



## Presidential Cabinet Political Commentary Update

By Chris Ballesteros

Secretary of State  
Hillary Clinton

Hillary Clinton first rose to national prominence as the First Lady of the United States during the years 1992-2000, when her husband, Bill Clinton, served as President of the United States. After Bill Clinton left the White House, Hillary Clinton campaigned for and won the position of **junior senator** in the State of New York. After an unsuccessful primary campaign against Barack Obama in 2008, she was nominated for the post of Secretary of State by the then President-Elect. This move was seen as an attempt to consolidate Obama's political base of support and preempt potential party divides due to Hillary Clinton's disgruntled primary supporters. As Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton will be responsible for overseeing the diplomatic operations of the United States and coordinating relations with foreign countries.

The confirmation process was relatively smooth for Senator Clinton. Hillary Clinton is one of the undisputed leaders of the Democratic Party, both because of her husband's influence and because of her assertive, aggressive style. The Democratic Party was almost unanimously in support of her nomination as Secretary of State, despite the divisiveness evident during the primary campaign. She was considered very well qualified by her peers in the Senate, and only two senators, both Republican, voted against her confirmation.

Many conservatives maintain a deep dislike for Hillary Clinton's political beliefs, which were usually opposed to the policies of the Bush Administration. A few members of the Republican Party challenged her nomination on the basis of Bill Clinton's fundraising relationship with a number of foreign entities, including the governments of a few Middle Eastern nations, including Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Oman. This controversy evaporated after Bill Clinton signed an agreement with Barack Obama's transition team stating that his charitable foundation would not receive financial contributions from international organizations during Hillary Clinton's tenure at the State Department. Hillary Clinton ultimately received strong bipartisan support, including the backing of former Republican Presidential Candidate John McCain, and only two dissenting Republican votes. Though Hillary remains one of the most divisive politicians in America, Hillary Clinton's nomination was positively viewed by the American public in general, and she is also considered one of the most widely admired women in the nation.

**Junior senator**—the longer continuously serving of each state's two senators is conventionally referred to as the senior senator, and the other is referred to as the junior senator.

Jones, Jeffrey M. (2009-01-13). "As Senate Hearings Begin, Hillary Clinton's Image Soars", The Gallup Organization. Retrieved on 27 January 2009

Stout, David (2009-01-21). "Clinton Is Approved, but Vote on Holder Is Delayed", *The New York Times*. Retrieved on 27 January 2009

## **Secretary of the Treasury** **Timothy Geithner**

After serving for six years as the ninth President of the **Federal Reserve Bank of New York**, Timothy Geithner was nominated by President-elect Barack Obama on November 24, 2008 to become Secretary of the Treasury. Geithner's nomination was met with fierce resistance from the **right wing** of the Republican Party. During his confirmation hearing before the United States Senate, Geithner was confronted with evidence that documented his failure to pay approximately thirty five thousand dollars in self-employment taxes. Geithner apologized for his actions, calling them careless and unavoidable, and testifying that he had prepared his own taxes with TurboTax software. Senator Tom Harkin questioned the ability of someone who could not calculate his own taxes to oversee the **Internal Revenue Service**, while Senator Robert Byrd said that "it has become clear to me that this is not merely a matter of complexity leading to mistakes, but of inexcusable negligence." Former Republican presidential candidate Mike Huckabee even went through the trouble of posting an impassioned plea against Geithner's confirmation on his official website. Another line of attack was opened up by conservative radio commentator and Senator Jim Bunning, who noted that Geithner was responsible for regulating one of the largest financial organizations, the Federal Reserve Bank, at the same time the economic crisis began in earnest.

However, Geithner did have many supporters throughout the nomination process. Senators Orrin Hatch and Lindsay Graham defended Geithner's actions, stating that he made a mistake that any human being could, and lauding him as more than competent and qualified to be Secretary of the Treasury. Geithner also garnered the support of then-Secretary of the Treasury Henry Paulson, who applauded his understanding of the markets and government while describing him as unusually talented. Former Senator Don Riegle, who chaired the Senate Banking Committee, stated that "Geithner is a solid choice. He has shown more independent thinking, he has also seen this financial system meltdown from the inside...he can offer highly skilled and pragmatic advice to Obama."

