

STATEMENT OF WILLIAM H. LASH, III
BEFORE THE UNITED STATES SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE
JUNE 21, 2001

Chairman Baucus, Ranking Member Grassley, I am honored and humbled to come before you as President Bush's nominee for Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Market Access and Compliance. I know the committee has a hectic schedule this week, and I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today.

I would like to thank President Bush and Secretary Evans for their confidence and their support of my nomination, and, if confirmed, look forward to working on their trade agenda. I know that many of the members of this committee have worked with Under Secretary Aldonas, and I look forward to working with and learning from him. I am very excited about working with the team Secretary Evans and Under Secretary Aldonas have assembled for the International Trade Administration, including Faryar Shirzad as Assistant Secretary of Import Administration, Maria Cino as Assistant Secretary for the Commercial Service, and Linda Conlon, who was recently nominated to be Assistant Secretary for Trade Development.

This hearing room is a long way from the streets of my youth in Jersey City, New Jersey. They say when if you see a turtle in a tree, you do not know how he got there but you can be sure he had help. I would like to thank the people who have helped me in my American journey. My mother Vivian Lash who instilled a sense of confidence, values, love and who stressed the importance of education in the difficult surroundings of the inner city; the nuns at Sacred Heart School in Jersey City who would never accepted anything but my best; and Justice Alan Handler of the New Jersey Supreme Court who taught me that both sides should be always be heard in a quest for justice. But most importantly, I would like to thank my wife Sharon Zackula, and my son Will for reminding me everyday what is most important life.

Although I am a law professor by profession, I have served as a lawyer for and corporate director of several companies. Indeed, my first assignment after graduation from law school was assisting a U.S. firm exporting into Europe. As a corporate director, the firms I have served have all grown by exports. Indeed, one of these firms is totally dependent on exports and on the ability to invest in foreign markets. I have witnessed first hand the challenges of small and medium-sized exporters and am particularly sensitive to the impact foreign trade barriers have on U.S. exporters and investors.

As I have met with several members of the Committee and their staffs over the past few weeks, it has become clear the important role Market Access and Compliance plays in Administration trade issues. The one thing everyone has agreed upon is the critical role compliance plays in establishing domestic support for trade. Last year, the Congress fully funded MAC's compliance initiative, and, if confirmed, I plan to full implement that plan, including the initiatives on China compliance.

Given the international tariff and non-tariff barriers that continue to limit U.S. exporters, the President has correctly identified expanded trade, and re-establishing Presidential Trade Promotion Authority, as a priority. Future trade agreements and trade liberalization can only be successfully addressed by cooperation and communication with Congress. If I am fortunate enough to be confirmed by the Senate, I look forward to working with you and your staffs to ensure that American businesses, workers and farmers get the full benefits of current and future trade agreements. I look forward to regular consultation and communications with this committee, as the Administration and Congress must agree and move forward in concert on any trade liberalization efforts.

I know that, in particular, Congressional assistance, guidance and input are crucial for the success of MAC. If I am fortunate enough to be confirmed as Assistant Secretary, I will look to Congress for advice and guidance in implementing the President's trade agenda. It cannot be disputed that we must enforce the international trade agreements we have entered into. We have entered into these deals and we are entitled to receive the benefits of these bargains.

If confirmed, I will work with the trade professionals of MAC to identify and investigate trade violations and build unassailable factual records in support of our claims and support the U.S. position. In February, Secretary Evans asked each member of Congress to identify one member of their staff as a liaison with the Department on trade compliance issues of their constituents. They will work closely with Congress and our counterparts in the Department of Commerce, the office of the United States Trade Representative, the Department of Agriculture and other U.S. government agencies to ensure U.S. companies receive the full benefits of our trade agreements .

Again, thank you for your time. I would be pleased to answer your questions.