

Statement of Kent D. Logsdon
Nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Moldova
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
September 29, 2021

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, Members of the Committee:

I am honored to appear today as President Biden's nominee to be the next U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Moldova. I am grateful to the President and to Secretary Blinken for the confidence they have placed in me. If confirmed, I pledge to work closely with Congress to advance our nation's interests in Moldova.

I would not be here without the love and support of my family. My wife Michelle, who just retired after 35 years of service as a foreign service officer, initially with the U.S. Information Agency, and then as a public diplomacy officer at the State Department. Our children, who accompanied us to our overseas postings. We are proud of their resilience and achievements – Nora is a law student at the University of Virginia and Will is studying music production at Shenandoah University. And my parents, who encouraged me in this career - my mother Carroll, who passed away last year after contracting COVID, and my father Bill, who just retired after nearly 60 years as a patent attorney.

The world changed after I joined the foreign service. The Berlin Wall and the USSR disappeared, and the Cold War ended. My wife and I joined many of our colleagues in establishing and building relationships with new countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. I have focused most of my diplomatic career working in or on issues involving the countries in this region and it is exciting to see their progress and development in the past thirty years. If confirmed, leading our mission in Chisinau would be a highlight of my diplomatic career.

The U.S.-Moldova relationship is grounded in shared democratic values and support for a democratic, secure, and prosperous Moldova, anchored in Europe.

With an historic mandate, President Sandu and a reform-oriented government have launched an ambitious program to establish a more transparent and accountable democracy, build a stronger economy, and combat endemic corruption. At the UN General Assembly, President Biden told the world about Moldovan voters' success in delivering "a landslide victory for the forces of democracy with a mandate to fight graft, to build a more inclusive economy."

Corruption threatens Moldova's economic prospects and democratic future. We must continue to support the Moldovan government's efforts to strengthen the capacity of its institutions to identify, investigate, and prosecute corruption. If confirmed, I will make the fight against corruption one of my top priorities. We must also continue to be a steadfast partner to civil society, independent media, and other organizations committed to developing participatory democracy and promoting good governance.

Progress in the fight against corruption will strengthen Moldova's investment climate and ensure a level playing field for U.S. business. Moldova has strengthened financial sector oversight and transparency. Continued reforms will help Moldova unlock further budgetary support from the European Union and IMF to strengthen its economy in the wake of the COVID pandemic.

Support from the United States and the European Union is helping Moldova expand trade and market linkages with the West. The EU is now Moldova's largest trading partner. Moldova is linking its energy infrastructure to Europe and diversifying its energy supply to reduce dependence on Russian gas imports.

Moldova is also committed to transforming its defense forces and their capacity to contribute to international security and peacekeeping missions. U.S. security assistance has been key to this effort. The United States respects Moldova's constitutional neutrality and welcomes its efforts to build a more modern military equipped to counter emerging threats.

Russian malign influence and disinformation threaten Moldova's democratic development, ambitious reform agenda, and European trajectory. If confirmed, I will work closely with government leaders, civil society, and international partners to support Moldova's democratic reform agenda and build resiliency against malign influence and disinformation.

Resolving the Transnistria conflict remains a priority. The United States supports OSCE-led efforts to uphold Moldova's sovereignty and territorial integrity while acknowledging a special status for Transnistria. We need to continue to press Russia to honor its commitments to withdraw its troops and munitions from Moldova. And we are committed to protecting the fundamental freedoms of citizens on both sides of the Nistru River. If confirmed, I will continue to promote confidence building measures and seek tangible results through the OSCE-led 5+2 process.

The Moldovan people have chosen a bold path of reform and Western integration. It is in our interest to support them. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Members of this Committee and the Congress to do just that. Improving Moldova's democracy, prosperity, and security will help to develop a key partner in Eastern Europe.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to your questions.