biden Administration continue to build on this momentum to deepen relations with India? Will you make that a priority?*

**India is a crucial partner in supporting a rules-based system in the Indo-Pacific. If confirmed, I will seek to build upon and expand our partnership with India, both on a bilateral basis and as a partner in the Indo-Pacific.**

- *Now that the United States and India have signed all the relevant defense-enabling agreements, what should be the top priorities for growing our security partnership?*

**If confirmed, I will work with my colleagues at the Department of Defense to identify and pursue ways to grow the U.S.-India security partnership. During the Obama-Biden administration, the U.S. pursued closer ties with India in areas such as maritime domain awareness, intelligence sharing, and defense procurement. These areas were continued, and in some cases, expanded upon during the Trump administration. The Biden Administration will develop them further.**

- *What will you do to navigate the ongoing trade disputes and human rights issues with India, and how can the United States balance legitimate concerns about India's trade practices and human rights policies with other priorities in the relationship?*

**The U.S. and India have a broad, multi-faceted partnership. We will seek to bridge our differences, when they emerge, from a posture of trust and in a way that protects core U.S. interests and values.**

- *Tensions between China and India flared last summer, resulting in casualties on both sides. Will the Biden Administration continue to provide diplomatic and intelligence support to India and accelerate requests for defense articles to India?*

**Yes.**

*The United States and India remain locked in a dispute about Lincoln House. Various Indian government ministries are preventing the U.S. government from completing a years-old transaction to sell the property. This is an unnecessary irritant in bilateral ties.*

- *Do you commit to making the resolution of the Lincoln House issue a priority with India, and to directing the U.S. Ambassador to India to do the same?*

**Yes.**

- *The Indian Ministry of Defense is also involved in this issue. Do you commit to ensuring relevant U.S. Department of Defense officials are briefed on the issue, and to ensuring they raise it with their own counterparts as well?*

**Yes.**

*India has greatly increased its role in the Indo-Pacific region, including through the Quad and by deepening partnerships with Southeast Asia.*

- *What role do you envision for U.S.-India cooperation to advance regional objectives in the Indo-Pacific?*

**India is a crucial partner to advance U.S. objectives in the Indo-Pacific. If confirmed, I will pursue revitalized cooperation with India on defense and security issues, as well as on the crucial issues of pandemic recovery and fighting climate change. Increased cooperation among our allies and partners, including India, will be a force multiplier in achieving U.S. objectives in the Indo-Pacific.**

- *What are some areas you believe are ripe for U.S.-India cooperation with other partners in the region?*

**In addition to building upon U.S.-India cooperation on defense and security issues, we will explore the prospects for deeper cooperation on COVID-19 and climate, along with other like-minded partners in the region.**

#### **The Quad**

*The Quad is an increasingly important part of the U.S. cooperation structure in the Indo-Pacific. The Quad has held regular discussions over the last several years on a wide range of issues, such as countering disinformation, strengthening supply chain resiliency, and coordinating efforts to support countries vulnerable to malign and coercive economic actions in the Indo-Pacific region. Working with our partners in and through the Quad will be crucial to U.S. interests, and helps establish habits of cooperation amongst democracies against hostile authoritarian powers in the Indo-Pacific.*

- *Do you commit to prioritizing the Quad as means to advance U.S. interests and expand collaboration with partners in the Indo-Pacific?*

**Since its 2007 founding, the Quad security dialogue has become an essential national security forum in Asia and is a good news story of the United States and its closest partners pulling closer together in the face of China's most assertive policies and for the good of the region. The group has made progress in coordinating on essential regional maritime issues, on cyber defenses, and has recently held its first quadrilateral naval exercise— a milestone to be lauded and repeated.**

- *In the coming year especially, what will be the Biden Administration's priorities for the Quad?*

**The Quad is an example of a broader phenomenon we hope to help catalyze in the Indo-Pacific -- increased networking among the United States capable allies and partners, like Japan, Australia, and India, whose closer cooperation acts as a force multiplier. We hope to build on its progress and bring cooperation to new areas.**

- *Will the Biden Administration pursue a Quad meeting of the presidents and prime ministers of the United States, Australia, Japan, and India?*

**This is certainly something we will consider and discuss with our partners.**

- *Besides more high-level summits, how can the United States build on the momentum of the last few years and increase collaboration amongst Quad members?*

**We view the Quad as having essential momentum, and important potential -- we hope to build on its recent achievements by deepening cooperation on areas of traditional focus, such as on maritime and defense issues, while also working closely with Quad partners to confront some of the defining issues of our time, including COVID-19, climate, and democratic resilience.**

- *In 2016, the Obama Administration labeled India a "major defense partner," a designation supported by Congress in the Fiscal Year 2017 National Defense Authorization Act. Some have called for an amendment to the Arms Export Control Act to facilitate more defense sales to India and help solidify it as a Major Defense Partner. Does the Biden Administration support such a step?*

**President Biden has a long history in advancing the U.S.-India relationship from his time in the Senate and as Vice President. The Biden-Harris administration will prioritize strengthening and deepening our strategic partnership with India, including in defense and security collaboration. President Biden sees India as a critical strategic partner in tackling a range of global challenges, from developing an international response to COVID, to fighting climate change, and working toward a global economic recovery.**

*The Obama Administration launched the Defense Technology and Trade Initiative with India promote joint co-development and production of defense systems. Thus far, that objective has not been realized.*

- *To what do you attribute this?*

**U.S.-India security cooperation has deepened in important ways in recent years. During the Obama-Biden administration, the U.S. pursued closer ties with India in areas such as maritime domain awareness, intelligence sharing, and defense procurement. These areas were continued, and in some cases, expanded upon during the Trump administration. The Biden Administration will develop them further.**

- *Will the Biden Administration pursue greater cooperation under DTTI with India? If so, what will be the Administration's key priorities?*

**The Biden Administration will study these efforts and develop an approach that allows Washington and Delhi to strengthen this important partnership.**



- *Will the Biden Administration advocate for India's membership in the UN Security Council and in the Nuclear Suppliers Group?*

**The Biden Administration will review how best to support India's increasingly prominent role on the global stage and in international institutions.**

- *How will the Biden Administration cooperate with India on 5G, digital security, and other emerging technology issues? Please be specific.*

**Our approach will start by making new and emerging technologies a focus of this partnership -- for too long, our defense ties have outpaced other aspects of cooperation. This means establishing closer ties, bilaterally, and through groups like the Quad, that will allow us to share views and best practices and align our objectives when it comes to 5G and digital security and other emerging technology issues.**

#### Pacific Islands

- *What will the Biden Administration do to ensure long-term sustainable relationships and policies in the Pacific Island region?*

**Under the Biden-Harris Administration, the United States will restore itself as a Pacific Power -- a regional leader who helps to keep Asia open, secure, and prosperous. With our allies and partners in the region, we will work to confront some of the defining issues of our time -- including for the Pacific Island region. Our administration will also work to promote better integration of climate and ocean issues across multiple international fora.**

- *What role do the Pacific Islands play in broader U.S. strategy goals in the Indo-Pacific?*
- *The Pacific Islands region has become an increasingly contested area between the United States and China. In your assessment, what are the implications for U.S. interests of more pronounced presence and influence by China in the Pacific Islands? What forms of influence are we seeing from China that could have a negative impact on U.S. interests?*

**The Pacific Islands will play an important role in the broader U.S. strategy goals in the Indo-Pacific, including in efforts to counter Chinese influence that could have a negative impact on U.S. interests.**

- *Will the Biden Administration prioritize renegotiating compacts with the three Federated American States in the Pacific Islands?*

**Yes.**

#### North Korea

*The threat of North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programs has been an intractable problem for the United States across Republican and Democratic administrations.*

- *Please describe the major elements of the policy you will pursue with respect to North Korea. Please describe in detail in what ways the Biden Administration's approach will differ from that of the Trump Administration.*
- *In light of evidence of continued work at its nuclear sites and on its missile capabilities, do you believe that North Korea has any intention of giving up its nuclear weapons and related missile programs? Why or why not?*
- *How will you approach the challenge of North Korea's nuclear weapons and ballistic missile program? Will the Biden Administration pursue negotiations with North Korea for the purposes of reaching an agreement with respect to its nuclear weapons program and/or missile programs?*
- *Do you believe that the stated goal of U.S. policy should continue to be denuclearization? If not, why not?*
- *Alternatively, will you pursue and advocate for a more limited arms control-style agreement? One that does not require North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons and long-range missiles?*

**It is without question that North Korea's nuclear, ballistic missile, and other proliferation-related activities constitute a serious threat to international peace and security and undermine the global nonproliferation regime. The United States has a vital interest in deterring North Korea, defending against its provocations or uses of force, and in limiting the reach of its most dangerous weapons programs, and above all keeping the American people and our allies safe. The Biden-Harris administration will adopt a new strategy to keep the American people and our allies safe. That approach will begin with a thorough policy review of the state of play in North Korea in close consultation with the ROK, Japan, and other allies on ongoing pressure options and the potential for any future diplomacy. We will remain committed over the long-term to denuclearization of North Korea, while also focusing in the near term on limiting the threat to the United States and our allies.**

- *Please answer the following with respect to North Korea's nuclear program and U.S. policy on denuclearization. Do you see dismantlement of the fissile material production facilities at Yongbyon as the right first step in a denuclearization process?*
- *Do you see the dismantlement of any other sites, including currently undisclosed sites, as important to continuing the denuclearization process?*
- *How important is a full Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) declaration of its nuclear facilities and stockpiles? Do you believe that should be part of any agreement with North Korea?*
- *Do you see disclosure of all missile sites as an essential component of an agreement with North Korea on its weapons programs?*
- *In your view, what are the essential elements of any verification and enforcement mechanisms on an agreement with North Korea regarding its nuclear program? How will the Biden Administration overcome previous obstacles to verification and enforcement of the North's commitments?*

- *The Iran deal included sunset provisions on Iran's conventional arms embargo (in 2020) and nuclear-related ballistic missile activity (in 2023). The Iran deal also had no 'end use monitoring' scheme in place to ensure sanctions relief did not lead to support for the Iranian nuclear program. Would you advocate for or pursue a deal with North Korea that included similar sunsets? Why or why not? Please explain your position.*
- *Would you advocate for or pursue a deal with North Korea that did not include robust 'end-use monitoring' for sanctions relief? What, in your view, are the essential elements of a robust 'end use monitoring' program?*
- *Calling for denuclearization is one thing, but it is quite another to verify that steps towards denuclearization have been taken. An effective verification and enforcement regime for an agreement with North Korea would likely require an unprecedented level of time and resources from the United States, its allies, and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in one of the most secretive and restrictive environments in the world. Will there be a primary role for U.S. inspectors in any verification agreements with North Korea?*
- *How do you plan to include IAEA inspectors for verification, and for what functions?*

**North Korea's nuclear, ballistic missile, and other proliferation-related activities constitute a serious threat to international peace and security and undermine the global nonproliferation regime. The administration will assess the threat North Korea poses and adopt an approach that works in close coordination with allies to limit it. I look forward to consulting with Congress as we do.**

- *In his 2019 New Year's speech, Kim Jong-un spoke of developing the DPRK's civilian atomic energy capabilities. Do you support a civilian nuclear program or a civilian space launch program in North Korea? Why or why not? Please explain your position.*
- *The South Korean government has been supportive of the United States' decision to engage the highest level of the North Korean regime to resolve the nuclear issue, rather than attempting to engage at lower working levels.*
- *What are your views on pursuing leader-to-leader diplomacy with North Korea? Will you continue it or pursue something different? Why?*
- *Regardless of whether the Biden Administration keeps engaging with North Korea at a high official level, what role will necessary working-level discussions—such as those on technical disarmament—play in your diplomatic framework towards the DPRK?*

**We will evaluate the merits of principled diplomacy with North Korea that reduces the threat to the United States and our allies, that improves the lives of the North and South Korean people.**

- *If confirmed as Secretary of State, do you commit to engage with South Korea, Japan, and other relevant partners on Korean Peninsula issues prior to and following high-level engagements with the DPRK?*

**The Biden-Harris administration will adopt a new approach to keep the American people and our allies safe that will begin with a thorough policy review of the state of play in North Korea in close consultation with the ROK, Japan, and other allies on ongoing pressure**

**options and the potential for any future diplomacy. We will evaluate the merits of principled diplomacy with North Korea that reduces the threat to the United States and our allies, that improves the lives of the North and South Korean people. We will remain committed to denuclearization of North Korea, while also focusing in the near term on limiting the threat to the United States and our allies.**

*Secretary Pompeo appointed a Special Representative solely in charge of North Korea policy.*

- *If confirmed, what will be your staffing arrangement at the Department of State regarding North Korea? Who will be managing day-to-day North Korea policy at the State Department?*

**If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing staffing arrangements at the earliest opportunity.**

*Despite ample evidence that North Korea continues to develop its weapons programs, China and Russia have called for sanctions relief and increased economic ties. Though the U.S. has supported improved inter-Korean ties, South Korean requests for sanctions relief also caused concern among U.S. officials.*

- *What are the goals of the United States' and the United Nations' sanctions regimes on North Korea? Please describe your understanding.*
- *In your view, should the United States and the United Nations lift any sanctions on North Korea at this time? Why or why not? Please explain your position in detail.*
- *If confirmed, under what circumstances would you consider lifting sanctions on North Korea, either in whole or in part?*
- *If confirmed, under what circumstances would you consider pursuing an incremental easing of sanctions over time?*
- *Do you think that providing sanctions relief to North Korea to get them back to the negotiating table is an effective strategy? Why or why not? Please explain your position.*

**North Korea's nuclear, ballistic missile, and other proliferation-related activities constitute a serious threat to international peace and security and undermine the global nonproliferation regime. The United States will continue to work closely with all countries to ensure the full implementation of all UN Security Council sanctions resolutions concerning North Korea.**

- **But sanctions enforcement has lagged in recent years, with reports of smuggling and sanctions evasion. We plan to work immediately with other countries to shore up these sanctions and make sure they're doing their job.**
- 
- **China and Russia must fully and completely enforce all sanctions in place against North Korea. Beijing and Moscow can no longer be bystanders and spoilers, and we will put both on notice that they must fully enforce all financial measures to which they have agreed, plugging the holes that they have poked in this all-important sanctions regime. We will also review what additional sanctions should be imposed**

**if Pyongyang carries out additional nuclear tests and launches. We would prefer to work through the UN Security Council, but we have bilateral U.S. sanctions tools available as well.**

- *Please answer the following with respect to the impact of sanctions on North Korea. What evidence, if any, is there that sanctions are having a significant impact on North Korea's domestic economy?*
- *What measures, if any, would enable sanctions to cause North Korean leaders to agree to abandon its nuclear and missile programs?*

**When effectively implemented, sanctions make it harder for the DPRK to acquire the technology, know-how, and funds to develop its nuclear and ballistic missile programs. They also play a role in compelling the DPRK to agree to end these prohibited programs. The Biden Administration will review the current sanctions regime and align its sanctions approach with its broader strategy for North Korea.**

*The Obama Administration failed to secure congressional support for the Iran deal.*

- *If confirmed, and if the Biden Administration pursues an agreement with North Korea regarding its weapons programs, do you commit to regular briefings at both the Member and staff levels in advance of and following negotiations with North Korea?*
- *If confirmed, and if the Biden Administration pursues an agreement with North Korea regarding its weapons programs, do you personally commit to appear before this committee prior to the completion of any such agreement for public hearings on the matter?*
- *Do you believe that an agreement with North Korea regarding its weapons programs should be submitted to the Senate as a treaty for the Senate's consent to ratification? If no, please explain in detail.*

**I look forward to consulting with Congress on any efforts to limit the dangers posed by North Korea's dangerous and illegal programs.**

- *Any agreement the United States pursues with North Korea will have a direct impact on the security of South Korea and Japan. If confirmed, and if the Biden Administration pursues an agreement with North Korea regarding its weapons programs, do you commit to coordinating with and consulting South Korea and Japan before making any binding commitments in an agreement with North Korea?*

**Close coordination with and among allies will be central to U.S. strategy on North Korea. South Korea and Japan are essential military, political, intelligence, and diplomatic partners, and we must proceed in lock-step if any renewed diplomatic approach is to succeed.**

*The Trump Administration cancelled or postponed U.S.-ROK military exercises in an effort to create diplomatic stakes for denuclearization talks with North Korea.*

- *Do you agree with this policy? Why or why not? Please explain your position.*
- *Would you agree to limit U.S.-ROK military activities if the ROK recommended doing so?*

**The Biden Administration will repair and modernize its alliances, including with South Korea. Seoul and Washington should be the ones to determine the readiness requirements of this vitally important pact.**

- *Are you willing to impose sanctions on or take other economic action against Chinese government entities if they are implicated in sanctions evasion?*
- *In 2017, you wrote that China was the “most visible component” of the Obama Administration’s efforts to put pressure on North Korea, and that this was because China had finally demonstrated some willingness to uphold UN sanctions and curb its exports to the North. However, China is at best an inconsistent partner, and it is once again evading sanctions and pushing for their removal.*
- *How will the Biden Administration engage with China on the North Korea issue, generally? Is China a reliable partner on North Korea? Please explain your position in detail.*
- *Should U.S. strategy really depend on China’s willingness to put pressure on the North given its track record of sanctions evasion?*

**China and Russia must fully and completely enforce all sanctions in place against North Korea. One of the many costs of the Trump administration’s reality show diplomacy was that it removed all pressure from China and Russia to fully enforce the sanctions they had agreed to against Pyongyang. Beijing and Moscow can no longer be bystanders and spoilers, and we will put both on notice that they must fully enforce all financial measures to which they have agreed, plugging the holes that they have poked in this all-important sanctions regime.**

*North Korea routinely engages in cyberattacks and other cyber operations to fund its weapons program, evade sanctions, and promote disinformation about the Kim regime. In 2019, the UN noted it was investigating at least 35 instances of North Korean cyberattacks across 35 countries, and 2020 has demonstrated North Korea’s continued commitment to this form of financial and cyber-crime.*

- *How will the Biden Administration prioritize building resiliency against and stopping North Korean cyberattack?*
- *Do you commit to ensuring that North Korean cyberattacks are an issue that will be addressed in any denuclearization talks with North Korea?*

**The Biden Administration will develop a comprehensive cyber approach, including for North Korea.**

*Tibet*

- *Will the Biden Administration continue public presidential meetings with, and support for, the Dalai Lama as conducted by the Trump Administration? Will you commit that the Department of State will meet with the Dalai Lama's representatives, as the Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor did in 2020?*

**Yes.**

- *Recently, due to a vacancy, the Special Coordinator for Tibet was filled by the Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. In past practice, the Special Coordinator was filled by the Under-Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy and Human Rights. If confirmed, do you pledge to fill the Special Coordinator position at the level of Under-Secretary? Do you pledge to fill the position in a timely manner once a confirmed Under Secretary is in place?*

**If confirmed, I will ensure that we appoint a Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues in a timely manner and will empower that individual.**

#### Taiwan

- *If confirmed, would you re-affirm the U.S. policy to support Taiwan's World Health Assembly observer status? Could you describe steps that you would take to advance this objective?*

**If confirmed I will continue U.S. policy to support Taiwan membership in international organizations where statehood is not a requirement and encourage Taiwan's meaningful participation, as appropriate, in organizations where its membership is not possible. We will work closely with friends and allies to advance our shared prosperity, security, and values in the Asia-Pacific region -- and that includes deepening our ties with Taiwan and support for Taiwan memberships in these organizations.**

- *What specific steps do you intend to take to secure such meaningful participation for Taiwan in such international organizations as the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)?*

**If confirmed I will continue U.S. policy to support Taiwan membership in international organizations where statehood is not a requirement and encourage Taiwan's meaningful participation, as appropriate, in organizations where its membership is not possible. We will work closely with friends and allies to advance our shared prosperity, security, and values in the Asia-Pacific region -- and that includes deepening our ties with Taiwan and support for Taiwan memberships in these organizations.**

#### Human Rights around the World

##### Uyghur Human Rights

- *Do you consider the human rights abuses committed by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) against the Uyghurs and other religious and ethnic minorities, including forced sterilization, to constitute a genocide? If not, please explain.*
- *If confirmed, how do you plan to confront the Chinese government on the human rights violations taking place in Xinjiang?*

**Uighurs and other ethnic minorities have suffered unspeakable oppression at the hands of China's authoritarian government. President Biden has called this oppression genocide. China is engaged in gross human rights violations that shock the conscience and must be met with serious consequences. We will speak out consistently and jointly with allies and partners, impose costs and sanctions on those responsible, and help those persecuted find safe haven in the United States and other countries. We have been heartened by bipartisan congressional action on Xinjiang and commit to implement the Uighur Human Rights Policy Act. We look forward to working with Congress on this crucial issue.**

- *Due to the massive amounts of human rights abuses being committed by the CCP, do you believe they should be allowed to host the Olympics in 2022?*

**China is engaged in gross human rights violations that shock the conscience and must be met with serious consequences. On the specific question of China's hosting of the Winter Olympics in 2022, we will closely review the issue.**

- *Legislation currently under consideration proposes a human rights briefing for the Olympic athletes on Team America. The briefing would help inform athletes about major human rights abuses committed by the government hosting the Olympics, and alert them to narratives that the government pushes to deflect or deny such abuses. Do you support such a proposal? Would you devote Department of State resources and personnel toward working with the International Olympic Committee and other relevant stakeholders to ensure such briefings are provided to as many American athletes as possible prior to the 2022 Olympics?*

**If confirmed, I would support the Department reaching out to the U.S. Olympic Committee to offer briefings to U.S. competitors.**

#### Hong Kong Human Rights

- *The CCP has cracked down on the most basic rights of the people of Hong Kong. How will you address the human rights abuses occurring in Hong Kong?*

**China's continuing crackdown on Hong Kong — not only the imposition of the National Security Law, but also the arrests and imprisonment of pro-democracy activists — is an assault on freedom and democracy. We must stand united with our allies and partners against China's assault on Hong Kong's freedoms. We have been heartened by bipartisan congressional action on Hong Kong and commit to implement the Hong Kong Autonomy Act. We look forward to working with Congress on this crucial issue.**



Rohingya Human Rights

- *Recently, the government of Bangladesh forcibly moved Rohingya refugees from Cox's Bazaar to Bhasan Char, an island in the Bay of Bengal. This was undertaken without advance consultation with donor and international organizations, who were thus left unprepared to support critical assistance and protection measures. If confirmed, do you commit to discussing this action with Bangladeshi government officials? Do you commit to pressing the Bangladeshi officials to ensure no further relocations are undertaken before the UN conducts a thorough, independent, and technical assessment to determine the safety, feasibility, and desirability of relocating refugees to Bhasan Char?*

**First, if confirmed I look forward to leading a review of atrocities committed, and work toward peace, security, and equal rights for the Rohingya as citizens of Burma. For years, the international organizations and NGOs working on the ground in Cox's Bazaar have been engaged in relevant protection and assistance activities for tens of thousands of Rohingya refugees fleeing violence in Burma/Myanmar. If confirmed, I and other relevant State Department officials will engage with the government of Bangladesh, leaders of relevant international and non-governmental organizations, and other partners in the international community to support a coordinated, appropriate approach to hosting Rohingya refugees, recognizing the enormous burden on the government of Bangladesh.**

General

- *If confirmed, how will you organize and mobilize the resources of the State Department to counter malign Russian government behavior and influence in the Western Hemisphere.*

**If confirmed, I am committed to reviewing the current policy and funding priorities the Department has dedicated to countering malign Russian government behavior and influence in the Western Hemisphere and determine if any adjustments are necessary to advance a successful strategy. I look forward to consulting with Congress on this.**

- *If confirmed, how will you organize and mobilize the resources of the State Department to counter malign Chinese government behavior and influence in the Western Hemisphere?*

**If confirmed, I am committed to reviewing the current policy and funding priorities the Department has dedicated to countering malign Chinese government behavior and influence in the Western Hemisphere and determine if any adjustments are necessary to advance a successful strategy. I look forward to consulting with Congress on this.**

- *Are China's growing commercial ties and investments in Latin America a security threat to the United States?*

**The reality is that China is our most serious competitor, and competition with China is one of the central challenges that will define the 21st century. In Latin America, we will meet this challenge by ensuring that American companies can compete on an even playing field, providing a meaningful alternative to China's economic approach, promoting entrepreneurship and fair practices. As the region recovers from COVID-19, we will look to build a resilient hemisphere that is less reliant on China or other extra-hemispheric actors.**

- *If confirmed, your responsibilities will include overseeing the activities of the Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. Several ballot measures in the November 2020 elections involved the legalization of illicit narcotics in the United States, including a measure in Oregon legalizing the personal possession of cocaine, heroin, oxycodone and methamphetamine. Please explain your views on the impact these measures have on United States efforts to combat transnational criminal organizations.*

**Assistance to support other countries' counter-terrorism and counter-narcotics efforts overseas help to keep Americans safe at home and reduces the flow of drugs to our shores. If confirmed, I am committed to reviewing the current policy and funding priorities the Department has dedicated to countering malign Chinese government behavior and influence in the Western Hemisphere and determine if any adjustments are necessary to advance a successful strategy. I look forward to consulting with Congress on this.**

#### JCPOA

- *What are the implications of sanctions relief tied to JCPOA re-entry for Iran's malign activities in the Western Hemisphere?*

**If confirmed, I am committed to reviewing the current policy and funding priorities the Department has dedicated to countering malign Iranian government behavior and influence in the Western Hemisphere and determine if any adjustments are necessary to advance a successful strategy. I look forward to consulting with Congress on this.**

#### North America

##### Canada

- *What is your assessment of the strategic threat China presents in the Arctic? If confirmed, what strategies would you employ to strengthen bilateral efforts with Canada to deter and compete with China in the Arctic region?*

**If confirmed, I am committed to work with Canada on an effective strategy with respect to the Arctic region. I will review the current policy and determine if any adjustments are needed. I look forward to consulting with Congress.**

- *What is your assessment of the strategic threat Russia presents in the Arctic? If confirmed, what strategies would you employ to strengthen bilateral efforts with Canada to deter and compete with Russia in the Arctic region?*

**If confirmed, I am committed to work with Canada on an effective strategy with respect to the Arctic region. I will review the current policy and determine if any adjustments are needed. I look forward to consulting with Congress.**

*In 2024 key provisions of the United States' Columbia River Treaty with Canada are set to expire. The Columbia River Treaty provides the northwest region stable flood control, hydroelectric power, and water flow throughout each year. The State Department has been engaged in modernizing the treaty since 2018.*

- *Will you commit to making the renegotiation of the treaty a priority to the State Department?*
- *As treaty renegotiations enter their fourth year, will you commit to allowing talk to move forward within their current scope? Or do you plan to expand the treaty areas of interest?*

**I am aware of the urgency around negotiations to modernize the Columbia River Treaty, and if confirmed, I commit to addressing the issue with alacrity. I will review the current scope of negotiations, and I commit to work with Congress on the issue.**

#### Mexico

*In 2008, Mexico enacted landmark judicial reforms moving from a closed inquisitorial system to an adversarial model, yet continues to face some challenges in implementation.*

- *How can the United States best tailor support within the Merida initiative to ensure our assistance for the judicial sector is most effective in addressing U.S. interests?*

**U.S. foreign assistance pays dividends for Americans. When we provide technical assistance to a country to strengthen its judicial system, for example, that creates a better legal environment, with spillover benefits for security and anti-corruption efforts. We are committed to working with Mexico on a range of issues in our mutual interest. We also will seek greater engagement with Mexico on democracy, rule of law, and anti-corruption efforts.**

*Mexico has increased the pace of extraditions to the United States, with over 60 extraditions this past year, yet Mexico has taken actions recently that diminish our law enforcement efforts.*

- *If confirmed, what efforts will you make to further increase the pace of extraditions and promote robust law enforcement cooperation between the United States and Mexico?*
- *How would you message the importance of maintaining robust law enforcement cooperation with Mexican government officials?*

- *What mechanisms can the United States employ to support strengthening Mexico's ability to defend and protect its southern border from transitional criminal activities?*

**U.S.-Mexico security cooperation has been and will continue to be a top national security priority. If confirmed, I am committed to assess the state of our bilateral cooperation on security matters, and to adjust as necessary to increase effectiveness. For starters, we need to review and reestablish the institutional mechanisms that advanced our interests in the past, such as our High Level Security Consultative Group.**

- *In December 2020, Mexico approved reforms to the national security law, limiting the power and restricting operations of foreign law enforcement agents in the country. If confirmed, what efforts will you make to maintain continuity in United States-Mexico law enforcement cooperation as Mexico implements this law?*

**If confirmed, I look forward to comprehensive conversations with the Mexican government to ensure our law enforcement cooperation deepens and works for the benefit of the United States and Mexico.**

*According to the 2019 National Drug Threat Assessment, fentanyl and other highly potent synthetic opioids continue to be the most lethal category of illicit substances in the United States. The 2020 DEA report on fentanyl flows to the United States highlights that China remains the primary source of fentanyl and fentanyl-related substances trafficked into the United States, increasingly through Mexico. Mexican transnational criminal organizations are producing increased quantities of fentanyl and cartels such as the Sinaloa and the New Generation Jalisco cartel are the primary trafficking groups responsible for smuggling fentanyl into the United States from Mexico.*

- *If confirmed, how do you intend to communicate these concerns about fentanyl production and trafficking to the Mexican government?*
- *What specific actions would you encourage Mexico to meaningfully tackle transitional criminal activities through its territory, including trafficking of illicit narcotics?*

**I look forward to comprehensive conversations with the Mexican government to ensure our law enforcement cooperation deepens and works for the benefit of the United States and Mexico. Counternarcotics will be among the top priorities for these conversations.**

#### Central America

*In September 2019, then-(Acting) Assist. Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs Michael Kozak described to this Committee how, despite years of programmatic successes, the U.S.-Central America Strategy had failed to muster the political will necessary for aid-recipient countries to effectively combat endemic corruption, economic protectionism, and rampant criminality that have generated wave after wave of illegal migration from the region.*

- *Do you agree with his assessment?*

**We recognize the ultimate solution for sustainably reducing migration in the region is to work with civil society, the private sector, governments and international partners to catalyze structural change to address corruption, security, and prosperity in the region.**

- *Please explain how the Biden Administration will build sustained political will in Central America to tackle the push factors of illegal migration.*

**The President has articulated a comprehensive \$4 billion, four-year plan in this area that will provide financial and other forms of assistance and incentives to confront corruption, enhance security, and foster prosperity across the region. We look forward to working with Congress on this plan.**

*The Strategy for Engagement in Central America was designed to promote economic prosperity, security, and good governance in order to deter illegal migration from the region. Pursuant to that strategy, Congress has placed multiple conditions on aid to these countries.*

- *To what extent have legislative conditions contributed to policy changes in the recipient nations?*

**Congress is a partner in the State Department's foreign policy agenda. I commit to working with Congress to ensure we utilize all available congressional tools to maximum effect, and - simultaneously - that Congress provides adequate flexibility for the Department to implement policies with the speed and agility that the challenges require.**

- *How do you plan to incentivize needed reforms if the recipient countries fail to meet conditions set by Congress, and those failures prompt restrictions on assistance?*

**We will work with partners in the region so that people can find safety and build new lives without having to leave their home countries.**

*President-elect Biden has proposed a four-year \$4 billion strategy for Central America.*

- *Can you describe the importance of concrete and verifiable benchmarks in any strategy toward the region and what these benchmarks would look like?*

**Concrete and verifiable benchmarks will be important to any strategy and should reflect both U.S. policy priorities and the needed reforms to address the root causes of migration in Central America.**

- *Can you describe the type of investment and specific reforms you are seeking from individual governments for this strategy to reduce illegal migration from the region? What is the off-ramp for this strategy?*

**We recognize the ultimate solution for sustainably reducing migration in the region is to work with civil society, the private sector, governments and international partners to catalyze structural change to address corruption, security, and prosperity in the region.**

Nicaragua

- *Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega, Vice President Rosario Murillo, and the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) party have taken aggressive measures to silence and punish independent organizations and dissent. These measures include a “foreign agents law” and a special law on cybercrimes, among others. Can you describe what these repressive laws stipulate and how they violate fundamental freedoms essential for preserving democracy?*

**We are committed to again making human rights a core pillar of U.S. foreign policy. This includes redoubling our dedication to human rights throughout the hemisphere, including in Nicaragua.**

*Nicaraguan exports to the United States have increased by approximately 70 percent since the Dominican Republic-Central America Free Trade Agreement (DR-CAFTA) went into effect in 2006. DR-CAFTA requires important reforms of the domestic legal and business environment that encourage competitive business development and investment, protect intellectual property rights, and promote transparency and the rule-of-law in the trade partners.*

- *Is it your assessment that Nicaragua has instituted reforms that promote transparency and the rule-of-law over the last 15 years since the trade deal has gone into effect?*
- *Is Nicaragua abiding by its commitments to DR-CAFTA?*
- *How has DR-CAFTA benefitted the government of Nicaragua?*

**The President made three commitments to the American people on trade:**

- **Re-orienting US trade policy to put US workers at the center;**
- **Rebuilding U.S. alliances and working with allies, in stark contrast to Trump’s trade wars against allies.**
- **Using trade tools, with allies and partners, to combat climate change.**

**The President has pledged to carefully evaluate all of the steps taken by this Administration, including the private deals and assurances that may have been made, in order to ensure our trade policies achieve the goal of supporting workers and growing our middle class, both now and in the long-term. All the while, we are committed to anti-corruption efforts, challenging authoritarian governance, and standing up for the rights of all people, including the people of Nicaragua.**

- *The Nicaragua Human Rights and Anticorruption Act of 2018 (PL 115-335) requires the United States to oppose any loan or financial or technical assistance by international financial institutions to the government of Nicaragua for a project in Nicaragua, except those provided to address basic human needs or to promote democracy in Nicaragua. In exercising that discretion, the Trump administration ensured that COVID assistance provided to Nicaragua in July 2020 did not flow to the government of Nicaragua, but rather to trusted non-governmental organizations. Do you commit to continue this practice as the Biden administration manages United States participation in international financial institutions?*

**COVID-19 response and recovery, including vaccine diplomacy, will be an important focus for U.S. policy in the Americas. As the region recovers, we will look to build a resilient hemisphere that is less reliant on China or other extra-hemispheric actors, and we will remain committed to anti-corruptions safeguards in that process as well.**

- *According to the 2019 State Department's Report on Human Rights in Nicaragua, "there were numerous reports that the government or its agents committed arbitrary or unlawful killings" in response to the April 2018 pro-democracy protests, where the government's violent crackdown left at least 325 people dead, over 2,000 injured, hundreds illegally detained, tortured, and disappeared, and more than 80,000 exiled in neighboring countries. An Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) team concluded in July 2018 that the Nicaraguan security forces' actions could be considered crimes against humanity. The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights describes Nicaragua as suffering from a "climate of widespread terror." If confirmed, would you support an investigation into serious human rights abuses and crimes against humanity committed by the Ortega regime?*

**We are committed to again making human rights a core pillar of U.S. foreign policy. This includes redoubling our dedication to human rights throughout the hemisphere, including in Nicaragua.**

*In November 2019, the Organization of American States (OAS) High Level Commission on Nicaragua concluded that the government's actions "make the democratic functioning of the country impossible," in violation of Nicaragua's obligations under Article 1 of the Inter-American Democratic Charter.*

- *If confirmed, what instructions would you give the U.S. Ambassador to the OAS to encourage greater international pressure on the situation in Nicaragua?*

**The Biden administration will once again challenge authoritarian governance and stand up for the rights of all people, including the people of Nicaragua, in multilateral institutions.**

- *Should Nicaragua be suspended from the OAS?*

**If confirmed, I would seek to engage with allies across the hemisphere to ensure that democracy does not continue to falter in Nicaragua.**

- *What direct role do foreign powers—particularly Russia and Cuba—play in Nicaragua? What are Russia's and Cuba's strategic objectives in Nicaragua?*

**If confirmed, I am committed to consulting with the intelligence community to assess the role of Russia and Cuba in Nicaragua and to determine if any adjustments are necessary to advance a successful strategy. I look forward to consulting with Congress on this.**

- *What strategies would you employ to improve the capacity of the democratic forces to coalesce and become a credible challenge to Ortega ahead of the November 2021 general elections?*

**If confirmed, I will stand with the Nicaraguan people and for democracy. It is past time for free and fair elections so the Nicaragua people can turn the page on the corrupt and repressive Ortega regime.**

The Caribbean

Cuba

*For decades, the Cuban government has harbored a number of U.S. fugitives of justice, including: Joanne Chesimard, on the FBI's Most Wanted Terrorists List for executing New Jersey state trooper Werner Foerster in 1973; Ishmael LaBeet, convicted of killing eight people in the U.S. Virgin Islands in 1972; and Charles Lee Hill, charged with killing New Mexico state policeman Robert Rosenbloom in 1971; among others. The government of Cuba continues to refuse Colombia's request to extradite members of the U.S.-designated Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) National Liberation Army (ELN) living in Cuba after the group claimed responsibility for the January 2019 bombing of a Bogota police academy that killed 22 people and injured more than 60 others. These instances underscore how Cuban government support of the Maduro regime has created a permissive environment for international terrorists to live and thrive within Venezuela.*

- *Does Cuban provision of food, housing, and medical care for these U.S. fugitives constitute support for international terrorism? If confirmed, do you commit to prioritizing the extradition of all fugitives from U.S. law enjoying safe harbor in Cuba? Should Cuba be removed from the list of state sponsors of terrorism (SST) while they continue to harbor U.S. fugitives? Would you advise establishing diplomatic relations with Cuba while it continues to provide safe harbor to fugitives from the U.S. justice system?*
- *Does Cuba's refusal of Colombia's extradition request constitute support for international terrorism?*
- *If confirmed, would you support Cuba's removal from the SST list without verifiable assurances that it would cease to foster a permissive environment for international terrorists in Venezuela?*
- *Please describe your role in the State Department assessment that recommended the removal of Cuba from the SST list in April 2015.*
- *Please list the specific assurances provided by the government of Cuba in relation to its removal from the list in 2015.*

**If confirmed, I will carefully review the recent decision to designate Cuba as a State Sponsor of Terrorism, including the underlying rationale, and I will consult with the intelligence community and Congress on the way forward. Regarding diplomatic engagement, in the past, it has opened up the door for bilateral cooperation on issues of mutual interest, such as the environment, health, and commerce, and discussions on issues of disagreement, such as human rights, property claims, and the return of fugitives from**



**justice. Cuba was removed from the State Sponsors of Terrorism list in 2015 following a thorough review.**

*During your last confirmation hearing before this Committee in November 2014, you testified that, “[a]t least in my judgment, unless Cuba is able to demonstrate that it is taking meaningful steps to move forward, I don’t see how you move forward in the [bilateral] relationship.” Within two weeks, President Obama announced a dramatic shift in U.S. policy towards Cuba.*

- *Please provide a record of your guidance as Deputy Secretary of State in relation to the series of Cuba policy shifts that occurred between December 2014 and January 2017.*
- *Please describe your involvement in the decision by President Obama to visit Cuba in March 2016.*
- *Please explain your involvement in the September 2016 decision to name a United States Ambassador to Cuba.*
- *Please describe the “meaningful steps” taken by the Cuban regime between November 2014 and March 2016 that merited President Obama’s shift in Cuba policy.*
- *Please describe the conditions under which you would recommend the re-establishment of diplomatic relations with Cuba.*

**Our Cuba policy will be governed by two principles. First, support for democracy and human rights will be at the core of our efforts through empowering the Cuban people to determine their own future. Second, Americans – especially Cuban-Americans – are the best ambassadors for freedom in Cuba. In 2015 and 2016, the U.S. made tremendous progress in advancing U.S. interests on the island, increasing support for civil society, and empowering a new class of Cuban entrepreneurs independent of the state. Most importantly, President Obama’s policies of engagement strengthened family ties, increased cultural and educational exchanges, and empowered Cuba’s private sector.**

*In your November 2014 confirmation hearing, you said, “anything that might be done in the future on Cuba would be done in full consultation, with the real meaning of consultation, that I just alluded to, with this Committee.” In a January 2015 hearing before this Committee, just three months later, you said that you “regret” not consulting members of the Committee during White House negotiations to normalize relations with Cuba. Specifically, you stated with regard to your confirmation hearing that, “I did not live up to the standard I set during that hearing,” and that “I think that I could have done a better job in engaging with you and in consulting with you in advance, and I regret that.”*

- *If confirmed, do you commit to conduct meaningful consultations with me, my office, and the rest of the Committee before and during any negotiations with Cuba?*

**We recognize there are many different views in Congress on what our approach to Cuba should be. We will consult with Congress on any potential actions.**

*There is well-documented evidence of Cuba’s support for the Maduro regime in Venezuela.*

- Please describe the trajectory of Cuban involvement in Venezuela between November 2014 and January 2020.
- Do you agree that Cuban military and intelligence support is the linchpin to Maduro's survival in Venezuela?
- Please describe your views on the most effective approach to persuade the Cuban regime to play a more positive role in Venezuela.
- If confirmed, how would you lead an international coalition of like-minded democracies to put pressure on Cuba regarding its involvement in Venezuela?
- Is it in our nation's interests to reestablish diplomatic relations with Cuba before the Cuban government measurably and meaningfully reduces its presence in Venezuela?
  
- Do you commit to the full and faithful implementation of the 1996 LIBERTAD Act?
- Please describe your understanding of the conditions set by the LIBERTAD Act for the United States to normalize relations with Cuba.
- Please describe your understanding of the role of military-controlled firms in the Cuban economy.
- Is it in the national interest of the United States to facilitate or allow financial transactions that benefit military-controlled firms in Cuba? If so, how and why?
- If confirmed, how will you work to ensure that U.S. public and private engagement in Cuba does not disproportionately benefit the Cuban military, intelligence, or security services or personnel at the expense of the Cuban people?

**If confirmed, I will work with the Department and the Intelligence community to assess the role of Cuba in Venezuela and associated U.S. policies. With respect to resolving problems in Venezuela, I will work with like-minded allies to align our sanctions and diplomatic efforts toward those ends. We agree with the "VERDAD Act" that there must be a negotiated solution. Our Cuba policy will be governed by two principles. First, support for democracy and human rights will be at the core of our efforts through empowering the Cuban people to determine their own future. Second, Americans – especially Cuban-Americans – are the best ambassadors for freedom in Cuba. We recognize there are many different views in Congress on what our approach to Cuba should be. We will consult with Congress on any potential actions.**

*In February 2016, the United States Department of Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) allowed the Cuban regime to register the Havana Club rum brand in the United States.*

- Please describe the economic windfall that this decision has had for the Cuban regime since 2016.
- Should the U.S. Government rescind the 2016 OFAC license given to Havana Club rum?
- What conditions and/or circumstances would need to be met before you would formally nominate a United States Ambassador to Cuba?

**If confirmed, I am committed to reviewing the current policy and associated Treasury Department policies with respect to Cuba. I look forward to consulting with Congress on this.**

*According to the State Department, in 2019, the government of Cuba maintained an estimated 50,000 medical personnel in more than 60 countries under conditions that represent forced labor. The United States, the United Nations, independent media outlets, and non-governmental organizations have all documented and called out the Cuban regime's exploitative and coercive practices toward its doctors participating in its overseas medical programs.*

- *Can you describe your understanding of how Cuban doctors are forced to participate in the Cuban medical program, sent to a foreign country, and the conditions in which they are forced to live while participating?*
- *Can you describe how these programs only serve to benefit the Cuban government at the expense of the Cuban people?*
- *Do you consider the Cuban regime's overseas medical missions to be exploitative human trafficking efforts?*
- *Do you commit to instructing United States embassies in countries that accept Cuban medical missions to communicate to host governments the realities of the forced labor practices employed by the Cuban regime?*

**Support for human rights will be at the core of our efforts. We will engage directly with the Cuban government to denounce abuses and call for reforms.**

*In the Mais Medicos program, which ran from 2013-2018, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) facilitated the deployment of thousands of Cuban doctors to Brazil, some of whom subsequently alleged misconduct and abuse.*

- *How should PAHO be held accountable for its role in this program?*
- *If confirmed, do you commit to working to ensure PAHO implements necessary governance changes to ensure increased oversight of future projects or programs such as Mais Medicos?*

**If confirmed, I commit to reviewing the issue and the U.S. government's current policy approach to determine if any adjustments are necessary. I look forward to consulting with Congress on this.**

*The State Department's 2019 Human Rights Report for Cuba painted a dismal picture of human rights abuses by the Cuban regime, to include accounts of disappearances; torture and other cruel, inhumane, or degrading treatment or punishment; harsh prison and detention center conditions; arbitrary arrests and detentions; denial of fair public trial; and political prisoners and detainees. The regime also has cracked down on freedom of expression, limited internet freedom, and restricted freedoms of peaceful assembly and association.*

- *Will you commit to calling out human rights violations by the Cuban government?*
- *How will you work to support democratic activists and human rights defenders in Cuba?*

**We are committed to again making human rights a core pillar of U.S. foreign policy. This includes redoubling our dedication to human rights throughout the hemisphere. Despite**

**our shortcomings, human rights defenders around the globe continue to look to the United States for support against authoritarian regimes.**

*In President Obama's reversal of longstanding United States policy toward Cuba, the Castro regime released a U.S. intelligence agent in exchange for three Cuban agents which our United States agent helped to capture.*

- *Do you believe this was a fair exchange?*
- *Do you believe this man's sacrifice was served with the return of the agents he helped capture?*

**Engagement opened up the door for bilateral cooperation on issues of mutual interest, such as the environment, health, and commerce, and on issues of disagreement, such as human rights, property claims, and the return of fugitives from justice.**

*In 2014, when President Obama first announced his plans to normalize relations with the Castro regime, he said a presidential visit to Havana was "not in the cards." Then in December 2015, Obama expressed desire to visit Cuba but drew a "red line" declaring he would only visit Cuba if the government makes "progress on civil liberties," and that he was not "interested in validating the status quo."*

- *Do you believe progress was made on civil liberties by the time of Obama's visit?*
- *Do you believe the human rights situation in Cuba worsened during the period of normalization?*

**The Obama administration's negotiations leading up to the re-establishment of diplomatic relations resulted in the Cuban government's release of 53 political prisoners and its commitment to expand Internet access. Today, nearly half of Cuba's population have cell phones and almost a quarter have Internet access. Engagement opened up the door for bilateral cooperation on issues of mutual interest, such as the environment, health, and commerce, and on issues of disagreement, such as human rights, property claims, and cooperation on law enforcement issues. During this period, we were effectively able to advance many U.S. interests on the island, including increasing support for civil society and empowering a new class of Cuban entrepreneurs independent of the state. Most importantly, President Obama's policies of engagement strengthened family ties between Cubans on the island and in the United States, increased cultural and educational exchanges for the Cuban and American people, and strengthened Cuba's private sector.**

#### Haiti

- *Legislative elections are more than a year overdue, there is not a functioning parliament, and the president is ruling by decree. If confirmed, what efforts would you make to support strengthening Haiti's technical capacity to hold elections?*

**The Haitian people deserve democracy and prosperity. Haiti has been without a functioning government for too long, and in the meantime conditions continue to**

**deteriorate. There is no time to waste. The political parties need to come together to end the misery, corruption and insecurity that has plagued the Haitian people for too long. If confirmed, I will work with Congress and with the United Nations and the international community to ensure Haiti's development and democratic stability is again a priority.**

South America

Colombia

*Coca production in Colombia has been steadily increasing since 2013, reaching 212,000 hectares in 2019. In March 2020, the United States and Colombia announced a joint action plan to reduce coca cultivation and cocaine production by 50 percent by the end of 2023. The plan would make full use of all available tools, including rural development, interdiction, as well as manual and aerial eradication.*

- *Would you agree that achieving this goal by 2023 would deliver significant health and security benefits for Americans here at home?*

**Yes.**

- *If confirmed, what tools and policies would you implement to ensure that our two nations meet this goal?*
- *Now is the time to reinvigorate the U.S.-Colombia partnership with a broad bilateral agenda.*
- *Please explain the level of prioritization you would give to the use of aerial eradication in order to achieve this goal by 2023.*

**We will support efforts to combat illegal narcotics trafficking and consolidate peace in Colombia. Only Colombians can decide how to build a just and lasting peace in their country. If confirmed, I will stand with Colombian leaders to seek an end to drug violence, promote investment and trade, and support the fight against corruption.**

- *Would you support the provision of United States technical assistance to Colombia for aerial eradication programs once Colombia has satisfied its domestic legal requirements to do so?*

**We need to work with Colombia to curb the flow of illicit drugs, but do so safely and responsibly.**

*Colombia is a critical United States ally in the Western Hemisphere. In 1997, the United States designated the National Liberation Army (ELN) and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) as foreign terrorist organizations (FTOs), responsible for hundreds of thousands of deaths and millions of displacements during the half century-long conflict, most of whom are still displaced today.*

- *If confirmed, do you commit to keeping these entities listed as FTOs?*

- Please describe your understanding of the links between the Maduro regime and the Ejercito de Liberacion Nacional (ELN).
- Please describe your understanding of the extent of Cuba's support for the ELN.

**In Colombia and elsewhere, the capacity to designate an entity as an FTO is an important tool of the United States. If confirmed, I will carefully review FTO designations, and I will consult with the intelligence community and Congress on the way forward.**

Venezuela

- In your view, is the humanitarian crisis in Venezuela the result of political and security conditions in that country, or are they the cause of them?
- Can the humanitarian crisis be resolved on Maduro's watch?
- Please describe your understanding of Iran's interests in the survival of the Maduro regime.
- Is it in the interests of Iran for the Maduro regime to end?
- If confirmed, what specific steps will you recommend as Secretary of State to diminish Iranian influence in Venezuela?

**As President-elect Biden has said, we stand with the Venezuelan people and for democracy. It is past time for free and fair elections so the Venezuelan people can turn the page on the corrupt and repressive Maduro regime. The Venezuelan people are desperate for change. The Biden Administration will support the restoration of democracy and economic stability in Venezuela. If confirmed, I am committed to reviewing the current policy and funding priorities the Department has dedicated to countering Iranian government behavior and influence in the Western Hemisphere, including Venezuela, and determine if any adjustments are necessary to advance a successful strategy. I look forward to consulting with Congress on this.**

- Please describe your understanding of Russia's interests in the survival of the Maduro regime.
- Is it in the interest of President Putin for the Maduro regime to end?
- If confirmed, what specific steps will you recommend as Secretary of State to diminish Russian influence in Venezuela?

**If confirmed, I am committed to reviewing the current policy and funding priorities the Department has dedicated to countering malign Russian government behavior and influence in the Western Hemisphere and determine if any adjustments are necessary to advance a successful strategy. I look forward to consulting with Congress on this.**

- Please describe your understanding of Cuba's interests in the survival of the Maduro regime?
- Is it in the interest of the Cuban regime for the Maduro regime to end?
- If confirmed, what specific steps will you recommend as Secretary of State to diminish Cuban influence in Venezuela?

