

Statement of Kelly Craft
Nominee to be Permanent Representative to the United Nations
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
June 19, 2019

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Menendez, and all Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear here today.

It is a singular honor to sit before you as President Trump's nominee to serve as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations.

A special word of thanks, of course, to my Kentucky Senators, Leader McConnell and Senator Paul, for their kind words as well as their encouragement, wisdom, and support throughout my tenure in Ottawa.

I would also like to express gratitude to President Trump, Vice President Pence, Secretary Pompeo, Ambassador Lighthizer and Mission Canada for the trust they have shown me as we have worked together to strengthen our bonds with Canada and the Canadian people.

I appear before you today excited at the prospect of representing the United States at the UN, but also saddened at the thought of leaving my many superb colleagues and counterparts across our northern border.

Mr. Chairman, I am blessed with the most loving and supportive family imaginable. My husband Joe, our family Ron, Elliott, JW, Mollie, Ryan, Lauren, Kyle, Mia, Stu, Jane and Wyatt. My siblings Marc and Elisabeth, Micah and Bruce. And the 5 of 11 stars in our lives Jake, Kingsley, Holland, Lachlan, and Windsor.

When the President asked me to consider moving to New York to serve as our nation's Permanent Representative to the UN, I turned to the people you see behind me to ask for their guidance, and to God for His. If confirmed, I would assume this position knowing that, like the Toronto Raptors and Kentucky Wildcats, I will have a very deep bench.

I would also assume this position with clear-eyed humility. I have much to learn about the United Nations, a fact I first encountered in 2007 when I served as an

Alternate Delegate to the UN General Assembly and saw firsthand the complexity of multilateral diplomacy at this unique institution.

I learned then that making progress at the UN requires constant attention to relationships, a knack for knowing the bottom line, and a belief in incremental, but determined, steps forward.

Ultimately, I would not have accepted the President's nomination for this position if I was not certain I was ready for the task at hand. Like the President I have had the honor to serve, I believe that the United Nations is a vital institution that is at its best when free nations jointly contribute to its missions around the world.

I was born and raised on a working farm where all living things were valued and treated with kindness. We were that family with more than a few one-eyed cats and three-legged dogs. We treasured and protected the land, and all those who worked it and walked it. My parents instilled in me a respect for people of all means, occupations, origins, and circumstances. If confirmed, those are the values that will animate my work at the UN, as they have throughout my personal and professional life.

And, if confirmed, I will carry that respect with me as I engage with all 192 of my counterparts. I will also carry with me several key priorities that I've already had the opportunity to discuss with many of you on the committee.

Most notably, the United States must continue the drum beat of reform at the UN. Of course, the issue of reform has been something of a mantra for members of both parties on this committee, and for good reason.

The UN system has grown quickly, its activities have expanded, and its ambitions have at times gotten ahead of accountability. Waste and overlap remain problems. Conduct issues, including sexual exploitation, continue to surface.

Hiring practices are too often opaque, and backroom deals for appointments and contracts continue. None of that is acceptable, and my voice on these matters will be heard whenever and wherever these issues arise. The United Nations needs greater transparency, and U.S. taxpayers deserve it. Reform makes the UN stronger, not weaker.

The second priority I would take to New York is a focus on expanding the pool of resources available to the UN's humanitarian network, and pushing its agencies to

maximize the impact of those resources on the ground, where needs are the greatest. There are numerous, massive, and protracted crises, from Sudan to Yemen to Syria. And there are new crises that we did not foresee a few years ago, such as the four million Venezuelans who have fled their country in search of safety and sustenance.

The United States has long been the world leader in supporting humanitarian aid, spending more than eight billion dollars a year through USAID and international organizations such as UNICEF and the World Food Program. But I also believe other responsible nations can and must do more to contribute their fair share, and I will make that point firmly and frequently. Again, the UN is stronger, not weaker, when more of its members are invested in the success of its most important work.

Finally, I am a believer in the power of public-private partnerships to unlock opportunity and spur development. If confirmed, I will take to New York a broad network of relationships that I believe can fuel new partnerships and expand those with proven track records. Among my areas of strong interest for displaced populations are strengthening pre-natal care services for women, improving the quality of early childhood education, and increasing attention to elder care challenges. The numbers are colossal, the needs urgent, and we have a moral and practical obligation to work with other countries to address these crises.

While bolstering humanitarian efforts will be a top priority for me, there is one other issue of a global nature that I would like to briefly address. I understand that some members of this committee have raised questions about where I stand on climate change, and though I have spoken to many of you individually about this issue, I want to repeat my thoughts here publicly.

Climate change needs to be addressed, as it poses real risks to our planet. Human behavior has contributed to the changing climate. Let there be no doubt: I take this matter seriously, and if confirmed, I will be an advocate for all countries to do their part in addressing climate change.

This does not mean, in my view, that the United States should imperil American jobs—or our economy as a whole—by assuming an outsized burden on behalf of the rest of the world. However, it does mean that we should promote the creativity and innovation that have made the United States a leader in tackling the challenges of our environment—all while safeguarding our nation's economic wellbeing.

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, I believe that the United States must maintain its central leadership role at the United Nations. I say that for several reasons. First, when the UN performs as it should, it advances key American objectives, including the promotion of peace and security.

Second, without U.S. leadership, our partners and allies would be vulnerable to bad actors at the UN. This is particularly true in the case of Israel, which is the subject of unrelenting bias and hostility in UN venues. The United States will never accept such bias, and if confirmed I commit to seizing every opportunity to shine a light on this conduct, call it what it is, and demand that these outrageous practices finally come to an end.

Finally, I believe the United States must remain vigilant in constraining efforts by our strategic competitors to gain influence at our expense. I speak in particular about Russia and China – two nations with cynical approaches to the United Nations.

If confirmed, I will miss no opportunity to draw attention to malign influence at the UN; to distinguish American leadership from the corrosive, underhanded conduct of those nations; and to reinforce the values—our values—that were central to the UN's founding.

Mr. Chairman, the United States has been met with many recent successes at the UN, from historic sanctions against North Korea to a renewed boldness in speaking out against rogue actors. These are successes I am eager to build upon, and I look forward to working with this committee and benefiting from its collective wisdom and experience.

If given the honor to sit behind the nameplate that reads “United States,” you have my word that I will do everything in my power to advance policy that benefits the American people; that contributes to a safer, more prosperous world; and that is grounded in an unwavering commitment to universal human rights and human freedom.

Thank you for welcoming me here today, and I look forward to your questions.