

Testimony of Denise Bauer
Ambassador-Designate to the Kingdom of Belgium
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
July 25, 2013

Mr. Chairman and Members of this distinguished Committee:

It is a great honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to the Kingdom of Belgium. I am deeply grateful to President Obama and Secretary Kerry for the confidence they have placed in me.

If confirmed, I will look forward to working with this Committee and the Congress as I proudly dedicate myself to protecting and advancing U.S. interests in Belgium.

Belgium is a valued NATO ally, and the United States and Belgium have a long history of friendship and close cooperation. Belgians today still remember the generosity of ordinary Americans who sent food and medical aid during World War I, as well as the sacrifices Americans made to liberate Belgium during the Battle of the Bulge

seventy years ago this December. Since then, our relationship has grown even stronger and Belgium has taken an important leadership role on the international stage. The United States has worked with Belgium on many issues of mutual interest, such as counterterrorism and countering violent extremism, expansion of trade relations, NATO missions in Afghanistan and Libya, and peacekeeping missions in the Middle East and Africa. Belgium shares our commitment to promoting security, stability, and human rights throughout the world.

Belgium is also one of our most important trading partners. In 2012, the United States exported nearly 30 billion dollars worth of goods to Belgium. U.S. companies have substantial investments in the Belgian economy, including in the chemical, automotive, petroleum, and pharmaceutical sectors. The negotiations of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership present an opportunity to further expand this relationship. As President Obama said, “America and Europe have done extraordinary things together before. And I believe we can forge an economic alliance as strong as our diplomatic and security alliances.”

If confirmed, I will encourage Belgium to play a positive role in the trade negotiations and will work to expand American exports to Belgium to help create more jobs and greater prosperity for the American people and Belgians alike.

In his statement before the Senate Committee, Secretary Kerry said, “American foreign policy is ... defined by food security and energy security, humanitarian assistance, the fight against disease and the push for development, as much as it is by any single counter terrorism initiative. It is defined by leadership on life-threatening issues like climate change, or fighting to lift up millions of lives by promoting freedom and democracy.”

I believe in this approach to foreign policy. If confirmed, I will embrace Secretary Kerry’s diplomatic vision for furthering the interests of both the United States and Belgium, and will proudly lead an accomplished group of American interagency professionals and Locally Engaged Staff.

As you know, this past Sunday was an historic day for Belgium. His Majesty King Philippe was sworn in as the 7th King of the Belgians.

If confirmed, it will be my privilege to work with the people of Belgium and their new king in opening this important new chapter in the long history of friendship between our nations.

In closing, if I may, I would like to take a moment to thank my family and friends for their incredible support through all life's journeys, particularly my husband Steve, and our wonderful daughters, Katherine and Natalie. They are home in California now, but, should I be confirmed, they will join me in Belgium and will be part of a team effort. They share my commitment to serving our country and my appreciation of the vital role diplomacy plays in international peace and prosperity.

Once again, Mr. Chairman and Members of this distinguished Committee, thank you very much for this opportunity.

I am happy to answer any questions you may have.