**If confirmed, I will work with the Department and the Intelligence community to assess the role of Cuba in Venezuela and associated U.S. policies.**

- *Please describe your understanding of China's interests in the survival of the Maduro regime.*
- *Is it in the interest of China for the Maduro regime to end?*
- *If confirmed, what specific steps will you recommend as Secretary of State to diminish Chinese influence in Venezuela?*

**If confirmed, I am committed to reviewing the current policy and funding priorities the Department has dedicated to understanding and developing strategies to address Chinese, Russian, and Cuban government behavior and influence in the Western Hemisphere, including Venezuela, and determine if any adjustments are necessary to advance a successful strategy. I look forward to consulting with Congress on this.**

- *In a January 2019 editorial, you credited the Trump Administration for isolating the Maduro regime, but criticized the alleged absence of a "comprehensive strategy" or a "Plan B if Mr. Maduro digs in or lashes out."*
- *Please explain your comprehensive strategy to advance a peaceful transition in Venezuela.*
- *Please explain your "Plan B if Mr. Maduro digs in or lashes out."*
- *There have been more than a dozen failed attempts at negotiating with the Maduro regime. They have occurred in an environment of engagement during the Obama Administration, and under the pressure of punitive measures implemented by the Trump Administration.*
- *Please describe the lessons learned from your tenure as Deputy Secretary of State in negotiating with the Maduro regime.*
- *Please describe your views on the conditions under which there can be successful negotiations with the Maduro regime resulting in a peaceful transition to democratic rule in Venezuela.*
- *Please explain how the United States could work more closely with the European Union—and specifically Spain—to increase economic pressure on Maduro.*
- *If confirmed, do you commit to not supporting or promoting negotiations without previous and meaningful behavior change by the Maduro regime?*
- *Do you commit to not settling for inadequate conditions under which free and fair presidential, legislative, and local elections would be conducted?*

**I understand the pain that the current crisis in Venezuela is inflicting on Venezuelans and their families. If confirmed, I will be committed to: (1) granting Temporary Protected Status to Venezuelans already in the United States; (2) addressing the humanitarian situation affecting millions of Venezuelans; (3) targeting government officials and their cronies involved in corruption and human rights abuses; and (4) to restoring democracy in Venezuela through free and fair elections and aiding in the country's long-term recovery. If confirmed, I will seek to work with partners like the European Union and Spain to seek to rebuild multilateral pressure on Maduro, call for the release of political prisoners, and implement sanctions against Venezuelan officials credibly accused of corruption and human rights abuses. Recent reports that the Biden-Harris administration is planning to open talks with the Maduro regime are not correct. No such decision has been made. If confirmed, I will ensure that the overriding goal of the United States must be to press for a democratic outcome in Venezuela, through free and fair elections, and to help the Venezuelan people rebuild their lives and their country.**

*In September 2020, the UN Independent International Fact Finding Mission on Venezuela cited evidence of unlawful executions, forced disappearances, arbitrary detentions and torture in the country since 2014, amounting to crimes against humanity.*

- *Do you believe the perpetrators of these crimes against humanity have been held accountable?*

**If confirmed, I will seek to rebuild multilateral pressure on Maduro, call for the release of political prisoners, and implement sanctions against Venezuelan officials credibly accused of corruption and human rights abuses.**

- *If confirmed, what tools will you use to ensure every person responsible for crimes against humanity in Venezuela is brought to justice?*

**President Biden has been clear throughout the campaign and during the transition that he believes Maduro is a dictator. If confirmed, I will ensure that the Biden-Harris administration will stand with the Venezuelan people and their call for a restoration of democracy through free and fair elections.**

- *In December 2020, the General Secretariat of the OAS raised concerns about the failure by the chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) to take swift action following a UN report documenting evidence that Nicolas Maduro and senior members of the regime ordered or contributed to what amounted to crimes against humanity.*
- *Do you support the ICC opening a formal investigation into allegations that the government of Nicolas Maduro committed crimes against humanity?*

**As President Biden has said, we stand with the Venezuelan people and for democracy. It is past time for free and fair elections so the Venezuelan people can turn the page on the corrupt and repressive Maduro regime.**



*In December 2020, U.S. Southern Command Commander, Navy Admiral Craig S. Faller stated that, “We are seeing growing Iranian influence in [Venezuela] to include the Quds force, which is alarming and concerning, and some weapons ties ... It’s not just oil shipments. It’s arms shipments as well ... We saw an uptick in that this year. We’re watching the rate of change very carefully to see if it connects to any other Iranian malfeasance around the globe.”*

- *Please describe your understanding of Iranian influence in Venezuela?*
- *To what extent are Iran and Venezuela working together, and what does each country have to gain from the partnership?*
- *What security risks does Iranian presence in Venezuela present for the U.S. and the Western Hemisphere more broadly?*
- *What are the intentions of Iran-backed Hezbollah in Venezuela?*

**We will work with our allies and partners to counter Iran’s destabilizing activities in the region, including its support for violent proxies. The Biden-Harris administration will be committed to protecting our diplomats around the world. We will ensure that our diplomats are safe.**

*Foreign maritime operators continue to facilitate tanker travel to Venezuela despite U.S. sanctions and employ new strategies to avoid detection. At least 17 oil tankers have traveled to Venezuela in recent months, facilitating crude exports to Cuba, China, India, Malaysia, and Spain.*

- *If confirmed, what strategies would you employ to prevent Venezuela from evading sanctions through Iranian operators?*

**We will work with like-minded allies to align our sanctions and diplomatic efforts toward those ends. We agree with the “VERDAD Act” that there must be a negotiated solution to the problems in Venezuela.**

- *Do you believe the Venezuela crisis poses the greatest national security threat in the Western Hemisphere? Where does Venezuela fall on your list of priorities in the Western Hemisphere?*

**The Venezuelan people are desperate for change. The Biden Administration will support the restoration of democracy and economic stability in Venezuela.**

- *Please explain your understanding of how the Maduro regime operates as a narco-terrorist regime. Can you describe the role of the Venezuelan military in narcotics trafficking? Can you explain the relationship between the Maduro regime and United States-designated foreign terrorist organizations, FARC and ELN? Do you believe the United States should negotiate with narco-terrorists?*

**President-elect Biden has been clear throughout the campaign and during the transition that he believes Maduro is a dictator and the Biden-Harris administration will stand with the Venezuelan people and their call for a restoration of democracy through free and fair elections. We agree with the “VERDAD Act” that there must be a negotiated solution to the**

**problems in Venezuela. If confirmed, I am committed to reviewing the current policy and context with the Intelligence community and the Department to determine if any adjustments are necessary to advance a successful strategy. I look forward to consulting with Congress on this.**

- *Please explain your understanding and view of the humanitarian exemptions outlined in United States sanctions toward Venezuela that allow for humanitarian support to the Venezuelan people. If confirmed, what instruction would you give to the United States ambassador to the OAS to encourage greater international pressure to promote a transition to democracy in Venezuela?*

**Humanitarian assistance is a first-order priority as we will seek to address hunger inside of Venezuela and the largest refugee crisis in the modern history of Latin America and the Caribbean. There are a few international NGOs on the ground but not nearly enough to meet urgent needs. We would like to see the World Food Program and others be able to get in and distribute aid.**

#### Brazil

*The tri-border area (TBA) between Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay has long been considered a hub for criminal activities including arms and drug trafficking, smuggling, money laundering, and terrorist financing, notably involving Iran-backed Hezbollah.*

- *What is the extent of Hezbollah's presence in the TBA and what are its main objectives in the region?*
- *What is the connection between terrorist groups and organized crime in the TBA?*
- *How can the United States support and strengthen counterterrorism efforts with countries in the region that currently do not have the capacity to enforce a terrorist designation?*
- *If confirmed, what strategies would you employ to put pressure on Iran to limit its support for Hezbollah's activities in the Western Hemisphere?*

**If confirmed, I am committed to reviewing the current policy and funding priorities the Department has dedicated to countering malign Iranian government behavior and influence in the Western Hemisphere, including support for Hezbollah's activities, and determine if any adjustments are necessary to advance a successful strategy. For starters, the United States can engage in a counterterrorism dialogue with countries in the region and share potential tools for combating terrorist threats. I look forward to consulting with Congress on this.**

#### Ecuador

*In July 2020, more than 350 Chinese fishing boats were detected conducting Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing activities off the coasts of Ecuador, Chile, and Peru in the Pacific Ocean. There are concerns about similar Chinese IUU activities in the South Atlantic Ocean off the coasts of the Falkland Islands.*

- *Please describe your views about Chinese Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing in the waters of the Western Hemisphere?*

**If confirmed, I am committed to reviewing the current policy and funding priorities the Department has dedicated to countering malign Chinese government behavior and influence in the Western Hemisphere and determine if any adjustments are necessary to advance a successful strategy. I look forward to consulting with Congress on this.**

- *If confirmed, what policy tools would you employ to support Western Hemisphere partners threaten by these malicious activities?*

**If confirmed, I will review all policy tools at our disposal to combat malicious activities.**

*Refugees and Migration*

*The Trump Administration has reduced the ceiling on the number of refugees to be granted entry into the United States each fiscal year (FY), setting it at 45,000 for FY2018; 30,000 for FY2019; and 18,000 for FY2020 respectively. These ceilings are much lower than in previous years. Actual refugee admissions in FY2020, which were negatively impacted by the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, totaled 11,814. On October 28, 2020, President Trump issued a Presidential Determination (PD) setting the refugee ceiling for FY2021 at 15,000.*

- *Does the Biden Administration plan to raise the refugee ceiling? If so, do you plan to consult with Congress before doing so? What will you recommend to President Biden with regard to any new refugee ceiling?*

**The President has committed to raise the annual refugee admissions target to 125,000 and to increase it over time. If confirmed, I will recommend that we set a new target that is commensurate with the global humanitarian need, our nation's obligation to the world's most vulnerable, and America's long bipartisan tradition of welcoming refugees. The Biden Administration will consult with Congress before issuing a new Presidential Determination.**

- *If you do intend to recommend an increase to the refugee ceiling, how do you plan to allow entry without overburdening a slimmed-down system?*

**The essential elements of the US Refugee Admissions Program remain intact, even as arrivals have plummeted, and they remain critical to the success of the program. Partnerships with state and local officials, and welcoming communities across the country, have been and will continue to be the basis for a strong and successful program. I understand that the State Department and other federal agencies involved in this program, together with private sector partners, have the capacity to significantly scale up resettlement in the coming months and years. As we scale up, we will always prioritize the security and integrity of the program.**

- *President Trump re-categorized potential claims for refugee seekers in the United States. Will the Biden Administration adhere to or alter these categories?*

**The Biden Administration intends to restore the long-standing, bipartisan approach of ensuring that refugees from all regions of the world have access to the US Refugee Admissions Program, based on vulnerability and humanitarian need.**

- *Do you believe that refugees who have been persecuted or have a well-founded fear of persecution based on religion should remain a priority for U.S. admission?*

**Refugees who have been persecuted or have a well-founded fear of persecution based on religion have long been a priority for U.S. resettlement in keeping with our nation's history and support for religious freedom. If confirmed, I will continue to work with Congress through initiatives such as the Lautenberg program to ensure this remains a priority for our country.**

- *In a July 2020 Executive Order, President Trump promised an increase in admissions for refugees from Hong Kong to the United States. To our knowledge, there have been no refugee applications from Hong Kong. How do you evaluate this policy given the political climate in Hong Kong?*

**The Biden Administration is committed to supporting the people of Hong Kong who are being persecuted because of their political beliefs. For those who seek protection and refuge, we are committed to providing a meaningful pathway to safety, be it through resettlement or any other legal mechanism.**

*Special Immigration Visas (SIVs)*

*Protecting U.S. national security in relation to the issuance of Special Immigrant Visas (SIVs) remains a major concern, including both Iraqi and Afghan SIV programs. All applicants for entry into the United States are subject to security checks conducted by the Department of State and the Department of Homeland Security, a process that also involves coordination with other agencies. Former officials have stated that the vetting process for SIVs is particularly rigorous and must go through the interagency process.*

- *How will you streamline the system for SIVs while protecting U.S. national security?*

**If confirmed, I will work with the security vetting agencies to examine how the vetting process can be strengthened and made more efficient, while continuing to prioritize U.S. national security.**

- *Do you believe that current protocols effectively accomplish the goal of admitting Iraqis and Afghans who assisted the U.S. government overseas, provided that they do not pose security risks?*

**Congress established the SIV programs to provide humanitarian protection to nationals of Iraq and Afghanistan fleeing violence and other forms of persecution directed at them because they provided faithful service to the United States, and delays in processing applicants under the SIV Programs must be addressed. If confirmed, I will work with the Department to examine how these programs can be carried out in a more timely manner to ensure that those at risk can fully benefit from the protection these programs provide.**

Trafficking in Persons

- *The recommendation of the State Department Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking and Slavery (JTIP) regarding tier rankings in its annual Trafficking In Persons (TIP) Report are frequently overridden by regional bureaus or embassies with priorities other than the eradication of trafficking. Anti-trafficking experts have repeatedly raised concerns about “grade inflation” within the tier ranking process. If confirmed, will you work to reduce the influence of political concerns on the tier ranking system?*

**The U.S. has always been a global leader in the fight against human trafficking and the TIP report is one of the most important diplomatic tools and information sources on this issue. Therefore, if confirmed, I will work with JTIP and the regional bureaus to fairly apply the minimal standards, and will work to reduce the influence of political concerns on the tier ranking system.**

- *Countries that receive a Tier 3 rating in the TIP Report are subject to non-humanitarian, non-trade related foreign aid restrictions. The President has the option of exercising a national security waiver for countries who receive Tier 3 status. Since 2004, successive presidents have used the waiver, either partial or full, for a host of countries.*
- *How effective do you believe these aid restrictions are in influencing countries to improve their human trafficking policies?*

**We will look at the Tier 3 sanctions based on the facts on the ground in the particular country and what would move changes along the minimum standards most effectively. The Biden administration sees this as one of many important tools that might be brought to bear when appropriate.**

- *What is the impact of granting national security waivers on the effectiveness of the aid restrictions and the fight against human trafficking?*

**Prior administrations have often followed a waiver with more targeted foreign assistance and aid responses that have a salutary effect on counter-trafficking activities in vulnerable communities. We expect that should waivers be appropriate for a particular country we would examine all available diplomatic and assistance responses.**

CCP Influence  
5G and Beyond

*The Trump Administration undertook a major push to keep products from China's Huawei out of 5G networks in countries across the world, especially in allied nations in Europe. Despite criticisms of the style of the approach, multiple countries have chosen to exclude Huawei from their emerging 5G networks, including the United Kingdom, Czech Republic, Poland, Sweden, Estonia, Romania, Denmark, and Latvia.*

- *Is your approach to keeping 5G networks clean from Chinese equipment and the consequent security hazards going to be different from that of the Trump Administration? How so?*
- *Looking beyond 5G, what other emerging technologies do you think would create risks for the United States and its allies if we have an undue reliance on untrusted vendors? Are there areas that you will prioritize, and how so?*
- *The previous Administration began to advance a Clean Networks initiative to "address long-term threats to data privacy, security, human rights and principled collaboration posed to the free world from authoritarian malign actors, including the Chinese Communist Party." What is your view of this initiative?*

**China is engaged in conduct that blunts our technological edge, threatens our security and our influence, and is designed to make America and its allies more dependent on China, and China less dependent on America and our allies. We must counter China's aggressive and coercive actions and invest in advanced technologies—including communications and other emerging technologies, re-engage robustly in the UN system, and restore our vital security partnerships. We need a comprehensive strategy that actually addresses the full range of these issues; a review of next steps regarding the Clean Network Initiative will be a part of this effort.**

*Huawei Marine is becoming bigger player in the market to construct, own, and operate undersea cables, which carry \$10 trillion in global business transactions each day, and at least 95 percent of total digital communications. Huawei Marine is owned by Hengtong Group, which has close ties to the People's Liberation Army. The Trump Administration has engaged in financing the construction of undersea cables for Pacific Island partners, as well as engaging with allies and partners considering PRC bids on the security risks.*

- *What is your view on the challenges presented by greater presence of Huawei Marine in constructing undersea cables?*
- *How would you use diplomacy to address this issue?*

**As noted above, we need a comprehensive strategy to address the full range of issues involving China's aggressive actions to dominate the digital communications space. If confirmed as Secretary State, I would re-energize our efforts to advance diplomacy in this space.**

European Union

Tech Policy

*The EU and certain members within it have been pushing for “strategic autonomy” and “digital sovereignty,” that would give Europe much more power to decide how tech companies – most of which are American and Chinese – are allowed to operate in that hugely important region. The EU also aims to bolster a European tech sector that has lagged behind. However, initial proposals would seem to create barriers to entry for U.S. companies in the form of taxes, tariffs, fines, and anti-trust legislation, which, in effect, creates a decoupling from the United States. This outcome would be damaging both for the EU and the United States, and would severely hinder our joint ability to compete with the PRC as it seeks to become a scientific and technological superpower.*

- *What can the United States and the EU do to stay on the same page regarding tech policy? Is there room for a compromise between the two?*
- *If confirmed, will you prioritize convincing the Europeans that it is both of our interests to align our digital policies and strategies to compete with China? How so?*
- *If confirmed, what areas of potential cooperation would you prioritize?*

**Strengthening and revitalizing the U.S.-EU partnership will be a key priority for the Biden-Harris administration. The U.S.-EU trade and investment relationship is the largest in the world. Together we have the power to set the global rules of the road on issues we care about, including with respect to technology. At the same time, there are a number of difficult issues. We will seek to resolve these issues, while safeguarding U.S. interests, including concluding a successor agreement to the U.S.-EU Privacy Shield and pursuing a comprehensive multi-national agreement to update global tax rules in ways that prevent global profit-shifting while ensuring a level global playing field for U.S. companies.**

#### North Korea

*North Korea routinely engages in cyberattacks and other cyber operations to fund its weapons program, evade sanctions, and promote disinformation about the Kim regime. In 2019, the UN noted it was investigating at least 35 instances of North Korean cyberattacks across 35 countries, and 2020 has demonstrated North Korea’s continued commitment to this form of financial and cyber-crime.*

- *How will the Biden Administration prioritize building resiliency against and stopping North Korean cyberattacks?*
- *Do you commit to ensuring that North Korean cyberattacks are an issue that will be addressed in any denuclearization talks with North Korea?*

**As President Biden has made clear, the administration will make cybersecurity a top priority across every level of government, to include investing in our people and our infrastructure to build cyber resilience, as well as holding malicious cyber actors accountable for their behavior. If confirmed as Secretary, I would ensure that North Korean cyberattacks were taken into consideration as part of any diplomatic strategy.**

#### Russia & the Arctic

*The U.S. relationship with Russia is at its lowest point in decades. Many of the traditional channels of dialogue have been slowly severed. At the same time, Russia has positioned itself, at the center of many of the world's current conflicts: Syria, Nagorno-Karabakh, Ukraine, and Libya.*

- *What is your stance on disinformation campaigns and cyberattacks against the U.S. and the Central and Eastern European nations from sources within Russia and elsewhere? What role, if any, do you see for the U.S. in stemming Kremlin misinformation flowing to the Russian people about the U.S. and its allies? In this vein, what do you see as the role of the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty?*

**A key element of our overall cyber strategy will be to promote a sustainable framework for responding to malicious cyber activity that employs threats of punishment, denial, and norms. This includes making clear that the United States will respond swiftly and proportionately through cyber and non-cyber means, to include through entities like Voice of America and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, to cyberattacks against the nation, to include cyber-enabled disinformation campaigns.**

#### Cyber

##### Organization

- *Should the Chief Information Officer report directly to the Secretary? If so, why? If not, to whom should they report?*

**The Chief Information Officer is a vital role that will be involved in major technology issues facing the Department. If confirmed, I will commit to reviewing guidance from the Office of Management and Budget and legislation to determine the best reporting structure for the role.**

*Do you support continuing to have cyber responsibilities split between the Bureaus of Information Resource Management and Diplomatic Security?*

**There may be more we can do to integrate and coordinate the work of the Bureaus of Information Resource Management and Diplomatic Security. If confirmed, I will commit to reviewing this and consulting with Congress.**

*The Department has been advocating for the creation of a Bureau of Cybersecurity and Emerging Technologies (CSET), to be based in the T Family.*

- *Do you support the creation of CSET?*

**I do support the creation of CSET.**

- *Do you believe it should be in the T Family?*



**If confirmed, I will take a close look at where CSET should best be placed within the Department.**

- *Do you believe a cyber bureau should include all elements of cyber, to include e-commerce and privacy issues?*

**If confirmed, I would closely review the mission and scope of responsibility of the bureau, to include whether it should include responsibility for e-commerce and privacy issues.**

- *Should a cyber bureau include regular consultations with U.S. private sector actors to receive external views and leverage outside expertise?*
- **If confirmed, I would closely review the mission and composition of the Bureau to ensure it is effectively established within the Department and with respect to external stakeholders.**
- *Given the massive cyber hack that was reported in December 2020, how important is cybersecurity to the State Department and U.S. diplomacy?*

**If confirmed, cybersecurity will be a top priority for the State Department.**

- *What cybersecurity challenges does the Department currently face?*

Nation-states and non-state actors leverage cyberspace, largely with impunity, to threaten our security and our way of life, online and off: combining hacking with malign influence operations to undermine election integrity and interfere in democratic processes; breaching major corporations to steal data, including intellectual property, to enable espionage; targeting industrial control systems across electric utilities, manufacturing plants, and oil refineries; and brazenly stealing huge amounts of capital from over 40 countries around the world. The United States now operates in a cyber landscape that requires a level of data security, resilience, and trustworthiness that neither the U.S. government nor the private sector alone is currently equipped to provide. The Department will play a critical role in building U.S. cyber resilience by renewing our commitment to international engagement in cyberspace and digital governance.

- *How do you intend to improve cybersecurity at the Department?*

The Department, like the whole of the Federal government, faces significant risks from a range of malicious cyber threat actors. Addressing these challenges will require a dedicated investment in infrastructure and talent to ensure the security and resilience of our networks. If confirmed, I will make this a top priority.

Central America

Nicaragua

- *Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega, Vice President Rosario Murillo, and the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) party have taken aggressive measures to silence and punish independent organizations and dissent. These measures include a “foreign agents law” and a special law on cybercrimes, among others. Can you describe what these repressive laws stipulate and how they violate fundamental freedoms essential for preserving democracy?*

**President-elect Biden has made clear that democracy and human rights will once more be at the center of America’s foreign policy. Human rights apply offline as well as online. While cybercrime is a growing threat to nations around the world that must be addressed, it cannot be a justification to violate human rights. Every government must comply with its obligations under international law to respect and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms. We will pursue an affirmative strategy that counters new and emerging threats to democracy globally and advances human rights and universal values around the world.**

*The United States and the United Nations*

- *What is your view of the relationship between the United States and the United Nations (UN)?*

**President Biden recognizes that many of the biggest threats we face are transnational in nature and must be worked collectively, including through international organizations. Since the UN’s founding 75 years ago, the United States has been critical to the United Nations success, and the United Nations, in turn, has been central to U.S. efforts to secure peace and security, prosperity, and human rights. If confirmed, I will look forward to working with Congress to ensure the U.S. relationship with the United Nations remains constructive and continues to serve America’s national security interests.**

- *My constituents are concerned about the lack of “return on investment” at the UN. How will you work to enhance U.S. return on investment at the UN considering we are the top donor to the entire UN system?*

**The Biden-Harris administration will continue to hold the UN accountable to its mission and its member states. This means doing all we can to ensure that the UN is using resources efficiently and effectively – eliminating waste, demanding zero tolerance for any corruption, strengthening whistleblower protections and transparency and accountability, and ensuring other countries pay their fair share. It also includes taking steps to address the UN’s credibility deficit, with regard to the unfair treatment and targeting of Israel, sexual exploitation and abuse perpetrated by UN military and civilian personnel, and the election of states known for human rights violations to UN leadership positions. We will continue to pursue such reforms to ensure the organization reaches its full potential. As the largest donor to the UN, we should aim to get the most we can out of our financial leverage. If confirmed, my team and I will do everything we can to make sure that other countries pay their fair share.**

- *Does the UN play a role in determining U.S. participation in military conflicts? Do you believe that a UN resolution creates a legal obligation for U.S. military involvement in resolving a foreign conflict, including under UN doctrine relating to the responsibility to protect civilians? Does a UN resolution serve as a substitute for an authorization of the use of force from the U.S. Congress?*

**The United Nations does not play a role in determining U.S. participation in military conflicts.**

- *I introduced the Multilateral Aid Review Act to assess the value of U.S. taxpayer investments in multilateral entities, including the UN and its affiliated agencies. If confirmed, would you support a comprehensive review of U.S. investments in multilateral organizations?*

**If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing this issue closely and working with Congress to ensure effective oversight of the UN and its affiliated agencies. I am committed to ensuring prudent management of U.S. taxpayer investments in multilateral entities.**

- *There have been efforts to have the United States rejoin the World Tourism Organization. If confirmed, would you support the re-entry of the United States to the World Tourism Organization? What benefits would the United States enjoy for re-joining this organization?*

**If confirmed, I will ensure careful consideration and review before any efforts are made to rejoin the World Tourism Organization.**

UN Security Council

*There have been a number of proposals to increase the size of the UN Security Council, to include the expansion of the number of permanent members of the Council.*

- *How do you believe U.S. interests would be affected by the expansion of the Council's size or by the addition of more permanent members?*
- *Changes in the composition of the Security Council would require an amendment to the UN Charter, which in turn would require the advice and consent of the Senate. Do you commit to consulting with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in advance of pursuing any proposals to change the composition of the Council?*

**If confirmed, I look forward to understanding the latest state of play regarding any ongoing conversations among UN member states on possible reform of the UN Security Council, and I look forward to consulting closely with Congress on this issue.**

UN Management Reform

- *What are your views on the need for management reform at the UN?*

- *How will you work to address barriers to advance UN management reforms, especially those created by the different priorities among member states?*
- *How will you measure success in implementing management reforms at the UN?*
- *What policies need to be implemented to maintain fiscal responsibility and accountability within the UN system?*

**The Biden-Harris administration will continue to hold the UN accountable to its mission and its member states.**

*While the UN has taken steps to improve its efficiency, operational effectiveness, and accountability, the continuing need for reform is obvious to most observers, including strong supporters of the institution. The UN Secretary-General has committed to an agenda of reform. The U.S. push for reform is one of the main drivers behind the progress to date.*

- *In your opinion, what are the top three reforms that the UN could undertake in the coming two years that will have the greatest impact?*
- *How will you explain to the Secretary-General and the member states that continued reform is a precondition for full U.S. support of the UN?*
- *What tactics would you use if reform efforts falter or lack urgency?*

**The Biden-Harris administration will continue to hold the UN accountable to its mission and its member states. This means doing all we can to ensure that the UN is using resources efficiently and effectively – eliminating waste, demanding zero tolerance for any corruption, strengthening whistleblower protections and transparency and accountability, and ensuring other countries pay their fair share. It also includes taking steps to address the UN’s credibility deficit, with regard to the unfair treatment and targeting of Israel, sexual exploitation and abuse perpetrated by UN military and civilian personnel, and the election of states known for human rights violations to UN leadership positions. If confirmed, I will ensure that we continue to pursue such reforms to ensure the organization reaches its full potential, and I look forward to working with Congress on these efforts.**

*UN Entities*

- *The United States is the largest donor to the World Food Programme, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, and other UN agencies. Will you continue this pattern of voluntary donations to address some of the world’s most pressing issues?*

**The U.S. role as the world’s largest humanitarian donor has always been an important marker of our leadership on the world stage, and a reflection of the strong bipartisan commitment to our generosity and to leading with our values. If confirmed, I am committed to the U.S. continuing to play this role and to working with Congress to ensure robust funding for the key international humanitarian organizations, including UN agencies.**

*The International Criminal Court/International Criminal Law*

*The United States is not a party to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and has been unfairly targeted by the Court. The Trump Administration took a harder line on US involvement in the ICC after the Prosecutor opened an investigation into U.S. service members.*

- *Does the Biden Administration support the United States becoming a party to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court?*
- *Under what circumstances should the United States cooperate with the ICC?*
- *Do you believe that the ICC should be investigating alleged actions of US service members and officials in Afghanistan? If yes, please explain.*
- *Do you believe that the ICC has jurisdiction to investigate or bring to trial United States service members, officials, or other United States citizens? If yes, please explain.*
- *Do you believe that the ICC should be investigating a case involving alleged Israeli actions in the Palestinian territories? If yes, please explain.*
- *Do you believe that the ICC has jurisdiction to investigate or bring to trial Israeli service members, officials, or other Israeli citizens? If yes, please explain.*
- *Do you believe the ICC's reputation has been diminished by recent attempts to prosecute United States and Israeli nationals? If no, please explain.*
- *Do you believe that an ICC prosecution of United States services members and public servants would deny those U.S. citizens fundamental due process protections to which all Americans are guaranteed under the U.S. Constitution, such as a right to trial by jury? If no, please explain.*
- *Do you believe the United States has an obligation to protect U.S. citizens who have served or are currently serving in Afghanistan against criminal prosecution by the ICC? If yes, as Secretary of State, what specific actions would you take to ensure that US service members, officials, and citizens are not subject to ICC prosecutions? If no, please explain.*

**The United States shares the goals of the ICC in promoting accountability for the worst crimes known to humanity. At the same time, the U.S. has always taken the position that the court's jurisdiction should be reserved for countries that consent to it, or that are referred by the UN Security Council. We are following the court's work on Afghanistan closely and will vigorously defend U.S. personnel from legal jeopardy before the ICC. We are also following the court's work on the Israeli/Palestinian situation. U.S. lawyers have often worked with Israeli lawyers to share expertise on the court and I anticipate that this will continue. Much as we disagree with the ICC's actions relating to the Afghanistan and Israeli/Palestinian situations, we do not think imposing financial and visa sanctions on officers of the court was an appropriate or effective strategy. It sent the wrong signal about U.S. support for the rule of law and created pointless friction with our allies who support the court. It also has not worked. We understand that the ICC has recently undergone an independent review and that member states may be considering various reforms to help the court better achieve its core mission of punishing and deterring atrocity crimes. We think this is a worthwhile effort. We anticipate that the bulk of our energies with respect to the ICC will be spent on defending our personnel, but there may be exceptional cases where we consider cooperating with the court as we sometimes have in the past. We will have to weigh the interests at stake on a case by case basis.**

- *Beyond the ICC, what international accountability mechanisms do you support? Please provide examples of special courts or tribunals which have worked well as well as examples of special court or tribunals which did not work well.*

**Since World War II, the United States has played a leading role in promoting accountability for atrocities. The ICC is part of an array of efforts, including regional and domestic efforts, to provide accountability. The best prospects for accountability rest with the strengthening of domestic institutions and political will. If confirmed, I will ensure that the U.S. government continues to pursue international accountability through the full range of available and effective mechanisms.**

- *What is your vision for the Office of Criminal Global Justice's role in the Department of State?*

**The Office of Global Criminal Justice plays a critical role in supporting the U.S. government's efforts to ensure international accountability. If confirmed, I will work to ensure the office is appropriately staffed to play this vital role.**

UN Relief Works and Agency (UNRWA)

- *Do you support the United States reinstating its financial support for UNRWA? If so, what reforms would you recommend UNRWA undertake in order to re-gain support from the United States?*
- *As of submittal of these questions, there are approximately 26 million refugees globally, including "5 million refugees under the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA)." To address this challenge in 2020, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) employed 17,324 staff across 135 countries, and UNWRA employed 27,841 staff.*
- *Why does UNWRA require 10,000 more staff to advocate its regional mission than UNHCR to advance its global mission?*
- *Do you believe UNWRA should be absorbed by UNHCR, given UNHCR's efficiency and infrastructure*
- *If confirmed, will you commit to working with the appropriate Congressional committees prior to any consultations for resumption of U.S. contributions to UNRWA?*

**President Biden plans to follow through on his pledge to restore U.S. economic and humanitarian aid to the Palestinians. The critical humanitarian assistance UNRWA provides has only become more important during the global pandemic. Restoring funding to UNRWA is not just the right thing to do; it is also in the interests of peace. Without UNRWA's services, Gaza would be in even greater danger of a humanitarian collapse that would have serious security implications for Israel. The current administration's attempt to extract Palestinian concessions by withholding UNRWA and other funding clearly failed. Maintaining this misguided decision would only inflict further pain on innocent Palestinians. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with Congress regarding a resumption of funding to UNRWA and will ensure a close focus on management and other reform issues at the agency.**

UN Human Rights Council

- *What is the position of the Biden Administration regarding the UN Human Rights Council?*

**The Biden-Harris administration believes that, when it works well, the Human Rights Council plays an important role in shining a spotlight on the world's worst human rights violators and can serve as a beacon for those fighting against injustice and tyranny. We also recognize that the Human Rights Council is flawed and in need of reform. We believe that the best way to improve the Council so it can achieve its potential is through robust and principled U.S. engagement.**

- *Will the Biden Administration seek to become a member of the Council at its next opportunity?*

**President Biden has committed that the United States will seek to rejoin the Human Rights Council. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing the best opportunity for the U.S. to next seek election to the Council.**

- *What reforms will the Biden Administration seek at the UN Human Rights Council?*

**The Human Rights Council is not without its flaws and needs reform – including to address its anti-Israel bias. But when we have a seat at the table we can advocate on Israel's behalf, and we have seen changes like a reduction in the number of resolutions targeting Israel. It is critical that the U.S. show up and engage with the Council directly. The membership of the UN Human Rights Council has also been criticized. We've seen that when the U.S. plays an active and constructive role on the Council, we have been able to engage with our allies and friends to keep off some of the countries with the worst human rights records and to encourage countries with better records to run for seats. U.S. engagement at the Council can be a force for positive change and for holding the world's worst human rights violators accountable. We can also work with our allies at the Council to more effectively counter the influence of persistent human rights violators like China, which can be much more influential on HRC issues when the U.S. is not actively engaged. The Council has been one of the few places in the UN to shine a spotlight on China over its actions in Xinjiang and Hong Kong. In recent years, we have also seen important HRC efforts on some of the world's worst violators, including Syria, the DPRK, Iran, and Venezuela. The U.S. should be actively at the table and leading the efforts to hold bad human rights actors to account.**

- *Will the Biden Administration commit to securing necessary reforms prior to rejoining the UN Human Rights Council?*

**The Biden-Harris administration is committed to seeking reforms of the Human Rights Council, particularly with respect to the Council's membership and its disproportionate**

**focus on Israel. If confirmed, I will ensure the U.S. prioritizes needed reforms as part of our re-engagement with the HRC.**

- *Does the Biden Administration believe the Council devotes a disproportionate amount of attention to criticizing Israel while ignoring more pressing human rights crises?*

**The Council has, in the past, shown a disproportionate focus on Israel. This is unacceptable. All governments have a responsibility to uphold and protect human rights-- a disproportionate focus on one country is in conflict with the universality of the obligations outlined under international human rights law. We believe U.S. engagement can help the Council focus on urgent issues, and that our absence creates a vacuum of leadership that is exploited by others. When we are at the table, we can advocate on Israel's behalf and ensure the Council focuses on the world's worst human rights violators, like Syria, Venezuela, and the DPRK.**

- *Understanding that the Human Rights Council has been "broken," in large part, by allowing human rights abusers to obtain seats on the Council, do you believe that conditioning U.S. participation on reform is beneficial?*

**Persistent violators of human rights do not belong on the UN Human Rights Council. The best way for us to raise the quality of engagement with and membership on the Council is to engage in a principled fashion ourselves. The U.S. is most effective at the Human Rights Council and in other UN bodies when we are at the table, in the room, in good financial standing, and use the full weight of our diplomatic might to lead and to pursue appropriate and needed reforms.**

*There have been credible allegations that the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights shared the names of Chinese dissidents who were attending UN Human Rights Council sessions with the Chinese Government.*

- *If confirmed, how will you investigate these allegations?*
- *What reforms will you seek to ensure that this practice never happens again?*

**If confirmed, I will ask relevant Department officials for a detailed understanding of this issue and will ensure that U.S. government personnel prioritize this matter in engagements with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.**

#### UN Peacekeeping

*The United States is the single largest financial contributor to UN peacekeeping activities. Congress authorizes and appropriates U.S. contributions, and it has an ongoing interest in ensuring such funding is used as efficiently and effectively as possible.*

- *Do you believe that any country, including the United States, should pay more than 25% of the peacekeeping budget?*
- *What is your position on repayment of current U.S. peacekeeping arrears?*



- *Are there any specific steps you believe the UN should take to reduce the overall size of the UN peacekeeping budget? If so, what are they?*
- *Are there any specific UN peacekeeping missions you would support reducing or terminating? If so, what missions do you believe should be reduced or terminated?*

**As President Biden has committed, we will seek to address U.S. outstanding financial balances for the UN regular and peacekeeping budgets, including potential action to address arrears that have accrued over the past four years. The United States' influence at the UN is greatest when we pay our bills in full and on time -- including the influence we need to push back against China and others and to lead reform efforts, including reform efforts to ensure that UN peacekeeping funds are used as effectively as possible. Our failure to live up to these financial obligations - both on the UN regular budget and the peacekeeping budget - undermines U.S. credibility and leadership at the United Nations, is a major contributing factor to the UN's current liquidity crisis, and gives China and member states an easy talking point to promote themselves and undercut the U.S.**

**If confirmed, I would welcome the opportunity to work with Congress to take the steps necessary to allow the United States to meet our financial obligations, including addressing the substantial level of arrears that have accumulated over the past four years and the 25% cap on peacekeeping funding.**

*The UN and the Palestinians*

- *The UN maintains several particular bodies and departments that focus on the Palestinians. These including the Division on Palestinian Rights (DPR), the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP), and UN Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL). Will you work to challenge the existence and funding of these departments?*
- *Recently, the Palestinians threatened action to circumvent ascension protocols and seek a change in their status at the UN. Do you believe this action promotes the Middle East peace process and serves the needs of the Palestinian people?*
- *In your view, what consequences should the Palestinians face if they continue to attempt to gain membership in UN agencies?*

**As a matter of principle, there are no shortcuts to Palestinian statehood outside of direct negotiations between the parties and this includes counterproductive unilateral steps to gain membership in UN agencies. If confirmed, I will ensure the U.S. works to avoid such actions.**

*The United States lacks a veto over membership decisions in UN specialized agencies that the Palestinians could target for membership. When the Palestinians apply for membership, the United States is required to cut funding to that organization pursuant to two laws enacted by a Democratic-led Congress in the early 1990's. To this end, Title 22, Section 287e of the U.S. code states:*

*“No funds authorized to be appropriated by this Act or any other Act shall be available for the United Nations or any specialized agency thereof which accords the Palestine Liberation Organization the same standing as member states.”*  
(Adopted as Public Law 101-246 in 1990.)

*“The United States shall not make any voluntary or assessed contribution: (1) to any affiliated organization of the United Nations which grants full membership as a state to any organization or group that does not have the internationally recognized attributes of statehood, or (2) to the United Nations, if the United Nations grants full membership as a state in the United Nations to any organization or group that does not have the internationally recognized attributes of statehood, during any period in which such membership is effective.”* (Adopted as Public Law 103-236 in 1994.)

- *The language in these provisions is clear and provides no discretion or waiver authority. If confirmed, will you support their enforcement?*

**If confirmed, I will support the enforcement of these provisions.**

*Over the past several years, the Palestinian Authority has received votes in various UN bodies to upgrade its status. Such attempts undermine the long-held belief that peace between Israel and the Palestinian Authority can only come about as a result of direct negotiations.*

- *What is your plan to stop initiatives like this from even coming before UN entities, or the General Assembly, for a vote?*
- *How will you address future attempts by the Palestinian Authority to achieve statehood through the UN?*

**As a matter of principle, there are no shortcuts to Palestinian statehood outside of direct negotiations between the parties and this includes counterproductive unilateral steps to gain membership in UN agencies. If confirmed, I am committed to ensuring the U.S. works to avoid such actions, and I will support enforcement of relevant U.S. statutory provisions.**

*Israel at the UN*

*The United States has a long maintained a policy of opposing many one-sided Security Council resolutions that more often than not, criticize Israel, but fail to address other issues such as Palestinian terrorism.*

- *Do you support the use of an American veto to block one-sided anti-Israel resolutions in the Security Council?*
- *What do you believe should be the standard employed in deciding whether to veto or not?*
- *Do you believe that there is a disproportionate focus on Israel at the UN? How would you counter this at the UN?*

**At the UN, we will continue to uphold President-elect Biden’s strong commitment to Israel and its security. This includes opposing efforts to unfairly single out or delegitimize Israel**

**through one-sided resolutions, reports, and other actions across the United Nations, including the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council, and other bodies. If confirmed, I also look forward to working with our Israeli diplomatic colleagues, to promote the election of Israel to UN leadership posts, inclusion in UN working groups, and support for qualified Israeli candidates for UN positions.**

Elections at the UN

*I introduced the STRATEGIC Act to advance a comprehensive U.S. policy for competition with China. The legislation authorizes the Office of UN Integrity that the Trump Administration stood up within the Bureau of International Organizations.*

- *If confirmed, would you support the sustainment and authorization of such an office?*
- *Additionally the STRATEGIC Act establishes a Special Envoy for Integrity within the UN System. If confirmed, will you appoint a Special Envoy for UN Integrity to examine malign influence in UN elections and UN bodies? If not, why not?*

**We have seen that when America walks away from the UN, others fill the void. When we forfeit our seat at the UN, others step in and occupy the space. We will use our re-engagement in the UN system to push back against the rising influence of China and others. Our approach toward China at the UN will derive from a clear and compelling affirmative U.S. policy agenda, based on American values and interests that we drive in UN forums and with our allies and partners. When China opposes that agenda, we will seek to outmaneuver China. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress to ensure the State Department is organized effectively to do so.**

- *China has focused intensely on securing leadership roles in various UN agencies, particularly those overseeing technical standards that will shape the future. In many cases, these leaders have overtly advanced Chinese Communist Party goals, instead of acting independently to advance the global good. It is clear the United States has had mixed success with elections for heads of International Organizations in the past, and is taking more robust and coordinated steps to advocate for qualified and independent candidates in UN bodies?*

**China engages robustly across the entire UN system to drive its anti-human rights and development agenda. The U.S. has been absent from those discussions for the past four years, and it is time for us to re-engage actively. We cannot compete unless we return as a strong diplomatic player and make sure we're engaged and in good standing across the United Nations. If confirmed, I will prioritize U.S. efforts to advocate for qualified and independent candidates in UN bodies.**

- *If confirmed, will you prioritize robust strategies to secure the election qualified and independent candidates to lead UN/IO bodies, especially highly specialized agencies?*

**The Biden-Harris administration believes in the independence and integrity of UN/IO bodies, including highly specialized agencies, and agrees with the importance of electing qualified and independent candidates to lead such bodies. If confirmed, I will prioritize robust strategies to secure the election of such candidates.**

Peace Corps

*Due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, the Peace Corps evacuated roughly 7,000 American citizens from posts abroad. Mission China was scheduled to close in 2021, but due to the uncertain nature of the virus, was closed early.*

- *Do you believe that the Peace Corps should re-enter China?*

**If confirmed, I will ensure that the State Department thoughtfully reviews this question with Peace Corps leadership, ensuring that our top priority remains the health and safety of U.S. volunteers.**

- *Do you believe China meets the criteria for a country to establish or maintain such a mission?*

**If confirmed, I will ensure that the Peace Corps maintains rigorous and careful criteria for opening and maintaining country missions.**

- *The Peace Corps began deploying small cohorts of volunteers to countries that had begun to open in early 2021. How will you work with the Director of the Peace Corps to ensure a safe re-entry for American Citizens as they return to service?*

**Our embassies will work closely with Peace Corps country programs to review local public conditions, assess potential risks to volunteers, and enact appropriate measures to minimize COVID-19 risk. We will take an evidence-based approach to determining when and how volunteers can return to service.**

Saudi Arabia Human Rights

*Saudi Arabia has a long record of arbitrarily detaining its own citizens and U.S. dual nationals, including prominent women's rights activists.*

- *If confirmed, how will you secure the unconditional and immediate release of these women, including Loujain al-Hathloul, Samar Badawi, Nassima al-Sada, Nouf Abdulaziz and Maya'a al-Zahrani?*
- *What strategies will you use in the Saudi-U.S. bilateral relationship to bolster human rights in country?*
- *What steps will you take to ensure all detainees are given fair trials and proper detention conditions?*

As President Biden said in October, “I will defend the right of activists, political dissidents, and journalists around the world to speak their minds freely without fear of persecution and violence.” Our administration intends to elevate human rights issues across our foreign policy, including specifically in our relationship with Saudi Arabia. I will raise the cases of political prisoners directly with leaders in Saudi Arabia. The Biden-Harris administration will make clear from the outset that the issue of political prisoners - including brave Saudi women like those you mentioned - will be a priority in U.S. relations with Saudi Arabia; and that Saudi Arabia will face U.S. pressure to avoid additional detentions as well as resolve current cases. If confirmed, I will also ensure that Embassy Riyadh is giving these cases the attention they deserve.

Egypt Human Rights

- *The Egyptian government has a less-than-stellar record on human rights, including recent arbitrary detentions of human rights activists, impunity for security services, deplorable detention conditions, suppression of fundamental freedoms, and more. It is important that the United States seek to bolster human rights and civil society in Egypt. What tools will you use to address these human rights abuses and end impunity for those committing them?*

**President Biden is deeply committed to human rights, and has directed his Administration to elevate human rights and rule of law concerns in U.S. foreign policy. If confirmed, I will elevate human rights in our bilateral relationship with Egypt and in doing so consider the variety of tools available to the Biden-Harris Administration to signal that these issues are a priority.**

Iran Policy

JCPOA and INARA

*The Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act (PL 114-17) (“INARA”) requires the President to provide to Congress the text and related materials of any agreement with Iran relating to the nuclear program of Iran within five days of reaching the agreement. Additionally, INARA stipulates that the administration certify that such an agreement is not “inimical to or constitute an unreasonable risk to the common defense and security.”*

- *Would the requirements of INARA cited above apply to any future nuclear deal with Iran?*

**The Biden-Harris administration will strictly follow the requirements of INARA with regard to any new agreement entered into with Iran that falls under the provisions of the Act.**

- *Would the requirements of INARA cited above apply to any process of rejoining or reaffirming U.S. participation in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action?*

President Biden has pledged to work closely with Congress, and this includes briefing on any plans regarding the administration's future course of action. The JCPOA was submitted under INARA in 2015 and underwent close congressional and public scrutiny. The administration will look at whether INARA would require that the deal be submitted again, but in any case, if confirmed, I am committed to consulting with Congress on the path forward. Should the U.S. resume JCPOA participation, it will of course result in a resumption of the extensive reporting required under the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act (INARA), which ended after the United States ceased participating in the deal.

- *What is your definition of "an unreasonable risk to the common defense and security"?*
- *Would a resurgent Iranian ballistic missile program constitute "an unreasonable risk to common defense and security"?*

**If confirmed, I am committed to fully consulting with Congress on any nuclear agreement with Iran as called for under the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act. This includes complying with any certification or reporting requirements related to common defense and security.**

*Do you believe that the United States is a "JCPOA participant" as described in UN Security Council Resolution 2231 (2015)?*

**The issue of whether the United States is a "JCPOA participant" came up in the context of the Trump administration's efforts to invoke "snapback" at the United Nations Security Council -- in other words, to reimpose all UN sanctions that were lifted pursuant to the nuclear deal. The threat of snapback of UN sanctions is a significant concern for Iran and provides leverage to ensure they comply with the JCPOA. The Trump Administration invoked it in a way that was never contemplated by the deal, namely after unilaterally withdrawing from it. The fact that virtually none of our allies or partners believes that snapback was achieved, underscores the need to act in accordance with the purpose of the Security Council resolution, and to take into account the views of our allies.**

#### *Iran and China*

*In recent years, China has become Iran's preeminent oil and trading partner, providing Iran with crucial technological support to help develop its energy resources and other forms of infrastructure. In June 2020, China and Iran allegedly entered into a 'Comprehensive Strategic Partnership', which includes a maximum investment of \$400 billion to improve Iran's oil, gas, and transportation infrastructure.*

- *What impact does Chinese economic investment have on the efficacy of the international sanction regimes against Iran? What gains does China receive from such investment?*
- *How would the Chinese government, or Chinese-based companies, benefit from the lifting of U.S. sanctions against Iran?*
- *How does the United States drive a wedge between or shape CCP-Iranian relations?*

- *Beyond economic considerations, China and Iran have also furthered their strategic and defense cooperation. China, and Chinese-based entities, are known to have supplied Iran's missile, nuclear, and conventional weapons programs. How does Chinese support to the development of Iran's nuclear program impact U.S. interests and objectives with respect to Iran?*

**The President is committed to ensuring as broad a multilateral coalition as possible to address Iran's nuclear program and destabilizing activities. That will mean seeking to work with China, which has close ties to Iran, to ensure they are on board and, at a minimum, will not create impediments to our diplomatic objectives. Competition defines our relationship with China, but in the past it has been cooperative in efforts to constrain Iran's nuclear program as it should have no interest in seeing Iran develop a nuclear weapon and in the profoundly destabilizing impact that would have in a region upon which China depends for its oil imports. On the economic front, the last few years have seen both a decrease in trade between China and Iran due to U.S. sanctions and China's fear of exposing itself to our sanctions, and the announcement of the China-Iran Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. On paper, the agreement is substantial, although it is hard to know whether the items listed will be followed through. Working with our allies and partners, using sanctions and other means at our disposal, the administration will seek to pressure China and other countries not to take steps vis-a-vis Iran that threaten our interests.**

- *The People's Liberation Army's presence in Djibouti, coupled with Chinese investments across the Red Sea region, have prompted growing concern about malign Chinese influence in the Middle East and North African region. How do you plan to contend with the growth of Chinese commercial and strategic expansion, including its coercive economic statecraft?*
- *Diplomatic and security engagement with U.S. partners in the Middle East and North Africa can advance our interests and values, while highlighting the dangers associated with dealing with China, including its coercive economic statecraft.*
- *Is there a strategy for engagement when it comes to Chinese cooperation with U.S. partners and allies in the region? What messages do you plan to send them? What tools do you see as being at your disposal to thwart nefarious Chinese ambitions in the region, and in what context would you be willing to deploy them?*

**Enhancing our alliances and partnerships through diplomatic, development, and security initiatives is vital as some countries in the region extend their cooperation with China. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing and advancing our strategies to protect and secure U.S. interests in the region.**

#### Israel – Palestinian Policy

##### Abraham Accords

- *Please provide your view of the Abraham Accords and their impacts for regional security, economic cooperation, and prosperity in the region.*

President Biden welcomed the Abraham Accords as an important contribution to peace in a divided region. The Biden-Harris Administration will seek to build on these agreements to further strengthen cooperation between Israel and its neighbors. And we will work with other Arab and Muslim countries to encourage them to normalize relations with Israel. We look forward to learning more about what commitments the Trump administration may have undertaken in finalizing these agreements, which we will give the fullest consideration.

- *If confirmed, how do you and the Biden administration plan to expand on the Abraham Accords to broker additional normalization agreements and ensure that existing agreements reap tangible economic and security benefits?*

The Abraham Accords are an important contribution to peace and security in the Middle East. The Biden-Harris Administration will seek to build on the agreements to expand the circle of peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors. We will also closely monitor the status of the normalization agreements reached over the last few months, encouraging the Arab states to uphold their commitments to establish full diplomatic relations with Israel.

- *Some argue that the Trump administration's exit from the nuclear deal and maximum pressure against Iran coupled with its clear pro-Israel policies set the conditions for normalization under the Abraham Accords. Please provide your perspectives on this argument.*

As I said before the Committee, I applaud the Trump administration's role in the normalization agreements between Israel and its Arab neighbors. These agreements reflect recognition by Israel and Arab countries that they hold many interests in common and can most effectively address them through cooperation. However, it is important to acknowledge that the Abraham Accords are the product of years of quiet diplomacy between Israel and the Arab world that was supported by U.S. administrations from both parties. In some cases, these normalization agreements formalized a state of affairs that had existed informally for some time.

