

**Senate Committee on Foreign Relations**  
**Chairman Richard G. Lugar**  
**Opening Statement for Nominations Hearing**  
**March 15, 2005**

Today, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee meets to consider nominees to three key State Department positions involving East Asia. President Bush has nominated Ambassador Thomas Schieffer to be Ambassador to Japan, Mr. Joseph DeTrani to the rank of Ambassador during his tenure as Special Envoy to the Six-Party Talks on North Korea's nuclear program, and Ambassador Christopher Hill to be Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs. We welcome these three distinguished nominees and look forward to our discussions with them.

Our first nominee, Ambassador Schieffer, is presently the U.S. Ambassador to Australia, where he has a distinguished record of service. Before going to Australia, Mr. Schieffer had an extensive business and legal career in Texas. His public service journey began early in his life. While still attending the University of Texas, he worked in the offices of State Senator Don Kennard and Governor John Connally. Subsequently, he served three terms in the Texas House of Representatives.

Japan and the United States will benefit from Ambassador Schieffer's experience as a civic and business leader, his strong inter-personal skills, his close relationship with the President, and his understanding of the region. He will be replacing my good friend and former colleague, Howard Baker. Ambassador Baker has been an outstanding representative of our country, along with his wife, Nancy -- our former Senate colleague.

The Japan - U.S. relationship is the cornerstone of U.S. security interests in Asia and is fundamental to regional stability and prosperity. Japan has the world's second-largest economy, and it is the third largest trading partner of the United States. Japan has been a steadfast partner in promoting democracy in Iraq and seeking a resolution to the North Korean nuclear crisis. Many issues will require the immediate attention of Ambassador Schieffer, including efforts to re-open Japan's market to American beef.

Our second nominee is Mr. Joseph DeTrani, who has been the Special Envoy to the Six Party Talks since 2003. Prior to becoming Special Envoy, he served nearly forty years at the Central Intelligence Agency, where he was most recently the Chief of East Asia Operations.

Mr. DeTrani's appeared before the Foreign Relations Committee just three weeks ago to report on developments in North Korea. He has my personal thanks for his accessibility and responsiveness to Committee inquiries regarding the Six Party process.

As Special Envoy, Mr. DeTrani has displayed innovation and energy in his efforts to gain consensus among leaders of the Six Parties to proceed with dialogue at the working group level. Along with Senator Biden, I encouraged establishment of the so-called "working group" concept among the Six Parties, so that we would have a venue to establish priorities for discussion and definitions of key terms used in later plenary sessions. Once Assistant Secretary-designate Hill and his North Korean counterpart convene, along with officials from the other four countries, it is critical that all have identical understanding of the proposals discussed. The opportunity for mis-communication within the context of the Six Party Talks is a grave concern.

For these reasons, Mr. DeTrani's efforts are indispensable to the success of the Six Party Talks. I know that he will continue to work well with Secretary Rice, Ambassador Hill, and other Administration officials in pursuit of a resolution that protects the security of the United States and the East Asian region.

Our final nominee, Ambassador Christopher Hill, has been nominated to be Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs. He currently serves as our Ambassador to South Korea. Previously, he served as Ambassador to Poland and Macedonia. Prior to these posts, he was Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Southeast European Affairs at the National Security Council.

President Bush has also designated Ambassador Hill as the top U.S. negotiator to the Six Party Talks. Consequently, once confirmed as Assistant Secretary, he will serve in dual roles, as did his predecessor, Assistant Secretary James Kelly.

Ambassador Hill will face enormous challenges and opportunities as he oversees policy towards East Asia. He must devote significant attention to the North Korean nuclear crisis, while addressing other urgent priorities in the region. Among other tasks, he must maintain our positive relationship with the ASEAN nations, reduce tensions in the Taiwan Straits, strengthen our important alliance with Japan, and help fulfill the U.S. aid commitments to nations devastated by the December earthquake and tsunami.

Our relationship with China is also a special concern. There is good news in several areas, but Ambassador Hill will need to engage Chinese officials on trade and currency concerns, non-proliferation issues, human rights, religious freedom, and Beijing's ill-advised "Anti-Secession Law" directed at Taiwan. Based upon Ambassador Hill's impressive career, I look forward to the foreign policy accomplishments in East Asia and the Pacific that he can achieve.

I congratulate each of our nominees. We admire your achievements and your willingness to undertake these important services for our country. Please introduce family and friends that may have accompanied you on this important occasion.

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