

Opening Statement of Chris Pratt
Nominee for Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
May 15, 2025

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen, and distinguished Members of the Committee: thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am honored by President Trump's nomination to serve as the Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs and very grateful for Secretary Rubio's support. If confirmed, I am committed to working hand-in-hand with this Committee and with Congress to advance our nation's security priorities—particularly in Foreign Military Sales reform, technology licensing, security cooperation, and export controls.

Throughout my career in public service, I have worked at the intersection of diplomacy, security, and national interest. At the State Department, I served as Deputy Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs, where I was privileged to lead efforts that brought wrongfully detained Americans home. That experience underscored the importance of collaboration across government agencies and with our elected representatives to protect and serve the American people.

Since my nomination, I have had valuable discussions with many of you and your staff regarding the national security challenges we face. For example, China continues to pursue policies that undermine U.S. interests across the globe. Iran remains a destabilizing force in the Middle East and beyond. North Korea continues to advance its weapons programs. And non-state actors persist in seeking ways to harm the United States and our allies.

In this complex environment, strengthening our relationships with key allies in order to advance our national interests remains paramount. One of our most critical and enduring partnerships is with Israel. As President Trump has unequivocally stated, the United States must remain a steadfast partner to Israel as it faces growing threats from terrorist organizations and hostile actors in the region. If confirmed, I will work closely with Congress to ensure our security cooperation with Israel remains robust and continues to serve

our mutual strategic interests, while addressing human rights issues and adherence to applicable humanitarian law.

Despite today's threats, I am optimistic. I believe in the power of American diplomacy when supported by strategic alignment between the State Department, Congress, and our interagency partners. As Secretary Rubio has noted, the State Department must be a force multiplier—advancing America First policies that make our nation safer, stronger, and more prosperous. If confirmed, I will ensure the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs (PM) is a proactive and collaborative partner in that mission.

If confirmed, a top priority will be to deepen the cooperation between the State Department and the Department of Defense. The PM bureau plays a central role in ensuring that U.S. diplomatic and military efforts are aligned and mutually reinforcing. This includes ensuring that U.S. military personnel abroad are secured with the agreements and legal frameworks necessary to operate with maximum protections and the full backing of our civilian leadership.

Another key focus area is improving the efficiency and effectiveness of U.S. foreign military sales. These programs are vital not only to strengthening our security partnerships abroad, but also to supporting the U.S. defense industrial base and American jobs at home. I am committed to working with Congress and industry leaders to streamline processes, reduce unnecessary delays, and implement President Trump's recent executive order on Reforming Foreign Military Sales with transparency and accountability.

Also, if confirmed, working with Congress to streamline Regulatory processes will be a critical component of my agenda. Regulations play a crucial role in safeguarding national security, but they must be updated to reflect current realities and strategic needs. I will work in close consultation with Congress to ensure that our regulatory frameworks remain rigorous while also enabling U.S. companies to compete and innovate in a rapidly evolving global defense marketplace.

In every area of responsibility—whether it's facilitating arms transfers, supporting our military partners, or safeguarding sensitive technologies—my approach will be rooted in partnership: with Congress, with industry, with our allies, and across the U.S. government. If confirmed, I will lead with transparency, engagement, and a clear sense of purpose in advancing America's security and prosperity.

Thank you for this opportunity to appear before you. I look forward to your questions and, if confirmed, to working closely with each of you in service to our nation.