

**Statement of U.S. Permanent Representative-Designate Susan E. Rice
Before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee
January 15, 2009**

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Lugar, and distinguished Members of the Committee, I am deeply honored to appear before you as the President-elect's designee to be the United States' Permanent Representative to the United Nations. I want to thank the President-elect for his confidence in naming me to this vitally important position.

Mr. Chairman, my warmest congratulations to you as the new Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. You have been an ardent champion and advocate for a principled U.S. foreign policy to ensure this country's security and prosperity. There is a great tradition of probity on this Committee, dating back to Senator Fulbright. The man seated next to you, Senator Lugar, continued that great tradition through his years as Chairman, and I know you will, as well. I am very grateful to you, Mr. Chairman, and to Senator Lugar, for convening this hearing swiftly to consider my nomination.

I would like to take a moment to introduce and thank my family. I am so pleased and proud to be joined today by my mother, Lois Rice, my father, Emmett Rice, my wonderful husband Ian Cameron, and our greatest blessing, our children, Jake and Maris. Without their unfailing wisdom, love and support, I would not be here today, nor could I imagine taking on this great responsibility.

In addition, I want to express my gratitude to Senator Susan Collins and Senator Evan Bayh for their generous introductions of me and for their extraordinary service to our nation. I am very appreciative of their support.

Mr. Chairman, like many Americans, I first heard of the United Nations as a child of about Maris' age. My initial images of the UN were not the blue helmets of its peacekeepers or the white vehicles of its life-saving humanitarian workers but the orange and black of the UNICEF boxes I carried door to door each Halloween. I grew up trick-or-treating for UNICEF – a tradition my children continue today. The concept is simple and powerful – children the world over helping other children. UNICEF and the UN embodied to me then, as it does still today, our shared responsibility to one another as human beings and our collective potential and obligation, to forge a more secure, more just and more prosperous future.

As I grew up during the Cold War, I then saw the UN frequently paralyzed by geopolitical and ideological showdowns between the United States and the Soviet Union. Later, with the fall of the Berlin Wall, I joined millions in hoping that the vital

mission of the UN could be advanced through enhanced cooperation. Serving in the Clinton Administration in the 1990s, I had the opportunity -- first as the official on the NSC staff responsible for UN affairs and later as Special Assistant to the President and Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs -- to gain a first-hand appreciation of the organization's strengths and understanding of its weaknesses.

In the wake of the Cold War, the UN was modernized in important ways and did substantial good -- from Namibia to Mozambique, from El Salvador to South Africa and Cambodia. At the same time, there were clear failures, witnessed in the unimaginable human tragedies of Somalia, Rwanda and Srebrenica, and the inability to effectively deal with crises in Haiti and Angola. We saw the difficulties and limits of UN action when conflicting parties are determined to continue fighting, as well as the imperative of mobilizing broad-based support behind UN efforts. We were disappointed when the UN occasionally served as a forum for prejudice instead of a force for our shared values. Finally, we learned that mismanagement and corruption can taint the dedicated work of skilled professionals, and that the reprehensible actions of a few can undermine the goodwill of many towards an institution, which most Americans nonetheless continue to support.

Mr. Chairman, I believe we stand now at yet another defining moment -- one in which the peoples and nations of the world must find both the will and more effective means to cooperate, if we are to counter the urgent global threats that face us all. Terrorism, the spread of weapons of mass destruction, civil conflict, climate change, genocide, extreme poverty, and deadly infectious disease are shared challenges that no single nation can defend against alone. They require common action based on a common purpose and vision of shared security. I welcome the challenge and am humbled by the opportunity to serve our country at the United Nations. If I am confirmed, I will work to promote and implement President-elect Obama's commitment to "strengthening our common security by investing in our common humanity."

Advancing America's Interests in the United Nations

More than 60 years ago, in the aftermath of the destruction and devastation of World War II, the United States provided the leadership and vision that led to the founding of the United Nations. Our leaders understood then that a global institution that brings all of the world's countries together would enhance -- not diminish -- our influence and bring more security to our country and the world.

