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PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE UNITED STATES MISSION TO THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

ARMSTRONG BECOMES ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE

*American
Bio
Book*

Washington, February 16, 1972 -- Willis C. Armstrong, a veteran Foreign Service Officer in the field of economics, was sworn in as Assistant Secretary of State for Economic Affairs on February 15 in Washington.

Mr. Armstrong has been serving as President of the U.S. Council of the International Chamber of Commerce, in New York.

From 1964 until his retirement from the Foreign Service in 1967, Mr. Armstrong was Minister for Economic Affairs in London. He previously served two years as Economic Counselor in Ottawa, and at the beginning of World War Two worked at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow.

Following is the text of remarks by Mr. Armstrong at the February 15 ceremonies in which he was sworn in as U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Economic Affairs:

The political effectiveness of the U.S. in world affairs is closely linked with the international position of U.S. industry and agriculture. We have just had a year of deficit in our trade accounts. It was preceded by more than 70 years of surpluses. Our current situation, therefore, does not warrant a state of panic, but its lessons are clear enough. We must improve our competitiveness, particularly in industry, and we must recapture the technological advantage which put us in the lead in the recent past. American industry has the skills, the managerial talent and the capital to succeed in this venture, if its costs are not too high, if the right government policy prevails, and if it sincerely makes the effort.

The actions of our government, beginning in August, have set the stage, through changes in currency values and by other means, for the exercise of American industrial initiative. Government and industry together should seek better export opportunities and should intensify their already substantial efforts in this field, new programs in technology should be promptly developed, with particular reference to our export performance. The main effort to get the country back into a surplus position must, of course, be made by private enterprise, with Government encouragement and support. The

Foreign Service must give high priority to our commercial affairs and work closely with U.S. business abroad.

American investment in other countries is a great source of continuing strength to the U.S. economy, a major stimulant to exports, and a substantial contributor -- over the long term -- to a sound balance-of-payments ...elements in American industrial life, as well as being major creators of productive employment for American workers. They will make their best contribution to the success of our economy when least hampered by governments -- our own and others -- in making their economic and business decisions.

Recently a lack of self-confidence has seemed to pervade much American thinking, notably in the economic field. This is really a source of astonishment to our competitors, who realize full well what we can do. We must remember that our competitors are our customers and also our allies and friends. Our welfare is closely linked with theirs. Neither they nor we can succeed politically in building a better world unless we succeed in economic relations.

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February 16, 1972

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WILLIS C. ARMSTRONG TO HEAD
U. S. COUNCIL OF THE
INTERNATIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

NEW YORK, June 30 -- Willis C. Armstrong was named today as President of the United States Council of the International Chamber of Commerce. The announcement was made by James A. Linen, Chairman of the Council and President of Time Incorporated. Mr. Armstrong succeeds Christopher H. Phillips, who resigned as head of the Council's staff in March 1969 to become Deputy United States Representative to the United Nations Security Council.

For the past two years, Mr. Armstrong has been Associate Dean of the School of International Affairs at Columbia University. Before that he served for 28 years in the United States government, largely in the field of international economic policy. At the time he retired from the Department of State in September 1967, he was Economic Minister at the United States Embassy in London.

As President of the Council, Mr. Armstrong will work with leading American businessmen concerned with international trade and investment and monetary affairs. As one of the 42 national groups of the Paris-based International Chamber, the United States Council seeks to promote international economic growth through cooperation and private enterprise.

Handwritten initials and marks in the right margin, including a vertical list of circled letters (LH, JH, KE, PK, E) and a signature "Arm" with "510" below it.

Mr. Armstrong spent 12 years of his government service in the Bureau of Economic Affairs of the Department of State dealing with commercial policy, with tariff and trade negotiations, with problems of commodities and fuels and with East-West trade. He held a number of positions in this Bureau and at one point was Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Economic Affairs.

While in London, he was a director of the American Chamber of Commerce (UK). He also spent four years in the United States Embassy in Ottawa as Economic Counselor, Minister and Charge d'Affaires. Between his assignments in Ottawa and London, he directed the Office of British Commonwealth and Northern European Affairs in the State Department. He has also served overseas on many United States delegations and for nine years was the United States Delegate to the International Rubber Study Group. In 1956, he received a Rockefeller Public Service Award that led to extensive travel in Southeast Asia where he studied the role of natural rubber in economic development.

Mr. Armstrong was born in Brooklyn, N. Y., April 2, 1912, and attended Summit High School in New Jersey, and Phillips Academy at Andover, Mass. He received his B. A. from Swarthmore and his M. A. from Columbia. He was a teacher and a graduate student in Russian History at Columbia when he first joined the Foreign Service to take a post in the Embassy in Moscow. He is married to the former Louise Schaffner, of Lancaster, Pa., who was also a Foreign Service officer. They have one son, Ian, and they reside in Princeton, New Jersey.

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