

**STATEMENT OF AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE  
LISA KUBISKE  
BEFORE THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

**June 8, 2011**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, thank you for granting me the opportunity to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the next United States Ambassador to Honduras. This is a tremendous honor and responsibility for which I am deeply grateful to President Obama and Secretary Clinton. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with you and your colleagues to advance the interests of the United States.

I would like to take a moment, Mr. Chairman, to acknowledge my husband, Dan, our boys, Philip and Adam, my stepdaughter, Jessica, and my sister, Alex. Each has been a source of love and support during my diplomatic career. I'd also like to acknowledge my parents, who have been hugely influential in providing the values I hold today and encouraging me to pursue professional opportunities.

After studying in Massachusetts and here in Washington, I have spent my career serving the United States, in the Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Trade Representative's Office, and the Department of State. Many of my postings have been in Latin America, most recently in Brasilia, where I served as deputy chief of mission at a mission with over 1,100 employees at a pivotal moment in U.S. relations with Brazil. I have also worked in Shanghai and Hong Kong.

As I have understood since I studied in Peru as an undergraduate, Latin America is a region of core interest to the United States, where the domestic impact of our foreign policy is tangible. Our actions have a direct impact on the lives of United States citizens, and the flows of migrants and illegal drugs to our borders.

Having served as the Department of State's Western Hemisphere economic policy director and as a negotiator at the United States Trade Representative's Office, I am acutely aware of the economic opportunities in Latin America for the United States. Our economic relationship is especially important with Honduras. To date, 200 U.S. companies operate in Honduras. Nearly half of Honduran imports originate in the United States. Our trade surplus with Honduras was \$60 million in 2009.

We can strengthen our economic ties while helping Honduras develop and grow. One promising area is Honduras' alternative energy sector. In January, Honduras began construction on the largest wind farm in Central America, which will bring cheap, clean energy to a very poor country. I am proud to report that the turbines are being manufactured in Pennsylvania, helping to create jobs in the United States.

I also look forward, if confirmed, to building on the strong cultural and bilateral ties between the United States and Honduras. Fifteen-thousand American citizens live in Honduras, and 100,000 Americans visit Honduran cities, beaches and Mayan ruins every year. In the United States, there are nearly one million residents of Honduran origin. The money they send back to their families accounts for one-quarter of Honduras' gross domestic product. U.S. government investments in Honduras are similarly transformative. Honduras' vice president has called the \$205-million Millennium Challenge Corporation Compact, completed last September, the most successful development project in Honduras' history.

Honduran governments, including the current administration headed by President Porfirio Lobo, have recognized the value of close ties. Together, we are helping address the alarming rise in gang activity that has burdened Honduras with one of the world's highest homicide rates. At our Embassy in Tegucigalpa, officials from the Departments of State, Homeland Security, and Justice work side-by-side with the Honduran government to disrupt the operations of drug trafficking organizations. Reversing this trend, a threat to U.S. national security, would be one of my top priorities. If confirmed, I would also look forward to assisting our joint efforts to address the underlying causes of insecurity, building on the work of U.S. government agencies such as the Peace Corps, USAID, and non-governmental organizations that daily demonstrate the generosity of the American people.

Two years ago, Honduras was wracked by a political crisis that resulted in Honduras' suspension from the Organization of American States (OAS). Just a week ago, a special session of the OAS lifted that suspension, a tribute to President Lobo's efforts to promote national reconciliation. Our continued engagement remains essential to strengthen Honduras' democratic institutions and to continue supporting the Honduran government's efforts to strengthen respect for human rights, which has included the creation of a Ministry of Justice and Human Rights and the creation of a police unit, aided by the United States, for victims of human rights violations.

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, I deeply value the potential opportunity to serve the United States in this capacity, and I thank you again for granting me the privilege of appearing before you today. I would be pleased to answer any questions you and your colleagues may have.