Geithner was confirmed by the Senate in a 60-34 vote on January 26, 2009. Geithner's confirmation hearings were not widely ana-

**Federal Reserve Bank of New York**—one of twelve regional banks throughout the US that acts as part of the Treasury Department's Federal Reserve System. The regional reserve banks help the Treasury Department control the supply of money in America.

**Right wing**—conservative or reactive political positions.

**Internal Revenue Service**—a federal agency that collects taxes and enforces the internal revenue laws .

lyzed by polling organizations and were not major news, despite the slight embarrassment caused to the Obama administration by Geithner's tax mixup.

"Geithner to Be Nominated as Treasury Secretary", CNBC (21 November 2008). Retrieved on January 27, 2009

Aherns, Frank (January 21, 2009). "Treasury Pick Misfiled Using Off-the-Shelf Tax Software", *Washington Post*, p. D1. Retrieved on January 27, 2009

Beck, Glenn (January 22, 2009). "We Can't Trust Timothy Geithner", *Fox News*. Retrieved on January 27, 2009

Jackie Calmes (2009-01-26). "Senate Confirms Geithner for Treasury". *New York Times*. Retrieved on 2009-01-27

Hirschfield Davis, Julie (January 14, 2009). "Tax problems may plague Obama's treasury pick", *Associated Press, My Way News*. Retrieved on January 27, 2009

Huckabee, Mike (January 24, 2009). "Call Your Senators Today -- Stop the Geithner Treasury Nomination". *Official Web Site of Mike Huckabee*. Retrieved on January 27, 2009

Lanman, Scott (24 November 2008). "Geithner Nomination Takes Top Fed Wall Street Liaison". *News. Bloomberg*. Retrieved on January 27, 2009

Shear, Michael D.; Montgomery Lori (January 14, 2009). "Treasury Nominee Accounts for Own Tax Errors", *Washington Post*. Retrieved on January 27, 2009

## **Secretary of Defense Robert Gates**

Robert Gates is a highly **decorated** intelligence expert and government official with extensive experience in the fields of defense and education. Gates was nominated on November 8, 2006 by President George W. Bush to be the next United States Secretary of Defense. Gates won unanimous approval in the Senate Armed Services Committee, and was approved by a 95-2 vote in a full vote on the Senate Floor. The two dissenting votes were cast by Republican Senators Bunning and Santorum, who were unhappy with Gates' declaration that the United States was not winning the war in Iraq. All other Senate Republicans

**Decorated**—*honored with many military titles and awards.*

and every voting Democrat supported the confirmation of Robert Gates, with Senator Bill Frist congratulating Gates on his “exemplary performance”, Senator Edward Kennedy stating that Gates “recognized the high price that our troops are paying for the current policy”, and Senator Richard Durbin saying “that gives me hope that with this nomination and with the Iraq Study Group report, this nation has turned a corner.”

Public sentiment was initially against Robert Gates because of the perceived failures in Iraq, but the dramatic turnaround orchestrated under his watch has raised his approval rating considerably. Along with General Petraeus, Gates is considered as one of the few most responsible for the astounding progress made in Iraq over the past two years. Barack Obama announced on December 1, 2008 that Robert Gates would remain Secretary of Defense, a move that was popular with liberals and conservatives alike. Since Secretary of Defense Gates is a **hold-over** from the previous administration, there will be no additional confirmation process.

