

TESTIMONY OF JAMES STEINBERG
U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
NOMINEE FOR DEPUTY SECRETARY OF STATE

JANUARY 22, 2009

Mr. Chairman, Senator Lugar, Members of the Committee:

I am grateful for the kind words of Senator Kennedy and Senator Hutchison. I've been privileged to be part of the historic Boston-Austin connection and hope to do justice to both traditions of public service.

I am honored by the trust that President Obama and Secretary Clinton have shown in me by asking me to serve with them. I can think of no greater privilege than the opportunity once again to serve our country. I also want to thank my family for their unfailing love and support. And I'm also pleased to be here today with my good friend and colleague, Jack Lew, with whom I look forward to building a unique and productive partnership that will strengthen the State Department's ability to contribute to our national security and foreign policy goals in the coming years.

As the Committee knows, I had the honor of working as a staff member in the Senate for nearly five years in the early 1980s. I know and respect the central role that the Congress plays in helping to formulate our national security strategy, and the unique responsibility and justifiably proud tradition of the Foreign Relations Committee in helping to assure a sustained and sustainable American foreign policy that bridges both parties and both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue. I want to congratulate Senator Kerry, my other home state senator, for taking on the great responsibilities of leading this committee, and Senator Lugar, who has been a counselor to me for many years and a remarkable global leader. I look forward to your advice and guidance and to working closely with you and all the Members of the Committee and your staffs to meet the challenges and opportunities that we face as a nation.

As the Dean of a school of public affairs, I have had the pleasure of spending the last three years with young men and women who feel a compelling call to public service. I am constantly struck by their idealism and their commitment to dedicating their lives to fulfilling the dreams and aspirations of our nation's founders – that America should be a beacon to the world. As the first generation of the age of globalization, my students know that America thrives best when all those around the world who share our dreams and our values have an opportunity to seek the blessings we have fought so hard to secure. They also know that America is strongest when we work together with those who share our interests and values, to meet challenges like terrorism, nuclear proliferation and climate change that no nation, not even ours, can successfully address alone. This is the vision that President Obama and Secretary Clinton have offered to the nation and to you, and one that I enthusiastically share.

As Secretary Clinton stressed so eloquently in her testimony, for America to succeed in meeting the coming challenges, we must harness all the tools of American power and influence – what she and others have called “smart power.” The State Department has a crucial role to play in underpinning U.S. global leadership, and as a veteran of the Department from an earlier time, I want to pay tribute to the dedication of the many men and women in the Foreign and Civil Service who so ably serve their country, and look forward to working with them again. But no one agency or part of government can be effective unless it collaborates seamlessly with all of the components of our national security community – at the Pentagon, the uniformed military, the White House, the intelligence community, the Department of Homeland Security, and increasingly with our economic agencies and those concerned with our nation’s health – so I also look forward to working with President Obama’s entire team to build a national security strategy that is comprehensive and forward looking, one that not only addresses the urgent crises of today, but sets us on a path to master the challenges of tomorrow. I have no doubt that working together, we can help assure that America’s future will remain bright – something we owe to our children and generations to come.

I am also excited to reach out to the best minds and demonstrated experience of so many of our people – in the private sector, in NGOs, and, of course, in our universities and think tanks – to make sure that we are innovative and creative as we can possibly be in meeting the new challenges of the 21st century. There is enormous talent and commitment across our nation, and we must find imaginative ways to bring those perspectives and experience to the working of our government. This is the best way I know to assure that the 21st century will be a century of hope and opportunity for America.

I have had the opportunity to study closely your hearings with both Secretary Clinton and Ambassador-designate Rice, so I am familiar with a number of the issues that concern you all. Having served in the past as a Deputy, you won’t be surprised if I tell you that I concur wholeheartedly with their responses, but would be happy to try to amplify them where possible. Thank you for the courtesy you have shown to me and I look forward to your questions.