

Testimony of William H. Moser
Nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Kazakhstan
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
October 11, 2018

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Kaine, and Members of the Committee, it is an honor and a privilege to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be Ambassador to the Republic of Kazakhstan.

I am honored by the trust and confidence the President and Secretary Pompeo have placed in me with this nomination. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with Congress to advance our country's interests in Kazakhstan and to further strengthen the *enhanced strategic partnership* with Kazakhstan set by President Trump in his meeting with Kazakhstan's President Nazarbayev in January of this year.

I want to introduce my wife Marie. We are very pleased to return to Kazakhstan, where I served 20 years ago. Marie and I and our children have fond memories of our time there.

For more than a quarter century, Kazakhstan has been a valued friend and a strategic partner of the United States in Central Asia. We were pleased to be the first country to recognize Kazakhstan's independence on Christmas Day 1991. Sovereign, independent, and dynamic, Kazakhstan over the past nearly 27 years has worked diligently to strengthen its economy, investing wisely in its future through ambitious education and infrastructure projects. A country the size of Western Europe and the ninth largest country in the world, Kazakhstan is geographically strategic, ethnically diverse, and resource rich. Its population is young, energetic, and increasingly connected with the world around them.

For the United States, our strategic goals in Kazakhstan are to strengthen Kazakhstan's sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity, and to support Kazakhstan's development as a prosperous, stable, and democratic state, that is integrated into the world economy and that cooperates with its neighbors, the United States, and our partners to advance regional and global security. The United States and Kazakhstan have worked closely to pursue these ambitious goals. Following the renewed commitments of our two countries' presidents, if

confirmed, I look forward to further enhancing our engagement as strategic partners.

U.S. companies have long recognized Kazakhstan's potential and today have a strong history of cooperation with Kazakhstan to develop its tremendous oil and gas resources. United States' investment in Kazakhstan has grown to nearly 30 billion dollars, making Kazakhstan an important economic partner in the region. If confirmed, I look forward to strengthening U.S.-Kazakhstan commercial ties and to working with Kazakhstan in sectors like agriculture, manufacturing, and IT services as it diversifies its economic base.

Kazakhstan has been a key supporter of our South Asia strategy, providing crucial support for our forces in Afghanistan and denying safe haven for terrorists. Kazakhstan continues to provide critical logistical support and access for our troops fighting ISIS and the Taliban in Afghanistan. We appreciate Kazakhstan's work to train and educate Afghan civilian specialists, and to empower women in Afghanistan's economy. Kazakhstan can be proud of its work to focus global attention on Afghanistan and Central Asia during its rotating membership on the UN Security Council, which will successfully conclude this December.

Since Kazakhstan took the courageous step to voluntarily renounce its nuclear weapons after independence, the United States and Kazakhstan have worked in continuous partnership for more than a quarter century to safely and securely manage this part of its Soviet legacy. Kazakhstan has consistently been a leading voice for nonproliferation, working to ensure a safer and healthier future for the children of Kazakhstan and for the world. Kazakhstan today is a valued partner in our efforts to rid the Korean Peninsula of nuclear weapons.

I first served in Kazakhstan in 1996, in our then-Embassy in Almaty as a management officer and then as energy attaché. I have also served in other post-Soviet states, most recently as Ambassador to Moldova. If confirmed, I intend to draw on my years of experience in the region to work with the Government of Kazakhstan and to reach out to the people of Kazakhstan to ensure that the already strong and dynamic United States-Kazakhstan partnership continues to grow and strengthen. I will work to enhance people-to-people ties between United States and Kazakhstan and to continue our partnership with Kazakhstan on its ambitious education reform program to create a trilingual society, comfortable and linguistically capable in Kazakh, English and Russian.

Mutual interest and mutual respect underlie our relations with Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan is a regional and global leader in its own right; Kazakhstan is in no one's sphere of influence. Historic, cultural and economic ties with Russia are important to Kazakhstan, but Kazakhstan is not defined by any one relationship or neighbor, whether near or far. The United States' example of a prosperous, rule based democracy that has built durable economic growth alongside social and political stability is an attractive model that speaks for itself. Kazakhstan's future is bright, and it is for Kazakhstan to choose its path. The United States will always be a reliable and principled partner for Kazakhstan's efforts to advance market reform and its development into a free, democratic society respectful of the rights and choices of its citizens.

For the last three years, I have been the senior career official within the State Department's Bureau of Overseas Building Operations. From that position, I have worked to ensure that State Department facilities around the world are safe, secure, and operationally effective, so that the U.S. government can best represent our country, its policies, and people abroad. If confirmed, I pledge that, as ambassador, the safety and security of our mission in Kazakhstan and of all its personnel will be one of my highest priorities. I will also ensure that the mission is a place where no one should ever suffer from discrimination, harassment or exploitation of any kind. I know from supervising organizations with hundreds of employees, that my personal example is essential to ensure that every employee is treated with respect and that his or her contributions are valued. If confirmed, I would maintain and promote the highest standards of ethical conduct and security.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Kaine, I thank you again for the opportunity to share my thoughts about the relationship with Kazakhstan. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with you and this committee.

I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.