

Testimony of Greg Delawie
Nominee for Ambassador to the Republic of Kosovo
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Senate Foreign Relations Committee

Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Shaheen, and Members of the Committee, it is an honor and a privilege to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be Ambassador to the **Republic of Kosovo**. I deeply appreciate the confidence that President Obama and Secretary Kerry have placed in me. I hope the Committee and the Senate will share that confidence and confirm me. I am accompanied today by my wife, Vonda Delawie, a retired Foreign Service Officer, my daughter Torrence and my son Fred, all of whom have shared with me the joys and challenges of a lifetime bouncing from one country to the next. Wherever we have served, we have always remembered what an honor it is to work for the American people and to represent them to the rest of the world.

Our relationship with Europe's youngest democracy is based on a shared vision of Kosovo's legitimate place in a Europe whole, free, and at peace. The government and people of Kosovo deeply respect the United States, and are grateful for our role in ending the ethnic cleansing of the late 1990's. Over the past 16 years, with our strong support, Kosovo has made remarkable progress. Concrete examples of that progress include Kosovo's 2008 Declaration of Independence and the end of international supervision in 2012.

A democratic, fully sovereign, and multi-ethnic Kosovo must become an integral part of the international community. The United States has worked and continues to work closely with Kosovo toward that end. Although Kosovo faces enormous challenges in the interconnected areas of rule of law, regional security, and economic development, it has made progress. I would like to highlight some successes:

- With U.S. and international support, Kosovo has drafted and implemented modern laws to bring Kosovo's criminal legislation in line with international standards, to establish the rules of criminal procedure mandatory for court proceedings, and to reform the judicial system. The European Rule of Law Mission, EULEX, is building capacity in the judicial system, with the vital help of U.S. police, prosecutors, and judges.
- The NATO Kosovo Force, or KFOR, makes a multinational contribution to regional security. KFOR is uniquely trusted by Albanians and Serbs alike

and its presence creates an atmosphere that allows the EU-led Dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia to flourish. The United States provides some 700 troops to KFOR.

- With U.S. guidance, Kosovo has moved up 42 places on the World Bank's "Ease of Doing Business" ranking, from 117th in 2011 to 75th in 2014. We have helped Kosovo privatize its national airport management and energy distribution companies. U.S. technical assistance helped Kosovo conclude a landmark \$460 million public-private partnership deal for the Brezovica ski resort complex. Our USAID economic programs in the last five years alone have generated 17,500 new jobs, \$330 million in increased sales, and \$37.6 million in new revenues across multiple sectors.

As impressive as these recent achievements are, Kosovo continues to face many obstacles. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will devote my time and energy to leading a whole-of-government U.S. effort to help Kosovo surmount these obstacles. We will focus on measurable improvement in three central and highly interdependent areas [the three "R"s]: strengthening the rule of law, increasing regional security, and promoting economic reforms to reduce poverty, unemployment, and energy insecurity. I'd like to share just a bit about what I see as our priorities, beginning with the rule of law.

Rule of Law

Corruption hampers Kosovo's democratic and economic development. It deters investment, spurs emigration, and weakens confidence in public institutions. This in turn can create fertile ground for the growth of violent extremism. The government of Kosovo must develop a more coordinated approach to addressing corruption, engaging all government agencies in the effort. If confirmed, I will intensify interagency support for Kosovo's efforts to combat corruption and restore citizens' faith in their government.

Kosovo must respond appropriately to allegations of **serious crimes** committed between 1998 and 2000. Under the auspices of the EU-established **Special Investigative Task Force** (SITF), an American prosecutor found evidence that indictable offenses were committed by a small number of former Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) senior leaders. Kosovo must resolve these serious allegations if it is to close this chapter of its history and move forward with democratic development and Euro-Atlantic integration. The government is currently adopting the necessary constitutional amendments, legislation and

agreements to establish a Special Court to adjudicate SITF cases in line with international standards. While I hope that these measures will soon be in place, I will, if confirmed, encourage the Government of Kosovo to maintain a high level of support and cooperation throughout the judicial proceedings.

Kosovo confronts a significant **human trafficking** problem. It has anti-trafficking and victim-protection laws, as well as a shelter for victims, but does not yet meet minimum standards for enforcement of anti-trafficking laws or victim protection. To improve enforcement, the U.S. Embassy has provided anti-trafficking training to Kosovo government officials, and successfully encouraged the foreign ministry to include training on human trafficking as part of the standard preparation for all of Kosovo's diplomatic personnel. Kosovo's fight against trafficking is also supported more generally by U.S.-organized training for law enforcement, prosecutors, and judges in Kosovo. If confirmed, I will continue the Embassy's work with Kosovo to implement these laws and intensify the fight against this modern form of slavery.