**Holdover**—*in this context, a former cabinet member who will be continuing in a new administration.*

"Robert Gates confirmed as secretary of defense", Associated Press (December 6, 2006). Retrieved on January 27, 2009

CNN (20 January 2009). "Defense Secretary Gates to be 'designated successor' Tuesday" (News article). *CNN*. CNN. Retrieved on January 27, 2009

"Gates Cabinet Appointment 'A Done Deal'" (Blog), *Political Radar*, ABC News (25 November 2008). Retrieved on January 28, 2009

## **Attorney General Eric Holder**

Eric Holder has extensive experience in the intelligence community, private practice, and in public legal affairs. He served as senior legal adviser and as a member of the vice presidential selection committee for then-Senator Barack Obama before being nominated by President-elect Obama for the position of Attorney General of the United States.

Holder’s political stance generally has a liberal slant. He believes that **waterboarding** constitutes torture, leading to some controversy among conservatives who advocate a more aggressive approach towards terror suspect interrogation. Some Republicans are also unhappy with his outspoken criticism of the Patriot Act and the National Security Agency (NSA) surveillance program. Senator Arlen Specter of the Senate Judiciary Committee raised a common concern among Republicans, grilling Holder on his involvement in the pardon of rogue fin-

**Waterboarding**—*a form of torture consisting of immobilizing the victim and pouring water over the face and into the breathing passages.*

ancier Marc Rich during his service under the Clinton Administration. Holder has also come under criticism from the **far left wing** of the Democratic Party for his harsh views on drug laws and for his defense of an agricultural entity charged with supporting Colombian death squads. The Senate Judiciary Committee voted 17-2 to advance Holder's nomination to the floor of the Senate. Holder was confirmed with a vote of 75-21 on February 2, 2009, and is the first African-American to hold his position.

**Far left wing**—  
*radically liberal.*

Greenwald, Glenn (November 19, 2008). "Preliminary facts and thoughts about Eric Holder" (Blog). *Glenn Greenwald's Unclaimed Territory* (*Salon.com*). <http://www.salon.com/opinion/greenwald/2008/11/19/holder/index.html>. Retrieved on January 27, 2009

Hook, Carol S. (19 November 2008). "10 Things You Didn't Know About Eric Holder" (Article). *Nation & World: Politics*. U.S. News & World Report. Retrieved on January 27, 2009

Yost, Pete (19 November 2008). "Marc Rich pardon controversy just won't die" (Article). *Google News*. Associated Press. Retrieved on January 27, 2009

Tapper, Jake (November 18, 2008). "Holder v Bush on War on Terror Tactics" (Blog). *Political Punch* (*ABC News*). <http://blogs.abcnews.com/politicalpunch/2008/11/holder-v-bush-o.html>. Retrieved on January 27, 2009

## **Secretary of the Interior** **Ken Salazar**

Ken Salazar has considerable experience in the legal, environmental, and political fields. After serving as the Junior Senator from Colorado, Salazar was nominated by then President-elect Barack Obama to fill the position of Secretary of the Interior. Republicans who favor the expansion of oil drilling were wary of Salazar's cautious approach to exploring **oil shale** and reluctance to drill in potentially environmentally sensitive regions. Senator Richard Burr raised these questions during Salazar's confirmation hearings, although Salazar's responses largely diffused the controversy. Conversely, some liberal environmentalist groups have raised concerns about Salazar's relationship with the coal and mining industries. The executive director of the Center for Biological Diversity said that "Salazar is a right-of-center Democrat who often favors industry and big agriculture in battles over global warming, fuel efficiency, and endangered species." Most of the criticism surrounding

**Oil Shale**—*a type of rock from which fuel can be extracted.*

Salazar has been eschewed by the American public, and Salazar was unanimously confirmed by the United States Senate through a voice vote. Environmental groups such as the League of Conservation Voters have also stepped in to defend Salazar, citing his experience with land and water issues.