Today, with our security at home affected by instability, violence, disease, or failed states in far corners of the world, the President-elect has affirmed America's commitment to the United Nations as an indispensable, if imperfect, institution for advancing our security and well-being in the 21st century. He has made it clear that

we must pursue a national security strategy that builds strong international partnerships to tackle global challenges through the integration of all aspects of American power – military and diplomatic; economic and legal; cultural and moral. The goal of our diplomacy at the United Nations must be to make it a more perfect forum to address the most pressing global challenges: to promote peace, to support democracy, and to strengthen respect for human rights.

There is no country more capable than the United States to exercise leadership in this global institution, and to help frame its programs and shape its actions. My most immediate objective, should I be confirmed, will be to refresh and renew America's leadership in the United Nations and bring to bear the full weight of our influence, voice, resources, values, and diplomacy at the United Nations.

The Obama Administration will work to maximize common interests and build international support to share the burdens of collective action to counter the most pressing threats Americans face, while working to help tackle the poverty, oppression, hunger, disease, fear and war that threaten billions around the world every day.

We will make our case to the UN, and press for it to become a more effective vehicle of collective action. We will also be prepared to listen and to learn, to seek to understand and respect different perspectives. The task of our diplomacy must be to expand both the will and ability of the international community to respond effectively to the great challenges of our time.

I know that the UN often frustrates Americans, and I am acutely aware of its shortcomings. But that is precisely why the United States must carry out sustained, concerted, and strategic multilateral diplomacy. Many countries invest heavily in deliberations on what they view as the "world's stage." That in part explains why diplomacy at the UN can be slow, frustrating, complex, and imperfect. But that is also why effective American diplomacy at the United Nations remains so crucial.

Indeed, in some places the UN is the only capable institution trying to make a difference. Around the world, the United Nations is performing vital, and in many areas life-saving, services. Last year, the World Food Program fed 86 million people in 80 countries who would otherwise go hungry or even face starvation, including Afghanistan, Iraq, Sudan, Indonesia, and Congo. Thanks to the efforts of UNICEF and the World Health Organization, smallpox and polio have been nearly wiped out. UNICEF alone vaccinates about 40% of the world's children each year.

The choices we face in addressing global challenges can often be difficult: allowing conflict and suffering to spread, mobilizing an American response, or supporting a multi-national United Nations effort. The UN is not a cure-all; we must be clear-eyed

about the problems, challenges and frustrations of the institution. But it is a global institution that can address a tremendous range of critical American and global interests.

The support of others can never be viewed as a prerequisite for U.S. action, but our actions are strengthened with the support of friends, allies and other stakeholders. Achieving the backing of an institution that represents every country in the world can give added legitimacy and leverage to our actions and facilitate our efforts to garner broad support for our policy objectives.

From the Balkans to East Timor, from Liberia to Kashmir, from Cyprus to the Golan Heights, the United Nations has, for more than six decades, played a critical role in forestalling renewed fighting, helping to resolve conflict and repair war-torn countries, providing humanitarian aid, organizing elections, and responding to threats to international peace and security. Countless lives have been saved. And when it works, the UN has helped promote the very democratic values that lie at the center of what the United States represents.

Indeed, the flaws and disappointing actions within the UN are rooted in its potential to serve as an engine for progress. All nations understand the importance of this institution. That is why countries like Sudan, North Korea and Cuba work so hard to render bodies like the UN Human Rights Council ineffective and objectionable. It is why efforts to pass Security Council resolutions on abuses in places from Zimbabwe to Burma occasion such fierce debate, and don't always succeed. It is also why many try to use the UN to willfully and unfairly condemn our ally Israel. When effective and principled UN action is blocked, our frustration naturally grows, but that should only cause us to redouble our efforts to ensure that the United Nations lives up to its founding principles.

As in the past, there will be occasions in the future when deadlocks cannot be broken, and the United States and its partners and allies will nonetheless have to act. Yet, what our leaders accomplished over 60 years ago was to help establish an inclusive global institution that, by its very existence, provides the potential to enhance collective security, while affording a powerful platform for American leadership -- leadership that can increase our own and others' security and prosperity.

Nature of the Challenges and UN Role

Today, there is more on the agenda of the United Nations than ever before, and with that full agenda comes increased expectations and increased need to shed inefficiency and implement management best practices. Nearly 90,000 UN peacekeepers -- more than ever before -- are deployed in 16 missions around the world. The UN is also

playing vital roles in Iraq and Afghanistan -- working to strengthen governance, foster democracy and development, and meet pressing humanitarian needs. The United Nations is also at the center of global efforts to address climate change, prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, stabilize weak and failing states, prevent and resolve conflict, reduce poverty, combat HIV/AIDS and halt the spread of other infectious disease, assist and resettle refugees and the internally displaced, feed the hungry and promote food security, and confront genocide and crimes against humanity.

