

Testimony of Alejandro D. Wolff
Ambassador-Designate to the Republic of Chile
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
July 27, 2010

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

It is an honor to appear before you as President Obama's nominee to be the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Chile. I am deeply grateful for the trust and confidence President Obama and Secretary of State Clinton have placed in me by sending my name to the Senate for your consideration.

I would like to introduce my wife, Alexandra, who has been at my side for over 26 years -- all of them spent supporting me and our sons as we traveled to numerous diplomatic postings abroad and several assignments here in Washington. Our two sons, both currently working in New York, could not be here with us today. While I regret their absence, I am deeply proud of them and recognize Alexandra's determined effort to provide them a stable home despite the many moves we have made during my career.

My wife and I are delighted with the prospect of returning to Chile, where I served from 1991 to 1994 as the head of the Political Section in the Embassy. During that period, I witnessed first-hand the consolidation of Chile's successful transition to democracy and met many talented Chileans, some of whom occupy leadership roles today.

Having just completed my tour as the Deputy U.S. Representative to the United Nations, I am aware of the many regional and global challenges confronting us and the important contribution that our close friends and partners can make in helping us meet those challenges. Chile plays a key role in the region and can contribute to global peace and prosperity in this Hemisphere and beyond. If confirmed, I pledge to work closely with the Administration and the Congress to further our nation's interests in Chile and will endeavor to strengthen the excellent relationship between our two countries.

If confirmed, I look forward to a productive dialogue with President Piñera, Foreign Minister Moreno, other Chilean government officials, members of the legislative and judicial branches of government, the private sector, and civil society

as we seek to advance bilateral relations and strengthen the political, commercial, and cultural ties between our two countries.

If confirmed, I will continue to seek opportunities to assist with Chile's recovery and rebuilding from the tragic February 27th earthquake and would strive to enhance the relationships of our many U.S. agencies with their counterparts in Chile as we work together on reconstruction, emergency management, and other areas of mutual benefit.

Chile's support for free trade, social justice, and equitable economic development has reduced poverty and provides a successful economic model for the region. The U.S.-Chile Free Trade Agreement (FTA) is a cornerstone of our relationship and, if confirmed, I will continue to build on the benefits this Agreement garners. Bilateral trade has more than doubled since the FTA went into effect in 2004, totaling more than \$15 billion in 2009.

I also want to assure you that, if confirmed as Ambassador, I will give the highest priority to ensuring the safety and security of Americans living and traveling in Chile. I look forward to working with you, your distinguished colleagues, and your staffs to advance our agenda with the Republic of Chile.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear today, and I welcome any questions you may have.