

**Oral Remarks by Hon. Yleem D.S. Poblete, PhD**

**U.S. House of Representatives  
House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Europe**

**“Arms Control, International Security, and U.S. Assistance to Europe: Review and Reforms for the State Department”**

**Tuesday, March 11, 2025**

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and distinguished Members, thank you for this opportunity to testify before the Subcommittee.

I provide specific, detailed recommendations in my prepared remarks on potential reforms, primarily for the Arms Control and International Security (T) family at the Department of State, as requested, but would like to address a couple of overarching issues relevant to today’s discussion.

For American leadership to endure and facilitate, contribute to security and peace, we must be strong — militarily, economically, and diplomatically.

This means, perhaps, doing more with less.

That begins by placing the security and well-being of the American people and our nation first and aligning all our efforts toward that goal.

America First does not mean America alone. The U.S. welcomes alliances where there is an alignment of interests, an equal stake and contributions toward shared goals. The U.S. wants partnership, not dependency.

For decades, multilateralism has been viewed as an end unto itself without examination of the mandate, functions, and relevance of multinational organizations. Such a review is integral to any effort to transform our policies and government to advance U.S. security and interests and leave the U.S. well-positioned for current and future challenges.

On criticism of the Trump administration and statements the U.S. needs to “be present” for Europe— the U.S. has been and is there for Europe in spades, including via the Aegis Ashore missile defense systems, U.S. navy ships with Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense capabilities, Patriot systems and other support. This is part of the U.S.-European Phased Adaptive Approach which I oversaw as Assistant Secretary of State under the first Trump administration.

I firmly believe the work of the T family—where diplomacy, intelligence, and defense converge—is an essential tool in the U.S. arsenal of national security instruments of power. It embodies peace through strength including via nonproliferation efforts, verification and compliance and associated accountability, strategic dialogue, missile defense policy, and deterrence.

I am sharing a few of the observations included in my prepared remarks, some unpleasant, but we are all seeking to improve.

As Assistant Secretary for Verification and Compliance under the first Trump Administration, I had the opportunity to work with some brilliant, dedicated, forward-thinking professionals and faithful public servants and patriots in this space, but observed:

- Others pining for and operating in a distant past or seized by nativism, losing focus of U.S. interests, priorities, and objectives.
- The Eurocentrism/Euro dominance stemming from Cold War dynamics, arms treaties, and agreements has led to the usurpation of some T family responsibilities.
- The utilization by the Intelligence Community of findings and assessments by international organizations, instead of providing U.S. intelligence.
- Manipulation of clearance processes to usurp statutory roles and authorities of decision makers and advance personal ideological agendas.
  - Examples include scope, content, determinations relating to the Compliance Report; personnel in the Office of the Legal Advisor reversing previously cleared determinations and approved language on such matters as Iranian violations of UNSC Resolutions, including 2231; Assistant Secretary-level clearances changed before they reached the Secretary's desk.

### Recommendations

To succeed in reforming, realigning, streamlining, and downsizing, there must be:

1. Clear guidance and leadership on the agenda, priorities, scope, and metrics to justify: personnel needs, programs, and funding that effectively and verifiably make the U.S. safer and stronger. This applies to Undersecretaries, Bureaus and Offices reporting up the chain of command to the Senate-confirmed Secretary of State-Secretary Rubio- and pursuant to President Trump's direction.
2. Clear lines of demarcation.

### Transparency/Honesty in Reporting

If a review has not already taken place, there should be an immediate halt of all reports until Presidential appointees have had an opportunity to review.

1. Stop overclassification to hide information from Congress and the American people.
2. Return to Unclassified reports with classified TS/SCI Annex as mandated by statute.
3. No versions of intermediate classification.
4. Dramatically increase the scope of the Compliance Report in terms of the subject matter covered and the information used to inform the judgments in the document.

### Optimization

1. T has to be fully integrated. No more marginalization or subordination to regional bureaus.
2. T should reflect the current landscape—in scope and message— as, potentially, Undersecretary for Global Security and Strategic Domains, which includes but is not limited to, outer space and undersea domains, AI, cyber.
3. Eliminate Congressional and Public Affairs offices and personnel within bureaus. All these requests should go through the Department’s respective bureaus and offices to ensure maximum coordination and message cohesion. One Nation. One Message. This would also help eliminate dangerous leaks and mitigate insubordination.
4. Bring matters pertaining to the Antarctic Treaty, Arctic Affairs, Artemis Accords (given based on Outer Space Treaty), Space Traffic Management (already handled by the ESC office in ADS) to a revamped and renamed ADS Bureau.
5. Funds and assistance programs should be consolidated into one dedicated office—not an additional office but, after reduction and consolidation of bureaus— into a single office with an oversight mandate.

Other eliminations, consolidations, and reductions are included in my written testimony.

We must do what is right and necessary, not what is easy or popular.

I look forward to your questions and working together to make the Department of State, foreign policy and programs more efficient and make the U.S. safer, stronger, and more prosperous, ushering in a new era of American leadership and greatness while advancing security and peace.