Abrams, Jim (2009-01-20). "Senate confirms 6 cabinet secretaries, puts off vote on Clinton". Associated Press. [http://www.startribune.com/politics/national/congress/37894759.html?elr=KArks8c7PaP3E77K\\_3c::D3aDhU6:\\_0c:QyDiiUiacyKUU](http://www.startribune.com/politics/national/congress/37894759.html?elr=KArks8c7PaP3E77K_3c::D3aDhU6:_0c:QyDiiUiacyKUU). Retrieved on January 27, 2009

Broder, Jim M. (17 December 2008). "Environmentalists Wary of Obama's Interior Pick". *The New York Times*. [http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/18/us/politics/18salazarcnd.html?pagewanted=1&\\_r=1&hp](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/18/us/politics/18salazarcnd.html?pagewanted=1&_r=1&hp) Retrieved on January 27, 2009

League of Conservation Voters (2008-12-07). *New Cabinet Choices Re-affirm Obama's New Direction on Energy and the Environment Retrieved on January 27, 2009*

Sprengelmeyer, M.E. (2009-1-15) <http://www.rockymountainnews.com/news/2009/jan/15/hearing-salazar-vows-wean-nation-foreign-oil/> *Ken Salazar feels the love at confirmation hearing Retrieved on January 27, 2009*

## **Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack**

Tom Vilsack served as Mayor of Mount Pleasant, Iowa, as an Iowa State Senator, and as the Governor of Iowa before being nominated by then President-elect Barack Obama on December 17, 2008 to be Secretary of Agriculture. Vilsack did not meet with significant opposition from the Republican Party, and most agricultural and environmental groups rallied to support Vilsack's confirmation, including the Corn Refiners Association, the National Grain and Feed Association, the National Farmers Union, the American Farm Bureau Federation, and the Environmental Defense Fund. A few organizations aligned with the organic food lobby raised concerns regarding Vilsack's support for **genetically modified foods** and larger, industrialized farms. Vilsack's nomination caused relatively little controversy amidst the American public, as it was largely overshadowed by big-name nominations like that of Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. Vilsack was one of six Cabinet members unanimously confirmed by the United States Senate on the day of President Obama's inauguration, January 20, 2009.

**Genetically modified foods**—plants and animals used for food purposes whose DNA has been modified through genetic engineering.

Anonymous. Senate confirms 6 Obama Cabinet officials, OMB director, CNN website, January 20, 2009. <http://politicalticker.blogs.cnn.com/2009/01/20/senate-confirms-6-obama-cabinet-officials-omb-director/> Retrieved January 27, 2009

Organic Consumers Association, [http://www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article\\_15573.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_15573.cfm) Sources: *Six Reasons Why Obama Appointing Monsanto's Buddy, Former Iowa Governor Vilsack, For USDA Head Would Be a Bad Idea* (November 12, 2008) Retrieved January 27, 2009

Schuff, Sally. Obama picks Vilsack for ad secretary. *Feedstuffs*, December 22, 2008, p1.

## **Secretary of Labor** **Hilda Solis**

Hilda Solis was active in California politics before being elected to five terms in the United States House of Representatives. She was identified as the final member of then President-elect Obama's proposed Cabinet on December 18, 2008. Solis was officially nominated by Obama on December 19, 2009 to become the next United States Secretary of Labor.

Solis has been heavily criticized by Republicans and other conservatives, who disapprove of her positions on sensitive issues such as the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA), which eliminates the use of the secret ballot in union elections, a measure vehemently opposed by conservatives. An anonymous Republican member of the United States Senate has put a secret hold on her confirmation, and much of her confirmation hearing involved Republican senators trying and failing to goad Solis into stating her explicit intentions regarding EFCA. The Center for Union Facts and a number of business groups have been critical of her relationship with the unions and EFCA, releasing several statements denouncing her policy views.

Democrats have been generally supportive of Solis' nomination, citing her extensive experience on labor and energy issues. The Service Employees International Union (SEIU) has strongly endorsed Solis' nomination, stating that "Hilda Solis has never backed down from the good fight to make the American Dream available to all." The nation's largest labor union federation, the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (commonly known as the AFL-CIO), also supports Solis' candidacy. The Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee passed along Solis's nomination with only two dissenting votes on February 11, 2009. The full Senate will also vote on, and most likely confirm Solis, but the procedural hold –

**EFCA**—*legislation establishing an easier system to enable employees to form, join, or assist labor organizations.*

essentially a **filibuster** threat – may delay any definitive action. The nomination is supported by most union members, but has not generated intense interest from the public at large.

