

**Opening Statement of Cardell Richardson, Sr.  
Nominee For Inspector General, U.S. Department of State  
Senate Foreign Relations Committee,  
November 16, 2023**

Chairman Schatz, Ranking Member Hagerty, and Members of this Committee:

Thank you for the invitation to appear before you today as you consider my nomination to be Inspector General for the Department of State. I am honored to have been nominated by President Biden to serve in this key role in government oversight.

I would like to introduce my family members who are here supporting me today: my wife, Jackie; my daughter, Chandace Richardson-Arledge; my son, who is my namesake and shares the same birthday, Cardell, 2<sup>nd</sup>; my brothers, Canardo and Carlton Richardson; and my sister-in-law, Joanne Finney.

I also recognize the many family members, colleagues and friends who have helped me during this nomination process and throughout my career.

I have dedicated my entire professional life to public service. I have over four decades of serving in diverse, and complex positions of leadership and responsibility.

My parents inculcated in my siblings and me: an unshakeable foundation of faith, and a strong work ethic. They encouraged me to live an open-book life; help those in need, and always do my best. These values have shaped my life.

Upon graduating from Howard University School of Architecture and Engineering, I was commissioned as a US Air Force officer, and internalized the Air Force core values, which are: *Integrity First, Service Before Self, and Excellence In All We Do*; which naturally resonated, as they reflect the same values I learned growing up.

I have served our great nation in multiple assignments, throughout the continental United States, and around the world. In 2003, after twenty-six years of dedicated service to the defense of our great nation, I retired from Air Force in the rank of Colonel, with an honorable discharge.

Upon retirement from the Air Force, I turned down a lucrative offer to join a large engineering firm because I was committed to continuing my public service. I instead, accepted the opportunity to serve, as a Defense Intelligence Senior Executive Service civilian, with the National Imagery and Mapping Agency, renamed the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA).

During my 20-year tenure at NGA, I served administrations of both political parties. I established a reputation of a strong leader, with impeccable integrity and I am renown for surmounting undifferentiated challenges. As a result, I was twice recognized with the Presidential Rank Award for strong leadership and extraordinary accomplishments,

For these reasons, I was selected to be Inspector General for the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, a position, in which I've served successfully, for the last six years.

In this role, I am responsible to Congress and American taxpayers. I lead an office of auditors, inspectors, investigators, attorneys, and staff whose mission is to detect and deter fraud, waste, abuse, and misconduct; and to promote economy and efficiency in Agency operations. I routinely report to Congress and the Agency Director with independent assessments and oversight of NGA's programs, operations and processes.

If confirmed, I will focus on four main areas to continue to add significant OIG value:

- **First**, I pledge to bring strong leadership, energy, vision, and independence to the Department's Office of Inspector General. Recognizing that there has not been a confirmed Inspector General at the Department of State in more than three years; if confirmed, my highest priority will be the mission of oversight, and the dedicated professionals that carryout this important oversight mission. I will continue to build a highly professional environment that attracts and retains the most talented employees to meet and exceed current and future oversight demands.

- **Second**, if confirmed, I commit to work closely with this committee and other committees of jurisdiction, as well as develop and sustain an effective and appropriate working relationship with State Department management. I will provide timely, comprehensive information relating to the programs and operations of the Department and the other agencies under the Department's oversight mandate: specifically, the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM) and the U.S. Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC); to ensure that the activities of these entities are as effective, efficient, and economical as possible. I will also continue to ensure the integrity of U.S. foreign relations efforts by holding accountable those who corrupt or defraud taxpayer-funded programs.

- **Third**, I will ensure that the Office of Inspector General remains an independent, objective organization that provides robust oversight, transparency, and accountability to the programs and operations of the Department and the agencies under the Department's oversight mandate.

- **Finally**, if confirmed as the State Department Inspector General, I commit to being a strong partner for Overseas Contingency Operation efforts, including Ukraine and US foreign relations programs in the Levant Region and elsewhere around the globe.

I am honored to be considered for this important position, and I look forward to answering your questions. Thank you.