

Statement of Elizabeth Moore Aubin
Nominee to be Ambassador of the United States of America to the People's
Democratic Republic of Algeria
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
June 9, 2021

Thank you, Chairman Van Hollen and Ranking Member Rounds, and members of this Committee for the opportunity to appear before you today. As the Texas-born child of a U.S. Air Force officer, I feel an immeasurable debt of gratitude to my parents, Tom and Virginia Moore, who raised me to put country over self, and I owe them everything for preparing me to take on my chosen vocation 31 years ago as a Foreign Service Officer; and to my husband, Daniel Aubin, for his incredible love and support.

It is a huge honor to be nominated by President Biden to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to Algeria, and I deeply appreciate the confidence he and Secretary Blinken have shown in me.

I served in Algeria from 2011-2014 as the Deputy Chief of Mission, so I was there for the 2013 terrorist attack at the In Amenas gas production facility. I, along with every member of the Embassy, did not stop working until American hostages were released, and three deceased Americans brought back to their families. It was a formative experience. If confirmed, my highest priority will be to keep every American safe in Algeria.

If confirmed, I hope to advance three critical priorities. First, strengthening our security cooperation to fight terrorism and promote regional stability. Second, expanding investment opportunities for U.S. companies to deliver economic benefits to the American people. Third, advocating for necessary political and economic reforms to foster stability as Algeria navigates a post-COVID economy. Although it rarely makes the front page, we have an important relationship with Algeria, and I will work to increase the impact of U.S. activities there.

I also believe in the enduring value of deepening people-to-people ties. Embassy Algiers supports an ever-growing spectrum of programs that strengthen our security, economic, governance, educational and cultural ties. Algeria's large youth population is curious about America and wants to learn English. That's an opportunity I hope to make the most of.

If confirmed, I will return to a country that is changed in important ways since I last lived there. Last year, the Algerian government adopted a package of constitutional reforms to strengthen Algeria's political system. Legislative elections will occur in three days. The Algerian public continues to demonstrate peacefully for core civil rights and liberties. I will continue to press for expanding observance of human rights, including freedoms of expression and association, and space for civil society.

Algeria fought against violent extremism in the 1990s. It has maintained its stability through rigorous counterterrorism efforts, national reconciliation programs, and de-radicalization initiatives. Algeria has found ways to export this peace dividend in a difficult neighborhood: it played a critical role in brokering reconciliation in Mali with the 2015 Algiers Accord; it provides security assistance to Tunisia and Niger; it actively participates in the African Union, the Arab League, and the OIC; and it hosts AFRIPO and the African Union Center for Study and Research on Terrorism.

While new investments are essential, Algeria also remains one of the key regional producers of oil and gas ranking ninth in the world in gas reserves and 16th in oil reserves, and has vast promise for renewables. If confirmed, I will promote U.S. companies as they seek to partner with Algerian firms to advance development of this vital energy sector for our mutual benefit.

The United States and Algeria have a rich history on which to continue to build. From the Treaty of Peace and Amity with the U.S. signed in Algiers in September of 1795, to American troops liberating Algeria in World War II; from the United States being the first country to recognize Algerian independence on July 3, 1962, to Algeria playing a role of creative and active mediation to help release the 52 American diplomat hostages from Iran. We have an enduring partnership that can face the opportunities and challenges of the 21st century together.

Thank you, Chairman Van Hollen and Ranking Member Rounds, and members of the Committee for this opportunity to address you. If confirmed, it will be the honor of my life to represent America to the Algerian people and to lead our tremendous and talented mission there.

I look forward to your questions.