

**Statement of James D. Melville, Jr.**  
**Nominee for Ambassador to the Republic of Estonia**  
**Senate Foreign Relations Committee**  
**July 22, 2015**

Chairman Johnson, Senator Shaheen, members of the Committee,

Thank you for holding this hearing today. It is a privilege to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be Ambassador to the Republic of Estonia. It is a tremendous honor to be asked to serve in this post, and I would like to thank President Obama and Secretary Kerry for their confidence in me. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you and your colleagues in Congress to protect American citizens and further U.S. interests in Estonia.

Mr. Chairman, with me is my wife Joanna. We celebrated our 31st Anniversary yesterday. I would have loved to introduce you to our sons, Desmond and Daniel, but they were unable to make the trip down here today. I am very pleased, however, to introduce my rooting section from New Jersey, led by my Mom, Georgina Melville, and including my sister-in-law Ruth Bayus, my sister and brother-in-law Eileen and Frank Karpicki, my nephew Nicholas Karpicki, my nieces Kathleen and Francesca Karpicki, my sister Laura Hampton and my niece Colleen Hampton. Danny and Desmond were born in Berlin during our first assignment, and they grew up in the Foreign Service. My late father immigrated to America when he was young, as did my mother's parents. They raised me and my six brothers and sisters to be very proud of our Irish heritage, but to be even prouder to be Americans. It has been the greatest honor of my life to serve our nation for nearly 30 years, and I am deeply fortunate to have had Joanna and our sons by my side. We are all very excited about the prospect of an assignment to Estonia; a country we last visited in its first year of independence from Soviet occupation while assigned to the U.S. Consulate in St. Petersburg.

Estonia is a strong and reliable ally in NATO, a member of the EU and the Eurozone, and a provider of development assistance focused on good governance and democracy. This year we mark the 75th anniversary of the Welles Declaration

under which the United States would not recognize the incorporation of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania into the Soviet Union. This declaration provided critical support and encouragement for Estonia during their 50 years of occupation and remains a powerful symbol today. Our shared values continue to underline our robust cooperation bilaterally, regionally and globally.

If confirmed, I hope to work to reinforce our partnership with Estonia during a new period of Russian aggression in the region and continue to strengthen the already deep and productive relationship we have enjoyed these many years.

A NATO Ally since 2004, Estonia has shown unwavering support for our shared objectives around the world. Estonian troops served with us in Iraq and Afghanistan, and Estonia continues to contribute to NATO's Resolute Support Mission (RSM). Estonia has met the NATO standard of committing two percent of its GDP to defense spending, serving as a model for other Allies in making the investments necessary to ensure our common security.

Estonian soldiers have proven themselves accomplished and knowledgeable partners in Iraq and Afghanistan and around the world, nonetheless our continued support remains crucial in helping Estonia respond to growing threats. If confirmed, I look forward to working to implement the European Reassurance Initiative (ERI) and continuing efforts to facilitate joint training and exercises and increasing interoperability under Operation Atlantic Resolve.

The birthplace of Skype, Estonia has established itself as a world leader on information technology. If confirmed, I will continue to work to expand opportunities for trade and commercial relations with this innovative partner. This includes working with my Estonian colleagues in support of TTIP.

As an expert on cyber issues, Estonia hosts the NATO Cyber Security Center of Excellence in Tallinn, which the United States joined in 2011, and has shared its expertise on e-governance with other nations, including Ukraine and other Eastern Partnership countries. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing our strong cooperation on cyber issues.

Outreach to and promoting resilience within all parts of society is an important component of an Ambassador's work. If confirmed, I will work closely with my team to continue outreach to the Estonian and Russian speaking public, including youth, as we welcome the strengths of a diverse and inclusive society.

Estonia has played an active role in advancing our shared security, economic, and social values. If confirmed, I look forward to representing my country in advancing a still deeper connection between the United States and Estonia.

I am grateful for the opportunity to have addressed you today, and am at your disposal to answer any questions you may have. Thank you.