

OPENING STATEMENT
Senate Foreign Relations Committee Nomination Hearing
December 9, 2010

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee is here today to consider the nominations of Sue Brown to be Ambassador to Montenegro; Joseph Torsella to be Representative to the United Nations for UN Management and Reform; Eric Postel to be Assistant Administrator at USAID; Pamela Spratlen to be Ambassador to the Kyrgyz Republic; David Carden to be Representative to ASEAN; and Daniel Shields to be Ambassador to Brunei.

Today, we will examine a wide variety of posts with responsibilities spanning regions and institutions across the globe. Each of them is important in strengthening U.S. influence and in safeguarding American interests. I want to congratulate each of you on your nominations, and welcome you and your families as we discuss the challenges and opportunities that you may face should you be confirmed.

Three of our nominees have been named for Ambassadorial posts in small, yet important countries in the strategic regions of the Western Balkans, Central Asia, and in the South China Sea.

Montenegro, independent only since 2006, has already made significant progress in joining NATO and the EU. However, if it is to continue down this path, Montenegro will need to confront the difficult challenges of corruption and organized crime.

Kyrgyzstan – located in the strategic Central Asian region – hosts an important logistics hub and transit center for transport in and out of Afghanistan. Deep-seated ethnic violence erupted earlier this year, and ongoing political instability threatens the process of forming a new government after the country's recent elections.

Brunei, a predominantly Muslim country bordering Malaysia, possesses substantial oil and natural gas reserves. The country helps maintain safe passage through vital sea lanes in the South China Sea and will play a role in helping resolve the various territorial disputes in this important region.

Today, we also examine America's relationship to the United Nations and the role the U.S. should be playing in reforming this important institution. As this year's Senate representative to the UN General Assembly, I understand the critical role the UN can play in helping meet some of the global challenges we face, but I also see how the institution too often falls short in meeting our expectations. As the largest investor, the United States should lead the effort to make the UN more accountable, effective, and transparent.

We will also consider America's relations with the Association of South East Asian Nations. Today, ASEAN has grown into one of the world's largest and most influential regional

coalitions. Trade, counter-terrorism, maritime security, and relations with ASEAN neighbors are just a few of the critical U.S. interests at stake in the ASEAN region.

Finally, the Committee will examine the role USAID should play in helping countries around the world create long-term, sustainable development. Stability and growth abroad is in America's security and economic interests. Development programs focused on women, micro-enterprise, and education can be critical to meeting this challenge.

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I want to thank each of you for your willingness to take on these important and challenging posts, and look forward to hearing your views. I want to take a second to briefly introduce our first panel before turning it over to you for your opening statements.

First up today, is Sue Brown, our nominee to be the Ambassador to Montenegro. A career member of the Senior Foreign Service, Sue has a distinguished record of service throughout the world, most recently as the Deputy Chief of Mission in Ghana. This is Sue's first Ambassadorial nomination.

Next, is Joseph Torsella, who has been nominated to serve as our Representative to the United Nations for UN Management and Reform. I understand Senator Casey will be introducing Mr. Torsella. Mr. Torsella is currently the Chair of the Pennsylvania Board of Education. He has been a small business owner, a Deputy Mayor, a Rhodes Scholar, and the founding President of the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia.

Finally, we have Eric Postel, who has been tapped to serve as the Assistant Administrator for Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade at USAID. Eric is the founder of an investment banking and financial consulting firm which is focused on emerging markets. He also was Senate appointed as a Commissioner on the U.S. HELP Commission, which was focused on foreign assistance reform.

As each of you give your opening statements, please introduce any family or friends here to support you.

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First on our second panel is David Carden, who has been nominated to be the U.S. Representative to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Mr. Carden is a lawyer and a partner at Jones Day, a well-renowned international law firm with 30 offices around the world. Currently, he serves as the Co-Chair of the firm's Litigation and SEC Enforcement Practice.

Next, is Pamela Spratlen, who has been tapped to be the U.S. Ambassador to Kyrgyzstan. Ms. Spratlen is a career member of the Foreign Service and is currently the Deputy Chief of Mission in Kazakhstan. This is Ms. Spratlen's first Ambassadorial nomination.

Finally, we will consider Daniel Shields to be the new Ambassador to Brunei. Shields is also a career member of the Senior Foreign Service. He currently serves as the Director of the Office of Mainland Southeast Asia here in Washington but has served throughout East and Southeast Asia during his career. This would also be his first Ambassadorial posting.

As each of you give your opening statements, please introduce any family or friends here to support you.