



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

RANKING MEMBER
SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMERCIAL AND
ADMINISTRATIVE LAW

COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND
GOVERNMENT REFORM

WESTERN CAUCUS
CHAIRMAN

November 2, 2007

The Honorable Henry Waxman
Chairman, Oversight and Government Reform Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
2157 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

You are undoubtedly aware of recent news reports about career diplomats within the State Department unwilling to render service in Iraq. Press reports of the "town hall" meeting held on this issue indicate that members of the Foreign Service, whose positions require them to be willing to serve anywhere in the world, are not only unwilling, but are actively opposing the policies set by the Department¹. As Secretary Rice said, it is the duty of American diplomats to work for success in the vital mission given to them by the President in Iraq².

I believe this matter should be thoroughly investigated by our committee for the following reasons:

1. Diplomats are required, as a condition of employment, to accept assignments anywhere in the world. Anyone unwilling to agree to these terms should be dismissed from the Foreign Service³.
2. Hundreds of thousands of America's young men and women have volunteered to serve in Iraq. They are paid less, are in greater danger, and certainly perform more difficult work than career diplomats. These facts make complaints from Foggy Bottom all the more intolerable.
3. The American Foreign Service Association⁴ is actively discouraging this policy from being implemented and advocates NOT sending American diplomats to a

¹ "It's one thing if someone believes in what's going on over there and volunteers, but it's another thing to send someone over there on a forced assignment." Diplomat Jack Crotty as quoted in TIME Magazine. (<http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1679818,00.html>)

² <http://www.reuters.com/article/middleeastCrisis/idUSN02571669>

³ On the Department hiring website questionnaire for potential FSOs, question #21 is "Am I willing or able to...live and work anywhere in the world, even in locations considered "hardship" posts?" [Note: This is an absolute requirement.] (Emphasis added)

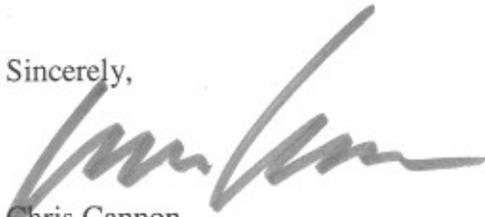
⁴ "AFSA's principal missions are to enhance the effectiveness of the Foreign Service, to protect the professional interests of its members, to ensure the maintenance of high professional standards for both

- war zone⁵. In doing so, they are actively undermining US foreign policy, strategic interests in the region, and success in the War on Terror.
4. The American Foreign Service Association indicates that of their members, two thirds of respondents want AFSA to be more vocal and assertive, even at the cost of more friction with Management⁶. According to the Department of State, Foreign Service Officers, "help formulate and implement the foreign policy of the United States." They do not have the right, either on their own, or through any union, to actively oppose the settled foreign policy of the administration while working for the Department⁷.

As you are well aware, America's diplomats are on the front lines of not only this war, but preventing future wars. However, whether the President is a Democrat or a Republican, foreign policy, once settled, must be carried out by those whose job it is to execute that policy. A government job is not a right. I believe it is incumbent upon this committee to investigate whether the Foreign Service, as it is currently constituted, is suited to fulfill its mission or whether it is in need of serious reform, including the personnel flexibility to remove officers unwilling to fulfill their duties.

I request that you look into these reports as the principal oversight committee for the House of Representatives. If you have further questions please contact me at (202)225-7751.

Sincerely,



Chris Cannon
Member of Congress

career diplomats and political appointees, and to promote understanding of the critical role of the Foreign Service in promoting America's national security and economic prosperity."

⁵ <http://www.afsa.org/president-update.cfm> ("AFSA stands by our position that directed assignments of unarmed Foreign Service members into the war zone in Iraq would be detrimental to the individual, to the post, and to the Foreign Service as a whole." – as seen on November 2nd 2007)

⁶ Id

⁷ On the Department hiring website questionnaire for potential FSOs, question #24 is, "'Am I willing or able to...enthusiastically support and defend actions and policies with which I may personally disagree?'"