Regional Security

Normalization of the Kosovo-Serbia relationship is a fundamental requirement for enduring regional security and is effectively a precondition for Kosovo to be able to thrive over the long term. We continue to support the EU-facilitated **Kosovo-Serbia High-Level Dialogue** and full implementation of all elements of the **April 2013 agreement on normalization**, which have been a landmark joint achievement of U.S. and European Union diplomacy in the Balkans. This Dialogue success reflects great credit on the political leaders of Kosovo and Serbia alike for making tough compromises for the good of their two countries. Dismantling parallel structures and integrating the predominantly Kosovo Serb northern municipalities into Kosovo's legal and institutional framework are key to full normalization of relations. Kosovo has made significant progress: voters of all ethnicities participated in recent municipal and parliamentary elections; municipal governments in northern Kosovo are now elected and constituted under Kosovo law; the main Serb political group, Srpska List, is part of the governing coalition. Outside the Dialogue context, bilateral contacts increasingly take place at all levels, from inter-ministerial dialogue to joint training for customs officers. Some aspects of normalization remain difficult to achieve, such as the planned creation of an Association of Serb Majority Municipalities.

If confirmed, I will champion **minority rights** and **promote integration** throughout Kosovo, including more proportional minority representation in the national and municipal civil services. Kosovo must find durable solutions for the

thousands of vulnerable persons displaced from Kosovo, many of whom now live in Serbia. U.S. programs assist some of those displaced in Serbia as well as returnees to Kosovo, but additional political and programmatic efforts are needed. Kosovo must also do more to protect the rights of Kosovo's other minorities, including the Roma, Ashkali, and Balkan Egyptian population, and promote their societal inclusion.

I applaud Kosovo for its robust efforts to confront the threat posed by **foreign terrorist fighters** heading to Syria and Iraq, and its participation in the Counter-ISIL Coalition. Kosovo passed legislation making it illegal for Kosovo citizens to join foreign terrorist organizations. Since November 2013, Kosovo authorities have arrested over 80 suspects for participation in, or recruitment for, terrorist groups in Iraq and Syria. With U.S. assistance, the government of Kosovo is improving its capacity to prosecute terrorism cases. The U.S. is also supporting Kosovo's effort to develop a "whole of government" approach to countering violent extremism. If confirmed, I will continue our backing for this important work.

As recommended in its U.S.-facilitated Strategic Security Sector Review, Kosovo is in the process of transitioning from the Kosovo Security Force to the **Kosovo Armed Forces**, with the stated mission of protecting the nation's territorial integrity, providing military support to civil authorities in disaster situations, and participating in international peacekeeping operations. The KAF is expected to develop capabilities in line with EU and NATO standards. If confirmed, I will ensure that the United States continues to guide and support this transition in a manner that is consistent with increasing regional stability, strengthens democratic institutions in Kosovo, and positions Kosovo to qualify for eventual NATO membership.

Energy Security and Economic Development

Mr. Chairman, I can guarantee that one of my highest priorities, if confirmed, will be to continue to press for the **reforms needed to develop Kosovo's economy**. This is key to reducing high rates of poverty and unemployment, to promoting regional ties, and to expanding opportunities for U.S. exporters and investors. The government's reform agenda includes strengthening the legal environment necessary to attract and retain foreign investors, who are already drawn by Kosovo's relatively young population, low labor costs, and abundant natural resources. Anti-corruption efforts are also vitally important.

The lack of dependable electrical power is widely considered Kosovo's greatest obstacle to achieving sustained economic growth. The government has made it a priority to modernize and improve the energy sector through a **comprehensive energy development and security plan**. If confirmed, I will work with Kosovo to implement its energy strategy, help meet its commitment to join the EU's common energy market, and to have a substantial share of its energy come from renewable energy sources by 2020.

CONCLUSION

This is a daunting agenda. But I know from my thirty-plus years in the Foreign Service that I will not have to pursue it alone. I will be able to draw on the experience of the talented team of Americans and locally-employed staff at Embassy Pristina, the experienced partners from multiple agencies in Washington, support from the Legislative Branch, and the contributions of private Americans and citizens of so many other nations who also want to see Kosovo succeed.

Mr. Chairman, for the past seven decades, the United States has been committed to building a Europe whole, free, and at peace. The work is not complete, but we know that we can achieve success because we have already accomplished so much. The history of the last twenty-five years has demonstrated how important it is for the United States to be involved in the Balkans. If confirmed, I will do my utmost to promote our mutual goal: a democratic Kosovo whose citizens trust its institutions, which is at peace with its neighbors, and which is making a sustainable contribution to the global economy.

Thank you very much for your attention. I hope you will place your trust in me and confirm me as Ambassador to the Republic of Kosovo. I am happy to take any questions.