

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

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Statement of Robert M. Orr Nominee United States Executive Director with Rank of Ambassador for the Asian Development Bank Testimony before the Committee on Foreign Relations United States Senate July 21, 2010

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Chairman Webb, Senator Inhofe, Senator Nelson and distinguished members of the Committee, I am deeply honored to have been nominated by President Barack Obama to be the next United States Executive Director with rank of Ambassador to the Asian Development Bank. And I am equally honored to have the opportunity to appear before you today for your consideration.

If I may, I would like to introduce my wife of 34 years, Ms. Mitsuko Tanabe Orr, a gifted classical pianist. Without Mitsuko it is highly unlikely I would have had the great fortune of having an international career, particularly devoted to Japan and other countries in Asia. She has taught me more than I can adequately articulate in this statement.

My mother, Marylouise, and brother Alex are not here today but if I am confirmed they have promised to attend the swearing-in ceremony. My family has a history of public service. My mother is 86, healthy, energetic and living in my home state of Florida. She works as a volunteer in my hometown local hospital. My brother is a senior meteorologist with the National Weather Service based in Portland, Oregon and I am very proud of his success in service to our country. I lost my father, Bob Orr, 30 years ago. He was a proud World War II veteran of the United States Coast Guard and was involved in our nation's space program during the 1960s and 70s. I wish to reference that he has remained a profound inspiration throughout my life.

In some ways my appearance before you today brings me full circle in my career. I had the great fortune, upon graduating from college to come to Washington to work as a Capitol Hill staffer for 5 years. Consequently I have always looked upon "the Hill" as a sort of home for me. It not only provided me with a great education, long time friends but also very fond memories.

My career has led me on a meandering road which I believe, should the Senate confirm me, will enhance my ability to execute the mission I am given by the President and Secretary Geithner. Following my Capitol Hill career, I had the good opportunity to work in the U.S. Agency for International Development in the Asia Bureau. This allowed me for the first time to be exposed to the profound poverty issues confronting developing Asia. In addition it demonstrated for me the importance of bipartisanship in foreign policy; as a life long Democrat I served in this capacity as an appointee of President Ronald Reagan.

That experience led me to return to academia, this time in Japan to Tokyo University to complete a Ph.D. in political science with a dissertation on Japan's foreign aid policy. This would subsequently be published as a prize winning book on the subject. Considering that Japan and the United States are the largest share holders of the AsDB, and Japan has strong influence in the Bank, should I be confirmed, I feel this experience would aid me in effectively executing U.S. policy priorities. Also, my understanding is that I would be the first fluent Japanese speaker assigned as U.S. Executive Director.

Subsequent to my second career in academia as a college professor, I held leadership positions with the private sector first with Motorola in Japan followed by Motorola in Europe and then as President of Boeing Japan. In these capacities and also as a Vice President of the American Chamber of Commerce Japan I was able to promote American business interests. Plus this allowed me to develop management skills as well as experience in international negotiations. In total I have lived 25 years in Asia engaged in government, academia and business.

The Asian Development Bank has become the largest regional International Financial Institution with 67 member countries, with borrowing members so diverse they extend as far west as the caucuses and east as the Pacific Islands. The AsDB's operations in its borrowing member countries provide assistance to countries in which nearly 1.3 billion people live in poverty. Secondly, AsDB's operations directly support international efforts for reconstruction and recovery in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

For all the excellent work that the AsDB does, I deeply appreciate that the Bank needs to continue to make improvements in the efficiency and effectiveness of its operations. I believe the issues which members of Congress have highlighted as challenges to the institution are

critical. Improvements need to be made in important areas, such as transparency and accountability.

Asia is the most dynamic region in our world. I have long been part of the region and seen this dynamism with my own eyes. And yet, it is simultaneously the region with the greatest number of impoverished people. Our challenge is to reconcile this disparity.

If confirmed I look forward to working with the Congress to address the critical issues which afflict the region consistent with American values and interests.

It is my distinct honor to appear before you today and I sincerely appreciate the opportunity. I would be very pleased to answer any questions you might have of me.

Thank you.

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