

Statement of Preston Wells Griffith III
Nominee for Representative of the United States of America to the Vienna
Office of the United Nations, with the rank of Ambassador and to be
Representative of the United States of America to the International Atomic
Energy Agency, with the rank of Ambassador.
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
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Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen and distinguished Members of this Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as the President's nominee to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to the Vienna Office of the United Nations and the International Atomic Energy Agency.

I want to thank President Trump for nominating me to serve in this role. I am honored and deeply grateful for the trust and confidence placed in me by the President and the Secretary of State. If confirmed, I would be humbled to represent the United States at some of the world's most consequential multilateral institutions and seek to ensure that every mission we undertake in Vienna delivers a tangible return for the American people and advances American interests.

I also want to thank the most important people in my life – my family, without whose love and support I would not be here today. Joining me today is my wife, Catherine, and our nine-year-old son, Wells. Their unwavering love, patience, and encouragement give me the strength, purpose, and resolve to serve.

I would also like to recognize my parents, who could not be here today. Through their constant love and encouragement, my mother, Donata, and my father, Preston, instilled in me the values of hard work, service, and humility that guide me every day. They continue to inspire me with their courage and resilience, particularly as my father battles amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or ALS, an incurable and progressive neurodegenerative disease, with my mother by his side every step of the way.

Lastly, I want to thank my siblings, friends, and colleagues, whose support, encouragement, and friendship have sustained me throughout my life and continue to do so.

I have been privileged to serve in a number of senior roles across the U.S. government, including at the Department of Energy, the National Security Council at the White House, the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation, and

the Department of State, during both of President Trump's administrations. Those experiences have prepared me well for the position for which I have been nominated. In all of these roles, I've been fortunate to work alongside so many exceptional career public servants, scientists, engineers, and professionals who are among the best in government. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing to work with them to advance American security, prosperity, and interests.

The Vienna-based international organizations address an extraordinary range of important technical issues – nuclear nonproliferation, outer space governance, export controls, countering illicit drugs, and preventing transnational crime and human trafficking, to name a few. These are not abstractions: they touch the safety and security of Americans every day. The stakes are exceptionally high.

My central commitment, if confirmed, will be straightforward: ensure every one of these organizations advances American values and interests.

President Trump said the United Nations has real potential. I believe that, too.

But potential is not performance. Many UN bodies, including those in Vienna, have drifted far from their mandates. These organizations must return to their core mandates, making sure that technical bodies stay technical, and that political issues are handled in the appropriate forums. In Vienna, this means advancing U.S. priorities of countering illicit drugs, disrupting transnational criminal and terrorist networks, ensuring nuclear materials do not fall into the wrong hands, and insisting that nuclear materials and technologies are used for exclusively peaceful purposes. The United States must help restore discipline, clarity, and credibility to these institutions.

An America First approach does not mean stepping back – it means showing up with clarity about our interests and confidence in our values. If confirmed, I will work closely with allies and traditional and non-traditional partners to ensure that Vienna-based agencies reflect principles we share – transparency, accountability, and respect for sovereignty.

These are especially important in agencies covering issues that have real-world implications for Americans, such as countering the spread of illicit narcotics and synthetic opioids, combating migrant smuggling, fighting the scourge of online scams and sextortion, and advancing the safe and responsible use of outer space, while leveraging public-private partnerships.

The work of the International Atomic Energy Agency is critically important in the areas of nuclear safeguards, safety, security, and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. This work is essential to U.S. national security interests. If confirmed, I will utilize the expertise of our team and interagency partners as I engage on these complex matters, ensuring the IAEA delivers on its core mandate in a way that aligns with U.S. interests.

This includes keeping the IAEA focused on holding Iran accountable to its IAEA safeguards agreement, which is a requirement under the Nuclear non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). President Trump has been clear: the United States will not allow the threat of a nuclear-armed Iran to destabilize the region. If confirmed, I will coordinate with other Missions to support maximum pressure efforts through every available multilateral channel. I will work to strengthen relationships and amplify U.S. messaging on why addressing this threat is so important.

The UN system has grown in scope and cost. We have a responsibility to ensure that every dollar contributed by the American taxpayer is used effectively. That requires streamlining budgets, reducing duplication, and demanding measurable outcomes – all of which make Vienna-based institutions even more effective. Advancing efforts for our historical allies to step up their financial contributions and share among the funding burden at the IAEA will allow for its critical work on high-profile nuclear files, such as Iran and Ukraine.

Across all of this work, accountability is essential. We must uphold the highest standards of transparency, professionalism, and integrity – and be prepared to enforce them.

If confirmed, I will ensure that Vienna-based organizations deliver for the United States by promoting clear mandates, strengthening efficiency and oversight, countering adversarial influence, advancing American leadership, and driving progress on nuclear nonproliferation and transnational security threats. That is how we help the UN live up to its full potential.

Thank you. I look forward to your questions.