

STATEMENT OF CAROL A. RODLEY  
AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE TO CAMBODIA  
BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

September 10, 2008

Madam Chairman, Senator Murkowski, Members of the Committee,  
I am honored to appear before you today as President Bush's nominee to be the Ambassador of the United States to Cambodia. I am grateful to President Bush and Secretary of State Rice for their confidence and trust in sending my name to the Senate for your consideration. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Committee and other interested members of Congress to advance U.S. interests in Cambodia.

I would like to introduce my husband, David Newhall, and two of my children, Alice and Steven, who are in the audience. Another son, Niles, is away at school in West Virginia. The career I have had in public service has been an enormous privilege, but it has demanded sacrifices from my family and I want them to know how much I appreciate their partnership and unfailing support.

In my 28 years in the Foreign Service, I have served in a number of countries, including Cambodia and Afghanistan, which have suffered from political strife, ethnic conflict, post conflict challenges, and insurgencies. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve and represent my country and I have always sought challenging assignments, both abroad and at home, where I believed I could make a difference. I am recently back from a year in Afghanistan, where I worked on coordination of civilian and military counterinsurgency efforts and reform of Afghan security forces. That experience reinforced for me the importance of an integrated approach to the complex problems that face us and our foreign partners.

The United States re-established relations with Cambodia in 1993, following one of the largest UN peacekeeping operations ever. Although the effects of Khmer Rouge rule still linger and Cambodia's road to democracy has been a difficult one, the country is at peace and its economy is growing. National Assembly elections in July took place peacefully and with a significant voter turnout, and Cambodians themselves are more confident of their future than they have been in the past. Throughout this time, the United States has been a beacon of support for democratic development and protection of human rights in Cambodia. A vibrant Cambodian NGO

community flourishes with our financial and moral support and has taken the lead in advancing the causes of political freedom, democratic governance, justice and respect for human dignity. This year, the Khmer Rouge Tribunal, established to bring the senior leaders of the Khmer Rouge to justice, and which I worked to establish during my previous service in Cambodia, is scheduled to hold its first trial – a significant milestone on the path to reconciliation and justice. Cambodia, once the beneficiary of a UN peacekeeping operation, today has deminers deployed in southern Sudan, and other Cambodian demining experts have shared their expertise on mine action coordination and victim assistance in Afghanistan.

While much work still needs to be done to strengthen rule of law, democratic institutions and respect for human rights, Cambodia and Cambodians have come a long way from the dark days of Pol Pot's evil reign. If confirmed, I would continue to emphasize that support for democracy, human rights, and the rule of law remain cornerstones of U.S. policy in Cambodia.

The United States and Cambodia share many common interests and our bilateral relationship is also growing closer. Cambodia has cooperated with us for years in helping achieve the fullest possible accounting of Americans missing from the Vietnam War. More recently, law enforcement and counterterrorism cooperation between our two nations has increased, as has our military-to-military engagement. Cambodia has also made significant progress in combating trafficking in persons and deserves praise for its support of religious freedom. Cambodia continues to improve its business and foreign investment climate, and its economy is growing. However it remains one of the poorest countries in Asia and is wracked with corruption that both inhibits development and threatens much of the progress that has been made. As I alluded to earlier, Cambodia's democratic institutions are still fragile and need our support.

If confirmed, I look forward to advancing our interests in Cambodia, promoting freedom, pressing for justice, standing up for human rights and the rule of law, safeguarding the 150,000 Americans who live in or travel to that country each year, and advocating for American business interests.

I would like to mention the progress Cambodia has made in the area of child welfare, which I know is of interest to many Members of this committee. Intercountry adoption from Cambodia has been suspended since 2001 when widespread corruption and trafficking in children was discovered. Since then, Cambodia has ratified the Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption and is working to establish the capability to meet its Convention obligations. If confirmed, I will work closely with Cambodian counterparts to develop a system that respects both Cambodian and U.S. law and provides safeguards for vulnerable children, birth parents and adoptive parents.

I believe my 28 years in the Foreign Service, including my recent service in Afghanistan as Counselor for Political/Military Affairs, my years as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research, and my previous service as Deputy Chief of Mission in Cambodia have prepared me well for this assignment. I would certainly draw on this experience to ensure that our Embassy uses its resources wisely, that we intensify our engagement on important issues that affect U.S. national security, and that the safety and security of American citizens remains a top priority.

Thank you, Madam Chairman, Senator Murkowski, and Members of the Committee. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.