

Statement of James S. Gilmore
Nominee to be U.S. Permanent Representative to the OSCE
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
April 9, 2019

Thank you, Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Menendez, and members of the Committee for the opportunity to appear before you. I thank Senator Kaine for introducing me to the Committee. Senator Kaine and I share a common background as former Governors of Virginia, and I am grateful for his support. If confirmed, it would be my honor to serve as the United States' Permanent Representative to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and to lead the U.S. mission as it works with Allies and partners to address the comprehensive range of challenges facing Europe, Eurasia, and North America. I am grateful to President Trump for this opportunity to serve my country again and his confidence in my ability to advance U.S. interests and values.

I am pleased to introduce my family who are here with me today. First, Roxane, my wife of forty-two years, the former First Lady of Virginia. Roxane holds two degrees in ancient history from the University of Virginia and has taught for more than three decades. I have learned a great deal from her knowledge of the beginnings of Western civilization. My two sons are here with me as well. Jay and Ashton are also University of Virginia graduates who work to defend our national security—Jay does so for the U.S. government, and Ashton works in the private sector.

I have been a committed student of foreign policy since attending the University of Virginia. I also served as a U.S. Army intelligence officer in West Germany, practiced trial law, was elected prosecutor for my home county, then Attorney General of Virginia, and then Governor. As Governor, I traveled to eighteen countries on three continents on trade missions. If confirmed, I would draw on these experiences to serve U.S. interests, collaborate with our Allies and partners, and stand up to those who seek to undermine the values, rules, and institutions that underpin freedom, prosperity, and peace in the OSCE region.

The OSCE is an indispensable pillar of the security architecture that has served the United States well for generations. I am proud the United States helped establish the organization at the height of the Cold War in the 1970s. If confirmed, I would strive to maintain strong U.S. leadership at the OSCE, defending the principles on which the organization was founded and strengthening it to face future challenges.

The OSCE's unique value stems from its broad membership—57 participating States across the Atlantic and Eurasia—and its comprehensive approach to security, which acknowledges the relationship between security and respect for human rights, rule of law, and democracy. It is the premier platform in Europe and Eurasia for advancing human rights and fundamental freedoms and defending civil society. Its rich body of human rights and security commitments, its network of field missions, and its independent institutions are strengths not replicated in any other security or regional organization.

The Helsinki Final Act principles speak of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States as well as for human rights and fundamental freedoms. These tenets are enduring. The contempt that Russia has shown for these principles and commitments—through repression at home and aggression abroad—should concern us all.

Of all the challenges confronting the OSCE today, none is more consequential or vexing than the conflict in Ukraine. Russia has armed, trained, led, and fought alongside its proxy forces in eastern Ukraine since 2014, leading to approximately 13,000 deaths. Russia's fueling of the conflict, its purported annexation of Crimea, and its provocative actions in the Kerch Strait and the Black Sea undermine regional stability and directly contravene all ten of the foundational Helsinki principles. The OSCE's highly effective Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine serves as the world's eyes and ears in eastern Ukraine's conflict zone. If confirmed, I will call on Russia to respect Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders, extending to its territorial waters.

More broadly, unresolved conflicts in Europe weaken regional stability. If confirmed, I would promote progress within the OSCE to resolve the protracted conflicts that have undermined peace and stability for too long, particularly in Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus.

We must also press for full implementation of existing agreements and arrangements to rebuild military transparency. If confirmed, I will work with Allies and partners at the OSCE to begin to restore predictability, transparency, and confidence in military security relations.

Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is an essential aspect of security. If confirmed, I would ensure that the U.S. Mission to the OSCE remains a strong voice on behalf of human rights defenders targeted for repression and I would continue to champion the role of civil society. I am committed to defending religious freedom and combating anti-Semitism and other manifestations of intolerance, including hate crimes. I would also draw on my personal experience to support OSCE election observation missions. Democracy can only prevail when the citizens of OSCE countries know they can change their government peacefully through genuinely free and fair elections. If confirmed, I also plan to support OSCE efforts to combat human trafficking and violence against women.

Congress's active, bipartisan engagement in the OSCE has been a tremendous strength to U.S. diplomatic efforts. I commend the Members of Congress who serve on the Helsinki Commission, participate in the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, and hold leadership positions in both. I am pleased to see that so many members of this Committee serve on the Helsinki Commission. I know you recognize the value that the OSCE brings to U.S. foreign policy.

If confirmed, I will follow the path set out by the President and Secretary Pompeo to provide U.S. leadership to uphold OSCE principles and commitments. Staying true to these principles and values, now is the time to work with Allies and partners to leverage the OSCE's capabilities to address both conventional and emerging threats in innovative and comprehensive ways.

Mr. Chairman, I am grateful for this opportunity to lead the outstanding team at USOSCE in Vienna. If confirmed, I commit to providing my best analysis and advice to the U.S. government and to work with this Committee, the Helsinki Commission, and Congress to advance policies that promote democracy, advance human rights, and enhance the prosperity and security of our country.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I welcome your questions.