

**Opening Statement of Fleet White
Nominee for Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of
Political-Military Affairs
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
April 16, 2026**

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen, and distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be the Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs. I am honored by this nomination and grateful to President Trump and Secretary Rubio for the confidence they have shown in me.

Thanks to my family for their unwavering support. I am joined today by my wife Adrienne, son Fleet, and parents, Fleet and Priscilla. Special thanks to my parents-in-law, Tommy and Barbara Gamez for raising a wonderful daughter. And thanks also to my sister Daphne, who is about to have her first baby, or else she would be here too.

If confirmed, I would assume responsibility for the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs at perhaps the most consequential time in its history. Political-military affairs have never been more central to our national security. The Bureau sits at the intersection of diplomacy, security cooperation, and the American industrial base. Its mission is to make sure that our security partnerships and defense trade advance U.S. strategic objectives while strengthening our own readiness and industrial capacity.

My career experiences up to this point have prepared me well for this role. I have had the honor of serving in the Bureau since President Trump's Inauguration Day last year. Prior to joining the State Department, I practiced law as an attorney here in Washington, D.C. and, before that, I was a submarine officer in the United States Navy.

If confirmed, I would focus on four priorities.

First, taking care of the people. The Bureau is home to over 500 full-time staff, military advisors, contractors, and foreign policy advisors assigned to major

Department of War commands. Supporting the workforce is the necessary first step to executing the Bureau's critical mission.

Second, reforming and accelerating the foreign defense sales process. For years, partners have raised legitimate concerns about the speed and predictability of our system, but thanks to President Trump, we are turning the ship around. The President has directed historic reforms to improve accountability, cut unnecessary bureaucracy, and ensure that the United States remains the partner of choice to reliably and rapidly deliver the best military equipment in the world. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Department of War, Congress, and American industry to implement these reforms and ensure continued American dominance in arms exports.

Third, strengthening deterrence by building capable partners who can carry more of the burden for their own security. The President has been clear that peace is preserved through strength—military strength, economic strength, and strong partnerships that advance our interests. America's alliances and partnerships remain a powerful strategic advantage, but they work best when partners invest seriously in their own defense and contribute to regional stability. Our security cooperation programs, security assistance, and arms transfers should help trusted partners build the capabilities they need to defend themselves, operate alongside U.S. forces, and deter aggression before it starts.

Fourth, ensuring that our defense trade and security assistance strengthens the readiness of the American warfighter and our industrial base. Our ability to deter and, if necessary, win conflicts depends on a strong industrial foundation here at home. Strategic arms transfers support domestic reindustrialization through expanding production lines, strengthening supply chains, and ensuring that the United States retains the technological and manufacturing edge required to equip our military.

In all of these efforts, Congress is an essential partner. The Bureau's responsibilities, from foreign military financing to foreign military sales—depend on close coordination with this Committee and with Congress as a whole. If confirmed, I am committed to regular consultation, transparency, and responsiveness to the Committee's vital oversight responsibilities.

If confirmed, I will approach my responsibilities with humility and a deep respect for the faith that the President, the Secretary, and you have placed in me. Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to your questions.