

**STATEMENT OF GILLIAN A. MILOVANOVIC  
AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE TO MALI  
BEFORE THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE  
MAY 7, 2008**

Mr. Chairman, honorable Members of the Committee, I am honored to appear before you today to discuss my nomination by President Bush to become our country's Ambassador to the Republic of Mali. I am deeply honored by the trust placed in me by President Bush and by Secretary Rice. If confirmed by the Senate, I will do my very best to be worthy of that confidence, and to advance the goals of the United States in Mali and in the region. I know from experience that my success will depend on a relationship of close cooperation and consultation with this Committee, its staff and others in the Congress. It is a relationship that I hope to begin with you today, building on the foundation of my previous years of service in Africa.

With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I would like to acknowledge my husband, Zlat, and my daughters Alexandra and Anna although they are unable to be here today. The Foreign Service has been more than just my career. It has been, and is, my life and that of my entire family. My family's patience, sacrifice, flexibility, good humor, curiosity and unfailing support have made possible any successes I have achieved as a professional

and as a person. If I am confirmed, it will be my honor and privilege to represent the United States in Mali. We all look forward to returning to the continent where we have already spent nine rewarding years as a family and where Anna was born.

With over sixteen years of democratic experience, Mali serves as an example for West Africa and beyond. Mali has a strong human rights record, hosted the Community of Democracies Ministerial in November 2007, is a strong partner against terrorism and extremism, an active participant in international organizations, and has deployed troops to several international peacekeeping operations.

Mali's political progress, however, has not been matched by improved social and economic indicators. In 2007, the UN gave Mali a ranking of 173 out of 177 countries in its Human Development Index, due in large part to literacy rates, health indicators, and a per capita GNP that are among the lowest in the world. These factors, along with food security concerns, insecurity, and the presence of al Qaeda-aligned terrorists in the country's sparsely populated northern regions, constitute serious threats to democracy and regional stability.

The United States has been a key partner in helping Mali to overcome these challenges, and, if I am confirmed, I will continue to deepen and expand this important relationship. President Bush's recent trip to Africa, and his meeting with Malian President Touré in Washington, have highlighted USG support for important programs such as the President's Malaria Initiative and PEPFAR for HIV/AIDS. Mali's \$461 million MCC Compact entered into force in September 2007, and it is a high priority for President Touré. Our Peace Corps program in Mali is one of the largest in Africa. Mali is a key member of the Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Partnership (TSCTP). Through TSCTP, we are helping Mali augment its ability to control its borders and counter Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb efforts in the region, ensuring that northern Mali remains inhospitable to extremism. The USG has a well-received African Contingency Operations Assistance (ACOTA) program in Mali, and the visit of AFRICOM's General Ward at the end of February underscored that Mali is a key partner in regional security.

Mr. Chairman, this year marks my 30th anniversary as a Foreign Service Officer. If confirmed, I would bring to my assignment in Mali prior experience as a Chief of Mission, nine years of service in Africa, and 15

years of experience working with societies in political and economic transition.

It has been my privilege to work closely over the years with the Defense Department, State National Guards, and other partners to reform and modernize defense establishments in Europe and Africa and to strengthen their capacity to contribute to peacekeeping, regional security, and the Global War on Terror.

During my career, I have been very proud to swear in new Peace Corps Volunteers on a number of occasions. I am particularly delighted that, if confirmed, I will have the opportunity to continue my long collaboration with the Peace Corps, an agency whose mission and whose volunteers represent the best that America has to offer.

Mali faces significant challenges in seeking to improve the health of its citizens, advance education, and promote human rights. If confirmed, to help Mali achieve these goals I would draw on my experience with USAID and Peace Corps education programs, and I would foster a multi-agency task force approach to combat trafficking in persons and other abuse, as well as to promote the rights of women and girls. When assigned to Botswana and

South Africa I gained immense respect for the work of CDC and was privileged to be “present at the creation” of the PEPFAR program in South Africa. Should I be confirmed, I believe this experience too would help me to lead our Mission effectively and to advance U.S. interests in Mali.

Mr. Chairman, if I am confirmed, you will find in me a responsive partner, fully committed to working with you and with this Committee to advance U.S. interests in the Republic of Mali, and a Chief of Mission whose highest priority will be to ensure the security of Embassy personnel, their families, and other Americans in Mali. It would be a great honor to be entrusted with carrying on the work of the distinguished colleagues who have served as Ambassador to the Republic of Mali. With that Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, I thank you for your attention and I look forward to responding to your questions.

