

**Statement of Geoffrey R. Pyatt  
Ambassador-designate to Ukraine  
Senate Foreign Relations Committee  
Wednesday, June 19, 2:15 p.m.**

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and Members of the Committee,

It is a great honor to appear before you as President Obama's nominee to be the next United States Ambassador to Ukraine. I am grateful to the President, Secretary Kerry, and former Secretary Clinton for the confidence they have placed in me through this nomination, and if confirmed I will look forward to working closely with the Congress and Members of the Foreign Relations Committee and its staff.

With the Chairman's permission I would like to begin by introducing my wife Mary, with whom I have shared a 23-year Foreign Service career that has taken us and our children much further than either of us could have imagined. As a teacher at each of our overseas posts, Mary has done much to build goodwill and to demonstrate why the idea of America remains so powerfully attractive around the world.

If confirmed, I will continue to build our strategic partnership with Ukraine and will work to realize the potential we see in this relationship with bipartisan support. The U.S. – Ukraine Charter on Strategic Partnership signed by Secretary Rice, and the commission that Vice President Biden established to implement this charter, set high expectations for our bilateral ties. And if confirmed, my highest goal will be to sustain the effort to advance Ukraine on the path toward a modern European democracy.

One area of notable achievement in our bilateral relationship is cooperation on nonproliferation, in particular, the removal of all highly enriched uranium from Ukraine, as jointly pledged by President Obama and President Yanukovich at the 2010 Nuclear Security Summit. Ukraine's leadership on this issue stands as an example for countries around the world. Indeed, Ukraine's decision to remove all of its nuclear weapons and join the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty as a non-nuclear weapon state was one of the major accomplishments for European peace in the last 20 years.

I have a particular commitment to these issues of nuclear nonproliferation from my time as Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Mission to International Organizations and the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna, and if confirmed I will continue to encourage Ukraine's contributions as a global partner on nuclear security, nonproliferation, and disarmament.

The United States' strategic goals for Ukraine have remained broadly consistent throughout more than 21 years of independence. We support Ukraine's sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity, along with its desire to pursue its own political and economic interests. In keeping with the aspirations of the Ukrainian people, the United States promotes democracy, a market economy, and rule of law in order to encourage the development of a strong, prosperous, and European state. If confirmed, I will encourage the Ukrainian government to act now to take advantage of this historic opportunity to pursue Ukraine's hopes for European integration and to meet the EU's conditions for signature of the EU – Ukraine Association Agreement.

In the past three years, the United States has expressed increasing concern about the political situation in Ukraine, especially regarding the selective prosecutions of opposition leaders. If confirmed, I will encourage Ukrainians to set high standards for themselves on human rights and rule of law, recognizing

that democratic principles are in Ukraine's own interest, and central to U.S. policy. I will also support Ukrainian aspirations for free and fair elections that meet the bar they set for themselves in 2010, especially looking ahead to the 2015 presidential election.

The U.S. commitment to supporting Ukraine is demonstrated by the size of our assistance program—approximately \$104 million last year, despite reduced budgets globally. Ukraine also hosts the largest Peace Corps program in the world. Our assistance promotes long term progress in democracy and human rights, in economic development, health and energy independence, and in military and nonproliferation cooperation.

In recent years, Ukraine has become a valuable contributor to international peacekeeping. It currently has over 500 peacekeepers deployed across seven different UN peacekeeping operations. Ukraine is the largest contributor of military helicopters to UN missions. Ukraine also participates in NATO operations, including troops in Afghanistan and troops deployed to the NATO mission in Kosovo, and will soon contribute a ship to NATO's anti-piracy mission off of the coast of Somalia.

This year, as chairman in office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Ukraine has the opportunity to demonstrate its international leadership and to set an example for other countries. My current assignment as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary has given me the opportunity to work closely with the OSCE to advance U.S. interests in Central Asia. In this regard, we have been encouraged by the role that Ukraine has played so far in its OSCE chairmanship, and if confirmed I will look forward to working closely with Ukraine to sustain this success.

Ukraine's economic prosperity depends on financial stability, promoting reforms and attracting foreign direct investment, especially in the energy sector, which is an area of growing U.S. – Ukraine cooperation. On energy security, U.S. companies are ready to invest in unlocking Ukraine's gas resources, and helping the country to achieve its goal of increased energy independence. But our trade and investment relationship should be bigger than it is, and the business climate in Ukraine has been weakened by corruption, a lack of transparency, and questions about the fairness of the courts. If confirmed, I will make it a priority to advocate on behalf of U.S. companies and to work with Ukrainians both in and out of government to advance rule of law, the protection of intellectual property rights, and investor rights.

Ukraine has a highly educated population, an active civil society, and tremendous natural resources. And Ukraine is a young democracy, with its first generation of citizens born into an independent country just now reaching adulthood. If confirmed, I will use all our public diplomacy tools to continue our engagement with this emerging generation as they play an increasingly important role in society, government, and business. I also would look forward to working closely with the vibrant Ukrainian diaspora community in the United States.

Through a diverse and challenging diplomatic career I've learned that there is no greater honor – nor greater responsibility – than representing the United States abroad. I have also learned the importance of clarity on American principles, and that modesty in the pursuit of U.S. goals can be appropriate, especially when it comes to countries that are still defining their place in the world.

Ukraine and its people face critical choices in the months and years ahead. If confirmed, I will do all I can to support the men and women of the U.S. Mission as they work with Ukrainians to further U.S. interests and advance Ukraine's future as an independent and prosperous European democracy.

I would like to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the honor of appearing today and would be happy to address your questions.