

**Statement of Dr. Yleem D.S. Poblete**  
**Nominee for Assistant Secretary of State, Verification and Compliance**  
**Senate Committee on Foreign Relations**  
**November 28, 2017**

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, Members of the Committee.

It is an honor and privilege to be here today.

I am humbled by the trust President Trump and Secretary Tillerson have placed in me via this nomination and for the opportunity, if confirmed, to join public servants at the Department of State and throughout the Administration in advancing U.S. national security and interests.

I wish to thank Vice President Pence for his support; Senator Boozman, former Congressman Howard Berman and Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen for taking the time to be here today or to weigh in on my behalf. Congresswoman Ros-Lehtinen is more than a former boss. She is a friend. She was the key that opened the door to my almost two decades of public service on the House Committee on Foreign Affairs—a trajectory which enabled me to undertake new regional or functional portfolios every two to four years and, as such, helped me develop a greater appreciation for the experiences of Foreign Service, Civil Service, and other State Department personnel.

I rose through the ranks to become Staff Director and Chief of Staff and worked with some extraordinary individuals, many of whom are now on this side of the Capitol. My Committee experience enabled me:

- to work on the threat posed by radiological weapons and the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency in securing these materials;
- to work on nuclear cooperation agreements;
- to exercise oversight of U.S. statutes and of compliance by foreign countries with their obligations and commitments under existing bilateral and international agreements.
- to develop policy responses to counter threats from rogue regimes seeking nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons capabilities, and/or destabilizing numbers of advanced conventional weapons; and
- to secure support for the U.S. agenda and priorities in international fora.

None of this, however, would have been possible were it not for the Lord's protection and for my family.

Words fail me in appropriately thanking my parents and grandparents for their many sacrifices; in thanking my siblings and my husband, Jason, for their unconditional love and support.

I grew up in a family who experienced first-hand the evils of Communism-- persecution, intimidation, arbitrary arrest and detention, friends and relatives killed before them.

When my mother arrived in the United States as a teenager via the Peter Pan flights from Cuba, she knelt and literally kissed the ground—the soil of liberty.

Gratitude and respect for this great nation prompted my father, a young refugee, to serve in the U.S. Army.

My family instilled in me the firm belief that: *“this nation is the last best hope of man on Earth”*; that there are actors who seek to do her harm, and I feel privileged to have the opportunity, if confirmed, to contribute to keeping her safe through the rigorous verification and enforcement of arms control, nonproliferation, and disarmament agreements or commitments.

I am fully aware and appreciate that this mandate comes from you, the Congress, when establishing the position for which I have been nominated. Turning to the Committee report for guidance, it said: the Assistant Secretary will have *“overall oversight of policy and resources for verification and compliance regarding not only various treaties, but also executive agreements and commitments, including those falling within the purview of regional bureaus when such agreements or commitments pertain to arms control, nonproliferation, or disarmament.”*

I recognize that by combining these components in a single bureau under one assistant secretary, the Congress sought to ensure that verification and compliance mechanisms would reflect the challenges and concerns of policymakers, would be integrated into the agreements from their inception, and would be rigorously enforced.

In that vein, I commit to you today that, if confirmed, I will dutifully fulfill this mandate and pursue “effective verification”— seeking to detect violations well before they become a threat to our national security and interests and before options to address, correct or counter the situation are limited. Effective verification must also include detection, documentation, and accountability for *“patterns of marginal violations”* or non-compliance.

Violations must be appropriately and effectively addressed. Failure to do so, as stated in the 2017 Compliance Report produced by the Bureau I have been nominated to lead, can *“perpetuate and compound the dangers [to U.S. and allies’ security].”*

Maximizing the expertise of the Bureau, of the Department of State, of intelligence and resources from across the U.S. government and partner nations will be a priority, as will identifying and applying new technologies to correct deficiencies which may exist, in order to address today’s security needs while preparing for the challenges of tomorrow.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, Members of the Committee, let me close by, again, thanking you for the privilege to appear before you today. I consider this appointment, if

confirmed, to be the highest honor and solemn responsibility to undertake. I relish the opportunity to serve our nation and am humbled by the trust and confidence that the President and Secretary of State have placed in me via this nomination for Assistant Secretary for Verification and Compliance.