

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Assistant Secretary - Designate Michael Posner by
Senator Robert Menendez (#3)
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
July 28, 2009**

Question:

President Obama has stated that the treatment of gay, lesbian and transgender individuals must be “part and parcel of any conversations we have about human rights.”

- How will you, as Assistant Secretary, seek to ensure that the human rights dialogue of the United States embraces these concerns?

Answer:

Secretary Clinton has consistently signaled her commitment to advancing the rights of the LGBT communities as a vital piece of U.S. human rights diplomacy. UN Ambassador Rice has reinforced this commitment at the United Nations. If confirmed I also will work to ensure that U.S. bilateral and multilateral diplomatic efforts consistently address these issues. In recent years Human Rights First has focused increased attention on Hate Crimes in Europe targeting the LGBT community. If confirmed I will draw on this experience to help advance U.S. diplomacy in this area.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Assistant Secretary - Designate Michael Posner by
Senator Robert Menendez (#4)
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
July 28, 2009**

Question:

The Obama Administration has endorsed a United Nations statement that affirms the universality of human rights and calls for homosexuality to be decriminalized around the world.

- How would you, as Assistant Secretary, seek to advance the provisions in this UN statement?

Answer:

On March 18 the U.S. announced its support for the French-initiated UN Declaration on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity. In the March session of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC), the U.S. was unequivocal in its support for the LGBT community abroad; at the Paris Conference on LGBT rights in May, the USG once again underscored its commitment to fight against human rights violations aimed at the LGBT community abroad; and, at the June HRC session, the USG was pleased to co-sponsor a panel on human rights and the LGBT community.

If confirmed, I will build on this base the Obama Administration has established. The Administration is committed to support for anti-criminalization efforts and to combat human rights violations against LGBT individuals. In recent years Human Rights First has focused increased attention on Hate Crimes in Europe targeting the LGBT community. If confirmed I will draw on this experience to help advance U.S. diplomacy in this area.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Assistant Secretary - Designate Michael Posner by
Senator Robert Menendez (#5)
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
July 28, 2009**

Question:

Countries around the world have organizations that represent the needs of certain groups, such as the gay and lesbian community and ethnic minorities. However, these organizations are often seen as weak and are sometimes limited in what they are able to achieve.

- How can the Department of State help strengthen civil society writ large, and in particular with such human rights groups, to ensure that gay and lesbian and ethnic minority advocacy groups are strengthened as well?

Answer:

For more than 30 years I have worked to promote human rights as the Executive Director and more recently as President of a non-governmental organization, Human Rights First. I have devoted my professional life to the cause of human rights because I know that courageous people can and often do stand up to oppression and it is our duty to help them. If confirmed, I will work to strengthen civil society groups around the world.

In a recent foreign policy address at the Council on Foreign Relations, Secretary Clinton said, "We will reach out beyond governments, because we believe partnerships with people play a critical role." She has created an Ambassador for Global Partnerships to "widen opportunities especially for those who are too often left on the margins." She emphasized that the Department will "reach out directly to people and encourage them to embrace cooperation with us."

If confirmed, I will work cooperatively with the Ambassador for Global Partnerships, and I will also work to enhance efforts by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and

Labor to promote greater respect for human rights, including LGBT and ethnic minorities. The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor has formed an informal working group to take a closer look at how the Department of State can consistently address the concerns of the LGBT community abroad which can form a basis for further work in this area.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Assistant Secretary - Designate Michael Posner by
Senator Robert Menendez (#6)
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
July 28, 2009**

Question:

Many human rights abuses abroad have been suffered by gay, lesbian and transgender individuals, and laws in many countries continue to discriminate against even their basic rights.

- Would you support incorporating into the Foreign Service Institute's human rights training greater attention to how abuses and discrimination are manifested, and to how U.S. embassies can address these issues?

Answer:

I was pleased to see that the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor included in its July 2009 Human Rights

Officers Conference a session on reaching out to the LGBT community and incorporating LGBT civil society groups abroad into regular U.S. Embassy meetings with civil society. I also understand that DRL has formed an informal working group within the Bureau to take a closer look at how the Department of State can consistently address the concerns of the LGBT community abroad. If confirmed, I will support the activities that DRL has already begun and will also reach out to the Foreign Service Institute to encourage enhanced human rights training.