

Statement of Stephen Akard
Nominee to be Director of the Office of Foreign Missions
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
June 5, 2018

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Shaheen, Distinguished Members of the Committee,

It is an honor to be with you today as President's Trump's nominee to be the Director of the Office of Foreign Missions at the Department of State. I am grateful for the confidence he has placed in me and, should I be confirmed, for the opportunity to work with Secretary Pompeo and the many talented and dedicated people at the State Department.

I would like to thank my family – my wife Kay, and our three daughters, Julianne, Claire, and Hope, who are here with me today and have been a source of boundless love and support. As a fellow Hoosier, I also would like to recognize the important contributions to the functioning of this committee of Senator Young.

I appreciate the role of the Office of Foreign Missions in advancing our foreign policy and our national security interests. If confirmed, I will be dedicated to furthering the important objectives established in the Foreign Missions Act.

I entered the Foreign Service twenty years ago. I served overseas at the U.S. Consulate General in Mumbai, India, and during 9/11 at the U.S. Embassy in Brussels, Belgium. Following that tour, I served in Washington DC, in the Executive Secretariat, on the “Line,” where I advanced trips around the world for then-Secretary Colin Powell.

I returned home to Indiana for a new chapter of my professional career where I was fortunate to work with the Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC). At the IEDC, I pursued international economic development projects for the State of Indiana, served as general counsel, and later as chief of staff, and had the honor of advising three successive Governors and working with them to bring jobs and investment back home.

I brought the skills I honed as a Foreign Service Officer to the state level. Our success was remarkable. In the last four years alone, the State of Indiana attracted more than 20,000 new job commitments through foreign direct investment and more than \$6 billion in capital investments. If confirmed, I will bring these managerial and global experiences to the position of Director of the Office of Foreign Missions.

The Office of Foreign Missions plays a critical role in four distinct areas: First, employing reciprocity to ensure equitable treatment for U.S. diplomatic and consular missions and personnel; second, regulating the activities of foreign missions in the U.S. in a manner that will

protect our foreign policy and national security interests; third, protecting the U.S. from abuses of privileges and immunity by members of foreign missions; and, fourth, providing services and assistance to foreign missions in the U.S. in order to assure appropriate privileges, benefits, and services on a reciprocal basis.

The Foreign Missions Act has positively impacted the environment in which U.S. diplomatic and consular missions function overseas and created a secure basis to manage the activities of foreign missions operating here at home.

Mr. Chairman, the Department of State faces enormous challenges strengthening our security and prosperity. If confirmed, I pledge my utmost to implement the objectives of the Foreign Missions Act on behalf of our personnel overseas and to defend our national interests with respect to foreign missions operating in the U.S.

Thank you and I look forward to any questions you may have.