Holland, Jesse J. (2008-12-18). "AP source: Rep. Hilda Solis is Obama's labor pick". Associated Press. Yahoo! News. [http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20081218/ap\\_on\\_el\\_pr/obama\\_labor\\_2](http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20081218/ap_on_el_pr/obama_labor_2). Retrieved on January 27, 2009

Kornblut, Anne E. and Branigin, William (2008-12-19). "Obama Announces Final Cabinet Picks". *The Washington Post*. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/12/19/AR2008121902086.html?hpid=topnews>. Retrieved on January 27, 2009

Raju, Manu (2009-01-16). "GOP-ers may block Solis confirmation". *The Politico*. <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0109/17538.html>. Retrieved on January 27, 2009

## **Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Shaun Donovan**

Shaun Donovan, the former head of New York City's Department of Housing Preservation and Development, was nominated by then President-elect Obama to serve as United States Secretary of Housing and Urban Development on December 13, 2008. Donovan has not been met with significant opposition from either Democrats or Republicans. Sheila Crowley, president of the left-leaning National Low Income Housing coalition, stated that Donovan "enjoys high regard across the spectrum of housing interests, from low income housing and homeless advocates, public officials, developers, and financiers alike." Donovan's former boss, New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, said that he "has shown that we can do more with less, especially in these difficult times. He has been applauded for his extensive experience with housing and housing **subsidies** and excited little controversy during his confirmation process. Donovan was unanimously approved by the United States Senate through a voice vote on January 20, 2009.

"Shaun Donovan". *The New York Times*. December 13, 2008. <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/13/us/politics/13web-donovan.html>. Retrieved on January 28, 2009

Calmes, Jackie (December 13, 2008). "New York Housing Chief Picked for Slot in Cabinet". *The New York Times*. <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/13/us/politics/13appoint.html>. Retrieved on January 28, 2009

**Filibuster**—*form of legislation obstruction where a senator or congressperson infinitely extends debate upon a proposal in order to delay the progress or completely prevent a vote from taking place.*

**Subsidies**—*form of financial assistance from the government to a business, in order to encourage certain behaviors.*

Phillips, Kate (2009-01-22). "More Obama Cabinet Nominees Confirmed". The New York Times. <http://thecaucus.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/01/22/more-obama-cabinet-nominees-confirmed/> Retrieved on January 28, 2009

## Secretary of Energy Steven Chu

Steven Chu, a former Professor of Physics and Molecular and Cellular Biology at the University of California, Berkeley and director of the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, is a Nobel Prize winner in Physics and the twelfth United States Secretary of Energy. Steven Chu was officially nominated by then President-elect Barack Obama in December of 2008 and was unanimously confirmed by way of **voice vote** by the United States Senate on January 20, 2009. Chu was exceptionally noncontroversial, sailing through the confirmation process without criticism from either Republicans or Democrats. Some environmentalist groups may be concerned about Chu's support for nuclear energy, but Chu did not emphasize this stance during his confirmation hearings.

**Voice vote**—a vote taken by legislators responding verbally "aye" or "no." It is often used in cases where little dissent exists or if the matter is quite controversial and voters wish to have political cover.

Henry, Ed (2008-12-10). "Obama makes pick for energy chief, sources say". CNN. <http://edition.cnn.com/2008/POLITICS/12/10/obama.energy/index.html>. Retrieved on January 28, 2009

Johnston, Nicholas (2009-01-20). "Senate Confirms Seven Obama Nominees, Delays Clinton". Bloomberg L.P. <http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601087&sid=aFtD02yqOtMw>. Retrieved on January 28, 2009

Mufson, Steven and Rucker, Phillip (2008-12-10). "Nobel Physicist Chosen To Be Energy Secretary". Washington Post. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/12/10/AR2008121003681.html>. Retrieved on January 28, 2009

