

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-7012

July 28, 2010

Richard Verma
Assistant Secretary
Bureau of Legislative Affairs
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Verma:

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee held a hearing on July 22, 2010 to consider the nomination of Matthew J. Bryza to be the Ambassador to the Republic of Azerbaijan.

At the hearing, a number of Senators asked questions about Mr. Bryza's work in the region but some important questions remain unanswered. I know that Senators on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee have followed up with additional questions for Mr. Bryza. I, too, would appreciate answers to the following questions for Mr. Bryza:

- 1) Given your wife's employment by the Hudson Institute, what specific steps have you taken to comply with the U.S. Office of Government Ethics regulations that stipulate that all federal employees "shall endeavor to avoid any actions creating the appearance that they are violating the law or ethical standards" (5 CFR § 2635.101). In your testimony, you indicated that your wife had changed the scope of her work to avoid a conflict of interest. At what point did she make this change and what specific areas does your wife now work on? What firewalls have you put into place to protect each of you from any potential or perceived conflict of interest? How do you plan to maintain appropriate firewalls in the future, particularly related to financing the Hudson Institute may receive from outside sources that have an interest in the region?
- 2) Please elaborate on the decision making process that resulted in the exclusion of Nagorno-Karabakh from the OSCE Minsk Group peace process. Is it your belief that this exclusion is the result of Armenia's request to the other parties to the negotiations? Please explain why or why not.
- 3) Beyond your brief March 2006 public statement calling the videotaped demolition of an ancient Armenian cemetery in Djulfa a "tragedy," what steps did you take to pursue a Department of State investigation into the demolition? If confirmed, will you commit to visiting the Djulfa site? What steps will you take to highlight the important cultural patrimony of this and other Armenian monuments in Azerbaijan and ensure that they are being protected?

I look forward to the State Department's timely response to these questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Harry Reid". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a prominent initial "H".

HARRY REID
Senate Majority Leader