

STATEMENT OF CARLOS E. PASCUAL
AMBASSADOR DESIGNATE TO THE UNITED MEXICAN STATES
SENATE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
JULY 8, 2009

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

I am honored to appear before you as the nominee of President Obama and Secretary Clinton to serve as the next U.S. Ambassador to the United Mexican States. I thank each of you for the opportunity to appear before you today, and I express my gratitude to those who have been so generous with their time and insight throughout this process. If confirmed by the Senate, I look forward to working with this Committee and other members of Congress to advance U.S. interests in Mexico and the region.

President Obama, during his trip to Mexico in April 2009, set the strategic framework for U.S. relations with Mexico: “a new era of cooperation and partnership” built on “mutual responsibility and mutual respect and mutual interest.” Secretary Clinton called this “one of the two most important relationships between any two countries in the world.” As a people we are intertwined. More than 1 million U.S. citizens live in Mexico. Latinos and Latinas, the majority of them Mexican in origin, represent 15% of the U.S. population. Secretary Clinton called for a comprehensive agenda “to make progress on the economy, on energy and climate change, on security, immigration, education, health and other areas that are of great importance to our two countries and our two peoples.” If confirmed by the Senate, my job would be to bring creativity and energy to develop and implement this agenda, and to serve the needs of U.S. citizens who live and travel in Mexico.

No issue is more important than the recovery of our economies. Over \$1 billion in trade crosses the U.S.-Mexican border every day. Mexico is the first or second trading partner for 22 U.S. states. Because of the global recession, some estimate that Mexico’s GDP will fall more

than 7% in 2009. That affects U.S. exports. It also affects Mexico's long-term economic growth, which is crucial to reduce the flow of undocumented workers to the United States. We have a common stake to work with Canada and the rest of the G20 to orchestrate a global recovery that will create jobs in both Mexico and the United States. We have a common stake to make North America the world's most competitive supplier of goods, services and technology. To do that, our border crossings must be every bit as welcoming and efficient as they are secure.

No sector drives our recovery more than energy and its effects on our environment. I commend members of this Committee for their leadership in this field. In order to help meet the urgent climate change challenge, the United States and Mexico have a non-negotiable interest: to transform the way we consume fossil fuels and achieve economic growth. Mexico has been the third largest supplier of oil to the United States. Oil will be a part of our energy future. But our competitive destiny is to develop wind, solar and other renewable sources of electricity – and to use them to power our vehicles – not just to protect the planet, but to keep North America a vibrant hub in a global market.

In this global environment, Mexico and the United States must also be partners to stop the spread of organized crime and the trafficking of illicit drugs, weapons, people, and the cash associated with them. This is a hemispheric scourge fast becoming a global one. Control it in one spot and it spreads to others unless we all work together to combat it. These tentacles of organized crime reach into America – from the largest cities to small rural towns. The United States is the biggest consumer of drugs and supplier of weapons. Mexican drug cartels use this money and firepower to menace the people of both Mexico and the United States. Travel further south – to the Mexico-Guatemala border – and the challenges become more acute – more trafficking, more criminal activities, and more poverty. President Calderon has put his finger on

the challenge: to stop this “interminable recruitment of young people without hope, family, opportunities, future, beliefs or convictions.” Mexico and the United States both win when we each combat drugs and organized crime at home and abroad, and together we can excel in the fight against organized crime in this hemisphere.

Members of this Committee have been leaders in advocating that the fight against drugs is hemispheric. So too has Mexico. It advanced that vision with the Merida Initiative. The Congress has been farsighted to invest in building capacity to interdict drugs and to develop responsible and effective police forces and an accountable judiciary. Alongside the \$1.12 billion in U.S. appropriated funds going to Mexico, the Mexican Government has invested more than \$4 billion of its own funds into security and justice programs this year alone. Mexico is engaged because it wants a country that is safe for its people. For both our nations, this alignment of interests is our best chance to succeed.

The intersection of global, regional and national interests is what makes the U.S.-Mexican relationship unique. Some use the term “intermestic” to describe this mixing of international and domestic concerns. What is clear is that the United States must coordinate every part of our government to send a common message: that economic growth benefits us both, that efficient and secure borders will make us both more competitive and safe, that shutting down demand for illicit trade and improving the effectiveness of law enforcement are key to choking off the opportunities for organized crime, that lawful travel and migration enrich our two countries, and that economic hope must replace despair when people confront choices about whether they can lead law-abiding lives. If confirmed by the Senate, I pledge to support the leadership of our President and Secretary of State and to work tirelessly to coordinate our efforts in this most vital of relationships. Our success will come when we give U.S. and Mexican

citizens confidence that democracy, accountability and the rule of law can mean a better and more secure life.

Thank you for this opportunity, and I welcome your questions.

