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Hillary 'Qualified For The Job'

BY JOHN TOSCANO

President-elect Barack Obama's appointment of his one-time rival, United States Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, to the supersensitive job of Secretary of State, signaled his confidence in her ability to tackle one of the most important jobs of the new administration—defusing the ever-present threats to world peace in a conflict-ridden world.

In his announcement that he was offering her the job, Obama stated that his former political rival "is going to be an outstanding secretary of state".

He added, "If I didn't believe that, I wouldn't have offered the job. And if she didn't believe that I was equipped to lead this nation in such a difficult time, she would not have accepted."

Clinton in turn stated that if she is confirmed for the position by the Senate, as she is expected to be, "We must pursue vigorous diplomacy using all the tools we can muster to build a future with more partners and fewer adversaries, more opportunities and fewer dangers for all who seek freedom, peace and prosperity."

In her new role, Clinton will help the new president to answer the campaign charges that he was not experienced enough to deal with the crucial foreign policy situations he will surely face.

For Clinton personally, it will provide her with a dramatic and significant new role on the global stage which, if successful, can still leave her time for the opportunity to fulfill her dream of running to be the first woman president of the United States. That opportunity might come in 2012, when Clinton will be 69.

For Clinton's many supporters in the recent presidential campaign, her appointment by Obama to play a key role in his administration may finally erase the dissatisfaction they expressed when Clinton was not tapped to be Obama's vice presidential running mate this past November.

Clinton's selection by Obama for the Secretary of State role was greeted enthusiastically by Queens elected officials.

Congressmember Joseph Crowley (D-Queens/The Bronx) said in a statement, "President-elect Barack Obama's groundbreaking nomination of Senator Clinton speaks volumes [for] his desire to put the United States' relationships with the international community back on track."

Crowley also praised Clinton as "an experienced, dedicated public servant who is a shining star in the Democratic Party". He added: "It has been an honor and pleasure to work with her on behalf of the people of New York state, and while we will be losing her as an advocate for our state, the entire United States has gained an extraordinary Secretary of State who knows the world at large."

On a similar note, Congressmember Carolyn



Maloney (D-Queens/Manhattan) stated that Clinton's appointment as Secretary of State is a "bold, historic, and good for the country".

Maloney went on: "The Obama cabinet won't be a "team of rivals", it will be a team of the best and brightest. Hillary Clinton knows the world and its leaders, but she also knows what's on the mind of her fellow Americans.

"As someone who served as a New York Senator on 9/11, she understands how our homeland security depends on our foreign policy. Barack Obama is committed to restoring America's image and leadership around the world and he picked the best person to help make that happen."

Maloney concluded, "From her work on the U.N.'s Conference on Women in Beijing as First Lady to her seven years as a U.S. Senator working on issues ranging from saving Darfur to pay equity, Hillary Clinton has fought for human rights and freedom wherever she goes. Working side by side with her has been a pleasure. I wish her all the best in her new role."

Another Queens congressmember, Anthony Weiner (D), hailed Clinton's nomination as "great news" and added, "It's hard to imagine a person who comes to the job of Secretary of State better qualified than Senator Hillary Clinton. She not only has the experience dealing with world leaders from every part of the globe, having been the First Lady and now as Senator, but also having represented New York, whose diversity is renowned."

Weiner continued, "We understand the challenge of international terrorism. We saw it in Mumbai. And no one knows it better than Senator Clinton, who understands the nuances of these issues and is going to do a remarkable job as Secretary of State. We're not losing her, we're just sharing her with the rest of the world."

Also praising Clinton's nomination as Secretary of State was New York Governor David Paterson, who noted that Senator Clinton followed in a line of great Senators from New York state.

Paterson added, "She is the leader we need to partner with President-elect Obama to confront the international challenges we face today. I can think of no one more qualified for the position at this critical moment in our history."

The governor went on: "New York will lose a powerful voice in the Senate, but the nation will gain a powerful voice in the world."

Clinton's nomination was preceded by a long public discussion in the media. During that time, Obama asked former President Bill Clinton to turn over many of his personal documents to the president-elect's staff to prevent any conflicts of interest or other problems from arising in the future.

The ex-president cooperated fully with Obama, cheerfully meeting the request with the comment, "This is Hillary's turn."