

Statement of Hans Klemm
Nominee for Ambassador to Romania
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
July 22, 2015

Thank you Mr. Chairman, Senator Shaheen, and distinguished Members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

It is an honor for me to appear before you as President Obama's nominee to be the United States Ambassador to Romania.

I am humbled and grateful for the confidence that President Obama and Secretary Kerry have placed in me. If confirmed, I pledge to promote our interests, protect American citizens, and encourage even stronger ties with our excellent ally and strategic partner, Romania.

Mister Chairman, before beginning my remarks, I would like to note with regret that my wife, Mari, could not be here today due to professional obligations. If I am confirmed, Mari greatly looks forward to supporting our mission in Bucharest.

Romania is a staunch NATO Ally and a significant contributor to international peace and security. For years, it has been among the top 10 countries providing troops in Afghanistan both to the International Security Assistance Force and now, Resolute Support Mission -- saving U.S. taxpayers tens of millions of dollars by deploying and returning its own troops using Romania's own capabilities. I am proud to say that the United States helped Romania to develop these capabilities through an Excess Defense Articles grant of several C-130s. If confirmed, I will build on this cooperation to further increase Romanian defense capabilities and strengthen the Alliance.

I also wanted to take a moment to publicly acknowledge Romania's commitment to European defense. Romania is hosting the U.S. site at Deveselu for NATO ballistic missile defense -- the first new U.S. Navy facility in the European theater since Souda Bay in Crete. Romania is also home to our Forward Operating Site at Mihail Kogalniceanu, which hosts hundreds of U.S. Marines and U.S. Army personnel and serves as an important logistics hub for TRANSCOM. These examples of Romania's commitment are also the result of our excellent bilateral defense cooperation. Our military leaders at EUCOM, the European combatant command, and here in Washington, working together with the Department of State

and across the interagency, have done a superb job in laying the foundation of this relationship. And if confirmed, I will rely on their expertise and advice to build on these successes.

Romania has stood with us in responding to Russian aggression in the region. Its leaders condemned Russian violations of Ukrainian sovereignty and have urged European Union solidarity on sanctions against Russia – including increasing them, if necessary, until Russia reverses course. Romania has provided humanitarian and development assistance to Ukraine and leads the NATO Cybersecurity Trust Fund for Ukraine. If confirmed, I hope to consult often with the Romanian government on the best united course of action to resolve the conflict.

On the economic and energy fronts, Romania has a key role to play in ensuring the prosperity of southeastern Europe. With its long history of domestic oil and gas production and openness to exploration, Romania is well placed to help Europe diversify sources and transit routes for energy. Over time, we hope that Romania's role in the production and transit of energy for the region will grow. But in order to do so, Romania should advance priority projects that enhance regional energy cooperation, efficiency and diversification -- including upgrades to its domestic gas transmission network and improved interconnections with its neighbors. We applaud Romania's efforts to build a pipeline to Moldova, which will help that country benefit from an integrated European energy market. Our engagement with Romania in the energy sector has been robust and collaborative. To foster continued growth and attract continued investment, Romania must ensure that it has the appropriate regulatory and policy framework. If confirmed, I will continue our strong engagement on these issues.

Romania has supported the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership Agreement, which will create jobs and economic growth on both sides of the Atlantic. Romania has improved its investment climate, and its economy is one of few among European Union members in recent years to achieve close to three percent growth. Romania enjoys several advantages, including a skilled, multilingual labor force and a strategic location bridging Europe with Central Asia, the Caucasus, and the Middle East. The information technology sector has tremendous potential in Romania, as evidenced by the growing presence of American firms and the overwhelmingly positive response to the recent cybersecurity trade mission led by Department of Commerce Deputy Secretary Bruce Andrews. Now, Romania still needs to undertake further reforms. The United States has encouraged Romania to continue to professionalize the management of

state-owned enterprises, strengthen its regulatory framework, and increase transparency in official decision-making. These reforms are crucial to increase the well-being of the Romanian people and create more opportunity for Romanian and American companies. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Romanian government and private sector to make more progress on these fronts.

Last but perhaps most important, Romania has been engaged in a years-long, serious effort to root out high-level corruption and improve adherence to the rule of law. As Vice President Biden said during a visit to Bucharest last year, corruption represents a clear and present danger to a country's national security, and outside forces exploit these weaknesses to exercise malign influence and undermine the independence of sovereign countries. That is exactly why we have been so engaged in helping Romania sustain empowered, independent entities to tackle an issue that affects the lives of all Romanians. We are also helping Romania to focus on asset forfeiture, transparency initiatives, and on supporting the next generation of reformers. Altogether, Romania has made significant achievements in fighting corruption. Scores of local, regional, and national officials have been investigated, indicted and convicted on corruption charges. We must remain engaged with our Romanian partners to help ensure continued progress and that Romania's anti-corruption institutions have the freedom and independence to act, and to ensure the Romanian people will see no backsliding on the hard-won progress made so far. If confirmed, I will support Romania's anti-corruption institutions and civil society to strengthen adherence to the rule of law.

We have many agencies represented at Embassy Bucharest. Besides the Department of State, there is the Department of Defense, FBI, U.S. Secret Service, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Department of Justice, Department of Commerce, and Department of Agriculture, in addition to others. If confirmed, ensuring the Embassy's efficient and effective operation and its good stewardship of tax-payers dollars will be among my top priorities.

Senators, Romania is a strategically important friend and stalwart Ally that has made great strides in transforming itself, even as it helps us to keep a watchful eye on Russia's de-stabilizing actions in the region. If confirmed, I will work with you and your colleagues on the many areas of U.S. interest and look forward to welcoming you all to Bucharest, where you can see first-hand the outstanding work our Embassy is doing on behalf of the American people and in support of our strategic partnership. Thank you.