

**Statement of
Robert B. Zoellick
Deputy Secretary of State-Designate
before the
Committee on Foreign Relations
of the
U.S. Senate
February 15, 2005**

Chairman Lugar, Senator Biden, Members of the Committee:

I would like to thank Senators Grassley and Baucus for their friendship, partnership, and thoughtfulness in introducing me today. Although I would have been delighted to have hailed from Iowa or Montana, it was not residence or roots that prompted me to ask them to accompany me this morning. Over the past four years of service as the U.S. Trade Representative, I have worked closely with both Senators during their skilled leadership of the Finance Committee. I believe the three of us are proud of what we accomplished together. And as they hand me off to a new Committee, I wanted you to know of the high priority I assign to listening to your interests, learning from your experiences, and working together to pursue America's purposes around the world.

I would also like to thank you for taking the time during a busy period to talk with me individually. Our discussions have helped me gain a better understanding of your ideas and concerns. Frequent substantive consultation with this Committee is important to me, so if confirmed, I look forward to working closely with you.

Of course, I have had the opportunity to work with many of you over the past four years on trade topics -- and along the way probably learned more than I ever expected about the economic interests that inform the international outlooks of your states! I also have gotten to know and work with many of you over the 30 years since I first served our country as a very junior public servant during the long-distant Ford Administration. In particular, I had frequent contact with the Foreign Relations Committee during the tumultuous but rewarding period of 1989-92, when I served as an Under Secretary of State. For Members of the Committee with whom I have not had the opportunity to spend much time, I look forward to doing so. Especially during my tenure as U.S. Trade Representative, I learned how active outreach, consultation, consideration -- and debate -- are critical to the effective performance of an Executive official's responsibilities under the U.S. Constitution.

I am honored by and appreciative of the President's nomination to serve the country in this new post. I understand the importance he vests in America's conduct of foreign policy as we pursue the transformational goals he has set.

I respect the serious responsibility Secretary Rice proposed to share with me when she suggested this assignment. I thank her for the opportunity to contribute. As colleagues and friends over 16

years, I know well her commitment to guiding and driving a transformational diplomacy to achieve the President's goals.

As the Secretary also mentioned to the Committee, we are fortunate to follow Secretary Powell and Deputy Secretary Armitage, who have served America extraordinarily well, time and again, with honor and conviction. In particular, I have already seen how their attention to the management of the State Department has set an exemplary standard.

Given that the President has outlined recently his foreign policy vision and pointed to key directions in both the Inaugural and State of the Union addresses, and because Secretary Rice spent hours with you discussing particular matters, it would be presumptuous -- and in total candor, imprudent -- for me to present a policy statement this morning.

I read closely the transcript of the Secretary's confirmation hearing so as to better appreciate your questions -- and of course to stay constant with her answers. While of course recognizing the inevitable differences of opinion or degrees of concern about specific matters reflected in your exchange with her -- as is inevitable and appropriate in our vibrant democracy -- I could not help but be struck by the value of the exchange. At times the debate may be uncomfortable but I assure you that we recognize the need to consider new information and changing circumstances, identify new issues, integrate other perspectives, subject analyses to tough scrutiny, challenge assumptions, and learn lessons. After all, you, and if confirmed, I, have a serious charge, a high duty, to advance U.S. security, economic, and political interests and values around the world in a fashion that warrants the support of the American people and fulfills our oath of office. I want you to know that I take such matters seriously.

I thought it might be helpful for the Committee, in considering my nomination, to have an outline of the duties I hope to perform to the best of my abilities.

First, I would seek to support the Secretary as the Administration develops policies in priority areas. As your hearing with Secretary Rice pointed out, the top two matters are the critical follow through in Iraq after successful elections there and working with Israel and the Palestinians to achieve the goal of two democratic states living in peace.

Second, working with the Under Secretary for Management, I would assist the Secretary by supervising operations of the State Department -- including its budget and resources, facilities, and personnel. In particular, I hope to help the Secretary as we take on the challenge of strengthening America's public diplomacy, a subject that I know is of strong interest to the Committee.

Third, the Secretary has asked that I assist in the conduct of U.S. diplomacy abroad. When Secretary Rice announced her first trip abroad, to Europe and the Middle East, she also announced that if confirmed I would visit the other NATO capitals, so together we would be consulting directly with all 26 Alliance partners early in 2005. I also hope to arrange a session with the European Parliament, as I did shortly after becoming U.S. Trade Representative in 2001, and will maintain my close ties to the various institutions of the European Union. The Secretary has suggested I follow up Secretary Powell's and Governor Bush's prompt visit to Southeast

Asian countries hurt by the tsunami to assess how we can assist in reconstruction in countries with which I have had frequent contact. Following up on the President's meeting with President Hu of China, I hope to expand and make regular our dialogue with China on regional and international issues, terrorism, trade and economics, and other topics. I hope to build off of my activities over the years with countries throughout Latin America and the Caribbean to advance our diplomacy in the hemisphere. Last year, I traveled to sub-Saharan Africa three times -- including west, southern, and east Africa -- and I am proud to have been the first USTR to visit sub-Saharan Africa in 2001.

My fourth duty will be participation in the interagency policy process. I have been working closely with other departments over the past four years -- Treasury, Commerce, Agriculture, Labor, Homeland Security, OMB, and EPA -- and my colleagues at the Pentagon have already been gracious in starting to provide briefings in areas in which I have not been involved directly.

Fifth, I hope my experience with international economic issues will enable me to help integrate U.S. economic interests into our political and security strategies around the world. In addition to my past service in or work with economic agencies, I have been fortunate to serve on the Millennium Challenge Corporation board, have worked closely with AID on integrating trade and aid in our development work, and have experience with the work of the multilateral development banks. The Secretary has asked, in particular, that I assist in supervising the coordination of our political economy, democracy, and capacity-building work in the broader Middle East. I have already been working with most of these countries through the President's initiative to create a Middle East FTA. As I have discussed with a number of you, I hope my office can also serve as a familiar point of contact at the State Department for the wide ranging network of business and farm leaders with whom I have had the privilege to work.

Finally, but vitally, given the importance the Secretary assigns to our work with Congress, I want to assist her in ensuring we listen and respond to your concerns and interests. I was pleased to see the interest of many of you in prompt Congressional action on the U.S. Free Trade Agreement with Central America and the Dominican Republic, and as the official who signed the CAFTA-DR agreement for the United States, I certainly want to work with you to achieve that goal!

In closing, I consider myself fortunate to have served the past four years with an extraordinary group of public officials at USTR. They are highly motivated, incredibly hard-working, extremely responsible, and directed toward achieving real results for the people of the United States. The State Department is, of course, much larger, covering the Foreign Service, Civil Service, Foreign Service Nationals, and details from many departments. My frequent visits to our missions overseas -- small and large -- have reinforced for me how fortunate the United States is to have such a committed corps of public officials. If confirmed by the Senate, I will benefit from their considerable experience and insights. It will be an honor to serve with them.