

Statement of Assistant-Secretary-designate Anne C. Richard
Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration
Department of State
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
December 8, 2011

I am honored to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration or "PRM". I thank the President and Secretary of State Clinton for their trust and confidence. If confirmed by the United States Senate, I will bring to this position years of practical experience in government and in a leading relief agency, and an absolute dedication to my country and to the life-and-death humanitarian issues that are the responsibility of this Assistant Secretary.

I am joined this morning by my husband, Will Davis, and our two children Ellie and Max. I am also joined today by my sister Christine Palmer, her husband, Tim, and their children and my cousin Beth Dugan, in addition to several long-time friends. I have a caring extended family that has taken an interest in and supported my professional career, for which I am profoundly thankful. Friends and professional colleagues also join us here today and I thank them.

The United States provides humanitarian aid to tens of millions of people whose lives hang in the balance due to persecution, oppression, and conflict. Our nation's helping hand to refugees, victims of conflict, the uprooted, and the stateless expresses our highest American values and demonstrates our global leadership.

I have been involved in these issues for much of my professional life. Over the past decade, I have traveled to countries suffering from conflict and its aftermath, including South Sudan, Afghanistan, Burma, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, and Liberia. I have talked to refugees where they have sought safe haven, meeting Somalis in Kenya, Burmese in Thailand, Iraqis in Jordan and Syria, and Afghans in Pakistan. In trips abroad, I am repeatedly impressed by the courage and resilience of refugees and other uprooted people. Despite all that they have endured, most of them long to regain control of their lives and become self-sufficient again. They ask only for a little bit of help, and a small share of our attention. And I have seen how modest investments of our know-how and resources can indeed bring about major improvements in their lives.

Secretary Clinton has consistently demonstrated over the past three years that meeting the world's humanitarian challenges is a Department priority. The bureau I have been nominated to lead is central to that effort as its mission is "to provide protection, ease suffering, and resolve the plight of persecuted and uprooted people around the world on behalf of the American people." PRM supports protection measures which seek to maintain safe places of refuge, address gender-based violence, ensure that refugees have appropriate documentation of their status, and that their newborn children are registered. PRM support includes clean water, sanitation, immunization and other health care, shelter, and items like bedding, pots and pans, sanitary supplies, and seeds and tools to grow food which increases self-sufficiency. It includes services such as treatment of HIV/AIDS, counseling on voluntary family planning, and other measures to reduce maternal mortality. PRM works through well-regarded

and highly accountable multilateral and non-governmental organizations to reach millions and protect them from diverse threats, which range from armed militias to cholera. It also promotes best practices in humanitarian response and ensures that humanitarian principles are integrated into U.S. foreign and national security policy. That is an ambitious agenda and a weighty responsibility that I would embrace without reservation.

If confirmed, I would place special emphasis on three PRM responsibilities. First, I salute the vigorous humanitarian diplomacy practiced by the bureau's most recent Assistant Secretary, Eric Schwartz. He recognized that PRM has a valuable perspective: it is deeply involved in the delivery of aid through partners while also sending U.S. teams to engage with other governments on crucial issues to resolve crises and to find solutions. Because of this, it has a unique vantage point -- at the intersection of humanitarian, human rights, and political issues -- from which to inform and help shape U.S. foreign policy and the policies of foreign governments and international bodies. We know that persistent humanitarian diplomacy can eventually yield results. In the Balkans, for example, the State Department's efforts have helped to facilitate a landmark agreement this year which, when fully implemented, will provide housing solutions for as many as 74,000 refugees and internally displaced persons. This is a major step forward to bringing a permanent resolution to the Balkans' protracted refugee and IDP problem. We should continue to engage in humanitarian diplomacy that holds governments accountable for fulfilling their international obligations and emphasizes the hard truth that complex humanitarian emergencies ultimately require political solutions.

Nowhere is this truth more painfully evident in today's world than in Somalia, where tens of thousands have died and hundreds of thousands are at risk of death. Even as Somalis flee, there is no quick humanitarian solution to a famine being fueled by conflict and political instability. If confirmed, I would work with the Bureau of African Affairs, the U.S. Agency for International Development, and others in the U.S. government to address the crisis in the Horn of Africa.

Second, the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program annually welcomes a fraction of the world's refugees into our country for resettlement. This is a great American tradition that not only saves lives and lets families thrive but also enriches the fabric of our nation. This program, like others PRM oversees or manages, is a public-private partnership with organizations working at the local level. During the past decade it has been my privilege to visit refugees resettled in cities from Baltimore and New York to San Francisco and Salt Lake City. I never fail to be impressed by the hospitality and support new arrivals receive from local communities and by the energy refugees bring to their new lives in the United States. You may know that delays related to new security checks, unrest in Syria, and insecurity in Yemen have resulted in fewer refugees arriving in the United States over the past fiscal year. If confirmed, I will work with other parts of the U.S. government to ensure that our country sustains a vibrant refugee admissions program while carrying out effective security screening.

Third, if confirmed, I will continue to emphasize the need to protect vulnerable populations, particularly women and girls. Protection of the vulnerable is the core principle of international refugee law and should always be PRM's primary goal. Refugee women and children are particularly in danger

of sexual violence, physical abuse and exploitation, and separation from families -- among other threats. Secretary Clinton has long championed women's rights worldwide, and PRM's programs have helped hundreds of survivors of gender-based violence in places like Colombia and Kenya. More follow-through is needed so that our best practices in protecting and empowering women and girls are employed every time they should be.

In conclusion, I have been a fan of the PRM bureau for many years. Its staff brings extraordinary dedication and expertise to assisting people in distress and advocating on their behalf. If confirmed, I will seek to bring to the bureau all the knowledge and insights gained during my career, including an understanding of the importance of U.S. assistance and diplomatic engagement, and will be steadfastly committed to fulfilling the responsibilities entrusted to the Assistant Secretary. I am thankful to the President for nominating me to lead this bureau, grateful for the opportunity to serve under Secretary Clinton, and appreciate the Senate's careful consideration of my nomination.

Thank you, and I look forward to answering your questions.