## Secretary of Education Arne Duncan

Arne Duncan has been involved in the American public education system since he was a student at the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools. He served as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Chicago's public schools for eight years before being nominated for the position of United States Secretary of Education by then President-elect Barack Obama. In the past, conservatives and particularly evangelical Christians have taken issue with Duncan's proposal to create the na-

tion's first explicitly gay-friendly school. David Brody of the Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN) wrote that "Arne Duncan may have the total package and be a great Education Secretary, but pushing ideas like a gay high school will make social conservatives wonder what he will be pushing next." In fact, a consortium of eleven prominent evangelical pastors from Chicago expressed outright opposition to an explicitly **LGBT**-oriented high school. In contrast, liberals are not uncomfortable with that proposal, and have focused more heavily on his extensive qualifications and work on closing the achievement gap between high and low income students. However, Duncan was confirmed by the Senate on January 20, 2009 with little to no opposition.

**LGBT**—lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual.

Brody, David *Obama's Pick for Education Secretary Pushed For Gay High School* CBNNews.com (12-16-2008) <http://www.cbn.com/CBNnews/502637.aspx> Retrieved on January 28, 2009

Kingsbury, Kathleen *Will Arne Duncan Shake Up America's Schools?* Time Magazine (12-16-2008) <http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1866783,00.html> Retrieved on January 28, 2009

Linkins, Jason *'Gay High School' Could Be Used By Conservatives Against Arne Duncan* The Huffington Post [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/12/16/gay-high-school-could-be\\_n\\_151458.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/12/16/gay-high-school-could-be_n_151458.html) Retrieved on January 28, 2009

Pupovac, Jessica *How Chicago's Gay High School Plan Was Scuttled* The Chicago Journal (11-28-2008) [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/11/26/how-chicagos-gay-high-sch\\_n\\_146758.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/11/26/how-chicagos-gay-high-sch_n_146758.html) Retrieved on January 28, 2009

## **Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano**

Janet Napolitano, a former attorney, Arizona Attorney General, and Governor of Arizona, was nominated for the position of United States Secretary of Homeland Security on December 1, 2008 by then President-elect Barack Obama. Conservative objections to Napolitano's nomination have been scattered and weak.

A blog published in *National Review*, a conservative online and print publication, mentioned the role that Napolitano played as the attorney of Susan Hoerchner during the confirmation hearings of Justice Clarence Thomas. Susan Hoerchner was corroborating the story of Anita Hill, who had accused the then-Supreme Court nominee of sexual harassment, until it became clear that her statements were actually harming Hill's story. Napolitano then went "**off the record**" as she talked to her

**Off the Record**—*comments made that are not for publication.*

client privately. By the time they were back “**on the record**,” Hoerchner had developed a convenient case of amnesia. However, both mainstream Republicans and liberals have been highly complementary of Napolitano, with Senator Joe Lieberman declaring her a “superb nominee” and calling her “smart, no nonsense, a hard worker and goal oriented.” Lieberman is the chairman of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, and the ranking member of the committee, Republican Senator Susan Collins stated that she was “certainly impressed with the Governor’s background and knowledge of homeland security issues.” The nomination and subsequent confirmation of Janet Napolitano was one of the easiest of Obama’s Cabinet picks, and Napolitano was unanimously confirmed by the United States Senate on January 20, 2009.

**On the Record—**  
*describes statements  
made which can be  
published. .*

"10 Things You Didn't Know About Janet Napolitano". US News and World Report. (11-24-09) [http://www.usnews.com/articles/news/politics/2008/11/24/10-facts-about-janet-napolitano.html?s\\_cid=rss:10-facts-about-janet-napolitano](http://www.usnews.com/articles/news/politics/2008/11/24/10-facts-about-janet-napolitano.html?s_cid=rss:10-facts-about-janet-napolitano) Retrieved January 28, 2009

"Rendell: Napolitano Perfect for Homeland Security Because She Has 'No Life'" ABC News Political Punch <http://blogs.abcnews.com/politicalpunch/2008/12/rendell-napolit.html> (12-03-08) Retrieved January 28, 2009

