

**Statement of John F. Tefft**  
**Ambassador-Designate to Ukraine**  
**October 8, 2009**  
**Senate Foreign Relations Committee**

Madam Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am honored to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as the next Ambassador of the United States to Ukraine. I am grateful to the President and Secretary Clinton for their support and for the confidence they have placed in me. I look forward to working with the members of this committee and its staff to build the relationship between the United States and Ukraine.

I have had the privilege of serving my country for nearly 38 years as a Foreign Service Officer, much of it in Eastern Europe. Twice I have served as a U.S. Ambassador—most recently in Georgia, and previously in Lithuania. I have also served as Deputy Chief of Mission in Moscow – for 10 months of my assignment I was Charge d'Affaires at the Embassy. From 2004 to 2005 I was Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs and had responsibility for overseeing our bilateral relations with Russia, Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus. During this period, Ukraine experienced the Orange Revolution, which transformed the political dynamics of the country. I believe that this broad experience working in Eastern Europe, and on Ukraine in particular, has prepared me for the important task of advancing U.S. relations with Ukraine.

If confirmed, I will focus on further strengthening the already close strategic partnership between our two countries. In December 2008, the U.S.-Ukraine Charter on Strategic Partnership, which codified the goals and plans we have jointly made with our Ukrainian partners, was signed in Washington. During the recent visit of Vice President Biden to Ukraine, our governments agreed to create the Strategic Partnership Commission to help implement this Charter. The Commission will convene here in Washington later this year. This mechanism will cover not only high-level foreign policy issues but also economic cooperation, energy security, non-proliferation, democracy, the rule of law, and people to people exchanges.

I think Vice President Biden summed up succinctly the approach of this Administration toward Ukraine, which follows on the overall approach taken by every U.S. Administration since 1991. The United States supports Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. Our friendship is based on a shared belief that democracy is the chief guarantor of security, prosperity and freedom. Cooperation between our countries is essential to strengthen peace and security. A strong, independent and democratic Ukraine contributes to the security and prosperity not only of its people, but of a Europe whole, free and at peace. The Vice President emphasized in Kyiv in July that the United States will stand by Ukraine as it continues on the path to freedom, democracy, and prosperity. The

“reset” of our relations with Russia will not come at the expense of Ukraine; the United States does not recognize spheres of influence.

The depth of our relationship is clear from the size of our assistance program--\$120 million this year to bolster peace and security, strengthen democratic institutions, promote economic growth, and fight diseases like tuberculosis and HIV/AIDs. This includes an additional \$30 million that Congress provided as part of a package designed to strengthen our relationships throughout the region in the aftermath of the conflict in Georgia. Our assistance is designed not only to advance bilateral relations, but to improve the daily lives of average Ukrainians, especially during this difficult period in which the economy has contracted significantly. We also aim to promote greater energy efficiency and to lessen Ukraine’s energy dependency on others.

Support for Ukraine serves America’s interests because Ukraine has become a key component of European security. This was true even in Ukraine’s early years, when it took the historic decision to transfer its nuclear weapons to Russia. As we look to the post-START era, we commend this courageous step, and we stand by the security assurances provided in 1994, assurances that will remain valid after the START Treaty expires.

Ukraine has participated in many NATO missions, including the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan and the NATO Training Mission in Iraq. Ukraine has established an Annual National Program with NATO, and we support its future membership in NATO, as it chooses. Ukraine's alliances are for Ukraine to choose. Ukraine has participated in multilateral efforts to build security by preventing the proliferation of weapons, including through its membership in the Wassenaar Arrangement, and by working against transnational crime and money laundering, through its membership in the Egmont Group.

This is a key moment in Ukraine's post-Communist history. Since gaining its independence just two decades ago, the Ukrainian people have achieved a tremendous amount—freedom of speech is respected, political competition is vibrant, and Ukrainian citizens can democratically change their government through periodic, free, and fair elections. Ukraine is one of the most free and democratic nations in the post-Soviet region today. Its economic relations with the rest of the world are on sound footing, especially since Ukraine joined the World Trade Organization in 2008.

However, as Vice President Biden emphasized in Kyiv, much of the promise of the Orange Revolution has yet to be achieved. Political infighting has stalled

political and economic reforms. The Ukrainian people are suffering the effects of the world economic downturn, and assistance from international financial institutions has played a crucial role in Ukraine's ability to deal with the crisis. The United States supports the International Monetary Fund's program with Ukraine and urges the Ukrainian government to fulfill its commitments to the Fund and to other multilateral financial institutions.

Ukraine's economic prosperity depends on reform of its energy sector, an area in which both the United States and Europe are willing to help. Energy security can come only through comprehensive reform in the gas industry and through far greater efficiency in the consumption of gas. We know that these steps are difficult, but they are necessary to Ukraine's future. Energy is an area of growing U.S.-Ukraine cooperation.

If confirmed, I will encourage Ukraine's progress on the path of economic and political reform; continue our contribution to building democracy and prosperity, help in the fight against corruption; and facilitate Ukraine's participation in meeting global security challenges. I will ensure that our Embassy in Kyiv and its highly professional and motivated American and Ukrainian staff are fully engaged in building our strategic partnership with Ukraine. And if you choose to place your confidence in me as U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine, I will

ensure that we conduct our business in a manner that is fully consistent with American values.

Finally, Madam Chair, I would like to recognize my wife Mariella, who has been my indispensable partner in this career from the very beginning. In addition to her own professional accomplishments as a biostatistician and a nurse, she has made her own unique contributions to representing our country in every post in which we have served. I know she will bring her invaluable experience to bear in Kyiv. I would also like to thank my daughters Christine and Cathleen, who are also present, as well as my son-in-law, Andrew Horowitz. They make me proud every day, and have been supportive of my work throughout my career.

Thank you for the privilege of appearing before the Committee. I am prepared to answer any questions you might have.