

**Opening Statement for Mallory Stewart**  
**Nominee to be Assistant Secretary of State for Arms Control, Verification,**  
**and Compliance**  
**Senate Foreign Relations Committee**  
**October 5, 2021**

Thank you, Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and Members of this Committee for the opportunity to appear before you today.

It is my distinct honor and pleasure to be President Biden's nominee for the role of Assistant Secretary for Arms Control, Verification and Compliance (AVC) at the Department of State. I want to thank the President and Secretary Blinken for their confidence in me and for the opportunity, if confirmed, to help advance and protect America's national security.

I would also like to thank my colleagues and friends who have supported me throughout this process. And I would especially like to thank my parents, my husband, and our three children. I could not have achieved anything without their encouragement, their guidance, their patience, and their endless love and support.

The Arms Control, Verification and Compliance Bureau (AVC) is at the forefront of some of the most challenging and pressing national security priorities. I know firsthand just how important, complex, and challenging AVC's work is because, if confirmed, this would be a return to the Bureau in which I proudly served as a Deputy Assistant Secretary during the Obama Administration. I also had the privilege of working on the AVC portfolio prior to that during my time in the State

Department's Legal Adviser's Office, and I continue to work many of these issues in my current role at the National Security Council.

I joined the State Department's Legal Adviser's Office in 2002. I was inspired to leave my law firm job in part by the events of 9/11, amidst the swirl of international outreach, coordination, and concern. Throughout my time working on arms control and treaty issues, I have personally witnessed the value of international cooperation, engagement, and dialogue, even – and sometimes especially with – non-traditional partners and potential competitors.

In order to most effectively achieve the bureau's mission, AVC must continue its work to re-establish U.S. leadership in multilateral institutions and re-engage with allies and partners. The Biden-Harris Administration recognizes that the challenges we face are not ours alone and cannot be solved by any one nation. That is why it has placed a great deal of importance on engagement and has begun the work to revitalize and strengthen our alliances in the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific to better deter and defend against growing threats.

But engagement with allies is only one piece of the diplomacy puzzle. We must also engage with our main competitors, like Russia and China, and attempt to keep an open dialogue. It is important to be able to engage on security even at times of bilateral tension and disagreement. That is why this Administration is engaged in a strategic stability dialogue with Russia, and why we seek to engage in meaningful dialogue on nuclear and other strategic stability threats with China. From an administrative perspective, I am specifically interested in expanding AVC's capacity to work on the challenges posed by these countries' increasingly aggressive behaviors.

If confirmed, I would welcome the opportunity to lead this important Bureau together with the many dedicated professional public servants that uphold the bureau's national security mission every day. AVC's work to address the existential threat posed by nuclear weapons, deter the use of all weapons of mass destruction, and contend with emerging technology security challenges and a rapidly evolving security environment is critical to American security. If confirmed, I would hope to partner with the Hill and with other Departments and Agencies to make sure the Bureau has the necessary support and resources to fulfill its important mission.

Working together, we need to make sure AVC has the best tools and analytical capabilities available, now and in the future, to provide robust verification of arms control, nonproliferation, and disarmament agreements and commitments, as well as rigorous assessments of compliance with those agreements and commitments, including in order to provide Congress with a complete and accurate accounting of the arms control landscape through the annual Compliance Report. I was personally involved with the Compliance Report when I was a DAS in AVC. I think it is a critically important product that needs to be thorough, clear, and credible. If confirmed, I will make its timely delivery to Congress a priority.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, Members of this Committee. You have my commitment that, if confirmed, I will work in close coordination with you and respect your role in the formation of foreign policy. There are a great number of challenges we face – but we face them together, and we must resolve them together.

Thank you again for the opportunity to be here today, and I look forward to your questions.