

**Senate Committee On Foreign Relations**  
**Chairman Richard G. Lugar**  
**Opening Statement for Nominations Hearing**  
**June 19, 2006**

Today, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee meets to consider nominees to two key diplomatic posts. Joining us are Robert McCallum, Jr., who has been nominated to be Ambassador to Australia; and Leslie Rowe, who has been nominated to be Ambassador to Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu. We are pleased to have these two nominees with us today.

Mr. McCallum is presently Associate Attorney General at the U.S. Department of Justice. He has also served as Assistant Attorney General of the Civil Division at the Justice Department. Prior to his experience at Justice, he practiced law in Atlanta for almost three decades. In 2002 he received the Atlanta Bar Association Leadership Award.

Australia and the United States share a deep cultural affinity, rooted in our common language and heritage. Australia has been a valued and dependable partner on issues ranging from trade to the war on terror. The U.S.-Australia Free Trade Agreement, which went into effect last year, is an important benchmark in promoting bilateral trade.

Australia has taken an active role in contributing to peace and stability globally. Australian military personnel in Afghanistan have conducted special operations in support of security and reconstruction efforts. They also have provided air mobility and medical and logistical support to coalition partners. In addition, Australia leads a Reconstruction Task Force in south central Afghanistan.

In Iraq, more than 1,400 Australian personnel train new Iraqi defense forces, undertake aerial surveillance, and perform other important tasks. Australia also has made an important contribution towards humanitarian needs and reconstruction in Iraq.

In its own region, Australia is leading an international stabilization force to restore security and disarm militias in East Timor. Australia recently deployed 400 troops in the Solomon Islands to restore law and order following civil unrest.

Ms. Leslie Rowe currently serves as Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi, Kenya. Ms. Rowe has a long and distinguished career with the U.S. Department of State, ranging from her service as Consul General in Bangkok and Lisbon, to her service as Desk Officer for Brazil. Last year she received the Senior Foreign Service Performance Award.

As President Bush noted recently when the Papua New Guinean Ambassador presented his credentials, "...our warm bilateral relations are rooted in a tradition of friendship going back to World War II when Americans and Papua New Guineans fought side by side as allies. PNG is a trusted partner in promoting regional trade and development, and is a steadfast supporter of the war against terrorism."

Papua New Guinea leads the Pacific island states in resources and population, but continues to struggle with internal problems. Government operations contend with high rates of corruption and

insufficient training among government officials. The nation's resources continue to be extracted at unsustainable levels, and the frequency of HIV/AIDS infection has increased alarmingly.

Papua New Guinea officials are reaching out, encouraging a higher level of U.S. government public diplomacy programs in that country and the other Pacific Island states. This is a welcome initiative, which I support.

In the Solomon Islands, where factional conflict and instability is an unfortunate reality, Australia, New Zealand, and other Pacific Island nations have worked cooperatively to stabilize the country and provide a regional basis for conflict resolution.

Vanuatu has demonstrated a commitment to reforms and good governance. Vanuatu met Millenium Challenge Account criteria and the Millenium Challenge Corporation has signed a compact with the island nation.

I congratulate each of our nominees. Please 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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