

STATEMENT OF STEPHEN D. MULL
AMBASSADOR DESIGNATE TO THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND
BEFORE THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE
SEPTEMBER 12, 2012

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee,

It is a great honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the next Ambassador of the United States to Poland. I am deeply grateful to Secretary Clinton and the President for their confidence and trust, and I pledge to you that if confirmed, I will work closely with the Congress in advancing America's interests with this most valuable and important ally.

From Kazimierz Pułaski's and Tadeusz Kościuszko's decisive support for the American Revolution almost 240 years ago through their daily sacrifices in support of our common objectives in Afghanistan today, the people of Poland have repeatedly proven themselves to be among America's best and most reliable friends. Americans have drawn inspiration from the Poles' stubborn resistance to oppression, whether challenging Nazi occupiers in the streets and forests and exposing the horrors of the Holocaust, or fighting for justice in the shipyards of Gdańsk. The American people have been proud to assist our Polish friends through the years, from President Wilson's steadfast support for Polish independence at the close of World War I through our support for Poland's new democracy in the 1990's. Ours is a friendship based on the ties of family, a love of freedom, and a shared vision based on common values.

While America's friendship with Poland has strong roots in the past, it also has bright promise for the future. Poland has pledged to remain with us in Afghanistan through the end of combat operations in 2014, and to continue supporting Afghanistan after its troops depart. The United States and Poland will strengthen our promising economic relationship by promoting solid economic growth through expanded, two-way investment, enhanced trade, and support for energy independence, and through close consultation in responding to the European financial crisis. Our two countries will continue to work together to expand the frontiers of freedom, with a close and hardworking partnership in support of democratic values and human rights around the world. And the United States and Poland have an important common agenda in modernizing NATO to meet the security challenges of the 21st century.

If I am confirmed, it will be an extraordinary privilege to lead our team of over 140 Americans and more than 350 locally-employed staff representing a large interagency presence in our Embassy in Warsaw and Consulate General in Kraków. I will work hard, if confirmed, to protect American citizens, promote even closer cooperation with Poland on our common interests, and open new opportunities for American trade and investment in Poland's growing economy, helping to deliver jobs back home for Americans. Returning to Poland will have a special personal significance for me. I fondly recall working there as a junior officer in the mid-1980s, when I had the honor of carrying messages of support between President Reagan and Solidarity leader Lech Wałęsa and meeting many of the activists who would later lead Poland to freedom. I served there again in the mid-1990s in the exciting days of Poland's new democracy, when I helped prepare the way for Poland's membership in NATO. Returning as Ambassador, if I am confirmed, will open a rewarding new chapter for me in working to strengthen this important and valuable friendship.

Thank you for the honor of appearing before you today. I look forward to answering your questions.