If confirmed, I will work to strengthen the UN's effectiveness to fulfill its many important missions, and working closely with the Secretary of State, I will devote particular attention to four areas:

First, we must make renewed efforts to improve the capacity of the United Nations to undertake complex peace operations effectively. We need to weigh new UN mandates more carefully and review existing mandates as they are renewed. Indeed, the gap between number and complexity of the missions the Security Council has committed the UN to perform, and its ability to do so, has arguably never been greater. The fact that more than one year after the force was established, the crucial UN mission in Darfur is only at half its authorized strength is unacceptable. We should work to build global peacekeeping capacity and help streamline the UN as well as our own procedures for deploying and supporting UN missions. We must also no longer allow host nations to dictate the composition of – and thwart the effective deployment of – Chapter VII UN operations.

Second, the Obama Administration will provide strong leadership to address climate change and welcomes the UN Secretary-General's strong interest in this issue. Under President-elect Obama, the United States will engage vigorously in UN-sponsored climate negotiations while we pursue progress in sub-global, regional and bilateral settings. To tackle global warming, all major emitting nations must be part of the solution, and rapidly developing economies, such as China and India, must join in making and meeting their own binding and meaningful commitments. We must help the most vulnerable countries adapt to climate change and seize opportunities to accelerate their development by investing in supplying renewable energy and participating in emissions trading mechanisms. If confirmed, I look forward to advancing the diplomatic and development elements of the President's climate change agenda.

Third, preventing the spread and use of nuclear weapons is an enormous security challenge that deserves top level attention. Thanks to the bold leadership and vision of Senator Lugar and others, enormous progress has been made, but the threats are daunting and must be addressed. There is no more urgent threat to the United States than a terrorist with a nuclear weapon. Nuclear weapons materials are stored in

dozens of countries, some without proper security. Nuclear technology is spreading. Iran continues its illicit nuclear program unabated, and North Korea's nuclear weapon's program is destabilizing to the region and an urgent proliferation concern. President-elect Obama will work on multiple levels to address these dangers. It is essential to strengthen the global nonproliferation and disarmament regime, dealing with those states in violation of this regime, and upholding our obligations to work constructively and securely toward the goal of a world without nuclear weapons. The United Nations plays a significant role in this regime, particularly through the Review Conferences held every five years under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. The next Review Conference in 2010 is an opportunity to strengthen all nations' adherence to the global non-proliferation regime for the 21st century. Our objective for the 2009 Preparatory Committee is to lay the groundwork for a successful Review Conference in 2010 – one that advances the world's nonproliferation and disarmament regime and decreases the chance that nuclear weapons will end up in the hands of terrorists.

Fourth, President-elect Obama has called for us to “invest in our common humanity.” Billions of the world's people face the threats of poverty, disease, environmental degradation, rampant criminality, extremism, and violence where states and public institutions cannot provide security or essential services to their own citizens. Conflict-ridden and fragile states also can incubate these and other threats that rarely remain confined within national borders. Indeed, some of the world's most dangerous forces are manifest in or enabled by precisely these contexts. President-elect Obama has long stressed the importance of working with others to promote sustainable economic development, combat poverty, enhance food and economic security, curb conflict and help strengthen democracy and governing institutions. The Obama Administration is also committed to supporting broad-based and sustainable economic development, including making the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) America's goals. This is a broad but crucial agenda for the United States that will enhance our own security in an interconnected world. It is one that requires engagement from many different elements of the international community but where the United Nations has a unique and critical role to play.

Regional political and security challenges will inevitably remain a central element of the U.S. agenda at the United Nations. Iran's pursuit of a nuclear weapon will continue to demand the urgent attention of the UN Security Council. Multilateral pressure will continue to be needed to eliminate North Korea's nuclear weapons program. A strengthened UN role in Afghanistan and Iraq will promote governance, support elections, strengthen political institutions, improve coordination of development, and enhance regional security. The ongoing genocide in Sudan, the persistent violence in Eastern Congo, and the persecution and repression of innocents in Zimbabwe and Burma all require much more effective action by the international

community. And, recent events remind us yet again of the importance of working to help Israelis and Palestinians achieve their goal of a peaceful two-state solution that achieves lasting security for Israel and a viable state for the Palestinians. I will work to enable the United Nations to play a constructive role in pursuit of this goal.

