

Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
Chairman Richard G. Lugar
Opening Statement for
Nomination Hearing
October 20, 2005

Today, the Foreign Relations Committee meets to consider four nominations for important European ambassadorships. President Bush has nominated Mr. Roland Arnall, to be Ambassador to the Netherlands; Mr. Nicholas Taubman to be Ambassador to Romania; Mr. Benson Whitney to be Ambassador to Norway; and Ms. Susan McCaw to be Ambassador to Austria. We are pleased to welcome these four nominees and look forward to our discussion with them.

Mr. Roland Arnall was born in Paris and attended Sir George Williams College in Montreal, Canada, before settling in California. After working in the private real estate investment business, he founded the Long Beach Savings and Loan. In 1994 he created Ameriquest Mortgage Company and its parent company, Ameriquest Capital Corporation. Both Democrat and Republican governors have appointed him to positions on the California Governor's Education Task Force Committee, and he served on the Board of Trustees of the California State University System for 16 years. In addition, Mr. Arnall holds a number of positions with corporations and foundations. He is a Trustee of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, an international Jewish human rights organization dedicated to preserving the memory of the Holocaust through community involvement, educational outreach, and social action.

The United States and the Netherlands have a long friendship dating back to the American Revolution. At the core of our modern relationship are extraordinary business and investment ties. The Netherlands is the fourth largest foreign investor in the United States. Meanwhile, more than 1,600 U.S. companies have a presence in the Netherlands, employing more than 150,000 people. The United States has a larger trade surplus with the Netherlands than with any other nation. In 2004, we exported \$24.3 billion worth of goods and services to the Netherlands. This yielded a trade surplus of \$11.8 billion. Our diplomats in the Netherlands play a critical role in supporting and fostering this successful commercial relationship.

The United States and the Netherlands also work closely together in the global fight against terrorism. The Dutch are key participants in the International Security Assistance Force and Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. They also have sent peacekeeping forces to Iraq and participated in NATO and European Union training efforts in Iraq.

Our second nominee, Mr. Nicholas Taubman, has been nominated to be Ambassador to Romania. Mr. Taubman is President of Mozart Investments in Roanoke, Virginia. Prior to his current position, he was President, CEO, and Owner of Advance Auto Parts. Before entering the business world, Mr. Taubman served in the United States Army. The nominee has dedicated a great deal of time to philanthropic and educational organizations, including service as a Trustee of the Virginia Historical Society and a member of the Undergraduate Board of the University of Pennsylvania.

In the spring of 2003, the Senate voted unanimously to ratify Romania's membership in NATO. This was a vote of confidence in the Romanian people and an expression of American support for Romania's role in Europe. I am hopeful that Romania will soon be invited to join the European Union.

Romania is a strong ally in the war on terrorism. In Afghanistan, it contributed transport aircraft and more than 400 combat and support troops. In Iraq, Romania permitted the use of its territory for the launching of military actions against Iraq, and dispatched non-combat troops to the region. Bucharest continues to maintain a leadership role in the rebuilding of Iraq.

Romania also is active in peacekeeping operations in the Middle East, the former Soviet Union, Africa, and the Balkans. I commend Romania for its commitment to international peace and stability. I look forward to new opportunities for cooperation between the United States and Romania, including intensifying our collaboration on the threat posed by the spread of avian influenza.

Our third nominee is Mr. Benson Whitney, who has been nominated to be Ambassador to Norway. Mr. Whitney serves as President of Argus Management in Minnesota and as CEO of the Whitney Management Company. Prior to his current positions, he was Managing General Partner for the Gideon Hixon Fund and President of the Minnesota Venture Capital Association. In addition, Mr. Whitney serves in a number of organizations devoted to strengthening the economic and cultural life of the Twin-Cities community, including the Guthrie Theater, Wilderness Inquiry, the Persephone Fund, the St. Paul Riverfront Corporation, and the Headwaters Fund.

Our country enjoys a strong cultural friendship and many areas of common interest with Norway. I am especially appreciative that Norway was the first non-G-8 member to join the Global Partnership Against the Proliferation of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction. Oslo also has made critical contributions to the Nunn-Lugar Program's efforts to destroy the two million chemical weapons stored at Shchuchye in Russia and to safely dismantle non-strategic submarines in Northwest Russia. Norway is a leader in non-proliferation and is an important U.S. partner in reducing these critical threats.

Norway deployed an engineering company to Iraq for one year, has military officers stationed there, and is participating in the NATO training mission for Iraqis. In addition, Norway recently took over command of a Provincial Reconstruction Team in Afghanistan near the border with Turkmenistan. Oslo continues to provide critical diplomatic mediation in several troubled regions, particularly the Middle East and South Asia, and is an active participant in the NATO peacekeeping missions in the Balkans.

Our fourth nominee, Ms. Susan McCaw, has been nominated to be Ambassador to Austria. Ms. McCaw has held a number of senior positions in the business world and is currently President of COM Investments in the state of Washington. She is active in numerous cultural and educational organizations, including the Stanford Board of Trustees and the University of Washington Investment Committee. She was also the co-founder and Board Chairman of "Team Read," an innovative after school tutoring program in the Seattle Public Schools, which pairs high school tutors with second and third grade students.

Since the September 11th attacks, cooperation between U.S. and Austrian authorities has intensified, especially in combating terrorist financing, money laundering, and organized crime activity. In Afghanistan, Austria has supported U.S. and NATO-led operations, and deployed nearly 100 troops to provide security for the recent elections. Austria is playing a constructive role in Iraq reconstruction and is participating in international police training efforts for Iraqi police personnel in Jordan.

Next January, Austria will take over the European Union's rotating six-month presidency, and will face difficult issues involving the EU budget, the future status of Kosovo, and the uncertain future of the draft EU Constitution. I applaud the European Union's agreement earlier this month to start EU accession negotiations with Turkey. I look forward to working with Austrian leaders to strengthen the productive U.S.-EU relationship.

I welcome each of our nominees. I ask that you deliver your statements in the order that you were introduced. If you are summarizing a statement, the text of your entire presentation will be included in the hearing record. Also, please introduce family and friends that may have accompanied you on this important occasion.

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