

Senate Foreign Relations Committee
Hearing on Goosby Nomination
Opening Statement by Senator Richard G. Lugar
June 9, 2009

Opening Statement for Goosby Nomination Hearing

U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee Republican leader Dick Lugar made the following statement at today's hearing:

I join Senator Feingold in welcoming Dr. Eric Goosby, who has been nominated to be the Department of State's Global AIDS Coordinator. I had the opportunity to meet with Dr. Goosby last year as the Committee was crafting legislation reauthorizing the global HIV/AIDS program, and his insights were valuable to our work.

I am particularly pleased that the Committee is moving forward on this nomination. Given the importance of maintaining the momentum of our global HIV/AIDS programs, the Coordinator position is not one where we can afford an extended vacancy. Ambassador Mark Dybul deserves great credit for his work in managing the program and assisting Congress during consideration and passage of the authorization bill last year.

The main function of the Global AIDS coordinator is to oversee the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). By the end of the fiscal year, this program will have provided treatment to an estimated 3.28 million people. Before the program began, only 50,000 people in all of sub-Saharan Africa were receiving life-saving anti-retroviral drugs. Today, three times that many are being treated in Kenya alone. PEPFAR also focuses on prevention programs, with a target of preventing 12 million new HIV infections, including medical interventions that allow HIV positive mothers to give birth to HIV negative babies. As Americans, we should take pride in our nation's efforts to combat these diseases overseas.

We also should understand that our investments in disease prevention programs have yielded enormous foreign policy benefits. PEPFAR has helped to prevent instability and societal collapse in a number of at-risk countries; it has stimulated contributions from other wealthy nations to fight AIDS; it has facilitated deep partnerships with a new generation of African leaders; and it has improved attitudes toward the United States in Africa and other regions.

Last year's effort to garner overwhelming support for a re-authorization bill was a tremendous bipartisan achievement. The Tom Lantos and Henry J. Hyde United States Global Leadership Act Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, which President Bush signed into law last summer, extended and modified the U.S. global HIV/AIDS program for five additional years, at an authorization level of \$48 billion – including \$4 billion for tuberculosis and \$5 billion for malaria. In addition to the increased authorization level, the legislation expands the flexibility of the original legislation so that U.S. efforts in each country can be tailored to its unique situation. I have consulted extensively with American officials who are implementing PEPFAR. Most believe that flexibility is imperative to the continued success of the program. We don't know what the challenges of 2013 will be when the present authorization expires – though we can say with confidence that the landscape will be very different than it is today.

I am optimistic that the Administration and Congress will continue to work together to ensure that the U.S. lives up to our commitments and funds the program at a level that allows us to meet and possibly exceed the goals Congress set forth last year.

I congratulate Dr. Goosby and look forward to our discussion.

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