



Remarks at the Signing Ceremony for the United States-Ukraine Charter on Strategic Partnership and Security

Secretary Condoleezza Rice

Washington, DC
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Guest: Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs Volodymyr Ohryzko

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SECRETARY RICE: I am delighted to be here with my colleague, the Foreign Minister of Ukraine. Ukraine obviously is a very important partner for the United States and a good friend. We have long believed that Ukraine's independence, its democracy, is essential to a Europe whole and free and at peace. The Ukrainian people are a proud and a good people, and we are very proud, Foreign Secretary, to be your friends and to work with you.

Today, we are going to put into a charter those sentiments. This charter underscores our principles of relations. It outlines a way to advance cooperation in defense and security, in economics and trade, in energy security, in democracy, and in people-to-people contacts and cultural exchanges. The charter will assist the United States and Ukraine as we continue to work together on a wide variety of issues like energy security and trade, combating HIV/AIDS, and implementing reforms to strengthen transparency in Ukraine's institutions.

The United States supports Ukraine's integration into the Euro-Atlantic structures. And in that regard, I want to assure you that the declaration at Bucharest which foresees that Ukraine will be a member of NATO when it can meet those standards is very much at the center of our policy. We look forward to helping you to execute the decisions of Brussels to intensify the work of the Ukraine-NATO Commission toward the fulfillment of the Bucharest declaration.

Ukraine's a friend and partner. I believe this will be our last chance to meet, but we've met many times, and particularly over the last year. We were talking about the number of times that our presidents have met and various officials. But I want you to know that I'm a great admirer of what you're doing for your country. I look forward to seeing you in another capacity and to returning to Ukraine for a good time.

FOREIGN MINISTER OHRYZKO: Very good, very good. Thank you so much. Thank you. Thank you. Dear Madame Secretary, dear friends, I probably will switch on Ukrainian after that.

(Via interpreter) I would also like to say a few words about our relations. We very highly value our strategic relationship with the United States of America. During the last few years, our relations have truly attained the level of a strategic partnership, and the events that have taken place during that time bear testimony to this. And this year has truly been a very intensive one as far as our bilateral contacts go, including visits by the presidents of our countries – to our respective countries, and also including a number of contacts at various international fora.

During President Bush's visit to Ukraine, the roadmap was signed. And today, as a culmination of this process, we are signing the United States-Ukraine Charter on Strategic Partnership and Security. This is a very important document because it summarizes our efforts during the past year, but it also has a very important dimension for our future. I would like to call your attention to the areas in this document that address defense, security, the economy, human rights, the increased importance to cultural and people-to-people contacts, and also to the presence of the United States in Ukraine, in particular in the Crimea.

It's also very important that we are going to increase our contacts in the regions. This will provide an added stimulus to – or impetus to our relations.

So I am very glad and very satisfied that today, on the eve of Christmas, on the eve of New Years, we have such a very important and festive occasion. I would like to thank my colleague for all her work during this past year and wish her all the best, much success. We will be pleased to see her. We're looking forward to seeing her in Ukraine anytime. The people know you in Ukraine, they respect you there, and we'll be glad to see you anytime.

QUESTION: Thank you.

(The Charter was signed.)

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[BACK TO TOP](#)

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