

**PREPARED STATEMENT OF JOHN HEWKO  
NOMINEE, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION  
FOR AVIATION AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
JULY 29, 2008**

Chairman Inouye, Vice Chairman Stevens and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as you consider my nomination to be Assistant Secretary of Transportation for Aviation and International Affairs at the Department of Transportation. It is a great honor to be asked by President Bush and Secretary Peters to serve in this important position. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with the Members of this Committee and your staffs in addressing the many crucial aviation and international transportation issues facing the United States today.

I would like publicly to thank and acknowledge my wife Margarita and daughter Maria, and my siblings Marc and Annetta Hewko. Unfortunately, they are unable to be here today. I would also like to recognize my parents Lubomyr and Natalie Hewko who came to this country after the Second World War from Ukraine by way of displaced persons refugee camps in Bavaria. Their experiences, particularly those under Stalin's Communism and Hitler's Nazism, have given me a keen appreciation of the extraordinary country we live in and of the importance of freedom, democracy, hard work and dedication. This appreciation, and a desire to give back to the country that opened its arms to my parents, has motivated my interest in public service.

If confirmed, there are a number of skills that I would bring to this position. I have a very strong international background, having spent many years living and working outside the United States. In my current position at the Millennium Challenge Corporation, I have primary responsibility for negotiating MCC's foreign assistance agreements with 26 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and the former Soviet Union. Most of these agreements contain significant transportation projects and the experience of negotiating them underscored to me the critical importance of transportation infrastructure to a country's economic prosperity. If confirmed, I will also bring a strong management background to the position. This management experience will be particularly important during the upcoming transition to a new Administration. Finally, as someone from outside the aviation sector, I would bring a fresh perspective to many of the issues currently facing the industry.

Although the term of this Administration will soon end, there still remain many important issues that need to be addressed. The state of the domestic air transportation industry resulting from the rising cost of fuel and how the industry is responding will require significant attention. A number of smaller, yet important, programs such as Essential Air Service will need continued and effective stewardship. I would hope to focus on a number of the "Open-Skies" agreements currently being negotiated, with the goal of increasing access for American carriers and communities to international markets.

Finally, it is important to ensure a smooth, efficient and orderly transition to the new Administration in January 2009.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I look forward to working with you and the Members of Congress on these and other critical issues. I would come to this position with an open mind and a keen desire to find solutions to problems that are fair and take into account the concerns of the affected stakeholders and the best interests of the American people.

Again, I am grateful for the opportunity to appear before you today as you consider my nomination and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.