

Thomas DiNanno Opening Statement

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen, and distinguished Members of this Committee: thank you for this opportunity. I want to thank President Trump for nominating me to serve as the Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security. I also want to thank Secretary Rubio for his support – it is a tremendous honor to be nominated and appear before this committee. If confirmed, I will be an unwavering voice for the American people and for this Administration’s national security priorities. I commit to you that I will work closely with this Committee and with Congress to drive forward our shared vision and values.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my family, friends, and colleagues – without their support and encouragement, I would not be here today. I especially want to thank my mother and father for the love and support they have given throughout my life. And of course, I want to thank my lovely wife Darlene and our wonderful daughter Lexi, who are with me here today.

I have spent nearly 25 years in public service in various capacities in homeland and national security, including serving in the State Department’s Arms Control, Verification and Compliance Bureau during President Trump’s first administration.

Many of the Members of this Committee have expressed concern that we are in perhaps the most dangerous time the world has faced since World War II. Those concerns are not unfounded. We can point to the war in Ukraine, China’s rapid and opaque expansion of its nuclear weapons stockpile, a Middle East perpetually on edge, Iran’s nuclear ambitions and chemical weapons program, ever-threatening and growing North Korean WMD and missile programs, and the persistent threat of terrorists who seek to use WMD against the United States. Yet despite this challenging security environment, I am cautiously optimistic for the future. President Trump is the right person at the right time to stem – and in fact, reverse – the tide.

President Trump has said “it would be a great achievement to reduce the number of nuclear weapons in the world.” I agree wholeheartedly. That was part of his agenda during his first administration when the President recognized, as we all know now, that an unconstrained Chinese nuclear program will be a threat, not in the abstract “someday,” but in the very near term. In 2020, China was estimated to have roughly 200 nuclear warheads, with that number expected to double in a decade. Here we are, not even five years later, and the new estimates put the Chinese stockpile at over 600, growing to over 1000 by 2030. China’s longstanding excuses for refusing to engage in arms control can no longer be allowed to go neglected.

If confirmed, I will pursue meaningful and effective policies to strengthen America’s nuclear deterrence umbrella, enhance chemical and biological weapon deterrence, and seek verifiable and enforceable arms control agreements that enhance American national security. Arms control agreements without strong and effective verification

regimes – and the will to address non-compliance – serve only one purpose: to give an illusion of security. They do nothing to actually enhance global security. One need only look at the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty. Russia illegally developed INF-range systems now used for nuclear coercion and intimidation. If confirmed, I will only advance agreements that prioritize U.S. national security, strengthen those that don't, and reassess our participation in any agreement that constrains the United States or our interests.

As Secretary Rubio has underscored, State Department policies must make us safer, stronger, and more prosperous. If confirmed, I will view my policy decisions through that guidance. Particularly when it comes to foreign military sales. These sales are a critical part of U.S. security partnerships. I view this Committee as a critical partner in the oversight of arms exports. It will be one of my top priorities to ensure that all U.S. security assistance programs from the T family are thoroughly and expeditiously reviewed, transparent to Congress and the American people, and efficient for U.S. industry and America's partners.

In this vein, another important way to establish long-term partnerships is the promotion of civil nuclear energy. President Trump seeks to “unleash American energy,” and the United States has the most advanced nuclear technologies on offer today, and when the U.S. provides them, we not only to win multibillion-dollar deals but ensure the highest standards of nuclear safety, security and nonproliferation. If confirmed, I will work to use nuclear energy to establish long-term relationships with partners around the world, strengthen supply chains, and offer alternatives to Russia and China. I see this as a key area of focus and close cooperation with this Committee.

We must also strengthen efforts to combat proliferation threats – including the proliferation of chemical and biological weapons and missile delivery systems – as well as dual-use technologies that can be used to harm the United States. If confirmed, I will focus on ensuring our competitive advantage in critical and emerging technologies, such as AI, biotech, and quantum. We must effectively deploy export controls, investment screening, deny our adversaries any advantage, and preserve America's technological leading edge, while also helping American businesses not just grow, but thrive. If confirmed, I will insist that our partners and allies step up and do more to prevent western technologies from ending up in the hands of our adversaries. Here again, China is our biggest threat; we must stop China's exploitation of our technology. I believe there is consensus around the need to face and address the international security threats we face today. We may differ on the approach, but the national imperative is clear. This is reflected in bipartisan efforts to modernize our nuclear deterrent and in the important recommendations of the bipartisan Strategic Posture Commission report from 2023.

If confirmed, I look forward to engaging this Committee and consulting with you and your staff on these issues so that we can work together to advance these priorities.