

Testimony of Matthew A. Reynolds  
(Nominee to be Assistant Secretary of State for Legislative Affairs)  
before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee  
September 11, 2008

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for allowing me to appear before you today in regard to my nomination as Assistant Secretary of State for Legislative Affairs. I would like to thank President Bush and Secretary of State Rice for the confidence placed in me. I am honored by this opportunity to serve.

I would also like to thank my former Chairman, mentor and friend, Representative David Dreier for introducing me before the Committee today. While the United States Senate is solely responsible for confirmations--and I hope to achieve the Senate's approval through this hearing--the Bureau of Legislative Affairs serves both chambers of Congress and I value Mr. Dreier's endorsement as a Representative from the House.

I have spent most of my professional career directly serving United States Senators and Representatives. Over my 18 years working in Congress, I gained a wide range of experience managing both Members' personal offices and standing committees of Congress. One of my most rewarding assignments was serving as a professional staff member of this committee. Indeed, Mr. Chairman, it is good to be back, though it is a bit more intimidating now sitting at the witness table than it was enjoying the relative anonymity of the staff bench behind you.

For the past five years, I have been at the State Department in the Bureau of Legislative Affairs gaining knowledge and appreciation of the responsibilities and capabilities of the agency. With this first hand understanding of both Congress and the Department, if confirmed, it will be my highest priority to further strengthen the already solid relationships between the State Department and the Congress and with this Committee in particular.

Mr. Chairman, as you know, the State Department's Bureau of Legislative Affairs has three major responsibilities:

First, is to be responsive to your concerns and to requests for information from you and your staff, as well as to assist your constituents on consular and other matters. This is a customer service bureau and this Congress is its customer.

Second, is to consult with you—as well as with other committees that have oversight responsibilities for foreign affairs--to ensure that your views are considered in the State Department's policy formulation process.

Third and finally, is the responsibility to articulate, to explain and to defend the positions, policies and financial requests of the Department of State.

As this is the end of an Administration, I also recognize that the position of Assistant Secretary has another important responsibility that arises only periodically, and this one of those times. Namely, the task of facilitating a

smooth and seamless transition with the new, incoming Administration. If confirmed, I plan to carry out this mission to the highest level of success and professionalism possible to ensure the continuity of quality service.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to be here today. I would be pleased to respond to any questions that you may have.