

**Opening Statement of Dr. Kurt Campbell  
Nominee for Deputy Secretary of State  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
December 7, 2023**

Chairman Cardin, Ranking Member Risch, distinguished Senators: it's an honor to appear before you today.

I'm profoundly grateful to President Biden, Vice President Harris, Secretary Blinken, and National Security Advisor Sullivan for placing their trust in me to serve as our next Deputy Secretary of State.

Above all, I'm eternally grateful for the unconditional love and support of my wife, Lael Brainard, our loving family, and our three incredible daughters: Caelen, Ciara, and Coco. These young women are the reason I have dedicated my life to public service. It is for them that I have worked to help build a better world.

If confirmed, serving in this post will be a culmination of a long road of service – a journey that's taken me from the Navy to the Treasury Department, from the Pentagon to the NSC, from the State Department to my appointment as the first-ever Indo-Pacific Coordinator under President Biden.

Outside government, I returned to academia, working primarily on Asia-Pacific issues in the think tank community and the private sector. Through everything, I have seen the importance of America's global leadership.

As the President has said, we stand at an inflection point, when the decisions we make today will shape our planet long into the future.

If confirmed, I will dedicate my time and energy to ensuring that our choices lead toward a world that is more free, open, prosperous, just, and secure.

This is a critical time for international security – and for American diplomacy. There's no shortage of challenges before us: Russia's horrific war in Ukraine; the conflict in Israel and Gaza; the aftermath of COVID-19; the evolution of emerging technologies; the climate crisis; and more.

These challenges circumnavigate the globe, and we are working with partners on every continent to tackle everything from infrastructure and supply chains to migration and security, to the promotion of democracy and the protection of international norms.

Still, the dominant factors animating this era reside in the Indo-Pacific. The centrality of that region and its economic dynamism – not to mention our intensifying competition with China – is why I’m sitting before you as the nominee for Deputy Secretary.

The Biden-Harris Administration is determined to stay laser-focused on the Indo-Pacific, where so much of the story of the 21<sup>st</sup> century will be written. We must ensure that U.S. leadership remains indispensable in this region and beyond.

We also know that today’s challenges are truly global. What happens in one region affects the others. Our competitors are collaborating – just look at China, Iran, and North Korea’s support for Russia’s war of aggression. We are stronger across-the-board due to our alliances and partnerships, and we will keep growing the connective tissue between them.

If I earn your support, my commitments will be clear:

First, cooperation and communication between the State Department and Congress will be paramount. This tradition is rich and bipartisan, and I want to thank you and your staff for great conversations leading up to this hearing.

Second, I will build on the successful initiatives advanced by the Biden-Harris Administration so far – and ensure they are properly resourced and institutionalized – whether it’s the Indo-Pacific Quad, AUKUS, trilateral cooperation with Japan and South Korea, NATO enlargement, or deeper ties with India, Vietnam, and Pacific Island nations.

Third, I will engage in clear and transparent communication with our partners. This is particularly vital in the Indo-Pacific, where discussions are typically more subtle. Recent experience teaches us that direct dialogue is essential.

Fourth, I will be a strong supporter of Ukraine because its success is crucial to the future of the international order. We must keep working with our allies and partners to equip Ukraine with the means to defend itself and emerge independent, sovereign, democratic, and free.

Finally, I believe in the value of being present. Of showing up to deepen relationships; deliver messages of deterrence to our adversaries and reassurance to our friends; and conduct the persistent diplomacy required in a world often defined by the unexpected.

I sit before you on December 7<sup>th</sup>, a date which will forever live in infamy – the anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor. This marker is a reminder of how, even after a

horrific assault on our security and freedom, we could summon the strength to endure. How, even out of the ashes of war, we could forge bonds of friendship with Japan and emerge as strong partners in democracy, diplomacy, and peace.

Led by the State Department and its workforce, we can pursue that same path today –of vigilance, resilience, stronger alliances, and a safer future.

I look forward to working with you toward our common goals.