

**John R. Beyrle**  
**Ambassador-Designate to the Russian Federation**  
**June 19, 2008**  
**Senate Foreign Relations Committee**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, I am honored to appear before you today as President Bush's nominee to be the next U.S. Ambassador to Russia. I am grateful for the confidence and trust expressed in me by the President and Secretary Rice through this nomination. If confirmed, I will do my utmost to advance and defend American interests in Russia, and look forward to consulting and cooperating closely with the Committee and its staff, and with your colleagues in Congress, in pursuit of those goals.

It's a special pleasure to be back here in Dirksen 419, where I spent so many hours during the 101st Congress as a Pearson fellow on the staff of the late Senator Paul Simon.

I've now spent over three decades studying, working, and living in Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union and in Russia. I believe I have gained a broad range of experience related directly to the challenges and opportunities I would face if confirmed for this position.

I made my first trip to Russia as a university student in Leningrad in 1976, after four years of studying Russian in college. In the late 1970s I spent almost three years traveling to dozens of cities across the USSR on American cultural exhibitions organized by the U.S. Information Agency. I spent 2002 to 2005 as Deputy Chief of our Mission in Russia, but my first tour at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow was 25 years ago. The world has been transformed since then. Most importantly, no longer are the United States and the Soviet Union pitted in the ideological and military confrontation of the Cold War. Our bilateral relationship has experienced great change in these years, and the world is safer place for those changes. Today our relationship is much more complex, including elements of strategic cooperation, and areas where we have sharp differences.

As much as things have changed, however, important elements remain the same. Russia remains a great power. The largest country in the world, the Russian Federation enjoys enormous global influence. It is the only nuclear power comparable to the United States, and the world's largest producer of hydrocarbons. As a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, Russia's attitudes and influence matter in almost every issue of importance to America, whether the fight against global terrorism, non-

proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, or strategic and regional issues involving North Korea, Iran, or the Middle East.

The United States recognizes the shared challenges that our countries face. We seek to cooperate with the government of Russia wherever possible, because we will always achieve much more with Russia's cooperation than without it. This principle was spelled out in the Strategic Framework Declaration announced by Presidents Bush and Putin at Sochi in April. A roadmap for the way forward in U.S.-Russian relations, the Declaration states that the two countries will work together to promote security, prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction, combat terrorism, and advance economic cooperation. In less than two decades, we have built a strong record of concrete, cooperative achievements in these areas. For example, under the 20-year-old Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty, together we have eliminated an entire category of our nuclear weapons. Under the Cooperative Threat Reduction program, the United States has helped Russia improve physical security at chemical, biological and nuclear research, production and storage facilities. The United States has helped Russia dispose of fissile material through the Agreement—material from dismantled warheads is being down-blended into nuclear fuel used in the United States. Two Russian plutonium-production reactors have recently been shut down and will be replaced by fossil fuel plants with U.S. assistance. U.S.-Russia trade is growing, totaling nearly \$27 billion last year. U.S. companies and their foreign subsidiaries have invested more than \$16 billion in Russia, and Russian companies have invested more than \$5 billion in the United States since 2000. Both Russia and the United States can and should point to such achievements with pride – and use them as benchmarks for future progress.

At the same time, our desire to strengthen our relations with Russia – and to see a democratic and strong Russia as a constructive influence in world affairs – means that we must be open and honest about the areas in which we have disagreements, or concerns about Russia's development. Both the President and Secretary Rice have been forthright about these issues in their public statements and their discussions with Russian leaders. They include concerns about trends that are moving Russia away from a stronger democratic future, weakening the institutions of civil society, and endangering the sustainability of economic growth. We have seen opposition political parties and supporters facing increased restrictions. Non-governmental organizations and the media have been subject to pressure, harassment, and sometimes violence. Problems with corruption

and the rule of law persist in ways that hinder the operation of foreign businesses and dampen the investment climate. Freedom for civil society to operate and for citizens to express their political will is vital to the democratic development of any country, but especially a country as influential as Russia.

We are also very concerned about Russia's relations with its closest neighbors. While we appreciate the great influence Russia has in the world, we would like to see Russian leaders exercise that influence in a way that does not increase regional tensions, but contributes to peace and stability. Russia's long-term interests are best served by having strong, sovereign, prospering neighbors, and by energy dealings in which the terms are transparent, market-driven, and mutually beneficial.

The United States has a strong stake in Russia's success. However, that success, as Russian President Dmitry Medvedev recently acknowledged, can be built only upon a foundation of democratic and free market reforms. These reforms are in Russia's own interest, and we remain committed to working with the Russian people and their leaders to implement them.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed I will build upon the excellent work of my predecessor, Ambassador William Burns, to expand the cooperation we have already undertaken with the Government of the Russian Federation, and to speak plainly with Russian leaders when we encounter areas of disagreement. We will work to implement the roadmap of the Strategic Framework Declaration, including cooperation in the field of nuclear energy and non-proliferation; the expansion of Russian-American commercial ties and the integration of Russia into global economic institutions; the struggle against terrorism and transnational crime; and the encouragement of the development of democratic institutions, rule of law, and a vibrant civil society in Russia.

Mr. Chairman, these are but a few of the many challenges and opportunities that define the relationship between the United States and Russia today. If confirmed, I believe that my experience in and knowledge of Russia, its history, culture, people and language will enable me to be an effective advocate for the United States' foreign policy interests. Thank you for the honor of appearing before you today, and for considering my nomination.

