

Statement of Bijan Sabet
Nominee for U.S. Ambassador to the Czech Republic
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
November 29, 2022

Thank you, Chairwoman Shaheen, Ranking Member Portman, and distinguished Members of this Committee.

It is a profound honor to appear before you as President Biden's nominee to serve as United States Ambassador to the Czech Republic. I want to express my gratitude to the President and Secretary Blinken for the confidence they have placed in me with this nomination.

Before I begin, I'd like to introduce my family, starting with my wife Lauren who is here today. Lauren is my best friend and partner, who makes everything I do possible. She's also the daughter of a Delaware police officer, who was privileged to know the President who once chaired this Committee. Our three wonderful children, Sophia, Ellie, and James are watching online. I love you so much, and I'm so proud to be your Dad. If confirmed, Lauren and James will join me in Prague, and I know our daughters will visit as often as they can.

I also want to recognize and thank my parents, who taught me and my younger brother to cherish the democratic values and ideals of freedom and opportunity. Like so many, they immigrated to this country in pursuit of the American dream and became U.S. citizens as soon as they could. My father was born in Iran, where he completed medical school, before traveling to the United States for his residency in the late 1960's. Here, he met another young doctor—my mother—who had recently immigrated from South Korea. Born under Japanese occupation, she grew up during the Korean War with a deep sense of gratitude to the U.S. service members who helped save South Korea from Communism.

I've spent the better part of my life and career supporting entrepreneurs and helping them make the most of their potential. I co-created one of our country's leading venture capital firms where we have supported hundreds of startups - leading to the creation of tens of thousands of jobs. I also serve on the boards of several educational institutions, including Boston College. I enjoy mentoring both students and young professionals, particularly those from backgrounds that are underrepresented in the venture capital industry. If confirmed, I will bring that experience, energy, and focus on the next generation, to the work I do in the Czech Republic. If confirmed, I also commit to using my experience to advance bilateral trade and investment by building relationships between Czech and U.S. companies and entrepreneurs.

To that end, I would like to outline five policy priorities that will guide my work as U.S. Ambassador to the Czech Republic, if confirmed:

1. If confirmed, I will have no greater priority than the safety and security of the entire Embassy team and the thousands of U.S. citizen visitors and students who come to the Czech Republic each year.

2. If confirmed, I will support the Czech Republic in its outstanding efforts to promote regional security and protect Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity against Russia's aggression. I will also deepen our bilateral defense cooperation and NATO partnership, and support negotiations for the purchase of American-made F-35s.
3. If confirmed, I will promote U.S. companies as partners of choice for nuclear energy expansion, including small modular reactors, and for nuclear fuel diversification. I will look for ways to support all clean energy sources, especially U.S. companies working in renewable energy. Now more than ever, it is time to advance energy diversification and security.
4. If confirmed, I will work alongside our Czech partners to honor the legacy of former President Vaclav Havel in promoting democracy and human rights worldwide, especially in upholding media freedom and journalistic integrity.
5. Finally, if confirmed, I pledge to keep this Committee informed as I work to strengthen the alliance, friendship, and partnership between the United States and the Czech Republic.

Madam Chair, Ranking Member Portman, and Members of the Committee, thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today. I welcome your questions.