

**Testimony of Puneet Talwar**  
**Nominee to be Assistant Secretary of State for Political Military Affairs**  
**Senate Foreign Relations Committee**  
**December 11, 2013**

Thank you Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Corker, and all the other distinguished Members of the committee. It is a tremendous honor for me to testify before you today and to be considered for the position of Assistant Secretary of State for Political Military Affairs.

This Committee is in many ways a second home to me and I cherish the dozen years that I spent on the benches behind you witnessing some of the most consequential debates in American foreign policy. If I might, I want to take a moment to introduce to you my two sons, Haris and Ilyas, who are here today. I want to say how deeply grateful I am for the sacrifices my wife and my children have made over my twenty years of public service so that I can be sitting before you today.

Of course, I am also grateful for the confidence that President Obama and Secretary Kerry have shown in nominating me for this position.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Corker, over the past five years on the National Security Council, I have seen first-hand how the work of the State Department's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs -- or PM as it is known inside the State Department -- is absolutely critical to our national security.

The security of the United States is affected by more countries and more regions than ever before. The task of maintaining global security and addressing global challenges must be shared. It is therefore more vital than ever that our friends and partners have the capabilities to address common security challenges.

The PM Bureau is at the vanguard of our global security relationships. This effort involves a wide array of activities:

- negotiating security agreements around the world to give U.S. military personnel access for critical operations;
- clearing the long-forgotten minefields of war so that children may play safely outdoors;

- training international peacekeepers;
- partnering with others to successfully combat piracy in the Indian Ocean;
- bolstering the military capabilities of close partners so they can operate more effectively with our military and with each other;
- bringing foreign officers to the United States to study at our war colleges so they can learn from the best – the men and women of our armed forces; and
- facilitating defense exports while protecting the crown jewels of U.S. military technology.

The PM bureau leads each of these activities. From them, doors open to deeper cooperation on a wide variety of fronts. Security cooperation is often at the heart of our global relationships. When a country is willing to work with you on sensitive issues affecting their security, they tend to cooperate on other issues as well. When a country buys a superior U.S. defense system, they are also buying into a relationship with the United States. In this way, PM's work buttresses our diplomatic relationships.

- Indeed, PM's portfolio has a global reach, and if confirmed, I pledge to strengthen our security partnerships around the world. This includes:
- Supporting Israel's security and preserving its qualitative military edge in these turbulent times in the Middle East.
- Rebalancing our interests and investments in Asia.
- Deepening security cooperation with India and building on our Defense Trade and Technology Initiative.
- In Africa, empowering our friends to combat terrorism, manage conflict, and modernize militaries.
- And, of course, sustaining and adapting close cooperation with our European allies and partners, and with our partners in the Gulf Cooperation Council, to address 21<sup>st</sup> Century challenges.

Mr. Chairman, I want to touch briefly upon one other critical area of PM's work – defense trade. PM is working hard to support the U.S. defense industry because it is in our national security interest. That's why another high priority will be to advance export control reform if I am confirmed. The goal of this effort is to prevent sensitive technology from winding up in the wrong hands, while streamlining and clarifying the licensing process for defense sales. I want to continue working with Congress so that we have the best possible system to meet this objective.

If confirmed, I also look forward to reinforcing PM's ties to industry. I want U.S. exporters to know they have a partner in PM who intends to help them beat out competitors and win contracts.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, one of my main priorities will be to strengthen relations between the Bureau and the Committee. One lesson I took away from my years of service on this Committee is that the finest hours for American foreign policy invariably occur when the State Department and the Committee are working together toward the same end.

Thank you again and I look forward to answering your questions.