

Testimony of Charles Adams, Jr.
Nominee for U.S Ambassador to the Republic of Finland
March 10, 2015
Senate Foreign Relations Committee

Mr. Chairman and Honorable Members of the Committee,

It is a privilege to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be Ambassador to the Republic of Finland. 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 further U.S. interests in Finland.

With your kind permission, I would like to say a few words about my personal background and why this makes the privilege to serve as an Ambassador so meaningful, if confirmed by the Senate.

My late father, Charles C. Adams, dedicated the entirety of his professional career to representing the United States as a Foreign Service Officer, supported throughout by my late mother, Florence Schneider Adams. They, and what came over time to be a family of six children, spent many years in posts all over the world, principally in Europe and Africa, between assignments back home here in the United States. I had the opportunity to witness at first hand, through the eyes of the "foreign service brat" that I was, the enormous skill, savvy, dedication, and courage that my parents, and all other professionals of the Foreign Service, brought to their service to their country, and the burdens and sacrifices they were prepared to endure.

After service in the Peace Corps in East Africa in 1968-1970, I chose to enter the private sector, and have practiced international law and policy at high levels for now over 40 years. But I have always had close to my heart the idea that, as a salute to the memory of my mom and dad, and to the magnificent men and women of the Foreign Service with whom they served, I might someday be afforded the extraordinary privilege of serving my country as a United States Ambassador.

My feelings in this regard have in no way diminished; rather they have intensified in the six months since having first shared these remarks with this distinguished committee.

I am very excited that the President asked me to represent the United States in Finland. Finland is a close U.S. partner. It has been a member of the European Union since 1995, has developed an innovation-led economy, engages closely with us as a NATO partner, including in Afghanistan, and leads in promoting human rights around the globe.

Finland and its EU partners have stood with the U.S. in implementing sanctions against Russia, sharing our belief that Russia must be held accountable for its actions in Ukraine and abide by its commitments under the Minsk Agreement.

Participation in multilateral fora is a core component of Finland's foreign policy and this is demonstrated through its partnership with the U.S. in international organizations like the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

If confirmed, I will work to sustain and advance the strong U.S.-Finland bilateral relationship. I will work to do so by championing U.S. national interests across three areas: our shared security, shared prosperity and shared values.

First, on our shared security: ever since the 1950s, Finland has been a dedicated participant in UN peacekeeping missions around the world. At the 2014 NATO Summit in Wales, Finland became an Enhanced Partner of the alliance. Finland has been a participant in NATO's Partnership for Peace program for years and maintains a high level of cooperation and interoperability with the Alliance. Finland regularly participates in joint training missions with the U.S. and our allies, including joint air training later this month, and is one of the largest contributors to the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) in Ukraine, contributing 19 SMM observers.

The Finnish Government has contributed troops to the Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan, and has pledged \$8 million per year from 2015 to 2017 in support for the Afghan National Security Forces. Finland has taken the lead on implementation of UNSCR 1325, the Resolution for Women,

Peace and Security, which seeks to protect women's rights and participation in Afghan society.

Finland also played a critical role in addressing the crisis in Syria through its participation in the mission to transport and destroy Syrian chemical weapons and in 2014 provided over \$14 million in humanitarian assistance to the Syrian people.

Finland has demonstrated a commitment to combating violent extremism in partnership with the United States, having implemented enhanced anti-terrorism legislation in January and participating in the Foreign Terrorist Fighters Working Group.

Second, the United States and Finland share the vision of a strong, robust transatlantic economy that delivers benefits for all our citizens. That is why, if confirmed, one of my top priorities will be increasing economic cooperation between our two countries, through expanded bilateral trade and investment. Finland strongly supports a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (T-TIP), which, if successfully negotiated, could further increase bilateral economic ties and strengthen the overall U.S.-EU economic relationship. I will also work closely with the Finns on the increasingly important Arctic region. Finland is eager to work with us on our upcoming chairmanship of the Arctic Council, and will take over the chairmanship after us in 2017.

Finally, on our shared values, the U.S.-Finnish relationship continues to thrive because of the strong people-to-people ties between our two nations. These relationships are the lifeblood of our partnership. If confirmed, I will travel throughout the country meeting with students, media, local officials and civil society listening to their priorities and concerns and speaking to the enduring value of our cooperation.

Finland 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 Finland.

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.