Palestinian Status and Associated Issues

*In 2016 John Kerry argued that there would be no "separate peace" between Israel and Arabs without first solving the issue of Palestinian statehood.*

- *What are your views on Palestinian statehood and its ties to additional normalization agreements?*
- *Doesn't re-inserting Palestinian statehood back into the peace process hinder prospects of further normalizations with Israel?*
- *What is your assessment of Palestinian leadership and its ability to reach consensus between Gaza and the West Bank on issues of statehood and support for terrorism?*
- *In your view, how do Israeli-Arab normalization agreements affect the prospects for Israel-Palestinian peace negotiations?*



- *What are your views on the Trump Administration's plan for Middle East peace and requirements that the Palestinian Authority must cease terrorist activity and cease martyr/prison payments in order to achieve statehood? Can you commit to rejecting any offer of Palestinian statehood until concerns about the PA's extremist behavior are addressed?*

**President Biden continues to believe that the two-state solution is the best way to ensure Israel's future as a Jewish and Democratic state, while upholding the Palestinians' right to a viable, sovereign state of their own. The Abraham Accords are an important contribution to peace and security in the Middle East and it is our hope that these normalization agreements will ultimately lead to progress in resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The normalization agreements between Israel and its Arab neighbors reflect recognition that they hold many interests in common and can most effectively address them through cooperation. We are optimistic that this trend will continue and the circle of peace between Israel and the Arab world will further widen. The Biden-Harris Administration will restore credible U.S. engagement with the Palestinians in support of a two-state solution. We will oppose any unilateral actions that make a two-state outcome to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict more difficult, whether incitement, settlement construction, or annexation of the West Bank. The President publicly supported passage of the Taylor Force Act, and he has never hesitated to condemn terrorism or incitement by Palestinian actors. You can expect that to continue during his administration. The Biden-Harris Administration will also restore assistance to the Palestinian people, not as a favor but because it is in U.S. interests. This funding serves important purposes, including supporting Israeli-Palestinian security coordination, providing critical humanitarian relief, and fostering economic development. The suspension of aid to the Palestinians has neither produced political progress nor secured concessions from the Palestinian leadership. It has only harmed innocent Palestinian people, while undermining the credibility of the U.S. to bring both sides to the table to reach a negotiated solution. We appreciate congressional concerns regarding U.S. aid to the Palestinians and I can assure you that we will provide all aid consistent with relevant U.S. laws.**

- *Please provide your views on the relocation of the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem, recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, and United States recognition of Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights. What is your view on the reversibility of these U.S. policies?*

**As I said before the committee, the Biden-Harris Administration will not reverse President Trump's decision to move the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem. Nor will reverse U.S. recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. As long as Bashar al-Assad is in control of Syria, it would be irresponsible to urge Israel to part with the Golan Heights.**

- *Please provide your views on the relative benefits and risks of ESF and INCLE expenditures targeted towards the Palestinian people and security forces.*

**President Biden has pledged to restore assistance to the Palestinian people, not as a favor but because it is in U.S. interests. This funding serves important purposes, including**

**supporting Israeli-Palestinian security coordination, providing critical humanitarian relief, and fostering economic development. In so doing, the Biden-Harris Administration will fully comply with U.S. law, including the Taylor Force Act. We appreciate congressional interest in assistance to the Palestinians, and look forward to consulting with you.**

*Iraq Policy*

Strategic Iraq Objectives

*At great cost, the United States has worked to support a sovereign independent Iraq, reframe the US-Iraq bilateral relationship, and foster regional stability.*

- *How do you plan to continue to further U.S. interests in Iraq?*
- *What are your priority lines of effort linked to U.S. national security interests?*
- *What role will institutional reform and anti-corruption efforts play in this strategy?*
- *What role will countering Iranian influence play in this strategy?*
- *How do you plan to address the presence of Iranian-backed militias?*

**The Biden-Harris Administration supports a strategic partnership with a stable, democratic Iraq. The Administration will be a steady, reliable partner that supports Iraq's anti-corruption and economic reform efforts, helps it improve regional relationships, provides humanitarian assistance, backs efforts to control militias and counter Iran's malicious activities, and advises and assists Iraqi counterterrorism forces. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Committee on ways to advance these priorities.**

Preventing an Islamic State Resurgence

*Critics point to President Obama's withdrawal from Iraq in 2011 as one of the biggest errors of his presidency. The Obama Administration departed without securing a Status of Forces Agreement, allowed the Iraqi Security Forces to atrophy, did not adequately address the abuses of the Maliki government, and failed to address Sunni disenfranchisement that ultimately set conditions for the Islamic State's unchecked movement across the Iraqi border in 2014.*

- *Please provide your perspectives on the root causes of the rise of the Islamic State in Iraq as they related to U.S. policies, views on current troop levels as they relate to State Department objectives, and recommendations on key State Department initiatives for preventing an Islamic State resurgence.*

**The most important factor that led to the rise of the Islamic State in Iraq was the effort by the Iraqi government led by Prime Minister Maliki to marginalize Iraq's Sunni Arab population. Going forward, the Biden Administration supports maintaining a small number of troops to advise and assist Iraqi counter-terrorism forces to deal with the continuing threat from ISIS. If confirmed, I will ensure that the State Department is working to support the Administration's strategic objective of a stable and democratic Iraq.**

- *How appropriate are current bilateral diplomatic agreements (exchange of notes) for a sustained diplomatic and security cooperation mission?*

**If confirmed, I will review current agreements with Iraq to ensure that they provide a basis for continued diplomatic and security cooperation in support of the Biden-Harris Administration's strategic objective of a stable and democratic Iraq.**

#### **The Future of Iraqi Security Assistance**

- *Iraq's security apparatus remains dependent on DoD-administered Counter-ISIS Train and Equip Fund (CTEF) and congressionally-appropriated foreign military financing (FMF). Additionally, nearly 50% of Iraq's FMF expenditures are consumed with maintaining existing contracts. Please provide your thoughts on transitioning Iraq from CTEF to more traditional forms of Title 22 security cooperation, and 'right sizing' the Iraqi Security Forces in a manner that the government of Iraq can sustain given current budget shortfalls.*

**If confirmed, I will ask the State Department to consult with relevant offices across the interagency and with Congress to ensure that U.S. support for Iraqi security forces is effectively managed and enables our Iraqi partners to continue taking the lead in securing the country.**

#### Embassy Baghdad Staffing

- *The State Department has significantly reduced manning at key posts in Afghanistan and Iraq, often simultaneously with Department of Defense troop reductions. Arguably, as the DoD winds down its presence in these locations towards the end of major combat operations, diplomacy is paramount to ensure a durable peace. Can you commit to consultations with Congress before any decisions are made to reduce Embassy Staffing, particularly in Iraq and Afghanistan?*

**If confirmed, I will ensure that the State Department consults with Congress regarding any significant reductions in staffing levels in Iraq and Afghanistan.**

#### Syria Policy

##### **National Security Objectives**

- Please outline United States national security interests and objectives in Syria.

**U.S. national security objectives in Syria include preventing the resurgence of ISIS so that the terrorist group cannot directly threaten the United States and its interests; maintaining pressure on Al-Qaeda-affiliated groups; preventing a renewal of fighting that produces large-scale refugee flows that further destabilize U.S. partners and allies; promoting the provision of life-saving humanitarian aid to Syrian civilians in need; securing reforms in**

**Damascus that improve the welfare of Syrian civilians; and preventing the outbreak of broader regional conflict.**

**U.S. Role in Syria**

*In July you tweeted, "When Joe Biden is president, we will restore U.S. leadership on humanitarian issues [in Syria]." However, lack of United States engagement and enforcement of chemical weapons 'redlines' during the Obama administration opened the door to increased Russian involvement and allowed the civil war and abuses against the Syrian people to continue unabated. Current progress towards a political reconciliation under UNSCR 2254 have similarly stalled.*

- *Please provide your views on the United States' role in Syria and accelerating progress on UNSCR 2254.*

**The Biden-Harris Administration will support the work of the UN Special Envoy for Syria with high level diplomacy, coordinate with our allies and partners, and advocate through the United Nations Security Council. If confirmed, I will support the work of the constitutional committee that is called for by United Nations Security Council Resolution 2254 and renew U.S. efforts to promote a political settlement to end Syria's terrible civil war.**

- U.S. Syria policy is broadly governed by UNSCR 2254 and associated sanctions regimes. Does Bashar al Assad's expanded military control alter the prospects of a political settlement under UNSCR 2254? Do we need a new construct for Syria policy?

**A political settlement must address the underlying causes that led to nearly a decade of civil war. The Biden-Harris Administration will use the tools at its disposal, including economic pressure, to push for meaningful reform and accountability, and will continue to support the UN's role in negotiating a political settlement.**

- What is the linkage between U.S. troop levels in Syria, countering the Islamic State, blunting Iranian designs, influencing Turkish and Russian Syria calculus, and associated impacts on political UNSCR 2254 discussions?

**Preventing an ISIS resurgence in Iraq and Syria, as well as addressing the threats posed by its affiliates and networks beyond the Middle East, demands revitalized U.S. engagement, along with our partners and allies in the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS. Accordingly, President Biden has expressed support for maintaining U.S. forces in northeast Syria to support local partners and prevent the group's resurgence. The Biden-Harris Administration will be open to dialogue with Russia on Syria as long as it contributes to protecting civilians and to credibly moving the conflict toward a political solution. We will also continue to deconflict military operations with Russia, so that pressure is sustained on ISIS remnants in Syria. Turkey's concerns with respect to U.S. Syrian Kurdish partners in the fight against ISIS have not changed. We will consult with Ankara, and seek areas for cooperation on Syria.**

- What relative effect would a U.S. troop withdrawal have on U.S. influence over future negotiations?

**There is no military solution to end the war in Syria in a sustainable manner. The only path forward is a negotiated political settlement.**

*The Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act*

- *The Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act* is intended to prevent rehabilitation of the Assad regime, seek accountability for the regime's atrocities, and advance a political solution to the conflict. Please provide your views on the role of this legislation in furthering U.S. objectives in Syria.

**Members of Congress spoke clearly on this issue when they voted for the Caesar Civilian Protection Act in the last Congress imposing military, political, and accountability benchmarks for the Assad regime before it can receive sanctions relief. The United States remains an important voice on Assad's future in a variety of diplomatic groups focused on Syria, and at the United Nations Security Council. We will consult with our partners, and with Congress, to shape and set expectations for behavior changes by the regime in Damascus.**

*Turkey in Syria*

Turkey's objectives in northeast Syria run counter to U.S. interests while we tacitly support their activities in the northwest.

- How do we reconcile and balance Syria and Turkey policy?

**The United States and Turkey share an interest in sustainably ending the Syria civil war. The Biden-Harris Administration will consult Ankara on Syria policy, and seek areas for cooperation.**

- Can you balance Syria-Turkey policy without finding a Kurdish solution?

**The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in northeast Syria remain a capable and committed military partner in the fight against ISIS. They cannot continue the defeat-ISIS mission, or guard the remaining tens of thousands ISIS detainees and families, without U.S. support. Turkey's concerns with respect to U.S. Syrian Kurdish partners in the fight against ISIS have not changed. We will consult with Ankara, and seek areas for cooperation on Syria.**

*Libya Policy*

U.S Role in Libya

- Current United States policy relies on Europe and other actors to lead on Libya stabilization. Is there an argument for a more muscular U.S. role?

The situation in Libya remains uncertain, but it may be possible to build on a recently agreed cease-fire to advance stability in the country. Elections are planned for December 2021, and the UN-led Political Dialogue Forum is a rare opportunity to advance progress towards a solution. The Biden-Harris Administration will support the UN Special Envoy to advance this process. The U.S. can play an important role in building international support behind the steps the Libyans must agree on themselves.

In addition to the political track, the Biden-Harris Administration will continue to work to prevent ISIS from developing a stronger foothold in Libya. Terrorists and other armed groups continue to exploit the security vacuum in Libya, which underscores the importance of lowering tensions and making progress on governance.

Foreign Actors Contributing to Libya's Instability

*A recent UN expert report on Libya accused the warring parties and their international backers — the United Arab Emirates, Russia and Egypt on one side and Turkey and Qatar on the other — of violating the arms embargo with total impunity.*

- How do you plan to address reported violations of the UN arms embargo?
- How do you impose costs on arms embargo violators without harming U.S. objectives in other areas?

It is time for external actors to disentangle themselves from Libya and to give the Libyan people the space to make their own decisions. The current cease-fire agreement calls for respecting the UN arms embargo and for the removal of foreign forces in Libya. The Biden-Harris Administration will be looking at how the U.S. can best leverage our influence with external actors that have influence in Libya. This includes Turkey, which has supported the internationally-recognized government in Tripoli, and Egypt, Russia, and the UAE, which have been supporting factions in the eastern part of the country.

Russian Involvement in Libya

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

Russian President Putin has increased his use of private military companies like the Wagner Group in an attempt to increase Russian influence on the cheap and distance the Kremlin from unsavory and risky actions the group takes, giving Putin plausible deniability about his actions beyond Russia's borders. The United States should explore a range of options for curtailing the influence of Russian private military contractors,

**ranging from sanctions to increasing the awareness of local populations about who these groups are and the negative consequences of their activities.**

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

**Russian support for spoilers in Libya undermines the UN-supported political process, while perpetuating the conflict and the suffering of Libyan civilians. ISIS will continue to exploit instability and security vacuums to remain active in Libya.**

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

**Through its nefarious activities in Libya, Russia seeks to challenge U.S. and European leadership in North Africa, entrench Russian economic interests, and secure military positions that challenge the United States and NATO.**

#### Egypt Policy

##### U.S. Egypt Relationship

- *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?*

**We take Russia's growing influence in Egypt and elsewhere in the Middle East very seriously. It is regrettable that Egypt, a strategic partner of the United States, would cooperate with an American strategic competitor. We will expect more from Egypt, which continues to receive substantial U.S. diplomatic and financial support. We fully understand congressional interest in this issue and look forward to consulting closely with you on our approach.**

- *How have the Obama Administration's decisions to place various holds on military aid to Egypt affected Egypt's relationship with Russia and the United States? More broadly, is FMS or FMF an effective lever to modify conduct?*

**While Egypt's engagement with Russia is concerning, we do not believe that Cairo is seeking to replace the United States with Russia. There is no substitute for U.S. diplomatic support on the world stage or access to international capital markets. Egypt also continues to prefer U.S. military equipment. The Biden-Harris Administration would like to develop a cooperative relationship with Egypt, but such a relationship depends on a greater Egyptian willingness to address U.S. concerns.**

- *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?*

The United States has an interest in the stability of Egypt and the welfare of the Egyptian people. Where we share interests, such as in promoting Arab-Israeli cooperation and countering extremism, we will seek to partner constructively with Egypt. However, we have deep concerns about the level of repression in Egypt. Repression and human rights abuses are not only contrary to American values, but also undercut Egypt's own dynamism and stability as our partner. We will consistently raise these issues, both publicly and privately, and will work with Congress to champion human rights.

- *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?*

We are tracking the Egyptian purchase of Su-35s from Russia, which is just one manifestation of growing Egyptian-Russian cooperation. We will give full consideration to our options in addressing this problem, including, if appropriate, CAATSA sanctions. We fully understand congressional interest in this issue and look forward to consulting closely with you on our approach.

Middle East Security and Diplomatic Constructs

Potential Multilateral Approaches to the Middle East

- *Have the Abraham Accords set conditions for a renewed Middle East Strategic Alliance (MESA) or a derivative? What multilateral structures would a Biden Administration suggest to maintain stability in the Middle East while simultaneously reducing U.S. commitment?*

The Abraham Accords are a historic and welcome development in a polarized region. We will work to build on them and continue efforts to turn erstwhile enemies into partners. The Middle East remains perhaps the world's most under-institutionalized region. Bringing its nations into more constructive dialogue to reduce the risk of conflict and create and enforce regional norms for interstate conduct is an important and worthwhile goal. So too is ensuring that U.S. partners in the region can deepen their cooperation against common challenges such as the threat from Iran. As for the specific modalities of a Middle East regional construct and what U.S. commitments might accompany it, that is an issue we will have to study further in office. We will look closely and open-mindedly at the work of our predecessors and gauge what approach will best advance U.S. interests - and we would welcome your thoughts on this issue as well.

- *Would these multilateral structures force the United States to rely on imperfect partners with imperfect human rights records? How does the United States strike the appropriate*



*balance between U.S. presence and reliance on imperfect partners to maintain security and accomplish U.S. national security interests?*

**We cannot yet say what form multilateral regional cooperation might ultimately take, which is an issue that will require further study. But on the broader dilemma you raise, President Biden has made clear that he intends to elevate the role of human rights in U.S. Middle East policy and assert U.S. leverage to seek more responsible conduct. We will partner with a wide range of states around the world to protect the American people and advance their interests, fight terrorism, end conflicts, promote trade, and deepen people-to-people ties. But we will never lose sight of U.S. national interests and values and will push back forcefully against abuses of human rights by partners and adversaries alike.**

*Saudi Arabia Policy*

*During a November 2019 primary debate, President-elect Biden said he would limit arms sales to Saudi Arabia and make them the "...pariah that they are." Isolating Saudi Arabia would likely have negative consequences for U.S.-Saudi counterterrorism cooperation, would diminish U.S. efforts to improve Saudi Arabia's human rights record, and would eliminate Saudi Arabia's potentially helpful role in a broader Middle Eastern multilateral security construct.*

- *How do you interpret President-elect Biden's 'pariah' comments and how would you frame the U.S.-Saudi relationship in a Biden Administration?*

**President Biden has called for an end to U.S. support for the Saudi-led war in Yemen and for a broader reassessment of U.S. policy toward Saudi Arabia. He recognizes the value of continued cooperation to deter Iran and counter terrorism, but believes that "America should insist on responsible Saudi actions and impose consequences for reckless ones." Accordingly, the United States will cooperate with Saudi Arabia where our priorities align and will not shy away from defending U.S. interests and values where they do not. President Biden has also said he would want to hear how Saudi Arabia intends to change its approach to work with the incoming U.S. administration.**

- *What are the implications for U.S.-Saudi CT cooperation and regional stability?*

**Counterterrorism partnership between the United States and Saudi Arabia benefits both countries, and our hope is that it will continue even if we have differences over regional policy, as it has in the past. We believe that ending the Yemen war and reducing tensions with Iran will deliver benefits not just to U.S. interests, but to many states in the region. The United States will work with Saudi Arabia and other countries to manage the threat posed by Houthi capabilities; to defend its territory; and to end a costly, damaging war in Yemen. The United States provides very limited support to the Saudi-led coalition (SLC) in Yemen primarily focused on countering the threats from Houthi ballistic missiles and drones. A Biden Administration has telegraphed that it would end U.S. support for the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen.**

- *How would limiting support to the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen impact regional security?*
- *How would a reduction in U.S. support impact U.S. efforts to curb SLC civilian casualty rates?*
- *How do you anticipate such a move would affect UN-led peace efforts in Yemen and U.S. ability to influence the prospects for a lasting, and inclusive settlement in Yemen?*

**We believe that the Yemen war itself has had an adverse effect on regional security: creating opportunities for Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, ISIS, and Iran to entrench themselves while Yemenis have suffered. Ending U.S. support for the Saudi-led coalition, as President Biden has promised to do, is a necessary correction to U.S. policy; but also must be part of a larger effort to end the Yemen war itself, which has been costly and damaging to Saudi Arabia as well as to the Yemeni people. We recognize the efforts the U.S. military has made to help Saudi Arabia reduce civilian casualties and will consider how best to advance this goal as U.S. support changes, while pursuing the ultimate goal of reducing civilian casualties by ending the fighting through a negotiated solution. As for the UN process, we look forward to redoubling U.S. efforts to support UN Special Envoy Martin Griffiths in his work. It is too early to say how this necessary policy change, consistent with the expressed will of Congress, will affect UN peace efforts. Our hope is that an end to U.S. support, coupled with a renewed commitment to U.S. diplomacy and expanded humanitarian access, can help create conditions for the parties to reach a compromise that has so far eluded them.**

*United Arab Emirates Policy*

*UAE's Role in the Middle East*

*UAE has served as an important U.S. partner in the Middle East and Afghanistan. UAE-led efforts to normalize diplomatic ties with Israel under the Abraham Accords, and has a deep economic relationship with the United States.*

- *What is the UAE's role in the broader Middle East vis-a-vis U.S. national interests?*

**The United Arab Emirates is among the United States' closest economic, diplomatic, and security partners in the Middle East. It also has built some of the most effective institutions and companies in the region. It has shown, in its historic outreach to Israel and even with its recent diplomacy to lower tensions with Iran, that it can contribute meaningfully to a more peaceful Middle East. In other settings, the United Arab Emirates' rivalry with Qatar divided U.S. partners in the region and exacerbated local conflicts in Libya and elsewhere. Its past participation in the Yemen war and human rights record also raise concerns and will require continued U.S. engagement. The United States will look to the United Arab Emirates to continue its close and multifaceted partnership with the United States; build on its historic engagement with Israel; engage constructively to address the range of concerns our countries face from Iran; work to end regional conflicts and stabilize**

their aftermath; address human rights concerns; and continue its welcome progress toward easing its rift with Qatar.

- *What role might it play in a Middle Eastern multilateral construct?*

We welcome a deepening of regional cooperation, especially where it reduces the risk of conflict and helps our partners enhance their security. As for the specifics of a Middle East regional construct, as mentioned above, this is an idea we will have to study further.

- *How does the United States moderate UAE's often expeditionary Muslim Brotherhood-oriented foreign policy and encourage it to take a more productive role?*

The United States will work to encourage our partners on both sides of the GCC rift to recognize their common interest in cooperation. We will encourage both sides to build on recent progress in easing the rift itself and more constructively managing continued differences. From defense cooperation to bilateral trade to stability in places like Libya and Somalia, we see significant benefits that can be achieved via closer cooperation. Where we see damaging zero-sum competition, we will press the United Arab Emirates, as well as Qatar and other regional states, to take a different approach.

#### UAE, Russia and China

- *Despite being a key U.S. partner in the region, and central to normalization efforts with Israel, UAE also has a history of deepening cooperation with Russia and China that runs counter to U.S. interests. How does the department plan to address the UAE's partnership with Russia and China?*

Several U.S. partners in the Middle East have deepened cooperation with Russia and China in recent years. Some cooperation is benign or even beneficial; but other cooperation runs up against U.S. interests including the security of sensitive weapons systems and information technology. The United States will address these issues forthrightly with the United Arab Emirates and other partners to convey and underscore U.S. concerns.

*As a part of arms sales to UAE following the Abraham Accords, the UAE agreed to several conditions that were pending state-to-state codification. Please provide an update on the conditions of sale.*

**If confirmed, I will review the details of this weapons sale and the conditions you describe. I am committed to returning to regular order with respect to the arms sales consultative process with Congress. I look forward to consulting with the Committee on this matter.**

#### UAE and Libya

- *In your assessment, how closely are the Emiratis coordinating with the Russian state, as well as its subsidiaries like Wagner, in Libya? What forms does this coordination take?*

*Are there instances in which it has escalated into concrete and tangible support, whether that be to the Russian state or Russian-aligned operators?*

**We are aware of reports, including from the Defense Department's Office of the Inspector General, that the United Arab Emirates may be supporting the Wagner group in Libya. If confirmed, I will have my team report back to you in the appropriate setting on this issue.**

*UAE and Syria*

*There is growing concern over the prospect of the UAE normalizing ties with Bashar al-Assad.*

- *Do you share this concern?*

**I am concerned by any actions by any government that would normalize ties with an unreformed regime in Damascus.**

- *Are there tools the United States can employ to prevent the UAE from normalizing relations with the Assad regime, including with respect to potential UAE provision of reconstruction funds to Syria?*

**The United States retains a variety of executive and statutory tools to deter governments and private sector entities from normalizing ties, engaging in business, or providing reconstruction aid to an unreformed regime in Damascus.**

**Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Rift**

*The GCC rift has posed a serious obstacle to regional security and stability and splintered a unified front against Iranian aggression. The recent agreement at Al-Ula, however, may signal a thawing of relations and a potential end to the Gulf Rift.*

- *Given the Al-Ula agreement, what are the prospects that the dispute can be resolved in an enduring manner, and what would be the best approach for doing so?*
- *Would your State Department plan to support and advance Kuwaiti led mediation efforts? If so, how?*
- *What lesser confidence building measures would you consider to build on the Al-Ula agreement and ensure a lasting end to the Gulf dispute?*

**The GCC rift divided U.S. partners and made our work in the region more difficult. We are encouraged to see that the two sides made headway at al-Ulla. While not all differences were resolved, this meeting brought meaningful progress and a commitment to continued work to lower tensions. We will strongly encourage both sides to sustain the momentum toward rapprochement and constructively address those differences that remain. We welcome Kuwait's good offices in reducing tensions. We will look into both specific confidence building steps and potential support for Kuwaiti mediation going forward in advancing what we deem to be an important U.S. interest in further easing the GCC rift.**

Yemen PolicyYemen Political Resolution

- *In your assessment, is there more the United States can do diplomatically to end the war in Yemen? If so what?*
- *In October 2020, then-candidate Biden suggested that, “under a Biden-Harris Administration, we will reassess our relationship with the Kingdom [of Saudi Arabia], end U.S. support for Saudi Arabia’s war in Yemen.” How do you anticipate ending U.S. support to the Saudi-led coalition will affect U.S. efforts to reach a comprehensive and inclusive settlement in Yemen?*
- *What are the U.S. interests in ending the conflict in Yemen? Can you ensure U.S. equities will be taken into account in a final settlement if the United States reduces, restricts, or cuts off support to the Saudi-led coalition (SLC)?*
- *Do you believe UNSCR 2216 properly reflects the current context in Yemen? Will the new Administration seek to modify this UNSCR?*

**President Biden has pledged to cease U.S. support for the Saudi-led military campaign in Yemen, which has become a strategic, humanitarian and moral disaster. We also intend to revitalize diplomacy, alongside the UN and others, to end the war itself. While Saudi Arabia faces legitimate threats from the Houthis, its war has emboldened Sunni jihadists, caused a humanitarian catastrophe, and further entrenched Iran in Yemen. We need to use what leverage we have to push all sides to end this war.**

The Role of the Houthis in Yemen

- *What role do you see the Houthis playing in perpetuating conflict? Do you have concern about Houthi military and human rights abuses? How do you plan to address said abuses?*

**The Houthis are violent actors, whose leadership should be held accountable for their actions. They violently seized control of Yemen’s capital, attack nonmilitary targets inside Saudi Arabia, abuse the human rights of Yemenis under their control, thwart the provision of humanitarian aid, accept illicit support from Iran, and have held Americans against their will, with one even dying while unjustly held. The Biden administration will not hesitate to apply pressure to push the Houthis to curb their abuses and negotiate to end the war.**

- *To what extent do the Houthis pose a legitimate security threat to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia? How does your administration plan to address this threat to the Kingdom, as well all U.S. citizens residing therein?*

**The Houthis do indeed pose a legitimate threat to the security of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and thereby to U.S. citizens residing there. We intend to hold its leadership accountable for its conduct; work with Saudi Arabia to bolster its defenses against various dangerous Houthi capabilities; help ensure the Houthis cannot gain access to further**

**advanced capabilities; and work to end the Yemen war, including an end to Houthi attacks on Saudi territory.**

- *What is your position on the designation of the Houthis as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO)? How will this designation impact diplomatic efforts to end the war as well as U.S. efforts to address the humanitarian crisis?*

**We share bipartisan congressional concerns about the last-minute decision to designate the Houthis as a Foreign Terrorist Organization and a Specially Designated Global Terrorist Entity. While we understand that the Houthis are far from benign actors, we take seriously the warnings from the United Nations and international humanitarian organizations that these designations could lead to a wide scale famine. Accordingly, we intend to ask the appropriate agencies to address this issue as soon as we are in office. At the same time, we will not hesitate to apply pressure to push the Houthis to curb their abuses against the Yemeni people and to negotiate an end to the war.**

- *Will you seek to revoke the designation of the Houthis as a FTO? If so, how quickly do you expect this process to play out and what steps would you take to ensure U.S. national security interests are taken into account?*

**We will ask the appropriate agencies and offices to review this decision on an expedited basis. We will work to provide the widest appropriate assurances to commercial and humanitarian actors in the meantime. And, recognizing that the Houthi movement has much to answer for, we will hold its leadership accountable. As we do, we will continue efforts to help Saudi Arabia defend its territory from Houthi attacks and work to end Yemen's civil war.**

- *The recent designation of the Houthis as a FTO could have significant humanitarian consequences for the civilian population in Yemen. This is in part because the U.S. Government lacks the ability under U.S. law to issue a license that gives safe harbor from criminal exposure to commercial or humanitarian entities providing humanitarian supplies to civilians. Do you think the U.S. Government should have the ability to issue such a license?*

**I understand and share the concerns you are raising about ensuring humanitarian access in Yemen and believe that U.S. sanctions programs should always have appropriate licenses and exceptions to enable humanitarian access consistent with the law. If confirmed, I will work to make sure that we are using all legally available tools to reduce impediments to humanitarian access.**

- *How do you plan to mitigate the impacts of the FTO designation, given the limitations of U.S. law? Can you commit to working with the NGO community, private sector businesses, and international financial institutions to provide guidance regarding what criminal or civil exposure they would or would not face?*

**While the broad designation of the Houthi movement is under review, we will commit to working -- in consultation with the Department of Treasury - with the NGO community, private sector, and international financial institutions to use all available tools under the law to ensure that the designation does not impair humanitarian access.**

- *How will the Department of State coordinate with the Departments of Justice and Treasury before any future FTO designations are made? What about USAID?*

**We intend to engage in extensive consultation with different stakeholder departments and agencies, including USAID, before future FTO designations.**

- *What means can the United States employ to get the Houthis to engage in peace talks in good faith and reduce interference in aid operations?*

**The Biden-Harris administration intends not only to cut off U.S. support for the Saudi-led military campaign in Yemen, but reengage in diplomacy to end the war itself. That includes renewed support for UN Special Envoy Martin Griffith's efforts to bring the parties together and redoubled efforts to ensure Saudi Arabia can defend its territory from Houthi attacks. As we encourage Saudi Arabia to seek an end to the conflict, we will not hesitate to apply pressure where possible on the Houthis to reduce interference in aid operations, to engage constructively in peace talks, or to cease destabilizing actions.**

*The Role of Other Countries in Yemen*

It has been widely reported that the United Arab Emirates, despite withdrawing a majority of its military support for the Saudi-led coalition, continues to provide important diplomatic support to the pro-separatist Southern Transitional Council (STC).

- *Can you commit to pressuring the UAE to ceasing this support, and using its influence to press the STC to work towards implementing the Riyadh agreement? Are there other ways the US can work successfully to resolve the divisions in the anti-Houthi coalition?*
- *Can you commit to pressuring other countries to increase financial pledges to the UN's Humanitarian response plan for Yemen?*
- *What role has Yemen's economic decline played in exacerbating the humanitarian crisis in Yemen? Should the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and others support the liquidity of Yemen's Aden-based Central Bank? Should the State Department make addressing Yemen's economic deterioration a priority in its efforts to end the conflict?*

**The Biden-Harris administration recognizes that, in addition to ceasing U.S. support for the Saudi-led military campaign in Yemen, we must redouble our efforts to end the war itself. That will require a negotiated solution that brings together the various stakeholders on the ground. The United States will work with the UAE and other external actors to resolve divisions on the ground and encourage the implementation of the Riyadh agreement - as a springboard for diplomacy to reach a negotiated solution that ends the war itself. On the humanitarian front, we are aware that there is a massive shortfall in international aid that we will work diplomatically to bridge, even as we work to ensure and**

**increase humanitarian access to Yemenis in need. Yemen's war, famine, and economic crisis are interlinked - and in resolving the first two, we will study how best to help ensure Yemen's economic viability as well.**

Lebanon Policy

Overall Lebanon Policy

- *Despite the August 4, 2020, explosions in Beirut and unrest that followed, Lebanon's political elites have continued to cling to power. Current policy has been to withhold broader financial assistance absent reforms targeting corruption and transparency. Please describe a Biden Administration's policy objectives in Lebanon and how they differ from previous approaches.*

**The United States has four main objectives in Lebanon: (1) prevent ISIS and other terrorist groups who threaten us from gaining a direct foothold in the country, (2) prevent the outbreak of widespread violence, (3) promote the political and economic welfare of Lebanese civilians, including refugees and their host communities, and (4) counter Iran. Over the long-term the only sustainable approach to supporting a stable Lebanon is through support for credible, transparent, and independent political institutions.**

Financial Reforms and Sanctions

- *What conditions would Lebanon need to meet in order to qualify for U.S. financial support? Will a Biden administration continue sanctions against corrupt and Lebanese Hezbollah (LH) linked officials to advance reforms?*

**Lebanon is in need of emergency humanitarian assistance in the aftermath of the port explosion. It is important that the United States and other donors heed the call of Lebanese civil society actors and non-government organizations, and channel funding through groups and international organizations with clean records. Non-humanitarian financial support should be provided only after meaningful steps toward reform demanded by the Lebanese people. If confirmed, I will assess sanctions imposed on Lebanese officials and individuals as part of a whole-of-government approach to Lebanon.**

- *Can you commit to working to ensure the \$11 billion in CEDRE, IMF, and World Bank funding earmarked for Lebanon remains contingent on key reforms, including reforms to the electricity/natural gas sector, increased transparency, and an audit of the central bank?*

**French President Emmanuel Macron's roadmap for Lebanon outlines a promising path forward that ties reconstruction aid and international financial support to a program of institutional reform. The Biden-Harris Administration will work with like-minded allies and partners who share the view that meaningful reform, consistent with the demands of the Lebanese people, is necessary to unlock international donor support for Lebanon.**



Lebanese Armed Forces

- *Many in Congress see the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) as a vital counterweight to the influence of Lebanese Hezbollah (LH) and Lebanon's legitimate security guarantor. What role do you see for the LAF in Lebanon?*
- *The Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) played an important role in preventing ISIS from seizing territory inside Lebanon, and are an increasingly capable U.S. counterterrorism partner. Do you commit to providing continued FMF assistance to the LAF, barring information that indicates otherwise?*

**There are concerning reports about use of excessive force by the LAF in response to widespread protests last year that, if confirmed to be true, could require a reassessment of U.S. security assistance and cooperation.**

- *Will you commit to consulting with Congress before modifications to LAF assistance?*

**If confirmed, I commit to consulting with Congress on the security assistance program to the LAF.**

China in the Middle East

*Despite efforts to the pivot to the Pacific, competition with China must also occur outside the Indo-Pacific region and on a global scale. China's Belt and Road initiatives are prospering in Africa, South Asia, and are making lasting inroads in the Middle East.*

- *Given a likely diminished U.S. commitment to the Middle East under a Biden administration, how do you plan to contend with the growth of Chinese strategic expansion? How does the United States remain the partner of choice in the Middle East given CCP encroachment and lack of Chinese focus on human rights issues?*

**China seeks to expand its influence in the Middle East and drive wedges between the U.S. and our long-time partners. Chinese economic activity and technology transfers—coupled with a corresponding but as yet smaller expansion of its military footprint and collection capabilities—is growing Chinese influence across the region. These actions put U.S. influence — military, diplomatic, and economic — at risk. If confirmed, I will work with the Department of Defense, other key national security agencies, and Congress to determine a balanced set of tools to address China's involvement in the Middle East.**

China and Israel

- *The United States has growing concerns with China's economic relationship with Israel. Given the relative weakness on Israel's committee on foreign investment and issues highlighted by the CCP's involvement in Haifa port, how do you effectively decouple the CCP from Israel?*

**China seeks to expand its influence with Israel and drive a wedge between us and our close partner. Chinese economic activity is growing its influence in ways that put U.S. influence — military, diplomatic, and economic — at risk. If confirmed, I will work with the Department of Defense, other key national security agencies, and Congress to determine a balanced set of tools to address China’s involvement in Israel.**

*The Islamic State*

- *Experts contend that the Islamic State is at a strategic inflection point. While the physical caliphate in Iraq and Syria has been dismantled, the terror group continues efforts to reconstitute and remains a threat to the United States and its partners. The Department of Defense recently disbanded the Defeat ISIS Task Force and dismissed the Task Force Director. Similarly, State Department eliminated the Special Envoy to Counter ISIS (SECI) as an independent entity and placed the office under the CT Bureau. What are your views on the threat posed by ISIS? What are your views of the SECI organizational changes at the State Department and associated impacts on counter ISIS activities?*

**ISIS remains a serious threat. The group is exploiting instability in Iraq and Syria, demonstrates intent to execute attacks abroad, and continues to inspire terrorist attacks from sub-Saharan Africa to the Asia-Pacific theater. Preventing an ISIS resurgence in Iraq and Syria, as well as its affiliates and networks beyond the Middle East, demands revitalized U.S. engagement, along with our partners and allies in the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS. If confirmed, I will assess the recent organizational changes to the Special Envoy to Counter ISIS office and their impact on our ability to achieve counter-ISIS objectives.**

*Thousands of foreign terrorist fighters and their families remain in Syrian Democratic Forces prisons or makeshift camps in Syria. Repatriation efforts to return these fighters and families to their countries of origin have been wildly unsuccessful. These fighters and their families represent a strategic vulnerability to the region.*

- *How will you address repatriation, de-radicalization, and demobilization efforts?*
- *What civilian security, democracy, and human rights programs would you highlight or pursue to address the seeds of conflict that led to the Islamic State’s rise and allure and have not been effectively addressed?*

**The Biden-Harris Administration will work on enduring solutions for ISIS detainees and their families at facilities such as the Al-Hol camp, currently under guard by the Syrian Defense Forces. While U.S. military action has been critical to successes against ISIS, we recognize that the lasting defeat of the group will require attention to the underlying grievances that created fertile ground for its rise. If confirmed, I will ensure that the State Department is considering all programs relevant to this challenge.**

*Development and U.S. National Security*

*If development, diplomacy, and defense are co-equal legs of the U.S. national security stool, pursuing “development for development’s sake” is not a viable policy. The recent merger of the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development into the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, to “unite [their] aid with [their] diplomacy”, suggests that our British allies would agree.*

- *Should U.S. international development efforts be linked to U.S. national security interests? If not, why not?*

**Yes.**

- *If confirmed, how will you structurally address development issues within the interagency and ensure that U.S. development, diplomacy, and defense priorities are, in fact, effectively aligned and coordinated?*
- *In addition to elevating the Administrator of USAID to a cabinet-level position, do you support calls to elevate USAID to a Cabinet-level agency and to create a development directorate on the National Security Council? If so, how would that change the current arrangement, whereby USAID serves under the foreign policy direction of the State Department?*
- *If confirmed, you will sit on the boards of the Millennium Challenge Corporation and the Development Finance Corporation. How do these agencies fit into the national security architecture? How do you intend to balance their development mandates with U.S. national security priorities?*

**If confirmed, I will work closely with counterparts across the interagency to ensure that U.S. development, diplomacy, and defense priorities are effectively aligned and coordinated. President Biden has stated his intention to elevate the Administration of USAID to a cabinet-level position. I will work closely with the Administrator for USAID to ensure that the State Department and USAID are effectively advancing common objectives. I appreciate the support from Congress for the Millennium Challenge Corporation and Development Finance Corporation, which can be important tools in advancing development and foreign policy priorities.**

*Office of Foreign Assistance*

- *What is the role of the Office of Foreign Assistance (F) at the U.S. Department of State? Is F meant to create policy or to serve as a clearinghouse of foreign assistance data, metrics and standards?*

**The Office of Foreign Assistance coordinates U.S. foreign assistance. It advances U.S. national security and development objectives by coordinating policy, planning, and performance management efforts.**

*Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability*

*Congress passed the Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act (FATAA) in 2016 to enhance Congressional and public oversight of U.S. foreign assistance. Among other requirements, the legislation requires the 22 Federal departments and agencies implementing U.S. foreign assistance programs to publish timely, detailed data about such programs on a publicly available, fully searchable, online platform. It also calls for the consolidation of existing, competing platforms—[www.foreignassistance.gov](http://www.foreignassistance.gov) and [www.dec.usaid.gov](http://www.dec.usaid.gov), for example—into a single, comprehensive platform. Today, few Federal departments are complying with the timely publication requirements (with the Department of State serving as a leading offender) and a consolidated platform has yet to be established.*

- *If confirmed, will you bring the Department into compliance with FATAA?*
- *If confirmed, will you ensure sufficient resources are set aside to create a single, consolidated, publicly available digital platform for foreign assistance data?*

**If confirmed, I will ensure that relevant information related to U.S. foreign assistance programs are available and accessible to Congress and the public as called for under the FATAA.**

#### Humanitarian Assistance

##### Food Aid

*The United States is the single most generous provider of humanitarian assistance in the world, both financial and in-kind, thus saving hundreds of millions of lives and promoting the growth of healthier, more stable societies. Yet today, an estimated 690 million people are food insecure, of which 270 million are facing starvation. As needs outpace the ability of donors to respond, it is imperative that the Department and USAID be enabled to stretch U.S. humanitarian resources farther, including by modernizing U.S. international food aid.*

*Historically, the flagship U.S. food aid program – Food for Peace – required that 100 percent of the food provided under the Act be purchased in the United States, of which 50% must be shipped on U.S. flagged vessels. According to the GAO, the shipping requirement, in particular, has added significant time and cost to emergency food aid, even while failing to fulfil its statutory purpose. Three consecutive administrations have thus proposed changes—ranging from setting aside 20 percent of the budget for local and regional procurement to eliminating Food for Peace entirely. The Global Food Security Act (as re-authorized through FY2023) and the 2018 Farm Bill did include modest reforms, but more needs to be done.*

- *Do you agree that agricultural cargo preference requirements have outlived their statutory purpose and thus add unnecessary time and expense to U.S. food aid?*
- *Should U.S. cargo preference requirements continue to be applied to international food aid, or should humanitarian assistance in all forms be exempted while the Department of Defense continues, refines, or expands its own efforts to maintain sealift capacity?*
- *If confirmed, will you carry forward the food aid reform efforts of your predecessors, including under the Obama Administration?*

**If confirmed, I will work with relevant counterparts within the Biden-Harris administration to review the status of agricultural cargo preference requirements.**

Global Fragility

*More than 80 million people are currently displaced around the world. This number has doubled in just the past decade, as a result of growing global conflicts and disasters. Importantly, Congress passed the bipartisan Global Fragility Act in 2019, mandating the creation and implementation of a Global Fragility Strategy to address the root causes of fragility and prevent future humanitarian crises.*

- *What is the role of foreign assistance in tackling the drivers of state fragility and humanitarian crises?*
- *How would you work to ensure the U.S. government effectively implements the Global Fragility Act?*

**U.S. foreign assistance can play a critical role in helping address the root causes of poverty and fragility and prevent future humanitarian crises, which ultimately benefits our foreign policy and national security. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress to ensure effective implementation of the Global Fragility Act.**

Humanitarian Assistance Exemptions

- *Under what circumstances should humanitarian assistance be exempted from sanctions restrictions? How will the State Department, including through the new Office of Sanctions Coordination, work with the Treasury Department to ensure our sanctions programs are designed to shape behavior without exacerbating humanitarian crises around the world?*

**Consideration of exemptions for humanitarian assistance from sanctions may be necessary to respond to humanitarian crises or to address other urgent priorities. If confirmed, I will ensure the State Department works closely with the Treasury Department to ensure that sanctions programs effectively achieve their intended effect without exacerbating humanitarian crises.**

Branding

- *Should humanitarian assistance be branded? If not, why not?*

**If confirmed, I will review the current status of branding on U.S. foreign assistance and consult with Congress on the appropriate way forward on this issue.**

- *Should all U.S. foreign assistance be branded? If not, why not?*

**If confirmed, I will review the current status of branding on U.S. foreign assistance and consult with Congress on the appropriate way forward on this issue.**

- *If confirmed, will you uphold President Trump's Executive Order on branding U.S. foreign assistance and the USAID Branding Modernization Act (P.L. 116-334)? Would you delegate authority to brand assistance implemented by USAID to the Administrator, consistent with the P.L. 116-334? If not, why not?*

**If confirmed, I will review the current status of branding on U.S. foreign assistance and consult with Congress on the appropriate way forward on this issue.**

*Foreign Assistance Reviews, Suspensions, and Withholdings*

Statutory Restrictions

- *The Siljander, Helms, and Kemp-Kasten Amendments, in addition to the Mexico City Policy, have been instrumental in defending life in U.S. foreign assistance. What are your views on these abortion-related restrictions in U.S. foreign assistance?*

**Sexual and reproductive health care services are essential to women's health and well-being. President Biden intends to rescind the Mexico City policy, which undermines our efforts to advance gender equality globally by restricting our ability to support women's health and gender-based violence prevention and response programs.**

*Other statutory restrictions, such as Trafficking in Persons (TIP) restrictions, have proven effective in influencing other governments to change poor behavior. However, if not implemented carefully, these restrictions can have unintended consequences and backfire on U.S. foreign policy interests.*

- *Do you commit to working with Congress to apply such restrictions on assistance in a deliberative and effective manner?*
- *Do you commit to working with Congress to enact and execute any necessary waivers for these restrictions so that they do not harm those they are not intended to affect?*

**If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress to ensure that restrictions on assistance are applied in a deliberate and effective manner, including on the use of waivers.**

Non-Statutory Restrictions

*In certain situations, the actions of foreign governments, international organizations, or other entities may necessitate the suspension or termination of U.S. foreign assistance absent an explicit directive in law. This may be done, for instance, to incentivize or punish.*

- *Beyond regular statutory restrictions on assistance, under what circumstances would the withholding or termination of U.S. foreign assistance to a country, international organization, or other entity be appropriate?*

- *If confirmed, do you commit to consulting Congress prior to suspending or terminating U.S. foreign assistance for any reason other than the application of U.S. law?*

**The potential withholding or termination of U.S. foreign assistance may be considered in circumstances where U.S. foreign policy objectives are at stake. If confirmed, I look forward to consulting with Congress on potential decisions to suspend or terminate assistance.**

*Journey to Self-Reliance*

*Former USAID Administrator Mark Green spearheaded the agency's "Journey to Self-Reliance" initiative in an effort to provide strategic focus to U.S. foreign assistance, including by taking a data-based approach toward building partner country capacity to achieve and sustain development results. In contrast with China's development model, which creates dependence, Administrator Green argued that America should seek to foster self-reliance and responsibility among its friends.*

- *While distinct from "diplomatic" assistance, do you agree that the purpose of development assistance is to end the need for its existence? Is USAID's mission to deliver assistance, or to help countries stand on their own two feet?*
- *Do you intend to work with USAID to continue the "Journey to Self-Reliance" initiative, whether in name or in spirit?*

**If confirmed, I will work with the Administrator of USAID to review the strategy and initiatives for development assistance.**

*Countering China*

*Countering Chinese Influence Fund*

*In 2019, the FY2020 State & Foreign Operations appropriations bill created the Countering Chinese Influence Fund (CCIF) to counter malign Chinese influence around the world and increase transparency and accountability associated with the Belt and Road Initiative.*

- *Do you support the goals and objectives of the CCIF?*
- *Are there particular regions or sectors that you believe the CCIF should prioritize?*
- *Do you commit to directing an official at the Assistant Secretary level or above to oversee the obligation of these funds, to ensure that they are obligated strategically and in a manner that advances U.S. interests?*

**China's use of coercive and corrupting tools of malign influence to undermine and interfere in democracies are a concern for the U.S. and our allies around the world. The Biden-Harris administration will take action to counter this malign Chinese influence, including by increasing transparency and accountability associated with the Belt and Road Initiative. If confirmed, I look forward to consulting with Congress**

**to identify priority regions and sectors as well as to ensure appropriate leadership in the Department responsible for obligation of these funds.**

*Development Finance Corporation (DFC)*

*The BUILD Act of 2018 significantly restructured U.S. assistance for development finance, transforming the Overseas Private Investment Corporation into the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) and incorporating the development finance activities of USAID. The DFC's primary mission is to harness the power of the American private sector to foster inclusive, market-based economic growth in low- and middle-income countries.*

- *What is the DFC's role in our strategic competition with China?*
- *Are there particular countries, regions, or sectors that the DFC should focus on?*
- *Should the DFC be authorized to establish offices and operate in high-income countries if doing so would "counter Chinese influence," beyond what is currently authorized by law? Or should the DFC remain focused on its core mission of promoting economic growth in low- and middle-income countries while the CCIF is tapped for this form of strategic assistance in higher-income areas?*

**The Development Finance Corporation created by Congress is an important tool for improving our ability to facilitate private-sector activities in low and lower-middle income countries and to help counter Chinese influence. The Biden-Harris administration will use our economic diplomacy and the tools of the DFC, USAID, MCC and Treasury, to work with the U.S. private sector, governments to counter Chinese malign influence in Africa, the Western Hemisphere and across the developing world to increase trade and investment and promote U.S. business. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress to ensure effective utilization of the DFC.**

*Power Africa*

Access to reliable power is a prerequisite for economic growth and health security. Power Africa, authorized by Congress and advanced by the Obama and Trump administrations, has proven to be a valuable tool in expanding access to electricity in Sub-Saharan Africa, and the program should be continued. Imposing overly-restrictive mandates on the program in the name of climate sensitivity, however, would neither advance African growth *nor* measurably reduce total global carbon output.

*Commitment to Energy Growth in Africa*

- *Power Africa has helped alleviate energy poverty on the continent by connecting over 17 million homes and businesses to electricity. Yet, Africa is undergoing urbanization faster than anywhere else on the planet, and so needs much larger energy systems to support job creation, big cities, and industry. If confirmed, how will the United States promote abundant, affordable energy at scale across Africa?*



**If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress to use all available tools to promote abundant, affordable energy across Africa.**

Power Sources

- *The U.S. approach to promoting energy in emerging markets has been technology-inclusive. Power Africa has supported diverse types of energy investments, and the DFC recently lifted a prohibition on nuclear power. This flexible approach has enabled countries to find their own cost-effective path to an energy solution that supports their development goals. Additionally, U.S. flexibility has helped to level the playing field for American firms against Chinese and Russian competitors. Unfortunately, some European countries are now restricting overseas investments in natural gas on climate grounds. If confirmed, would you support Power Africa and DFC continuing to be able to support and invest in a flexible range of technologies, including natural gas?*

**If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress on ensuring that Power Africa and the Development Finance Corporation are advancing our energy and climate goals.**

International Child Abduction

- *If confirmed, how will you encourage foreign governments to act in accordance with the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction, which requires the prompt return of abducted children to their country of habitual residence?*

**If confirmed, I will raise with foreign governments the importance of preventing, detecting and addressing cases of international child abduction, including the need to comply with the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction.**

- *Will you commit to raising the issue of international parental child abduction in high-level meetings with foreign governments, including with Japan, Costa Rica, India, etc?*

Yes.

