

Written Statement of John Tien

**Nominee for Deputy Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security**

**Before the
U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs**

May 27, 2021

Chairman Peters, Ranking Member Portman, and distinguished members of the Committee,

It is an honor to appear before you today. I would like to thank President Biden for nominating me, Secretary Mayorkas for wanting me to be on his team, and Senator Reed for giving me that kind introduction. To Senator Reed, you continue to be a great public servant role model to all of us who graduated from West Point.

In fact, it was 34 years ago to this very day on May 27, 1987, along with my 1,000 plus fellow classmates, that I graduated from West Point and commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the United States Army. Our West Point Class of 1987 motto is “Our Country We Strengthen.”

For my next 24 years of active-duty service, I tried to do just that: strengthen our country. I did it in peacetime and I did it in wartime. In 2006, I was given the privilege to lead more than 1,100 Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines in combat operations in Iraq as the Task Force 2-37 Armor Battalion Commander. If confirmed, it would be the honor of my lifetime to once again serve alongside my fellow Americans, and in this case, the 240,000 amazing Homeland Security employees, in helping safeguard our homeland.

Safeguarding our homeland, whether it is in the Army or in the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), is a team effort for me and my family. In that light, I am so happy that my life partner since senior year of high school is here with me today, my wife Tracy. I love you and thank you for supporting me in this next possible life chapter of service. To our two daughters, Amanda and Rebecca, who are watching this live: I am so proud of the kind of human beings and American citizens that you have become. I want to thank my three sisters, uncle and aunt, mother-in-law, and other extended family who have supported me throughout my life to include sending all of those great care packages while deployed in Iraq. I also want to acknowledge three people who are no longer with us: my father, John Tien Sr.; my stepfather, Thomas Hennessy; and my mother, Deborah Hennessy, who recently died of COVID-19. I know they would have all been proud of me, especially my mother, that I may get a chance to serve the Nation again.

As for my birth father, he, along with my grandparents, and his two brothers and sister escaped the likely persecution of Communist China after World War II. As a young college student, my father proudly became a naturalized U.S. citizen in the late 1950s. When it was time for me to

consider college, he asked me to consider giving back to the country that welcomed our family decades earlier. He asked me to go to West Point. Admittedly, I first went to West Point out of a family obligation. However, by the time I graduated, I realized what a privilege it was to be able to call myself a West Point graduate and officer in the United States Army.

The mission of DHS is to secure the Nation from the many threats we face. The threats that our Nation face today are evolving, and originate both here in the homeland and abroad. The Department must not just be vigilant, it must be ready. If confirmed as the Deputy Secretary, one of my roles is to be the Department's chief operating officer. In this role, I will help ensure the Department is ready and that it executes its missions responsibly both in terms of wisely using the resources given to us and doing so through the enforcement of our Nation's laws.

Just as the threats to the Nation are evolving, the Department will need to be flexible, will need to evolve its capabilities, and will need to work with our partners at the Federal, State, Local, Tribal and Territorial levels. We will also need to work with partners abroad and with the private sector, where I have spent the last ten years of my professional life. In short, we need partners.

As the Department evolves and executes its mission over the coming years and if I am confirmed, I look forward to partnering with all of you on this committee and our other Congressional partners to help us evolve and help us be ready. It would be an honor to join you in service to the Nation.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.