

Statement of David McKean
Ambassador-Designate to The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
December 2, 2015

Mister Chairman and Distinguished Members of the Committee: Good afternoon.

I am honored to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as the next Ambassador to the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. I am deeply grateful to the President and to Secretary Kerry for the confidence and trust they have placed in me with this nomination.

As Senator Markey has noted, I spent many years working as a staff member and Chief of Staff for Senator Kerry and I'm particularly honored to be testifying in front of a committee for which I was staff director in 2009.

My journey to this point would not have been possible without the support and guidance of my family, most especially my wife Kathleen, who is here today.

During my lifetime I have travelled to over 65 countries, having visited more than 30 in my current capacity as Director of Policy Planning at the Department of State. The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg was the very first country I ever visited in 1972.

Luxembourg is at the heart of Europe, both geographically and politically. If confirmed by the Senate, I pledge to devote my time and efforts to enhancing the already strong relationship between our two countries that is based on both historical ties and Luxembourgers' positive views of America.

Luxembourg citizens are deeply appreciative of the sacrifices American troops made during World War II to defeat the Nazi occupation and liberate their country. The over 5,000 graves in the Luxembourg American Military Cemetery serve as reminders of the sacrifice borne by so many for the liberties that Luxembourgers enjoy today. One of those graves is that of General George Patton, whose wife was from my hometown of Hamilton, Massachusetts. The General and Mrs. Patton had planned to retire there, but it was not to be. His simple grave in Luxembourg is a reflection of his desire to be laid to rest alongside his men and perhaps serves as his final lesson in leadership.

Leadership is important to me. Great work is done when people are motivated, inspired, and empowered. That's the spirit in which I intend to approach the job of Chief of Mission, if confirmed.

Over the last three years at the State Department, I have developed an admiration for the Foreign Service Officers and Specialists, and Locally Employed Staff, who serve with dedication and determination to advance U.S. foreign policy worldwide. It would be an honor for me to lead them at our Mission in Luxembourg during a critical time in Europe.

Luxembourg is concluding its six-month Presidency of the Council of the European Union, during which the agenda was dominated by the refugee crisis affecting Europe. The unprecedented levels of new arrivals have posed considerable challenges to the Union, and Luxembourg has used the council presidency to help foster dialogue and forge consensus. Luxembourg was among the first EU countries to receive refugees as part of the EU plan to distribute 160,000 refugees among Member States.

Luxembourg has also stepped up recently in other areas of humanitarian assistance, and overall commits over one percent of GNP to assistance. In 2014 alone, Luxembourg made contributions of over \$24 million to support refugees, internally displaced persons, and other victims of conflict in Syria, Mali, South Sudan, and the Central African Republic.

United States and Luxembourg commercial ties have been historically strong. The United States exports over \$1.5 billion worth of goods to Luxembourg. If confirmed I will make trade promotion and direct investment from Luxembourg into the United States a priority, so that we can increase the market for U.S. goods and services and help create jobs and value here at home. A major component of that effort will be to advance discussions on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership. If confirmed, I will do everything I can to build public support for a comprehensive T-TIP agreement that boosts economic growth and creates jobs on both sides of the Atlantic.

Another issue that we will be addressing in 2016 is Russia's aggression in Ukraine, and the sanctions that are in place against Russia. Russia's violations of Ukraine's sovereignty cannot stand, and if confirmed I will work with the Luxembourg government to ensure their continued support of EU sanctions, until Minsk is fully implemented.

Recent events have shown that no nation in Europe can take its liberties and freedoms for granted. If confirmed, I will do all I can, working with Luxembourg, to advance our shared vision of a Europe whole, free, and at peace.

Thank you again for the privilege of appearing before you today, and I look forward to answering your questions.