

Statement of Marshall Billingslea
Nominee for Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
July 21, 2020

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Menendez, and members of the Committee, I am honored to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee for Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security. I am grateful to the President and Secretary Pompeo for their trust and confidence in me to serve in this important new role.

First of all, I thank my family – my wife Karen and my two daughters Morgan and Elsa – for supporting my decision to accept the President's nomination to the Department of State. These positions require enormous family sacrifice, and I could not do this without their love and backing.

Senators, it is a great pleasure to appear before this committee, which dates to the earliest days of our Republic as one of the original ten standing committees of the Senate. It is an honor to appear before the body, which discharges the Senate's constitutional prerogatives under Article II, Section 2, Clause 2. I hope it will also be a nice homecoming of sorts; as some of you may know, I began my government career on the professional staff of this very committee.

The experience I gained from my time as an SFRC staffer was formative, and has had a lasting influence on my career in government.

In particular, I am gratified to be nominated to lead the "T Family" of Bureaus, given that I worked closely for nearly seven years with both T and its predecessor, the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. In fact, I had the privilege in the late 1990s of co-drafting for then Chairman Helms the bipartisan legislation that would fold ACDA into the Department of State and create the Under Secretary position.

So I find myself, 21 years later, now sitting before you, nominated by the President for the position of Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security.

If confirmed by the Senate, I look forward to tackling the many, and critical, national security issues, for which the T family is responsible within the State Department. Some of those challenges are recurring, decades-old issues, pre-dating creation of the Under Secretary. And some are newer, emergent problem sets requiring fresh and creative thinking.

I am pleased to be nominated to a position with a portfolio with which I am familiar. This is not just from my time serving on this Committee staff, but from my tenure as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Negotiations Policy, where I worked closely with both the arms control and nonproliferation functions of T, and later at both NATO and then as Deputy Under Secretary of the Navy, where I worked closely with the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs and its Directorate of Defense Trade Controls.

Members will see, in my history of public service, a career spent working on a wide range of arms control, nonproliferation, and political-military issues, I supported a number of arms control and law of war treaties, over the years. I helped move several of those through this Committee during the 1990s, ranging from START II to the Amended Mines Protocol, the CFE Flank Agreement, the Convention on Nuclear Safety, and other measures.

My support for arms control that advances U.S. security, and which is both enforceable and verifiable, is fully captured in my 2002 testimony as DASD for Negotiations Policy, before the Senate Government Affairs Committee. In that hearing I stressed the importance of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the value of the International Atomic Energy Agency, and the enhanced access provided under the Additional Protocol, which I supported during the Bush Administration. I also talked at length about the importance of multilateral regimes, such as the Australia Group, the Nuclear Suppliers Group, and the Missile Technology Control Regime.

During that time, I launched expansion of the Suppression of Unlawful Acts at Sea (SUA) Convention to include proliferation, and drove DoD involvement in creation of the Proliferation Security Initiative. I also testified before this Committee on behalf of the Child Soldiers Protocol.

Finally, my time at the Treasury Department, for the past three years, demonstrates my deep and abiding commitment to enforcing global nonproliferation norms, especially UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs). Much of what I did, as Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, was to confront North Korean proliferation networks circumventing the objectives of the NPT and flouting UNSCRs. Similarly, I drove the use of sanctions and other financial tradecraft to disrupt Iranian proliferation networks, as well as their terror apparatus.

It is with this background – my ability to recognize what makes an international agreement a good deal for the United States – and my commitment to verification of compliance and enforcement, that led to my appointment as Special Presidential Envoy for Arms Control. The President tasked me with negotiating the most complete, effective, and verifiable arms control agreement possible to safeguard American national security. It is also why he put me forward for the much broader role of Under Secretary.

As Senators know, I recently testified before this Committee in closed session on our thinking regarding nuclear arms control, the New START Treaty, and the worrisome nuclear arms build-ups of both Russia and China. I will continue to keep this Committee fully and currently informed of our progress in these areas, though for obvious reasons, cannot delve into specifics of the negotiations in open session. I look forward to continuing those discussions with you, particularly as the results of our technical working groups – which soon will deploy to Vienna – become apparent.

In closing, leading nuclear arms control negotiations as Special Presidential Envoy has provided me an even deeper respect for the hard-working men and women at the State Department, particularly those in the “T Family” of bureaus and offices.

Notwithstanding COVID, the T family continuously rises to the challenge. From the Arms Control Verification and Compliance Bureau's efforts to address global WMD proliferation issues to the Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation's effective responses to proliferation threats and shaping of the international security environment to the outstanding work by the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs to support our global security partnerships on the one hand, and the American defense industrial base on the other, the T family is providing outstanding support to the President's arms control, nonproliferation, and international security priorities. If confirmed as Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security, I am committed to working with this committee to strengthen the "T Family," the State Department and American national security.

Chairman Risch and Ranking Member Menendez, I greatly appreciate the opportunity afforded by the Committee to appear before you today as you consider my nomination.