

**Statement of Kimberly Breier**  
**Nominee to be Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs**  
**Senate Committee on Foreign Relations**  
**June 13, 2018**

Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Menendez, and Distinguished Members:

It is an honor to be with you today as President Trump's nominee to be Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs. I am humbled and thankful that the President and Secretary Pompeo have entrusted me with this important opportunity. I also want to thank former Secretary Tillerson. Working with him was one of the great highlights of my career.

I want to thank my parents who could not be with us today from Massachusetts. I am here because their sacrifices allowed me to have opportunities they themselves did not. I could not be here without the love and support of my husband Peter and my daughter Emma, who are an inspiration to me in their unflinching support and willingness to allow me the privilege of serving my country.

One does not get to this point absent the mentoring of many people. I am grateful for having the opportunity to learn from talented foreign policy experts, intelligence analysts, foreign and civil service officers, and many other colleagues, mentors, and teachers too numerous to name. I have had the privilege of knowing six recent Assistant Secretaries of Western Hemisphere Affairs, and many have taken the time to offer me wise counsel. I recently had the pleasure of meeting a seventh, who described to me how the job is akin to playing tennis with five ball machines on the other side of the court.

Indeed, the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs is as described—it covers a hemisphere and is home to 29 embassies and 23 consulates in 30 countries and handles the intersection of bilateral, regional, and global issues. It is a leading Bureau on many issues at the forefront of the Trump administration's agenda, including ensuring free and fair trade, stepping up our efforts to combat transnational criminal organizations of all types, deterring irregular migration, and working through alliances to enhance U.S. prosperity, security and to promote democratic governance.

The region is often under-appreciated in its strategic importance to the United States, as we are often consumed with other global priorities. I firmly believe, and fully commit, that we *must* get it right in the Western Hemisphere if we are to have success in other parts of the world. I am and will be, if confirmed, a tireless advocate for the importance of this region. Diplomacy in the Western Hemisphere has a demonstrable and direct impact on the lives of Americans unlike that of any other region.

The National Security Strategy lays out that our economic prosperity is central to U.S. national security. Our prosperity is deeply intertwined with the Western Hemisphere, home to more than

half of the nations with whom we have free trade agreements. Overall trade with the Western Hemisphere is nearly three times as much as we trade with China and we have an overall trade surplus with this region.

The Administration's policy toward Western Hemisphere is rightfully dynamic and robust—both in seizing opportunities and in addressing challenges. For example, interaction with Mexico is intense, daily, and institutional. I am personally committed to ensuring that the Administration's focus on Mexico will bear fruit in a positive way that people can see.

The Administration has been and remains steadfast on Venezuela, implementing a strategy to help return the country to a democratic path. As Vice President Pence said recently, Venezuela shows us the tragedy of tyranny. This unprecedented challenge requires robust diplomacy, creativity, and more than anything, fierce resolve.

Last year, the Administration announced its Cuba policy, which seeks to support the Cuban people, their human rights, and not to allow U.S. economic interaction to aid the repressive security services. The Administration has continued support for the U.S. Strategy for Central America, in fact expanding it by aligning more closely with Mexico.

The Administration has continued to support sustainable peace in Colombia, at the same time reaching new agreements with Colombia to address the alarming growth of coca cultivation and production. The Caribbean 2020 plan sent to Congress last year looks to foster security and prosperity in a region important to our interests and vulnerable to transnational crime, poverty, and natural disasters.

I have had the privilege of working on something I am passionate about for nearly two decades. This includes government service over four presidencies for administrations on both sides of the aisle. I have seen the Western Hemisphere from three executive branch departments, from the private sector, from think tanks, and from extensive travel and study abroad. I began my career as an intelligence analyst and served for more than a decade, rising to manage a team with leadership responsibilities across a large office focused on the Middle East. On the National Security Council Staff at the White House, I was Director for Brazil and the Southern Cone, Director for Mexico and Canada, and did an interim period on the Andean region.

Working in the private sector for five years was a lesson in how the private sector can be a U.S. policy force multiplier. I also had the good fortune to work, twice—first as an intern and two decades later in a leadership role—at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS).

Since last June, I have had the great privilege to work closely with the Western Hemisphere Bureau while serving on the Secretary's Policy Planning Staff. I reunited with former colleagues and have

been reminded how committed public servants work long hours to get the job done, to advance U.S. policy interests, and to serve their nation. I have seen how much talent and good humor there is. I can assure you that working with WHA is both humbling and deeply reassuring because, if confirmed, we will all be in this together. I could not ask for a better team. If confirmed, my job will be to ensure they all succeed and the United States succeeds as well.

I'd like to close by thanking you all for your continued commitment to getting it right in the Western Hemisphere. So many of you care deeply about this region and for that I thank you. I am happy to answer your questions.