

Statement  
By  
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To  
The Senate Foreign Relations Committee  
July 8, 2009

Mr. Chairman, and members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, thank you very much for this opportunity to appear before you.

I am deeply honored to be here today, as the President's nominee to be the United States Ambassador to the Federative Republic of Brazil. Please allow me to express my deep gratitude to the President and the Secretary of State for the trust and confidence they have shown in me. Also, please allow me to express my gratitude to the Committee as it undertakes its vitally important constitutional role of advice and consent.

I would also like to express my deep gratitude to my family. I especially would like to acknowledge my wife, Guisela, and my sons, Thomas and John. Our family has been shaped and tested by our many years in the Foreign Service. Each knows the joys and sacrifices of public life, and I am grateful for their love and companionship. I would also like to acknowledge my parents, who raised their children within public life, instilled in us the virtue of service, and taught us that we would be measured not by the fame or wealth we accumulate, but instead by our devotion to duty, our compassion, and our willingness to understand others.

I come before you today as a career member of the United States Foreign Service. I have served my country for 25 years in Latin America and Africa. I have served across five administrations in Embassies, Consulates, multilateral missions, the Department of State, and the White House. Most recently, I have served as the Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs at the Department of State and the Senior Director for Western Hemisphere Affairs at the National Security Council.

I would like to take this opportunity to comment briefly on the role I have played in shaping our policy towards Brazil, our near term goals for deepening our relationship, and the strategic value of that relationship looking into the future.

I first served in Brazil from 1989-92 as Special Assistant to Ambassadors Harry Shlaudeman and Richard Melton. The impact that this vibrant and ambitious country had on me has never faded. I was impressed by the openness of its society and the deep pride Brazilians had in their national heritage. I recognized in Brazil's racially and ethnically diverse society strong similarities with the United States. I saw in its hard-won commitment to democracy and human rights the basis for common political dialogue and understanding. And I perceived in its commitment to multilateralism and

international organizations a vocation for global leadership that could make it a useful partner of the United States.

In my later work at the National Security Council and at the Department of State, I helped shape four overarching goals that guided our engagement with Brazil:

**Create a structured dialogue that engages all major aspects of our governments.**

Beginning in 2003, the United States and Brazil developed a series of working groups that addressed trade and commerce, finance, energy, agriculture, environment, defense, and science and technology. These working groups meet periodically, and have created a web of relationships between our two governments that build confidence, enhance communication, and resolve problems.

**Identify areas where the United States and Brazil can collaborate on key social and economic development issues.**

In 2007 Brazil and United States signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Biofuels that committed both countries to 1) work together to fashion an international regulatory structure for biofuels, 2) exchange experts and research on biofuels, and 3) cooperate in third countries to help in their development of national biofuels industries. The third aspect of this cooperation, now covering countries from Central America, the Caribbean, and Africa, is a major feature of our international cooperation. Also in 2007, the United States and Brazil committed to work together to eradicate malaria in Sao Tome and Principe, and are exploring possible cooperation to fight HIV/AIDS in Lusophone Africa.

**Connect our civil societies in ways that share experiences and respond to immediate needs.**

In 2008 both countries signed the Joint Action Plan Against Racial Discrimination. This novel experiment in social diplomacy creates steering groups and civil society interface to identify ways in which the United States and Brazil can cooperate to combat racial discrimination. In 2007 the U.S.-Brazil CEO Forum was launched. This Forum provides U.S. and Brazilian executives an opportunity to advise our governments on strategies for increasing commercial ties, improving the business climate, eliminating impediments to trade and investment, and promoting innovation.

**Support Brazilian efforts to assume larger leadership roles internationally.**

Brazil's willingness to lead MINUSTAH, the UN peacekeeping mission to Haiti, was the first time Brazil had undertaken such a role in the Americas since the 1965 Dominican Crisis. Our ability to work with Brazil in Haiti, as a major donor and political partner, underscored the important peacekeeping, humanitarian, and development work we could accomplish together.

This innovative approach to our diplomatic outreach helped create a network of engagement and a strong record of accomplishment that propelled our bilateral relationship to a strategic level. In March of this year, President Obama met with Brazilian President Lula and praised Lula's "progressive, forward-looking leadership" in the hemisphere and throughout the world. He characterized the bilateral relationship as a "very strong friendship" and said that Brazil and the United States need to fashion a

“proactive strategy” that uses the strength of our relationship to improve ties throughout the hemisphere. The President’s comprehensive vision of our bilateral relationship was on display at the G20 Leaders’ meeting in London, and the Summit of the Americas in Trinidad and Tobago. Our partnership helped fashion a coordinated response to the financial and economic crisis, globally and regionally, and launch initiatives related to energy, climate change, and microfinance. As the United States looks forward, we can consolidate these important gains and allow our relationship to grow through two important steps:

**Promote partnership with Brazil as a regional leader and a global player of growing importance.** Brazil has committed itself to global leadership, opening 48 new diplomatic missions in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia since 2002, and staking out a large role for itself in the G-20. Brazil is determined to be a key player in broader global decision-making, from climate change to non-proliferation, and wants to be viewed as an equal of traditional global powers. This is an opportunity we should not pass up. Brazil is prepared to share the burden of global partnership while enhancing the mix of countries prepared to make this commitment.

**Identify the components of an expanded partnership.** Brazil’s international interests are growing. We need to focus on those areas where our interests are congruent and where cooperation can enhance our bilateral relationship. Several of these areas are:

- Strengthening the foundations of bilateral trade and investment
- Broadening our energy partnership.
- Undertaking joint action on the environment and climate change
- Exploiting new potential for security assistance cooperation
- Addressing citizen safety through law enforcement cooperation
- Improving regional integration through infrastructure development
- Enhancing food security

As we build our bilateral relationship, we need to keep in mind Brazil’s probable trajectory in the world. Brazil will not become less important; it will only become more important. Brazil is well positioned to succeed in the near to mid-term. It has a relatively small population in a continent-sized country. It has rich natural resources and abundant energy. It has no enemies along its frontiers and no significant internal strife. It is already democratic. Its internal governance structure is sound: it has resilient institutions, and its federal system devolves significant power to states. It has a relatively open economy, it is an advocate of regional integration, is committed to a global trading system, and is a responsible player within international organizations. In other words, this is the kind of partner we want to have.

This is not to say that Brazil does not have challenges, or that we do not have differences. But the challenges are manageable, and the points of converging interests far outweigh the differences. In short, our goal is to show that our interests and Brazil’s ambitions are compatible, and that we can enhance each other through dialogue and cooperation.

How we manage our relationship with Brazil over the next several years will set a tone that could last decades. I think both of our countries understand what is at stake and want to make every effort to ensure our mutual success.

If confirmed by the Senate, I look forward to working with the distinguished members of this committee, Congress, and your staffs to achieve the goals of United States policy and build a relationship with Brazil that is worthy of both our great nations.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the superb staff of our Embassy and Consulates in Brazil. Our American and Locally-Employed Staff are energetic, talented, and committed to our success. I would be deeply honored to work with them as Chief of Mission Brazil.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.