

Statement of Ambassador Lynne Tracy
Nominee for U.S. Ambassador to the Russian Federation
U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
November 30, 2022

Thank you, Senator Portman, for the very kind introduction. I also want to thank you for your service to the state of Ohio, the Senate, and to this committee. Your leadership and commitment to public service is inspirational, particularly with the national security challenges facing our country.

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and Members of the Committee,

I am honored to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee to be the next Ambassador of the United States to the Russian Federation. I am grateful to President Biden and Secretary Blinken for the confidence they have placed in me during a period of unprecedented tension in U.S.-Russia relations brought about by Russia's war on Ukraine.

For 28 years, I have had the good fortune to represent the United States as a Foreign Service Officer – many of those assignments have been in the countries of the former Soviet Union. It has been a privilege to serve as U.S. Ambassador to Armenia and prior to that as Deputy Chief of Mission in Moscow. My experience as a contractor in the late 1980s at the Embassy in Moscow as part of an American-only staff is an experience that has again become relevant to some of the challenges we are facing today.

Throughout my career, I have worked hard to protect our nation and its interests. For me, this has always been about more than the effort of one individual. It has required teamwork that goes beyond a single department or just one branch of our government. If confirmed, I pledge to continue that team approach and to work closely with the members and staff of this committee on our Russia policy.

Mr. Chairman, this committee and other Members of Congress have my commitment that, if confirmed, the plight of U.S. citizens detained in Russia will be a top priority for me. U.S. citizens living and traveling in Russia have faced unprecedented harassment, and some have been determined by the Secretary of State to be wrongfully detained. With the support of the consular team in Moscow, I will devote my attention and energy to supporting the welfare and well-being of every U.S. citizen detained in Russia. I will work closely with Washington as the Administration continues to engage Russian authorities to bring Paul Whelan and Brittney Griner home. I will also pursue the humanitarian release of Marc Fogel. I will press the Russian government to live up to its obligations, including as they relate to providing timely and consistent consular access and to the fair treatment of our citizens who are detained.

As the Members of this committee know all too well, Russia's unjustified and unprovoked war against Ukraine has shattered European security and undermined global economic stability. Russia's war has resulted in catastrophic loss of life and in recent days as it struggles on the battlefield, the Putin regime has escalated its attacks with a bombing campaign against civilian infrastructure intended to cause suffering and death for ordinary Ukrainians.

Together with our allies and partners, the United States remains committed to supporting Ukraine's sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity and to helping Ukraine defend itself. We are also imposing unprecedented economic costs on Russia and welcome the continued close coordination with Congress on sanctions and other tools.

As the world's two pre-eminent nuclear powers, the United States and Russia have special responsibilities. These include refraining from reckless saber-rattling, maintaining lines of communication to reduce nuclear risks, and living up to commitments under the New START Treaty and other arms-control obligations. President Biden has said the Administration is ready to negotiate a new arms control framework to replace New START when it expires in 2026. But we need Russia to allow for inspections to resume under the Treaty before we can have a dialogue on what comes next.

The Russian government is intensifying repression against civil society, independent media, human rights activists, pro-democracy advocates, and even Russian citizens who simply have the courage to use the word "war". If confirmed, I will work to keep a spotlight of support on those, like Vladimir Kara-Murza, Alexei Navalny, and Radio Free Europe reporter Vladyslav Yesypenko, who have been jailed or harassed simply for seeking to exercise their fundamental freedoms.

I believe that promoting mutual understanding among Americans and Russians can contribute to long-term stability in our bilateral relations. Even in the darkest days of the Soviet Union, citizens of good will in both our countries formed people-to-people ties. I will cultivate these connections, particularly through our public diplomacy programs, in order to keep the door open to a better future. If confirmed, I will reach out to the Russian people at all levels of society as one of my priorities.

These topics and others require hard conversations. If confirmed, I will make it a priority to conduct frank diplomacy, supporting the President's efforts to maintain a clear channel of communication and to hold Russia accountable. We have a team of smart, experienced, and dedicated public servants at our Embassy in Moscow who are performing brilliantly in an extremely challenging environment. Their safety, security, and ability to do their jobs is of paramount concern. If confirmed, it will be one of the greatest honors and privileges of my career to lead them, and I pledge to do so with integrity and humility.

Finally, I am pleased to be joined today by my sister, Anita Jepsky. I have been blessed to receive the indispensable support of my family. My parents Albert and Carol Sue Tracy, Anita, and my sister Mary Lou Tracy have always believed in me and been there for me. I am grateful to Ambassador John Sullivan and my mentor Ambassador John Tefft for their wise counsel and strong example of public service. I also want to acknowledge my history professor at the University of Georgia Dr. Ronald Rader and his wife Zhanna Rader, who guided my first steps as a student pursuing a deeper understanding of Russia and the Soviet Union.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, thank you for the privilege of appearing before the committee and considering my nomination. I look forward to your questions.