

**Testimony of Alaina B. Teplitz**  
**Nominee for Ambassador to Federal Republic of Nepal**  
**Senate Foreign Relations Committee**  
**June 23, 2015**

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, members of the committee, it's an honor to appear before you today as the President's nominee for U.S. Ambassador to Nepal.

I'd like to recognize some of my family who are with me today and without whom I would not be at this table before you: my sons Max and Miles Mellott.

Mr. Chairman, right now when people think of Nepal, they invariably think of the horrific earthquake of this past April, and the tremendous damage it wrought. That tragedy has brought together the people of Nepal, the country's neighbors, and the international community to help the victims recover and the country rebuild.

And while much has changed in Nepal since the earthquake, our overall priorities for the country remain the same: to strengthen its democracy, advance its economic growth, and improve its resiliency. If confirmed, I will work to advance these goals and build on the achievements of my predecessors and our sixty years of positive engagement with Nepal.

I'll speak first about the last objective, improved resiliency, and then discuss the other two priorities. At the top, I'd like to extend the Department's profound gratitude to Congress for its support for seismically-safe housing for U.S. Embassy personnel in Kathmandu. It saved the lives of our mission personnel and enabled them to immediately assist with rescue and relief efforts, thus saving more lives and reducing the quake's impact on Americans, Nepalese, and others.

The first responsibility of every U.S. Ambassador is to ensure the safety and security of American citizens, and, if confirmed, I will continue to prioritize investments that will protect our personnel and citizens in Nepal.

And as Nepal moves to the reconstruction phase, we will work with its government and its neighbors in Asia to help it to "build back better" – to provide protection to the most vulnerable, to improve resiliency against future disasters, and to ensure that investments in Nepal's infrastructure are economically sound and environmentally sustainable.

I will now turn to the second priority, advancing Nepal's economic growth. As we work to help Nepal's economy grow and advance, we must look to leverage its location among the booming economies of South Asia. With more investments in infrastructure, the creation of a business- and investment-friendly environment, and a more integrated regional market, Nepal's entrepreneurs could harness the region's economic potential and create tremendous prosperity for their nation. Nepal's recent eligibility for a Millennium Challenge Corporation Compact should help it develop some of that economic potential. If confirmed, I will actively look for opportunities to improve the business environment and support American investment in Nepal.

I would lastly like to discuss our priority of strengthening Nepal's democracy. In 2006, the country emerged from a decade of civil conflict with a commitment to creating a constitution that would seal a lasting peace. The American people can be proud of the role they've played in Nepal's transition from violence to peaceful politics. That process is still underway, and there has been some significant progress lately – Nepal became eligible for an MCC Compact because of its democratic progress. But much remains to be done, and our government will help Nepal where we can to advance its constitutional process and cement a hard-won peace.

Maintaining that peace will require a firm commitment to human rights, and, if I am confirmed, the promotion and protection of human rights will remain a central priority for Mission Kathmandu. This especially includes protections for Tibetan refugees, for women, for disadvantaged populations, and for those vulnerable to trafficking.

Mr. Chairman, I am aware of the many challenges we will face in these efforts, from maintaining good coordination with Nepal's government and our international partners, to ensuring our resources are being spent effectively.

My career in the Foreign Service has been dedicated to the efficient management of resources, whether for our missions in Kabul, Dhaka, or Belgium, here in Washington at the Foreign Service Institute or in the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs.

With the support of Congress, our government is preparing for a large recovery and reconstruction effort in Nepal, and, if confirmed, I hope to draw on my management experience and expertise to help ensure the people of Nepal get the best assistance we can give, and that the U.S. taxpayers get the biggest bang for their buck.

As that assistance effort progresses, I would, if confirmed, look forward to working closely with this Committee and others in Congress to ensure our work reflects our shared priorities.

Thank you and I look forward to your questions.