

Testimony of Adam Namm
Nominee to be Ambassador to Ecuador
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
November 8, 2011

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

I am honored to appear before you today as the President's nominee for United States' Ambassador to the Republic of Ecuador. I am grateful to President Obama and Secretary Clinton for the trust and confidence they have placed in me.

I would like to recognize family members that have joined me today: My wife, Mei Huang; my daughter, Rebecca Namm; my mother, Susan Spencer; my step-mother, Joan Namm; and my sister-in-law, Wei Huang, all of whom are sources of great joy and support. On this day I am also thinking of my father, Arnold Namm, who left us last year but is still very much with me.

During my 24-year Foreign Service career, I have been privileged to represent our nation in a diverse group of countries -- the Dominican Republic, Saudi Arabia, Colombia, and Pakistan -- as well as serving in multiple positions in Washington. For the past two-and-a-half years, I have had the honor of leading the State Department's Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations. During my tenure in that Bureau, we opened 16 new U.S. diplomatic facilities around the world, with another 33 facilities under design and construction. In 2008, I had the pleasure of cutting the ribbon on our New Embassy Compound in Quito, and I am pleased to report that the Department will open a New Consulate General Compound in Guayaquil in 2012.

The United States' ties with Ecuador date back to that country's independence from Gran Colombia in 1830, and we sent our first envoy to Ecuador in 1848. The close links between our two countries are evident in the interchange of people: As many as two million Ecuadorians live in the United States, and Ecuador maintains consular offices in 17 U.S. cities. For Americans, Ecuador is a popular destination for tourism, an attractive place to retire, and a place of opportunity for commerce and study. More than 200,000 Americans visit Ecuador each year and some 25,000 U.S. citizens reside in Ecuador. If confirmed, my top priority will be to ensure the well-being of U.S. citizens living in and visiting Ecuador.

Another priority will be to promote U.S. business interests. The United States is Ecuador's largest trading partner. In 2010, the United States supplied 25% of Ecuador's imports, with a value of 5.4 billion dollars, and was the destination for 35% of Ecuador's exports, valued at 7.5 billion dollars. Our energy relationship is also vigorous; with the fourth largest proven oil reserves in Latin America after Venezuela, Brazil, and Mexico, and as a consumer of U.S. petroleum products, Ecuador represents an important partner in this vital economic sector.

As this Committee knows, our relationship with Ecuador has been difficult in recent months, marked by Ecuador's regrettable expulsion of our ambassador. I believe, however, that this trying period has only underscored, for everyone, the importance of reinvigorating our countries' bonds. By nominating a new ambassador to Ecuador, the President and the Secretary are demonstrating their commitment that the United States and U.S. interests be represented at the highest level. If confirmed, I will be a forceful advocate for our interests and values,

including democracy, trade, and countering the scourge of narcotics trafficking and other illicit activity. In advocating for our interests I will engage both the Ecuadorian government and Ecuadorian civil society.

We have shared commitments on which to build. Ecuador and the United States are signatories to the Inter-American Democratic Charter, and so are bound to respect and protect fundamental democratic rights and institutions. Secretary Clinton, on the tenth anniversary of the Charter, took note of its first article, saying, "The peoples of the Americas have a right to democracy, and our governments have an obligation to promote and defend it." If confirmed, one of my core tasks will be to promote the democratic freedoms the peoples of both the United States and Ecuador hold dear.

Thank you for giving me the honor of appearing before you today. I look forward to any questions you may have, and to working with you if confirmed.