

Hearing on the Nomination of:

**The Honorable Jane Holl Lute
To be Deputy Secretary of the
United States Department of Homeland Security**

**Before the
United States Senate Committee
on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs**

**March 26, 2009
10:00 a.m.
342 Dirksen Senate Office Building**

Jane Holl Lute – Opening Statement as Prepared for the Record

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Collins, Members of the Committee, I am deeply honored by the President's nomination and the opportunity to appear before you today.

I am joined this morning by my husband, General Douglas Lute – who many of you know and know that he has served proudly as an American soldier, and has been most recently serving at the White House under both President Bush and now President Obama.

Neither my husband nor I are politicians. We are public servants. Both of us were called to serve our country some time ago as soldiers in the United States Army. That call to service brought me to Berlin at the height of the Cold War; to the Middle East for Operation Desert Storm; to the National Security Council staffs under President George H.W. Bush and President William Jefferson Clinton; to United Nations Peacekeeping – where I ran support operations for the second largest deployed military force in the world.

That call to service has also brought me here, today, before you. I am deeply honored by President Obama's nomination – and Secretary Napolitano's confidence – and, if confirmed, will continue this tradition of service.

Sitting here, I am struck by the sheer array and enormity of the challenges that confront the Department of Homeland Security. But I am also deeply impressed by the men and women who have made the work of securing the American homeland their calling. I am also struck by the collective knowledge, experience, and wisdom in this room. Few understand the challenges facing the Department of Homeland Security better than you, the Members of this Committee, and few understand the challenges of protecting and preparing the American people better than the first-responders, the firefighters, the police officers, the sheriffs, those in the emergency medical services, the emergency managers, the state, local, and tribal governments across this great Nation. In the process of preparing for this Hearing, I have reached out to many of these groups and sought their guidance, their input, their direction.

The Department of Homeland Security must enhance its relationship with state and local stakeholders. Secretary Napolitano is deeply committed to that objective and, if confirmed, I will work with her to ensure that that these relationships are built, protected, and improved.

I have spent my entire adult life working on the issues at the heart of the Department of Homeland Security's mission—protection, prevention, preparedness, response, recovery, and resilience.

I have managed these challenges in places and in situations where successful operations, livelihoods, and sometimes lives have depended upon the exercise of sound leadership, strong management, and level-headedness.

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I have experienced the challenges of managing multi-billion dollar budgets, and supporting operations in some of the most austere, remote, and difficult environments in the world.

As part of that experience, I have spent a great deal of time working in, on, and around international borders, conflicted borders, disputed borders, and borders where a balance has to be struck between maintaining safety and security while permitting and even encouraging legitimate trade and travel. I believe that my international perspective will compliment the Secretary's own deep engagement with issues on the southwest border of the United States in leading the Department of Homeland Security's discharge of this central aspect of its mission.

I know what it is like to be responsible for preparing for and responding to emergencies when the need to gain accurate information, mobilize critical resources, and manage the coordination of those resources under the pressure of crisis is real.

I know what it is like to be the officer in charge of support to hundreds of thousands of people in far-flung operations from diverse institutional backgrounds, each with legacies, traditions, cultures and languages.

I know the imperative of creating an integrated, coherent culture, while respecting the individuality and uniqueness of the parts.

I know what it is like to tackle the problems of interoperability—both from the perspective of a shivering soldier in Berlin splicing wire at 3 a.m. wondering if I could fix the problem before the Brigade Commander even knew there was one; to my work as the Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations responsible for supporting Peacekeepers who came to the UN from hundreds of countries, each with their own cultural traditions, training, languages, and, yes, different radios.

While a new Administration brings change—some things will not change. The Department of Homeland Security must remain fully committed to its mission of keeping America and Americans safe, and we must do that while protecting the highest values and principles that define this great country.

The Department must be responsible and responsive, proactive and engaged, robust and efficient. It must keep us prepared for the majestic force and might of Mother Nature and it must protect us from the cruelty of those who target civilians.

If confirmed, I will continue that path, searching, fighting, seeking, and creating new, better, more meaningful ways to keep our country safe, to keep our population prepared and protected, and to keep our borders secure. America is at its best when Americans stand proud and confident. America is at its best when we are able to secure both our borders and our historical values; when we confront the worst, with power that rests on the deep values and proud traditions that built this great Nation

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In conclusion, let me underscore how deeply honored I am by the President's nomination and how deeply honored I am to appear before you, this distinguished Committee.

If confirmed, I know that this conversation will be just the beginning of our dialogue. I know I will need your insight, your guidance, and your steady hand as we make our way through the rapids that our country will inevitably face in the coming months and years.

I am no politician, but I am here to present myself for service. As call my family and I have taken, and continue to take, very seriously.