

Secretary-designate Marco Rubio
SFRC Confirmation Hearing Opening Remarks
January 15, 2025

Thank you, Chairman Risch. Thank you, Ranking Member Shaheen. And thank you, Senator Scott for your introduction. In the 249-year history of our republic, only 71 other Americans have served in the position President Trump has nominated me to occupy. I thank him for his confidence. It is both an incredible honor and an extraordinary responsibility.

Three of my children – Amanda, Anthony, and Dominick – were not able to join me here in person today. But I am happy that my wife Jeanette and my daughter Daniella are here with me. Because as each of you know well, it would be impossible to serve in the Senate or in the role I have been nominated for now, without the love and the support of our families.

I am also pleased my sisters Barbara and Veronica, and my nephew Orlando are joining me. It is a reminder that the path that brings me to this moment was paved by those who are not here with us. By two parents, who arrived here on May 27th 1956 from Cuba with nothing but the dream of a better life. Because of them, I had the privilege to be born a citizen of the greatest nation in the history of the world. And to be raised in a safe and stable home, by parents who made their children's future the very purpose of their lives.

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At the end of World War II, the United States was, in the words of then Secretary Acheson, tasked with creating a world order “a free half” out of chaos “without blowing the whole to pieces in the process.”

In the decades that followed, the global order they created served us well. For Americans, incomes rose and communities flourished. Alliances emerged in the Indo-Pacific and Europe that led to the emergence of stability, democracy, and prosperity in these regions, and prevented a cataclysmic third world war. And ultimately a wall in Berlin came down and with it, an “evil empire.”

Out of the triumphalism of the end of long Cold War emerged a bi-partisan consensus that we had reached “the end of history.” That all the nations of earth would become members of the democratic Western led community. That a foreign policy that served the national interest could now be replaced by one that served the “liberal world order.” And that all mankind was now destined to abandon national identity, and we would become “one human family” and “citizens of the world.”

This wasn't just a fantasy; it was a dangerous delusion.

Here in America, and in many of the advanced economies across the world, an almost religious commitment to free and unfettered trade at the expense of our national economy, shrunk the middle class, left the working class in crisis, collapsed industrial capacity, and pushed critical supply chains into the hands of adversaries and rivals.

An irrational zeal for maximum freedom of movement of people has resulted in a historic mass migration crisis here in America and around the world that threatens the stability of societies and governments.

And across the West, governments now censor and even prosecute domestic political opponents, while radical jihadists openly march in the streets and drive vehicles into our people.

While America far too often continued to prioritize the “global order” above our core national interests, other nations continued to act the way countries always have and always will, in what they perceive to be in their best interest.

And instead of folding into the post-Cold War global order, they have manipulated it to serve their interest at the expense of ours.

We welcomed the Chinese Communist Party into this global order. And they took advantage of all its benefits. But they ignored all its obligations and responsibilities. Instead, they have lied, cheated, hacked, and stolen their way to global superpower status, at our expense.

In our very own hemisphere, despots and narco-terrorists take advantage of open borders to drive mass migration, traffic women and children, and flood our communities with fentanyl and violent criminals.

And in Moscow, Tehran, and Pyongyang, dictators sow chaos and instability and align with and fund radical terror groups. Then hide behind their veto power at the United Nations and the threat of nuclear war.

The postwar global order is not just obsolete; it is now a weapon being used against us.

And all this has led us to a moment in which we must now confront the single greatest risk of geopolitical instability and generational global crisis in the lifetime of anyone alive here today.

Eight decades later, we are called to create a free world out of chaos once again.

This will not be easy.

And it will be impossible without a strong and confident America that engages in the world, putting our core national interests above all else once again.

Just four years ago we saw the beginnings of what that would look like. During President Trump's first term, American strength was a deterrent to our adversaries and gave us leverage in diplomacy. There were no new wars, ISIS was eviscerated, Soleimani was dead, the historic Abraham Accords were born, and Americans were safer as a result.

Now President Trump returns to office with an unmistakable mandate from the voters. They want a strong America. Engaged in the world. But guided by a clear objective, to promote peace abroad, and security and prosperity here at home.

That is the promise President Trump was elected to keep.

And if I am confirmed, keeping that promise will be the core mission of the United States Department of State.

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Tragically, horrifying atrocities and unimaginable human suffering can be found on virtually every continent. And I am certain that today I will be asked about the array of programs and activities the Department of State carries out to address them.

As a nation founded on the revolutionary truth that “all men are created equal” with rights that come not from man but from God, we will never be indifferent to the suffering of our fellow man.

But ultimately, under President Trump, the top priority of the United States Department of State must be and will be the United States.

The direction he has given for the conduct of our foreign policy is clear. Every dollar we spend, every program we fund, and every policy we pursue must be justified with the answer to three simple questions:

- Does it make America safer?
- Does it make America stronger?
- Does it make America more prosperous?

Under President Trump, the dollars of hardworking American taxpayers will always be spent wisely and our power will always be yielded prudently, and toward what is best for America and Americans above all else.

Prudence in the conduct of foreign policy is not an abandonment of our values.

It is the commonsense understanding that while we remain the wealthiest and most powerful nation on earth, our wealth has never been unlimited and our power has never been infinite.

And placing our core national interests above all else is not isolationism. It is the commonsense realization that a foreign policy centered on our national interest is not some outdated relic.

Since the emergence of the modern nation-state over two centuries ago, countries acting based on what they perceive as their core national interest has been the norm not the exception. And for our country, placing the interest of America and Americans above all else has never been more relevant or more necessary than it is right now.

For in the end, how America can promote the cause of “peace on earth” if it is not first safe at home?

What good to our allies is America if it is not strong?

And how can America help end the suffering of God’s children across the world, if it is not first prosperous here at home?

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