

STATEMENT OF
BRIGADIER GENERAL CARL A. STROCK
ON HIS NOMINATION TO BE
MEMBER OF THE
MISSISSIPPI RIVER COMMISSION

BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
UNITED STATES SENATE

SEPTEMBER 21, 2001

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

I am deeply honored to appear before you as a nominee for membership on the Mississippi River Commission. As a soldier, an engineer, and a life-long public servant I am excited about this opportunity to serve the Nation in this important capacity.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to make a brief statement about the Mississippi River Commission, the Mississippi River and Tributaries (MR&T) project, and my qualifications for this appointment.

The Mississippi River Commission, established by Act of Congress on June 28, 1879, consists of seven members, all of whom are appointed by the President of the United States subject to confirmation by the Senate. Three members are Corps of Engineers officers, one of whom serves as president; one member is from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; and three members are from the civilian sector, two of whom must be civil engineers.

From its inception in 1879, the Commission has been charged with the task of planning and implementing a program of flood damage reduction projects and navigation improvements on the Mississippi River. More recently, project purposes have been expanded to include environmental restoration. This task continues to be conducted in concert with the myriad of political institutions, individuals, and public entities which have major

interests in seeing that the water resources needs and opportunities of the Mississippi Valley are evaluated, planned, designed, constructed, and maintained.

As established in 1879, the Commissioners were to serve as advisors in planning and implementing water resource projects and programs on the Mississippi River between the Head of Passes below New Orleans to its headwaters. Since 1928, the Commission has focused on the Mississippi River and Tributaries project, authorized by the Flood Control Act of May 15, 1928, to be implemented under oversight of the Commission. The MR&T project extends generally from the confluence of the Ohio River to the Head of Passes below New Orleans and covers portions of seven states. It receives water from all or portions of 31 states and part of two Canadian provinces, or roughly 41 percent of the contiguous United States. Effective planning, design, construction, and operation of the widespread and complex MR&T project have been assisted greatly by the Commission's active consultation with the public, particularly on its semiannual lower Mississippi River inspection trips, and by the high degree of professionalism that has been developed in its staff.

A major flood on the lower Mississippi River would have catastrophic effects on the inhabitants of the Mississippi Valley and the economy of the nation were it not for the protection provided by the levees and other flood control works

along the main stem of the Mississippi and Atchafalaya Rivers. Many have noted that the comprehensive project on the lower river provided for passage of major floods in 1973, 1983, 1997, and other years without the extensive damage suffered in the upper river area during the 1993, 1995, and 2001 flood events.

In addition, the navigation features of the project help to maintain the river for shipping import and export commodities between inland ports and world markets.

I am well qualified to serve as a member of the Mississippi River Commission by virtue of my education, professional qualifications, experience, and commitment to public service.

I hold a Bachelor of Civil Engineering degree from The Virginia Military Institute and a Master of Civil Engineering degree from Mississippi State University. I belong to a number of engineering societies and am a registered professional engineer in the State of Missouri. I am also a graduate of the Army's Command and General Staff College and the National War College, institutions that develop leadership, strategic thinking, and decision making in a values-based environment.

In addition to my formal education my 30 years of service in the United States Army have prepared me for the responsibilities I will assume as a member of the Mississippi River Commission. Besides extensive service in combat engineer assignments I have three assignments in the Corps of Engineers

and considerable experience in engineering and construction from the project to the corporate level.

From 1980 to 1983 I served in Mobile District as a Project Engineer multiple projects on the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway in Mississippi and Alabama. I also served as Resident Engineer on Columbus Air Force Base in Mississippi. My service as a senior officer in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has provided me with the opportunity to work with leaders and agencies at the local, state, and national level and with non-governmental organizations. These relationships coupled with my sound working knowledge of authorities and legislative processes will enable me to help fashion balanced solutions to complex problems that best serve the interests of the people and the Nation.

From 1997 to 1999 I commanded the Pacific Ocean Division in Honolulu, Hawaii. In that capacity I had responsibility for the construction and maintenance of numerous shallow and deep draft harbors, navigation channels, coastal protection structures and flood control works - most in environmentally sensitive areas of Alaska and Hawaii.

From 1999 to 2001 I commanded the Northwestern Division in Portland, Oregon. The Northwestern Division covers 14 states and has responsibility for two major drainage basins, the Columbia and the Missouri. While my experience in the Northwest contributed dramatically to my understanding of the economic,

engineering, and environmental considerations of major rivers, it is my experience on the Missouri that will be most valuable to the Commission. I have a detailed understanding of the Missouri River and its impact on the Mississippi River. During certain periods of the year the Missouri contributes up to 70 percent of the flow of the Mississippi in the reach between St. Louis and Cairo. This fact illustrates the value of a Commissioner who has an understanding of the interaction between these two great rivers. Over the past two years I served on the Commission as a member-designee. During this time I participated in four inspection trips and became very familiar with the Mississippi River and Tributaries project and those works that make the system so effective in flood damage reduction and navigation. I have worked hard to develop a true understanding of the interests of the many groups who use and enjoy the River and depend on the Corps to address their concerns - navigators, farmers, sportsmen, port operators, levee boards and drainage districts, environmental interest groups, and others.

If confirmed for this position, Mr. Chairman, I look forward to playing a key role in enhancing the economic vitality and environmental quality of the Mississippi River and its tributaries.

Mr. Chairman, for your information, I have attached my complete biography. This completes my prepared statement. Again, thank you for your consideration. I would be pleased to respond to any questions.