

**Statement of Ambassador Brian A. Nichols, Assistant
Secretary of State for Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs,
Before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations: The
Future of U.S-Brazil Relations**

March 15, 2023

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to discuss our relationship with Brazil. As the world's seventh-most populous country and twelfth-largest economy, Brazil is a global actor and strategic partner with whom we work closely to advance shared priorities.

President Biden and President Lula reaffirmed our vital and enduring partnership during their February 10 meeting at the White House. Nine cabinet officials joined the presidents, reflecting the breadth and depth of our bilateral relations. The two presidents agreed that strengthening democracy,

protecting human rights, and addressing the climate crisis would anchor our shared agenda.

The troubling events in Brasilia, on January 8, highlighted the threats that polarization and misinformation pose, even for established democracies. President Biden, Secretary Blinken, and I quickly and forcefully condemned that day's violent attacks. In their February 10 meeting, both presidents condemned political extremism and violence, hate speech, and disinformation. They agreed to work together to address these challenges, including through this month's second Summit for Democracy.

The United States and Brazil will continue working together to advance human rights at home and abroad. President Biden and President Lula committed to reinvigorate the U.S.-Brazil

Joint Action Plan to Eliminate Racial and Ethnic Discrimination and Promote Equality, known as JAPER, to promote the human rights and wellbeing of marginalized racial and ethnic communities, including Indigenous people and people of African descent, in both countries. We anticipate productive conversations on these subjects during the upcoming Human Rights Dialogue and technical-level meetings on JAPER.

Home to 30 percent of the world's tropical rainforests, Brazil plays a vital role in addressing the climate crisis. The Biden-Harris Administration stands ready to support President Lula's commitments to advance environmental protection and sustainable development.

President Biden and President Lula intend to work together to enhance global food security. Brazil's status as the world's

largest agricultural net exporter and one of the largest fertilizer importers makes it an important partner in our efforts to address the food security challenges we now face.

Both our governments are interested in expanding trade and investment and developing supply chain resiliency. The United States is by far Brazil's largest foreign investor, and Brazil represents a top export market for the United States, receiving nearly \$47 billion dollars in U.S. goods in 2021. U.S. Trade Representative Ambassador Katherine Tai's trip earlier this month reinforced our desire to grow bilateral trade, in line with our shared values. Under Secretary of State for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment Jose Fernandez will similarly engage with Brazilian government officials and private sector leaders later this month to discuss trade, critical minerals, agriculture, and clean energy.

We also work closely with Brazil in multilateral fora, including in the UN Security Council, where Brazil serves as an elected member through the end of 2023. We expect Brazil will remain a committed leader in the UN on humanitarian issues, peacekeeping operations, and efforts to promote international peace and security. Brazil will also serve as G20 president in 2024.

We know we must work diligently to keep the relationship strong and to pull together on the tough issues facing the world. President Lula places an emphasis on South-South cooperation and seeks to position Brazil as a leading voice for peace, including in Ukraine. The Russian Federation is solely responsible for the war in Ukraine. However, we welcome all genuine efforts to secure a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace in Ukraine, based on the UN Charter's principles. Brazil

voted in favor of the February 23 UN General Assembly resolution demanding Russia's immediate withdrawal from Ukraine, and we look forward to continued cooperation to address the dire human rights and humanitarian consequences of Russia's war.

We understand our countries will not always see eye-to-eye – and Brazil, as a sovereign nation, makes its own foreign policy decisions. We conveyed our consternation that Brazil recently hosted two Iranian naval vessels beginning February 28, emphasizing the Iranian regime's brutal suppression of its own people, provision of weapons to Russia, and destabilizing activities around the world. We will continue to engage with our Brazilian partners to discourage cooperation with malign actors including Iran.

In conclusion, the Biden-Harris Administration is committed to working diligently to ensure U.S.-Brazilian relations remain strong and productive, for the benefit of U.S. citizens, the Brazilian people, and the world. Next year, we will celebrate two hundred years of bilateral relations, and we are confident that our partnership will continue to thrive for many generations to come.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I welcome your questions.