

Statement of Richard M. Mills, Jr
Nominee for Deputy Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, Deputy Representative of the United States of America in the Security Council of the United Nations, and Representative of the United States of America to the Sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
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Thank you, Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Menendez, and distinguished members of the committee. I am honored to appear before you today as the President's nominee to serve as the Deputy Representative of the United States to the United Nations.

I am also honored to have – off-camera -- with me today my much better half, Leigh Carter. Leigh and I met early in our respective Foreign Service careers, married as entry-level officers thirty years ago, and throughout my time in the U.S. Foreign Service, she has been a mentor, a true partner, and most of all a wise sounding board for me.

I am grateful to have had the opportunity to serve on behalf of the U.S. people in many places during my thirty year career in the Foreign Service, including in Armenia as U.S. Ambassador and most recently in Ottawa where I led for the past ten months the outstanding team at the U.S. Mission to Canada. But it will be a particular pleasure for me, if confirmed, to join Ambassador Craft's team at USUN, where I previously served in the early 2000s. Ambassador Craft chose me to serve as her deputy chief of mission in Canada in 2018 and we worked together for nine months before she left Ottawa for New York. She was a caring, thoughtful leader of the team in Canada and I am proud of what the team at Mission Canada accomplished under her leadership. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Ambassador and helping the team she has assembled at USUN achieve U.S. policy priorities at the UN.

Mr. Chairman, as I mentioned, I served at USUN once before, from 2001-2003. A time when the UN system faced two of its greatest post-war challenges: the aftermath of 9/11 and marshalling support for the reconstruction of post-Saddam Iraq. That experience provided me insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the UN system. The strengths are real, and often evident in circumstances of dire human need and conflict. It is evident in conflict and post-conflict zones where UN blue helmets provide the space for peace to take root. It is in these same environments where UNICEF and the World Food Program save lives and bring hope to devastated communities. It is through the Security Council that meaningful sanctions can be applied to rogue states such as Iran, and unwelcome scrutiny can be applied to the conduct of corrupt actors such as Nicolas Maduro and Bashar al Assad. In all those examples of UN effectiveness, you will find the United States at the center of the action. In fact, Mr. Chairman, it is my view that the

United Nations would quickly lose its bearings without the continuing stewardship of the United States.

I say that because no other nation demands more of the UN than the United States. I say that because the values upon which the UN is built are American values – peace, freedom, respect for sovereignty, individual liberties. And I say that because even now, 75 years after the UN was created, the majority of member states look to America to lead the way.

Mr. Chairman, an effective network of international organizations has never been more crucial to global peace, health, and prosperity. We need only consider the COVID-19 crisis to recognize the crucial need for a credible and effective World Health Organization. Unfortunately, WHO's failings in response to this crisis remind us that the United States and our like-minded partners must be vigilant, must demand maximum transparency from organizations, and must never allow individual member states to contort or politicize these important international tools.

The World Health Organization's performance during the COVID pandemic is an important indicator that oversight and reform must be a continuous exercise, and meaningful accountability must be applied in instances of mismanagement or misconduct. Positive steps have been taken in recent years to improve transparency and accountability in the UN system, but that drumbeat must continue, and if confirmed, I will actively support that effort. Increased scrutiny of peacekeeping mandates has improved the efficiency and effectiveness of peacekeeping missions and in several instances resulted in missions being completed and closed.

Secretary-General Guterres has taken important steps to improve accountability and strengthen reporting requirements. We need to encourage further action to maximize the UN's value to the American people and to American national security.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, there is one reality at the United Nations that stubbornly refuses to yield, a reality that Ambassador Craft is fighting hard to counter, and that is anti-Israel bias. Far too often the United States stands in small company in our defense of Israel. If confirmed, I look forward to joining Ambassador Craft in her vigorous campaign to expose to the light this deplorable situation.

Combatting anti-Israel bias is first among Ambassador Craft's overarching priorities, but demonstrating American leadership on a broader scale runs a close second.

A few months ago, the Ambassador hosted a groundbreaking event in New York to assemble innovative private sector actors for discussion of unlocking the unlimited potential for partnership with the United Nations to advance humanitarian and development objectives.

That event aligns with the Ambassador's vision for a growing pool of private sector partners that can bring American expertise and innovation to some of the world's pressing challenges. I share the Ambassador's excitement about this potential, and if confirmed will look for every opportunity to advance her vision.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, other member states can and should do more to support financially the world's expanding humanitarian needs. Last year the United States contributed more than 9 billion dollars to UN humanitarian responses, extending decades of American leadership in these efforts. Unfortunately, the needs outstrip the resources, and as the situations in Yemen, Syria, and Venezuela continue to worsen, the United States is asking more nations to do more. If confirmed, I will support Ambassador Craft's outreach to member states to encourage them to reconsider their current levels of support.

In addition, we must be cognizant of other forces at work on the global stage that pose challenges for American leadership. A more assertive China, for example, which is eager to assume leadership roles across the UN system and use UN venues to advance its own vision for global economic development.

Iran continues to roil its region, fueling conflict in Syria, Yemen, and Iraq. Russia too is hard at work propping up the Assad and Maduro regimes, and shielding both from international action at the Security Council.

All that to say, Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, that in a complex world the United Nations remains a crucial institution. An institution that, when effective, serves American interests and those of the global community. Maintaining the UN's effectiveness requires the focus and skilled efforts of the outstanding team at USUN. I believe I am ready to add value to their efforts, and if confirmed I will endeavor to do so.

Thank you and I welcome your questions.