

Statement of James Costos
Ambassador Designate to Spain
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
July 25, 2013

Chairman Murphy, Ranking Member Johnson, Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak before this distinguished committee as President Obama's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to Spain and Andorra. I would also like to thank the most important people in my life for being with me today, as they are every day:

My Mom and Dad are second-generation Greek-Americans who instilled in our middle-class family the values of hard work, self-reliance, and service, exemplified by my father's tenure as a U.S. Marine who was stationed at Camp David under President Truman.

My sister, a teacher's aide, is also here; as is my niece, who I'm proud to say is a recent graduate of nursing school. And of course, I'm so grateful that my partner Michael of fourteen years is here, who will be a great asset to our country. He is equally committed to representing the very best of American art and culture to Spain, Europe, and visitors from all over the world.

My passion for service came from my parents, and my community involvement began at a very young age, when I volunteered with the local Chamber of Commerce in Lowell, MA to help revitalize our city. I have remained politically and philanthropically active ever since, serving on the board of the Humane Society, working with the Human Rights Campaign, dedicating my time and resources to several arts and cultural institutions and supporting the effort to elect President Obama.

Today, it would be the greatest privilege of my life to represent the values and interests of the country I love in Spain and Andorra. Spain is an important historical ally of the United States and if confirmed, I will add to our more than 200 years of diplomatic history to further our shared interests. I believe that my experience as an HBO executive responsible for global marketing and communications should serve our country well as we tell America's story in Spain and Andorra.

A diplomatic mission, like a company, is comprised of multiple departments, all of which must be relied upon to move business forward. At HBO, my leadership had to inspire and gain the respect of employees in a large company with over 100 external business relationships in dozens of countries. I managed by empowerment, and developed my team to make decisions that allowed them to

take ownership of their work if they succeeded or if they failed. In the end, all that we do is for the greater good of the organization and those we serve.

If confirmed, the same will be true of my tenure as Ambassador. I will work to strengthen U.S. relations with Spain bilaterally, multilaterally and particularly within the NATO Alliance. As you know, Spain's strategic military bases in Moron and Rota host U.S. forces on both a permanent and rotational basis and have been critical in supporting U.S. and NATO operations from Iraq to Afghanistan to Libya for more than a decade. In recognition of the strategic nature of these bases, the U.S. sought and was granted authorization to station four Aegis-equipped U.S. destroyers, along with their crews and families in Rota, beginning with two ships in 2014. In March of this year, Spain also authorized the temporary use of Moron to base a 500-strong Special Marine Air-Ground Task Force to provide rapid response to threats against U.S. interests in the region, especially in Northern and Western Africa. If confirmed, I will continue to strengthen our relationship with senior Spanish defense officials and make it a priority to visit these bases and the U.S. servicemen and women, and their families, protecting the United States and our allies.

Spain has been a serious and committed partner in Afghanistan for more than a decade and, as a key NATO member, has been an important contributor to

the international community's peace and security agenda. I also intend to make sure the Spaniards know how valued they are and how much we appreciate their shared commitment to investing in democracy and freedom around the globe. If confirmed, I will encourage Spain to continue its support of shared U.S. and NATO efforts in training, advising and assisting the Afghan National Security Forces in post 2014 Afghanistan as well as supporting peacekeeping operations in Africa.

Above all, I will work every day to ensure the safety and security of the 170,000 U.S. citizens in Spain and millions of tourists – reinforcing the strong cooperation among law enforcement agencies in the United States, Spain, and Andorra in combating terrorism, piracy, and drug trafficking, and working with the Government of Spain to encourage legitimate business and tourist travel and to prevent unauthorized travel to the United States.

If confirmed, I look forward to relying on my extensive business experiences to encourage more commerce between Spain and the United States. With the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership negotiations just beginning, I will work with Spain to move these free trade negotiations forward by meeting and listening to the concerns of government officials and the Spanish people, traveling the country to raise awareness about the economic benefits of this agreement, and

use traditional and social media to engage in public diplomacy on America's behalf. I will also pay special attention to working with our Spanish partners to protect Intellectual Property Rights, to ensure the proper policies and legal mechanisms are in place to encourage investment and innovation, and to protect the rights of businesses that trade and invest transatlantically. I am also focused on engaging with the Spanish and Latino population in the United States to help encourage more Spanish-American exchanges, and uncover new business opportunities and investments. Additionally, I want to focus on youth engagement using technology, science, arts, cultural, educational and sports programs.

I am deeply committed to furthering the economic and foreign policies of the country we love, and it would be the greatest honor to serve the United States in this official capacity. I believe that the values I was raised with and the business experience I have gained over the past several decades have uniquely prepared me for this role. Spain is a valued partner of the United States on vital issues and we must continue engaging bilaterally and multilaterally to the benefit of both countries and the European Union. If confirmed, I will use my time as Ambassador to strengthen our partnership and champion the United States' values and interests.