

Statement of William Ellison Grayson
Nominee for Ambassador to the Republic of Estonia
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
13 May, 2020

Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member, distinguished members of the Committee,

I am honored and privileged to appear before you today, in this virtual hearing during this unprecedented time and pandemic, as the President's nominee to be the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Estonia. I am deeply grateful to President Trump and Secretary Pompeo for the trust and confidence that they have placed in me with this nomination. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with the Committee, your staffs, and other Members of Congress to build upon the strong and robust partnership between the United States and Estonia. My top priority will be the health, welfare, and security of U.S. citizens in Estonia and our exceptional Embassy team in Tallinn. I will also work to further strengthen our security, NATO cooperation, bilateral trade and entrepreneurial opportunities and to counter malign influence in the region.

Mr. Chairman, with your permission, I would like to introduce and thank my family members who are with me today. First, my wife Laurie Grayson who, if I'm confirmed, will be an outstanding representative of the United States in Estonia as she's been throughout my career. I am also proud to introduce our accomplished and loving three daughters, Elizabeth and Caroline, here with us in San Francisco and Katherine, who's in DC working on Capitol Hill. I also want to recognize my great sister Darby and my amazing parents, EC and Jean Grayson, who continue to be exceptional role models. My Dad served as the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy under President Ronald Reagan and is a Korean War veteran. He and my Mom instilled in us our love of family, country and public service.

I am grateful that throughout my private and public sector career, I have had the opportunity to serve in four presidential administrations. First, as the Principal Deputy General Counsel of the Army under President George H. W. Bush. Next, on the President's Commission on White House Fellowships under President George W. Bush, then as a regional White House Fellows panelist under President Barack Obama. I am currently the Chairman of the Presidio Trust in San Francisco, appointed by President Trump, where I have the privilege of overseeing

one of the National Park's crown jewels. I am now honored and humbled as the President's nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to Estonia.

Mr. Chairman, the United States and Estonia have been close friends for over 100 years. A strong NATO Ally since 2004, Estonia has shown unwavering support for our shared defense and security around the globe. Estonian troops serve with us in Iraq and Estonia continues to contribute to NATO's Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan. Estonia has committed two percent or more of its GDP to defense spending since 2012, serving as a model for other NATO Allies. If confirmed, I will work to deepen our defense cooperation with Estonia.

This October, Estonia will host the 2020 Three Seas Initiative Summit. The initiative is a Central European-led effort to accelerate cross-border commerce through north-south energy, transportation, cyber and digital infrastructure projects. It should also provide an alternative to malign investments from the PRC and other nations that are not in the long-term interests of the region or the United States.

This year we mark the 80th anniversary of the 1940 Welles Declaration under which the United States refused to recognize the forced annexation of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania into the Soviet Union. Estonia showed great strength and determination in overcoming Soviet occupation and emerged as a shining example of innovation to the world. The shared democratic values of the U.S. and Estonia continue to be the bedrock of our bilateral, regional, and global cooperation.

Estonia is a leader in information technology being one of the most digitally advanced countries in the world. If confirmed, I will use my experience working with talented tech, cyber and AI company founders and innovators in San Francisco, Silicon Valley and around the U.S. to expand our trade, research and investment opportunities. Estonia hosts the NATO-accredited Cooperative Cyber Defense Center of Excellence in Tallinn, which the United States joined in 2011. We share a vision of a secure and open cyberspace, in which all countries behave responsibly. Estonia joined us last year for a 27-country joint statement on Advancing Responsible State Behavior in Cyberspace, and we continue to collaborate on cyber deterrence efforts. Our recent Joint Declaration on 5G security is further evidence of our cyber cooperation which, if confirmed, I look forward to continuing and expanding.

The United States and Estonia are strong partners, grounded by 100 years of diplomatic relations and friendship. Given the many global threats and

opportunities that exist today, our relationship is as important now as it has ever been. If confirmed, I will be a champion for the United States and its interests in Estonia while strengthening the bilateral economic, defense and democratic ties that bind us. Mr. Chairman, I recognize and appreciate the honor bestowed upon me by this nomination. If confirmed, I will do my best to uphold the trust that you, your fellow members, President Trump, Secretary Pompeo and the American people are placing in me.

Thank you again for this opportunity to appear before you today and I look forward to your questions.