- *How will you build an effective interagency process with other federal agencies—including the Department of Justice and Homeland Security—on ways to prevent and resolve cases of international child abduction?*

**If confirmed, I will work with the leadership of all relevant federal agencies to develop an effective process for preventing and resolving cases of international child abduction.**

International Child Adoption

*The number of children who are being adopted from overseas has declined in recent years.*

- *If confirmed, how will you ensure that international child adoption processes are run smoothly, transparently, and in accordance with legal commitments?*

**If confirmed, I will encourage foreign governments to take steps to ensure that international child adoption processes are run appropriately and with robust safeguards, so that as many children around the world as possible can be raised in safe and loving homes.**

- *Will you commit to raising issues with international child adoption in high level meetings with your foreign counterparts?*

**Yes.**

Arms Control

- *The Trump Administration has reported that China has embarked on the single greatest expansion of a nuclear arsenal since the dawn of the Cold War. Do you agree with this assessment? Why or why not?*

**If confirmed, I will work with relevant national security departments and agencies to assess the status of China's nuclear arsenal, and will consult with Congress on this important issue.**

- *More than half of our NATO allies have expressed concern over the growth of China's nuclear arsenal, and its unwillingness to join arms control talks. Do you share the concerns of these allies?*

**If confirmed, I will consult with our colleagues in NATO about their concerns over the growth of China's nuclear arsenal.**

- *Is China in compliance with its Article VI obligations under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty?*

**If confirmed, I will work with relevant departments and agencies to assess the status of China's compliance with its Article VI obligations under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, and will consult with Congress on this important issue.**

- *The United States and Russia have for many years implemented risk reduction measures regarding their nuclear arsenals, but the China has not joined such arrangements. Were it to move to a launch on warning posture, would that increase the need for risk reduction with China? How might we best engage China regarding risk reduction?*

**Risk reduction measures are an important part of nuclear arms control. If confirmed, I will work with my counterparts across national security departments and agencies and consult with our allies and Congress on how to effectively engage China regarding risk reduction.**

- *In your assessment, do the actions of Vladimir Putin and the available intelligence about him support an assessment that he agrees with the Reagan-Gorbachev statement that, "A nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought?" Does Russian doctrine, force posture and operational planning indicate that Russia under Putin believes that a nuclear war cannot be won?*

**If confirmed, I will work with relevant national security departments and agencies to assess of Russian posture, doctrine, and intentions regarding the use of nuclear weapons.**

- *Do you commit to having your incoming nuclear negotiator tour current U.S. nuclear enterprise facilities, to ensure they are fully aware of all issues regarding current U.S. nuclear weapons production that may be affected by arms control agreements?*

**If confirmed, I will work to ensure State Department negotiators on nuclear non-proliferation and arms control agreements are fully aware of U.S. nuclear weapons production and capabilities.**

- *Please assess the risk of an arms race between Russia and China as China moves to at least double its nuclear arsenal.*

**An arms race between Russia and China would pose significant concerns for regional and global stability. If confirmed, I will work with allies, partners, and international organizations to reduce the risk of an arms race.**

*The New START Treaty*

*The Resolution of Ratification to the New START Treaty obligated the Obama Administration to pursue follow-on negotiations with Russia regarding its tactical nuclear weapons.*

- *How can the United States best constrain Russia's tactical nuclear weapons, which fall outside of New START?*

**President Biden intends to pursue an extension of the New START Treaty, an anchor of strategic stability between the United States and Russia, and use that as a foundation for new arms control and strategic stability arrangements that serve U.S. interests.**

- *New START does not include China, which is in the midst of a dramatic upgrade and expansion of its nuclear arsenal, which the Intelligence Community assesses will at least double by 2030. How can the United States best constrain China's growing and capable arsenal?*

**If confirmed, I will coordinate with relevant national security departments and agencies and consult with Congress on the best strategy for addressing the growth of China's nuclear arsenal.**

- *What can be done to ensure that Russia's so-called "exotic" strategic delivery systems, three of which Russia says are outside New START, are constrained by arms control obligations?*

**The Biden-Harris administration will be focused first on extending the transparency and predictability of New START, an anchor of strategic stability between the United States and Russia, and use that as a foundation for new arms control and strategic stability arrangements that serve U.S. interests.**

- *Do you support the requirement, as called for in the New START Resolution of Ratification, to, "modernize or replace the triad of strategic nuclear delivery systems: a heavy bomber and air-launched cruise missile, an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), and a ballistic missile submarine (SSBN) and submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM)?"*

**The triad of strategic nuclear delivery systems has served an important role in U.S. defense and national security strategy. The Biden-Harris administration will review, where appropriate, the nuclear modernization program.**

- *The Russian Foreign Ministry released a statement in October agreeing to extend New START for one year and to freeze warheads, before retreating from that position as the U.S. elections approach. This marked the first ever occasion that Russia has voiced any agreement to limiting all warheads, and marked a major walk-back from Russia's previous refusal to consider anything short of a five year extension. Do you commit to pursuing the one year/warhead freeze option for New START extension, and to build off of those negotiating efforts to codify an agreement that accounts for all warheads, and sets conditions for multilateral engagement in the future?*

**The Trump administration engaged in extensive negotiations with the Russians on an extension of New START for years, but was unable to secure an agreement. A Russian pledge not to increase its nuclear warhead totals is a helpful statement, but does not constitute an agreement. It is not a substitute for the benefits to U.S. national security that we get from the New START's robust declaration and on-site inspection mechanisms.**

#### Declaratory Policy

*The Obama Administration debated changing U.S. declaratory nuclear policy, but decided to retain the long-standing policy of ambiguity.*

- *Why did the Obama Administration decide not to change U.S. declaratory policy?*
- *Has the international security environment improved since 2016? What significant improvements have occurred that would warrant a change in U.S. declaratory policy?*
- *Russia and China have modernized and expanded their nuclear arsenals, and embarked on military aggression against their neighbors. Given the increasing threats from Russia and China, how is a change to a no first use or sole purpose doctrine justifiable?*

- *Do U.S. allies support the U.S. adoption of a no first use or sole purpose nuclear declaratory policy?*
- *Do you commit to consulting closely with the Congress and with U.S. allies before any change in U.S. declaratory policy?*
- *What impact would a sole purpose nuclear declaratory policy have on the ability of the United States to offer extended deterrence in support of allies?*

**President-Elect Biden is committed to maintaining a strong, credible deterrent to defend the United States and our allies, while also taking steps to reduce the role of nuclear weapons. He has said that the United States should review its current policy that reserves the right to use nuclear weapons first. He also said that he believes that the sole purpose of the U.S. nuclear arsenal should be deterring -- and if necessary, retaliating against -- a nuclear attack, and he is committed to consulting with our military and allies to put that belief into practice. We will consult with Congress and our allies on any policies or actions in this area.**

*Extended Deterrence*

*One of the key justifications for the full nuclear modernization program of record, as first put forward by the Obama Administration, is to provide extended deterrence to U.S. allies and achieve associated U.S. objectives regarding assurance allies and promoting nonproliferation.*

- *Do you see a risk of damaging extended deterrence if the United States not modernize its nuclear enterprise?*
- *Do you commit to consulting with Congress and with allies regarding any such risks?*

**Extended deterrence plays an important role in advancing U.S. national security objectives, including providing assurance to allies and promoting nonproliferation. If confirmed, I look forward to consulting with Congress and allies on this important issue.**

*NATO Nuclear-Sharing*

*The NATO Secretary General released a statement earlier this year noting that, "Our solidarity is our strength and the ultimate expression of that solidarity remains our nuclear deterrent." How damaging would it be to the solidarity of the NATO alliance for a member to demand the withdrawal of U.S. nuclear weapons? Would it call that member's NATO membership into question?*

**One of NATO's greatest strengths is the solidarity of its members. If confirmed, I look forward to strengthening NATO unity, solidarity, and resolve.**

*The Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty*

*In 2019, NATO strongly supported the finding of the United States that Russia was in material breach of its obligations under the INF Treaty, and said that it was up to Russia to preserve the INF Treaty.*

- *Do you agree with NATO's assessment that Russia violated the INF Treaty, and was responsible for its termination?*

**Without a doubt there were unacceptable problems in Russia's compliance with the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) and Open Skies Treaties. Going forward, we will be focused first on extending the transparency and predictability of New START, and then looking to use that extension as a foundation for new arms control arrangements that serve U.S. interests.**

- *I do not believe that it is possible to return to the INF Treaty without a new ratification by the Senate. Do you agree? Please explain. If you do not, do you commit to consulting with Congress before attempting to return to the treaty?*

**If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress and relevant agencies and departments on ways to create new arms control agreements that serve U.S. interests.**

- *Given the massive growth in numbers and capability of the People's Liberation Army Rocket Forces, I do not believe that any future treaty covering intermediate-range missiles is in the interests of the United States if it does not include China. Do you agree?*

**If confirmed, I look forward to consulting with Congress on the best strategy for addressing the growth of China's nuclear arsenal.**

*The Open Skies Treaty*

- *I do not believe that it is possible to return to the Open Skies Treaty without a new ratification by the Senate. Do you agree? Please explain. If not, do you commit to consulting with Congress before attempting to return to the treaty?*

**If confirmed, I would intend to consult with Congress about arms control efforts generally, and efforts related to the Open Skies Treaty in particular.**

*The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)*

*Under the CWC, any member state can request a challenge inspection without delay to resolve questions regarding non-compliance. Do you commit to requesting a challenge inspection of Russia regarding the poisoning of Alexei Navalny?*

**The Biden-Harris Administration will ensure the completion of an investigation into Russia's use of chemical weapons in the poisoning of Russian opposition leader Alexey Navalny, as set out by the Chemical and Biological Weapons Control and Warfare Elimination Act of 1991. The attempted assassination of Mr. Navalny warrants a considered response, including, but not limited to, relevant action within international organizations. Action through the OPCW should be on the menu of options.**

Other Arms Control Agreements

*Do you support the United States joining the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons? Why or why not?*

- *Do you support the United States joining the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty? Why or why not?*
- *Do you support the United States joining the Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty? Why or why not?*
- *Do you support the United States joining the Arms Trade Treaty? Why or why not?*

**The Biden-Harris administration is committed to strengthening international non-proliferation and arms control agreements and regimes. If confirmed, I will consult with Congress on any potential action related to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the Fissile Cut-Off Treaty and the Arms Trade Treaty.**

Non-Proliferation  
Iran's Nuclear Program

*Rafael Grossi, Director of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), recently stated that reviving the Iran nuclear deal would require a new agreement setting out how Iran's breaches of the deal should be reversed. I agree with Director Grossi's assessment. Do you?*

**President Biden has made clear he is committed to ensuring that Iran cannot acquire a nuclear weapon. Iran was in compliance with its commitments until the U.S. withdrew from the deal. Since then, and while it has violated several of its commitments under the deal, Iran has continued to allow intrusive IAEA verification as required by the JCPOA, the most intrusive verification procedures ever negotiated. The President has made clear that the United States will be prepared to resume participation in the JCPOA if Iran restores its compliance, and then, through follow-on diplomacy, the U.S. will seek to lengthen and strengthen the nuclear constraints.**

- *I view any Iranian limitations on IAEA inspectors as a redline, and see Iran's obfuscation and refusal to answer questions to the IAEA regarding its undeclared sites as unacceptable. In your mind, are limits on IAEA inspectors a redline?*

**Until the U.S. withdrew from the JCPOA, both the IAEA and the Trump administration assessed on multiple occasions that Iran was in compliance with the deal, including the enhanced monitoring provisions. The IAEA identified and sought access to two Iranian nuclear facilities to which Iran initially resisted providing access. The issue was addressed last summer and the IAEA Director General has noted that Iran provided inspectors with access to those two locations. The JCPOA imposed the most intrusive inspection and monitoring regime ever negotiated and Iran has warned that if it cannot receive the benefits provided for in the deal, then it would soon cease to implement the enhanced**

**monitoring procedures under the deal, including its provisional application of the Additional Protocol. This would represent a significant setback for the IAEA's ability to report reliably on Iran's program.**

*Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act*

- *How do you plan to balance the requirement to hold the Russian defense and intelligence enterprise accountable with the need to avoid undue damage to U.S. alliances and partnerships, especially given the competition for partners?*

**I appreciate the efforts of Congress to strengthen the tools available to hold Russia's defense and intelligence enterprise accountable through CAATSA. The Biden-Harris administration will consult with allies and partners on the appropriate means of holding Russia accountable and deterring further aggression.**

- *If we deny requests to sell arms to U.S. allies and partners, should we then sanction those allies or partners if they acquire Russian defense equipment for what they see as their own legitimate defense requirements?*

**It is important to keep U.S. allies and partners facing west, rather than taking steps that push it closer to Russia and other adversaries. If confirmed, I will consult with Congress on the appropriate approach on U.S. arm sales and sanctions for countries with issues of concern.**

*Security*

*FY 2019 National Defense Authorization Act Section 889*

*Recently, legal restrictions—commonly referred to as section 889—have come into effect that severely limit the types of telecommunications networks that U.S. government departments and agencies can use overseas. However, many countries' networks are so saturated by prohibited telecommunications equipment that complying with section 889, absent a waiver, would severely limit the ability of our posts to operate abroad.*

- *How do you assess the burden placed on the Department by these restrictions?*
- *Will the Department be able to implement these restrictions fully without diminishing its ability to operate abroad?*
- *Are there costs to the Department associated with these restrictions?*
- *Would the Department be able to operate without the waivers currently granted by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) to the Department?*
- *Do you plan to request an extension of waivers?*
- *Do you intend to request a blanket waiver authority for the Secretary of State that would allow the Department to adjudicate its own waivers?*
- *Do you commit to working with Congress to find a long-term solution to this situation that ensures secure, reliable communications while encouraging foreign governments to move away from the prohibited Chinese technology?*



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**Ensuring the security of telecommunications networks at U.S. facilities overseas is vital to our national security. If confirmed, I will review the current state of telecommunications networks at Department embassies, consulates, and other facilities and the impact of restrictions on telecommunications networks. I will consult with the Director of National Intelligence on the necessity of waivers and whether any extensions are necessary. I will work with Congress to find a long-term solution to ensure the security and reliability of our networks.**

Security and Effective Diplomacy

*One troubling trend my staff and I have identified during our travels during the previous congress is that many of our diplomats are not getting out from behind embassy walls and meeting with the local population or even other diplomats. Frequently, we are told that the security requirements are too tight and sacrifice advancing U.S. interests for airtight security.*

- Does the inability of State Department diplomats to leave the embassies at which they are currently stationed put the Department at a strategic disadvantage?
- Do Chinese, Russian, and Iranian diplomats face similar restrictions to those placed on U.S. diplomats?
- Do you support getting our diplomats back outside posts? If yes, how so?
- Do you intend to emphasize to the Bureau of Diplomatic Security your desire to do so?
- Should security concerns always take precedence over the ability of our diplomats to operate abroad?
- How should diplomacy be weighed in relation to security concerns, particularly regarding embassy security?

**If confirmed, I will review the current operating posture of Department personnel overseas. I will also review whether there are restrictions on U.S. diplomats that put them**

**at a disadvantage to their counterparts. I will discuss with the Bureau of Diplomatic security how to best strike the balance between enabling U.S. diplomats to engage outside of posts while ensuring their safety.**

Cuba/Havana Syndrome

*Between late 2016 and May 2018, the State Department found that certain U.S. Embassy community members suffered a series of unexplained injuries, including hearing loss and cognitive issues.*

- *If confirmed, will you commit to continuing the investigation into the circumstances surrounding the sonic attacks?*
- *Will you seek to ensure the safety and security of U.S. diplomatic personnel in Havana and other posts where personnel were injured?*
- *Is it in the national interest of the United States to assign an ambassador to Cuba before the Cuban government fully and credibly explains the targeted attacks on U.S. diplomats in Havana?*
- *If confirmed, do you commit to supporting all State Department employees and their families who were injured by these sonic attacks, including those employees who have since left the Department?*
- *If confirmed, do you commit to work constructively with other government agencies on finding the cause of the attacks as well as on how best to support those U.S. government employees who have been injured?*
- *If confirmed, do you commit to regularly sharing new information, including updates on any live investigations, to Congress?*

**One of the first briefings I requested as Secretary-designate was on this issue. Congress has played an important role in pushing for further investigation of the source of these injuries. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress to get to the bottom of the source of these injuries, including whether any foreign governments are behind them. I will commit to ensuring the State Department personnel receive the full support and benefits they deserve and to working with other government agencies on ensuring support for all injured U.S. government employees.**

State Authorization/Oversight

Legislation and Congress

- *Do you support Congress passing a State Department authorization bill?*

**Yes.**

- *Do you believe it is important that the Department be explicitly authorized outside of the appropriations process consistently?*

**I believe it is important for the Department to consistently work with Congress to ensure necessary and appropriate authorization outside of the appropriations process. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress on this.**

- *If confirmed, do you commit to instructing Department personnel to play a constructive, supportive, and timely role with Congress in writing and passing a State Department authorization bill?*

**If confirmed, I will instruct Department personnel to play a constructive, supportive, and timely role with Congress in the development and passing of a State Department authorization role.**

- *How can the Department better support Congress in passing a State Department authorization bill?*

**I believe the Department should work with Congress to identify necessary authorities or other legislative provisions for a State Department authorization bill that would enhance its ability to carry out its mission on behalf of the American people.**

- *Do you believe that the role the Senate Foreign Relations Committee is important in providing congressional oversight?*

**Yes.**

- *Do you commit to making Department personnel available for timely briefings upon request?*

**Yes.**

- *Do you believe that the Foreign Service Act should be updated?*

**If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress on appropriate updates to the Foreign Service Act.**

*Paris Climate Accord*

- *For the purposes of U.S. domestic law and Article VI of the U.S. Constitution, does the Paris Climate Accord have the status of a treaty, yes or no?*

**The United States joined the Paris Climate agreement in 2016 as an executive agreement, based on long-standing authority of Presidents to enter into international agreements.**

- *If the Paris Accord has the domestic law status of a treaty, does the President intend to transmit it to the Senate for its consideration?*

**As when the U.S. joined the Paris Climate Agreement in 2016, the President rejoined the Agreement based on existing authority. We will consult closely with Congress on all of our climate diplomacy efforts.**

- *What is the nature of the Paris Climate Agreement? Is it an executive agreement, a treaty, or an agreement negotiated under ex ante agreement authority provided by the Congress? Should it have been a treaty or an agreement based on ex post congressional authorization? If not, why not?*

**The Paris Agreement is a legal instrument that will guide the process for universally acting on climate change.**

- *Is the U.S. still a party to the Paris Climate Agreement? If not, can President Biden take actions to have the US rejoin the Paris Climate Agreement? Under what authorities can he recommit the U.S. to the agreement?*

**On January 20, 2021, President Biden signed the instrument to rejoin the Paris Agreement on climate change. The instrument was deposited with the United Nations Secretary-General. In accordance with the terms of the Agreement, the United States will become a Party thirty days after depositing the instrument.**

- *The word “shall” appears in the text of the Paris Climate Accord at least 117 times. In which places does the word “shall” create a binding commitment on the United States? If “shall” does not create a binding commitment, which provisions of the Paris agreement are, in the view of the Department, binding on the United States as a matter of international law?*

**The Paris Agreement is a legal instrument that will guide the process for universally acting on climate change.**

- *Is the U.S. nationally determined contribution (NDC) of a commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to “26-28 per cent below its 2005 level in 2025 and to make best efforts to reduce its emissions by 28 percent a binding commitment on the U.S. or is it aspirational? Can the U.S. redefine its NDC downwards if circumstances warrant it?*

**Under the terms of the Paris Climate Agreement, parties’ Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) are not legally binding. To meet our commitments under the Paris agreement, the Biden-Harris administration will begin work immediately to develop a new NDC for emissions reduction targets. We will consult with a wide range of stakeholders, including members of Congress, concerning the shape of the NDC.**

*Article 4.3 of the Paris Climate Accord states:*

*“Each Party’s successive nationally determined contribution will represent a progression beyond the Party’s then current nationally determined contribution and reflect its highest possible ambition, reflecting its common but differentiated*

*responsibilities and respective capabilities, in the light of different national circumstances.”*

*Is this so-called “ratchet up” provision binding upon the U.S. or merely aspirational?*

*President Obama claimed he had sufficient existing authority to substantially, if not fully, implement the Paris Climate Accord. Do you agree with that assessment that the President continues to have sufficient executive and congressionally mandated authority to implement the Paris Climate Accord? Please cite the specific authority relied upon to implement.*

- *Did President Obama make the claim that he had the authority to implement the Paris accord using only the authorities in the UNFCCC, executive authorities under Article II, and existing statutory authority, such as the Clean Air Act? Do you agree with that claim?*

**The Paris Agreement creates an unprecedented framework for global action to avoid potentially catastrophic planetary warming, while building global resilience to the climate impacts we are already experiencing. The U.S. was instrumental in achieving the Agreement, and the Biden-Harris administration will again exercise global leadership in addressing what is a top challenge for America and the world. The United States joined the Paris agreement in 2016 as an executive agreement, based on long-standing authority of Presidents to enter into international agreements.**

*Green Climate Fund*

*The Green Climate Fund (GCF) is a multiyear, multibillion dollar effort that will lend and provide support to private and public sector borrowers. The Obama Administration pledged \$3 billion to the GCF.*

- *What does the Biden Administration intend to pledge?*
- *The GCF is intended to support a range of climate investment, including investments in the private sector such as technology development. How will the Biden Administration ensure that such investments are complementary and do not crowd out the private sector?*

**The Biden-Harris administration will work with the private sector to help promote a large-scale shift in private capital toward climate-friendly activities. This will help finance the transition to a net-zero carbon economy.**

*The GCF could be investing in projects around the globe in both the public and private sector space. The UNFCCC and COP process envisions some \$100 billion annually spend on mitigation and resilience with the GCF as an important part of that effort. In fact, in practice, the GCF will look a lot like a Bretton Woods statute bank, like the IDB or the African Development Bank.*

- Do you agree that it is appropriate that Congress should have oversight over U.S. contributions to the GCF?
- Should the GCF be authorized by Congress as other similarly situated development banks, such as the World Bank or regional development banks are?
- Should the U.S. representative to the GCF, as a senior official overseeing billions in climate investments, be presidentially-appointed and Senate confirmed?
- Is the GCF performing as well as expected? Should the U.S. fund pledges to the GCF?
- Should the U.S. demand proper safeguards at the GCF to prevent waste and corruption, improper intrusion into private market lending, lending to repressive regimes such as North Korea, Cuba, and Sudan? Does the GCF currently have those safeguards? Will you commit to working with the Congress to ensure such safeguards are in place?

**President Biden is committed to ensuring that the United States meets its climate finance pledge. These resources are essential for ensuring developing countries can reduce their emissions and build resilience against the destabilizing impacts of climate change – both of which have clear benefits not only for the recipient countries, but also for the U.S. and the rest of the world. The Biden-Harris administration will work closely with Congress to increase the international climate finance it provides through a variety of channels, including our bilateral agencies and multilateral funds and organizations, such as the Green Climate Fund and the multilateral development banks. If confirmed, I will work with Congress to ensure appropriate safeguards at the GCF are in place.**

#### Climate

*President Biden has announced that his administration will place climate issues at the forefront of his policy priorities. He has stated his intention to rejoin the Paris Climate Agreement on “Day One” of his administration. As part of this emphasis, he has announced that former Secretary of State John Kerry will serve as his climate envoy to the world.*

- As Secretary of State, will you commit to work on climate issues in a bipartisan manner? Or do you intend to work around those with differing views?
- As Secretary of State, how will you ensure that the priorities of the State Department will not be overrun by the former Secretary of State’s specific portfolio?
- What resources will Mr. Kerry be provided to meet his objectives and what limitations will be placed on him and his resources?
- As the two of you travel and meet with world leaders to discuss foreign policy, how will these leaders know which of you represents the final say on U.S. policy?

**As Special Presidential Envoy for Climate, former Secretary Kerry will lead our diplomatic efforts to reassert U.S. climate leadership and raise global ambition to meet the daunting climate challenge. The Envoy’s office will be housed at the State Department, and he will maintain a presence at the White House as well. His climate diplomacy work will be closely coordinated with the Department’s and our administration’s broader diplomatic engagement. As part of his efforts to lead U.S. climate diplomacy, the Envoy will also be**

**coordinating with the Administration’s efforts on the domestic side. He will also engage in consultations with the Senate.**

Wildlife/Pandemics

*The United States is currently struggling to overcome a health and economic crisis caused by a previously unknown virus that jumped from wildlife to humans – who had no previous immunity to it. According to the CDC website, scientists believe that 3 out of every 4 new or emerging infectious diseases in people come from animals, and most of these originate in wildlife. Many of the most well-known pandemics and epidemics have started when these kinds of diseases have spilled over from wildlife to people, including SARS, Ebola, HIV, and of course, COVID-19. Scientists also believe that these spillover events are becoming more frequent and are closely linked to human-wildlife interactions involving trade in wildlife species that are likely to transmit these diseases and the destruction of forests and other habitats where these species live. This is particularly true in places like Southeast Asia and Central Africa.*

- *Given the massive harm that this pandemic has caused the U.S. in term of loss of life and economic damage. What do you think the role of the State Department should be in trying not just to respond to these kind of spillover events after they happen but to prevent them from happening in the first place?*
- *How should we work with countries around the world to address the root causes of these events – such as high-risk trade in wildlife or the destruction or fragmenting of tropical forests due to human development and infrastructure?*
- *Do you think funding to support these activities should be part of our response to the current pandemic, and efforts to prevent the next one?*

**The State Department can play a leading role to elevate global health diplomacy to identify potential global health risks and to work within the international community to prevent epidemics and pandemics before they occur. This includes addressing the root causes of these events and strengthening the prevention and response capabilities of local health systems. The Biden-Harris administration is seeking supplemental funding to respond to the current pandemic and to increase global preparedness and prevention mechanisms, and looks forward to consulting with Congress in this critical area.**

Wildlife/Illegal Trade

*In the developing world in particular, natural resources make up bread and butter of many countries’ economies, in addition to supporting the jobs, nutrition, and health needs of local communities. They can also be highly sought after – whether by our global competitors, such as China, or by bad actors who may rob them for profit or to finance criminal and even violent activities. In the 1990s we heard a lot about “blood diamonds” in Africa that financed war in west Africa and the Congo Basin. Over the past decade, the same has been true of elephant ivory and illegal timber, that have helped fund militias and even terror groups like the Lord’s Resistance Army and al Shabaab. And of course, when natural resources become scarce, like food and water, that can feed into extremism and create recruitment opportunities for groups*

*like Boko Haram in the Sahel, or the rise in piracy we saw off the coast of Somalia due to overfishing by foreign fleets from China and elsewhere. The United States has been a leader on issues like stopping wildlife trafficking and illegal fishing, and Congress has been consistently supportive of these efforts in a bipartisan way. We have also passed laws such as the Global Fragility Act, and these issues involving scarcity of food, water and other resources clearly play a role in the fragility or stability of countries and regions.*

*What sort of priority do you to hope to place on these kinds of issues as Secretary of State, and how can they be better integrated into our approach to U.S. foreign policy and national security policy?*

**The United States must continue to be a leader in combatting wildlife trafficking, poverty alleviation. Congress has taken important action through the Global Fragility Act to strengthen efforts to stabilize conflict-affected areas and prevent violence globally. If confirmed, I will prioritize these issues and consult with Congress on further steps to integrate them into U.S. foreign policy.**

#### Natural Resources

*Over the past year, we've heard a lot of discussion of the importance of protecting forests around the globe. The fires in the Amazon clearly focused the world's attention, and bipartisan bills in Congress have been introduced to encourage tree-planting and the efforts to protect and restore forests around the world. At the same time, illegal logging and the trade in illegal timber in many countries around the world isn't just destroying forests, it's also hurting the American forestry industry and its workers by depressing prices for timber on the global market. A good portion of that illegal timber also flows through China after being logged in places like the Russian Far East or Southeast Asia, and then making its way into the United States. Estimates are that these kinds of illegal activities are costing the U.S. forestry sector between half a billion and a billion dollars a year in lost revenue. And illegal clearing of forests for agriculture has a similar impact on U.S. commodity producers, when imported products are produced more cheaply on illegally deforested lands.*

*President-elect Biden has talked about wanting to support renewed international efforts to protect forests like the Amazon. What role do you see for the State Department in supporting these efforts, and what can we do diplomatically and by using carrots and sticks to stop the kinds of illegal activities that are destroying these forests and harming American workers?*

**The State Department has an important role to play in leading international efforts to prevent deforestation in the Amazon and other regions. If confirmed, I will consult with Congress on how to strengthen the diplomatic and economic tools at our disposal to stop illegal activities, protect forests, and support American workers.**

#### Nature of Position



On November 23, 2020, then-President-elect Joe Biden announced that he intended to appoint former Secretary of State John Kerry to be a "Special Presidential Envoy for Climate." The announcement stated that Secretary Kerry:

*will fight climate change full-time as Special Presidential Envoy for Climate and will sit on the National Security Council. This marks the first time that the NSC will include an official dedicated to climate change, reflecting the president-elect's commitment to addressing climate change as an urgent national security issue.*

- *What is the chain of command for this new position and to whom will the officeholder report?*
- *What will the role of the Secretary of State be with respect to this position?*
- *Will this position be located within the Department of State?*
- *Does the use of special envoys have the potential to create duplication of effort within the Department? If so, how would you avoid such duplication? If not, why not?*
- *Does the use of special envoys have the potential to create confusion within the Department in terms of overlapping authorities and unclear organizational charts? If so, how would you avoid such confusion? If not, why not?*
- *Does the use of special envoys have the potential to create confusion within foreign governments about which official(s) have the lead on different issues? If so, how would you avoid such confusion? If not, why not?*
- *Does the use of special envoys have the potential to undermine morale among State Department employees in offices where their work has been supplanted by a new special envoy?*
- *Should the Department consult with this committee before the creation of any new special envoy or similar position at the Department? Why or why not?*
- *Do you believe that the Department should first look to its extant workforce before creating special envoys?*
- *Do you believe that an assistant secretary should have responsibility for every element of their bureau's portfolio?*
- *In general, what circumstances would merit the creation of a special envoy?*
- *How will Mr. Kerry's portfolio differ from the Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of Oceans, Environment, and Science?*
- *Will the OES assistant secretary report to Mr. Kerry?*
- *How will OES and Mr. Kerry's team de-conflict any overlap in their portfolios?*
- *Do you commit to ensuring that there is no duplication of effort among Mr. Kerry's staff and the rest of the Department?*

**As Special Presidential Envoy for Climate, former Secretary Kerry will lead our diplomatic efforts to reassert U.S. climate leadership and raise global ambition to meet the daunting climate challenge. The Envoy's office will be housed at the State Department, and he will maintain a presence at the White House as well. His climate diplomacy work will be closely coordinated with the Department's and the Biden-Harris administration's broader diplomatic engagement. As part of his efforts to lead U.S. climate diplomacy, the Envoy will also be coordinating with the administration's efforts on the domestic side. He will also**

**engage in consultations with the Senate. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the role of special envoys, which have long been used by administrations on a bipartisan basis to respond to focused and urgent priorities, does not lead to duplication of efforts or lack of organizational clarity, create confusion among foreign governments, undermine morale at the State Department. I will consult with Congress on the appropriate roles and responsibilities of special envoys to advance foreign policy and national security priorities.**

Constitutional Requirements

*Article II, Section 2 of the U.S. Constitution provides that the President:*

*shall nominate, and by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, shall appoint Ambassadors, other public Ministers and Consuls, Judges of the supreme Court, and all other Officers of the United States, whose Appointments are not herein otherwise provided for, and which shall be established by Law: but the Congress may by Law vest the Appointment of such inferior Officers, as they think proper, in the President alone, in the Courts of Law, or in the Heads of Departments.*

*Under this provision, all "Officers of the United States" not otherwise provided for in the Constitution may only be appointed "with the Advice and Consent of the Senate." The U.S. Supreme Court has interpreted the meaning of "Officers of the United States" to include "any appointee exercising significant authority pursuant to the laws of the United States." Buckley v. Valeo, 424 U.S. 1, 125–26 (1976).*

- *In your view, would Secretary Kerry, as Special Presidential Envoy for Climate, be "exercising significant authority pursuant to the laws of the United States"? Please explain your answer.*
- *Does President Biden intend to submit a nomination for Secretary Kerry to the Senate for its advice and consent regarding his appointment as Special Presidential Envoy for Climate?*
- *Do you commit to advising President Biden that he should submit a nomination for Secretary Kerry's appointment to the Senate for its advice and consent before Secretary Kerry takes office?*
- *Do you commit to advising President Biden that he should submit a nomination for any appointee who will be "exercising significant authority pursuant to the laws of the United States" to the Senate for its advice and consent before the appointee takes office?*

**Special envoys have long been used by administrations on a bipartisan basis to respond to focused and urgent priorities. If confirmed, I will consult with Congress on the appropriate roles and responsibilities for special envoys. As Special Presidential Envoy for Climate, former Secretary Kerry will lead our diplomatic efforts to reassert U.S. climate leadership and raise global ambition to meet the daunting climate challenge.**

Treaties

Presidential Decision to Suspend, Terminate or Withdraw from a Ratified Treaty

*Under the Constitution, the President and the Senate share the treaty-making power. Over the last few decades, the President has increasingly claimed the authority to unilaterally withdraw from treaties with no further action by the Senate or Congress. Reserving the right to object to such a claim of authority to which the Senate has not consented, some have argued that, in recent cases, the President has failed to adequately notify the Senate in advance of such a unilateral withdrawal.*

- *What is your view with respect to the Senate's role in treaty withdrawal? Should the President, acting through the Secretary of State, notify the Senate in advance of any presidential decision to suspend, terminate, or withdraw from any treaty that has received Senate consent to ratification?*
- *Should the Secretary provide to the Senate, through the Foreign Relations Committee and with adequate advance notice, a detailed written justification for the withdrawal?*
- *In your view, what does "advice and consent" mean? What is and should be the role of the Senate be with respect to entering into and terminating treaties?*
- *What is the scope of the President's authority to abrogate a treaty or other international agreement? Is it unlimited? If not, what are the limitations?*

**As a former staff director of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I understand the importance of working with the Senate on foreign policy matters and treaties. If confirmed, I would ensure that for any particular situation involving treaties, the Office of the Legal Adviser would be presented with the facts, and I would consult closely with that office and with Congress on any related issues.**

Rejoining a Treaty

*In your view, does the President have the authority to re-join a treaty without resubmitting that treaty to the Senate for advice and consent? Please explain.*

**As a former staff director of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I understand the importance of working with the Senate on foreign policy matters and treaties. If confirmed, I would ensure that for any particular situation involving treaties, the Office of the Legal Adviser would be presented with the facts, and I would consult closely with that office and with Congress on any related issues.**

"Non-binding" Political Agreements

*In testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, expert legal witnesses have suggested that Congress consider requiring the reporting of significant non-binding political commitments to Congress. Should Congress be informed of these non-binding arrangements? If so, in what form?*

**As a former staff director of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I understand the importance of working with the Senate on foreign policy matters. If confirmed, I would ensure that for any particular situation in this area, the Office of the Legal Adviser would be presented with the facts, and I would consult closely with that office and with Congress on any related issues.**

*Reporting of Political or Oral Agreements which Create Legally Binding Commitments*

*The Case-Zablocki statute (22 U.S.C. 112b) requires the Secretary to provide to the Congress the text of international agreements to which the United States has agreed to become a party. The intent of the statute is to ensure Congress is fully informed of executive decisions to create international, legally binding obligations on the United States.*

*In recent years, presidents have made "political" or "oral" agreements with potentially binding commitments on the United States. Successive administrations appear to have taken the view that such agreements fall outside the scope of Case-Zablocki and therefore do not have to be provided to the Congress.*

*In testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, expert legal witnesses have suggested that Congress consider requiring the written reporting of significant binding political commitments that have not been reduced to writing to Congress.*

- *What are your views regarding providing the Senate with the written text of any political or oral agreement intended to be binding on the United States under international law?*
- *With respect to any oral international agreement or political commitment that creates or is intended to create a legally binding commitment for the United States under international law, will you commit, if confirmed, to working with Congress to establish a meaningful process for reducing such commitments or agreements to writing and transmitting to the Congress the text of such agreement?*

**As a former staff director of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I understand the importance of working with the Senate on foreign policy matters. If confirmed, I would ensure that for any particular situation in this area, the Office of the Legal Adviser would be presented with the facts, and I would consult closely with that office and with Congress on any related issues.**

*Periodic Consultations with Congress on Treaties and Other Agreements*

*Although the State Department's Circular 175 process calls for consultation with Congress on treaties and agreements, it does not provide much guidance on how such conversations should occur. As a practical matter, no established routine procedure for consultation with the Senate (formal or informal) currently appears to exist, at least from the perspective of the Senate side. In recent years, to the extent they occur, State Department briefings to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations (SFRC) have been ad hoc and by affirmative request of the Committee.*

*The paucity of information has led some Senators to grow skeptical with respect to treaties presented to the Committee for advice and consent but completed without the opportunity for consultation. This problem is further complicated if the treaty requires implementing legislation on subject matter over which another Senate committee may have jurisdiction. As a result, some Senate Foreign Relations Committee Senators have expressed wariness with taking up such treaties. Avoidable misunderstanding and confusion can result, complicating or preventing required Senate action.*

*Alternatively, with a more regularized and institutionalized consultation process with SFRC, the Senate and Administration can develop a more dynamic approach to these agreements. Enhanced and meaningful consultation can build support for these agreements and prove valuable in increasing Senate understanding of administration policy objectives over time.*

*Will you commit to directing the Department to address this oversight and work with the Committee to establish a process under which the Department will, on a regular periodic basis, engage in meaningful, advance consultation with the SFRC regarding the Departments' intention to negotiate significant international agreements and treaties?*

**As a former staff director of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I understand the importance of working with the Senate on foreign policy matters. If confirmed, I would ensure that for any particular situation in this area, the Office of the Legal Adviser would be presented with the facts, and I would consult closely with that office and with Congress on any related issues.**

*Scope of the "Provisional Application" Doctrine with Respect to Treaty Implementation*

*In October 1999, the Senate voted to reject the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty by a vote of 51-48.*

*Setting aside the fact that the United States Senate has not consented to ratification of the Vienna Convention on Treaties, please describe your views with respect to the scope of the "provisional application" doctrine.*

- *What are your views with respect to the legal effect of a Senate vote to reject a treaty? If rejected, does the President have authority to subsequently implement the provisions of that treaty in spite of that vote? Does such a Senate vote place limits on a future claim of presidential authority to provisionally implement the rejected treaty?*

**As a former staff director of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I understand the importance of working with the Senate on foreign policy matters. If confirmed, I would ensure that for any particular situation in this area, the Office of the Legal Adviser would be presented with the facts, and I would consult closely with that office and with Congress on any related issues.**

**Reservations, Understandings, and Declarations" and Other Conditions to Consent to Ratification**

*Please describe your views with respect to the binding legal effect of the Senate's inclusion of conditions to consent to ratification of a treaty under constitutional advice and consent, such as reservations, understandings, and declarations (RUDs). If the President decides to ratify a treaty to which the Senate has consented but has also included such RUDs in its resolution of consent to ratification, is the President legally bound to implement such conditions as included by the Senate in its consent to ratification resolution?*

**As a former staff director of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I understand the importance of working with the Senate on foreign policy matters. If confirmed, I would ensure that for any particular situation in this area, the Office of the Legal Adviser would be presented with the facts, and I would consult closely with that office and with Congress on any related issues.**

*Authorizations for the Use of Military Force (AUMF)*

*The War Powers Resolution requires congressional notifications when United States Armed Forces are introduced into hostilities or into situations where there is imminent involvement in hostilities.*

- *Based on your experience, what do you think the term "hostilities" means?*
- *Separate from military action authorized under the 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF), do you believe the United States has been or is engaged in ongoing hostilities in Yemen?*
- *Under both the Obama and Trump Administrations, certain terrorist detainees held at Guantanamo Bay have not been released for good reason. Do you envision or support a shift in policy with respect to Guantanamo Bay detention?*
- *Do you agree with the Trump Administration's use of force pursuant to the 2001 AUMF? Why or why not?*
- *Do you believe that the 2001 AUMF should be repealed or updated? Why or why not?*
- *Is it possible for Congress to update the 2001 AUMF without negatively impacting current detention authority for terrorist detainees?*
- *Do you believe that any legislative update to the 2001 AUMF should ensure that detention authority for terrorist detainees is not interrupted? Why or why not?*
- *Do you believe that any legislative update to the 2001 AUMF should ensure that current military operations against terrorists around the world continue to be authorized?*
- *Do you believe that the 2001 AUMF authorizes the use of military force against associated forces of Al Qaeda?*
- *Do you believe that any legislative update to the 2001 AUMF should contain geographic constraints? Why or why not?*
- *Do you believe that any legislative update to the 2001 AUMF should include a hard sunset? Why or why not?*

**President[-Elect] Biden campaigned on a promise to bring to a responsible end the "forever wars" that have continued since 9/11, while also protecting Americans from terrorist and**

other threats. This will mean rightsizing our counterterrorism operations, as well as restoring and enhancing safeguards to make those operations transparent and to protect civilians. We will also work with Congress to update the relevant legal authorities so that they are more explicit about the scope and boundaries of the conflicts in which America is engaged. It has been almost twenty years since the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force became law. In the ensuing two decades, that law has been invoked for military actions in countries and against groups that are not named in the statute. For the sake of good governance and public accountability -- and consistent with Congress's role when it comes to critical decisions to use military force -- we think it is time for an up-to-date statute that sets out the agreed scope and limitations of our military activities. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with Congress on this effort.

- *Do you commit to working closely with this committee and directing your staff to brief the committee on any use of force undertaken pursuant to the 2001 AUMF, 2002 AUMF, or Article II of the United States Constitution?*

**If confirmed, I am committed to working with Congress to review and repeal outdated authorities and to put in place an up-to-date statute that sets out the agreed scope and limitations of our military activities. I look forward to working closely with Congress on this effort. I will work closely with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and direct Department personnel to provide the appropriate briefings on the use of force.**

Political-Military Affairs

Arms Sales

*Do you commit to respecting Congress's role in the arms sales process, and to adhering to the informal notification process as established for decades with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and House Foreign Affairs Committee?*

**Yes.**

*Do you commit to restricting the informal arms sales review process to only SFRC and HFAC, and not to allow informal review by other Congressional committees?*

**If confirmed, I will work with SFRC and HFAC to ensure full respect for their congressional jurisdiction over review of arms sales.**

Security Assistance

*In the decades since 9/11, the Department of Defense has acquired more and more authorities and resources for what were previously State Department-led security assistance activities.*

- *Has that dynamic gone too far? Is it time for the State Department to take the lead in security assistance once again?*

- *Is the State Department organized and equipped to lead security assistance efforts for the U.S. Government? What are the obstacles to the Department effectively leading these efforts? What changes are necessary to enable the Department to best lead these efforts?*

**The State Department's leadership role in providing security assistance is intended to ensure that U.S. security assistance is advancing U.S. foreign policy objectives. If confirmed, I will review the current status of the Department's ability to lead security assistance efforts for the U.S. Government and consult with Congress on any necessary changes to enhance these efforts.**

Burden-Sharing

*The Trump Administration has pushed our allies to contribute more to host nation support activities, expanding the scale of their expected contribution and the scope of activities that are expected to be covered. Some of these allies apparently believe the Biden Administration will not seek any additional contributions, and will return to status quo ante discussions of such topics.*

*Should Korea, Japan, Germany and others discard those considerations now? Are they off the hook for contributing more to support the deployment of U.S. forces?*

**If confirmed, I will work with the relevant agencies and departments to review the status of host nation support activities.**

India

*In a March 2020 event at the Hudson Institute, incoming Coordinator for the Indo-Pacific Dr. Kurt Campbell said, "I do not think there is a relationship that's more important for the United States to invest in over the course of the next 10 to 15 years than India." Do you agree? Why or why not*

**The Biden-Harris administration views India as a critical strategic partner in tackling a range of global challenges, from developing an international response to COVID, to fighting climate change, and working toward a global economic recovery.**

Global Health Security and Diplomacy

*Initially fueled by non-transparency and unchecked travel, then exacerbated by deliberate disinformation, a deadly novel coronavirus that should have been contained at its source in China instead has been allowed to spread across international borders, sicken over 70 million people, claim over 1.6 million lives, shutter schools and businesses, and wreak havoc upon the global economy. The impact of this pandemic will be felt for generations to come.*

*The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare two critical truths: (1) infectious diseases do not respect borders and a threat anywhere can quickly become a threat everywhere; and (2) the global architecture for global health security is woefully ill-equipped and underprepared.*



- *I requested information from the Trump Administration about the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic, and will share with you the contents of that request. If confirmed, will you commit to fully investigating the origins of the pandemic, including with regard to the safety protocols at the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV) and associated research facilities, and to sharing that information with this committee in a timely manner?*

**I support a robust and clear investigation into the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic. An impartial public health investigation into the origins of any novel outbreak is vital to protecting against future re-emergence events. The Biden administration will comprehensively review all information available to us about the origins of SARS-COV-2 and will fully support the ongoing origins investigation being conducted under the auspices of the World Health Organization. It is imperative to have transparency on the early days of the pandemic, including to identify important lessons about how future pandemic emergence events can be averted.**

*The World Health Organization*

*The World Health Organization (WHO), as the guardian of the International Health Regulations and as the clearinghouse of global health data and best practices, plays a key role in advancing global health security. From combatting polio and eradicating smallpox, its record for addressing long-simmering global health challenges is remarkable. Yet, its record for responding to sudden onset emergencies is remarkably poor.*

- *Much like the sudden onset global health emergencies that preceded it, including the 2013-2014 Ebola outbreak in West Africa, the WHO was either unwilling or unable to mount an effective emergency response to the COVID-19 outbreak in Wuhan, China. Not only did it fail to use its bully pulpit to press the Chinese government for access and information in the critical first days of the outbreak, but the WHO provided political cover for China's reckless response, publicly validated disinformation, and condemned travel controls designed to mitigate the global spread.*
- *Do you agree that the WHO is badly in need of reform? If so, what specific reforms are necessary to restore its credibility among the American people and the world? Will you seek to build upon and advance the reform agenda previously put forward by the Trump administration, which had won the support of the G-7 prior to the U.S. withdrawal?*

**President Biden is committed to strengthening and reforming the World Health Organization to ensure that it can deliver on its vital global mission. It will be a high priority to swiftly review and develop options for advancing priority reforms during the initial weeks of the Administration. The State Department will work closely with our interagency counterparts and partner countries, including the G-7, to build support for priority reforms.**

*Will you seek to leverage U.S. contributions to the WHO to incentive reforms? If not, how will you secure necessary reforms?*

**In President Biden's day one letter to the WHO Director General, he pledged to be a constructive partner, and he also pledged to work to strengthen and reform the organization. We will work closely with the other Member States, including our European allies who have put forward specific reform proposals, to reform the organization.**

*Should the WHO be given authority to enforce state obligations under the International Health Regulations – including for inspections and data transparency – or should enforcement be assigned elsewhere?*

**Member state adherence to obligations under the International Health Regulations is critically important, and the new administration will both lead by example and urge other member states to improve their own adherence. We will also work with our partners to strengthen the IHR, including by exploring measures to promote greater member state adherence and transparency.**

*Should the WHO be given greater emergency response capacity (including through the rapid recruitment and deployment of emergency responders within 24 to 48 hours of an outbreak), or should it focus its energies on strengthening emergency preparedness in partner countries while emergency response is assigned elsewhere?*

**We will work with the WHO and with other Member States to improve the WHO's capacity for emergency response and its ability to support nations in strengthening public health preparedness. Preparedness and response capacities are closely linked and both vital to pandemic readiness.**

*If confirmed, will you ensure that by joining COVAX, the vaccines pillar of the WHO-supported Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator, the United States will not subsidize the distribution of the CoronaVac vaccine, developed by the Beijing-based Sinovac, or similarly substandard Chinese COVID-19 vaccines with an efficacy rate of just 50 percent?*

**We intend to join COVAX to support the multilateral and equitable distribution of safe and effective vaccines. WHO certifies vaccines for use in COVAX that meet specified safety and efficacy standards. We will use our influence within the COVAX platform to ensure these standards are rigorously upheld.**

*Closing Gaps in Global Health Security and Diplomacy*

*How can the United States best incentivize greater commitment and investment in closing gaps in global health security within countries at high risk of outbreaks with pandemic potential?*

**I am committed to advancing global health security capacity and ensuring that the U.S. approach is metrics-driven and catalyzes national preparedness investments among our partners. We will actively explore options for improving investments in global health**

**security capacity, as well as new financing mechanisms to support preparedness in low-income countries.**

Do you support the concept of an international incentive fund, as proposed in the Global Health Security and Diplomacy Act of 2020?

***COVID-19 has highlighted the lack of global preparedness financing for epidemics and pandemics. Health security financing is a shared global responsibility, and should involve contributions from international donors as well as commitments from national governments. An international incentive fund is one of the options that we will explore.***

*U.S. Leadership on Global Health Security*

*Lack of strategic direction, embittered competition, and poor communication between the two principal implementers of U.S. global health assistance—USAID and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)—have long plagued U.S. global health programs. This is why, when authorizing the greatest commitment by any country to combat a single disease in history, Congress placed the responsibility for coordinating the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) within the Department of State. The PEPFAR program is now recognized as the most successful U.S. foreign assistance program since the Marshall Plan and has saved millions of lives, strengthened health systems and supply chains, and advanced key U.S. diplomatic, economic, and security goals.*

*Recognizing the success of the PEPFAR model—but also understanding that PEPFAR would eventually need to be transitioned—the Obama Administration in 2009 sought to launch a 6-year, \$63 billion Global Health Initiative (GHI). Managed by the Coordinator of U.S. Government Activities to Combat HIV/AIDS and Special Representative for Global Health Diplomacy at the Department of State, the GHI proposed to take an evidence-based approach toward strengthening health systems and enhancing global health security. Though the GHI never found its footing, the compelling need to close gaps in global health security while also mitigating the need for disease-specific initiatives justifies taking another look.*

- *Do you agree that the PEPFAR model, to include the coordinating role played by the Department of State, has been successful?*

***PEPFAR has been a highly effective program. As President Biden stated during the campaign, he is committed to strengthening global health policy and diplomacy at the State Department and across his administration. We are exploring options for doing so and look forward to working with Congress to support this priority.***

*What is the future of PEPFAR? With an increasing number of partner countries reaching epidemic control and taking greater responsibility for managing their own epidemics, is it time to look at transitioning PEPFAR into a broader global health security program?*

***PEPFAR has had a tremendous impact on the HIV/AIDS emergency over the past decade and a half. As the United States continues to combat HIV/AIDS, we must also be sure to***

***strengthen the public health and healthcare systems on which PEPFAR's impact relies, and explore how PEPFAR's strategy can facilitate and complement global health security investments.***

*The COVID-19 pandemic originated and accelerated in higher-income countries, where USAID does not maintain a regular presence and where diplomatic engagement proved critical to securing access for global health experts on the one hand, and the evacuation of American citizens on the other.*

- *Who is responsible for coordinating and executing U.S. foreign policy in Washington, DC, to include diplomatic engagement to advance U.S. global health security interests overseas – the Department of State, USAID, or CDC?*

**I will strengthen the Department of State's diplomatic engagement in support of the COVID-19 health and humanitarian response, as well as global health security more broadly. This work is cross-sectoral by nature, and the White House will continue to coordinate policy in this area across the many government agencies involved in advancing global health security. The Department of State will continue to play a major role, pursuant to President Biden's week one priority actions and Executive Order 13747. The Department of State will play a leading role in diplomatic engagement on health security, in close alignment with USAID, HHS, CDC, and other agencies.**

*Who is best placed to coordinate the execution of a comprehensive U.S. global health security strategy overseas, including by resolving conflicts between implementing agencies and organizations – the Department of State, USAID, or CDC?*

***The White House will coordinate the development of U.S. global health security policy. The Department of State will play a major role, working with USAID, CDC, and other parts of the federal government, which have distinct and complementary roles and which must work in close alignment. The Biden-Harris Administration will seek to minimize conflicts between agencies by clearly delineating agency roles and responsibilities and by maintaining regular coordination through the National Security Council staff.***

Is the recreation of a global health directorate on the National Security Council sufficient to address the day-to-day diplomatic challenges of implementing, monitoring, and evaluating U.S. global health security assistance in the field?

**The re-establishment of the National Security Council Global Health Security and Biodefense Directorate is necessary to better coordinate U.S. global health security policy, which will assist with the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of U.S. assistance by respective U.S. agencies. Chiefs of Mission play a major role in day to day diplomatic outreach and engagement in partner countries, in conjunction with the expert personnel and programmatic agencies in the field that are responsible for programmatic implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.**

*COVID-19*

*If confirmed, how do you plan to responsibly return the Department's workforce to the office as the COVID-19 situation improves in certain countries?*

**Protecting our workforce is my highest priority. The Department of State will take a science-driven, evidence-based approach to workforce safety measures on COVID-19, consistent with federal guidelines. We will manage the in-person return of the workforce in a careful and judicious manner as conditions permit, with due consideration of varying local conditions in our hundreds of posts around the world.**

Will you continue the Trump Administration's phased approach?

**On January 20, President Biden signed an Executive Order, "Protecting the Federal Workforce and Requiring Mask-Wearing." This Executive Order establishes guidance on safe workplace operations for federal agencies through the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Office of Management and Budget, and the Office of Personnel Management. The Order also establishes the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force to provide ongoing guidance to heads of agencies on the operation of the Federal Government, the safety of its employees, and the continuity of Government functions during the COVID-19 pandemic, based on public health best practices as determined by CDC. The Department of State will review and develop implementation guidance in accordance with federal guidelines, which reflects consultation with appropriate stakeholders, including Federal employees, unions, and contractors.**

After the pandemic has subsided, should the Department return 100 percent of its workforce to the office full-time?

**We will take an evidence-driven approach to determining the timing of a full return to in-person work. The Department has demonstrated agility and innovation in its approach to supporting staff telework while maintaining the quality of the Department's operations, and we will explore how the lessons from this experience should shape the Department's telework posture in the future.**

Recent discussions with State Department staff indicated that the Department has mishandled its vaccine rollout. For example, on New Year's Eve, the Bureau of Medical Services (MED) was scrambling to find any employee in the National Capital Region to receive the vaccine because it had doses that were going to spoil. This transpired after MED staff told my staff two weeks earlier that the Department was set to receive one-tenth the number of doses it had requested and expected to receive.

Do you pledge to improve the Department's vaccine rollout?

**Yes. We intend to work with MED and others to review the vaccine rollout under the previous administration to ascertain lessons learned and next steps. Our goal is to ensure**

**that the vaccine rollout plan is evidence-based and equitable, and to increase communication and transparency in its execution.**

Do you intend to address the mistakes that MED has made in its vaccine roll-out and hold accountable those within the Department who made mistakes with such a valuable resource not available to most Americans?

**The logistics of the initial vaccine rollout in much of the country have been bumpy, and early challenges are inevitable. We are aware of mistakes made in an early round of the Department's vaccination program, will explore how these mistakes occurred, and will take action as appropriate to ensure they are not repeated.**

Do you intend for the Department to vaccinate all or parts of the workforce? If so, which parts and in what order? Should LES staff be included?

