

Statement of Christopher T. Robinson
Nominee for U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Latvia
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
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Chairwoman Shaheen, Ranking Member Portman, and Distinguished Members of the Committee, it is a privilege to appear before you. I am honored to be the nominee for U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Latvia, and I thank President Biden and Secretary Blinken for their confidence in me.

I want to start by recognizing those who have made it possible for me to be here today. First, I want to honor my wife, Donka, for her love, commitment, and support for over 27 years of marriage. We are blessed by our three daughters, Faith, Hope and Charity. I want to thank them for their service to our country in the sacrifices they have made growing up with frequent moves and the demands of life in the Foreign Service. I would also like to thank my mother, Eileen Robinson, and my father-in-law, Peter Todorov, my sister Gillian, and brother Matthew, as well as my sister-in-law, Neda Todorov, for their inspiration and steadfast support every step of the way.

I am a career Foreign Service Officer with over 27 years of experience. I have served in Russia, Belarus, Nicaragua, and Iraq, among many other assignments. Much of my career has focused on supporting the freedom and independence of Europe as well as defending and advancing human rights, often in some of the world's most authoritarian regimes. As the events unfolding in Ukraine today demonstrate, protecting and supporting these freedoms is fundamental to safeguarding our own national security. Most recently, as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Russia, I have had the privilege to work with this Committee over the last four years to help build and implement policies to counter and deter Russia's aggression in Europe and around the world. I thank the Committee for the strong bipartisan support it has given to these efforts.

If confirmed, my first priority would be to ensure the safety and security of U.S. citizens in the Republic of Latvia.

My second priority will be to enhance bilateral efforts to counter and deter Russia's aggression, particularly against Latvia, and regional efforts to strengthen Trans-Atlantic security.

At the core of our relationship with Latvia is our bond as NATO Allies.

Latvian soldiers have served side-by-side with U.S. soldiers in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Balkans, contributing to NATO missions and operations. Latvia hosts one of NATO's battle groups and our service members train alongside Latvians to defend NATO territory.

Latvia was among the first countries to send weapons to Ukraine and continues to support the government and people of Ukraine as they fight for their freedom and democracy.

Tens of thousands of Ukrainian refugees are currently living in Latvia, supported by the Latvian government.

If confirmed, I will work with the Latvian government to strengthen our security partnership and our Alliance through NATO.

My third priority will be to collaborate with Latvia to address global challenges.

Our partnership with Latvia is deep and productive and extends far beyond the security realm.

As an EU member state, Latvia has a critical voice in Brussels on regulations in the single market, sanctions, and energy policy.

Latvia shares U.S. concerns about China's human rights record, its strategic alignment with Russia as Putin pursues his war of choice against Ukraine, and its record of economic coercion. If confirmed, I will work with Latvia to strengthen international protections for human rights and the rules-based order.

As host of the NATO Strategic Communications Center of Excellence, Latvia has worked with other countries in the region to counter disinformation from Russia and other malign actors. If confirmed, I hope to build on and deepen our bilateral cooperation to confront this growing challenge.

Latvia hosts a large segment of the Russian independent media-in-exile and has supported Russian journalists' efforts to connect with Russian audiences and share the truth of Putin's brutality. If confirmed I will support these journalists as they continue doing their important work.

Latvia has also committed to ending its dependence on Russian natural gas and is working with the U.S. government to identify diversified energy options, including liquified natural gas and advanced nuclear technologies. If confirmed, I will work with Latvia to end its dependence on Russian energy.

If confirmed, I eagerly await working with the talented team at Embassy Riga to build on their successes and advance these shared goals, together. I look forward to partnering with Congress to further U.S. priorities in Latvia. And I enthusiastically await hearing from people across Latvia, sharing our ideas, and deepening people-to-people ties as we strive toward a better tomorrow.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I look forward to your questions.