

**Testimony of Gregory B. Starr**  
**Assistant Secretary of State for Diplomatic Security-Designate**  
**Senate Foreign Relations Committee**  
**September 19, 2013**

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Corker, Members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today. I would like to thank the Committee for your continued support and interest in the Bureau of Diplomatic Security's programs. This support enables Diplomatic Security, also known as DS, to safeguard American diplomats and facilities for the conduct of U.S. foreign policy, while maintaining our robust investigative programs which serve to protect the United States borders and our presence overseas. As the President's nominee to become the Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, I am thankful to the President and Secretary Kerry for the confidence they have placed in me to lead DS during these difficult and demanding times.

I have been a security professional for over 30 years. My experience both within the Department and outside our government has prepared me to take on the challenges of leading DS into the future. The world is changing, and so is the way in which diplomacy is conducted; the way in which we provide security for our diplomats must change with it.

Although we can never truly eliminate all risks faced by U.S. government personnel as they advance our national interests abroad, we in the Department constantly review evolving threats and seek to mitigate risk as much as possible.

The challenges we have faced over the previous decade, and over the previous year in particular, have been significant and growing. Increasingly, our people are called upon to live and work in difficult and dangerous environments. We operate in these environments out of necessity, because that is where we must be to serve our nation's interests. I have learned that we cannot shut ourselves inside our embassies, embracing a zero-risk posture, and forgo the work of helping build the rule of law and strengthen democratic institutions abroad. It is in just these countries where it is toughest to serve, where American diplomacy pays the greatest dividends. This is the face of American diplomacy today and it is my job, and the job of DS, to keep our people safe while still allowing this important work to continue.

As a senior leader within DS, I can tell you that we are looking towards the next challenges and threats. We must continue to embrace change across the spectrum of security requirements. If confirmed, I plan to focus on three broad priorities: staffing and resources, improving coordination among our investigative elements, and continuing to improve our physical security protections for U.S. personnel serving overseas.

In terms of staffing and resources, I want to ensure that we have qualified people, with sufficient training, and the right resources at our posts overseas in order to respond to each post's unique security environment. We improved the

training our foreign affairs colleagues receive by expanding our Foreign Affairs Counter-Threat (FACT) course. On the investigative side of DS, I will continue to ensure that our criminal investigators, background investigators and cyber security personnel are working closely together, as well as with other Department offices. Under my leadership, we have improved our coordination both within the Department and with our interagency partners in the Department of Defense and the Intelligence Community. Finally, we will continue to work closely with our partners in the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations and Regional Bureaus to provide safe, secure, and functional embassies and consulates that represent the United States abroad.

In conclusion, I want to assure this Committee that we in DS realize that our work in securing our posts and protecting our people will never be done. We take great pride in our accomplishments, but we are focused on the future. If confirmed, I pledge that through my leadership, everyone within DS will understand that they must lead by example, properly delegate authority, and be committed to continually improving how we deliver security to our constituents and achieve our global mission. Having said that, I want to be clear that I believe that responsibility for the provision of security lies with the Assistant Secretary of DS and if I am confirmed, I am committed to shouldering that responsibility. I will be glad to answer any questions you have. Thank you.