**The Department should prioritize the vaccination of its workforce based on clear parameters. Such prioritization should not differentiate between foreign service, civil service, contractors or LES.**

*Recent reports have suggested that as of January 11th, over 1,000 State Department employees had already been vaccinated, while zero USAID employees had received the vaccine. Do you agree that this inequity is unacceptable? If confirmed, will you seek to ensure that all employees of USAID, over which the Department currently exercises foreign policy direction, have equitable access to vaccines?*

**We will follow administration policy on vaccine eligibility for the federal workforce, and will work to ensure that prioritization among foreign affairs personnel is driven by public health considerations rather than political or bureaucratic factors.**

North Atlantic Treaty Association (NATO)

*For years, both Republicans and Democrats alike pushed NATO allies to increase their defense spending for their own protection and for the well-being of the alliance. During President Trump's tenure, NATO allies increased their defense spending by more than \$100 billion, and nine allies meet the spending benchmarks, up from only three in 2014. This re-investment demonstrates a strong commitment to NATO and is a win for the United States and the alliance.*

- *Will you continue to press our allies to prioritize their own defense and our mutual security, including by ensuring allies are spending on equipment and not just personnel?*
- *There has been a lot of focus on the NATO Wales Summit pledge that all allies would spend 2% of their GDP on defense and 20% of that amount on equipment. How useful is the two percent spending pledge as a metric of an ally's defense readiness and commitment to NATO?*
- *Should NATO re-negotiate a better metric? What other metrics would you suggest?*

**The Biden-Harris administration will be committed to rebuilding U.S. alliances, particularly with our NATO allies. We will work to ensure NATO has the capabilities it needs to deter and defend against new and existing threats to our collective security. We will continue to ensure that allies are doing their fair share, while reframing the burden sharing conversation to focus on capabilities and consider steps to widen the aperture on contributions that count as defense spending, while maintaining pressure to do more. We look forward to consulting with NATO allies, as well as with Congress, on the best strategy to ensure NATO has the capabilities it needs.**

#### **European Sovereignty/PESCO**

*Do you view the various European attempts to establish a sovereign Europe and a European army, or PESCO, as complimentary of, or a threat to, NATO? How specifically will these efforts benefit the United States and NATO and how will they threaten or harm them?*

**A strong and militarily capable Europe is in the U.S. interest, freeing up valuable resources that the United States can deploy in the Indo-Pacific and towards other priority challenges. The United States should consider a more supportive stance toward PESCO and other European defense initiatives as part of our focus on growing European capabilities, while ensuring that they complement and do not distract from NATO. So long as these efforts focus on delivering capabilities, effectiveness, and operational readiness, and take place within the context of greater NATO-EU cooperation, they will advance both U.S. and European interests.**

How will you ensure Europe understands the importance of participation by non-EU allies in these new defense institutions?

**In November 2020, the EU Council agreed to rules that open the door for non-EU entities to participate in PESCO projects. The United States, in close coordination with other non-EU allies like the United Kingdom and Norway must continue to advocate the importance of third-party participation in PESCO projects.**

#### **U.S. Troop Levels in Europe**

The Trump Administration sought to re-evaluate the number of U.S. service members in the European theater, as well as the location of EUCOM and AFRICOM headquarters. While this final decision will be taken by the Department of Defense, the decision to move troops to or from an allied country has foreign policy implications both for our allies and our adversaries.

- Do you believe that the decision to decrease troop levels in Europe is a good decision for overall U.S. foreign policy? What role should the State Department and diplomacy have in making future decisions about troop posture?

- Countries in NATO’s south and east have stated that they would be interested in additional U.S. troops. What is your view on placing additional troops in these regions? Would the Administration consider allies that border the Black Sea, such as Romania?

**During the campaign, then President-Elect Biden pledged that he will “task the Secretary of Defense to conduct a comprehensive review of our posture relative to the threats we face and to recommend how that posture should change over time.” I have publicly stated that the Biden-Harris should review President Trump’s decision to withdraw some U.S. troops from Germany. Ultimately, I would support a global force posture review that considers whether posture adjustments are required to ensure alignment with defense priorities and U.S. national security interests.**

#### **China, Europe, and the United States**

Europe has begun to wake up to the threat posed by the People’s Republic of China (PRC). Last fall, I published a report recommending strong engagement with our European allies on China. The EU High Representative for Foreign Policy proposed a U.S.-EU dialogue on China, and Secretary Pompeo wisely accepted. However, this is just the start, and many challenges remain.

- How will the Biden Administration maintain this momentum on cooperation with our European allies?
- If confirmed, on what China-focused issues do you intend to initially engage Europe? Which do you see as most ripe for potential success?
- It is not just greater military presence, investment in ports, 5G telecommunications networks, and other critical infrastructure that pose mutual security risks to the United States and Europe. It is also CCP political influence in our education systems, media, and local and national politics. What is the Biden Administration’s plan to work with the Europeans to protect our societies from this malign influence? How will the Biden Administration work to ensure we share the same threat assessments with our European and other democratic allies? Is additional diplomatic engagement or intelligence sharing necessary?

**The most effective way to address the pressing global challenges we face – including China but also COVID-19 and climate change--is alongside partners who share our values and interests. The Biden-Harris Administration recognizes the challenges that China poses to our democracy and Europe’s liberal democracies and views the time as ripe for greater cooperation on the full range of challenges that China poses, including to democracy, and in the technology, trade, and investment realms. That is why strengthening and revitalizing the U.S.-EU partnership will be a key priority for the Biden-Harris administration and we look forward to engaging with Congress on this critical issue.**

#### **Russia & the Arctic**



## Russia

The U.S. relationship with Russia is at its lowest point in decades. Many of the traditional channels of dialogue have been slowly severed. At the same time, Russia has positioned itself, at the center of many of the world's current conflicts: Syria, Nagorno-Karabakh, Ukraine, and Libya.

- What is the most productive way to demonstrate U.S. objections to Russia's bad behavior?
- What role should sanctions play in pushing back on Russia? How effective has our sanctions regime been in curtailing Russian malign behavior? Have they inadvertently helped Russia? And how can we design sanctions to ensure we have a deterrent effect without helping Putin accomplish other goals?
- It is very important that we implement a comprehensive Russia strategy, in which we have multiple tracks, including dialogues. What will be the Biden Administration's comprehensive Russia strategy? What will you emphasize?
- The past several U.S. Administrations have tried to "reset" the U.S. relationship with Russia, and each has failed. French President Macron is currently attempting a reset with Russia to the dismay of Europe and NATO's eastern allies who are beefing up their defenses with an eye toward Russia. Will this Administration attempt a "reset" with Russia?
- How will you work with the Europeans, who have differing perspectives on Russia, to ensure that NATO and the EU maintain a united view of the Russian threat and a united response?
- What is your stance on disinformation campaigns and cyberattacks against the U.S. and the Central and Eastern European nations from sources within Russia and elsewhere? What role, if any, do you see for the U.S. in stemming Kremlin misinformation flowing to the Russian people about the U.S. and its allies? In this vein, what do you see as the role of the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty?
- Do you support more dialogues between the Russian and American people? How do you propose we strengthen U.S.-Russia people-to-people ties? Is that possible at the current moment or in the near future?

**There will be no reset with Russia. This Administration sees the Putin regime as it is: an increasingly paranoid and repressive system that has grown more aggressive in its efforts to undermine the United States and other liberal democracies. The Biden Administration is prepared to meet the Kremlin's aggression with renewed resolve and strengthened Alliances—to deter and disrupt Moscow's threats and enhance democracies' collective resilience to Kremlin tactics. Sanctions are one of many tools that increase the costs the Kremlin faces for its hostile actions, particularly when they are executed in coordination**

**with our Allies. Just as the Biden-Harris Administration works to increase the pressure on Moscow, so too will it focus effort on building U.S. resilience and the resilience of our allies in ways that mitigate the effects of Moscow's actions. Moreover, the Biden Administration is prepared to engage Moscow, both to increase the lines of communication that mitigate the risk of miscalculation between us, and to advance U.S. interests. While firmly opposing the Putin regime's aggression, the Biden Administration will look for opportunities to build the foundation for a better relationship with Russia and its people.**

On January 17, 2021, Russian opposition politician Alexei Navalny returned home to Russia from Germany, where he had spent the last five months being treated for poisoning with a nerve agent from the Novichok family. This poisoning was almost certainly organized and perpetrated by the Russian government under the leadership of Vladimir Putin. Immediately upon his return to Russia, Mr. Navalny was arrested and has been put into prison for at least 30 days after a rushed, sham trial.

- After his arrest, Mr. Navalny's team released a list of eight people close to Vladimir Putin that they would like to see sanctioned. Do you believe that the United States and its allies should take up Mr. Navalny's request? Would doing so set a negative or positive precedent for the future use of sanctions?
- How much support, and of what kind, do you believe that the United States should give to Mr. Navalny and other Russian opposition figures?

**The Kremlin's attacks against Mr. Navalny and sustained crackdown on the freedoms of all Russians are yet another sign of a regime that is lacking confidence -- so paranoid that it is unwilling to tolerate any criticism or dissent. The Biden Administration will ensure the completion of an investigation into Russia's use of chemical weapons in the poisoning of Russian opposition leader Alexey Navalny, as set out by the Chemical and Biological Weapons Control and Warfare Elimination Act of 1991. The Administration will also consider imposing additional costs on Mr. Navalny's attackers and stand with all of those advocating for democracy and universal rights -- whether in Russia or elsewhere around the world.**

#### **The Arctic**

Russia has militarized much of its Arctic coastline, and China has claimed to be a "near Arctic" state. Meanwhile, the effects of a changing climate greatly worry our fellow members of the Arctic Council.

- If confirmed, will your State Department look at the Arctic through a climate lens or a security lens?
- To what extent will engagement in and with the Arctic Council be a priority for the Administration?

- What role do you believe that NATO should play in the Arctic?
- Are there areas in which the United States can work with Russia to accomplish shared goals in the Arctic? Do you see the Arctic as an area where we could have a productive relationship with Russia?

**The Arctic is warming much faster than other parts of the world. A warming Arctic threatens sea-level rise throughout the world and melting of the permafrost and the consequent release of powerful greenhouse gases. Our administration will seek to re-engage on climate issues in particular within the Arctic Council. In addition, climate change has increased the geopolitical importance of the Arctic and increased human activity in the region, including Russian efforts to rebuild its military presence along the Northern Sea Route, increasing the risk of accidents and miscalculation. The United States must address the region's growing security concerns, most immediately by working in lockstep with our Arctic and European allies to engage Russia in an effort to establish a code of conduct to regulate military activity in the region and reduce the risk of incidents escalating into armed conflict.**

#### Eastern Europe

*President Biden has said a goal of his Administration would be to "Build Back Better" the U.S. relationship with our allies in Europe. I welcome efforts to work with our allies to resolve our differences and tackle today's and tomorrow's challenges. While this push is geared toward our tense relationships with Germany and France, maintaining strong ties with our partners and allies in Eastern Europe, like the Baltics, Greece, and Romania, is critical.*

- *Do you commit to supporting and prioritizing our allies in the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea, and Central and Eastern Europe?*
- *Will the Administration develop a Black Sea strategy to push back on Russia and coordinate U.S. allies and partners that reside in this strategic region?*

**If confirmed, rebuilding our relationships with our European allies will be one of my priorities, including those in Central and Eastern Europe and the Black Sea region. Our commitment to our NATO collective security obligations is ironclad, and we will work to deter and disrupt Moscow's threats and enhance democracies' collective resilience to Kremlin tactics. We look forward to consulting with Congress as we develop our strategic approach to the region.**

#### The Black Sea

*With Russia's illegal annexation and militarization of Crimea and the emergence of Turkey's Blue Homeland doctrine, the strategic Black Sea region has grown increasingly important and unstable.*

- *What more do we need to do to protect allies in the Black Sea and help them protect themselves?*
- *How can we encourage more collaboration between U.S. allies and partners in the Black Sea?*
- *What equipment or technical assistance is needed to ensure our allies and partners are stable and secure?*

**Our administration will continue to reject Russia's attempted annexation of Crimea and recognize Crimea as sovereign Ukrainian territory. We will also work with Ukraine and other partners and allies in the Black Sea region to help them to improve their ability to deter and defend against threats to their security. If confirmed, I look forward to consulting with my colleagues at the Department of Defense and with Congress on the appropriate level and type of support for our allies and partners in the region.**

*Three Seas Initiative*

*If confirmed, how will the Department interact with the Three Seas Initiative? Do you see it as an economic initiative, or a geopolitical one?*

**The Three Seas Initiative has an important role to play in advancing the goal of interconnectivity in infrastructure, energy, and digitalization among its members. I look forward to seeing the initiative move forward with concrete projects that will benefit the citizens of its member states. Our administration looks forward to working alongside the EU to support the region's development and cohesiveness.**

*Hungary*

*Hungary, an EU member and NATO ally known in part for its 1956 revolution against its Soviet occupation, has grown increasingly autocratic under Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and his political party, Fidesz. In what Orbán calls an "illiberal democracy," he and his affiliates have captured and consolidated the media, pressured civil society, forced one of the country's top universities to leave the country, cozied up to Russia and China, and increased corruption by Orbán-linked companies and Hungarians. The pressure on independent media has gotten so bad that RFE/RL re-opened its Hungarian service last year to ensure that citizens had at least one independent news outlet.*

- *The Obama Administration policy of shunning Hungary did not and will not solve the problem of the country's democratic backsliding. Neither did the Trump Administration's policy of hugging Hungary closer. What do you believe is the right balance between carrots and sticks for Hungary?*
- *What should be the U.S. role in ensuring Hungary remains a democracy and how should the U.S. work with the EU on this issue?*

- *Will the United States put diplomatic support behind the EU's efforts to tie the rule of law to disbursement of EU funding?*
- *If confirmed, will you ensure the President appoints an Ambassador to Hungary that will have the backing from Washington that is necessary to stand up to Orbán and Fidesz?*

**No democracy is perfect. That is why the Biden-Harris administration is committed to democratic renewal at home and abroad, and why it is important for allies to hold one other accountable to our democratic commitments. The Biden administration looks forward to working with allies on the basis of our shared values and commitments. Where allies fall short of those commitments, we will voice our concerns. We are concerned about recent developments in Hungary that have curtailed LGBTQ+ rights, eroded space for civil society, and undermined judicial independence. If confirmed, I will ensure that we have an Ambassador that will have the backing from Washington to engage with Hungarian counterparts on these issues as an important part of our bilateral agenda.**

#### Bulgaria

*In December, Bulgaria vetoed the opening of EU accession talks with North Macedonia over a bilateral language and cultural dispute. While the dispute is bilateral, this veto has wider geopolitical impacts for the region, the EU, and the United States. It is in the interest of the United States for the Balkan countries, especially North Macedonia which has made many difficult reforms and changes to reach this point, to be rewarded for these reforms and given what it was promised. It is also in the interest of the EU and the United States to have Balkan countries join the West rather than rely on Russia, China, and other malign actors for economic and political support.*

- *How involved should the United States be in this process? If confirmed, what will you do to push Bulgaria and North Macedonia to resolve their disputes outside of the EU process?*

**I strongly support the euro-Atlantic aspirations of the countries of the Western Balkans as a key step toward realizing the long-held vision of a Europe free, whole, and at peace. Our administration will work with the EU and the countries of the region to support the region's democratic and economic development and to advance its euro-Atlantic aspirations.**

#### Kosovo-Serbia

*Resolving the Kosovo-Serbia dispute would go a long way toward advancing stability and security in the Western Balkans. In an effort to support this, the Trump Administration appointed two Special Envoys, one for Serbia-Kosovo Dialogue and another for the Western Balkans. An EU-led Kosovo-Serbia Dialogue is also underway, led by EU Special Representative Miroslav Lajčák. U.S. and EU efforts to reconcile Kosovo and Serbia have recently seemed at odds with each other, not complimentary. The Trump Administration was able to secure an economic agreement between the two, but a full compromise agreement has yet to be secured.*

- *How does the Biden Administration plan to engage in the current Kosovo-Serbia dialogue?*

*If confirmed, would your State Department appoint a Special Envoy to this dispute? If so, how will you assign that work? Will you look to an outside envoy or to someone within the Foreign Service? If a Foreign Service Officer, how will he or she be politically empowered to take on this role?*

- *If you do intend to appoint a Special Envoy to Kosovo-Serbia, how would you instruct him or her to interact with EU Special Representative Lajčák?*
- *What support, political or otherwise, does the Biden Administration plan to give to the process? What carrots and sticks can be used to incentivize each side to compromise?*

**As the President has said, “A comprehensive settlement that will lead to mutual recognition, preserve the sovereignty and territorial integrity of both states, and strengthen their democratic institutions is essential for Kosovo and Serbia to move forward. It would enhance both countries’ security and prosperity, advance their aspirations for membership in the European Union and other multilateral institutions, and support the enduring aim of a Europe whole, free, and at peace.” Our administration will be committed to working with the EU to support negotiations toward a comprehensive settlement. If confirmed, I will carefully consider the question of a special envoy for the region.**

#### *Bosnia & Herzegovina*

*Last year marked the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Dayton Peace Accords, which brought peace to Bosnia in 1995. The Accords currently serve as the basis for the country’s constitution, and scholars and policy-makers—including President-elect Biden—agreed in a statement released on Dayton’s 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary that reforms in Bosnia are incomplete, and that the process is no longer working for the country and its people. Its leaders are corrupt and under sanction, its youth are migrating to Europe for a better life, and global malign actors are using Bosnia as a gateway to Europe. President Biden’s statements about Bosnia during the 2020 presidential campaign and throughout the transition (as President-elect) seem to indicate that the country will be a priority of his Administration.*

- *What are President Biden’s and your plans to help bring stability and good governance to Bosnia and its people?*
- *Will the Biden Administration, alongside the EU, put political efforts into securing a more permanent constitution for Bosnia and Herzegovina?*

**As the President has said, 25 years after the signing of the Dayton Accords, it is clear that the work to promote justice, reconciliation, and fully functional Bosnia and Herzegovina remains incomplete. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the international community and the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina to finally achieve the promise**

**contained in the Dayton Accords — a prosperous, just, and democratic Bosnia and Herzegovina in the heart of a Europe whole, free, and at peace.**

Belarus

*Since the August 9th presidential election, Belarusians have peacefully protested in unprecedented numbers to contest the official results, which fraudulently awarded Alexander Lukashenka another term. The government has responded to these peaceful protests with violence, initiating a campaign of disappearances, arrests, torture, and violence against the protestors and journalists.*

- *At the end of 2020, the Senate confirmed Julie Fisher to be U.S. Ambassador to Belarus—our first ambassador in the country in 12 years. What will you instruct her to prioritize during her time in Minsk? How do we ensure that her presence in country is not used as a signal of support for the Lukashenka regime?*
- *Since the protests began, the United States has increased its support of civil society in Belarus. What more can the United States, along with European allies, do to assist Belarusian advocates of democracy?*
- *Are U.S., EU, UK, and Canadian sanctions having an effect on the regime? If not, what are our other options?*

**People around the world have been inspired by the Belarusian people, especially Belarusian women, peacefully demonstrating for the right to choose their own leadership. President-elect Biden has strongly condemned the Lukashenka regime for its violent and repressive tactics against peaceful protesters and called for a peaceful transfer of power, the release of all political prisoners, and new elections. The Biden administration will continue to evaluate the situation on the ground and consult with our allies and partners to determine appropriate next steps to support the Belarusian people and their right to choose their own leaders via free and fair elections.**

Georgia

*Since its independence, Georgia has generally made good progress toward democracy and implementing market-based economic reforms. Georgia has also been a strong U.S. partner with ambitions to join the Euro-Atlantic community through the EU and NATO. However, over the past few years, the country has suffered democratic backsliding and oligarchic capture of the judiciary, media, and the ruling political party.*

- *What levers can be used to push Georgians, including and especially the ruling party Georgian Dream, to reform Georgia's judiciary and complete electoral reforms?*
- *Has the political and governance situation in Georgia reached the point at which we should reevaluate our relationship with the country, including by conditioning certain aid to Georgia?*

- *Would a revival of the U.S.-Georgia FTA discussions incentivize Georgia and its political elites to relinquish power and support reforms, or would it reward bad behavior?*
- *Should the United States work to revive the Anaklia port project? How much should security and geopolitics factor into projects like the Anaklia port?*
- *What mechanisms does the United States have to encourage the opposition to reform and consolidate itself in an effort to serve as a more effective check on the pro-Russian ruling party?*
- *How will the United States engage the Europeans and the EU to present a united front in Georgia and jointly apply pressure towards the reforms?*

**The United States and Georgia have continued to deepen bilateral relations, particularly in the wake of Russia's 2008 invasion of Georgia and 2014 invasion of Ukraine. If confirmed, I would continue to support the Georgian people's choice to pursue closer ties with the EU and NATO and, as Congress has done, voice strong U.S. support for Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. I would look forward to working with Congress to identify opportunities to support Georgia's democratic development, anti-corruption and pro-business reforms.**

*Nagorno-Karabakh*

*During the two month war between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the Nagorno-Karabakh region, both sides were documented committing human rights violations. Verified videos showed the decapitation of captives, the desecration of bodies, and extrajudicial executions. While Russia brokered a ceasefire, a long-term peace agreement was not reached.*

- *If confirmed, how will you engage with both Armenia, Azerbaijan, and regional stakeholders such as Russia and Turkey to ensure that these crimes are subject to accountability?*
- *As a co-chair of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group, what should the United States do differently to push the two countries to agree to a resolution of this conflict?*

**As the President has said, the United States should be leading a diplomatic effort to find a lasting resolution to the conflict, working together with our European partners. If confirmed, I will reinvigorate U.S. engagement to find a permanent settlement to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict that protects the security of Nagorno-Karabakh and helps to ensure another war does not break out. This includes stepping up our engagement via the Minsk Group, of which the United States is a co-chair, and additional diplomatic work to prevent any further interference by third parties. Our administration is deeply committed to human rights and will urge both sides to investigate any allegations of human rights violations and bring to justice those responsible.**



Ukraine

*You served in the Obama Administration during Russia's 2014 invasion of Ukraine.*

- *What lessons did you take from that experience?*
- *Was the U.S. response in the initial days of Russia's invasion of Crimea adequate? In retrospect, what steps, if any should have been taken to move convincingly convince Putin to reverse course, early in that crisis and before Russia invaded eastern Ukraine?*

**I am focused on the future of Ukraine and how our administration can support the country's internal fight for reform and its external fight against Russian aggression.**

**If confirmed, I will continue to oppose Russia's occupation and attempted annexation of the Crimean peninsula, which is sovereign Ukrainian territory, and support the implementation of the Minsk agreements to end the conflict in eastern Ukraine. Our administration will work to support Ukraine's chosen European path, including by pushing for progress on fighting corruption and implementing reforms that will strengthen Ukraine's institutions and lead to a brighter future for all Ukrainians. Sanctions on Russia as a result of its aggression in Crimea and eastern Ukraine should remain in place unless and until Russia reverses course, and we would look forward to working with Congress to continue providing the assistance Ukraine needs to defend itself against Russian aggression, including weapons, based on an assessment of the needs of the Ukrainian armed forces.**

*Ukraine continues to fight two wars: one with the Kremlin and its various attempts to undermine Ukraine's freedom and independence; and the other with its own demons, particularly the entrenched corruption that has so often undermined Ukraine's democratic transition and Euro-Atlantic ambitions.*

- *If confirmed, will your State Department support the continued provision of lethal and non-lethal military equipment to the Government of Ukraine to support the defense of their territory against Russian-orchestrated fighters in the east of the country? Do you believe the current level of U.S.-provided training for Ukraine's military should increase, decrease, or remain the same?*
- *What pressure and leverage do we have on the Ukrainian government to ensure they continue their anti-corruption reforms?*
- *Should the United States continue to condition certain types of assistance on continued economic and anti-corruption reforms? Should existing conditions for aid be expanded? What further incentives does the United States, along with our European partners, have to encourage Ukraine to complete its land reform, decentralization, privatization of state-owned enterprises, and creation of an independent and responsive judiciary?*

**If confirmed, I will continue to oppose Russia's occupation and attempted annexation of the Crimean peninsula, which is sovereign Ukrainian territory, and support the implementation of the Minsk agreements to end the conflict in eastern Ukraine. We would work to support Ukraine's chosen European path, including by pushing for progress on fighting corruption and implementing reforms that will strengthen Ukraine's institutions and lead to a brighter future for all Ukrainians. Sanctions on Russia as a result of its aggression in Crimea and eastern Ukraine should remain in place unless and until Russia reverses course, and we would look forward to working with Congress to continue providing the assistance Ukraine needs to defend itself against Russian aggression, including weapons, based on an assessment of the needs of the Ukrainian armed forces.**

*Crimea*

*In 2018, Secretary Pompeo issued his Crimea Declaration reaffirming U.S. policy of non-recognition of Russia's illegal claims over Crimea. If confirmed, will you uphold this declaration?*

**If confirmed, I will continue to oppose Russia's occupation and attempted annexation of the Crimean peninsula, which is sovereign Ukrainian territory. Sanctions on Russia as a result of its aggression in Crimea and eastern Ukraine should remain in place unless and until Russia reverses course.**

*Many have expressed grave concerns about Russia's human rights violations in Crimea, including a crackdown on the Crimean Tatar community. If confirmed, what additional actions will you take to hold Russian authorities accountable for their human rights abuses in Crimea?*

**I have taken note of Russia's persecution of Crimean Tatars—actions the Kremlin supports to silence dissent against its attempted illegal annexation of the Crimean Peninsula. The Biden-Harris Administration will restore democracy and human rights to the center of U.S. foreign policy and, if confirmed, I would welcome the opportunity to work with Congress to address this issue as part of a broader strategy that advances human rights and universal values around the world.**

*Turkey*

*Turkey—once thought to be a secular democratic example to its neighbors in the Middle East—has become increasingly authoritarian and belligerent. Our NATO allies are growing increasingly worried that Turkey is no longer a good and reliable member that will work together within NATO for a common defense. Its dalliances with Russia, support for the authoritarian regime in Azerbaijan, dishonest actions on refugees, drilling for oil in Cypriot waters, behavior in Libya, and constant violations of the airspace of its neighbor and fellow ally, Greece, all seem to confirm this fear.*

- *How should NATO deal with a member nation who no longer wants to play by the rules, be it Turkey today or another ally in the future? How will you instruct your ambassador to NATO to address this problem?*

- *Do you agree with Congress on the necessity for the United States to sanction Turkey for their purchase of the Russian-made S-400 air defense system? If not, what steps would you have preferred to see in response to this purchase?*
- *What concerns do you have about the emerging nexus between Turkey and Russia? Should the U.S. actively work to undermine that relationship? If so, how? Should this relationship and alliance flourish, what risks would that condominium pose for the U.S. and its interests in the region and around the world? In such an instance, do you believe that actions should be taken to remove Turkey from NATO?*
- *If confirmed, would your State Department commit to continuing to support the cases of the three locally-hired U.S. embassy and consulate employees who have been accused, detained, and in some cases convicted, of involvement in the attempted presidential coup in 2016?*
- *In addition to jailing U.S. embassy employees, Turkey is the second worst jailer of journalists in the world, falling behind only China. How does the Biden Administration plan to make clear to Turkey that these violations of democratic freedoms are fundamentally incompatible with the Euro-Atlantic community of which Turkey purports to be a member? What consequences should Turkey face if it does not change course?*
- *Turkey's arrests and abuses of academics, political opponents, and religious and ethnic minorities have also become increasingly common and concerning. What steps would you take to ensure Turkey fully meets its obligations under international human rights and religious freedom laws? How will your State Department confront the various issues faced by the Ecumenical Patriarchate of the Orthodox Church, which is based in Istanbul?*

**Turkey is a challenging ally. President Biden has promised to call out Turkish behavior that is inconsistent with international law or its commitments as a NATO ally. Our administration will also return human rights and rule of law to the bilateral agenda. At the same time, we have shared interests in countering terrorism, ending the conflict in Syria, and ensuring regional stability. We will seek cooperation with Turkey on common priorities and engage in dialogue to address disagreements. More broadly, it is important to keep Turkey facing west rather than taking steps that push it closer to Russia and other adversaries. We can uphold our values and protect our interests while also keeping Turkey aligned with the transatlantic alliance on critical issues. In terms of the S-400 air defense system, we believe the system is incompatible with NATO equipment. A top priority will be urging Turkey not to deploy the systems. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress to review the impact of the CAATSA sanctions imposed by the previous administration to determine their effect and whether additional measures are required or warranted.**

Central Asia

*The five post-Soviet Central Asian republics, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, or C5, have often not been prioritized in U.S. foreign policy. During the past twenty years, the United States has largely seen these nations exclusively through a counterterrorism or Afghanistan lens, despite their general lack of terroristic activities. The Defense Department has lumped them in with the Middle Eastern nations in CENTCOM, while the State Department's South and Central Asia grouping separates the five countries from China and Russia.*

- *If confirmed, what elements will be the focus of your Central Asia policy?*
- *In a world that is shifting from the earlier focus on counterterrorism to a focus on great power competition, how do you believe the State Department should interact with the C5?*
- *The C5 countries have poor human rights records. However, as Russia and China jockey for influence in the region, some worry that a singular focus by the United States on human rights would likely alienate the C5, as it has in the past. In your assessment, what is the proper balance between human rights, economics, and security in U.S. engagement with the C5?*

**Changes in Central Asia in the last several years have created both new opportunities and new challenges. The United States will continue to provide strong support for the independence and territorial integrity of the Central Asia countries, encourage regional cooperation and connectivity, reduce terrorist threats, and promote rule of law reform and respect for human rights. If confirmed I would look forward to working with Congress to sustain U.S. diplomatic support and engagement in the region.**

Western EuropeGermany

*The U.S.-Germany relationship has been increasingly strained over the past years. Among our points of disagreement are the NordStream II pipeline, military spending, attitudes towards China, and questions of the use of nuclear weapons.*

- *What steps will you hope to take to improve the U.S. relationship with Germany? Would you recommend that the U.S. return its troops to Germany and maintain its combatant commands for Europe and Africa in Germany?*
- *Under German leadership, the European Union just concluded an investment deal with China. How do you view the German government's attitudes towards China, doing business with China, and their recently published Indo-Pacific Strategy?*

- *Do you believe that the NordStream II pipeline should be completed? Do you commit to following the law and implementing the Protecting Europe's Energy Security Act and the Protecting Europe's Energy Security Clarification Act?*

**If confirmed, repairing relations with U.S. allies, including Germany, will be among my highest priorities. Germany is an important U.S. ally and economic partner, and we look forward to forging a strong U.S.-Germany partnership and partnering on shared challenges, including China's problematic economic practices. We will not always agree, but we will look to manage those differences constructively as allies. As President Biden has made clear, the Nord Stream 2 pipeline is a bad idea. We will monitor for activity to complete or certify the pipeline and, if such activity takes place, make a determination on the applicability of sanctions.**

#### Greece

*The U.S.-Greece relationship is currently as strong as it has ever been. Greece resides in a tumultuous and tense Eastern Mediterranean neighborhood, with daily Turkish violations of its airspace, thousands of migrants arriving on Greek territory, and increased Russian and Chinese activity in the region's waters and on land. In response to this growing pressure, an Eastern Mediterranean alliance is emerging between Greece, Israel, and Cyprus on defense and energy. Egypt has even joined the Mediterranean Gas Group.*

- *What will the Biden Administration do to continue to strengthen our relationship with Greece? Will the Administration give support to the emerging Eastern Mediterranean alliance?*
- *Greece has expressed strong interest in purchasing F-35s, but it may not be able to outright afford them. Should Greece have these planes and what mechanisms should the United States use to assist with this purchase?*
- *Even before COVID-19, but especially after, Greece needs foreign direct investment (FDI) in several sectoral areas. They would prefer investment from the West rather than China. How will the Biden Administration encourage American companies to invest in Greece to support our strong bilateral relationship, benefit both of our economies, and prevent additional malign investment in such an important partner?*

**The U.S.-Greece security relationship is important to our interests in the Eastern Mediterranean and has grown significantly as bilateral ties have improved, beginning in the Obama administration. I look forward to working with Congress and my colleagues at the Department of Defense to determine any appropriate support for foreign military sales to Greece. If confirmed, I will work to continue to deepen ties between the United States and Greece, including facilitating foreign investment and stronger commercial ties.**

#### UK/Brexit

*In December, the United Kingdom and the European Union agreed to a free trade deal that would prevent the UK from crashing out of the bloc. While the agreement prevented the worst economic and geopolitical outcomes, there are likely to be disagreements and problems with the deal's implementation in the coming years.*

- *What opportunities does the UK's new relationship with the EU present for the United States? What risks and obstacles does the new arrangement present for the U.S.' relationships with both the EU and UK? Opportunities and risks for NATO and the transatlantic relationship?*
- *The UK recently increased its defense spending and is due to publish its Integrated Security and Defense Review in the near future. How will you engage the UK on the future of their foreign and defense policy? What are your priorities for the future of the U.S.-UK defense relationship?*
- *If confirmed, how will you and the Administration engage the UK and Ireland to ensure the Good Friday Agreement remains upheld and the government of Northern Ireland remains functioning?*

**The Biden-Harris administration will support a strong UK and a strong EU. We look forward to working with both partners to address the range of global challenges facing all of our countries. I welcomed the UK's announcement that it will increase its defense spending and look forward to working with the UK and other allies to ensure NATO has the capabilities it needs to deter and defend against the threats we face. The president-elect has been unequivocal in his support for the Good Friday Agreement, and has made it clear that we must not allow it to become a casualty of Brexit. As the United Kingdom and European Union begin implementing Brexit-related provisions, the Biden administration will encourage them to prioritize political and economic stability in Northern Ireland.**

*While the UK has been negotiating its divorce from the EU, it has simultaneously been negotiating a free trade agreement with the U.S. It has already concluded trade agreements with Japan and Singapore.*

- *Do you support concluding a free trade agreement with the UK? What role will you play in the process?*
- *How will a U.S.-UK FTA affect the United States strategically and geopolitically?*

**President Biden has been clear that he will make significant new investments in the U.S. and for American workers before he signs any new trade deals. We look forward to engaging with the British government on strengthening our ties across a wide range of economic issues where our interests align. We will review the progress made during bilateral trade negotiations by the current administration and consult with Congress on the best way forward. President Biden has warned that any trade deal between the U.S. and**

**UK is contingent upon respect for the Good Friday Agreement, which he said cannot become a casualty of Brexit.**

European Union

Trade Disputes

*I support the Biden Administration's efforts to re-engage and coordinate with our European allies, but while the tone of the United States towards Europe has changed, difficulties and disagreements in the transatlantic relationship remain.*

- *The dispute between Boeing and Airbus must be resolved as soon as possible. How will the State Department work with other U.S. departments and agencies to solve the dispute and remove a huge irritant from the transatlantic relationship?*
- *Will the Biden Administration lift the Section 232 tariffs from our allied partners? How will the Biden Administration use this tool to confront shared national security threats, such as China, in the future?*

**If confirmed, rebuilding relationships with our allies and partners, including the EU, will be among my highest priorities. Where feasible, I will look to resolve or deescalate difficult bilateral issues with the EU and other partners, in order to facilitate deeper cooperation in our mutual interest on priorities such as COVID-19, climate change, and meeting the China challenge. Where differences remain, I will consult with allies and partners in a spirit of openness and mutual respect.**

Tech Policy

*The EU and certain members within it have been pushing for "strategic autonomy" and "digital sovereignty," that would give Europe much more power to decide how tech companies – most of which are American and Chinese – are allowed to operate in that hugely important region. The EU also aims to bolster a European tech sector that has lagged behind. However, initial proposals would seem to create barriers to entry for U.S. companies in the form of taxes, tariffs, fines, and anti-trust legislation, which, in effect, creates a decoupling from the United States. This outcome would be damaging both for the EU and the United States, and would severely hinder our joint ability to compete with the PRC as it seeks to become a scientific and technological superpower.*

- *What can the United States and the EU do to stay on the same page regarding tech policy? Is there room for a compromise between the two?*
- *If confirmed, will you prioritize convincing the Europeans that it is both of our interests to align our digital policies and strategies to compete with China? How so?*
- *If confirmed, what areas of potential cooperation would you prioritize?*

**If confirmed, rebuilding relations with U.S. allies and partners, including the EU, will be one of my highest priorities. The President has been clear that the way to tackle the biggest current trade issues, including Chinese unfair trade practices, human rights and labor issues, and the environment, is to work with allies to develop high standards and punish countries that violate them. While our administration and the EU will not agree on everything, we see significant scope for cooperation and, where we disagree, we will manage those differences constructively. We look forward to working with you and other leaders in Congress to shape international economic policy that serves American workers at home and our interests and values around the world.**

United States-EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA)

*A free trade agreement between the EU and the United States could be an economic and strategic win for both sides of the Atlantic if negotiated carefully. However, the abandoned Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (T-TIP) demonstrated the difficulties of this effort. Given China's coercive and dishonest economic practices, a carefully considered trade agreement between our two sides could potentially bolster market-based economics practices and help set global standards.*

- *If confirmed, as a senior member of President Biden's foreign policy team, what are your views regarding a Biden Administration attempt to revive EU-U.S. trade agreement negotiations? If the U.S. were to pursue such a course, what areas should be prioritized?*
- *Many barriers to trade include non-tariff barriers, such as differing regulations and standards. These differences don't just have economic consequences they may give rise to strategic challenge, as well. How can we work to resolve differences in standards and regulations with the EU, UK, and other democratic, market-oriented partners in goods trade and also in the digital and services sectors?*

**The President-elect has made clear that his test for trade policies is whether they deliver for the American worker and the middle class. The President-elect does not want a return to business as usual on trade and has said he will not sign any new trade deals until his Administration has made significant investments in American workers and infrastructure. He has also been clear that the way to tackle the biggest current trade issues, including Chinese unfair trade practices, human rights and labor issues, and the environment, is to work with allies to develop high standards and punish countries that violate them. We look forward to working with you and other leaders in Congress to shape international economic policy that serves American workers at home and our interests and values around the world.**

Anti-Corruption/Rule of Law

*In the FY21 National Defense Authorization Act, the U.S. Congress passed significant beneficial ownership legislation. The EU has also been working on a rule-of-law mechanism to link EU funds to good governance, as well as cracking down on "golden visas." European countries have found themselves at both ends of this corruption cycle.*



- Will collaborating with our democratic allies to tackle corruption in our financial systems be a priority for the Biden Administration? How does the Biden Administration plan to fulfill President Biden's proposal of a "Summit of Democracies?" What are the immediate priorities for that Summit?
- What concrete actions will you take as Secretary of State to push countries to reform their systems and crackdown on corruption?

*The Department of Justice, through its Office of Overseas Prosecutorial Development, Assistance, and Training (OPDAT) and International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP) initiatives, plays a significant role in helping partner countries to promote the rule of law and combat corruption. Will you prioritize coordinating with the Department of Justice and supporting these programs?*

- How important is it that the United States and its European allies take steps to make our own systems less friendly to kleptocracy and less penetrable by dirty money?

**Corruption isn't just another item on a list of global problems. It is a scourge that makes it more difficult to address other challenges—from global health and food security, to economic development and fair trade, to maintaining strong alliances. That's why the President-elect has made clear that tackling corruption will be a major part of the agenda of the Summit for Democracy that the United States will host in the next year. Congress has taken important action to support this fight and, if confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress to continue to ensure that the U.S. is a global leader in countering kleptocracy and corruption.**

*Several members of the EU's eastern bloc have experienced a rise in corruption, a decline in rule of law, and a strain on democratic institutions. Free and independent media in Poland, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria has been reduced and persecuted. Ruling parties have consolidated power in important industries and in the government. This past year, Bulgaria saw large anti-corruption protests sweep the country. The EU has implemented rule-of-law conditionality to disbursement of EU funding as a means to combat this trend.*

- Does the United States have a role to place in EU and EU member states' anti-corruption efforts? If yes, what is that role?
- As an EU member and a NATO ally, what will you do to push anti-corruption efforts in Bulgaria to ensure stability and security in the country and prevent malign actors from gaining footholds in the country and hence in the EU and NATO?

**NATO was founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law. Those shared values make our societies stronger and more resilient to those who would seek to threaten or divide us. And NATO is stronger because it is an alliance grounded in our democratic values, rather than transactions or coercion. The United States, therefore, is committed to working with our Allies to uphold our democratic commitments, including**

**on corruption. President Biden has long recognized that corruption is a national security issue. In the spring of 2014 he gave a major address in Romania, outlining, for example, how corruption made countries more vulnerable to foreign interventions. If confirmed, I will ensure that fighting corruption will remain a centerpiece of a values-based foreign policy agenda.**

*China sees the EU's periphery as a gateway into Europe. As a result, it has followed Russia's example and invested economically and politically in several countries, including Serbia, Ukraine, and Belarus, as well as several EU countries. These investments prey on corrupt officials and entities and utilize corruption as a geopolitical tool.*

- *Will the Biden Administration make a concerted push on anti-corruption in the EU and its periphery with the dual purpose of benefitting European citizens and making it more difficult for malign actors like Russia and China to gain a foothold?*

**President-elect Biden has long recognized that corruption is a national security issue. At a time when adversaries like Russia and competitors like China—regimes both plagued with endemic corruption—are challenging universal values and using corruption to expand influence beyond their borders, it's important for the United States and its allies to take a firm stand against corruption. Congress has taken important action to support this fight and, if confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress to continue to ensure that the U.S. is a global leader in countering kleptocracy and corruption.**

*Assault on Free Media in Europe*

*In recent years, many European countries, including several in the EU, have seen elements of their democracies eroded. One major theme of this erosion is the shrinking space for media freedom in countries like Malta, Slovakia, Poland, Hungary, Belarus, Georgia, and Bulgaria. Independent media has been taken over by the state, purchased by pro-government oligarchs, and journalists have been threatened, harassed, and jailed by law enforcement or government agencies. Horrifiably, several journalists have been killed in recent years. Chinese companies are quietly acquiring stakes in European media. And Turkey, a member of NATO that is ostensibly applying for EU membership, is the second worst jailer of journalists in the world. In reaction to this backsliding, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) recently reopened offices in Romania, Bulgaria, and Hungary. The EU adopted a mechanism to tie funding to upholding the rule of law.*

- *How important is this issue to the Biden Administration? What will the U.S. do to support the EU's efforts to uphold rule of law, the independent journalists' efforts to report the news, and the remaining media outlets continued operations?*
- *Under your leadership, how will the State Department work together with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and United States Agency for Global Media (USAGM) to further the cause of free speech and free media in Europe and Central Asia?*

**The Biden-Harris Administration will restore democracy and human rights to the center of U.S. foreign policy. In addition to ensuring proper focus on media freedom and freedom of expression in our own programming and diplomatic engagement, we will work with international partners. For example, Sweden has just assumed the chairmanship of the OSCE, and has often been a strong partner of the U.S. in defense of free expression and free media. We can work together to support the OSCE's Representative on Freedom of the Media. I also support the ongoing independent journalistic work of RFE/RL, whose reporters provide indispensable, objective reporting in the region.**

Human Rights

*Around the world, political dissidents, activists, journalists, and human rights advocates have been victims of repression, torture, detention, abuse, and arbitrary killing, for solely exercising their right to freedom of expression.*

- *If confirmed, what would you do to bolster and reiterate the U.S. Government's commitment to protecting and advocating for those on the frontlines, including civil society organizations?*
- *How would you direct the State Department to enhance global protections for freedom of expression and the press?*
- *How would you prioritize a "whole-of-government" approach to human rights policy and its application in regional and functional diplomatic relationships?*
- *There is serious concern about the state of press freedom around the world. If confirmed as Secretary of State, what actions will you take to curb suppression of press freedom and support independent journalists around the world?*

**I share your concern about the "democratic recession" around the world, about attacks on civil society, political dissidents, and independent journalists. As you note, press freedom is under attack, and a free and independent media is essential to holding governments accountable to their citizens. I am eager to work with the team at the State Department, USAID, and with Congress to expand U.S. efforts in support of press freedom and independent media. More broadly, President Biden has made clear that human rights and democracy should be central to our foreign policy-- it's part of why he has committed to host a Summit for Democracy-- and I share his assessment and am committed, if confirmed, to ensuring that human rights and democracy are elevated within the State Department, and in interagency discussions.**

*Everyone should be able to practice their faith however they choose, including in places like China, India, and Uzbekistan.*

- *If confirmed, how will international religious freedom factor into your priorities as Secretary of State?*

- *What do you believe is the role of the U.S. Government in advocating on behalf of religious minorities?*

**I will make it a priority to ensure that the voice and diplomatic engagement of the U.S. government is robustly deployed in defense of religious freedom and on behalf of ethnic and religious minorities and others who experience violations of their universal human rights. I am committed to working with the White House to ensure the timely nomination of an Ambassador-at-large for International Religious Freedom and will work with that person and the Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor to make sure that international religious freedom remains a priority.**

*The International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (IRFA) defines Countries of Particular Concern (CPC) as countries where the government engages in or tolerates “particularly severe” violations of religious freedom. The statute, as amended by the Frank Wolf International Religious Freedom Act of 2016 (Frank Wolf Act), also defines the State Department’s Special Watch List (SWL) for countries where the government engages in or tolerates “severe” violations of religious freedom.*

*The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) released a report in mid-2020 that outlined their recommendations for CPC and SWL designations. Of note, USCIRF recommended that Burma, China, Eritrea, Iran, North Korea, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan—as well as five others—India, Nigeria, Russia, Syria, and Vietnam be designated as CPCs. In December, only Burma, China, Eritrea, Iran, Nigeria, the DPRK, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan were re-designated.*

- *Do you believe this list encompasses all of the violators of religious freedom globally? Do others deserve to be placed on the CPC list?*
- *Do you pledge to not allow political concerns to interfere with the CPC designations?*

**I am committed to faithfully implementing the IRFA and the Frank Wolf Act, and to using the standards set forth by Congress to guide designations under the law. I will carefully review the evidence provided by State Department experts, as well as the input of USCIRF. I look forward to continuing to engage with you, and with other members of the Committee, on how we can not only identify where violations of religious freedom are occurring, but also how we can work constructively to end them.**

*Women, Peace and Security*

*2020 marked the 20th anniversary of the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. How will you prioritize women in peacekeeping and in security efforts both at the UN and within US programming abroad?*

**UNSCR 1325 is a lodestar that has guided conflict prevention and resolution efforts, not only at the UN but also in regional security organizations and on the ground in conflict and crisis zones around the world, over the last two decades. If confirmed, I am fully committed**

**to expanding that work, in furtherance of the Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017, and to ensuring that the State Department leads the way. After all, it is both the right and smart thing to do: efforts to prevent conflict, to end conflict, to recover and rebuild after conflict are more successful and more sustainable when women are not only included but empowered.**

*Conflict and crisis have significant implications for women and girls. In contemporary conflicts, as much as 90 percent of casualties are among civilians, most of whom are women and children. Women are the first to be affected by infrastructure breakdown, as they struggle to keep families together and care for the wounded. How do you believe the United States and the UN should approach and prioritize the protection of women and girls in conflict settings?*

**Civilian protection, including the protection of women and girls in conflict zones, should be a priority of the United States and of our international partners. Civilian casualties are not only tragedies within conflict, they set back the cause of repairing and rebuilding when conflict is over. We will work with international partners, including relevant UN agencies, to put a focus on the protection of women and girls in conflict and crisis zones.**

*Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor*

*Atrocity Prevention*

*Under President Obama and as continued under President Trump, the Atrocity Early Warning Task Force (formerly the Atrocity Prevention Board) is tasked with tracking potential behaviors that could amount to atrocities in foreign countries. The task force, while noble in cause, lacks adequate resources to accomplish the stated goal.*

- *If confirmed, how will you appropriately fund, staff, and train personnel serving on this task force in the new administration?*
- *Will you bolster training efforts to continue empowering Foreign Service Officers, Locally Employed Staff, and contractors to detect and report on the warning signs of atrocities?*
- *Please describe efforts you intend to take to bolster the interagency approach to preventing atrocities through this task force.*

**The original intent behind the creation of the Atrocity Prevention Board / Atrocity Early Warning Task Force was not only to identify early warnings but also to bring together the information that the U.S. government has on potential crises to build as complete a picture as possible, and to use that information as a basis for evaluating policy options to prevent atrocities. That objective remains an important one. If confirmed, I will work with the team at the State Department and Congress -- including by aligning policy guidance, staffing, and resources-- to meet the objective of the task force at each stage: identifying and detecting warning signs; assembling information from across the interagency; and focusing interagency policy leaders' attention on policy options to prevent atrocities before**

**they occur..In line with the Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act of 2018 and subject to resource availability, I will support expanded training efforts on atrocity prevention for State Department Foreign and Civil Service, Locally Employed Staff, and contractors.**

*Internet Freedom*

*Internet freedom around the globe is waning as authoritarian states continue to suppress dissent, silence critics, and oppress populations through online censorship and repeated or prolonged internet shutdowns. Current programmatic efforts in Asia, Central Asia, and the Middle East aim to combat this issue.*

- *How will you prioritize Internet Freedom within the Democracy, Human Rights and Labor bureau and across the Department?*
- *Do you believe that internet shutdowns are a threat to human rights?*

**With the support of Congress, over the last decade the State Department has built a range of programmatic activities that support Internet Freedom— the ability of individuals to exercise their internationally recognized human rights online as they do offline. Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights elaborates the freedom of expression and the right of all persons to “seek, impart, and receive information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.” Authoritarian regimes use Internet shutdowns among other tactics to prevent the exercise of this right. If I am confirmed, Internet Freedom will continue to be a priority for the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, and for bureaus across the Department.**

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**Responses to Questions**  
**[Questions #1 to #167]**  
**Submitted to Hon. Antony J. Blinken**  
**by Senator James E. Risch**

SECRETARY-DESIGNATE BLINKEN'S REFORMATTED QUESTIONS  
AND RESPONSES [CONTINUED IN PART II]<sup>1</sup>

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[PRINTER'S NOTE: The questions and responses that follow are copies of the original material received by the committee. Throughout, there are a few blank pages, as well as consecutive short pages with very little text. These pages appeared in the original documents received from the Department of State and are the result of typing errors. They are not an indication of an incomplete response.]

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<sup>1</sup>The first set of responses were considered unacceptable [see the footnote on page 281 for a more detailed explanation]. The State Department offered to reformat what the Transition Team had sent into the numbering system used in the as-submitted Risch QFRs. These responses were not substantively different from what the Transition Team had sent. This also included the questions that had been omitted from the first response document.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#1)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

There are several vacant ambassadorial posts in Sub-Saharan Africa without a named nominee to be considered by the Foreign Relations Committee, including such high-priority posts as Sudan. Many other posts will become vacant in the coming year.

- a. As Secretary of State, are you committed to working with the White House to ensure that Ambassadorial positions in Sub-Saharan Africa are filled by qualified, experienced nominees in a timely manner?
- b. Under your leadership as Secretary of State, what actions will you pursue to ensure that hard to fill posts in Sub-Saharan Africa are sufficiently and consistently staffed?
- c. In your opinion, is Africa fully integrated into the Department's strategic frameworks and strategy documents?
- d. Do you believe that Africa is adequately represented in the State Department's Indo-Pacific strategy?
- e. How can the Department better leverage the Bureau of African Affairs and encourage better coordination with the Bureau of Near East Affairs on Red Sea Corridor issues?

**Answer:**

I believe there may be more we can do to ensure that Africa is adequately represented in the Department's Indo-Pacific strategy. If confirmed, I will commit to reviewing this and consulting with Congress.

If confirmed, I will work with the White House and relevant State Department bureaus and offices to ensure that all posts in Sub-Saharan Africa are sufficiently and consistently staffed with the appropriate personnel.

I believe there may be more we can do to integrate Africa into the Department's strategic frameworks and strategy documents. If confirmed, I will commit to reviewing this and consulting with Congress.



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I believe there may be more we can do to ensure that Africa is adequately represented in the Department's Indo-Pacific strategy. If confirmed, I will commit to reviewing this and consulting with Congress.

If confirmed, I will closely review existing coordination between the Bureau of African Affairs and the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs on Red Sea Corridor issues and ask senior leadership to identify and implement mechanisms for better coordination.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#2)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

The Department of State's Office of the Inspector General issued a report in September 2020 on the audit of the Bureau of African Affairs Monitoring and Coordination of the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership Program (TSCTP), which identified \$201.6 million in potentially "wasteful spending due to mismanagement and inadequate oversight." The OIG explicitly questioned approximately \$109 million in program funds with "invoices that lacked supporting documentation."

If confirmed as Secretary of State, how will you ensure that the Bureau of African Affairs has the requisite capacity, including sufficient numbers of trained contract officers and staff, to ensure that it can implement, monitor, and conduct appropriate oversight of TSCTP and other programs?

**Answer:**

If confirmed, I will work with leadership of the Bureau of African Affairs to review existing capacity and identify any necessary increases in resources to implement, monitor, and conduct appropriate oversight of TSCTP and other programs.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#3)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

The proliferation and activities of violent extremist organizations (VEOs) across sub-Saharan Africa increasingly pose a national security threat to the United States, as evidenced by the attack on American and Kenyan personnel by Al-Shabaab at Camp Simba in Manda Bay, Kenya in January 2020.

- a. What is your perspective on the decision announced by the Pentagon in December 2020 to withdraw U.S. troops from Somalia?
- b. Do you plan to coordinate with the Secretary of Defense and other relevant U.S. government departments and agencies to develop a comprehensive, continent-wide strategy to address the terror threat posed by ISIS-affiliated and other VEOs active in the Sahel, Lake Chad Basin, Somalia, the Swahili Coast (Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)?
- c. Of the security assistance tools available to the Department of State, which are the most underutilized in Sub-Saharan Africa, and how do you intend to rectify such imbalances?

