

Statement
Ambassador John D. Negroponte
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
January 30, 2007

Chairman Biden, Senator Lugar, Members of the Committee, it is a privilege to appear before you as the President's nominee for the position of Deputy Secretary of State.

Let me say at the outset how much I appreciate Senators Stevens and Lieberman taking the time from their busy schedules to present me to the Committee. Over the years, they have offered me a great deal of wise counsel, support, and, not the least, warm friendship. Senator Stevens, Senator Lieberman, I am in your debt. Thank you very much.

As someone who started his career as a young Foreign Service officer on October 5, 1960, I welcome my nomination to become Deputy Secretary of State as an opportunity of a lifetime.

During my tenure in the Foreign Service, I have been a vice-consul, consul, consul general, assistant secretary of state, and ambassador. These positions have enabled me to serve at a one-officer post in Hue, South Vietnam, and

as chief of mission of one of our largest embassies in Mexico City. Both assignments were challenging and rewarding, as were the many others in Asia, Latin America, Europe, the Middle East, and of course, here in Washington. If I am confirmed by the Senate, my experience overseas and at home will help Secretary Rice promote the transformational diplomacy that is the cornerstone of her leadership of the Department of State.

Globalization is bringing many changes to the world, empowering a host of new international actors. Nonetheless, constructive diplomatic relations between and among nation states remain central to preserving international stability and security, and expanding opportunities for economic and cultural interactions.

- Diplomacy helps us pursue peaceful cooperation in regions threatened by conflict, bolster the international rule of law, and ensure respect for human rights;
- It gives us the opportunity to support weak and failing states and build coalitions to stabilize and strengthen them; and
- It enables us to protect our citizens, advance our economic interests, and promote our image as a nation defined by its democratic values.

I have appeared before this committee for confirmation hearings seven times—the first occasion 30 years ago when my responsibilities focused on oceans, fisheries and law of the sea, and most recently when the President nominated me to be United States Ambassador to the newly sovereign Iraq. I volunteered to go to Baghdad because I believed—and still believe—that it is possible for Iraq to make a successful transition to democracy. I believed—and still believe—that failure in Iraq would be a disaster for Iraqis, for our friends in the region, and for the United States. If confirmed, I expect to devote considerable time and effort to the implementation of our policies in Iraq.

Supporting our nation's security on the front lines of this new century, the men and women of the Department of State face great challenges. The United States must maintain a full-time diplomatic presence in many parts of the world where conditions are demanding, harsh, and often dangerous. It is a tribute to the courage and dedication of our Foreign Service that the Department already has filled 84% of its positions in Iraq for the summer of 2007 and 96% of the positions programmed for Afghanistan.

The Secretary's vision of transformational diplomacy goes beyond the special needs we must address in Iraq and Afghanistan, however. The Department of State is a critical component of national security, and I hope the Department will be viewed that way in terms of its mission and budget. We have well over 100 hardship posts around the world and 22 posts where restrictions limit or prohibit accompaniment by family members. The Department's senior leadership has a great responsibility to support and protect all its personnel abroad, just as it has an obligation to develop our future generations of diplomatic leaders.

If the Senate confirms me, I would hope that, in addition to Iraq, I could make a strong contribution to our foreign policy in those parts of the world where I have spent the most time in my career—Asia and Latin America. But as Deputy Secretary I will face challenges in many other areas—too numerous to list in full—from promoting America's economic, business, and energy interests overseas to supporting our programs in public diplomacy.

Mr. Chairman, I have always consulted closely with this Committee, and any member of Congress who has an interest in issues for which I am responsible. I will remain available to you and seek your counsel.

Again, I regard this nomination as a great honor, and I am grateful to President Bush and Secretary Rice for the confidence they have placed in me.

I welcome the Committee's questions.

Thank you very much.