

June 18, 2012

Dear Mr. President and Madame Secretary,

It is with a heavy heart that I write to withdraw my nomination to serve as U.S. Ambassador to Iraq. I am grateful for the continuing confidence that you have placed in me. But after much thought over the past week, and having discussed the issue with my wife, Gina, I believe it is in the best interests of the country, and of our life together, to withdraw my nomination and serve in another capacity.

Iraq urgently needs an ambassador. The country is in the midst of a political crisis and our mission is undergoing rapid transformation. In my statement before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I set forth a vision for leading our mission through the difficult months and years ahead. This vision was based on nearly a decade of experience and I am grateful to have received the strongest possible support from the leadership team now at the embassy.

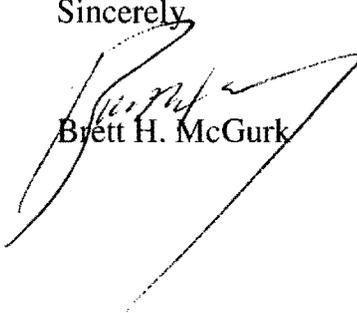
I am also grateful for the unwavering support of the three prior U.S. ambassadors – Ryan Crocker, Chris Hill, and Jim Jeffrey. Their unanimous endorsement spoke to the confidence I have earned from those with first-hand experience working with me over many years and under immense pressure.

The most difficult part of this process, however, was watching my wife become a part of it. She is the most precious thing in the world to me, and the depiction of our relationship has been both surreal and devastating. We have also witnessed real sacrifice and suffering in Iraq and know that nothing should be allowed to distract from the pressing work that must be done to build a better future there.

On Saturday, we visited Section 60 at Arlington National Cemetery, where so many heroes of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars now rest in peace. It was there that I decided to write this letter to you. We have both lost friends in Iraq. In their memory, I remain forever committed to helping the country I love and the country I have come to know forge a lasting partnership. For me, this is a lifelong calling.

Going forward, I pledge my strongest possible endorsement and support for a new nominee, and I shall always remain grateful for the opportunity to serve.

Sincerely,



Brett H. McGurk