

**Statement of George A. Krol**  
**Ambassador-Designate to the Republic of Kazakhstan**  
**Senate Foreign Relations Committee**  
**July 17, 2014**

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member and other members of the Committee.

Thank for you for the opportunity to appear before you today in connection with my nomination to be the next United States Ambassador to the Republic of Kazakhstan.

I am honored by the trust and confidence the President and Secretary Kerry have demonstrated in me with this nomination. If confirmed, I will endeavor to fulfill their and your high expectations of me to advance our country's interests in Kazakhstan.

As a 32-year career officer of the U.S. Foreign Service and as an American citizen, I can think of no greater honor and privilege than to serve our country and represent the American people as Ambassador of the United States. I am grateful also for the support and inspiration my family members and friends have provided me through my years of service to our nation and I count on their love and support in the future.

Encompassing a territory the size of Europe, Kazakhstan possesses immense natural resources and is located at the crossroads of east and west, north and south. Its population is young and increasingly connected with the world around them. For the United States, our strategic goals are to facilitate and strengthen Kazakhstan's sovereignty and independence, its stability, its prosperity and its democracy.

Our Strategic Partnership with Kazakhstan has become increasingly important as Kazakhstan takes its rightful place on the world stage as a country of consequence. From the earliest days of its independence 22 years ago, Kazakhstan has made wise decisions. It gave up its Soviet-legacy nuclear arsenal, which at the time was the fourth-largest in the

world, and has become a world leader in non-proliferation. From the beginning, Kazakhstan has emphasized economic reform and, as a result, is now a middle-level-income nation with a financial system that largely meets international standards. Another wise, early decision was to provide international education for many of its young citizens, an investment that has paid off handsomely in both the public and private sectors of Kazakhstan. Long a provider of humanitarian and development assistance for Afghanistan, Kazakhstan is now standing up, in collaboration with our own USAID, its own international development body, KAZAid. This is a country the United States can work with.

United States investment in Kazakhstan has grown to roughly \$31 billion, making Kazakhstan our most important economic partner in the region. We have also expanded our ties in the security sphere and in the areas of education and growth of Kazakhstan's civil society.

Kazakhstan has been a generous partner in Afghanistan and a vital link in the Northern Distribution Network, and is a strong supporter of building greater transport and commercial links across the region and beyond. Kazakhstan has also directly supported international efforts regarding Iran's nuclear program and has been not only a responsible partner but also a world leader in global nonproliferation efforts, having given up at its independence what was, at the time, the fourth-largest nuclear arsenal in the world. As Kazakhstan increases its role and voice in regional and international affairs, the United States wishes to be Kazakhstan's trusted strategic partner.

If confirmed, I would intend to use diplomatic experience in the Central Asia region where I now serve as Ambassador to Uzbekistan and previously as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, as well as my interagency contacts, to lead our mission team in advancing our growing engagement with Kazakhstan in pursuit of our broader national interests of strengthening long-term stability in the Central Asia region and the world, promoting American economic and business interests,

encouraging respect for universal human rights and preventing any threats to our national security emerging from this region.

Mutual interest and mutual respect underlie our relations with Kazakhstan. Only the people of Kazakhstan can and should freely determine their future development without outside interference or pressure.

Respecting Kazakhstan's traditions and transition from its Soviet past, our approach is not to dictate to Kazakhstan its path of development but to provide the people of Kazakhstan a strong example of a prosperous, rule-based democracy on which to build durable economic, social and political stability.

The choice will be Kazakhstan's to make, but the United States will always be a reliable principled influence and partner for Kazakhstan's efforts to advance market reform and to develop into a free, democratic society respectful of the rights and choices of its citizens.

Having served as an ambassador twice before, and as a U.S. taxpayer, I understand the importance of being a responsible steward of the public trust, of public funds, property, programs, and personnel.

Security of the mission and all its personnel is one of the highest priorities for any ambassador as is ensuring that the mission is a place where no one should ever suffer from discrimination, harassment or exploitation of any sort. If confirmed, I would maintain these high standards of ethical conduct and security for our missions in Kazakhstan.

Mr. Chairman, I have spent most of my adult life in the diplomatic profession. I have learned that the key to successful diplomacy is establishing and maintaining effective relationships. Clear communication is essential.

At the end of the day, it's all about building trust. This applies not only to engagement with foreign governments and societies but also to engagement with Congress.

If confirmed, I will always be available to this committee, its members and staff to discuss and work with the committee in pursuit of our national interests in Kazakhstan.

Again, I thank you for this opportunity and look forward to your questions.