

**Statement of Mr. Puneet Talwar**  
**Nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of Morocco**  
**Senate Committee on Foreign Relations**  
**July 27, 2022**

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Young – it is an honor to return to the Committee as President Biden’s nominee to be the United States Ambassador to the Kingdom of Morocco.

I want to thank the President and Secretary Blinken for their trust and confidence in me. I have great respect for this committee. I have seen first-hand your strong commitment to advancing our national interests. If confirmed, I look forward to consulting closely with you and hopefully welcoming you when you visit.

I am joined today by my wife Sarosh and my sons Haris and Ilyas. My parents, brother, and sister are watching from home.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Young, Morocco is a long-standing and valued partner. Indeed, it was the first country to recognize American independence. With its strategic location, Morocco is a bridge between Europe, the Mediterranean, and Africa – regions that are critical to American national security.

Morocco is a leader on key regional and global issues. It is at the forefront of efforts to combat terrorism. It has taken bold steps on the climate crisis. Morocco is also dedicated to economic development in Africa, and last week, it hosted the U.S.-Africa Business Summit.

I want to highlight Morocco’s leadership on peace with Israel. The relationship between the two countries is blossoming. It now spans cooperation on investment, energy, aviation, and other areas. Morocco was the first Arab country to sign a defense cooperation agreement with Israel. Last week, the Chief of Staff of the Israel Defense Forces made a landmark visit to Morocco. In March, Morocco’s foreign minister attended the inaugural meeting of the Negev Forum. The vision of a “warm peace” that eluded the region for so long is coming into focus thanks to the Abraham Accords and Morocco’s growing ties with Israel. If confirmed, I will support translating that vision into tangible improvements in the lives of ordinary people so that we can expand the circle of peace, something which ultimately serves American interests.

With respect to the conflict in Western Sahara, last Fall the United Nations Secretary-General appointed a seasoned diplomat, Staffan de Mistura, as his Personal Envoy to work with the parties in a renewed push for peace. He is someone I have known for many years. If confirmed, I will support his efforts to promote a just and durable political solution.

Domestically, Morocco has an ambitious reform and development agenda that emphasizes expanding the private sector. If confirmed, I will support Morocco’s reform program, and I will strongly advocate for American exports. I will also support the advancement of human rights.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Young, I have been immersed in policy toward this region for 30 years. My formative years were spent in this very room on the benches behind you. I built on

that experience at the National Security Council and in a senior diplomatic position as Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs. These roles have given me a reservoir of directly relevant experience to draw upon should I be confirmed.

I would like to close with a few words about my family. I could not have made it this far were it not for the unconditional support and love of my wife Sarosh, who steadfastly supported me through the long hours I have logged in public service. She did so even as she pursued her own career and cared for the two fine gentlemen you see behind me.

This is also an especially meaningful moment for my parents. It is the culmination of a journey they began 60 years ago when they took a leap of faith and left India to come to America with little more than their dreams. They sacrificed and endured a great deal so that my brother, sister, and I would have opportunities they never had. We are forever grateful to them.

Thank you. I look forward to your questions.