

2 December 2008

The Honorable Condoleezza Rice  
Secretary of State  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Madam Secretary:

For the last five years, it has been my privilege to serve as a member of the State Department's Advisory Committee on Historic Diplomatic Documentation.

With regret, I submit to you my resignation, effective February 16, 2009.

Three firmly-held beliefs – ones that I know you share -- made it possible for me to serve on the Advisory Committee. The first was my belief in the imperative to provide citizens with (in the words of PL 102-138) “a thorough, accurate, and reliable documentary record of major United States foreign policy decisions and significant United States diplomatic activity.” The second was my belief that an independent and professional Advisory Committee, operating in the role clearly defined by Congress and affirmed by the Executive, served an important function in guaranteeing that whatever the possible momentary political embarrassment, the accounting provided by the State Department in its *Foreign Relations of the United States* series was in fact “thorough, accurate, and reliable” and in ensuring public trust in this series. The third was my belief that the State Department shared this commitment, both to providing a “thorough, accurate, and reliable” accounting and to the existence of an independent and professional Advisory Committee.

I regret that while I still firmly hold the first two of these beliefs and while I have never had reason to doubt the State Department's commitment to a “thorough, accurate, and reliable” documentary history, recent actions by the State Department have deprived me of confidence that the department is in fact committed to the continued existence of the independent, professional Advisory Committee envisioned by Congress in PL 102-138.

As you know, the Advisory Committee's most recent annual statement to Congress raised frank but constructive concerns regarding the *Foreign Relations of the United States* series. The report represented the carefully considered and fully informed appraisal of the nine members of the Advisory Committee. The principal author of the report was – and was publicly identified as – Advisory Committee member Professor Thomas Schwartz of Vanderbilt University.

PL 102-138 gives the Secretary the authority to appoint, to reappoint, and to continue in service until the appointment of a new member, the members of the Advisory Committee. The practice has been for active members of the committee to be reappointed to a second three-year term. Following the delivery of the committee's most recent annual statement, the State

Department, acting through Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Teresa Dean, took the unusual step of not reappointing Professor Schwartz to a second term on the Advisory Committee. Professor Schwartz, who was nominated for service on the Advisory Committee by the Organization of American Historians and who was re-nominated by that organization to serve a second term (though such a re-nomination is not necessary), is an eminent scholar of American foreign policy, has played an active and thoughtful part in the Advisory Committee's activities and deliberations, and would in all likelihood, in the fullness of time, have been expected to assume the committee's chairmanship. Whatever the reasons for this unusual decision, the non-reappointment of Professor Schwartz appears to reasonable, informed observers as a calculated, punitive step by the department designed to intimidate the Advisory Committee and to reduce its independence. Regrettably, when this decision is more widely known, it will certainly be interpreted this way throughout the academic community.

Under these unfortunate circumstances, I conclude my continued service beyond the completion of the current calendar year's duties is impossible. It is my intention to make my plans to resign public during the open session of the next regularly scheduled Advisory Committee meeting, on December 10, 2008, and subsequently to convey this information to the American Political Science Association so that it may begin the process of identifying nominees to fill my seat on the committee.

I am grateful both to you and to Secretary of State Powell for the honor you have done me in allowing me to serve on the Advisory Committee. I share your commitment, and that of Secretary Powell, to the *Foreign Relations of the United States* and to the openness and candor about our nation's successes and failures that it embodies. My time on the committee has only enhanced my respect for the series and admiration for the individuals involved in producing it -- and my confidence that this series is and will continue to be the definitive and transparent account of our nation's activities abroad.

Sincerely yours,

Edward Rhodes  
Visiting Professor (2007-2009), Department of Politics, Princeton University  
Professor, Department of Political Science, Rutgers University

cc: Eliot Cohen  
Sean McCormack