Clegg, Roger *The Real Janet Napolitano* The National Review (11-20-08) <http://corner.nationalreview.com/post/?q=ODFIZjM0ZmVmOTNhMDMzOWE0ZmZhNTU5YjEzYmRjNTk=> Retrieved on January 28, 2009

**Administrator of the Environmental Protection  
Agency  
Lisa Jackson**

Lisa Jackson, formerly the Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) and Chief of Staff to the Governor of New Jersey, was nominated on December 15, 2008 by then President-elect Barack Obama to serve as the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. Although Jackson has not been heavily criticized either in the media or in hearings before the Senate, a few environmentalist groups have been unhappy about her performance as Commissioner of Environmental Protection. According to *Grist* magazine, an environmentally-focused publication, most low-level employees in the department were not supportive of Jackson, though many administrators viewed her more favorably. The group “Public Employees for

Environmental Responsibility” also criticized Jackson, declaring that “DEP employees describe Ms. Jackson as employing a highly politicized approach to decision-making that resulted in suppression of scientific information, issuance of **gag orders** and threats against professional staff members who dared to voice concerns.” Jackson’s nomination did not receive widespread attention from the American public, and Jackson was unanimously confirmed by a voice vote of the United States Senate on January 23, 2009.

**Gag orders**—order restricting information or comment from being made in public..

Kocieniewski, David (11 December 2008). "The New Team Lisa P. Jackson". The New York Times. <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/11/us/politics/11web-jackson.html>. Retrieved on January 28, 2009

Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (December 8, 2008). *WHY LISA JACKSON SHOULD NOT RUN EPA — Disastrous Record in New Jersey Bodes Ill for Reforming EPA*. Press release. [http://www.peer.org/news/news\\_id.php?row\\_id=1136](http://www.peer.org/news/news_id.php?row_id=1136). Retrieved on January 28, 2009

Sheppard, Kate (January 5, 2009), "The Lisa of our concerns: N.J. enviros deeply divided over record of Obama's EPA nominee", *Grist Retrieved on January 28, 2009*

### **Ambassador to the UN Susan Rice**

Susan Rice, who was the Director for International Organizations and Peacekeeping, Special Assistant to the President, Senior Director for African Affairs, and Assistant Secretary of State under the Clinton Administration, was nominated to be United States Ambassador to the United Nations by then President-elect Barack Obama on December 1, 2008. While Rice did not come under notable criticism from either side of the aisle during the confirmation process, she was at the center of some earlier controversies. In 1998, Newsweek noted that professional consensus considered Rice “bright but inexperienced and inflexible”, largely because of the Clinton Administration’s lack of action against the Rwanda genocide. A number of authors and politicians have also blamed Rice for failing to seize an opportunity presented by the Sudanese government to capture Osama Bin Laden. However, the 9-11 Commission later decided that these allegations were not credible and speculative. Rice is not widely recognized among the American public, and was unanimously confirmed by the United States Senate on January 22, 2009.

"Losing Africa, Yet Again" (Article). *Policy (Newsweek)*. 5 October

2008. <http://www.newsweek.com/id/93350?tid=relatedcl>. Retrieved on January 28, 2009

"Responses to Al Qaeda's Initial Assaults", *The 9/11 Commission Report (official government edition ed.)*, National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, 22 July 2004, pp. 110, ISBN 0-16-072304-3, [http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/911/report/911Report\\_Ch4.htm](http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/911/report/911Report_Ch4.htm), Retrieved on January 28, 2009

Carney, Timothy; Mansoor Ijaz (June 30, 2002). "Intelligence Failure? Let's Go Back to Sudan". *Washington Post*. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A64828-2002Jun29>. Retrieved on January 28, 2009

Power, Samantha (September 2001). "Bystanders to Genocide" (Article). *The Atlantic*. <http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200109/power-genocide>. Retrieved on January 28, 2009