

**Statement of Ambassador Wendy R. Sherman**  
**Nominee to be Deputy Secretary of State**  
**Senate Foreign Relations Committee**  
**March 3, 2021**

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

And thank you Senator Cardin for your kind introduction.

I am grateful to my husband Bruce for his love and support and my daughter Sarah, who inspires me with her work. Bruce, Sarah, my grandsons Ezra and Oscar, and my sister Andrea, her husband Kevin, their son Erik, along with numerous friends and colleagues, have sustained me in their love and counsel.

I am also deeply grateful to President Biden, Vice President Harris, and Secretary Blinken for their trust in me in nominating me to be Deputy Secretary of State. If confirmed, I pledge to work every day to sustain that trust and the trust of this Committee and the Senate.

President Biden has outlined a foreign policy vision that puts diplomacy center stage, where we lead not just by the example of our power but the power of our example, and where our foreign policy benefits and serves the American people. This vision is one that is deeply personal to me. In 1945, my parents were present at the founding of the United Nations. My father, then an active-duty Marine still recovering from injuries he suffered at Guadalcanal, felt it was important that he and my mother attend the founding of a forum to prevent war and spare future generations from the suffering their generation endured. This same sentiment led him to help found what later became the American Veterans Committee.

My parents instilled in me a profound commitment to making a safer, better world for the American people. That commitment led me to social work and community advocacy, and later, to politics and public service as a means of improving the lives of my fellow citizens.

As the President has emphasized, diplomacy must be the tool of first resort of American leadership in a more interconnected and competitive world. From the pandemic to the climate crisis to nuclear proliferation, the challenges that threaten the prosperity and security of the American people will only be solved by working together and in common purpose with our allies and partners.

To do so, we have to rebuild alliances and partnerships; strengthen our democratic institutions; increase economic opportunity; and enhance respect for democratic principles, including

freedom of the press, religious liberty, human rights, and the rule of law. Engaging in the broadest way possible, not only with government officials, but with the private sector and all of civil society – youth, women and girls, journalists and opinion leaders – is critical to our success in these efforts.

When I served as Under Secretary of State, I travelled to 54 countries to advance American interests and values. I went to Burma in support of further democratic and economic reforms and met with both Aung San Suu Kyi and Min Aung Hlaing. I traveled to Bangladesh after the horrific garment factory accidents to press on worker safety and labor rights. In Africa, I pushed on countering Chinese investment, and welcomed rising leaders on the continent as part of the Young African Leaders Initiative. I traveled to almost every major conflict zone, and engaged extensively with our Transatlantic and Indo-Pacific allies and international partners who work with us to resolve those conflicts. If confirmed, I will bring a breadth of experience and relationships to bear on the challenges that face our country today.

Among those challenges are those posed by the ambitions of China to rival the United States, the determination of Russia to damage and disrupt our democracy, and the nuclear and other threats posed by Iran and North Korea. To compete and win the strategic competition with China, we have to invest in America and confront and challenge Beijing where we must, including on human rights and democratic values. We will act firmly in defense of our national interests in response to actions by Russia that harm us or our allies. With respect to Iran, as the lead of the U.S. negotiating team for the JCPOA, I remain clear-eyed about the threat that Iran poses to our interests and those of our allies. I am ready to address your questions about the JCPOA, but would note that 2021 is not 2015 when the deal was agreed, nor 2016 when it was implemented. The facts on the ground have changed, the geopolitics of the region have changed, and the way forward must similarly change.

Moving forward on the challenges our country faces will not be easy, but I firmly believe in the capacity of the United States to meet these challenges through renewed global leadership and the exceptionally talented staff of the State Department. During my prior service, I experienced the unparalleled professionalism of the State Department's civil servants, foreign service officers, locally engaged staff, and contractors. I also saw the personal sacrifices and contributions their families make for our nation. I am grateful that, if confirmed, I will again have the opportunity to benefit from the expertise and dedication of all of the women and men who advance American interests every day in all of the 180 countries with which we have diplomatic relations.

Of course, for our diplomacy to be successful on any issue, we must engage with Congress. I am honored to now be participating in my fourth nomination hearing before this Committee. The first time was as the nominee to be the State Department's Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs in 1993.

Since then, in three decades of work in foreign policy and national security, I have learned firsthand the need for close and constructive coordination with Congress. As a former Congressional chief of staff, I gained a deep appreciation of the Senate's responsibility to provide oversight of the Executive Branch. Secretary Blinken has spoken to this Committee of his and the President's commitment to restoring Congress's traditional role as a partner in our foreign policy making, and if confirmed, I pledge to play a leading role in that effort.

With that commitment, I welcome your questions and look forward to our discussion today.