

Testimony of Richard Verma
Nominee for Deputy Secretary of State for Management & Resources

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as the President's nominee to serve as the Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources.

I want to also express my gratitude to President Biden and Secretary Blinken for their trust in nominating me for this position and for the opportunity to serve our country again.

This is my third time appearing before this Committee. This has been made possible through the support, patience and understanding of my loving family, who are with me today. My wife Pinky, and my children, Zoe, Lucy and Dylan. And to my dad, sisters, and all my family who are here today as well, you have always been by my side.

I know I sit here today because of the sacrifice of those who have come before me. Pinky's grandparents escaped the carnage of the Armenian genocide, and her father served in World War II. My parents fought for Indian independence, helped build a post-Colonial India, and bravely set out for the United States 60 years ago, seeking a better life for their children, arriving here with virtually nothing. Their story is the story of the American dream – and my appearance before you today is a testament to the profound promise and power of that dream.

I am here because of their hard work and courage, in addition to those of my teachers, coaches, neighbors and friends who stood by me. To all of them: thank you.

Across a career spanning three decades, I have been privileged to serve in this esteemed institution, as well as in the Department of State, the military, and the private sector. If confirmed, I will seek to bring this constellation of experiences to this role.

I have a strong appreciation for this Committee's important work from my time as a Senate staffer and as Assistant Secretary of State for Legislative Affairs.

In fact, when I served in the Leader's office working for Senator Reid, the staff director of this committee was one, Tony Blinken. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely and collaboratively with this Committee again to advance shared, bipartisan priorities. I know the Secretary is fiercely committed to this as well.

I was honored to have served as U.S. Ambassador to India from 2014 to 2017, where we advanced critical priorities in the bilateral relationship. In India, I was able to work closely with extraordinary career professionals from across the State Department and U.S. Government to create a lasting impact.

If confirmed in this role, I commit to serve the Department's workforce here in Washington and around the world. Our people are our greatest asset. We must train and invest in their professional development and support and retain this talent over time, dismantling the structural barriers that keep too many people from joining or advancing in the Department's ranks.

I will support our entire workforce – from our Locally Employed staff, contractors, Eligible Family Members, Civil and Foreign Services, to our interns.

Secretary Blinken has also made clear that advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility is everyone's responsibility. I look forward to championing this effort.

I will be steadfast in the management and oversight of taxpayer dollars. I will advance a strategic vision that aligns our resources with our national security priorities, operationally through our workforce, information technology, and facilities, as well as through foreign assistance programs at the Department and USAID.

I will also prioritize and advance Secretary Blinken's agenda to modernize American diplomacy. I am encouraged to learn of the efforts already underway to enhance the Department's capacity and expertise to address critical missions; to modernize training and professional development; institutionalize an agile and hybrid workforce; attract and retain talent; modernize technology and the use of data; and shift toward decisive leadership, innovation, and agility.

Today's world suffers from no dearth of challenges. From the war in Ukraine, to renewed great power competition, to evolving transnational threats. One could easily become discouraged. But there is reason for hope. I am truly optimistic about America's ability to lead on the global stage and meet this critical moment in time.

The America that welcomed my family here six decades ago, did so on the promise of opportunity, freedom, and democracy – values we see threatened around the world today. The U.S. State Department is more important than ever to advance these values. If confirmed, it will be an honor to return to the Department and support Secretary Blinken in his mission to equip and empower the Department and its workforce to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to your questions.