

Opening Statement of Andrew Bremberg
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
June 20, 2019

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Menendez, distinguished members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to be considered to represent the United States of America to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva. I want to thank the President for nominating me for this position and for the trust he has placed in me.

I would not be here today without the support of my family. My wife Maria, my children Paul, Lucy, Jane and Annie, and other members of my family that are here with me today. I cannot thank them enough for their love and support, and the sacrifices they have made on my behalf. In particular, I want to thank my mother Rebecca for coming from New Jersey today. While growing up in Summit, her daily example of love and service to others has been the most formative experience of my life.

Public service to our country has been my life's calling. I have served in government for more than a decade, both in the Senate and during two administrations. I have worked at the Department of Health and Human Services, and most recently, I served as the Director of the Domestic Policy Council at the White House, where I ran the interagency process for domestic policy issues similar to the National Security Council.

I have worked on a wide range of domestic and foreign policy issues in these positions, but throughout all of them I learned key skills that have served me well:

- The importance of consensus-building and creating coalitions to support key initiatives;
- The value our career foreign and civil services can bring to bear to address technical and complex policy issues; and
- the necessity of putting the American people first at every decision point.

If confirmed to be the U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. in Geneva, I intend to focus on promoting Human Rights, and advocating for key reforms in the U.N. system on behalf of the American people.

American leadership was critical to the formation of the United Nation and adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. When we consider the ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya in Burma, the detention of one million Uighurs [wee-gurs] in China, and the growing crisis in Venezuela, it is clear that America's voice and moral clarity on human rights is needed today as much as ever.

Regrettably, the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva has not lived up to its noble mission or its name. The only permanent item on the Council's agenda is criticism of Israel, which is a beacon of democracy and protection of human rights in a region that has little of either.

If confirmed, I commit to giving voice to human rights issues that the Council is either incapable or unwilling to address. I will continue to work productively with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and I will meet with human rights advocates and ensure that American leadership is consistently present on human rights.

To legitimately fulfill its mandate, the Human Rights Council must be a fair, reliable, and impartial advocate for human rights and fundamental freedom. This is not possible if countries like China are allowed to use its influence campaign to undermine the work of the HRC. For example, we cannot stand for Chinese threats to missions in Geneva urging them to stay away from an event organized on March 13 about China's internment of Uighurs and other Muslim minorities in Xinjiang.

American leadership was essential to the creation of the United Nations and we must pursue reforms to international organizations to protect the universal values these institutions were created to defend in the first place.

If confirmed, I will advocate for reforms at UN organizations to protect US sovereignty and the broader world order we have fought so hard to create. We contribute more to the United Nations than any other country. It is our duty to ensure these funds are spent effectively, efficiently, and in a manner consistent with American values and interests.

An example of the kind of reform I am talking about is an effort I spearheaded at the White House to address unfair postal rates in the Universal Postal Union (UPU).

The UPU sets the rates that foreign postal operators, such as the China Post, compensates the U.S. Postal Service for shipping small packages once those

packages arrive in the United States. Under the current system, these rates are set so low that certain foreign shippers pay 70 percent less compared to what US small businesses have to pay to ship a package the same distance within the United States. In practice, this allows some Chinese sellers to charge less for their product (including shipping and handling) than an American business must pay for shipping costs alone.

The administration is currently seeking to renegotiate the UPU conventions to address this issue, and I am committed to working with our international partners to fix this problem.

If confirmed, I commit to bring the same eye and initiative to other international organizations to seek reforms that will better protect Americans and people around the world.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before this Committee today, and I will be happy to answer your questions.