**Answer:**

The Biden-Harris administration will seek to address the threat posed by al-Shabaab and adopt a tailored, effective, and sustainable strategy to achieve our interests in Somalia and East Africa. If confirmed, I will work with relevant interagency counterparts to review our posture in the region, looking especially closely at the safety of U.S. personnel operating in the country and the current terrorist threat in the region.

If confirmed, I plan to coordinate with the Secretary of Defense and other relevant U.S. government departments and agencies to develop an effective strategy to address this threat and will consult with Congress.

If confirmed, I will conduct a review of all current security assistance tools being utilized by the Department in Sub-Saharan Africa and identify any imbalances that must be addressed. I look forward to consulting with Congress on this.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#4)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

The activities of armed groups in sub-Saharan Africa pose a growing threat to stability, democratic governance, and economic development on the continent, and armed groups control large swaths of territory in places like the Central African Republic (CAR).

- a. How can the Department of State, in coordination with other relevant departments and agencies, support our African partners to better manage the activities and impacts of armed groups?
- b. How can the Department of State better address the cross-border movement of armed groups, including through the development and execution of regional approaches?
- c. How can the Department of State, in coordination with other relevant departments and agencies, enhance its work with African partners to disrupt the illicit financial and resource flows of armed groups, including the smuggling of natural resources across borders?

**Answer:**

If confirmed, I will work with the Department of Defense, USAID, and other agencies to assess how we can better address the challenges of armed groups in CAR. I look forward to consulting with Congress on this.

I believe there may be additional steps the Department can take to work with the UN, regional actors, and other partners to assess what type of regional engagement can be brought to bear.

The United States will work with our partners and allies and seek to lead a global fight against corruption. Nowhere is this more important than in Africa, including in CAR. We look forward to working with you on additional tools to combat corruption around the world.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#5)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

With 49 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, there are myriad opportunities and challenges to the security, economic, health and humanitarian interests of the United States. The U.S. government is presently engaged on a variety of fronts.

- a. What is the number-one threat posed to the United States in Africa? What is the greatest opportunity for the U.S. in Africa?
- b. Please list the near-term challenges and opportunities that the United States must engage in during your first 60, 90, and 180 days, if confirmed, as Secretary of State.
- c. In the early days of your tenure as Secretary of State, if confirmed, how will you make clear inside the Department, across the administration and externally, that Africa is a priority for the Biden Administration?
- d. How will you ensure the United States respects and values our African partners, while also representing our values and interests, particularly as it relates to respect for the rule of law, protecting human rights, and advancing democracy?
- e. Sub-Saharan Africa is experiencing a massive "youth bulge." While programs like the Young African Leaders Initiative and its Mandela Washington Fellowship are vital, what can the United States do to expand its reach and effectively engage with Africa's enormous youth population?

**Answer:**

Africa is a priority for the Biden Administration. We intend to engage African countries early and often as partners in pursuing our shared interests and values — from security, global health, climate change, freedom and democracy, and shared prosperity. Senior level engagement on a consistent basis will be a signal of our commitment. Our policy priorities include strengthening democratic institutions, advancing lasting peace and security, promoting economic growth, trade, and investment; and promoting health and sustainable development. We will reinvigorate and restore our partnerships across the continent -- building substantive, reciprocal partnerships with African governments, institutions, and publics based on shared interests and respect. We will work with African governments, the U.S. private sector, and international

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financial institutions to restore economic growth across the continent to help return African economies to some of the fastest growing in the world and open new opportunities for American businesses. With a population of 1.3 billion people whose median age is 19 years old, one of Africa's most important resources is its youth. By supporting the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI), we intend to work with public, private sector, and civil society partners across the continent to develop initiatives and economic opportunities to harness the innovation and energy of Africa's youth. Assessing ways to expand YALI and our engagement with Africa's youth will be a priority for the Africa Bureau. U.S. engagement in Africa keeps Americans and Africans safe. We will take a holistic approach to security challenges, ensuring that U.S. security and governance approaches are mutually reinforcing and sufficiently comprehensive. Working with our partners at DoD and the intelligence community, we will review all of our deployments, including in Africa, to ensure they are right-sized and necessary to assist partners confront a serious terrorism threat as we work to help Africans advance their own security.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#6)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

In 2019, Africa accounted for just 1.4% of U.S. global trade and received 0.7% of U.S. foreign direct investment. Such shares have declined relative to their historical highs a decade or so ago.

- a. What are your views on the role trade and investment could and should play in building stronger ties between the United States and the African continent? How should U.S.-African trade and investment initiatives factor into the U.S. global strategy to counter China, particularly in Africa?
- b. How can the U.S. government better promote African countries as destinations for U.S. private sector foreign investment? How can the United States improve access for African firms seeking to do business here? How can we best engage the U.S. African diaspora?

**Answer:**

Increasing trade and investment is critical to building stronger ties between the United States and Africa. The reality is that China is our most serious competitor, and competition with China is one of the central challenges that will define the 21st century. In Africa, we compete with China by ensuring that American companies can compete on an even playing field, providing a meaningful alternative to China's economic approach, promoting entrepreneurship and fair practices.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#7)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Like Prosper Africa, several past U.S. efforts in Africa have sought to expand U.S.-Africa trade and investment by enhancing U.S. inter-agency coordination and fostering private sector transaction activity centered on such ends. Other previous initiatives, including the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), USAID's Africa trade hubs, and the Obama Administration's Trade Africa and Doing Business in Africa (DBIA) initiatives, reflect a long line of U.S. initiatives in this sphere with mixed results.

Is Prosper Africa the appropriate vehicle to significantly boost two-way trade and investment between the United States and Africa? Do you intend to continue or modify the existing Prosper Africa initiative? If so, how?

**Answer:**

Increasing trade and investment to and from Africa has been a shared bipartisan priority across administrations. The new administration, the State Department and other engaged departments and agencies, will examine Prosper Africa to assess whether it should be continued or modified.



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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#8)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

One vital area of Prosper Africa that requires greater emphasis is improving the enabling environment within African partner countries to better attract U.S. business investment. Improvements in anti-corruption initiatives, human rights, the rule of law, and overall good governance would create better conditions for U.S. investment conditions. Such enhancements would also counterbalance efforts by Chinese firms and the Chinese Communist Party to undermine free-market competition in African markets to their advantage.

How can the U.S. government most effectively support efforts to improve the enabling environment for competitive foreign investment by U.S. firms in Africa? What types of partnerships work best, and how can the United States best incentivize reforms and other actions necessary to foster economic opportunity and expand two-way trade and investment with the African continent?

**Answer:**

The United States has an interest in Africa's success and sustainable development; we want to be partners in creating climate-friendly trade that secures good livelihoods for both African and American workers. We know that U.S. companies are already working to take advantage of these opportunities and benefitting from these market opportunities.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#9)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

On May 30, 2019, the framework agreement establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) entered into force. While trading under the AfCFTA framework is not expected to occur until mid-2021, the AfCFTA, if fully realized, would cover 54 countries (the largest of any regional trade bloc), creating a market encompassing 1.2 billion people with combined economic output in 2018 of \$2.5 trillion.

- a. How can market integration under AfCFTA best incentivize U.S. trade and investment in the region?
- b. How can the United States best support the successful implementation of the AfCFTA, while also pursuing bilateral trade deals, such as the ongoing trade talks with Kenya? Would such bilateral trade initiatives conflict with or improve AfCFTA negotiations and implementation?
- c. How should we prioritize varying U.S. trade policy goals in the region? How may the AfCFTA affect these competing policy priorities?

**Answer:**

By 2050, one of every four people in the world will live in Africa. The continent has the world's youngest population and workforce. If successful in implementing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the region will create the fifth-largest economy in the world. At the same time, Africa has slipped into a recession for the first time in 25 years due to the impacts of COVID-19, stalling growth and threatening years of progress in reducing extreme poverty. Using our economic diplomacy and the tools of the DFC, USAID, MCC and Treasury, our team will work with the U.S. private sector, African governments, and international financial institutions to increase trade and investment in Africa and promote U.S. business. We also intend to consult with Congress early to discuss the road ahead for renewing and updating the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) and, looking further down the road, determine the prospects for the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) and other trade preference

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programs. We are committed to a trade policy that promotes American workers. We are committed to strengthening alliances with our key partners, like Kenya. We intend to closely review the status of ongoing negotiations with Kenya.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#10)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Across Sub-Saharan Africa, democratic gains are under threat as long-serving rulers manipulate constitutional and electoral processes to remain in power while stifling dissent and limiting opposition parties and candidates' activities. In 2020 alone, several African ruling parties and incumbent leaders applied authoritarian tactics that manipulated democratic processes and frameworks, including in Cameroon, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.

- a. If confirmed as Secretary of State, will reinforcing democratic institutions and norms in Africa be a priority?
- b. Will you commit to ensuring that messaging from the Department of State and its embassies and leadership consistently reinforces the U.S. democratic values and interests, including the need to respect democratic institutions and norms, advance human and political rights, and enhance citizen responsive governance?
- c. What is your perspective on balancing competing U.S. priorities in the areas of security, democracy, and human rights in Sub-Saharan Africa, especially when some of our top security partners – including Uganda, Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Mali – periodically or consistently engage in undemocratic practices? In your view, which should take priority in Africa?

**Answer:**

Yes.

There has been worrying backsliding in democracy and human rights, especially in West Africa. We are concerned about these trends. Our administration will restore democracy and human rights to the center of U.S. foreign policy, including in Africa. In our diplomatic engagements, we will pay close attention to term limits, democratic norms, media freedom, and the health of civil society. We must pay attention both to security concerns and democracy and human rights.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#11)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

In the last two years, Sudan and Ethiopia have embarked upon unexpected democratic transitions. While the United States was, and continues to be, eager to support these transitions, rapidly mobilizing adequate resources has been a challenge in both cases.

If confirmed, how would you prepare the Department to respond to rapid democratic transitions and opportunities that emerge unexpectedly?

**Answer:**

There are significant consequences for U.S. interests in Africa when governance challenges fester; opportunities for democratic transitions demand a quick response. Working within the Department and with other departments and agencies, we will look to see how we can respond more effectively to emerging opportunities.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#12)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

The United States and France share several overlapping priorities in Sub-Saharan Africa and work together on many fronts, including fighting the terror threat in the Sahel. However, American and French interests in the region do not always align, including with regard to the ongoing conflict in northwest and southwest Cameroon.

- a. If confirmed, how will you engage our French partners to ensure that we employ a mutually-beneficial partnership across the Sahel and West and Central Africa that reflects the various points of leverage and capability the United States and France each bring to the table?
- b. How can the United States better coordinate with France to holistically address security threats and improve diplomatic engagements in the Sahel and West and Central Africa from a holistic perspective?
- c. How can the United States better coordinate and collaborate with the European Union, as well as individual European governments, including the U.K., to enhance policy consistency and advance mutually-beneficial opportunities for trade, investment, development, and security cooperation with the African Union, regional bodies, African governments, and private sector partners?

**Answer:**

If confirmed, I will ensure that we work with our French partners to ensure that we employ a mutually beneficial partnership in Africa. Coordination and collaboration are essential, and we must work to align our approaches to holistically address the security and governance challenges across the Sahel, West Africa, and Central Africa. I am also committed to working with our European partners to advance our shared interests in Africa.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#13)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

How can the United States better leverage its Ambassador to the African Union and Ambassador to the United Nations (UN) to encourage constructive African engagement on democracy, human rights, corruption, and the rule of law?

**Answer:**

Our administration intends to elevate human rights and democracy issues across our foreign policy, including in our relationships with our African partners. If both confirmed, Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield and I will work to encourage constructive African engagement on democracy, human rights, corruption, and rule of law at the United Nations. Our Ambassador to the AU will also encourage this type of engagement.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#14)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

If confirmed, what will be your priorities for engagement with the African Union and sub-regional institutions, including the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Southern African Development Community (SADC), East African Community (EAC), and Economic Community of Central African States (CEEAC)?

**Answer:**

President Biden recognizes that many of the biggest threats we face are transnational in nature and must be worked collectively, including through international organizations. This is nowhere more true than in Africa -- the African Union and sub-regional institutions play an incredibly important role on governance, economic, and security issues across the continent. If confirmed, I will look forward to working with Congress to ensure increased U.S. engagement with the African Union and other sub-regional bodies across the range of America's national security interests.



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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#15)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Russian malign activity in Africa is of increasing concern, particularly given credible reports of elections interference across the continent and deployment of Russian mercenaries, including through the Wagner Group, in Northern Mozambique, and nontransparent transfers of weapons and training through Russian security sector support to the Touadera Administration in the Central African Republic (CAR).

From your perspective, in addition to sanctions, how can the United States better engage with our African partners to limit the malign activities and influence of Russia generally, and more specifically, of Yevgeny Prigozhin and affiliated mining and security companies (like the Wagner Group) in Africa?

**Answer:**

Diplomatic and security engagement with U.S. partners in Africa can advance our interests and values, while highlighting the dangers associated with dealing with Russia.

Enhancing our alliances and partnerships in Africa through diplomatic, development, and security initiatives will enable us to better protect and secure U.S. interests in Africa.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#16)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Political and ethnic tensions and violence in Burundi have contributed to instability, human rights abuses, and humanitarian crises in central Africa's Great Lakes region for decades. On June 9, the government of Burundi announced that sitting President Pierre Nkurunziza (age 55) died suddenly of "cardiac arrest," two and a half months before he was expected to step down following general elections on May 20, 2020. Nkurunziza's elected successor, CNDD-FDD party head Evariste Ndayishimiye, was inaugurated in late August, after the constitutional court upheld his victory with 68% of the vote in the May 2020 elections.

- a. How optimistic are you about deepening ties with the new Burundian administration under President Ndayishimiye?
- b. What reforms are most needed for Burundi and what should be the U.S. approach toward engaging the Ndayishimiye administration on a reform agenda?
- c. Under what conditions would you advocate for changes to the U.S. sanctions program for Burundi and/or aid restrictions? Will you commit to reviewing incidents of human rights abuses among actors by the Nkurunziza regime who are currently serving in President Ndayishimiye's government?
- d. How should President Ndayishimiye approach exiled Burundian opposition groups? What role can and should the United States play in facilitating reconciliation between the Burundian government and opposition groups?
- e. How would you evaluate the performance of Burundian troops in AMISOM? How can the United States better monitor their human rights record in Somalia?

**Answer:**

If confirmed, I will need to assess the current U.S. approach to reform in Burundi, including the approach of the new administration under President Ndayishimiye. This will include a review of the sanctions program for Burundi, assessing the current approach to accountability, the role of justice and reconciliation in the political dialogue, and the human rights records of the Burundian military.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#17)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

The Anglophone conflict in Cameroon is one of the world's most neglected yet intensely brutal conflicts. The United States has employed many of the diplomatic tools at its disposal, including the suspension of most security assistance and AGOA eligibility, yet the conflict rages on.

- a. What other tools does the United States have at its disposal to encourage a peaceful and enduring resolution to the Anglophone conflict in Cameroon? If confirmed, what tools would you intend to deploy?
- b. Will you consider imposing targeted sanctions on individual government and separatist leaders "responsible for extrajudicial killings, torture, or other gross violations of internationally recognized human rights"?
- c. How can the United States more effectively encourage France to use its significant leverage in Cameroon to encourage the government to engage in meaningful dialogue and end the conflict?
- d. Will you commit to continuing to limit U.S. security assistance to Cameroon and ensure that U.S. training and equipment is not being used to commit or enable human rights abuses in the Northwest and Southwest regions or the Far North?
- e. Do you commit to making Cameroon a priority in the UN Security Council? How can the United States work with like-minded Security Council members to raise the Anglophone conflict's profile and get it placed on the Security Council agenda?
- f. Will you commit to encouraging both government and Anglophone stakeholders to engage in constructive and inclusive dialogue, including with the involvement of an independent international mediator, to address the root causes of the Anglophone conflict and support sustainable peace and reconciliation?

**Answer:**

I am concerned about continued violence in Cameroon, and condemn the recent deadly attacks against civilians in the Anglophone region. An end to violence, and accountability for its perpetrators, is needed. It is important that children attend school and that aid can be delivered. More broadly, political dialogue is needed to resolve this ongoing conflict and to improve respect for human rights. If confirmed, I will review the different tools we have to press for a resolution of this conflict and to hold human rights violators' accountable, including sanctions.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#18)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

How can the United States most effectively counter malign Russian influence and activities in the security and mining sectors in the Central African Republic (CAR)? What policies should the United States pursue to ensure that the increasing competition for influence between Russia and France does not have long-term detrimental effects on a country already facing a dire humanitarian situation and overcoming decades of civil conflict?

**Answer:**

If confirmed, I will assess what more can be done to counter malign Russian influence in the CAR mining and security sectors. I am concerned about the humanitarian situation and the ongoing conflict in CAR, and we will engage with our partners in the region and in Europe, as well as in the UN.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#19)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Following controversial elections in 2018 elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the United States publicly and adamantly backed President Tshisekedi and supported efforts to reform and challenge the status quo established by former President Kabila.

- a. What is your perspective on the performance of the Tshisekedi Administration to date?
- b. Is it your assessment that the Tshisekedi Administration is in a position to continue to advance reforms, including in the areas of anti-corruption and in the security and mining sectors?
- c. In your view, how can the United States continue to support democratic reforms in the DRC, including by enhancing prospects for free, fair, and transparent elections in 2023?
- d. If confirmed, do you commit to supporting the legitimate victor of a free and fair electoral process in 2023?
- e. In your view, what is the Privileged Partnership for Peace and Prosperity (#PP4PP)? Is this an initiative you plan to continue if confirmed?
- f. In your perspective, what should the United States, our European allies, and the UN peacekeeping mission (MONUSCO) be doing to support a peace process and help facilitate the end of the conflict in Eastern Congo?
- g. In your opinion, how can the Department of State and Department of the Treasury better coordinate on sanctions for corruption and human rights abuses in the DRC, including as they relate to existing sanctions on Dan Gertler and his affiliated interlocutors and entities in the DRC's mining sector?

**Answer:**

Across administrations, the United States has worked to end violence in DRC, prevent conflict, promote economic development, and advance democracy and human rights. We will work with the Tshisekedi government and our civil society partners towards real economic and security reform and accountability. Continued U.S. engagement through our ambassador and at the United Nations is needed.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#20)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

The Greater Horn of Africa—including Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, and Uganda—sits at the crossroads of Africa, the Middle East, and the wider Red Sea Region. This diverse group of countries reflects a region where the United States can and should have a more comprehensive approach toward advancing diplomatic, development, and defense interests. The scramble for influence by both global and regional powers in the Greater Horn of Africa has contributed to rising levels of insecurity and political instability.

Would you agree or disagree that U.S. national security interests in the region would be better served if we had a more comprehensive and coordinated interagency approach toward the Greater Horn of Africa?

**Answer:**

I agree.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#21)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

If confirmed, would you be inclined to support the appointment of a U.S. Special Envoy for the Greater Horn of Africa to focus on our collective diplomatic, development and defense interests in this fragile yet strategically important region of Eastern Africa?

**Answer:**

As part of our strategy, I will review whether an envoy is needed.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#22)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

The United States views Kenya as a strategic partner in the region. While Kenya is not a major U.S. trade partner globally, it is one of Africa's most dynamic economies and the second-largest beneficiary of AGOA's tariff benefits, excluding crude oil. On February 6, President Trump and President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya announced their intent to begin free trade agreement (FTA) negotiations. If successful, it would be the first U.S. FTA with a country in sub-Saharan Africa.

- a. Do you believe the U.S.-Kenya FTA talks support or undermine regional trade initiatives and agreements under the pan-African AfCFTA and sub-regional trade initiatives under the East African Community?
- b. Do you support continuing to prioritize FTA negotiations with Kenya? If not, why not? If so, would your approach to negotiations differ from that of the Department under the Trump Administration? If so, how?
- c. How would you seek to position a future U.S.-Kenya FTA to build upon AGOA objectives and expand U.S. trade and investment ties with Africa?

**Answer:**

The Biden-Harris administration is committed to a trade policy that promotes American workers. We are committed to strengthening alliances with our key partners, like Kenya. We intend to closely review the status of ongoing negotiations with Kenya. I will work with the U.S. Trade Representative and the other economic departments and agencies to develop a broader approach to AfCFTA and trade and investment.



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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#23)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Rwanda is frequently considered by partners inside and outside of Africa as an economic development model in the region to which they should aspire and model. However, serious concerns exist about Rwanda's activities in the broader Great Lakes region, as well as its democratic record domestically.

If confirmed, how will you engage Rwanda and encourage the Kagame administration to play a more constructive role in the Great Lakes region, especially given ongoing political transitions in the DRC and Burundi and troubling democratic declines in neighboring Uganda and Tanzania?

**Answer:**

If confirmed, I will assess what more the United States can do to engage Rwanda and other regional partners to play a constructive role in the Great Lakes region. We will pay particular attention to the political transitions in DRC and Burundi. I share your concern about democratic declines in Uganda and Tanzania.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#24)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Paul Rusesabagina, the political dissident and protagonist depicted in the movie *Hotel Rwanda*, is currently on trial in Rwanda for "terrorism" and other charges. Mr. Rusesabagina, a Belgian citizen and American permanent resident, said he was kidnapped and forced onto a plane in Dubai that was bound for Kigali in August 2020. While the facts surrounding both how he ended up in Rwanda and the charges lodged against him by the Rwandan government are not fully verified, the Rwandan government must adhere to their stated commitments. They must treat Mr. Rusesabagina humanely and afford him a fair and transparent judicial process.

Will you commit to following Paul Rusesabagina's case and provide leadership to hold the Rwandan government to their commitments for a fair trial and due process for Mr. Rusesabagina?

**Answer:**

Yes. If confirmed, I will make clear that the human rights of all prisoners, including Paul Rusesabagina, should be respected. Our administration will work to ensure that a trial is conducted fairly and transparently. This is a case our team will follow closely.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#25)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

The United States has emphasized the need for one person-one vote direct elections in Somalia and provides support through USAID and other channels toward that end. However, Somalia's leadership recently decided, again, that the country will pursue an indirect selection process for members of parliament and the office of the president, instead of a direct election.

- a. What is your view of prospects for democratic direct elections in Somalia in the future, particularly given Somalia's persistent security and governance challenges?
- b. Do you believe the United States has held overly ambitious expectations for Somalia since 2016/2017, given the circumstances on the ground?
- c. UNSOS/AMISOM's mandate is up for renewal in February 2021. In your view, how can the United States most effectively engage in the mandate-renewal process, including with the penholder (the United Kingdom), to have frank discussions about what UNSOS/AMISOM can reasonably achieve and enhance mission efficiency?

**Answer:**

The project of addressing terrorist violence and broader instability and supporting Somali governance has continued across multiple administrations. A holistic approach is needed to ensure sustainable gains -- instability and lack of adequate governance cannot be addressed by military means alone. It is important that we engage the Somalis, partners, and other stakeholders, and UN and AU interlocutors on a pathway forward for Somalia. If confirmed, I will review the U.S. approach to the upcoming elections, the peacekeeping mandate, and long-term strategy for democracy and governance in Somalia.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#26)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

South Sudan has been a U.S. priority issue for decades. Throughout this troubled history, the United States has provided strong support for the peace process in an attempt to resolve Sudan and then-Southern Sudan's decades-long civil war, preparations for South Sudan's separation and independence from Sudan, and the provision of extensive U.S. humanitarian and development assistance (upwards of \$1 billion per year). This includes the years since the outbreak of South Sudan's civil war in 2013.

- a. Given that the United States is a significant stakeholder in ensuring that South Sudan achieves sustainable peace and development, what diplomatic investments would you make as Secretary of State bilaterally, regionally, and with multi-lateral institutions?
- b. What is your perspective on the ongoing U.S. assistance review, announced in 2018, for South Sudan? If confirmed, how would you support a timely conclusion to the assistance review and enable action on its findings?
- c. Would you support a reorganization of the State Department's Office of the U.S. Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan (USSESS), such that it is better streamlined and integrated within the Department's Africa Bureau?
- d. Do you support the use of separate U.S. Special Envoys for Sudan and South Sudan? How can the United States better approach providing specific high-level diplomatic attention to South Sudan while also ensuring that broader regional diplomatic issues are considered and leveraged as necessary for a more comprehensive policy toward the Sudans and the surrounding countries?

**Answer:**

The United States' long history of generosity towards the South Sudanese people -- with bipartisan support -- will continue. We will be engaging other donors and working with international organizations to ensure a robust humanitarian response to recent reports of famine. I share the bipartisan concerns about the implementation of the peace agreement and the need to consider regional challenges. It is imperative that all leaders deliver on the promises they have made to the South Sudanese people to reform and to peace. Our diplomatic efforts will remain focused on ensuring disputes are resolved politically and without violence, ending systemic corruption and instilling economic reforms, reforming the security sector, and pursuing

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accountability. South Sudan is one of the most dangerous places in the world for aid workers.

Violence against humanitarian workers is unacceptable. We will be paying particular attention to this concern.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#27)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

The ouster of longtime President Omar al-Bashir in April 2019 and installation of a power-sharing government between the Transitional Military Council and the civilian Forces for Freedom and Change served as a historic moment not just for the Sudanese people but also the U.S.-Sudan bilateral relationship. The United States has since served as one of Sudan's closest transition partners. The Trump Administration's formal rescission of Sudan's designation as a State Sponsor of Terrorism (SST) in December 2020, the pledged exchange of ambassadors between the United States and Sudan, and a near settlement of claims between Sudan and American victims of terrorism have created a new impetus for deepening what has been for decades a turbulent bilateral relationship under former President Bashir.

- a. If confirmed, what approach will you take to ensure that the United States continues to prioritize normalizing relations with Sudan's fragile yet historic civilian-led transitional government? Will you commit to supporting the nomination of a capable U.S. ambassador to Sudan as one of your early actions as Secretary? Furthermore, will you work to ensure that U.S. relationships with Sudan are managed through the civilian leadership of the transitional government?
- b. How should the United States prioritize its assistance to Sudan? Will you ensure that sufficient assistance is given to support U.S. democracy and governance strengthening initiatives in Sudan?
- c. Do you support the bilateral deal signed between the United States and Sudan on resolving outstanding terrorism claims, and will you commit to resolving any outstanding issues to ensure that Sudan achieves legal peace and American victims of terrorism are properly compensated?
- d. Given the planned drawdown of the African Union-UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) through 2021, what policies will you pursue to ensure necessary protection of civilians in Darfur? Do you believe that the existing UN arms embargo and other sanctions should remain in place in Darfur until the Sudanese government demonstrates that it can and will adequately protect civilians? If confirmed, how would you ensure that justice is pursued regarding atrocities committed against the Sudanese people, particularly in Darfur and "the Two Areas" of Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile?

**Answer:**

I intend to nominate a capable U.S. ambassador and support the civilian leadership of the transitional government. I intend to look at the new assistance to support Sudan's democratic transition and review the bilateral agreement to ensure the American victims of terrorism are

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properly compensated. Conditions have changed in Sudan, but, even with the signing of new peace agreements, violence persists in Darfur and the Two Areas. It will be vital that local voices in these areas are included as the Sudanese navigate their transition. Among other steps, we will be focused on the stand-up of the UN Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS). I will review these other items when in office. Our administration will continue to work to support Sudan's civilian-led democratic transition and economic stability. Continued bipartisan support for Sudan's transition is needed.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#28)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Leaders representing several countries in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) resolved in late November 2020 to develop a "comprehensive regional response" to the growing Islamist insurgency in the northern Cabo Delgado Province of Mozambique.

- a. Do you support SADC's planned regional efforts to counter northern Mozambique's Islamist insurgency? How can the United States effectively support SADC efforts to deal with Mozambique growing security problem?
- b. How can the United States better coordinate with international partners in supporting the Mozambican government through military, humanitarian and development assistance in northern Mozambique? How can we best de-conflict and minimize 'assistance fatigue' as more international and regional actors crowd this space in an effort to curb the Islamist insurgency in northern Mozambique?

**Answer:**

I will need to look at this recent development when in office, if confirmed. Broadly, we could consider ways to address the root causes of violence and use the Global Fragility Act as a framework to guide our programming and approach.



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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#29)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

While there was hope that the end of Mugabe's 37-year reign as president of Zimbabwe would usher in democratic and economic reforms and enable the beleaguered country to cast off its pariah status, the three years of leadership under President Mnangagwa have demonstrated a continuation, if not worsening, of human rights abuses, economic mismanagement and kleptocratic behavior of the ZANU-PF regime.

- a. From your perspective, what tools (including those currently underutilized) does the United States have at its disposal that are underutilized to encourage democratic and economic reforms in Zimbabwe?
- b. What is your perspective on the Zimbabwe Sanctions Program and its efficacy in encouraging reforms?
- c. An area of considerable debate has been the value of reincorporating political party programming into the portfolio of U.S. democracy assistance to Zimbabwe. Do you commit to reviewing the Department of State's posture on political party support in Zimbabwe?
- d. If confirmed, would you support the investment of resources into enhancing investigative journalism and research to better understand Zimbabwe's corruption and kleptocratic networks?
- e. What role can South Africa and the wider Southern African Development Community play in helping Zimbabwe end its political and economic crises? What actions can the United States take to encourage greater regional engagement?

**Answer:**

If confirmed, I will assess the current U.S. approach to Zimbabwe, including opportunities for greater regional engagement. I will also plan to review the sanctions program as well as our democracy assistance (political party support, anti-corruption work, and support to the media). I will consult with Congress on our assistance programs.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#30)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

If confirmed, what would be your priorities in the Sahel region?

**Answer:**

I am concerned about rising violent extremism, growing humanitarian concerns, and increasing governance challenges in the Sahel.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#31)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

What are your views on a dedicated U.S. Special Envoy for the Sahel Region? Do you support calls by some to create an additional U.S. Special Envoy to Nigeria or for the Lake Chad Basin?

**Answer:**

If confirmed, I am committed to ensuring that our staffing, including envoys, supports implementation of our strategy.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#32)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

How could the United States better coordinate and implement its policies and strategies in the region?

**Answer:**

The Biden-Harris administration will undertake an early interagency review of our diplomatic, security, and other assistance to the region to ensure that we have a strategy that addresses the underlying drivers of violence and extremism. As part of our global counterterrorism and military force posture reviews, we will be working to understand current and future threats in the region and, based on that, evaluating our security approach there.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#33)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

What is your perceived impact of a drawdown of AFRICOM in the Sahel region?

**Answer:**

If confirmed, I intend to look at these impacts as part of an interagency broader review.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#34)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

How can the United States better work with its European partners to ensure effective burden sharing and mission success to counter VEOs in the region?

**Answer:**

As part of this review, we will determine the best ways to work with our security partners in the region, in Europe, and in multilateral institutions to address extremist violence.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#35)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

The United States shares a “special relationship” with Liberia reflecting a shared history and the investment of significant U.S. assistance, including helping Liberia emerge from conflict, build democratic institutions, and overcome the West Africa Ebola outbreak (2014-2016). Liberia endured two brutal civil wars from 1989-1996 and 1999-2003, both characterized by gross human rights violations, war crimes and crimes against humanity, to include rape, massacres (including in places of worship), torture and the use of child soldiers. While Liberia has experienced peace for 17 years and the transfer of power from President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf to President George Weah in 2018, the country still experiences significant development challenges and trauma. While the deposed Liberian despot Charles Taylor was convicted of crimes against humanity committed in neighboring Sierra Leone by the Special Court in Sierra Leone, and others have been convicted in foreign countries, including the United States, to date, Liberia itself has not prosecuted anyone for crimes committed during its civil wars.

- a. From your perspective, what role does the combination of rampant corruption, including at the highest levels of government, and the legacy of violent conflict play in Liberia’s development and economic outlook?
- b. In your view, has the United States done enough to encourage Liberia to pursue justice and reconciliation for crimes committed during its civil wars?

**Answer:**

If confirmed, I am committed to reviewing this with the experts from the Africa Bureau and consulting with Congress. The United States will work with our partners and allies and seek to lead a global fight against corruption and restore democracy and human rights to the center of U.S. foreign policy, including in Liberia.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#36)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Mali is central to U.S. efforts to counter VEOs in the Sahel. Yet, the ouster of Mali's elected president by the Malian army in August 2020 heightened political uncertainty in the country amid severe security, governance, and humanitarian challenges. Under the leadership of retired military officer and former defense minister Bah N'Daw as President, Mali's civilian-led transitional government is expected to organize elections in 18 months and work towards more sustainable peace in Mali. These are monumental tasks, particularly in light of the complex security and political dynamics in the country, to say nothing of severe economic pressures.

- a. How can the United States best assist Mali through this transition? Would you agree or disagree that Mali serves as the most vital component of the U.S. security and counterterrorism strategy in the region? What role should the United States play in marshaling regional and international support for Mali's transition, to include democratic elections?
- b. How do you view the UN peacekeeping mission in Mali, MINUSMA? Does its current mandate serve its intended peacekeeping purpose? Should the United States support efforts to re-examine and reorient the UN presence in Mali, to include MINUSMA, to ensure its mission is focused and adaptable to changing circumstances on the ground?

**Answer:**

We are concerned about rising violent extremism, growing humanitarian concerns, and increasing governance challenges in the Sahel, including Mali. We believe we need a more holistic approach to the long-standing governance challenges in the Sahel. We will undertake an early interagency review of our diplomatic, security, and other assistance to the region to ensure that we have a strategy that addresses the underlying drivers of violence and extremism. As part of our global counterterrorism and military force posture reviews, we will be working to understand current and future threats in the region and, based on that, evaluating our security approach there. We will determine the best ways to work with our security partners in the region, in Europe, and in multilateral institutions to address extremist violence. As part of our work in the UN Security Council, we will also review MINUSMA as part of this comprehensive review.



UNCLASSIFIED

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#37)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

In December 2020, Secretary Pompeo designated Nigeria as a Country of Particular Concern under the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998, citing the country for “systematic, ongoing, egregious violations of religious freedom.”

- a. What is your assessment of the appropriateness of Nigeria for this designation?
- b. Are concerns about religious freedom among your top priorities for engagement with Nigeria?
- c. What is your assessment of the drivers of conflict in Nigeria? How do the drivers of conflict in Nigeria differ across geographical regions?

**Answer:**

If confirmed, I am committed to reviewing recent policy decisions to determine if any adjustments are necessary. The stability and prosperity of Nigeria is important to Africa and the United States. Nigeria is confronting a number of challenges, including the terrorist threat by Boko Haram in the north, and the need for police and security sector reform and accountability as demanded by the #ENDSARS protest movement and a growing humanitarian crisis in three regions.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#38a)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

The Indo-Pacific is the most important region for U.S. security and economic growth. It represents nearly half of the global population and is home to some of the most dynamic economies in the world, but is also home to security challenges that threaten to undermine U.S. national security interests, regional peace, and global stability. The Trump Administration articulated a strategy to advance a “free and open Indo-Pacific,” and has expanded partnerships with regional countries and implemented multiple initiatives in the region to support this goal.

- a. Do you agree with the core tenants of a vision for the “free and open Indo-Pacific” strategy advanced over the last several years? If so, what should the State Department’s role be in this strategy? If not, why not?

**Answer:**

The Biden Administration sees the Indo-Pacific as a vital region that must be a leading priority of U.S. foreign policy.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#38b)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Do you support the continued use of the term “Indo-Pacific” to describe the region?

**Answer:**

Yes.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#38c)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

What should be our objectives in the region?

**Answer:**

Under the Biden Administration, the United States will restore itself as a Pacific Power, and we will seek to keep Asia open, secure, and prosperous.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#38d)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

What specific policy and funding priorities for the State Department would it require to advance a successful Indo-Pacific strategy?

**Answer:**

If confirmed, I am committed to reviewing the current policy and funding priorities the Department has dedicated to the Indo-Pacific and determine if any adjustments are necessary to advance a successful Indo-Pacific strategy. I look forward to consulting with Congress on this.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#39a)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

The Trump Administration advanced a “free and open” Indo-Pacific strategy, emphasizing the importance of the values we’d like to see in the region. Thus far, President-elect Biden has used “secure and prosperous” to describe U.S. goals for the Indo-Pacific.

While certainly laudable goals, why make this change?

**Answer:**

The Biden Administration agrees that these are laudable goals for one for a region of such critical strategic importance. It will conduct a full policy review before charting its approach.

UNCLASSIFIED

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#39b)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Is this change in language a preview of substantial shifts to come in President-elect Biden's strategy in the Indo-Pacific?

**Answer:**

The Biden Administration will conduct a full policy review before charting its approach to this key region for U.S. foreign policy.

UNCLASSIFIED

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#39c)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

If confirmed, what major policy changes do you intend to make in U.S. strategy towards the region?

**Answer:**

The Biden Administration will conduct a full policy review before charting its approach, but some aspects are clear. It will depend on working closely with allies and partners around the world -- particularly those who are on the front lines of China's assertiveness and have too often born the brunt of its coercion -- including Australia, Japan, India, South Korea, and Taiwan. We will also strengthen our competitive capacities at home, making the domestic investments we will need to keep our society vibrant and competitive and the Indo-Pacific region open and dynamic.



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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#40a)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Over the last four years, the Department of State has established a number of new initiatives and expanded partnerships under the Indo-Pacific strategy related to infrastructure, energy, digital economy and smart cities, public health, education, democracy, anti-corruption, and the Mekong Region, among others. Despite the overall narrative that the Trump Administration hurt U.S. position and reputation, such initiatives have delivered concrete outcomes on the ground.

If confirmed, what are the key principles, initiatives, and other elements of the Trump Administration's Indo-Pacific strategy would you intend to retain and continue? How would you build on these initiatives?

**Answer:**

In recent years, and on a bipartisan basis, Congress has taken some important steps on Indo-Pacific strategy. These include the BUILD Act, which established the Development Finance Corporation, which is vital if the United States is to work with partners to advance an alternative, higher-standards infrastructure development model; it includes the Pacific Deterrence Initiative, which improves our regional force posture; and it includes legislation on Hong Kong's status and human rights violations in Xinjiang, which are vital to upholding our values and rule of law in the region. The Biden Administration looks forward to working with Congress to build on these steps.

UNCLASSIFIED

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#40b)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

What other policies, initiatives, and priorities would you pursue to advance U.S. interests in the Indo-Pacific region?

**Answer:**

The U.S. position in Asia requires us to rebuild our alliances and to work in lockstep with the allies and partners with whom we share interests and values. Allies are our greatest strategic asset, and if we are to maintain a strong position in the region, it must run through them. We will work to mend our longstanding alliances, including with Japan, Australia, and South Korea, moving away from coercive burden-sharing standoffs and returning to cooperation based on mutual respect; and we will deepen our partnerships with countries like India and New Zealand. We will also modernize all of these relationships, pursuing closer cooperation on areas like new technology, democratic resilience, and common responses to the threats of climate change and COVID-19.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#41a)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

The State Department recently realigned 288 positions at posts to better serve the U.S. strategic interest of competing with China. This is a welcome a step.

Will you commit to initiating a rigorous assessment of the State Department's personnel footprint to ensure it is aligned with the strategic imperatives of competing with China, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region?

**Answer:**

Yes.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#41b)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Will you commit to initiating this review as soon as you assume your position, if you are confirmed?

**Answer:**

Yes.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#42a)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

The United States has only a handful of free trade agreements with Indo-Pacific partners.

If confirmed, will you commit to prioritizing agreements with key Indo-Pacific economic partners in executing a robust trade agenda?

**Answer:**

The Indo-Pacific is the most dynamic and fastest-growing region on earth; we must prioritize economic ties with Asia because it is in our interest to do so.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#42b)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

What are your views on the United States joining the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership agreed to by 11 other nations in 2019?

**Answer:**

The Biden-Harris Administration economic policies begin with investment in everyday Americans, equipping them to succeed in the global economy. Any new trade agreements must protect workers, transparency, the environment, and middle class wages. The administration will review and assess the CPTPP agreement accordingly.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#43a)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

The Trump Administration emphasized human capital development initiatives with partners in the Indo-Pacific, particularly through the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). This included preserving and expanding assistance programs that provide concrete technical assistance and capacity-building for emerging and established leaders in partner governments, the private sector, and civil society. These programs build stronger nations that become better economic and security partners to the United States, more responsive to their own citizens, and more resilient to external coercion.

Do you believe that the United States should invest in nations that actively seek out opportunities to educate their leaders in areas such as management of key economic sectors, government transparency and accountability, and effective civic engagement?

**Answer:**

Yes.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#43b)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

If confirmed, will you commit to working with Congress on advancing initiatives in this area that uphold shared interests of the United States and our Indo-Pacific partners?

**Answer:**

Yes.



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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#44)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

The 2018 National Defense Strategy states that “great power competition, not terrorism, is now the primary focus of U.S. national security.”

- a. Do you agree with the Defense Department’s assessment?
- b. How do you believe U.S. diplomacy should change to reflect a greater emphasis on China and Russia?

**Answer:**

The 2018 NDS correctly identifies strategic competitions with China and with Russia as the primary challenges animating the global security environment; because of its ascent and the scope and scale of its attempts to exert power, China is the top priority. I am also concerned about transnational threats as the security landscape evolves, including those posed by pandemics, climate change, emerging technologies. U.S. diplomacy must prioritize these leading challenges but be prepared to address them all.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#45a)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Of the \$5.57 billion of Foreign Military Finance requested for FY 2021, \$5.19 billion was for the Middle East – leaving \$85.9 million for the East Asia & Pacific (1.5% of the total request) and \$170 million for Europe (3% of the total request). While we still need to maintain our commitments to Israel in particular, U.S. security assistance priorities require a serious re-evaluation.

Will you commit to working with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee toward reshaping priorities surrounding U.S. security assistance to ensure it is aligned with imperatives of great-power competition, especially with China but also with Russia?

**Answer:**

Yes.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#45b)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

In your view, is the Department's Foreign Military Financing budget sufficient to meet our strategic interests?

**Answer:**

The Biden-Harris administration will review the State Department's Foreign Military Financing budget to determine its alignment with our strategic interests.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#46)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

The objectives and policies being advanced by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) present the greatest foreign policy challenge facing the United States today and will continue to do so into the future. Therefore, it must be our top foreign policy priority. If not, why not? What do you think is the greatest foreign policy challenge for the United States?

**Answer:**

As we look at China, there is no doubt that it poses the most significant challenge of any nation-state to the United States in terms of our interests and the interests of the American people. The challenges that China poses to our security, prosperity, and values, and how we conduct this competition, will be crucial for defining the 21st century.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#47)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

In your view, what are the Chinese government's primary objectives domestically, in the Indo-Pacific region, and globally? How would you describe its primary political, economic, military, and technological objectives?

**Answer:**

China's government is engaged in conduct that hurts American workers, blunts our technological edge, modernizes its military, threatens our alliances and our influence in international organizations, and is designed to make America and its allies more dependent on China, and China less dependent on America and our allies. In these domains and others, China presents a significant challenge to U.S. interests and values.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#48)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

China touches upon a wide variety of U.S. interests and policy issues, both foreign and domestic. If confirmed, how will China policy be coordinated, particularly amongst yourself, the National Security Advisor, Special Envoy John Kerry, and the head of the Domestic Policy Council? Does President Biden intend for other Cabinet secretaries, such as those at Commerce, Treasury, and Justice, to place a high priority on China issues?

**Answer:**

The Biden-Harris Administration will coordinate China policy through an interagency process, reflecting a wide range of stakeholders and based on a shared understanding of the challenge that China poses to American interests and values.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#49a)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Former Secretary of State John Kerry, whom you worked for as Deputy Secretary of State, has been named a special presidential envoy for climate.

How would responsibilities between yourself and Mr. Kerry be divided when it comes to negotiating any climate-related agreements?

**Answer:**

As Special Presidential Envoy for Climate, former Secretary Kerry will lead our diplomatic efforts to reassert U.S. climate leadership and raise global ambition to meet the daunting climate challenge. The Envoy's office will be housed at the State Department, and he will maintain a presence at the White House as well. His climate diplomacy work will, of course, be closely coordinated with the Department's and our administration's broader diplomatic engagement.

UNCLASSIFIED

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#49b)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Will Mr. Kerry have authority to raise with China issues other than climate that are relevant to either the bilateral relationship or as regards U.S. policy in the Indo-Pacific region?

**Answer:**

The Special Presidential Envoy for Climate Change will lead our diplomatic efforts to reassert U.S. climate leadership and raise global ambition to meet the daunting climate challenge.



UNCLASSIFIED

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#49c)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Since Mr. Kerry is reporting directly the president given his new Cabinet-level role, how will you, the Department of State, and subsequently Congress, remain apprised of what he is negotiating with China?

**Answer:**

The Biden-Harris administration will speak with one voice on China. The Special Presidential Envoy for Climate Change and I will remain in close contact, and his climate diplomacy work will of course be closely coordinated with the Department's and our administration's broader diplomatic engagement. He will also engage in consultations with Congress.

UNCLASSIFIED

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#49d)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

If confirmed, how will you ensure that climate agreements negotiated by Mr. Kerry are consistent with broader U.S. interests and goals when it comes to China?

**Answer:**

Former Secretary Kerry's climate diplomacy work will of course be closely coordinated with the Department's and our administration's broader diplomatic engagement. He will also engage in consultations with Congress.

UNCLASSIFIED

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#49e)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

If a climate agreement is negotiated in such a way that does not keep broader interests in mind, what will you do to remedy this situation?

**Answer:**

We will ensure that climate diplomacy is closely coordinated with the Department's and our administration's broader diplomatic engagement and is in line with U.S. interests and values.

UNCLASSIFIED

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#49f)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Do you commit to keeping this committee informed of developments in any climate negotiations with China? Will President Biden make Mr. Kerry available to the committee to answer questions on his discussions with China?

**Answer:**

The incoming Administration is putting climate change at the forefront of its agenda, including cooperation on climate change with China. In December, Mr. Kerry called China “a partner on climate as we competed with them at other things during the Obama administration” and that “if we don't work as a primary extraordinary effort on climate, we're all cooked.” He's been described as viewing climate change as the most important issue in the U.S.-China relationship.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#50a)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

The incoming Administration is putting climate change at the forefront of its agenda, including cooperation on climate change with China. In December, Mr. Kerry called China “a partner on climate as we competed with them at other things during the Obama administration” and that “if we don’t work as a primary extraordinary effort on climate, we’re all cooked.” He’s been described as viewing climate change as the most important issue in the U.S.-China relationship.

Do you agree that reaching a climate agreement should be the top priority in our dealings with China? If so, why? If not, what should be our top priority instead?

**Answer:**

The Biden-Harris administration has many priorities for our dealings with China. We must advance our economic interests, counter China’s aggressive and coercive actions, sustain our key military advantages, defend democratic values, and restore our vital security partnerships, as we also conduct results-oriented diplomacy with China on shared challenges such as climate change.

UNCLASSIFIED

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#50b)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Do you believe that all other issues in the U.S.-China relationship should be subordinate to this priority?

**Answer:**

No.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#51)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

China has a history of breaking its promises, and its words on climate change often do not match its actions. We should not trade key U.S. interests away for cooperation on climate change. We must also not stand down in pursuing other interests to preserve such an agreement. Will you commit:

- not to enter into an agreement or advise the President to enter into an agreement with the People's Republic of China (PRC) that trades key U.S. interests away for cooperation or future promises by Beijing on climate change; and
- not to recommend any the following policies to either secure or preserve a climate change agreement with the PRC:
  - Decreasing freedom of navigation exercises in the South China;
  - Making changes in our defense relationships with any U.S. ally, or our overall defense posture in the Indo-Pacific region;
  - Delaying arms sales to Taiwan, or pulling back from any form of U.S.-Taiwan cooperation;
  - Deciding not to pursue policies that safeguard the U.S. economy from Beijing's anti-competitive trading practices;
  - Terminating sanctions against individuals or entities of the PRC, or removing a PRC company from the Entity List;
  - Dropping U.S. policies that hold CCP officials and companies accountable for egregious human rights abuses, including those conducted in Xinjiang?

**Answer:**

Yes.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#52)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

The challenges presented by a non-market economy such as that of the PRC that has captured such a large share of the global market are unprecedented. How would you assess the impact of China's ecosystem of economic and industrial policy, driven by "socialism with Chinese characteristics," on the free market, capitalist system constructed and maintained by the United States and its democratic allies for seventy years?

**Answer:**

China's economic and industrial policies have hurt American workers and blunted our technological edge. China is undercutting American companies by dumping products, erecting barriers, and giving illegal subsidies to corporations. It is stealing intellectual property and engaging in other practices to give it an unfair technological advantage, including forced technology transfer. China's low labor and environmental standards — even including instances of forced labor — create an unfair cost advantage at the expense of its own people. In short, Beijing seeks to get a leg up on dominating the technologies and industries of the future, at America's expense.



UNCLASSIFIED

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#53a)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Of the extensive and systemic economic and industrial policies pursued by the PRC, the mass subsidization of Chinese firms, intellectual property theft, and forced technology transfer are among the most damaging to the global economy.

If confirmed, what policies would you pursue with interagency partners to expose the full scope and scale of intellectual property theft and mass subsidization of Chinese firms, and the resulting harm to the United States, foreign markets, and the global economy? Please be specific.

**Answer:**

The Biden Administration will be willing to make use of the full array of tools. We will work with interagency partners, including the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, the Department of Treasury, and the Department of Commerce, to develop policies that counter China's abusive economic practices and hold Beijing accountable.

UNCLASSIFIED

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#53b)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

If confirmed, how will you use your role to rally like-minded market economies to reinforce long-standing principles on fair market practices such as non-discrimination and competition on a commercial basis without unjust government subsidies and support?

**Answer:**

Our approach to China's abusive economic practices to date has been too unilateral — and, as a result, ineffective. A better way to meet the challenge is to build a united front of U.S. allies and partners to confront China's abusive behaviors. On its own, the United States represents about a quarter of global GDP; when we join together with fellow democracies, our strength more than doubles. I will make this a priority.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#53c)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

If confirmed, what steps will you take to advance these important market principles and uphold fair competition?

**Answer:**

If confirmed, I will make use of the full array of tools to compete with China and rally like-minded market economies to confront China's economic abuses.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#53d)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

In your view, what are the best options for affected United States persons to address and respond to unreasonable and discriminatory CCP-directed industrial policies?

**Answer:**

If confirmed, I will review this matter to determine the best options for affected United States persons to address and respond to unreasonable and discriminatory CCP-directed industrial policies.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#54a)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

China is advancing a “corporate social credit system,” which uses existing financial credit systems, public records, online activity, government licenses and registrations, and other information to collect, aggregate, and integrate data regarding corporate entities that come within the jurisdiction of the PRC, including United States companies operating in the PRC to evaluate and rate certain financial, social, religious, or political behaviors of the entity and its key personnel, and punish or reward the entity based on that rating.

What is your assessment of the “corporate social credit system” and its impact on U.S. companies conducting business in China?

**Answer:**

China’s “corporate social credit system” is concerning. We should seek to understand its implications and work to ensure that it does not negatively impact U.S. companies.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#54b)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

How will you work to support private sector entities subject to coercion by the PRC, whether by the “corporate social credit system” or by other means?

**Answer:**

We will take on the challenge of China’s abusive, unfair, and illegal practices, including its coercion of private sector entities. The Biden Administration will be willing to make use of the full array of tools to counter China’s abusive economic practices and hold Beijing accountable.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#55a)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Americans can invest directly in numerous Chinese companies listed on U.S. stock exchanges or through mutual funds and exchanged traded funds that include such companies. Some of these companies support the People's Liberation Army, while others are tied to horrific human rights abuses committed by the Chinese government. The Trump Administration moved to restrict engaging in transactions in publicly traded securities of certain Chinese companies with ties to the People's Liberation Army, and President Trump signed a law that would require the delisting of foreign company shares from U.S. exchanges if those foreign companies do not comply with U.S. audit inspection requirements for three consecutive years.

If confirmed, how would you contend with this challenge?

**Answer:**

It is essential to confront China's economic abuses, defend our values, and protect the long-term prosperity and security of the United States. We must shine a light on Chinese companies that support military modernization or commit human rights abuses and impose appropriate restrictions on these firms.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#55b)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

What specific policies would you advocate?

**Answer:**

We will carefully review the steps taken by the Trump administration, as well as possible additional measures to ensure that Chinese companies linked to China's military modernization and human rights abuses face appropriate restrictions.



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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#56)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

The Department of State possesses a wellspring of expertise among economic officers who will continue to play a critical role in fostering a more level playing field for U.S. companies, helping them compete with Chinese companies and succeed despite anti-competitive economic practices employed by China.

