



Global **Minnesota**[®]

Global Minnesota Board Chair Ross Wilson Named to Lead the U.S. Embassy in Afghanistan

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Minneapolis— Ambassador Ross Wilson has stepped away from his role as board chair of Global Minnesota, a local nonpartisan, nonprofit organization, to accept a request by U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to lead the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan, at a critical time for that country and the region.

For nearly four decades, career diplomat Wilson represented the United States Foreign Service at home and abroad. He served as U.S. Ambassador to Azerbaijan in 2000-03 and to Turkey in 2005-08. In 2014 Ambassador Wilson was called back to government service as head of mission and chargé d'affaires in Turkey and again in the Republic of Georgia in 2018-19. Last week, he was sworn back into the U.S. Foreign Service and takes over from John Bass at our Kabul embassy.

“Afghanistan is an extraordinarily challenging, but also very consequential assignment and I am honored by the trust and confidence that Secretary of State Pompeo and the Department of State have placed in me,” Wilson said. A native of Minnesota and a graduate of the University of Minnesota, Wilson lives in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area.

“At Global Minnesota we work to advance international understanding and engagement. We were founded on the twin principals of public and citizen diplomacy. Ambassador Wilson’s return to public service exemplifies his personal and professional commitment to the importance of diplomacy. We are extremely proud to have been led by Ambassador Wilson whose experience in international relations is unmatched,” said Mark Ritchie, Global Minnesota President. “We wish him the best in his new assignment and know that he will make every effort to bring peace to the region.” Ritchie noted that Global Minnesota board vice chairs, Martha (Muffy) MacMillan, philanthropist and Cargill Foundation

Director, and Thea Keamy, Senior Vice President for Corporate Strategy and Business Development at Land O'Lakes, Inc. will provide leadership until an interim chair is named.

While serving in Afghanistan, Ambassador Wilson will step away from his duties at Global Minnesota and from his position as Senior Fellow at the Atlantic Council in Washington, D.C., and as a visiting lecturer at George Washington University.

Ambassador Wilson has also held assignments at U.S. embassies in Moscow and Prague, and at the consulate general in Melbourne. In Washington, D.C., he served as principal deputy to the ambassador-at-large and special advisor to the Secretary of State for the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union from 1997-2000. In addition he served as the deputy executive secretary of the U.S. State Department for Secretaries Baker, Eagleburger, and Christopher; chief of staff to Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick; chief U.S. negotiator for the Free Trade Area of the Americas while on detail to the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative; and in the State Department's offices dealing with Egypt and the Soviet Union.

Ambassador Wilson is married to Margo Squire, also a career diplomat.

About Global Minnesota: Global Minnesota connects individuals, organizations, and communities to the world. Through a unique lineup of programs offered throughout the state, Global Minnesota provides opportunities for Minnesotans of all ages, from the 2nd grader to the CEO, to learn about and engage with relevant, timely international issues. <https://www.globalminnesota.org/about/>

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