

**Statement of Ambassador David Hale,
Nominee to be Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
August 16, 2018**

Good morning, Senator Corker, Ranking Member Menendez, and distinguished members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

I first want to thank President Trump and Secretary Pompeo for their confidence in me to serve in this role, if confirmed. It is a tremendous honor to be nominated to serve our country, President Trump, Secretary of State Pompeo, and the men and women of the State Department as Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs. I approach this committee and the prospective position with humility and a commitment to serve to the best of my ability, as I have strived to do ever since Ambassador Edward Perkins first swore me into the Foreign Service in June, 1984.

My call to public service began with my grandparents, Joseph and Elizabeth Kler. They were world travelers who always returned from abroad with stories, books, and pictures of a world beyond our shores. As a young man, I gained a growing realization that what happened overseas mattered a great deal to our country's security and prosperity. I came to realize that a career in the Foreign Service would allow me to protect and advance our interests abroad. That was the beginning of my path from Bridgewater, N.J. to Beirut, and beyond.

In college, two professor-practitioners had a tremendous influence on my life: retired Ambassador Armin Meyer and future Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. Ambassador Meyer taught me in particular the value of quiet diplomacy – of the gains to be made through calm, candid, patient, persistent, and behind-the-scenes engagement to achieve U.S. goals.

Secretary Albright taught me that our diplomatic strength is rooted in our economic and military strength. She also taught me that while our strength is greatly enhanced through alliances and partnerships, there is no substitute for

American leadership. I am convinced American values are at the core of our nation's success and influence, and must remain there for our success to continue.

Throughout my career in the Foreign Service, other mentors have included ambassadors Ryan Crocker, Dick Murphy, Bill Burns, David Welch, and Dennis Ross, all of whom I watched maneuver through complex environments. I have always strived to emulate their firm approach, steady leadership, adept negotiating skills, calm temperaments, and commitment to results. I have also had the extraordinary privilege to work directly for and with six of the last seven secretaries of state. I am eager to work closely with Secretary Pompeo, if confirmed.

During my thirty-four years in the Foreign Service, I have developed a solid grounding in the work of the Under Secretary for Political Affairs, a role which entails extensive diplomatic interaction in innumerable bilateral and multilateral contexts, as well as the oversight of the regional and International Organizations bureaus. I've spent many years at high-threat posts, including as Ambassador to Jordan, Ambassador to Lebanon, and most recently, as Ambassador to Pakistan. It was in Lebanon that I first had the opportunity to work with Secretary Pompeo, then visiting as a member of Congress. Later, during my tour in Pakistan, I worked with him in his capacity as CIA Director to free an American citizen and her family from terrorist captivity. Using my diplomatic skills to rescue an American in distress remains one of my proudest moments.

On that note, my service has made me well-aware of the many threats our nation faces. These threats are continually evolving, and our Diplomatic Security teams have my highest respect for protecting our diplomatic personnel and installations. Our ambassadors in the field, backed up by the Department's leaders and experts, must constantly assess the risk/benefit equation of our presence and activities in often dangerous places. We have had hard lessons over the years, from Beirut to Benghazi. Although we absorb those lessons and minimize risk, we must also remember that our nation's security requires an active diplomatic presence on the front lines.

If confirmed, I will help Secretary Pompeo put the State Department – which is comprised of my gifted Foreign and Civil Service colleagues, and our exceptional Locally Employed Staff at missions abroad – back on track. Among my priorities will be crisis management, cultivating international alliances, developing the next generation of leaders in the Foreign Service and Civil Service, and communicating regularly with Congress. We have the finest diplomatic service in the world, and Secretary Pompeo has set us on the path to strong morale, readiness, and effectiveness. As the President, the Secretary, and the national security leadership make and conduct our nation’s foreign policy, they deserve the State Department’s best advice going up and most effective implementation going forward, drawn from the experience, talent, and diversity of its personnel. I am confident our diplomatic and civil service will continue to prove their value as an essential tool in advancing a results-oriented foreign policy in the service of our nation.

Finally, I look forward to the opportunity, if confirmed, to advancing American diplomacy in consultation with Congress. For thirty-four years, I have interacted with members here and abroad. I started in a junior capacity as a CODEL control officer countless times. In later postings, I had the honor to come to Capitol Hill often to consult members and staff. I remember traveling to Michigan with Senator Levin to meet his constituents and discuss the Middle East. As ambassador to three countries, I had the privilege of accompanying members to their meetings with foreign leaders. This is one of the most rewarding and essential functions of an embassy.

If confirmed, this body and the American people can have confidence that I will fulfill the Trump Administration’s foreign policy agenda with professionalism, integrity, and an eye toward results. I look forward to taking your questions.