

Statement of Geeta Pasi
Ambassadorial Nominee to the Republic of Chad
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
June 8, 2016

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee: It is an honor for me to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be Ambassador to the Republic of Chad. I am grateful to the President and Secretary Kerry for the confidence they have placed in me. First, Mr. Chairman, please permit me to acknowledge family members here today. My sisters, Usha and Rita, my brother Peter, my sister in law Hallie Lewis, my brother in law Subir Sachdev, and my nieces who have joined me today.

Mr. Chairman, please allow me to tell you about myself. My career has included challenging assignments around the world and at home. I have served in Africa three times, including as Ambassador to Djibouti. In Washington, I served in numerous positions, including as the Afghanistan Desk Officer where I was working on September 11, 2001. I currently serve in the Bureau of Human Resources.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I look forward to leading Embassy N'Djamena in advancing U.S. interests with our team of Foreign and Civil Service personnel, military staff, and local employees. Our main interests in Chad are peace and security, good governance, human rights, and economic development. Chad shares borders with Libya, Sudan, the Central African Republic, Nigeria, Cameroon, and Niger. Chad is an important partner in the fight against violent extremist groups, including Boko Haram. The United States aims to strengthen the productive partnership we enjoy with Chad. As we advance our mutual interests on the security front, we also seek to promote democracy and good governance. If confirmed, I will work with you to represent the interests and values of the American people to the government and people of Chad, at a moment when Chad's partnership with the United States and its allies is in the ascendancy.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, Chad is committed to regional stability. Chad plays a critical role in the region and is an important partner in combatting violent extremism.

Mr. Chairman, regional threats and instability have contributed to domestic challenges in Chad, including by threatening key trade routes and markets. This has weakened Chad's economy, which has already been impacted by a decline of

oil prices globally. International investment in Chad is severely constrained by its geographic isolation, limited infrastructure, human capital challenges, high import duties, and corruption. Chad's human rights record is problematic although there has been improvement. If confirmed, I will continue to press the Government of Chad on democracy and human rights.

Given its location in a troubled region, Chad is host to over 380,000 refugees – from Sudan, Nigeria and the Central African Republic – and approximately 100,000 internally displaced persons (IDP), largely in the Lake Chad region. Ongoing insecurity related to Boko Haram attacks has led to decreased food production, reduced market activity, and complicated the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Over 100,000 people are food insecure in Boko Haram-affected areas of the country. Boko Haram has repeatedly attacked villages, burned homes, killed village leaders, and targeted both civilians and security forces. IDPs and refugees lack access to food, shelter, sanitation, and hygiene services, and their large numbers have taxed Chad's already limited resources.

If confirmed, Mr. Chairman, I will remain focused on using all elements of the USG to support Chad in its efforts to counter the threat of Boko Haram, including closely monitoring Boko Haram's linkages to ISIL under its new name - ISIL West Africa Province. I will encourage the Government of Chad to focus not only on the immediate security threat, but also the root causes of violence in the region.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, my highest priority will be the protection of all Mission personnel as well as all Americans living and traveling in Chad and American business interests. Within the next year, the Mission will move to a newly constructed embassy compound, meaning that all Mission personnel will work in the safest and most secure facilities available. Maintaining this technologically-advanced building in Chad will be a challenge, and I am committed to good stewardship of this significant USG investment.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, I would like to thank you for the privilege of appearing before you today. If confirmed, I would welcome the challenge of protecting and advancing the interests of the United States in Chad: it is a duty and responsibility I would be honored to accept. Thank you and I would welcome any questions you might have.