

STATEMENT OF AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE

SCOTT H. DELISI

BEFORE THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE

February 2, 2010

Mr. Chairman and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

I am honored to appear before you as President Obama's nominee to be the United States Ambassador to the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal. I would like to thank the President and Secretary Clinton for their trust and confidence and I am grateful to receive this distinguished Committee's consideration.

With the Chairman's permission, I would like to introduce my wife Leija who has been my partner and counselor through most of my Foreign Service career and whose grace and heartfelt concern for others have won America more friends over the years than I can count.

Early in my Foreign Service career I had the privilege of serving in Mumbai, Islamabad, and Colombo and as the Nepal desk officer here in Washington. So, if confirmed, working in South Asia will be something of a home-coming for Leija and me.

Nepal and the United States have a long-standing relationship and our friendship is more important today than ever as Nepal confronts multiple challenges. There are urgent needs in the

areas of economic growth, health, climate change, and food security in particular. I also hope to build stronger trade and investment ties between our nations.

Progress in these areas, however, will require a stable partner in the Government of Nepal and that stability will come only with the successful completion of Nepal's peace process. The U.S. is funding critical aspects of the process, and we will continue to work closely with Nepal's political leaders as they seek to establish a system of governance that represents all of Nepal's citizens and respects their fundamental rights. Helping to successfully conclude the peace process and draft the new constitution are the most critical areas in which we can offer our support to the Government of Nepal in the short-term.

If confirmed, I will encourage Nepal's political parties to exercise strong leadership and judicious flexibility to reach consensus on key elements of the peace process, and I will match their efforts with my own in offering the support of the United States as Nepal seeks to make the hope of a durable peace a reality.

I will also work vigorously with Nepal's political leaders to end the prevailing culture of impunity regarding human rights abuses. As documented extensively by Nepali and international human rights organizations, the Maoists, the Nepal Army, and the Nepal Police committed serious human rights abuses during the decade-long insurgency. If confirmed, I will press all of them to cooperate in a thorough and transparent investigation of human rights cases and will urge them to hold accountable those who committed abuses so that the nation can move forward on the path of reconciliation.

Finally, I hope we will continue our robust development assistance program which contributes significantly to building a peaceful and stable Nepal. We were the first country to sign a technical cooperative agreement with Nepal in 1951, and that cooperation continues today.

The United States plays a critical role in supporting the government of Nepal's efforts to increase access to vital health care for its citizens, and we have contributed to the government's marked successes in reducing maternal and child mortality and in stemming the spread of HIV/AIDS. Food security will be another priority for me if I am confirmed so that we may better assist the government of Nepal in grappling with pervasive malnutrition.

We also have a vital interest in engaging Nepal on climate change, which has already had an impact on Nepal's Himalayan region and on regional water resources. If confirmed, I will make confronting the problem of climate change one of the core objectives of our mission in Nepal.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to appear before you today. I would be pleased to answer any questions that you might have.