

**STATEMENT OF BRIAN A. NICHOLS
UNITED STATES AMBASSADOR-NOMINEE TO ZIMBABWE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
JUNE 21, 2018**

Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Murphy, and distinguished members of the Committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be the next United States Ambassador to the Republic of Zimbabwe. I am profoundly grateful to have the confidence of the President and Secretary of State.

As I approach 30 years in the Foreign Service, serving at some of our most challenging missions, it is a humbling distinction to appear before the Senate for the second time as a nominee to serve the American people, as ambassador. My professional achievements owe to the wonderful women who join me today. My beautiful wife Geri, also a career Senior Foreign Service Officer, my daughters Alex and Sophie. They have all pushed me to be a better person, sacrificed for my career, and nurtured me with their love and support. I would also like to recognize my older brothers David and Keith for the powerful example that they set for me, though they could not be here today.

I have had the good fortune to represent the country that I love in fascinating countries around the world. I have advanced American values of respect for democracy, human rights, the rule of law, and private enterprise throughout my career. Those are values that my late father, Charles Nichols, a Fulbright Scholar and founder of Brown University's Africana Studies program, instilled in me and my brothers. My mother, Mildred Nichols, has served the people of Rhode Island, promoting higher education, vocational training, and charitable programs to lift people out of poverty for 50 years. Should I be confirmed, I will draw upon those values and my experience to strengthen our relations with Zimbabwe as it reforms, promote American principles, and help the people of Zimbabwe build a better future. As I have in all of my previous assignments, I will have no higher priority than the welfare and security of American citizens.

After 38 years of independence, Zimbabwe approaches a crossroads. The government and people of Zimbabwe have an opportunity to follow a new path: to become a stable and democratic country while returning to the prosperity of the past. This is what the Zimbabwean people need and deserve. To fulfill this goal,

the Zimbabwean government should intensify its efforts to carry out profound governance, electoral, human rights, and economic reforms. An absolutely critical test will be the Zimbabwean authorities' ability to deliver on July 30 a free, fair, and credible national election in accordance with international standards. Given Zimbabwe's enormous potential, genuine reforms can and will yield great dividends for her people. If confirmed, I look forward to close and continued collaboration with our Congress to help Zimbabwe along a path of positive change.

As we continue to support Zimbabwe's democratic development, we must also continue to invest in the people of Zimbabwe—in healthcare, people-to-people exchanges, humanitarian aid, and business development—to preserve the human capital needed to grow and improve Zimbabwe in the future. Today's Zimbabweans can look back across the centuries at a creative and complex civilization that built Great Zimbabwe and influenced an entire continent. I have faith that with our support, once given the opportunity to communicate, organize, and express their will, the people of Zimbabwe will find the best path forward and pursue it successfully.

My recent Foreign Service assignments provide rich experience, should the Senate confirm me to serve as Ambassador to Zimbabwe. As Ambassador to Peru, I led a large mission that focused on improving the rule of law, fighting transnational crime and corruption, strengthening our host nation's institutions, and promoting respect for human rights, particularly of women, girls, and disadvantaged groups. In that role, I led a unified mission initiative to promote American businesses and grow American jobs, earning the Department's Cobb Award for those efforts.

Prior to that, I helped to direct the State Department's rule of law, anti-crime, and counter-narcotics programming around the world, including in Africa. As the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, I directed a team of nearly 7,000 professionals who work every day to expand access to justice, protect civilians, and combat crime around the world. I am especially proud of our efforts to expand our partnerships in Africa to combat wildlife trafficking and build more professional police and prosecutors.

In those positions, as well as Deputy Chief of Mission in Bogota, I shaped organizations that were more diverse than ever in terms of background and expertise, improved morale, ensured tight management controls, and effectively

advanced our nation's policies and priorities. Should the Senate confirm me, I will aim to exemplify the highest standards of our great nation while doing so.

I look forward to partnering with you to advance America's interests in Zimbabwe and stand ready to answer any questions you might have now and in the future.