

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
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REMARKS

**Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton
Welcome Remarks to Employees**

**January 22, 2009
Washington, D.C.**

SECRETARY CLINTON: Thank you. Thank you all so much. Well, I am absolutely honored and thrilled beyond words to be here with you as our nation's 67th Secretary of State. And I believe, with all of my heart, that this is a new era for America. (Applause.)

President Obama set the tone with his inaugural address. And the work of the Obama-Biden Administration is committed to advancing America's national security, furthering America's interests, and respecting and exemplifying America's values around the world. (Applause.)

There are three legs to the stool of American foreign policy: defense, diplomacy, and development. And we are responsible for two of the three legs. And we will make clear, as we go forward, that diplomacy and development are essential tools in achieving the long-term objectives of the United States. And I will do all that I can, working with you, to make it abundantly clear that robust diplomacy and effective development are the best long-term tools for securing America's future. (Applause.)

In my testimony before the Foreign Relations Committee, I spoke a lot about smart power. Well, at the heart of smart power are smart people, and you are those people. And you are the ones that we will count on and turn to for the advice and counsel, the expertise and experience to make good on the promises of this new Administration.

I want to thank Steve for his comments that really summarized the full range of experience and expertise of both the Foreign Service and the Civil Service, and also to send my appreciation to all of the nationals around the world who work in our embassies and work with government officials.

This is going to be a challenging time and it will require 21st century tools and solutions to meet our problems and seize our opportunities. I'm going to be asking a lot of you. I want you to think outside the proverbial box. I want you to give me the best advice you can. I want you to understand there is nothing that I welcome more than a good debate and the kind of dialogue – (applause) – that will make us better. (Applause.)

We cannot be our best if we don't demand that from ourselves and each other. I will give you my very best efforts. I will do all that I can, working with our President, to make sure that we deliver on the promises that are at the very core of what this new Administration and this new era represent. So we need to collaborate, and we need to have a sense of openness and candor in this building. And I invite that.

Now, not everybody's ideas – (applause) – will make it into policy, but we will be better because we have heard from you.

I also want to address a word to the USAID family. I will be there tomorrow to greet them and thank them for the work they've done on behalf of development through some very difficult years, because they will be our partners. (Applause.)

Now, as Steve candidly said, so far, we're thrilled. (Laughter.) This is not going to be easy. (Laughter.) I don't want anybody to leave this extraordinarily warm reception thinking, oh, good – (laughter) – you know, this is going to be great. It's going to be hard. But if it weren't hard, somebody else could do it, besides the professionals of the Foreign Service and the Civil Service and our Diplomatic and Development Corps. (Applause.)

Now, as you may have heard percolating through the building, you know, when I was first nominated, I realized that there was this living, organic creature known as *the building*. (Laughter.) And as you probably already know, we are expecting the President and the Vice President to be here in the State Department this afternoon. (Applause.)

Among the many conversations that I've had with the President and with the Vice President, over years, but certainly much more astutely and in a concentrated way in the last weeks, we want to send a clear and unequivocal message: This is a team, and you are the members of that team. There isn't anything that I can get done from the seventh floor or the President can get done from the Oval Office, unless we make clear we are all on the American team. We are not any longer going to tolerate the kind of divisiveness that has paralyzed and undermined our ability to get things done for America.

So the President will be here – (applause) – on his second day in office to let all of you know, and all who are serving on our behalf around the world, how seriously committed he is to working with us. So this is going to be a great adventure. We'll have some ups and some downs. We'll face some obstacles along the way. But be of good cheer – (laughter) – and be of strong heart, and do not grow weary, as we attempt to do good on behalf of our country and the world.

I think this is a time of such potential and possibility. I don't get up in the morning just thinking about the threats and the dangers, as real as they are. I also think about what we can do and who we are and what we represent. So I take this office with a real sense of joy and responsibility, commitment and collaboration. And now, ladies and gentlemen, let's get to work. (Applause.)

Thank you and God bless you.