The Obama Administration will promote democracy, understanding that the foundations of democracy must be grown beyond elections, and those foundations are best seeded from within. We will stand up for human rights around the world mindful of our deep and abiding interest in ensuring strong global mechanisms to defend these rights. Thus, we will work closely with friends, allies, the UN Secretariat and others to seek to improve the performance and the prospects of the Human Rights Council, which has strayed far from the principles embodied in the UN Declaration of Human Rights, and too often undermines the very rights it must defend.

The United States will address all these challenges unencumbered by the old divisions of the 20th century. We cannot afford to be burdened with labels such as “rich” or “poor,” “developed” or “developing,” “North” or “South,” or “the Non Aligned Movement.” In the 21st century, these false divisions rarely serve anyone’s interests. In facing challenges of the scale that lie before us, all peoples and nations should focus on what we have in common: our shared desire to live freely and securely, in health, with hope and with opportunity. Those are the interests and aspirations of the American people, and they are shared by billions around the world.

Strengthening the United Nations

Mr. Chairman, the United Nations must be strengthened to meet 21st century challenges. None of us can be fully satisfied with the performance of the UN, and too often we have been dismayed. The United States must press for high standards and bring to its dealings with the UN high expectations for its performance and accountability, and that’s what I intend to do. In cooperation with other governments, we must pursue substantial and sustained improvements across the full range of management and performance challenges, including financial accountability, efficiency, transparency, ethics and internal oversight, and program effectiveness. Important work on all of these issues has been undertaken, but we have much further to go. Progress and reform are essential to address flaws in the institutions, to meet the unprecedented demands made on it, and to sustain confidence in and support for the UN. I pledge to you to work tirelessly to see that American taxpayer dollars are spent wisely and effectively.

To lead from a position of strength, the United States must consistently act as a responsible, fully-engaged partner in New York. To do so, we must fulfill our financial obligations while insisting on effective accountability. In the past, our

failure to pay all of our dues and to pay them on a timely basis has constrained the UN's performance and deprived us of the ability to use our influence most effectively to promote reform. President-elect Obama believes the U.S. should pay our dues to the UN in full and on time. I look forward to working with you and other Members of Congress to ensure that we do so, as well as to pay down our newly mounting arrears and to support legislation to permanently lift the cap on U.S. payments to the UN peacekeeping budget.

Leading USUN

If I am confirmed, I will have the privilege of leading our hardworking and dedicated team at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations. Successful diplomacy requires top-notch people. If confirmed, I intend to work with the Secretary of State to attract and support our best and brightest diplomats to serve at the Mission. Current tax laws and policies make service at the U.S. Mission a comparative financial sacrifice for Foreign Service officers. This is a situation that together, we should review and address to strengthen America's global leadership. In addition, a secure, modern work environment is critical to maximizing performance. The best businesses in America understand this point. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the new U.S. Mission building is completed as expeditiously as possible and provides our diplomats with the tools they need to be safe, effective and successful.

Early in my career I was a management consultant. I know that strong leadership and sound management supports effective action. We must enhance our capacity to press for a more efficient and effective UN. Heading a well-run mission will be an important priority for me.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, if I am confirmed, I will work energetically to help renew America's leadership in the world. I will ensure that the United States is represented powerfully and effectively. I will be an unflinching advocate of our interests and values, as I seek to maximize cooperation to address the most serious global challenges we confront. I will listen. I will engage. I will collaborate. I will go to the UN convinced that this institution has great current value, even greater potential, and great room still for improvement. I commit to being direct and honest in New York and always forthright with Congress. I will welcome the advice and support of the Members of this Committee; I look forward to working closely with all of you; and I invite each of you to come to New York to contribute directly to our shared efforts to strengthen and support this important institution.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, it will be my highest honor to support our country's interest in renewing our global leadership and effecting critical and lasting change. In the 21st Century, we can and we must transcend old barriers, build new bridges, strengthen our common security and invest in our common humanity.

Thank you.