

Statement for the Record
James F. Entwistle
Ambassador-Designate to the Democratic Republic of the Congo
Before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
July 13, 2010

Mr. Chairman and Member of the Committee:

It is a privilege to appear before you. I would like to thank President Obama and Secretary Clinton for the confidence they have placed in me as their nominee to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I am pleased to have with me today my wife, Pamela Schmoll, and our two children, Jennifer and Jeffrey Entwistle.

I have managed three posts as Deputy Chief of Mission in my career, and I have served in several Embassies in central and western Africa. I might note that my first supervisor in the Foreign Service was Roger Meece; if confirmed, I look forward to working with him in his new role as the Special Representative of Secretary General Ban Ki Moon in the DRC.

Ten years ago, the Democratic Republic of the Congo was the site of a horrific regional war. Much has improved since that time. The DRC and its neighbors have restored diplomatic relations. They are increasingly cooperating in pursuit of their common interest in peace and development. The Congolese economy has resumed growth.

But the country's challenges remain truly daunting. Insecurity remains persistent in many areas. Illegal armed groups are still able to commit atrocities against civilians, and too often, government security forces do as well. The government lacks the capacity to extend its authority to many areas of the country, which leaves civilians vulnerable and the extensive trade in natural resources unregulated. Millions remain displaced within and outside the country, from conflicts new and old. The country's infrastructure, the government's basic capacities, and the health and education of its people require massive investment.

With her visit to Kinshasa and Goma in August 2009, Secretary Clinton highlighted the importance that the U.S. Government places on our relationship

with the DRC – and the depth of our interest in helping the Congolese people meet the challenges that their nation faces.

We have a multifaceted partnership with the DRC government that spans a wide range of development, humanitarian, and security assistance. If I am confirmed, helping the government improve the security situation will remain a critical priority of the U.S. Embassy, second only to the protection of American citizens and interests. The DRC's security forces need to be strengthened and reformed to better enable them to assume the responsibilities for civilian protection currently being borne by UN peacekeeping forces. Helping the government break the link between armed groups and the trade in minerals is another critical step in improving security.

Recovering from the war and laying the foundation for development will be a generational challenge for the DRC, and for its many partners. We hope to see the country's democratic development reinforced through next year's national elections and through the respect of human rights. The murder of human rights activist Floribert Chebeya was deeply worrisome, as is the continued sexual violence in the DRC's eastern provinces. The recent arrest of the Congolese general Jerome Kakwavu for rape is an encouraging step away from an otherwise pervasive impunity. We are prepared to assist the government as it takes more steps toward promoting accountability.

Our partnership with the Democratic Republic of the Congo will best be advanced through a constructive and frank dialogue between the Congolese people, their government, and us. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with you, Mr. Chairman, and with the members of the committee in pursuing this critical task. I welcome any questions that you might have.