- a. Do you commit to fostering a strong corps of economic officers within the Department, including through providing tools and training they need to succeed in addressing issues related to China's unfair economic practices?
- b. Do you commit, through issuing All Diplomatic and Consular Posts (ALDAC) cables and via other means, to making sure economic officers prioritize among their various duties active economic and commercial diplomacy, including providing tangible support to U.S. companies as appropriate, tracking China's anti-competitive economic policies, and developing associated recommendations?
- c. Do you commit to ensuring that economic diplomacy is a top priority of every U.S. ambassador, and that performance of ambassadors will be evaluated in part on their commitment to advancing economic and commercial diplomacy?

**Answer:**

The economic dimension of U.S.-China competition is crucial and we will take on the challenge of China's abusive, unfair, and illegal practices. If confirmed I will ensure that economic diplomacy is a top priority across the Department.

UNCLASSIFIED

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#57)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

China's biggest export is not a particular product, but rather corruption. A 2018 study in the Journal of Public Economic Studies found that local corruption was higher around known development finance projects in Africa being overseen by Chinese actors. If confirmed, will you commit to highlighting corrupt Chinese practices and prioritize assistance to help counter corruption, including corruption caused or exacerbated by the Chinese government or Chinese companies?

**Answer:**

It is essential to confront China's economic abuses, defend our values, and protect the long-term prosperity and security of the United States. If confirmed I will ensure that economic diplomacy is a top priority across the Department.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#58a)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Before the U.S. presidential election in November, then-candidate Biden said on *60 Minutes* that Russia was the greatest “threat” to the United States, while China was the greatest “competitor.” My understanding is that he was speaking in terms of the military.

What is your assessment of the respective challenges posed to the United States by the Russian and Chinese militaries?

**Answer:**

The rapid development and operational focus of China’s military constitutes a significant and long-term security threat to the United States and to our allies and partners. Russia has used military force and other acts of coercion and intimidation in pursuit of a geopolitical agenda that is contradictory and inimical to the rule of law and U.S. national interests.

UNCLASSIFIED

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#58b)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Which country poses the greater military challenge, and why?

**Answer:**

Because of its ascent and the scope and scale of its military modernization, China is the top priority.

UNCLASSIFIED

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#58c)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Do you believe that the military challenge presented by the People's Liberation Army (PLA) is an urgent, or long-term, challenge? Please explain your position.

**Answer:**

The military challenges presented by the People's Liberation Army are both near-term and long-term. These challenges are an outgrowth of nearly two decades of intense efforts by China to modernize and reform the People's Liberation Army and other forces into an increasingly capable joint force able to conduct the full range of military operations across every warfighting domain.

UNCLASSIFIED

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#59)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

There have also been concerns about Chinese-Russian coordination, particularly in the military sphere in terms of arms sales and joint exercises.

- a. How would you characterize the China-Russia relationship? What areas of the China-Russia relationship are you most concerned about?
- b. How do these concerns fit into your broader policy goals to prevent an erosion of U.S. military advantage?
- c. How do we effectively compete against China and Russia without driving them together?

**Answer:**

The growing alignment between Russia and China amplifies the challenges that both countries pose to the United States. This is especially true in the way that Russia is amplifying the China challenge, particularly in the defense and democracy and human rights realms. Beijing is working with Moscow to fill gaps in its military capabilities, accelerate its technological innovation, and complement its efforts to undermine U.S. leadership. The United States will increasingly need to be mindful of this partnership and where possible, take steps to monitor and plan for, and create headwinds to their alignment.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#60a)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

There is widespread and bipartisan agreement that the military balance in the Indo-Pacific is becoming more unfavorable to the United States, and that this presents a grave danger: the erosion of conventional deterrence.

Do you agree that this situation presents a major challenge to United States interests?

**Answer:**

Maintaining and strengthening a military balance in the Indo-Pacific that advances U.S. interests will be a priority for the Biden-Harris administration.

UNCLASSIFIED

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#60b)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

How can the Department of State, working in concert with the Department of Defense, support the objective of maintaining a favorable military balance and bolstering deterrence?

**Answer:**

If confirmed, I will consult with the Secretary of Defense on how the State Department can best support this objective.



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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#61)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

In June, the United States suspended the entry into the United States of any PRC national on an “F” or “J” visa to study or conduct research in the United States where the individual’s academic or research activities are likely to support a PRC entity that implements and supports the CCP “military-civil fusion” strategy. This policy prevents U.S. research and technological innovation from falling into the hands of our most serious military competitor. Do you commit to retaining this policy?

**Answer:**

It is a critical U.S. interest to make sure that we protect the intellectual property that is produced in this country and that, if used to advance China’s military modernization, could undermine our security. It is also important that we maintain the openness and attractiveness of the United States, including as a destination for overseas talent. I will review the tools available to address these challenges, including visa policy.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#62)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

In December, Chinese military representatives failed to attend a dialogue scheduled with the United States pursuant to the Military Maritime Consultative Agreement—an agreement designed to improve operational safety and review previous unsafe encounters. It is one of multiple mechanisms between the United States and China to limit the risk of military miscalculation and conflict. China has a pattern of suspending military-to-military communications when bilateral tensions increase. Will you prioritize encouraging and pressing China to participate in dialogues designed to reduce miscalculation and avoid conflict, even when bilateral tensions increase?

**Answer:**

Yes.

UNCLASSIFIED

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#63a)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

The PLA has established its first overseas military base in Djibouti. The Department of Defense assesses that the Chinese government is considering other locations on the African continent for future military bases and logistics facilities.

How will the State Department under the Biden Administration ensure the PLA does not gain a foothold in strategic nodes in Africa, including through diplomatic engagement with our partners?

**Answer:**

Diplomatic and security engagement with U.S. partners in Africa can advance our interests and values, while highlighting the dangers associated with dealing with China.

UNCLASSIFIED

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#63b)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

What support or initiatives can the United States offer to African nations to make such agreements less attractive?

**Answer:**

Enhancing our alliances and partnerships in Africa through diplomatic, development, and security initiatives will enable us to better protect and secure U.S. interests in Africa.

UNCLASSIFIED

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#64)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Last year, Beijing implemented the “National Security Law” in Hong Kong, which effectively put Hong Kong’s legal system and law enforcement under Beijing’s control and severely undermined China’s international treaty obligations to respect Hong Kong’s autonomy and the rights protected in the Basic Law.

- a. How will the Biden Administration address these violations of international law?
- b. Will you commit to continue imposing costs on Beijing for its actions in Hong Kong?

**Answer:**

We are deeply concerned about China’s continuing crackdown on Hong Kong -- not only the imposition of the National Security Law, but also the arrests and imprisonment of pro-democracy activists. Hong Kong’s democracy movement is a beacon to the world. We must stand united with our allies and partners against China’s assault on Hong Kong’s freedoms. The President-elect has denounced these moves to undermine Hong Kong’s freedoms of expression, assembly, and press as guaranteed in the Basic Law and the high degree of autonomy that set Hong Kong apart from the rest of China. We have been heartened by bipartisan congressional action on Hong Kong and commit to implement the Hong Kong Autonomy Act. We look forward to working with Congress, and with our international partners, to respond to Beijing’s actions and to support the fundamental freedoms and human rights of the people of Hong Kong.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#65)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Millions of Uyghurs and other ethnic Muslims have been detained and disappeared into internment camps or put into forced-labor situations. This includes family members of U.S.-based Uyghurs, who have been advocating for the release of their family members and highlighting the horrific abuses in Xinjiang and across China. One example is Ekpar Asat, the brother of a U.S. permanent resident. Mr. Asat disappeared in China in 2016 only a few weeks after participating in the Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program.

- a. What can the Biden Administration do to advocate for the immediate and unconditional release of these individuals?
- b. If confirmed, will you commit to raising this issue, and specific cases, with the Chinese government immediately?

**Answer:**

Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities have suffered unspeakable oppression at the hands of China's authoritarian government. President Biden has been clear — and we are going to work with international partners to condemn China's actions and uphold the human rights of Uyghurs and others across China. In my experience, effective diplomatic engagement on such issues requires not only general statements but also raising specific cases like the ones you have highlighted. If I am confirmed, the State Department will incorporate specific cases into our human rights diplomacy.

UNCLASSIFIED

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#66)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Several countries have forcibly returned Uyghurs fleeing persecution and abhorrent human rights abuses by the Chinese Communist Party. How will you and interagency partners work with other nations to discourage, and eventually end, this practice?

**Answer:**

In Xinjiang, China is engaged in gross human rights violations that shock the conscience. Chinese government persecution of Uighurs raises serious refolement concerns when other countries forcibly return Uighurs fleeing such persecution to China. If I am confirmed, the State Department will engage with other governments to discourage forcible returns of Uihgurs to China. The Biden Administration is going to put our democratic values at the center of our foreign policy and stand up for democracy, human rights, and human dignity. We will speak out jointly with allies and partners, impose costs on those responsible, and help those persecuted find safe haven in the United States and other countries.

UNCLASSIFIED

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#67)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

The major rivers of Asia that flow from the Tibetan Plateau are subject to current and potential dam and diversion projects by China. This has severe environmental, economic, and societal consequences for Tibet. These projects are planned and implemented without the proper involvement of all stakeholders, including the Tibetan people. India and other governments in Asia are increasingly worried about China damming rivers originating in Tibet which serve over a billion people downstream.

- a. Would you commit to raising with Chinese officials the need to fully involve all stakeholders in the preservation of Tibet's fragile watershed?
- b. Would you call on the Chinese authorities to engage China's neighbors for the development of a regional framework on water security?

**Answer:**

Water security is an issue in many regions around the world, and one which, when properly managed, can reinforce regional ties and, when poorly managed, can exacerbate tensions and lead to conflict. Water is not only essential for survival, it shapes the development of economies and cultures. A sustainable approach to the water security issues tied to the Tibetan Plateau should involve and reflect input from the Tibetan people and other stakeholders.



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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#68)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

The Dalai Lama is in his 80's and his successor is yet to be chosen. Beijing has declared that it will involve itself in the succession process, even though the Dalai Lama himself makes such a decision in accordance with traditions of Tibetan Buddhism. How will you promote religious freedom for Tibetans in China and around the world so that they may practice their religion without interference from the Chinese government?

**Answer:**

The Chinese government should have no role in the succession process of the Dalai Lama. If confirmed, I am committed to working with the Special Coordinator for Tibet at the State Department, and with the Ambassador at large for International Religious Freedom to promote religious freedom for Tibetans in China and around the world.

UNCLASSIFIED

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#69)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

The Chinese government continues to “Sinicize” religions, which the Congressional Executive Commission on China describes as “a campaign that aims to bring religion in China under closer official control and into conformity with officially sanctioned interpretations of Chinese culture.” These policies affect Christians, Muslims, Han Buddhists, Taoists, and many others. What can the Biden Administration do to support freedom of religious practice for the people of China, free from interference and enforced conformity?

**Answer:**

If confirmed, I will work with the professionals in the State Department and in our embassies and consulates around the world to promote international religious freedom. Religious minorities have long faced human rights violations in China, including violations of their religious freedom. We can be most effective in calling attention to these violations and addressing them by working with allies and partners to defend religious freedom and other internationally recognized human rights.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#70)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

In 2019, the Chinese government continued to persecute human rights defenders, such as lawyers who represent defendants accused of political crimes. What can the Biden Administration do to support human rights defenders in China on day one?

**Answer:**

The Biden Administration will put our democratic values at the center of our foreign policy and stand up for democracy, human rights, and human dignity. We will speak out jointly with allies and partners and will not hesitate to raise the cause of human rights defenders in meetings with Chinese officials.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#71)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

The Vatican recently extended an agreement with the Chinese government that establishes a process for appointing bishops in China. Under the Agreement, bishops in China are in communion with Rome but also approved by the Chinese government. The details of this agreement have never been made public. Despite the agreement, Catholic bishops not affiliated with the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association continue to face persecution. Will you and whomever is confirmed as Ambassador to the Vatican prioritize religious freedom issues in China in your diplomatic engagements with Vatican officials?

**Answer:**

Yes.

UNCLASSIFIED

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#72)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Chinese influence in Europe continues to grow. It has invested billions across Europe and has sought to acquire strategic infrastructure and companies in Europe. European countries are starting to take a much more robust approach to China across the board, including on investment and human rights.

- a. What is your assessment of China's objectives in Europe and with regard to the transatlantic alliance?
- b. How should the United States respond to growing Chinese influence in Europe?
- c. What are the areas you think are most ripe for cooperation between the United States and Europe when it comes to China?

**Answer:**

China poses challenges to our security, prosperity, and values. The most effective way to address the pressing global challenges we face -- including China -- is alongside partners who share our values and interests. That is why strengthening and revitalizing the transatlantic alliance will be a key priority for the Biden-Harris administration. We look forward to deepening U.S.-Europe cooperation as we seek to deal with competition with China. We will seek to develop a common agenda when it comes to pushing back against China's abuses in the trade space, in the technology space and in other ways.

UNCLASSIFIED

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#73)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

After years of negotiations, on December 30th, 2020—nearly the final day of the German Council presidency—the European Union (EU) announced it had reached an agreement with China on an investment deal. I am very concerned that this agreement will slow momentum on cooperation among the United States, Europe, and other democracies on our shared challenges related to China.

- a. What is your view of the EU's decision to conclude this agreement at this moment?
- b. What are the economic and geopolitical implications of this agreement? Please be specific. Will it affect the EU's willingness to push back on China for its malign behavior, such as using the EU's new human rights sanctions regime? Do you believe that this agreement will affect, negatively or positively, U.S. attempts to hold China accountable for its malign trade and investment practices?
- c. The deal is not yet final, as the European Parliament must ratify it. Will you engage the European Parliament on the investment agreement and, if so, what will be your main messages to them?

**Answer:**

As we look to rebuild our relationship with the EU, one of our first priorities will be consulting on a coordinated approach to China's abusive economic practices, human rights violations, and other important challenges. The EU has made it clear that it is ready and willing to cooperate with the Biden administration on China. If confirmed I look forward to early consultations with our European partners on our common concerns about China.

UNCLASSIFIED

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#74)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Last year, I published a report on how the United States and Europe can cooperate on shared challenges related to China, including a chapter on contending with China's anti-competitive economic practices. I argued that the United States and Europe should revitalize trade negotiations, continue important initiatives at the World Trade Organizations such U.S.-EU-Japan efforts on subsidies, fix current sticking points like ongoing disputes between Boeing and Airbus, coordinate on export controls, and strengthen supply chain resilience. How would you advance these goals? What additional areas would you prioritize?

**Answer:**

We will take on the challenge of China's abusive, unfair, and illegal practices. China is undercutting American companies by dumping products, erecting barriers, and giving illegal subsidies to corporations. It is stealing intellectual property and engaging in other practices to give it an unfair technological advantage, including forced technology transfer. China's low labor and environmental standards — even including instances of forced labor — create an unfair cost advantage at the expense of its own people. In short, Beijing seeks to get a leg up on dominating the technologies and industries of the future, at America's expense. The Biden Administration will be willing to make use of the full array of tools to counter China's abusive economic practices and hold Beijing accountable. And we will build a united front of U.S. allies and partners to confront China's abusive behaviors.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#75)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

The United States passed legislation regarding export controls in 2018 and has implemented other regulatory changes recently, including changes related to ensuring U.S. products do not support China's military-civil fusion policies. The EU is also starting to advance reforms to its export controls measures. It is important to have multilateral export controls for national security reasons as well as economic ones.

- a. How would you work to build diplomatic consensus for multilateral alignment on export controls that safeguard national security and protect human rights?
- b. How would you work to ensure a broad agreement that would provide parameters not only to U.S. companies but also companies based in other countries?

**Answer:**

Both export controls and technology research and development are crucial to out-competing China in technology. The Biden-Harris Administration will make a top priority close coordination with U.S. allies in these crucial areas. We will play defense by building diplomatic consensus for multilateral alignment on export controls that safeguard national security and protect human rights and play offense by coordinating research, reducing barriers to joint development, coordinating regulatory practices, and increasing shared usage of key technologies. Taken together, these efforts will play a crucial role in maintaining and enhancing the U.S. and allied technological edge.



UNCLASSIFIED

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#76)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

China is investing heavily in emerging and dual-use technology research and development to become a "scientific and technological superpower". The United States, Japan, and Europe are each individually investing in certain technologies, but they would be much stronger if they were to coordinate research; reduce barriers to joint development; coordinate regulatory practices, and increase shared usage of such technologies.

- a. If confirmed, how will you coordinate with our allies on technology research and development?
- b. What will your priorities in this sphere look like?

**Answer:**

Both export controls and technology research and development are crucial to out-competing China in technology. The Biden-Harris Administration will make a top priority close coordination with U.S. allies in these crucial areas. We will play defense by building diplomatic consensus for multilateral alignment on export controls that safeguard national security and protect human rights and play offense by coordinating research, reducing barriers to joint development, coordinating regulatory practices, and increasing shared usage of key technologies. Taken together, these efforts will play a crucial role in maintaining and enhancing the U.S. and allied technological edge.

UNCLASSIFIED

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#77a)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

The Trump Administration has expanded cooperation with other allies and partners, such as those in Europe, to work together on issues in the Indo-Pacific, including joint Freedom of Navigation Operations, joint statements on the Chinese government's human rights abuses, and joint support for countries negatively affected by China's predatory economic statecraft.

Do you welcome a greater European role in the Indo-Pacific?

**Answer:**

Yes.

UNCLASSIFIED

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#77b)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

What are concrete priorities and issue areas those allies and partners from outside of the Indo-Pacific can work with the United States to address in this region?

**Answer:**

If confirmed, I will consult with allies and partners from outside the region on how to advance shared priorities in the Indo-Pacific region.

UNCLASSIFIED

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#78)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Competition with the PRC requires the United States' skillful adaptation to the information environment of the 21st century. If confirmed, how will you coordinate and advance United States public diplomacy and messaging efforts effectively to promote the value of partnership with the United States, highlight the risks and costs of enmeshment with the PRC, and push back on CCP propaganda and disinformation?

**Answer:**

China's use of information operations and other coercive and corrupting efforts to undermine and interfere in democracies are a concern for the U.S. and our allies. If confirmed I will lead work with our allies and partners to push back on China's attempts to write the rules of the information age by working with allies to define an affirmative, democratic vision for the global information space and to build resilience against these threats and expose China's malign activity. While we need to push back on China's efforts, we ultimately need to develop better means for the U.S. and our allies to leverage our democratic advantages and resilience.

UNCLASSIFIED

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#79)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

The FBI has found that CCP and PRC intelligence organizations target, infiltrate, and attempt to influence U.S. local, state, and even national-level politicians and certain government organizations, including by hacking into government databases to steal information on U.S. government personnel. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo gave several speeches on this issue during his tenure, including to the National Governors Association.

- a. What is the Biden Administration's plan to inoculate our political system from this malign influence?
- b. What specific steps will the Biden Administration, including the State Department, engage with state and local political leaders and their staffs on these issues?

**Answer:**

China's use of information operations and other coercive and corrupting efforts to undermine and interfere in democracies are a concern for the U.S. and our allies. If confirmed, I will examine this issue closely alongside interagency partners.

UNCLASSIFIED

**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#80a)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

At the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic, the CCP intentionally suppressed information about the virus's origins and spread disinformation about the virus across nearly every continent. This is just one example of how harmful CCP disinformation can be to the world.

What can the United States do to combat CCP disinformation?

**Answer:**

We will confront the growing strength of autocratic powers and their efforts to divide and manipulate others, and will push back on their attempts to write the rules of the information age by working with allies to define an affirmative, democratic vision for the global information space. If confirmed, I will lead work with our allies and partners to build resilience against these threats, as we expose China's malign activity and, when relevant, impose costs.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#80b)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

How can the United States work with its allies and partners who have shown great resiliency to CCP disinformation, such as Taiwan, to tackle this shared challenge?

**Answer:**

Together with allies and partners we will push back on China's attempts to write the rules of the information age by working to define an affirmative, democratic vision for the global information space. Together we will also develop better means for the U.S. and our allies to leverage our democratic advantages and resilience.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#81)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Xi Jinping has emphasized the desire to ensure that Hollywood filmmakers use their position to “tell China’s story well”. This translates into Beijing’s overreach into and censorship of Hollywood films through explicit censorship requirements for the Chinese market, boycotts and economic pressure, and acquisitions of industry corporations by Chinese companies. As Hollywood director Judd Apatow recently said, “Instead of us doing business with China and that leading to China being more free, what has happened is that China has bought our silence with their money.”

- a. Will the Biden Administration, including yourself and other senior State Department officials, engage the film industry regarding the pernicious impact of censorship by the Chinese government and other authoritarian governments on freedom of expression and other principles that are fundamental to the political system of United States?
- b. What steps will the Biden Administration take to monitor and stop efforts by Beijing to censor film narratives about China and put pressure on the U.S. film industry and other U.S.-based media?
- c. What are your views on the implications and consequences of Beijing’s tactics in Hollywood for the PRC’s overall strategy to exercise malign influence across various types of U.S. media? What other types of media in the United States are at risk of being subjected to tactics we are seeing used by Beijing to influence Hollywood?

**Answer:**

China’s use of information operations and other coercive and corrupting efforts to undermine and interfere in democracies are a concern for the U.S. and our allies. The Biden-Harris Administration will engage all relevant stakeholders, including the private sector, to ensure that people can engage in commerce and speak freely without worry about surveillance by foreign authoritarians or worry that the businesses that they either work for or purchase from are having to change their practices in fundamental ways to conform to the authoritarian tendencies



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of other governments. We will always be willing to speak out on behalf of our values and our way of life.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#82)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

In 2019, the Chinese government executed a significant pressure campaign on the National Basketball Association (NBA) over a personal tweet by the Houston Rockets manager supporting democracy advocates in Hong Kong. While certainly not the first, this incident captured the attention of the U.S. public and shed light on the lengths to which the Chinese government is willing to go to silence its critics and shape a favorable environment for the continuation of its repressive policies.

**Answer:**

China's use of information operations and other coercive and corrupting efforts to undermine and interfere in democracies are a concern for the U.S. and our allies. The Biden-Harris Administration will engage all relevant stakeholders to ensure that people can engage in commerce and speak freely without worry about surveillance by foreign authoritarians or worry that the businesses that they either work for or purchase from are having to change their practices in fundamental ways to conform to the authoritarian tendencies of other governments. We will always be willing to speak out on behalf of our values and our way of life.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#83)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

In your view, what are the implications of China being able to pressure and punish U.S. persons and companies into accepting or at least not pushing back on the political positions of the Chinese government, even when those positions undermine the fundamental political principles and values of the United States?

**Answer:**

China's use of information operations and other coercive and corrupting efforts to undermine and interfere in democracies are a concern for the U.S. and our allies. The Biden-Harris Administration will engage all relevant stakeholders to ensure that people can engage in commerce and speak freely without worry about surveillance by foreign authoritarians or worry that the businesses that they either work for or purchase from are having to change their practices in fundamental ways to conform to the authoritarian tendencies of other governments. We will always be willing to speak out on behalf of our values and our way of life.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#84)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

What can and should private sector actors do about this challenge? What about the U.S. government's role, and how will the Biden Administration address this issue?

**Answer:**

China's use of information operations and other coercive and corrupting efforts to undermine and interfere in democracies are a concern for the U.S. and our allies. The Biden-Harris Administration will engage all relevant stakeholders to ensure that people can engage in commerce and speak freely without worry about surveillance by foreign authoritarians or worry that the businesses that they either work for or purchase from are having to change their practices in fundamental ways to conform to the authoritarian tendencies of other governments. We will always be willing to speak out on behalf of our values and our way of life.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#85)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

There has been much written about how China's "One Belt, One Road" initiative (OBOR) as a means by which to increase the economic influence of state-owned Chinese firms in global markets, engender undue PRC political leverage with governments around the world, create a China-centric technology regime, secure dependence on supply chains centered on Chinese companies, export corrupt business practices, and provide greater access to strategic nodes for the People's Liberation Army.

- a. In your view, what are the goals of the OBOR?
- b. If confirmed, what actions would you take and what partnerships would you seek to execute concrete economic projects to compete with or reduce the influence of OBOR?

**Answer:**

Competition with China is one of the central challenges of the 21st century -- and we also need to compete with China's economic statecraft through the Belt and Road Initiative. The Biden-Harris administration will provide an alternative vision that promotes democratic governance and transparency in our global health and development work. We will distinguish ourselves from China's approach to development by ensuring that social and economic safeguards are built into the projects we support. We will focus on partnerships and on strengthening local capacity. In addition, we will work with allies and partners to advocate for the highest environmental, social, and labor standards to promote development investments that are both beneficial and sustainable over the long term.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#86)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

The United States is seeking to deepen its engagements with emerging partners in Southeast Asia, Africa, and Latin America that are already heavily involved in or welcoming of OBOR projects and investment. In addition to the detrimental impacts of unsustainable or sovereignty-reducing OBOR projects, the enmeshment of these nations with OBOR and PRC influence generally also complicates U.S. efforts to cooperate with them, given their vulnerability to PRC pressure. An example of the kind of country I'm talking about is Cambodia.

- a. How will the United States approach engagement with countries that fall into this category?
- b. For those countries that have already decided to enmesh themselves with China to a significant extent, to what extent should the United States prioritize helping to build countries' resiliency to Chinese economic pressure through OBOR, or other forms of pressure? How can and how should we be doing so?

**Answer:**

If confirmed, I will review these challenges in line with the need to compete with China's economic statecraft and build countries' resilience to Chinese economic coercion and pressure.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#87)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

The Trump Administration undertook a major push to keep products from China's Huawei out of 5G networks in countries across the world, especially in allied nations in Europe. Despite criticisms of the style of the approach, multiple countries have chosen to exclude Huawei from their emerging 5G networks, including the United Kingdom, Czech Republic, Poland, Sweden, Estonia, Romania, Denmark, and Latvia.

- a. Is your approach to keeping 5G networks clean from Chinese equipment and the consequent security hazards going to be different from that of the Trump Administration? How so?
- b. Looking beyond 5G, what other emerging technologies do you think would create risks for the United States and its allies if we have an undue reliance on untrusted vendors? Are there areas that you will prioritize, and how so?
- c. The previous Administration began to advance a Clean Networks initiative to "address long-term threats to data privacy, security, human rights and principled collaboration posed to the free world from authoritarian malign actors, including the Chinese Communist Party." What is your view of this initiative?

**Answer:**

Technology is at the center of U.S.-China competition. China has been willing to do whatever it takes to gain a technological advantage — stealing intellectual property, engaging in industrial espionage, and forcing technology transfer. We have to play a better defense, which must include (1) holding China accountable for its unfair and illegal practices and (2) making sure that American technologies aren't facilitating China's military buildup or human rights abuses. We also have to play a much better offense, by investing in the sources of our technological strength — supercharging American research and development so that we maintain our innovation edge. We need a comprehensive strategy and a more systematic approach that actually addresses the full range of these issues, rather than the piecemeal approach of the past

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few years. If confirmed I will be engaged in reviewing these issues carefully and will be committed to protecting U.S. data and America's technological edge.



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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#88)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Huawei Marine is becoming bigger player in the market to construct, own, and operate undersea cables, which carry \$10 trillion in global business transactions each day, and at least 95 percent of total digital communications. Huawei Marine is owned by Hengtong Group, which has close ties to the People's Liberation Army. The Trump Administration has engaged in financing the construction of undersea cables for Pacific Island partners, as well as engaging with allies and partners considering PRC bids on the security risks.

- a. What is your view on the challenges presented by greater presence of Huawei Marine in constructing undersea cables?
- b. How would you use diplomacy to address this issue?

**Answer:**

If confirmed, I will review these issues carefully, including in coordination with diplomatic partners, to ensure that we protect U.S. prosperity and security.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#89a)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

The South China Sea continues to be a hotbed of tension and potential escalation in the Indo-Pacific.

President Biden has said he'd retain the U.S. Freedom of Navigation Operation Program. Do you commit for advocating for regular Freedom of Navigation Operations, even if it raises tensions with China?

**Answer:**

Yes.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#89b)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

What other steps are you planning to take with our allies and partners in the region, including ASEAN, to boost maritime security in this area?

**Answer:**

The United States has a national interest in the maintenance of peace and stability, respect for international law, lawful unimpeded commerce, and freedom of navigation in the South China Sea; we will work with regional institutions like ASEAN and East Asia Summit to advance them.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#89c)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Do you commit to maintaining the policy that any armed attack on Philippine forces, aircraft, or public vessels in the South China Sea will trigger our mutual defense obligations?

**Answer:**

Our alliance with the Philippines is foundational to the U.S. role in the Indo-Pacific. It is a relationship founded on shared strategic interests, shared history, culture, and most importantly, people. The United States will stand by the Philippines to make sure the alliance can safeguard Filipino interests and territory, and the United States will continue to fly, sail, and operate wherever international law allows and our alliance commitments require.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#90)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

ASEAN countries and China are negotiating a South China Sea Code of Conduct. China is pushing ASEAN countries to disallow the presence of outside countries in the South China Sea, and to commit to not conducting certain types of military exercises with its partners. Making such demands are a clear infringement on the sovereignty of our Southeast Asian partners and contrary to U.S. interests.

- a. What are your views on the effort to conclude a code of conduct?
- b. Do you believe that China has any intent to negotiate a code of conduct in good faith?

**Answer:**

If confirmed, I will consult with ASEAN partners on this code of conduct to ensure it advances shared interests.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#91)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

There have been widespread concerns over China building military bases on artificially constructed islands in the South China Sea. In the coming months or years, China could build a similar military base on Scarborough Reef is currently an unoccupied feature. If confirmed, you could face a renewed crisis with a strategic competitor in the South China Sea, one of the most important waterways in the world.

- a. To what degree do you view the Chinese construction of a military base on Scarborough Reef as a national security challenge for the United States?
- b. How would you attempt to deter such an action and what would be your approach to addressing a Chinese fait accompli? What would be your broader strategy?

**Answer:**

We can and should push back on China's coercion and illegal claims in the South China Sea -- including its illegal militarization of features. Countering China's gray zone tactics in the South China Sea is not simply a military problem. It will require a government-wide effort that leads with diplomacy, development, and economic engagement. We will reestablish ourselves as regional diplomatic leaders and stand prepared to rally partners around international law and freedom of navigation.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#92a)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

For any potential escalation in the South China Sea, the United States at a disadvantage because our basing in the Indo-Pacific is heavily concentrated in Northeast Asia.

How can the State Department, through its diplomatic efforts, help to ensure we are appropriately postured for a potential South China Sea contingency?

**Answer:**

We can and should push back on China's coercion and illegal claims in the South China Sea -- including its illegal militarization of features. Countering China's gray zone tactics in the South China Sea is not simply a military problem. It will require a government-wide effort that leads with diplomacy, development, and economic engagement. We will reestablish ourselves as regional diplomatic leaders and standard prepared to rally partners around international law and freedom of navigation.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#92b)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

How important are our partners in Southeast Asia to securing a First and Second Island Chain from Chinese dominance and control?

**Answer:**

China's military modernization, coupled with its aggressive and coercive actions, presents an increasingly urgent challenge to our vital interests in the Indo-Pacific region and around the world. The Biden administration will view China as our most serious global competitor. Our allies and partners throughout the region will be critical to securing the Western Pacific.



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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#93)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

The Chinese Coast Guard continues to maintain a constant presence around the Senkaku Islands, under the administrative control of Japan. The Chinese Air Force has sent large numbers of its planes to the East China Sea throughout 2020, causing great stress to the Japanese Air Self Defense Force. In his call with Prime Minister Suga in November 2020, President-Elect Biden underscored U.S. commitments under Article 5 of our mutual defense treaty with Japan. Does that reaffirmation include the previous commitments made by Presidents Obama and Trump regarding the Senkaku Islands?

**Answer:**

It has long been the United States' position that Article V of the U.S.-Japan Mutual Defense Treaty applies to the Senkaku Islands. We oppose any unilateral change to Japan's administration of the Senkakus. The US-Japan alliance has never been more important and we stand firmly behind this commitment.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#94)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

The incoming Administration has stated that global health cooperation with China will be a major priority. The United States invested a lot of resources and personnel over many years to pursue health cooperation with China. That included a close relationship between the U.S. CDC and China's CDC, including co-location arrangements where they worked side-by-side for many years. While co-location arrangements ceased because of concerns about the physical security of U.S. diplomats, cooperation still continued. However, in the world's hour of need at the beginning of a serious pandemic originating in China, the Chinese government's response proved that global health cooperation would always take a back seat to the standing and reputation of the CCP.

- a. While some level of cooperation may be necessary, how can we have confidence in these initiatives without reciprocal good faith efforts by Chinese government interlocutors?
- b. How will you overcome this fundamental challenge, and why should the American people trust that use of taxpayer dollars and other resources will bear fruit?
- c. What areas of health cooperation will the incoming Administration prioritize with China? What will be the role of the State Department in this regard?

**Answer:**

If confirmed, I will be willing to test whether China is willing to play a constructive role on certain issues, including on global health but will be clear-eyed about U.S. interests. I will consult with Congress on any potential areas of cooperation.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#95)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Among the first calls President-Elect Biden made were to Japan, Australia, and South Korea, where Mr. Biden said he wanted to strengthen cooperation even further in new areas. For each of these allies – Japan, Australia, and South Korea – what are the new areas that the Biden Administration would like to see expanded diplomatic engagement and cooperation? Please be specific.

**Answer:**

The Biden Administration won't just mend our alliances, we will modernize them for the world we face. We are committed to working with allies to combat COVID-19 and climate change; to face down foreign election interference and corruption; to strengthen our defenses in cyber space and to produce and secure the technologies of the future.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#96)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Sustainable alliances require fair burden sharing arrangements. Our host nation support agreements – called Special Measures Agreements – with the Republic of Korea and Japan both need to be renegotiated. If confirmed, will you advocate for reasonable increases in the contributions by the ROK and Japan and also for expanding the cost categories to which they contribute?

**Answer:**

Yes.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#97)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

A rocky Japan-ROK relationship continues to hinder trilateral cooperation in the region, to the detriment of U.S. interests and shared interests among our three countries.

- a. If confirmed, will you prioritize overcoming this challenge?
- b. How will you approach it? What are priority areas of cooperation among the United States, Japan, and the ROK?

**Answer:**

The decline of relations between Japan and South Korea has been a deeply regrettable result of American diplomatic disengagement over the past four years. If confirmed I will not only reinvest in America's relationships with its allies, but in the relationships among them. None are more important than Japan and South Korea. We will explore opportunities to help them to improve their ties so that we can reinvigorate our cooperation on the North Korea challenge and expand it to new areas, facing down COVID-19, climate change, threats in cyberspace, and working to make our democracies more resilient.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#98)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Do you consider the Philippines to be a strategically important ally of the United States? Please explain your position.

**Answer:**

Our alliance with the Philippines is foundational to the U.S. role in the Indo-Pacific. It is a relationship founded on shared strategic interests, shared history, culture, and most importantly, people.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#99)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

The United States military currently cooperates with the Armed Forces of the Philippines on counterterrorism and maritime security. Multiple members of Congress have proposed limiting or cutting off U.S. security assistance to the Philippine military because of concerns over human rights abuses.

- a. Do you believe that taking such a step is in U.S. interests?
- b. Do you believe that taking such a step would improve human rights conditions in the Philippines?

**Answer:**

As friends and partners, it is also incumbent upon us to address with the Philippines those areas of the relationship in which we have concerns, including human rights, freedom of the press, and the extrajudicial killings that have been conducted as part of Manila's war on drugs. We appreciate Congress's close attention to these issues in recent years. We intend to consult closely on the path forward in our relationship with the Philippines.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#100)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Will you ensure that the U.S. Department of State consults with Congress before taking action on issues that could jeopardize U.S. access to or create significant tensions in our relationships with key defense partners in the Indo-Pacific, especially those in Southeast Asia?

**Answer:**

I appreciate Congress's close attention to these issues in recent years. If confirmed I intend to consult closely on the path forward in our relationships.



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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#101)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Cooperation between the United States and Japan on technology development and regulations is crucial to adapting to, in the words of Hirokazu Hokazono, the chief defense scientist at Japan's Ministry of Defense's Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics Agency, a "security environment [that] is changing at extremely high speed." To counter threats posed by this security environment, the U.S. and Japan will need to adapt quickly to defense technologies such as robotics that originate in the commercial sector.

- a. How can the U.S. and Japan further cooperation between its militaries, private technology industries, and academia to better integrate its civilian and defense technology development?
- b. How will the Biden administration work with its Japanese counterparts to expand such technology cooperation with other democratic allies, such as Australia and the EU?

**Answer:**

The U.S.-Japan alliance reminds us how we benefit from having close treaty allies around the world -- Japan is a capable, thoughtful, and dynamic partner who has helped us to secure our interests and values in Asia more effectively than we could do alone. We will work to expand our ties with Japan and other allies to cooperate on developing new technologies and the norms and rules that will govern them.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#102a)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

A change in the status quo for Taiwan would have huge implications for U.S. strategy and objectives in the region.

If confirmed, what would you do on the diplomatic front to strengthen our relationship with Taiwan and bolster deterrence?

**Answer:**

If confirmed I will continue U.S. policy to support Taiwan membership in international organizations where statehood is not a requirement and encourage Taiwan's meaningful participation, as appropriate, in organizations where its membership is not possible. We will stand with friends and allies to advance our shared prosperity, security, and values in the Asia-Pacific region -- and that includes deepening our ties with Taiwan.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#102b)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Would you advise the President to send high-level visitors to Taiwan, boost defense ties, explore negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement, strengthen the economic partnership set up by the Trump Administration, and advocate for Taiwan in international organizations?

**Answer:**

America's commitment to Taiwan will remain rock-solid. Taiwan is a leading democracy and a critical economic and security partner — its future matters to the United States for all of these reasons. We will continue to strengthen U.S. economic ties with Taiwan as an important priority.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#102c)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Do you commit to fully adhering to the requirement under the Taiwan Relations Act to provide Taiwan with arms of a defensive character?

**Answer:**

If confirmed, I will ensure the United States continues to make available to Taiwan the defense articles and services necessary to enable Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability, consistent with the Taiwan Relations Act and our one China policy.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#102d)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

China's actions in Hong Kong have accelerated the timeline for the Chinese Communist Party to unify with Taiwan. What will you do now to help ensure the PRC does not use violence or coercion against Taiwan and help Taiwan avoid the same fate as Hong Kong?

**Answer:**

If confirmed I will continue to support a peaceful resolution of cross-strait issues, consistent with the wishes and best interests of the people of Taiwan. I will continue to support U.S. policy to meet our commitments to Taiwan and assist Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#103)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

The previous Administration authorized many critical capabilities via arms sales to Taiwan over the last several years, including fighters to replace and augment those being worn out from Chinese Air Force incursions, ground-launched anti-ship missiles, mobile artillery rocket systems, and surveillance drones.

- a. Do you commit to fulfilling these arms sales with speed and urgency so that the capabilities get to Taiwan in a timely manner?
- b. Do you commit to ensuring that the Department of State adheres to a regularized process with regard to Taiwan arms sales, including avoiding the practice of bundling?

**Answer:**

Consistent with the Taiwan Relations Act and our one China policy, the United States continues to make available to Taiwan the defense articles and services necessary to enable Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability. This longstanding policy contributes to the maintenance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait.

We will continue to support U.S. policy to meet our commitments to Taiwan and assist Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability. Doing so increases stability both across the Taiwan Strait and within the region.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#104)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Last year, Assistant Secretary of State David Stilwell gave a speech called, "The United States, Taiwan, and the World: Partners for Peace and Prosperity."

- a. Do you agree with and reaffirm the statements made in this speech? Please explain your position.
- b. Do you commit to engaging with allies in the Indo-Pacific and Europe to develop support for the U.S. position that Taiwan's future should be determined peacefully and without coercion?

**Answer:**

Our commitment to Taiwan is rock-solid. Taiwan is a leading democracy, a major economy, a security partner, a technology powerhouse -- and a shining example of how an open society can effectively contain COVID-19. We will continue to support a peaceful resolution of cross-strait issues, consistent with the wishes and best interests of the people of Taiwan. There are many strong supporters of Taiwan in Congress and we look forward to working with members on this crucial issue.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#105)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Japan's State Minister of Defense Yasuhide Nakayama recently said, "There's a red line in Asia - China and Taiwan. How will Joe Biden in the White House react in any case if China crosses this red line? The United States is the leader of the democratic countries. I have a strong feeling to say: America, be strong!" This statement, which is unprecedented for Japan, reflects that country's significant concerns about Taiwan and the future of U.S. policy.

What is your response to Minister Nakayama's question? Do you commit to consulting with Japan consistently and extensively about U.S. policy on Taiwan in general and about responding to a Taiwan scenario in particular?

**Answer:**

If confirmed I will commit to working closely with allies to advance our shared prosperity, security, and values in the Asia-Pacific region. That includes deepening our ties with Taiwan.



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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#106a)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Last Congress, Congress passed and the president signed into law the Taiwan Assurance Act, which requires the Department of State to review all guidance documents with respect to our relationship with Taiwan. Shortly thereafter, the State Department declared all “should consider all ‘contact guidelines’ regarding relations with Taiwan previously issued by the Department of State under authorities delegated to the Secretary of State to be null and void.”

Do you plan to sustain this action taken by the Department of State? If not, why not? Please explain your position in detail.

**Answer:**

In line with the Taiwan Assurance Act passed by Congress, the State Department has been engaged in a review of contact guidance for our unofficial relations with Taiwan. I agree with Congress that it is time for updated guidance to reflect our commitment to deepening ties with Taiwan — a leading democracy and a critical economic and security partner. For the time being, we will leave the recent revocation of contact guidance in place so that we can complete the review that was already well underway.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#106b)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Do you commit to ensuring that any documents related to U.S. Executive Branch engagement with Taiwan are crafted with the intent to deepen and expand United States-Taiwan relations, and that are based on the value, merits, and importance of the United States-Taiwan relationship?

**Answer:**

If confirmed I will ensure that U.S. support for Taiwan will remain strong, principled, and bipartisan, in line with longstanding American commitments to the Three Communiqués, the Taiwan Relations Act, and the Six Assurances. We will continue to support a peaceful resolution of cross-strait issues, consistent with the wishes and best interests of the people of Taiwan.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#106c)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Do you commit to ensuring that any documents related to U.S. Executive Branch engagement with Taiwan are not crafted or implemented in such a way that defers to the preference of the CCP to limit the U.S.-Taiwan relationship?

**Answer:**

If confirmed I will ensure that U.S. support for Taiwan will remain strong, principled, and bipartisan, in line with longstanding American commitments to the Three Communiqués, the Taiwan Relations Act, and the Six Assurances. We will continue to support a peaceful resolution of cross-strait issues, consistent with the wishes and best interests of the people of Taiwan.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#106d)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

If the Department of State creates a new “Guidelines of Relations with Taiwan” memorandum, do you commit to sharing that document with appropriate congressional committees as required by the Taiwan Assurance Act?

**Answer:**

There are many strong supporters of Taiwan in Congress and we look forward to working with members on this crucial issue.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#107)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

The Indo-Pacific Strategy enshrined the principle of ASEAN centrality in pursuing U.S. objectives in Southeast Asia. ASEAN also published an “Indo-Pacific Outlook” that aligns with the U.S. Indo-Pacific Strategy.

- a. Do you agree that ASEAN should be a central element to U.S. strategy in the region?
- b. What will be your top priorities for strengthening U.S. partnerships with ASEAN member states and institutions?
- c. Will you continue initiatives with ASEAN started by the previous Administration, such as the U.S.-ASEAN Smart Cities Partnership and U.S.-ASEAN Health Futures, as well as cooperation with ASEAN on human capital development objectives?
- d. Do you agree that it is in our national interest to strengthen our security cooperation with Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Thailand? If so, please elaborate specifically on the U.S. interests it serves. If confirmed, what specific steps will you take to advance security partnerships with these nations, including your views on continuing arms sales, engaging in capacity-building, and cooperating on advanced technology with South and Southeast Asian partner countries facing China’s coercion and growing military power?

**Answer:**

The Biden Administration is committed to ASEAN centrality, and to working through regional fora like ASEAN and the East Asia Summit. We hope to work bilaterally and multilaterally to strengthen these critical partnerships.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#108)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Implementation of the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) is an important check on Russian defense and intelligence entities. At the same time, CAATSA contains a waiver authority to avoid undue damage to U.S. partners such as India, Vietnam, and Indonesia.

Please explain your position regarding the implementation of CAATSA on critical U.S. partners who purchase Russian defense equipment, and your understanding of whether existing waiver authority is sufficient to protect U.S. partnerships.

**Answer:**

We plan to review the impact of CAATSA sanctions on U.S. partnerships.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#109a)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

The United States supports a peaceful, prosperous, and democratic Burma that respects the human rights of its people.

What will the Biden Administration do to support Burma's democratic transition, especially following its November 2020 election?

**Answer:**

Burma's democratic transition is a reminder that there is rarely a linear path from dictatorship to democracy. The Biden Administration remains committed to Burma's democratic transition, and this will be reflected in our diplomatic engagement with the government of Burma, including State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, encouragement for efforts to achieve democratic constitutional reform that would address the military's role in governance and in the economy, progress for transparency and anti-corruption, and human rights protections that are essential to a successful multi-ethnic democracy.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#109b)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

In addition to the persecution of Rohingya Muslims, what other issues will be the Biden Administration's top priorities in terms of the human rights situation in Burma?

**Answer:**

Freedom of expression remains a priority, and the work of independent journalists and civil society organizations in particular will continue to be essential in driving forward Burma's democratic transition. Accountability for human rights abuses and corruption are essential foundations for building a democratic society characterized by rule of law. Furthermore, in addition to the persecution of the Rohingya in Rakhine State, Burma falls short on delivering equality under the law to members of other ethnic and religious minorities.



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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#110a)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

India is a crucial U.S. economic and security partner in the Indo-Pacific. Under the past administration, U.S.-India relations strengthened significantly with frequent high-level visits, deepened defense cooperation, and a mutual commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific.

How will the Biden Administration continue to build on this momentum to deepen relations with India? Will you make that a priority?

**Answer:**

If confirmed, I will work with my colleagues at the Department of Defense to identify and pursue ways to grow the U.S.-India security partnership. During the Obama-Biden administration, the U.S. pursued closer ties with India in areas such as maritime domain awareness, intelligence sharing, and defense procurement. These areas were continued, and in some cases, expanded upon during the Trump administration. The Biden Administration will develop them further.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#110b)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Now that the United States and India have signed all the relevant defense-enabling agreements, what should be the top priorities for growing our security partnership?

**Answer:**

If confirmed, I will work with my colleagues at the Department of Defense to identify and pursue ways to grow the U.S.-India security partnership. During the Obama-Biden administration, the U.S. pursued closer ties with India in areas such as maritime domain awareness, intelligence sharing, and defense procurement. These areas were continued, and in some cases, expanded upon during the Trump administration. The Biden Administration will develop them further.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#110c)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

What will you do to navigate the ongoing trade disputes and human rights issues with India, and how can the United States balance legitimate concerns about India's trade practices and human rights policies with other priorities in the relationship?

**Answer:**

The U.S. and India have a broad, multi-faceted partnership. We will seek to bridge our differences, when they emerge, from a posture of trust and in a way that protects core U.S. interests and values.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#111)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Tensions between China and India flared last summer, resulting in casualties on both sides. Will the Biden Administration continue to provide diplomatic and intelligence support to India and accelerate requests for defense articles to India?

**Answer:**

Yes.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#112a)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

The United States and India remain locked in a dispute about Lincoln House. Various Indian government ministries are preventing the U.S. government from completing a years-old transaction to sell the property. This is an unnecessary irritant in bilateral ties.

Do you commit to making the resolution of the Lincoln House issue a priority with India, and to directing the U.S. Ambassador to India to do the same?

**Answer:**

Yes.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#112b)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

The Indian Ministry of Defense is also involved in this issue. Do you commit to ensuring relevant U.S. Department of Defense officials are briefed on the issue, and to ensuring they raise it with their own counterparts as well?

**Answer:**

Yes.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#113a)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

India has greatly increased its role in the Indo-Pacific region, including through the Quad and by deepening partnerships with Southeast Asia.

What role do you envision for U.S.-India cooperation to advance regional objectives in the Indo-Pacific?

**Answer:**

India is a crucial partner to advance U.S. objectives in the Indo-Pacific. If confirmed, I will pursue revitalized cooperation with India on defense and security issues, as well as on the crucial issues of pandemic recovery and fighting climate change. Increased cooperation among our allies and partners, including India, will be a force multiplier in achieving U.S. objectives in the Indo-Pacific.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#113b)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

What are some areas you believe are ripe for U.S.-India cooperation with other partners in the region?

**Answer:**

In addition to building upon U.S.-India cooperation on defense and security issues, we will explore the prospects for deeper cooperation on COVID-19 and climate, along with other like-minded partners in the region.



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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#114a)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

The Quad is an increasingly important part of the U.S. cooperation structure in the Indo-Pacific. The Quad has held regular discussions over the last several years on a wide range of issues, such as countering disinformation, strengthening supply chain resiliency, and coordinating efforts to support countries vulnerable to malign and coercive economic actions in the Indo-Pacific region. Working with our partners in and through the Quad will be crucial to U.S. interests, and helps establish habits of cooperation amongst democracies against hostile authoritarian powers in the Indo-Pacific.

Do you commit to prioritizing the Quad as means to advance U.S. interests and expand collaboration with partners in the Indo-Pacific?

**Answer:**

Since its 2007 founding, the Quad security dialogue has become an essential national security forum in Asia and is a good news story of the United States and its closest partners pulling closer together in the face of China's most assertive policies and for the good of the region. The group has made progress in coordinating on essential regional maritime issues, on cyber defenses, and has recently held its first quadrilateral naval exercise-- a milestone to be lauded and repeated.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#114b)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

In the coming year especially, what will be the Biden Administration's priorities for the Quad?

**Answer:**

The Quad is an example of a broader phenomenon we hope to help catalyze in the Indo-Pacific -- increased networking among the United States capable allies and partners, like Japan, Australia, and India, whose closer cooperation acts as a force multiplier. We hope to build on its progress and bring cooperation to new areas.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#114c)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Will the Biden Administration pursue a Quad meeting of the presidents and prime ministers of the United States, Australia, Japan, and India?

**Answer:**

This is certainly something we will consider and discuss with our partners.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#114d)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Besides more high-level summits, how can the United States build on the momentum of the last few years and increase collaboration amongst Quad members?

**Answer:**

We view the Quad as having essential momentum, and important potential -- we hope to build on its recent achievements by deepening cooperation on areas of traditional focus, such as on maritime and defense issues, while also working closely with Quad partners to confront some of the defining issues of our time, including COVID-19, climate, and democratic resilience.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#115)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

In 2016, the Obama Administration labeled India a “major defense partner,” a designation supported by Congress in the Fiscal Year 2017 National Defense Authorization Act. Some have called for an amendment to the Arms Export Control Act to facilitate more defense sales to India and help solidify it as a Major Defense Partner. Does the Biden Administration support such a step?

**Answer:**

President Biden has a long history in advancing the U.S.-India relationship from his time in the Senate and as Vice President. The Biden-Harris administration will prioritize strengthening and deepening our strategic partnership with India, including in defense and security collaboration. President Biden sees India as a critical strategic partner in tackling a range of global challenges, from developing an international response to COVID, to fighting climate change, and working toward a global economic recovery.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#116)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

The Obama Administration launched the Defense Technology and Trade Initiative with India promote joint co-development and production of defense systems. Thus far, that objective has not been realized.

- a. To what do you attribute this?
- b. Will the Biden Administration pursue greater cooperation under DTTI with India? If so, what will be the Administration's key priorities?
- c. Will the Biden Administration advocate for India's membership in the UN Security Council and in the Nuclear Suppliers Group?
- d. How will the Biden Administration cooperate with India on 5G, digital security, and other emerging technology issues? Please be specific.

**Answer:**

U.S.-India security cooperation has deepened in important ways in recent years. During the Obama-Biden administration, the U.S. pursued closer ties with India in areas such as maritime domain awareness, intelligence sharing, and defense procurement. These areas were continued, and in some cases, expanded upon during the Trump administration. The Biden Administration will develop them further.

The Biden Administration will study these efforts and develop an approach that allows Washington and Delhi to strengthen this important partnership.

The Biden Administration will review how best to support India's increasingly prominent role on the global stage and in international institutions.

Our approach will start by making new and emerging technologies a focus of this partnership -- for too long, our defense ties have outpaced other aspects of cooperation. This means establishing closer ties, bilaterally, and through groups like the Quad, that will allow us to

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share views and best practices and align our objectives when it comes to 5G and digital security and other emerging technology issues.



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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#117)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

What will the Biden Administration do to ensure long-term sustainable relationships and policies in the Pacific Island region?

