

**Statement of Carol Z. Perez**  
**Nominee to be Director General of the Foreign Service and**  
**Director of Human Resources**  
**Senate Committee on Foreign Relations**  
**December 4, 2018**

Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Menendez, and Distinguished Members of the Committee, I am honored to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be Director General of the Foreign Service and Director of Human Resources at the Department of State. I am deeply grateful for the confidence the President and Secretary Pompeo have shown in putting forth my nomination.

It would be my privilege to advance America's security and values by empowering and strengthening the workforce charged with this critical mission—our Foreign Service, Civil Service, Locally Employed personnel, family members, and other colleagues who work at the State Department in Washington and at our 277 posts around the world. Secretary Pompeo noted in his confirmation statement, diplomacy is not for the faint of heart, especially at a time of growing global challenges. Strategic competition from China, Russian aggression, Iran's malign actions, terrorism, and narcotics and human trafficking are just some of the challenges.

For more than 31 years, I have had the pleasure of working with capable, dedicated, and patriotic public servants. These women and men toil both at home and abroad in service to our country. They swear an oath to protect and defend the Constitution, often at great sacrifice to themselves and their families. Our locally employed staff sometimes also incur great risks working with and for the United States. I can think of no higher honor than directing the recruitment, development, and retention of all our personnel.

I would like to take a moment to recognize the members of my family --my mom and dad, Irene and John Zelis, who are at home in Chicago, my husband Al, my son Michael, my daughters Marisa and Caroline and her husband Jacob, who are here with me today. They have stood by my side as I proudly represented the United States overseas and in Washington. I am forever grateful for their love and support.

The Secretary noted in his confirmation testimony that his first priority would be setting the mission and empowering our people. To that end, on May 15, he lifted the hiring freeze on Foreign Service and Civil Service employment, ending the workforce reduction plan. The Department is actively recruiting and hiring to fill our highest priority, mission-critical vacancies. If confirmed, this will be one of my top priorities. The Secretary has also made clear his commitment to filling senior vacancies. If confirmed, I will support his efforts to identify our best career candidates for senior

positions so we can get them in place and on-the-job. Our employees are self-motivated and committed to the mission, but, as the Secretary has noted, vacancies have had a demoralizing effect and we must work hard to turn this around.

Putting our people first is not just about hiring. It is about retention, professional development, engagement, and workplace culture. Like the Secretary, I believe in fostering a culture of excellence that is anchored in performance, accountability, and communication. Leaders have a special responsibility to communicate. Communication begins with listening, but it also requires responsiveness and transparency. Communication is also critical to unleashing the talent of a diverse workforce. The Secretary has made this a priority, and, if confirmed, I will follow his lead.

Thanks to our long-standing diversity efforts and bipartisan Congressional support through the Pickering and Rangel programs and other initiatives, we have made important progress in this area. Today's State Department looks and feels very different than the one I entered in 1987. But we have a ways to go, especially in fostering diversity at more senior levels. Addressing barriers to advancement and supporting professional development and career advancement opportunities will be a critical part of our efforts. If confirmed, I will work with the Members of this Committee to build on the progress we have made.

Like our military, the State Department needs an array of different capabilities and skills to meet its mission. And while we do not have five services, we have three distinct personnel systems. Our almost 14,000 Foreign Service employees, both our officers and specialists, are our forward-deployed force doing everything from opening markets for American companies and helping American citizens overseas to preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction. Our nearly 11,000 Civil Service personnel are the Department's institutional memory, continuity, and subject matter experts, based mostly in Washington, but also at our passport, security, and foreign mission offices across the country. Our 50,000 locally employed staff are the mainstay of our U.S. diplomatic operations abroad. Whatever our position or title, as the Secretary has noted, we are "one team, with one mission, and one future." If confirmed, I will work to enable this team effort to advance America's security, prosperity and freedom.

We live in a complex and changing world. Change has always been with us but the pace has accelerated exponentially in recent decades. Successful organizations share one characteristic: *they adapt*. While our people excel at adapting—, the Department as an institution has a mixed record of doing so. *This must change*. The Secretary has emphasized the need to be "nimble, smart, and relevant." Our people add value every day in big and small ways. But to deliver better results for the American people, the Department must do a better job of supporting its own personnel by empowering them, removing barriers and streamlining processes.

If confirmed, I am committed to smart, strategic talent management that will build a diverse, capable, agile workforce capable of meeting the challenges and opportunities of our times.

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