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APRIL 13, 1965

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WASHINGTON.....Forty Republican Members of Congress today called upon the President "to end the delay in the appointment of American Ambassadors."

Citing eleven vacancies around the world, the Congressmen said, "United States relations with the rest of the world are difficult at best. There is no excuse for endangering them further by failing to maximize effective communications."

In a statement issued in Washington Tuesday afternoon, the Members pointed out that "some of these posts have been left vacant for many months. The failure to appoint an Ambassador to a foreign government is more than an insult which can loosen the bonds between nations. No matter how capable the deputy chief of mission and foreign service personnel may be, there is no substitute for an Ambassador. Leaving the post unfilled denies maximum communication between governments -- communication of both opportunities and perils."

The Republicans declared, "Nations of the nuclear age should cherish the chance to keep persuasion friendly. The channels of diplomacy must be kept open for all who seek peace."

The vacancies cited include Australia, Panama, the Netherlands, Belgium, Uruguay, Morocco, the Gambia, Malta, Jamaica, the Yemen Arab Republic, and Cambodia.

The group expressed particular concern over the vacancy in Panama. They argued that the vacancy in 1963 was an important source of increased tensions between Panama and the United States.

Noting that the Australian Ambassadorial post has been vacant for more than six months, the Congressmen contended that Australia's strategic position as a SEATO ally and neighbor of Vietnam warranted an immediate appointment.

The Representatives were also critical of the failure to appoint Ambassadors to newly independent nations. "In the exciting first days of independence," they said, "national leaders are likely to establish policies and develop prejudices which will shape the future of their and neighboring nations. It is important that the United States be represented during these formative days by men of high quality and inspiration."

The full text of the statement is attached.

TEXT OF JOINT STATEMENT, APRIL 13, 1965

We urge the President to end the delay in the appointment of American Ambassadors.

There are today eleven vacant U.S. Ambassadorial posts around the globe. While preliminary diplomatic steps may have been undertaken, the fact is that there are no nominations for these posts pending before the Senate. The vacancies occur in NATO and SEATO, in Latin America and in Africa, and even in trouble spots familiar to all -- in Panama where tensions remain high, in Yemen where Nasser has staked his prestige, in Australia where support for American policy in Vietnam is crucial.

Some of these posts have been left vacant for many months. The failure to appoint an Ambassador to a foreign government is more than an insult which can loosen the bonds between nations. No matter how capable the deputy chief of mission and foreign service personnel may be, there is no substitute for an Ambassador. Leaving the post unfilled denies maximum communication between governments -- communication of both opportunities and perils.

Nations of the nuclear age should cherish the chance to keep persuasion friendly. The channels of diplomacy must be kept open for all who seek peace.

Of these eleven posts, nine should be filled immediately. The tenth requires either an appointment or a reversal of policy. And the eleventh may provide an opportunity for an important diplomatic initiative in the Southeast Asian conflict.

1. Australia. There has been no American Ambassador to Australia since September 30, 1964 -- over six months ago. Australia is a SEATO ally, staunch in its support of U.S. policy in Vietnam and vitally concerned with the maintenance of peace and the defense against aggression throughout Asia. The Administration should nominate an Ambassador now.

2. Panama. There has been no American Ambassador to Panama since March 21, 1965, and for weeks prior to that the impending reassignment of Ambassador Vaughn had been public knowledge. That the Administration would allow another ambassadorial vacancy to occur in Panama is almost inconceivable. In August 1963, Ambassador Joseph Farland resigned his post with warnings of increased tensions between the two countries. His warnings were ignored and he was not replaced until long after the severe Panamanian crisis erupted in January, 1964. It is obvious that with a competent American Ambassador on the scene with the authority to seek clear policy agreement with the Governor of the Canal Zone and the Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Southern Command, which is headquartered in Panama, much of any potential discord between the two countries can be anticipated and avoided. The Administration seems not to have learned this lesson. An Ambassador should be nominated now.

3. The Netherlands. There has been no American Ambassador to the Netherlands since June 26, 1964. There is no reason for a nine month delay in replacing an envoy to an important NATO ally whose support we seek in Vietnam and whose advice we should seek in our relations with Sukarno and Indonesia.

4. Belgium. There has been no American Ambassador to Belgium since March 18, 1965. It is extraordinary that the Administration would permit the American Embassies in both the European low countries to be unfilled at the same time.

5. Uruguay. There has been no American Ambassador to Uruguay since February 14, 1965. Most Latin American experts agree that Uruguay may prove to be a pivotal state in the vital political and economic choices which the Latin governments must make in the next decade. The post should be filled now.

6. Morocco. There has been no American Ambassador to Morocco since December 26, 1964. The course of North African leadership will influence the future of the entire Arab world. The United States cannot afford to slight it or ignore it.

7. The Gambia. This new nation became independent on February 18, 1965. The United States recognized it, but no Ambassador has yet been appointed. In the exciting first days of independence, national leaders are likely to establish policies and

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develop prejudices which will shape the future of their and neighboring nations. It is important that the United States be represented during these formative days by men of high quality and inspiration.

8. Malta. Similarly there has been no American Ambassador to Malta since September 21, 1964, when her independence was proclaimed.

9. Jamaica. There has been no American Ambassador to Jamaica since May 25, 1964 -- over ten months ago.

10. Yemen Arab Republic. The United States formally recognized the new "Republican" government of Yemen on December 19, 1962, but an Ambassador has never been appointed. Some have argued that the presence of 50,000 Egyptian troops in Yemen demonstrates conclusively that American recognition was premature. If the Administration believes that recognition of the Yemen government was unjustified, it should withdraw the recognition. If it believes that recognition was justified it should nominate an Ambassador.

11. Cambodia. The United States Ambassador to the Kingdom of Cambodia, which borders on South Vietnam, Laos and Thailand, resigned on March 16, 1965. He did not actually serve in Cambodia, however, For political reasons the Cambodian government had never received him. It would be an appropriate initiative by the United States for the President to nominate a new Ambassador and to attempt to restore productive and fruitful relations between the two countries. The economic development of the Mekong River Basin, which is an integral part of the Administration's policy in the Vietnam crisis, would require the full participation of Cambodia. The reestablishment of effective and cordial relations between the two governments would help facilitate an enforceable and honorable settlement to the Southeast Asian conflict.

In 1964 a Senate Committee studied the role of United States Ambassadors. Its recommendations were based on the counsel of many of America's most distinguished diplomats, including Dean Rusk, Averell Harriman, George Kennan, David Bruce, and Foy Kohler. On Ambassadorial vacancies the Committee report was adamant:

"An Ambassador loses influence from the moment it becomes known that he is leaving -- and the longer the gap between then and the arrival of his successor, the more we invite trouble in a world where trouble always seems to be waiting on the doorstep."

United States relations with the rest of the world are difficult at best. There is no excuse for endangering them further by failing to maximize effective communications.

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