

Statement of Roman Pipko
Nominee for Ambassador to the Republic of Estonia
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
Subcommittee on Europe & Regional Cooperation

Chairman Daines, Ranking Member Murphy, and Distinguished Members of the Committee, it is an honor and privilege to appear before you today.

I am compelled to begin my testimony with a tribute to this amazing country. Only in America.

In fact, I know that several other people nominated by President Trump are immigrants to this country and feel the same way I do. Each of us has a unique story, but we are all united by our love for this great country.

I came to the United States in 1981 as a poor refugee from the oppressive regime of the former Soviet Union. Now, forty years later, I sit in front of this august body as a participant in the process mandated by the Constitution of the United States.

This country opened unimaginable opportunities for me, and I am grateful for this honor.

As you can tell, for me these hearings are intensely personal and very emotional, but also profoundly symbolic for what this process and this country stand for.

I want to thank President Trump for nominating me to be the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Estonia. It is the privilege of a lifetime to represent him and the people of the United States. And I am deeply humbled.

I also want to thank this Committee and every Senator on the Committee for giving me the opportunity to testify in front of you today. It is a true honor, and I am grateful for your time and consideration.

I want to thank every American who helped me on my way. Republican and Democrat, male and female, Black and White. Their generosity will always stay in my heart.

I also want to thank my family. My Father, who I hope can see these proceedings from High Above – he would have never believed that this was possible. My Mother, who made heroic efforts to bring me to this country, and my wife and my three children. Without their love and unwavering support, I would not be sitting here today.

And, finally, I also want to thank Estonia and its many people for all they have done for my family and for me when I lived there to prepare me for this improbable journey.

If confirmed by you and the full Senate, I will be going as the U.S. Ambassador to the country of my birth which has made tremendous strides in the last few decades.

Estonia is one of the smallest member countries of the EU and NATO, but it is a leader in two of the most critical areas singled out by this Administration.

First, defense spending. I support President Trump for his unprecedented efforts to bring peace to Europe. Estonia has always been a reliable and steadfast Ally of the United States. Its soldiers participated shoulder to shoulder with U.S. troops in operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other regions. Estonia has long been a vocal leader on the importance of NATO Allies increasing defense spending. It invests in U.S. equipment and hosts U.S. forces on its territory. And now, in response to the request by the Trump Administration, it has already committed to spend approximately

5.4 percent of its GDP annually on military expenditures. It is a historic undertaking by Estonia and makes it a model partner of the United States, as recently recognized by the Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense.

The second metric emphasized by this Administration is openness of the country's market for trade and investment. The Wall Street Journal and Heritage Foundation 2025 index of Economic Freedom, which assesses 184 countries of the world based on their respect for property rights, judicial effectiveness, and government spending, has ranked Estonia eighth in the world and fifth in Europe. These are unparalleled accomplishments and make Estonia an exemplary partner of the United States.

In addition, the United States and Estonia cooperate closely on cyber security, energy, and law enforcement. I look forward to continuing this work in order to confront global challenges and promote shared priorities.

Mr. Chairman, the relationship between the United States and Estonia is strong. If confirmed by you and the full Senate, I have three important objectives as an Ambassador of the United States to the Republic of Estonia.

First, I will protect and strengthen the interests of the United States. Above all, it means that the security and wellbeing of U.S. citizens is my paramount priority.

Next, I will promote, support, and defend the policies of President Trump and his Administration.

And finally, I will promote durable bilateral political, military, economic and cultural relations between the United States and the Republic of Estonia.

Thank you for your time and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

