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Department of Defense
OFFICE OF PREPUBLICATION AND SECURITY REVIEW

VICTORINO G. MERCADO
Nominee to be Assistant Secretary of Defense
for Strategy, Plans, and Capabilities
Senate Armed Services Committee
March 10, 2020

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Reed, and Members of the Committee –
Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today (and a special thank you to the members of your staffs who met with me prior to this hearing).

Upfront, I would like to thank the President for nominating me and Secretary Esper for his trust and confidence in recommending me for this extraordinary opportunity to continue to serve.

Unfortunately, my family is on the west coast or on travel and could not be here today, although they very much wanted to be present.

For the record, I would like to thank my wife, Suzane, who allowed me to fail in retirement after 35 years in the Navy, and continue to serve in the Department of Defense - now as a civilian. She and our two children -- Dan, who just completed 10 years in the Navy as a Naval Aviator and is moving on to a new chapter; and Melinda who just joined the Los Angeles Angel City Chorale -- get full credit for all that I have been privileged to do in the Navy and back in the DOD.

I also want to acknowledge my mom and dad. My father enlisted in the Navy in the Philippines, retiring as a Master Chief in the 70s. My mother was an educator. They brought their family to the US, became naturalized citizens,

and I was born in Virginia while my father was stationed in Norfolk. What I am today, I owe to them and my sisters – Helen and Elsie, brother - Erwin, my dear in-laws and friends. It did take a village in my case.

As for the position that I have been nominated for – the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy, Plans and Capabilities – I have been incredibly fortunate to have been associated with this organization for the past year in varying capacities, and I have had a front row seat to its relevance in developing and implementing the National Defense Strategy, re-invigorating the plans review process and guiding the capability development and force management processes, working alongside the professionals in the Services, Joint Staff and the Combatant Commands. If confirmed, it would truly be a high honor to lead this high performing organization and I pledge my very best efforts to advance our national objectives during these consequential times.

Finally, I would like to say that my time working as a legislative fellow, supporting this Committee, back in 2000, was one of the highlights of my career ashore. I fully understand, appreciate, and thank you for the important work that you do on behalf of our men and women in uniform, our civilians and their families.

I am grateful for your consideration of my nomination and I welcome your questions. Thank You.