**Answer:**

Under the Biden-Harris Administration, the United States will restore itself as a Pacific Power -- a regional leader who helps to keep Asia open, secure, and prosperous. With our allies and partners in the region, we will work to confront some of the defining issues of our time -- including for the Pacific Island region. Our administration will also work to promote better integration of climate and ocean issues across multiple international fora.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#118)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

What role do the Pacific Islands play in broader U.S. strategy goals in the Indo-Pacific?

**Answer:**

The Pacific Islands will play an important role in the broader U.S. strategy goals in the Indo-Pacific, including in efforts to counter Chinese influence that could have a negative impact on U.S. interests.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#119)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Will the Biden Administration prioritize renegotiating compacts with the three Federated American States in the Pacific Islands?

**Answer:**

Yes.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#120)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

What role do the Pacific Islands play in broader U.S. strategy goals in the Indo-Pacific?

**Answer:**

The Pacific Islands will play an important role in the broader U.S. strategy goals in the Indo-Pacific, including in efforts to counter Chinese influence that could have a negative impact on U.S. interests.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#121)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

The threat of North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programs has been an intractable problem for the United States across Republican and Democratic administrations.

- a. Please describe the major elements of the policy you will pursue with respect to North Korea. Please describe in detail in what ways the Biden Administration's approach will differ from that of the Trump Administration.
- b. In light of evidence of continued work at its nuclear sites and on its missile capabilities, do you believe that North Korea has any intention of giving up its nuclear weapons and related missile programs? Why or why not?
- c. How will you approach the challenge of North Korea's nuclear weapons and ballistic missile program? Will the Biden Administration pursue negotiations with North Korea for the purposes of reaching an agreement with respect to its nuclear weapons program and/or missile programs?
- d. Do you believe that the stated goal of U.S. policy should continue to be denuclearization? If not, why not?
- e. Alternatively, will you pursue and advocate for a more limited arms control-style agreement? One that does not require North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons and long-range missiles?

**Answer:**

It is without question that North Korea's nuclear, ballistic missile, and other proliferation-related activities constitute a serious threat to international peace and security and undermine the global nonproliferation regime. The United States has a vital interest in deterring North Korea, defending against its provocations or uses of force, and in limiting the reach of its most dangerous weapons programs, and above all keeping the American people and our allies safe. The Biden-Harris administration will adopt a new strategy to keep the American people and our allies safe. That approach will begin with a thorough policy review of the state of play in North Korea in close consultation with the ROK, Japan, and other allies on ongoing pressure options and the potential for any future diplomacy. We will remain committed over the long-term to

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denuclearization of North Korea, while also focusing in the near term on limiting the threat to the United States and our allies.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#122)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Please answer the following with respect to North Korea's nuclear program and U.S. policy on denuclearization.

- a. Do you see dismantlement of the fissile material production facilities at Yongbyon as the right first step in a denuclearization process?
- b. Do you see the dismantlement of any other sites, including currently undisclosed sites, as important to continuing the denuclearization process?
- c. How important is a full Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) declaration of its nuclear facilities and stockpiles? Do you believe that should be part of any agreement with North Korea?
- d. Do you see disclosure of all missile sites as an essential component of an agreement with North Korea on its weapons programs?
- e. In your view, what are the essential elements of any verification and enforcement mechanisms on an agreement with North Korea regarding its nuclear program? How will the Biden Administration overcome previous obstacles to verification and enforcement of the North's commitments?

**Answer:**

North Korea's nuclear, ballistic missile, and other proliferation-related activities constitute a serious threat to international peace and security and undermine the global nonproliferation regime. The administration will assess the threat North Korea poses and adopt an approach that works in close coordination with allies to limit it. I look forward to consulting with Congress as we do.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#123)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

The Iran deal included sunset provisions on Iran's conventional arms embargo (in 2020) and nuclear-related ballistic missile activity (in 2023). The Iran deal also had no 'end use monitoring' scheme in place to ensure sanctions relief did not lead to support for the Iranian nuclear program.

- a. Would you advocate for or pursue a deal with North Korea that included similar sunsets? Why or why not? Please explain your position.
- b. Would you advocate for or pursue a deal with North Korea that did not include robust 'end-use monitoring' for sanctions relief? What, in your view, are the essential elements of a robust 'end use monitoring' program?

**Answer:**

North Korea's nuclear, ballistic missile, and other proliferation-related activities constitute a serious threat to international peace and security and undermine the global nonproliferation regime. The administration will assess the threat North Korea poses and adopt an approach that works in close coordination with allies to limit it. I look forward to consulting with Congress as we do.



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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#124)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Calling for denuclearization is one thing, but it is quite another to verify that steps towards denuclearization have been taken. An effective verification and enforcement regime for an agreement with North Korea would likely require an unprecedented level of time and resources from the United States, its allies, and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in one of the most secretive and restrictive environments in the world.

- a. Will there be a primary role for U.S. inspectors in any verification agreements with North Korea?
- b. How do you plan to include IAEA inspectors for verification, and for what functions?

**Answer:**

North Korea's nuclear, ballistic missile, and other proliferation-related activities constitute a serious threat to international peace and security and undermine the global nonproliferation regime. The administration will assess the threat North Korea poses and adopt an approach that works in close coordination with allies to limit it. I look forward to consulting with Congress as we do.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#125)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

In his 2019 New Year's speech, Kim Jong-un spoke of developing the DPRK's civilian atomic energy capabilities. Do you support a civilian nuclear program or a civilian space launch program in North Korea? Why or why not? Please explain your position.

**Answer:**

We will evaluate the merits of principled diplomacy with North Korea that reduces the threat to the United States and our allies, that improves the lives of the North and South Korean people.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#126)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

The South Korean government has been supportive of the United States' decision to engage the highest level of the North Korean regime to resolve the nuclear issue, rather than attempting to engage at lower working levels.

- a. What are your views on pursuing leader-to-leader diplomacy with North Korea? Will you continue it or pursue something different? Why?
- b. Regardless of whether the Biden Administration keeps engaging with North Korea at a high official level, what role will necessary working-level discussions—such as those on technical disarmament—play in your diplomatic framework towards the DPRK?
- c. If confirmed as Secretary of State, do you commit to engage with South Korea, Japan, and other relevant partners on Korean Peninsula issues prior to and following high-level engagements with the DPRK?

**Answer:**

We will evaluate the merits of principled diplomacy with North Korea that reduces the threat to the United States and our allies, that improves the lives of the North and South Korean people.

The Biden-Harris administration will adopt a new approach to keep the American people and our allies safe that will begin with a thorough policy review of the state of play in North Korea in close consultation with the ROK, Japan, and other allies on ongoing pressure options and the potential for any future diplomacy. We will evaluate the merits of principled diplomacy with North Korea that reduces the threat to the United States and our allies, that improves the lives of the North and South Korean people. We will remain committed to denuclearization of North Korea, while also focusing in the near term on limiting the threat to the United States and our allies.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#127)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

- Secretary Pompeo appointed a Special Representative solely in charge of North Korea policy.
- a. If confirmed, what will be your staffing arrangement at the Department of State regarding North Korea?
  - b. Who will be managing day-to-day North Korea policy at the State Department?

**Answer:**

If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing staffing arrangements at the earliest opportunity.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#128)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Despite ample evidence that North Korea continues to develop its weapons programs, China and Russia have called for sanctions relief and increased economic ties. Though the U.S. has supported improved inter-Korean ties, South Korean requests for sanctions relief also caused concern among U.S. officials.

- a. What are the goals of the United States' and the United Nations' sanctions regimes on North Korea? Please describe your understanding.
- b. In your view, should the United States and the United Nations lift any sanctions on North Korea at this time? Why or why not? Please explain your position in detail.
- c. If confirmed, under what circumstances would you consider lifting sanctions on North Korea, either in whole or in part?
- d. If confirmed, under what circumstances would you consider pursuing an incremental easing of sanctions over time?
- e. Do you think that providing sanctions relief to North Korea to get them back to the negotiating table is an effective strategy? Why or why not? Please explain your position.

**Answer:**

North Korea's nuclear, ballistic missile, and other proliferation-related activities constitute a serious threat to international peace and security and undermine the global nonproliferation regime. The United States will continue to work closely with all countries to ensure the full implementation of all UN Security Council sanctions resolutions concerning North Korea.

But sanctions enforcement has lagged in recent years, with reports of smuggling and sanctions evasion. We plan to work immediately with other countries to shore up these sanctions and make sure they're doing their job.

China and Russia must fully and completely enforce all sanctions in place against North Korea. Beijing and Moscow can no longer be bystanders and spoilers, and we will put both on notice that they must fully enforce all financial measures to which they have agreed, plugging

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the holes that they have poked in this all-important sanctions regime. We will also review what additional sanctions should be imposed if Pyongyang carries out additional nuclear tests and launches. We would prefer to work through the UN Security Council, but we have bilateral U.S. sanctions tools available as well.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#129)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Please answer the following with respect to the impact of sanctions on North Korea.

- a. What evidence, if any, is there that sanctions are having a significant impact on North Korea's domestic economy?
- b. What measures, if any, would enable sanctions to cause North Korean leaders to agree to abandon its nuclear and missile programs?

**Answer:**

When effectively implemented, sanctions make it harder for the DPRK to acquire the technology, know-how, and funds to develop its nuclear and ballistic missile programs. They also play a role in compelling the DPRK to agree to end these prohibited programs. The Biden Administration will review the current sanctions regime and align its sanctions approach with its broader strategy for North Korea.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#130)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

The Obama Administration failed to secure congressional support for the Iran deal.

- a. If confirmed, and if the Biden Administration pursues an agreement with North Korea regarding its weapons programs, do you commit to regular briefings at both the Member and staff levels in advance of and following negotiations with North Korea?
- b. If confirmed, and if the Biden Administration pursues an agreement with North Korea regarding its weapons programs, do you personally commit to appear before this committee prior to the completion of any such agreement for public hearings on the matter?
- c. Do you believe that an agreement with North Korea regarding its weapons programs should be submitted to the Senate as a treaty for the Senate's consent to ratification? If no, please explain in detail.

**Answer:**

I look forward to consulting with Congress on any efforts to limit the dangers posed by North Korea's dangerous and illegal programs.



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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#131)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Any agreement the United States pursues with North Korea will have a direct impact on the security of South Korea and Japan. If confirmed, and if the Biden Administration pursues an agreement with North Korea regarding its weapons programs, do you commit to coordinating with and consulting South Korea and Japan before making any binding commitments in an agreement with North Korea?

**Answer:**

Close coordination with and among allies will be central to U.S. strategy on North Korea. South Korea and Japan are essential military, political, intelligence, and diplomatic partners, and we must proceed in lock-step if any renewed diplomatic approach is to succeed.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#132)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

The Trump Administration cancelled or postponed U.S.-ROK military exercises in an effort to create diplomatic stakes for denuclearization talks with North Korea.

- a. Do you agree with this policy? Why or why not? Please explain your position.
- b. Would you agree to limit U.S.-ROK military activities if the ROK recommended doing so?

**Answer:**

The Biden Administration will repair and modernize its alliances, including with South Korea. Seoul and Washington should be the ones to determine the readiness requirements of this vitally important pact.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#133)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Are you willing to impose sanctions on or take other economic action against Chinese government entities if they are implicated in sanctions evasion?

**Answer:**

China and Russia must fully and completely enforce all sanctions in place against North Korea. One of the many costs of the Trump administration's reality show diplomacy was that it removed all pressure from China and Russia to fully enforce the sanctions they had agreed to against Pyongyang. Beijing and Moscow can no longer be bystanders and spoilers, and we will put both on notice that they must fully enforce all financial measures to which they have agreed, plugging the holes that they have poked in this all-important sanctions regime.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#134)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

In 2017, you wrote that China was the “most visible component” of the Obama Administration’s efforts to put pressure on North Korea, and that this was because China had finally demonstrated some willingness to uphold UN sanctions and curb its exports to the North. However, China is at best an inconsistent partner, and it is once again evading sanctions and pushing for their removal.

- a. How will the Biden Administration engage with China on the North Korea issue, generally? Is China a reliable partner on North Korea? Please explain your position in detail.
- b. Should U.S. strategy really depend on China’s willingness to put pressure on the North given its track record of sanctions evasion?

**Answer:**

China and Russia must fully and completely enforce all sanctions in place against North Korea. One of the many costs of the Trump administration’s reality show diplomacy was that it removed all pressure from China and Russia to fully enforce the sanctions they had agreed to against Pyongyang. Beijing and Moscow can no longer be bystanders and spoilers, and we will put both on notice that they must fully enforce all financial measures to which they have agreed, plugging the holes that they have poked in this all-important sanctions regime.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#135)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

North Korea routinely engages in cyberattacks and other cyber operations to fund its weapons program, evade sanctions, and promote disinformation about the Kim regime. In 2019, the UN noted it was investigating at least 35 instances of North Korean cyberattacks across 35 countries, and 2020 has demonstrated North Korea's continued commitment to this form of financial and cyber-crime.

- a. How will the Biden Administration prioritize building resiliency against and stopping North Korean cyberattacks?
- b. Do you commit to ensuring that North Korean cyberattacks are an issue that will be addressed in any denuclearization talks with North Korea?

**Answer:**

The Biden Administration will develop a comprehensive cyber approach, including for North Korea.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#135)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

North Korea routinely engages in cyberattacks and other cyber operations to fund its weapons program, evade sanctions, and promote disinformation about the Kim regime. In 2019, the UN noted it was investigating at least 35 instances of North Korean cyberattacks across 35 countries, and 2020 has demonstrated North Korea's continued commitment to this form of financial and cyber-crime.

- a. How will the Biden Administration prioritize building resiliency against and stopping North Korean cyberattacks?
- b. Do you commit to ensuring that North Korean cyberattacks are an issue that will be addressed in any denuclearization talks with North Korea?

**Answer:**

The Biden Administration will develop a comprehensive cyber approach, including for North Korea.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#136)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

For years, both Republicans and Democrats alike pushed NATO allies to increase their defense spending for their own protection and for the well-being of the alliance. During President Trump's tenure, NATO allies increased their defense spending by more than \$100 billion, and nine allies meet the spending benchmarks, up from only three in 2014. This re-investment demonstrates a strong commitment to NATO and is a win for the United States and the alliance.

- a. Will you continue to press our allies to prioritize their own defense and our mutual security, including by ensuring allies are spending on equipment and not just personnel?
- b. There has been a lot of focus on the NATO Wales Summit pledge that all allies would spend 2% of their GDP on defense and 20% of that amount on equipment. How useful is the two percent spending pledge as a metric of an ally's defense readiness and commitment to NATO?
- c. Should NATO re-negotiate a better metric? What other metrics would you suggest?

**Answer:**

The Biden-Harris administration will be committed to rebuilding U.S. alliances, particularly with our NATO allies. We will work to ensure NATO has the capabilities it needs to deter and defend against new and existing threats to our collective security. We will continue to ensure that allies are doing their fair share, while reframing the burden sharing conversation to focus on capabilities and consider steps to widen the aperture on contributions that count as defense spending, while maintaining pressure to do more. We look forward to consulting with NATO allies, as well as with Congress, on the best strategy to ensure NATO has the capabilities it needs.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#137)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Do you view the various European attempts to establish a sovereign Europe and a European army, or PESCO, as complimentary of, or a threat to, NATO? How specifically will these efforts benefit the United States and NATO and how will they threaten or harm them?

**Answer:**

A strong and militarily capable Europe is in the U.S. interest, freeing up valuable resources that the United States can deploy in the Indo-Pacific and towards other priority challenges. The United States should consider a more supportive stance toward PESCO and other European defense initiatives as part of our focus on growing European capabilities, while ensuring that they complement and do not distract from NATO. So long as these efforts focus on delivering capabilities, effectiveness, and operational readiness, and take place within the context of greater NATO-EU cooperation, they will advance both U.S. and European interests.



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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#138)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

How will you ensure Europe understands the importance of participation by non-EU allies in these new defense institutions?

**Answer:**

In November 2020, the EU Council agreed to rules that open the door for non-EU entities to participate in PESCO projects. The United States, in close coordination with other non-EU allies like the United Kingdom and Norway must continue to advocate the importance of third-party participation in PESCO projects.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#139)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

The Trump Administration sought to re-evaluate the number of U.S. service members in the European theater, as well as the location of EUCOM and AFRICOM headquarters. While this final decision will be taken by the Department of Defense, the decision to move troops to or from an allied country has foreign policy implications both for our allies and our adversaries.

- a. Do you believe that the decision to decrease troop levels in Europe is a good decision for overall U.S. foreign policy? What role should the State Department and diplomacy have in making future decisions about troop posture?
- b. Countries in NATO's south and east have stated that they would be interested in additional U.S. troops. What is your view on placing additional troops in these regions? Would the Administration consider allies that border the Black Sea, such as Romania?

**Answer:**

During the campaign, then President-Elect Biden pledged that he will “task the Secretary of Defense to conduct a comprehensive review of our posture relative to the threats we face and to recommend how that posture should change over time.” I have publicly stated that the Biden-Harris should review President Trump’s decision to withdraw some U.S. troops from Germany. Ultimately, I would support a global force posture review that considers whether posture adjustments are required to ensure alignment with defense priorities and U.S. national security interests.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#140)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Europe has begun to wake up to the threat posed by the People's Republic of China (PRC). Last fall, I published a report recommending strong engagement with our European allies on China. The EU High Representative for Foreign Policy proposed a U.S.-EU dialogue on China, and Secretary Pompeo wisely accepted. However, this is just the start, and many challenges remain.

- a. How will the Biden Administration maintain this momentum on cooperation with our European allies?
- b. If confirmed, on what China-focused issues do you intend to initially engage Europe? Which do you see as most ripe for potential success?
- c. It is not just greater military presence, investment in ports, 5G telecommunications networks, and other critical infrastructure that pose mutual security risks to the United States and Europe. It is also CCP political influence in our education systems, media, and local and national politics. What is the Biden Administration's plan to work with the Europeans to protect our societies from this malign influence? How will the Biden Administration work to ensure we share the same threat assessments with our European and other democratic allies? Is additional diplomatic engagement or intelligence sharing necessary?

**Answer:**

The most effective way to address the pressing global challenges we face -- including China but also COVID-19 and climate change--is alongside partners who share our values and interests. The Biden-Harris Administration recognizes the challenges that China poses to our democracy and Europe's liberal democracies and views the time as ripe for greater cooperation on the full range of challenges that China poses, including to democracy, and in the technology, trade, and investment realms. That is why strengthening and revitalizing the U.S.-EU partnership will be a key priority for the Biden-Harris administration and we look forward to engaging with Congress on this critical issue.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#141)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

The U.S. relationship with Russia is at its lowest point in decades. Many of the traditional channels of dialogue have been slowly severed. At the same time, Russia has positioned itself, at the center of many of the world's current conflicts: Syria, Nagorno-Karabakh, Ukraine, and Libya.

- a. What is the most productive way to demonstrate U.S. objections to Russia's bad behavior?
- b. What role should sanctions play in pushing back on Russia? How effective has our sanctions regime been in curtailing Russian malign behavior? Have they inadvertently helped Russia? And how can we design sanctions to ensure we have a deterrent effect without helping Putin accomplish other goals?
- c. It is very important that we implement a comprehensive Russia strategy, in which we have multiple tracks, including dialogues. What will be the Biden Administration's comprehensive Russia strategy? What will you emphasize?
- d. The past several U.S. Administrations have tried to "reset" the U.S. relationship with Russia, and each has failed. French President Macron is currently attempting a reset with Russia to the dismay of Europe and NATO's eastern allies who are beefing up their defenses with an eye toward Russia. Will this Administration attempt a "reset" with Russia?
- e. How will you work with the Europeans, who have differing perspectives on Russia, to ensure that NATO and the EU maintain a united view of the Russian threat and a united response?
- f. What is your stance on disinformation campaigns and cyberattacks against the U.S. and the Central and Eastern European nations from sources within Russia and elsewhere? What role, if any, do you see for the U.S. in stemming Kremlin misinformation flowing to the Russian people about the U.S. and its allies? In this vein, what do you see as the role of the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty?
- g. Do you support more dialogues between the Russian and American people? How do you propose we strengthen U.S.-Russia people-to-people ties? Is that possible at the current moment or in the near future?

**Answer:**

There will be no reset with Russia. This Administration sees the Putin regime as it is: an increasingly paranoid and repressive system that has grown more aggressive in its efforts to undermine the United States and other liberal democracies. The Biden Administration is prepared to meet the Kremlin's aggression with renewed resolve and strengthened Alliances--to

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deter and disrupt Moscow's threats and enhance democracies' collective resilience to Kremlin tactics. Sanctions are one of many tools that increase the costs the Kremlin faces for its hostile actions, particularly when they are executed in coordination with our Allies. Just as the Biden-Harris Administration works to increase the pressure on Moscow, so too will it focus effort on building U.S. resilience and the resilience of our allies in ways that mitigate the effects of Moscow's actions. Moreover, the Biden Administration is prepared to engage Moscow, both to increase the lines of communication that mitigate the risk of miscalculation between us, and to advance U.S. interests. While firmly opposing the Putin regime's aggression, the Biden Administration will look for opportunities to build the foundation for a better relationship with Russia and its people.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#142)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

On January 17, 2021, Russian opposition politician Alexei Navalny returned home to Russia from Germany, where he had spent the last five months being treated for poisoning with a nerve agent from the Novichok family. This poisoning was almost certainly organized and perpetrated by the Russian government under the leadership of Vladimir Putin. Immediately upon his return to Russia, Mr. Navalny was arrested and has been put into prison for at least 30 days after a rushed, sham trial.

- a. After his arrest, Mr. Navalny's team released a list of eight people close to Vladimir Putin that they would like to see sanctioned. Do you believe that the United States and its allies should take up Mr. Navalny's request? Would doing so set a negative or positive precedent for the future use of sanctions?
- b. How much support, and of what kind, do you believe that the United States should give to Mr. Navalny and other Russian opposition figures?

**Answer:**

The Kremlin's attacks against Mr. Navalny and sustained crackdown on the freedoms of all Russians are yet another sign of a regime that is lacking confidence -- so paranoid that it is unwilling to tolerate any criticism or dissent. The Biden Administration will ensure the completion of an investigation into Russia's use of chemical weapons in the poisoning of Russian opposition leader Alexey Navalny, as set out by the Chemical and Biological Weapons Control and Warfare Elimination Act of 1991. The Administration will also consider imposing additional costs on Mr. Navalny's attackers and stand with all of those advocating for democracy and universal rights -- whether in Russia or elsewhere around the world.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#143)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Russia has militarized much of its Arctic coastline, and China has claimed to be a “near Arctic” state. Meanwhile, the effects of a changing climate greatly worry our fellow members of the Arctic Council.

- a. If confirmed, will your State Department look at the Arctic through a climate lens or a security lens?
- b. To what extent will engagement in and with the Arctic Council be a priority for the Administration?
- c. What role do you believe that NATO should play in the Arctic?
- d. Are there areas in which the United States can work with Russia to accomplish shared goals in the Arctic? Do you see the Arctic as an area where we could have a productive relationship with Russia?

**Answer:**

The Arctic is warming much faster than other parts of the world. A warming Arctic threatens sea-level rise throughout the world and melting of the permafrost and the consequent release of powerful greenhouse gases. Our administration will seek to re-engage on climate issues in particular within the Arctic Council. In addition, climate change has increased the geopolitical importance of the Arctic and increased human activity in the region, including Russian efforts to rebuild its military presence along the Northern Sea Route, increasing the risk of accidents and miscalculation. The United States must address the region’s growing security concerns, most immediately by working in lockstep with our Arctic and European allies to engage Russia in an effort to establish a code of conduct to regulate military activity in the region and reduce the risk of incidents escalating into armed conflict.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#144)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

President Biden has said a goal of his Administration would be to “Build Back Better” the U.S. relationship with our allies in Europe. I welcome efforts to work with our allies to resolve our differences and tackle today’s and tomorrow’s challenges. While this push is geared toward our tense relationships with Germany and France, maintaining strong ties with our partners and allies in Eastern Europe, like the Baltics, Greece, and Romania, is critical.

- a. Do you commit to supporting and prioritizing our allies in the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea, and Central and Eastern Europe?
- b. Will the Administration develop a Black Sea strategy to push back on Russia and coordinate U.S. allies and partners that reside in this strategic region?

**Answer:**

If confirmed, rebuilding our relationships with our European allies will be one of my priorities, including those in Central and Eastern Europe and the Black Sea region. Our commitment to our NATO collective security obligations is ironclad, and we will work to deter and disrupt Moscow’s threats and enhance democracies’ collective resilience to Kremlin tactics. We look forward to consulting with Congress as we develop our strategic approach to the region.



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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#145)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

With Russia's illegal annexation and militarization of Crimea and the emergence of Turkey's Blue Homeland doctrine, the strategic Black Sea region has grown increasingly important and unstable.

- a. What more do we need to do to protect allies in the Black Sea and help them protect themselves?
- b. How can we encourage more collaboration between U.S. allies and partners in the Black Sea?
- c. What equipment or technical assistance is needed to ensure our allies and partners are stable and secure?

**Answer:**

Our administration will continue to reject Russia's attempted annexation of Crimea and recognize Crimea as sovereign Ukrainian territory. We will also work with Ukraine and other partners and allies in the Black Sea region to help them to improve their ability to deter and defend against threats to their security. If confirmed, I look forward to consulting with my colleagues at the Department of Defense and with Congress on the appropriate level and type of support for our allies and partners in the region.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#146)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

If confirmed, how will the Department interact with the Three Seas Initiative? Do you see it as an economic initiative, or a geopolitical one?

**Answer:**

The Three Seas Initiative has an important role to play in advancing the goal of interconnectivity in infrastructure, energy, and digitalization among its members. I look forward to seeing the initiative move forward with concrete projects that will benefit the citizens of its member states. Our administration looks forward to working alongside the EU to support the region's development and cohesiveness.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#147)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Hungary, an EU member and NATO ally known in part for its 1956 revolution against its Soviet occupation, has grown increasingly autocratic under Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and his political party, Fidesz. In what Orbán calls an “illiberal democracy,” he and his affiliates have captured and consolidated the media, pressured civil society, forced one of the country’s top universities to leave the country, cozied up to Russia and China, and increased corruption by Orbán-linked companies and Hungarians. The pressure on independent media has gotten so bad that RFE/RL re-opened its Hungarian service last year to ensure that citizens had at least one independent news outlet.

- a. The Obama Administration policy of shunning Hungary did not and will not solve the problem of the country’s democratic backsliding. Neither did the Trump Administration’s policy of hugging Hungary closer. What do you believe is the right balance between carrots and sticks for Hungary?
- b. What should be the U.S. role in ensuring Hungary remains a democracy and how should the U.S. work with the EU on this issue?
- c. Will the United States put diplomatic support behind the EU’s efforts to tie the rule of law to disbursement of EU funding?
- d. If confirmed, will you ensure the President appoints an Ambassador to Hungary that will have the backing from Washington that is necessary to stand up to Orbán and Fidesz?

**Answer:**

No democracy is perfect. That is why the Biden-Harris administration is committed to democratic renewal at home and abroad, and why it is important for allies to hold one other accountable to our democratic commitments. The Biden administration looks forward to working with allies on the basis of our shared values and commitments. Where allies fall short of those commitments, we will voice our concerns. We are concerned about recent developments in Hungary that have curtailed LGBTQ+ rights, eroded space for civil society, and undermined judicial independence. If confirmed, I will ensure that we have an Ambassador that will have the backing from Washington to engage with Hungarian counterparts on these issues as an important part of our bilateral agenda.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#148)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

In December, Bulgaria vetoed the opening of EU accession talks with North Macedonia over a bilateral language and cultural dispute. While the dispute is bilateral, this veto has wider geopolitical impacts for the region, the EU, and the United States. It is in the interest of the United States for the Balkan countries, especially North Macedonia which has made many difficult reforms and changes to reach this point, to be rewarded for these reforms and given what it was promised. It is also in the interest of the EU and the United States to have Balkan countries join the West rather than rely on Russia, China, and other malign actors for economic and political support.

How involved should the United States be in this process? If confirmed, what will you do to push Bulgaria and North Macedonia to resolve their disputes outside of the EU process?

**Answer:**

I strongly support the euro-Atlantic aspirations of the countries of the Western Balkans as a key step toward realizing the long-held vision of a Europe free, whole, and at peace. Our administration will work with the EU and the countries of the region to support the region's democratic and economic development and to advance its euro-Atlantic aspirations.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#149)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Resolving the Kosovo-Serbia dispute would go a long way toward advancing stability and security in the Western Balkans. In an effort to support this, the Trump Administration appointed two Special Envoys, one for Serbia-Kosovo Dialogue and another for the Western Balkans. An EU-led Kosovo-Serbia Dialogue is also underway, led by EU Special Representative Miroslav Lajčák. U.S. and EU efforts to reconcile Kosovo and Serbia have recently seemed at odds with each other, not complimentary. The Trump Administration was able to secure an economic agreement between the two, but a full compromise agreement has yet to be secured.

- a. How does the Biden Administration plan to engage in the current Kosovo-Serbia dialogue?
- b. If confirmed, would your State Department appoint a Special Envoy to this dispute? If so, how will you assign that work? Will you look to an outside envoy or to someone within the Foreign Service? If a Foreign Service Officer, how will he or she be politically empowered to take on this role?
- c. If you do intend to appoint a Special Envoy to Kosovo-Serbia, how would you instruct him or her to interact with EU Special Representative Lajčák?
- d. What support, political or otherwise, does the Biden Administration plan to give to the process? What carrots and sticks can be used to incentivize each side to compromise?

**Answer:**

As the President has said, “A comprehensive settlement that will lead to mutual recognition, preserve the sovereignty and territorial integrity of both states, and strengthen their democratic institutions is essential for Kosovo and Serbia to move forward. It would enhance both countries’ security and prosperity, advance their aspirations for membership in the European Union and other multilateral institutions, and support the enduring aim of a Europe whole, free, and at peace.” Our administration will be committed to working with the EU to support negotiations toward a comprehensive settlement. If confirmed, I will carefully consider the question of a special envoy for the region.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#150)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Last year marked the 25th anniversary of the Dayton Peace Accords, which brought peace to Bosnia in 1995. The Accords currently serve as the basis for the country's constitution, and scholars and policy-makers—including President-elect Biden—agreed in a statement released on Dayton's 25th anniversary that reforms in Bosnia are incomplete, and that the process is no longer working for the country and its people. Its leaders are corrupt and under sanction, its youth are migrating to Europe for a better life, and global malign actors are using Bosnia as a gateway to Europe. President Biden's statements about Bosnia during the 2020 presidential campaign and throughout the transition (as President-elect) seem to indicate that the country will be a priority of his Administration.

- a. What are President Biden's and your plans to help bring stability and good governance to Bosnia and its people?
- b. Will the Biden Administration, alongside the EU, put political efforts into securing a more permanent constitution for Bosnia and Herzegovina?

**Answer:**

As the President has said, 25 years after the signing of the Dayton Accords, it is clear that the work to promote justice, reconciliation, and fully functional Bosnia and Herzegovina remains incomplete. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the international community and the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina to finally achieve the promise contained in the Dayton Accords — a prosperous, just, and democratic Bosnia and Herzegovina in the heart of a Europe whole, free, and at peace.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#151)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Since the August 9th presidential election, Belarusians have peacefully protested in unprecedented numbers to contest the official results, which fraudulently awarded Alexander Lukashenka another term. The government has responded to these peaceful protests with violence, initiating a campaign of disappearances, arrests, torture, and violence against the protestors and journalists.

- a. At the end of 2020, the Senate confirmed Julie Fisher to be U.S. Ambassador to Belarus—our first ambassador in the country in 12 years. What will you instruct her to prioritize during her time in Minsk? How do we ensure that her presence in country is not used as a signal of support for the Lukashenka regime?
- b. Since the protests began, the United States has increased its support of civil society in Belarus. What more can the United States, along with European allies, do to assist Belarusian advocates of democracy?
- c. Are U.S., EU, UK, and Canadian sanctions having an effect on the regime? If not, what are our other options?

**Answer:**

People around the world have been inspired by the Belarusian people, especially Belarusian women, peacefully demonstrating for the right to choose their own leadership. President-elect Biden has strongly condemned the Lukashenka regime for its violent and repressive tactics against peaceful protesters and called for a peaceful transfer of power, the release of all political prisoners, and new elections. The Biden administration will continue to evaluate the situation on the ground and consult with our allies and partners to determine appropriate next steps to support the Belarusian people and their right to choose their own leaders via free and fair elections.



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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#152)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Since its independence, Georgia has generally made good progress toward democracy and implementing market-based economic reforms. Georgia has also been a strong U.S. partner with ambitions to join the Euro-Atlantic community through the EU and NATO. However, over the past few years, the country has suffered democratic backsliding and oligarchic capture of the judiciary, media, and the ruling political party.

- a. What levers can be used to push Georgians, including and especially the ruling party Georgian Dream, to reform Georgia's judiciary and complete electoral reforms?
- b. Has the political and governance situation in Georgia reached the point at which we should re-evaluate our relationship with the country, including by conditioning certain aid to Georgia?
- c. Would a revival of the U.S.-Georgia FTA discussions incentivize Georgia and its political elites to relinquish power and support reforms, or would it reward bad behavior?
- d. Should the United States work to revive the Anaklia port project? How much should security and geopolitics factor in to projects like the Anaklia port?
- e. What mechanisms does the United States have to encourage the opposition to reform and consolidate itself in an effort to serve as a more effective check on the pro-Russian ruling party?
- f. How will the United States engage the Europeans and the EU to present a united front in Georgia and jointly apply pressure towards the reforms?

**Answer:**

The United States and Georgia have continued to deepen bilateral relations, particularly in the wake of Russia's 2008 invasion of Georgia and 2014 invasion of Ukraine. If confirmed, I would continue to support the Georgian people's choice to pursue closer ties with the EU and NATO and, as Congress has done, voice strong U.S. support for Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. I would look forward to working with Congress to identify opportunities to support Georgia's democratic development, anti-corruption and pro-business reforms.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#153)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

During the two month war between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the Nagorno-Karabakh region, both sides were documented committing human rights violations. Verified videos showed the decapitation of captives, the desecration of bodies, and extrajudicial executions. While Russia brokered a ceasefire, a long-term peace agreement was not reached.

- a. If confirmed, how will you engage with both Armenia, Azerbaijan, and regional stakeholders such as Russia and Turkey to ensure that these crimes are subject to accountability?
- b. As a co-chair of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group, what should the United States do differently to push the two countries to agree to a resolution of this conflict?

**Answer:**

As the President has said, the United States should be leading a diplomatic effort to find a lasting resolution to the conflict, working together with our European partners. If confirmed, I will reinvigorate U.S. engagement to find a permanent settlement to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict that protects the security of Nagorno-Karabakh and helps to ensure another war does not break out. This includes stepping up our engagement via the Minsk Group, of which the United States is a co-chair, and additional diplomatic work to prevent any further interference by third parties. Our administration is deeply committed to human rights and will urge both sides to investigate any allegations of human rights violations and bring to justice those responsible.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#154)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

You served in the Obama Administration during Russia's 2014 invasion of Ukraine.

- a. What lessons did you take from that experience?
- b. Was the U.S. response in the initial days of Russia's invasion of Crimea adequate? In retrospect, what steps, if any should have been taken to move convincingly convince Putin to reverse course, early in that crisis and before Russia invaded eastern Ukraine?

**Answer:**

I am focused on the future of Ukraine and how our administration can support the country's internal fight for reform and its external fight against Russian aggression.

If confirmed, I will continue to oppose Russia's occupation and attempted annexation of the Crimean Peninsula, which is sovereign Ukrainian territory, and support the implementation of the Minsk agreements to end the conflict in eastern Ukraine. Our administration will work to support Ukraine's chosen European path, including by pushing for progress on fighting corruption and implementing reforms that will strengthen Ukraine's institutions and lead to a brighter future for all Ukrainians. Sanctions on Russia as a result of its aggression in Crimea and eastern Ukraine should remain in place unless and until Russia reverses course, and we would look forward to working with Congress to continue providing the assistance Ukraine needs to defend itself against Russian aggression, including weapons, based on an assessment of the needs of the Ukrainian armed forces.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#155)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Ukraine continues to fight two wars: one with the Kremlin and its various attempts to undermine Ukraine's freedom and independence; and the other with its own demons, particularly the entrenched corruption that has so often undermined Ukraine's democratic transition and Euro-Atlantic ambitions.

- a. If confirmed, will your State Department support the continued provision of lethal and non-lethal military equipment to the Government of Ukraine to support the defense of their territory against Russian-orchestrated fighters in the east of the country? Do you believe the current level of U.S.-provided training for Ukraine's military should increase, decrease, or remain the same?
- b. What pressure and leverage do we have on the Ukrainian government to ensure they continue their anti-corruption reforms?
- c. Should the United States continue to condition certain types of assistance on continued economic and anti-corruption reforms? Should existing conditions for aid be expanded? What further incentives does the United States, along with our European partners, have to encourage Ukraine to complete its land reform, decentralization, privatization of state-owned enterprises, and creation of an independent and responsive judiciary?

**Answer:**

If confirmed, I will continue to oppose Russia's occupation and attempted annexation of the Crimean Peninsula, which is sovereign Ukrainian territory, and support the implementation of the Minsk agreements to end the conflict in eastern Ukraine. We would work to support Ukraine's chosen European path, including by pushing for progress on fighting corruption and implementing reforms that will strengthen Ukraine's institutions and lead to a brighter future for all Ukrainians. Sanctions on Russia as a result of its aggression in Crimea and eastern Ukraine should remain in place unless and until Russia reverses course, and we would look forward to working with Congress to continue providing the assistance Ukraine needs to defend itself against Russian aggression, including weapons, based on an assessment of the needs of the Ukrainian armed forces.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#156)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

In 2018, Secretary Pompeo issued his Crimea Declaration reaffirming U.S. policy of non-recognition of Russia's illegal claims over Crimea. If confirmed, will you uphold this declaration?

**Answer:**

If confirmed, I will continue to oppose Russia's occupation and attempted annexation of the Crimean Peninsula, which is sovereign Ukrainian territory. Sanctions on Russia as a result of its aggression in Crimea and eastern Ukraine should remain in place unless and until Russia reverses course.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#157)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Many have expressed grave concerns about Russia's human rights violations in Crimea, including a crackdown on the Crimean Tatar community. If confirmed, what additional actions will you take to hold Russian authorities accountable for their human rights abuses in Crimea?

**Answer:**

I have taken note of Russia's persecution of Crimean Tatars--actions the Kremlin supports to silence dissent against its attempted illegal annexation of the Crimean Peninsula. The Biden-Harris Administration will restore democracy and human rights to the center of U.S. foreign policy and, if confirmed, I would welcome the opportunity to work with Congress to address this issue as part of a broader strategy that advances human rights and universal values around the world.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#158)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

Turkey—once thought to be a secular democratic example to its neighbors in the Middle East—has become increasingly authoritarian and belligerent. Our NATO allies are growing increasingly worried that Turkey is no longer a good and reliable member that will work together within NATO for a common defense. Its dalliances with Russia, support for the authoritarian regime in Azerbaijan, dishonest actions on refugees, drilling for oil in Cypriot waters, behavior in Libya, and constant violations of the airspace of its neighbor and fellow ally, Greece, all seem to confirm this fear.

- a. How should NATO deal with a member nation who no longer wants to play by the rules, be it Turkey today or another ally in the future? How will you instruct your ambassador to NATO to address this problem?
- b. Do you agree with Congress on the necessity for the United States to sanction Turkey for their purchase of the Russian-made S-400 air defense system? If not, what steps would you have preferred to see in response to this purchase?
- c. What concerns do you have about the emerging nexus between Turkey and Russia? Should the U.S. actively work to undermine that relationship? If so, how? Should this relationship and alliance flourish, what risks would that condominium pose for the U.S. and its interests in the region and around the world? In such an instance, do you believe that actions should be taken to remove Turkey from NATO?
- d. If confirmed, would your State Department commit to continuing to support the cases of the three locally-hired U.S. embassy and consulate employees who have been accused, detained, and in some cases convicted, of involvement in the attempted presidential coup in 2016?
- e. In addition to jailing U.S. embassy employees, Turkey is the second worst jailer of journalists in the world, falling behind only China. How does the Biden Administration plan to make clear to Turkey that these violations of democratic freedoms are fundamentally incompatible with the Euro-Atlantic community of which Turkey purports to be a member? What consequences should Turkey face if it does not change course?
- f. Turkey's arrests and abuses of academics, political opponents, and religious and ethnic minorities have also become increasingly common and concerning. What steps would you take to ensure Turkey fully meets its obligations under international human rights and religious freedom laws? How will your State Department confront the various issues faced by the Ecumenical Patriarchate of the Orthodox Church, which is based in Istanbul?

**Answer:**

Turkey is a challenging ally. President Biden has promised to call out Turkish behavior that is inconsistent with international law or its commitments as a NATO ally. Our



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administration will also return human rights and rule of law to the bilateral agenda. At the same time, we have shared interests in countering terrorism, ending the conflict in Syria, and ensuring regional stability. We will seek cooperation with Turkey on common priorities and engage in dialogue to address disagreements. More broadly, it is important to keep Turkey facing west rather than taking steps that push it closer to Russia and other adversaries. We can uphold our values and protect our interests while also keeping Turkey aligned with the transatlantic alliance on critical issues. In terms of the S-400 air defense system, we believe the system is incompatible with NATO equipment. A top priority will be urging Turkey not to deploy the systems. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress to review the impact of the CAATSA sanctions imposed by the previous administration to determine their effect and whether additional measures are required or warranted.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#159)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

The five post-Soviet Central Asian republics, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, or C5, have often not been prioritized in U.S. foreign policy. During the past twenty years, the United States has largely seen these nations exclusively through a counter-terrorism or Afghanistan lens, despite their general lack of terroristic activities. The Defense Department has lumped them in with the Middle Eastern nations in CENTCOM, while the State Department's South and Central Asia grouping separates the five countries from China and Russia.

- a. If confirmed, what elements will be the focus of your Central Asia policy?
- b. In a world that is shifting from the earlier focus on counterterrorism to a focus on great power competition, how do you believe the State Department should interact with the C5?
- c. The C5 countries have poor human rights records. However, as Russia and China jockey for influence in the region, some worry that a singular focus by the United States on human rights would likely alienate the C5, as it has in the past. In your assessment, what is the proper balance between human rights, economics, and security in U.S. engagement with the C5?

**Answer:**

Changes in Central Asia in the last several years have created both new opportunities and new challenges. The United States will continue to provide strong support for the independence and territorial integrity of the Central Asia countries, encourage regional cooperation and connectivity, reduce terrorist threats, and promote rule of law reform and respect for human rights. If confirmed I would look forward to working with Congress to sustain U.S. diplomatic support and engagement in the region.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#160)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

The U.S.-Germany relationship has been increasingly strained over the past years. Among our points of disagreement are the NordStream II pipeline, military spending, attitudes towards China, and questions of the use of nuclear weapons.

- a. What steps will you hope to take to improve the U.S. relationship with Germany? Would you recommend that the U.S. return its troops to Germany and maintain its combatant commands for Europe and Africa in Germany?
- b. Under German leadership, the European Union just concluded an investment deal with China. How do you view the German government's attitudes towards China, doing business with China, and their recently published Indo-Pacific Strategy?
- c. Do you believe that the NordStream II pipeline should be completed? Do you commit to following the law and implementing the Protecting Europe's Energy Security Act and the Protecting Europe's Energy Security Clarification Act?

**Answer:**

If confirmed, repairing relations with U.S. allies, including Germany, will be among my highest priorities. Germany is an important U.S. ally and economic partner, and we look forward to forging a strong U.S.-Germany partnership and partnering on shared challenges, including China's problematic economic practices. We will not always agree, but we will look to manage those differences constructively as allies. As President Biden has made clear, the Nord Stream 2 pipeline is a bad idea. We will monitor for activity to complete or certify the pipeline and, if such activity takes place, make a determination on the applicability of sanctions.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#161)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

The U.S.-Greece relationship is currently as strong as it has ever been. Greece resides in a tumultuous and tense Eastern Mediterranean neighborhood, with daily Turkish violations of its airspace, thousands of migrants arriving on Greek territory, and increased Russian and Chinese activity in the region's waters and on land. In response to this growing pressure, an Eastern Mediterranean alliance is emerging between Greece, Israel, and Cyprus on defense and energy. Egypt has even joined the Mediterranean Gas Group.

- a. What will the Biden Administration do to continue to strengthen our relationship with Greece? Will the Administration give support to the emerging Eastern Mediterranean alliance?
- b. Greece has expressed strong interest in purchasing F-35s, but it may not be able to outright afford them. Should Greece have these planes and what mechanisms should the United States use to assist with this purchase?
- c. Even before COVID-19, but especially after, Greece needs foreign direct investment (FDI) in several sectoral areas. They would prefer investment from the West rather than China. How will the Biden Administration encourage American companies to invest in Greece to support our strong bilateral relationship, benefit both of our economies, and prevent additional malign investment in such an important partner?

**Answer:**

The U.S.-Greece security relationship is important to our interests in the Eastern Mediterranean and has grown significantly as bilateral ties have improved, beginning in the Obama administration. I look forward to working with Congress and my colleagues at the Department of Defense to determine any appropriate support for foreign military sales to Greece. If confirmed, I will work to continue to deepen ties between the United States and Greece, including facilitating foreign investment and stronger commercial ties.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#162)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

In December, the United Kingdom and the European Union agreed to a free trade deal that would prevent the UK from crashing out of the bloc. While the agreement prevented the worst economic and geopolitical outcomes, there are likely to be disagreements and problems with the deal's implementation in the coming years.

- a. What opportunities does the UK's new relationship with the EU present for the United States? What risks and obstacles does the new arrangement present for the U.S.' relationships with both the EU and UK? Opportunities and risks for NATO and the transatlantic relationship?
- b. The UK recently increased its defense spending and is due to publish its Integrated Security and Defense Review in the near future. How will you engage the UK on the future of their foreign and defense policy? What are your priorities for the future of the U.S.-UK defense relationship?
- c. If confirmed, how will you and the Administration engage the UK and Ireland to ensure the Good Friday Agreement remains upheld and the government of Northern Ireland remains functioning?

**Answer:**

The Biden-Harris administration will support a strong UK and a strong EU. We look forward to working with both partners to address the range of global challenges facing all of our countries. I welcomed the UK's announcement that it will increase its defense spending and look forward to working with the UK and other allies to ensure NATO has the capabilities it needs to deter and defend against the threats we face. The president-elect has been unequivocal in his support for the Good Friday Agreement, and has made it clear that we must not allow it to become a casualty of Brexit. As the United Kingdom and European Union begin implementing Brexit-related provisions, the Biden administration will encourage them to prioritize political and economic stability in Northern Ireland.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#163)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

While the UK has been negotiating its divorce from the EU, it has simultaneously been negotiating a free trade agreement with the U.S. It has already concluded trade agreements with Japan and Singapore.

- a. Do you support concluding a free trade agreement with the UK? What role will you play in the process?
- b. How will a U.S.-UK FTA affect the United States strategically and geopolitically?

**Answer:**

President Biden has been clear that he will make significant new investments in the U.S. and for American workers before he signs any new trade deals. We look forward to engaging with the British government on strengthening our ties across a wide range of economic issues where our interests align. We will review the progress made during bilateral trade negotiations by the current administration and consult with Congress on the best way forward. President Biden has warned that any trade deal between the U.S. and UK is contingent upon respect for the Good Friday Agreement, which he said cannot become a casualty of Brexit.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#164)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

I support the Biden Administration's efforts to re-engage and coordinate with our European allies, but while the tone of the United States towards Europe has changed, difficulties and disagreements in the transatlantic relationship remain.

- a. The dispute between Boeing and Airbus must be resolved as soon as possible. How will the State Department work with other U.S. departments and agencies to solve the dispute and remove a huge irritant from the transatlantic relationship?
- b. Will the Biden Administration lift the Section 232 tariffs from our allied partners? How will the Biden Administration use this tool to confront shared national security threats, such as China, in the future?

**Answer:**

If confirmed, rebuilding relationships with our allies and partners, including the EU, will be among my highest priorities. Where feasible, I will look to resolve or deescalate difficult bilateral issues with the EU and other partners, in order to facilitate deeper cooperation in our mutual interest on priorities such as COVID-19, climate change, and meeting the China challenge. Where differences remain, I will consult with allies and partners in a spirit of openness and mutual respect.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#165)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

The EU and certain members within it have been pushing for “strategic autonomy” and “digital sovereignty,” that would give Europe much more power to decide how tech companies – most of which are American and Chinese – are allowed to operate in that hugely important region. The EU also aims to bolster a European tech sector that has lagged behind. However, initial proposals would seem to create barriers to entry for U.S. companies in the form of taxes, tariffs, fines, and anti-trust legislation, which, in effect, creates a decoupling from the United States. This outcome would be damaging both for the EU and the United States, and would severely hinder our joint ability to compete with the PRC as it seeks to become a scientific and technological superpower.

- a. What can the United States and the EU do to stay on the same page regarding tech policy? Is there room for a compromise between the two?
- b. If confirmed, will you prioritize convincing the Europeans that it is both of our interests to align our digital policies and strategies to compete with China? How so?
- c. If confirmed, what areas of potential cooperation would you prioritize?

**Answer:**

If confirmed, rebuilding relations with U.S. allies and partners, including the EU, will be one of my highest priorities. The President has been clear that the way to tackle the biggest current trade issues, including Chinese unfair trade practices, human rights and labor issues, and the environment, is to work with allies to develop high standards and punish countries that violate them. While our administration and the EU will not agree on everything, we see significant scope for cooperation and, where we disagree, we will manage those differences constructively. We look forward to working with you and other leaders in Congress to shape international economic policy that serves American workers at home and our interests and values around the world.



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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#166)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

A free trade agreement between the EU and the United States could be an economic and strategic win for both sides of the Atlantic if negotiated carefully. However, the abandoned Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (T-TIP) demonstrated the difficulties of this effort. Given China's coercive and dishonest economic practices, a carefully considered trade agreement between our two sides could potentially bolster market-based economics practices and help set global standards.

- a. If confirmed, as a senior member of President Biden's foreign policy team, what are your views regarding a Biden Administration attempt to revive EU-U.S. trade agreement negotiations? If the U.S. were to pursue such a course, what areas should be prioritized?
- b. Many barriers to trade include non-tariff barriers, such as differing regulations and standards. These differences don't just have economic consequences they may give rise to strategic challenge, as well. How can we work to resolve differences in standards and regulations with the EU, UK, and other democratic, market-oriented partners in goods trade and also in the digital and services sectors?

**Answer:**

The President-elect has made clear that his test for trade policies is whether they deliver for the American worker and the middle class. The President-elect does not want a return to business as usual on trade and has said he will not sign any new trade deals until his Administration has made significant investments in American workers and infrastructure. He has also been clear that the way to tackle the biggest current trade issues, including Chinese unfair trade practices, human rights and labor issues, and the environment, is to work with allies to develop high standards and punish countries that violate them. We look forward to working with you and other leaders in Congress to shape international economic policy that serves American workers at home and our interests and values around the world.

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**Questions for the Record Submitted to  
Secretary-Nominee of State Antony J. Blinken by  
Senator James Risch (#167)  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
January 19, 2021**

**Question:**

In the FY21 National Defense Authorization Act, the U.S. Congress passed significant beneficial ownership legislation. The EU has also been working on a rule-of-law mechanism to link EU funds to good governance, as well as cracking down on “golden visas.” European countries have found themselves at both ends of this corruption cycle.

- a. Will collaborating with our democratic allies to tackle corruption in our financial systems be a priority for the Biden Administration? How does the Biden Administration plan to fulfill President Biden’s proposal of a “Summit of Democracies?” What are the immediate priorities for that Summit?
- b. What concrete actions will you take as Secretary of State to push countries to reform their systems and crackdown on corruption?
- c. The Department of Justice, through its Office of Overseas Prosecutorial Development, Assistance, and Training (OPDAT) and International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP) initiatives, plays a significant role in helping partner countries to promote the rule of law and combat corruption. Will you prioritize coordinating with the Department of Justice and supporting these programs?
- d. How important is it that the United States and its European allies take steps to make our own systems less friendly to kleptocracy and less penetrable by dirty money?

**Answer:**

Corruption isn’t just another item on a list of global problems. It is a scourge that makes it more difficult to address other challenges--from global health and food security, to economic development and fair trade, to maintaining strong alliances. That’s why the President-elect has made clear that tackling corruption will be a major part of the agenda of the Summit for Democracy that the United States will host in the next year. Congress has taken important action to support this fight and, if confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress to continue to ensure that the U.S. is a global leader in countering kleptocracy and corruption.

[This section is continued in Part II.]

