

**Statement of John J. Sullivan**  
**Nominee to be Deputy Secretary of State**  
**Submitted to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee**  
**May 9, 2017**

Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, members of the Committee, I am honored to appear before you as the President's nominee to be Deputy Secretary of State.

I am joined by members of my family: my wife for almost 29 years Grace Rodriguez, the love of my life, who has always been my biggest supporter and best friend. We are joined by our children, Jack, Katie, and Teddy Sullivan, of whom I am immensely proud. Also with us are my mother-in-law Graciela Rodriguez and my sister-in-law Susan Rodriguez.

It was an honor to be introduced by Senator Sullivan of Alaska, my former colleague from the Bush Administration. I am thankful for his kind words.

I want to express my enormous gratitude to President Trump and to Secretary Tillerson for the trust and confidence they have reposed in me. If confirmed, I pledge to devote all that I have to be worthy of that trust and confidence.

By way of personal introduction, I am the grandson of Irish immigrants who arrived in South Boston in the 1880s. My parents, born in the 1920s, endured the Great Depression and, with millions of their generation, fought and won the Second World War. My father served in the U.S. Navy's Submarine Service in the Pacific Theater. My mother was a USO volunteer. We would now call them members of the Greatest Generation, but they never thought of themselves that way. They rarely spoke of their experiences during the War.

But one thing they did make clear, and instilled in me, was a profound love of our country and respect for the high calling of public service. In the 32 years since my law school graduation, those values have animated my career. In addition to stints in private law practice, I have had the privilege of serving in the U.S. Government: as a law clerk for Judge John Wisdom and for Justice David Souter, followed by senior positions at the Justice, Defense, and Commerce Departments.

During my public service, I have learned a great deal about our country and its role in the world. Most significantly, my experiences have prepared me to serve in the position for which I recently have been nominated: Deputy Secretary of State. In both legal and policy positions, I learned the operations of the national security bureaucracy. As Deputy Secretary of Commerce, I was chief operating officer of a cabinet department and participated in the budgeting process with OMB. I also worked closely with the Department of State while leading trade missions and government delegations on trips to China, Pakistan, Germany, Iraq, Israel and the West Bank, Jordan, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Japan, and the UAE.

But the most important lessons I learned were humility and respect. As Deputy General Counsel of DoD, I saw firsthand the sacrifices of our men and women in uniform. I learned to walk humbly through the halls of the Pentagon. I also learned respect for the career public servants who rarely get the praise they deserve. The Executive Branch functions because of these men and women, many with decades of experience.

A small number of public servants are accepted into the Foreign Service, which I know well. My uncle Bill Sullivan was a Foreign Service Officer for 32 years. He was the last U.S. Ambassador to Iran in the late 1970s. It was his staff in Tehran that was taken hostage on November 4, 1979—a few months after the President had recalled him.

It is an earlier date from 1979, however, that sticks out in my mind: February 14, Valentine's Day. The U.S. Embassy in Tehran was overrun by a mob, and my uncle and his staff were seized. After a few hours, the Americans were released and the embassy reopened. My uncle appeared in a picture on the cover of the next issue of Newsweek. He was surrounded by Iranians carrying assault weapons, one of whom was brandishing a bayonet in his face.

That day in 1979 is significant to me not merely because of the drama in Iran, but also because of a tragedy in Afghanistan. Our Ambassador, Spike Dubs, was kidnapped and assassinated in Kabul. Like my uncle, Ambassador Dubs was a U.S. Navy World War II veteran and a career Foreign Service Officer.

The assassination of Ambassador Dubs and the seizure of our embassy in Tehran on February 14, 1979, made a huge impression on me. I have remained in awe of our Foreign Service Officers who venture into such dangerous places on our behalf.

If confirmed, it would be my highest honor to work with the Foreign Service, the Civil Service, and the Department's locally employed staff in the conduct of American diplomacy. In a world in which we face significant and enduring threats, these challenging times require leadership from the United States. As Secretary Tillerson said when he came before this committee, "to achieve the stability that is foundational to peace and security in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, American leadership must not only be renewed, it must be asserted."

And we will be aided in the assertion of our leadership by two of our abiding strengths: our allies and our values. We have relationships with allies in this hemisphere and across the globe that extend back many decades and that have been the cornerstone of our national security in the post-war era. We have maintained and enhanced the relationships with our allies on the basis of our shared interests. But in many cases, we also share a commitment to the fundamental values expressed at the founding of our nation: the rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. These basic human rights are the bedrock of our republic and at the heart of American leadership.

Should I be confirmed, I commit to work with the members of this Committee as the Administration implements an American foreign policy that is worthy of our ideals as a people—ideals that have been handed down by the many generations that preceded us.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to your questions.