

**STATEMENT OF
AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE TO PALAU HELEN REED-ROWE
SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE
Wednesday, July 21, 2010**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

I am honored to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the first resident Ambassador to the Republic of Palau. I am deeply grateful for the trust and confidence that President Obama and Secretary Clinton have placed in me.

Permit me to express my deep gratitude to my immediate family – my brother Alvin Reed, my daughter Nikkia Rowe and my son Kevin Rowe. My family has been shaped and tested by my many years in the Foreign Service, and we have emerged stronger in our commitment to public service.

As a career member of the United States Foreign Service, I have served overseas in three geographic regions, as Deputy Chief of Mission in the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and in managerial capacities in Jamaica, Ecuador, and Niger. In Washington, I had responsibility for diverse portfolios in the Bureaus of Near Eastern Affairs and European Affairs. I believe that my extensive experience in senior positions in the Foreign Service – which have focused on advancement of democracy and human rights, promotion of economic development and national security agendas, and the rights and empowerment of women – has prepared me well to serve as U.S. Ambassador to Palau, if confirmed.

The United States and the Republic of Palau have enjoyed a close and special relationship for over 60 years. Our Compact of Free Association provides the framework for much of our bilateral relationship. Its provisions ensure the security of Palau and contribute to the security of the United States.

Under the Compact, citizens of Palau may live and work in the United States. Many of Palau's young adults are serving in the U.S. Military today in Iraq, Afghanistan, and worldwide. Several Palauans have made the ultimate sacrifice of giving their lives to make the world a safer place for us all.

Palau is a loyal friend and ally in many other ways. For example, Palau's voting record in the United Nations corresponds to U.S. interests on important policy matters more often than almost any other country in the world.

The United States and Palau have completed the first fifteen years under our Compact of Free Association, and we are currently engaged in the first 15-year review provided for in the agreement. Discussions are ongoing, and I am confident that both the United States and Palau will be satisfied with the results.

How we manage our relationship with Palau over the next several years will set a tone that could last decades. If confirmed, I will make every effort to ensure our mutual success in a range of areas. My highest priority will be the protection of Americans and U.S. interests in Palau.

With more than 20 U.S. government agencies conducting programs in Palau, I believe it is important to improve coordination among them to ensure our efforts are effective and implemented with transparency and accountability. If confirmed, I will work especially closely with the Department of the Interior, which makes available to Palau assistance appropriated under the Compact and its related agreements. I will also encourage the Department of Defense's Pacific Command to continue its engagement with Palau. The year I spent at the Naval War College, and my experience in the Marshall Islands have expanded my appreciation of our military's role in the region. I am pleased to report the U.S. Navy Pacific Partnership, designed to strengthen alliances in the Pacific, has deployed the USNS *Mercy* to Palau during this fiscal year to deliver humanitarian assistance and civic support. Palau is also an active participant in the Ship Rider program, an effort that benefits both Palau and U.S. maritime security initiatives.

Our Peace Corps volunteers continue to be welcomed by the Government of Palau and contribute in invaluable ways. I welcome engagement with our Regional Environment hub based in Suva as we identify and address mutual interests, both bilateral and regional, in the areas of environment and science. If confirmed, I will ensure that all U.S. assistance is visible and complementary to that of other regional donors.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Members of this Committee, other distinguished Members of Congress, and your staff members to achieve U.S. policy goals and strengthen our relationship with the Republic of Palau. I pledge to promote and protect U.S. interests and lead effectively our talented and dedicated American and Palauan staff.

I thank you again for the privilege of appearing before you today. I am pleased to answer your questions.