

STATEMENT OF DAN MOZENA
UNITED STATES AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE TO ANGOLA
SENATE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

October 03, 2007

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee:

I am honored to appear before you today as the President's nominee to serve as United States Ambassador to Angola. I am grateful to President Bush and Secretary Rice for their confidence in me. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you and your staff to advance United States interests in Angola, especially in the promotion of a stable, democratic, and transparent Angola that uses its rich resources to better the lives of its citizens.

If I may, I wish to introduce my wife Grace and my daughter Anne. For the past 36 years, Grace and I have been on a journey that has taken us far from our roots in rural Dubuque County, Iowa, where I was raised on a dairy farm and where we both attended one-room country schools.

Grace and I began our careers of public service as Peace Corps Volunteers in what was then called Zaire, where we helped village farmers develop better methods of raising chickens. Although Peace Corps life in remote Zaire was far removed from the world of diplomacy, those

experiences taught us that life in developing country capitals is hardly representative of the situation in the nation as a whole. Thus, at each of my postings – Zambia, Zaire, India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh – I reached out to know and understand the host country beyond the capital city. If confirmed, I will work hard to know Angola beyond Luanda. My most recent assignment as Director of the Office of Southern African Affairs enabled me to work from a Washington perspective to further our interests in Angola. As Director, I visited Angola to see firsthand the challenges Angola faces and our role in helping the Angolan people have hope for a brighter future. If confirmed, I will continue these efforts.

United States relations with Angola are good and improving. Angola matters to U.S. interests. A stable, democratic Angola is essential to stability in central and southern Africa. Its effective military has great potential to provide forces for peacekeeping in Africa. It is an important supplier of oil, and it has potential to become a major food exporter in a region that is often food insecure. Angola can be a more dynamic partner for U.S. trade and investment, and if confirmed I would seek to bolster trade and investment links between our countries.

Since the end of four decades of war in 2002, Angola has achieved much: bringing home and resettling over 400,000 war refugees; disarming

and reintegrating former soldiers into Angolan society; and removing thousands of land mines, thus restoring vital transportation routes and reopening rich farm land. Angola's GDP grew at a rate of 19.5% in 2006; the budget is in surplus, and reserves are growing. Inflation is down from triple digits only a few years ago to 12% today.

Nonetheless, much remains to be done. Despite its wealth, Angola ranks near the bottom of most social and development indicators. Angola must address this disparity to ensure its people benefit from the nation's natural wealth. Angolan President José Eduardo dos Santos publicly announced legislative and presidential elections in 2008 and 2009, respectively. The country also just concluded a successful electoral registration campaign in which over eight million citizens registered, paving the way for elections. Free and fair elections would signal Angola's emergence as a democracy and bolster its claims to regional leadership.

Thanks to high oil prices and increasing oil production, Angola has financial resources, but money alone does not build a country after decades of war and centuries of colonization. Corruption remains a challenge as Angola seeks to build and strengthen the institutions essential to good governance. If confirmed, I would use modest levels of U.S. assistance to help create greater capacity within the Angolan government, civil society,

and private sector to consolidate democracy, respect for human rights, and good governance. I would also use this assistance to jumpstart agriculture and other non-oil sectors of the economy, bolster Angolan readiness to conduct peacekeeping and humanitarian operations, and defeat the diseases that limit Angola in utilizing its best resource--its people.

I believe the United States can play an important role in facilitating Angola's successful transition to democracy before and after elections. Before elections, we should continue our work strengthening civil society's ability to organize and participate fully in local and national decision-making. We should help political parties build their capacity to ensure full, vigorous consideration of the issues important to Angolans. We should provide requested technical assistance to Angolan authorities to assist them in ensuring that national elections take place over a vast and diverse territory, and are free and fair. Democratic transitions do not end with elections, of course, so we should continue to foster the growth of a vibrant independent media and civil society. Both are essential to fostering government institutions that are responsive and accountable to their people.

Democracy's enduring success must be complemented by broad-based economic growth. Angola's mineral wealth is finite, employs few people, and will not create long-term opportunities for the next generation.

Instead, a better future for Angola lies in a return to its former proud status as a breadbasket of Africa. The U.S. is already helping promote the growth of the agricultural sector through an innovative public-private partnership. If confirmed, I would deepen this partnership.

Angola seeks to be a regional leader in southern and central Africa and the Gulf of Guinea. It could assist in peace support operations on the continent. Because we share many security interests, such as in the Gulf of Guinea, if confirmed, I would work closely with the Department of Defense and others to improve our military-to-military cooperation and Angola's maritime security.

Angola's success in tackling the challenges of democratic transition, broad-based economic growth, and continental leadership depends upon the health and well being of its people. If confirmed, I would work hard to realize the President's goal of reducing malaria deaths among Angolan children by half before 2010. Malaria is the number one killer of Angolan children under five, but with a sustained effort toward education, prevention, and treatment, we can help Angola beat it, and indeed we are already achieving notable success. A more ominous and rising threat is HIV/AIDS. This disease has ravaged much of southern Africa, but, until now, has largely spared Angola due to the severing of commercial and transportation

links during Angola's 27-year civil war. However, with the country finally at peace, those links are being reestablished rapidly, and thus we must act preemptively to help Angola avoid the scourge of double-digit HIV/AIDS infection rates present in most of its neighbors. Already, rates of HIV/AIDS are three to four times higher in border areas than in central Angola.

Contemplating these challenges, I see few quick fixes. We will need patience and perseverance in helping Angola build institutions and human capabilities. Our view must be long-term in order to be effective as we help Angola join the international community of democracies.

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee, should I be confirmed, I will work hard to build a strong, mutually beneficial relationship with Angola for the betterment of Americans and Angolans. Thank you for this opportunity to address you. I look forward to answering any questions you might have.