

Statement of Dereck Hogan
Nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Moldova
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
August 16, 2018

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Murphy, and distinguished Members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee:

I am humbled and honored to appear here today as President Trump's nominee to be the next U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Moldova. I am grateful to the President and to Secretary Pompeo for the confidence they have placed in me. If confirmed, I pledge to work closely with the Congress to advance our nation's important interests in Moldova.

I would not be here without the support of my wife, Anny, and our 14 year-old daughter, Hannah, whom I am pleased to introduce to you. Anny and Hannah have kept me balanced, humble, and focused on the most important things in life. I also would like to introduce you to my father, Eric Hogan, and step mother, Linda. I am blessed to have been raised by a father and mother who taught me how to put my faith in God and live to serve others.

During my 21-year diplomatic career, I have had the opportunity to do just that – serve the American people by promoting U.S. interests and values in the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Afghanistan, Belarus, Russia, and Azerbaijan. I believe my overseas assignments to countries in transition and vulnerable to foreign malign influence, along with multiple senior leadership positions in the Department, have prepared me well to lead a dynamic mission in a country on Europe's eastern frontier.

Our overarching foreign policy objective in Moldova is for the country to be a fully democratic, economically prosperous state firmly anchored in Europe, secure within its internationally recognized borders. A strong and secure Moldova is a better partner for the United States and the region.

In signing an Association Agreement and a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement with the European Union in 2014, Moldova boldly chose a Euro-Atlantic path. Despite active Russian interference and opposition, the Moldovan government has taken important steps on that path. With donor aid, including considerable assistance from the United States, Moldova has strengthened its police force, efforts to combat trafficking in persons, and some of its key

institutions, such as customs and tax collection agencies. As a result of the often difficult economic reforms it has undertaken, today Moldova's economy is less dependent on Russia than ever before, with over 80 percent of exports now going to European, North American, and other markets outside the former Soviet Union. Moldova is also diversifying its sources and routes to break its dependence on Russian-supplied energy, building new connections to Europe with international donor support. Moldova has actively contributed to ensure greater regional security and consistently participates in regional military exercises and supports the KFOR mission in Kosovo.

We also welcome the progress in the OSCE-led negotiations to resolve the long-standing Transnistria conflict and reach agreement on a special status for Transnistria within Moldova's internationally recognized borders. The negotiations, which are commonly known as the "5+2" talks and involve the United States as an official observer, have produced real results over the past year and will improve the lives of the people on both sides of the Nistru River. We continue to call for the withdrawal of Russia's remaining forces and equipment from Moldova, consistent with its 1999 Istanbul OSCE Summit commitments.

If confirmed as Ambassador, I will continue to support Moldova's efforts to resist Russian pressure and fully realize its potential as a prosperous, Western-oriented democracy. The Moldovan government and people undoubtedly recognize that much work still needs to be done. Corruption, weak rule of law, and a non-transparent justice sector only hamper Moldova's economic growth and facilitate its vulnerability to Russian pressure. Moldova's financial sector is still recovering from the 2014 embezzlement of over a billion dollars - almost 15 percent of Moldova's GDP at the time. The non-transparent invalidation of the June 3 mayoral elections in Chisinau thwarted the electoral will of the Moldovan people and undermined the rule of law in Moldova. Next February's parliamentary elections are a crucial opportunity to boost international and domestic confidence in Moldova. The United States, along with Moldova's other international partners, will actively support and encourage initiatives to promote free, fair, and transparent elections.

If confirmed, my goal will be to consistently demonstrate to the Moldovan government and public the benefits and responsibilities of deeper integration into the Euro-Atlantic community. I will direct our assistance to continue to promote needed democratic reforms, strengthen Moldovan institutions, and combat corruption at all levels. With my team at the Embassy, I will support broad-based economic growth, work to reduce poverty, and encourage a rules-based system that

is conducive to U.S. commercial activity. Direct engagement with the people of Moldova will figure prominently on my daily schedule. I am keenly aware that robust public diplomacy and people-to-people exchanges foster deeper bilateral ties and undermine Russia's anti-West narrative.

Serving as the U.S. ambassador to Moldova would not only be a great honor but also a great responsibility. If confirmed, the safety and security of our talented Mission personnel and American citizens in the country will be my top priority. I will also continue to be a good steward of the American people's tax dollars and resources.

In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to thank each of you for your time today. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you and our U.S. Mission team in Moldova to advance U.S. interests and strengthen our bilateral relationship with Moldova. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.