

Written Statement of Matthew W. Barzun

Ambassador-Designate to the Court of St. James's

Senate Foreign Relations Committee

July 30, 2013

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee: It is an honor to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be the next United States Ambassador to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. I would like to thank President Obama and Secretary Kerry for placing their confidence in me with this nomination, and I thank you for considering it. If confirmed, I will work every day to nurture and deepen this special relationship and important NATO ally. As the President and Prime Minister Cameron have said, the United States and United Kingdom count on each other, and the world counts on our alliance.

It is an intimate connection as we saw last week when so many Americans shared Britain's excitement about the new prince. And it's a relationship that has been meaningful to me for as long as I can remember.

Part of that meaning stems from my own family's connection to England. My ten-times Great Grandfather was John Winthrop, the first governor of my home state of Massachusetts (his statue is right over there in Statuary Hall). In 1630, John Winthrop left behind his life in Suffolk county, England to lead 700 men and women across the Atlantic to New England so they could build a new life in a city he named Boston.

In the midst of that journey he delivered a sermon whose words have inspired Americans ever since. Echoing the Sermon on the Mount, he said,

“We must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill, the eyes of all people are upon us.”

Quoted by Presidents Kennedy, Reagan, and countless others, these words express an ideal that has become part of America’s DNA. But it is fitting that the sermon was delivered while traveling between England and America, because these words also describe the hopes and expectations held by so many around the world for the U.S.-UK relationship: “The eyes of all people are upon us.

With this in mind, I come before you today with a tremendous sense of purpose and optimism. This optimism is not based on nostalgia, but on a history of continuing our common purpose, adapted for the times in which we live. I am confident that, working together, our two countries will not only preserve this critical relationship, but will continue to adapt it to a quickly changing world.

I began my professional life in 1993 when I left Boston to join a four-person Internet start-up in San Francisco called CNET. The company grew quickly, our success a result of realizing early that the web was different. What didn’t work was trying to just “build an audience” the way publishers and producers did. What did work was directly engaging with our users – to build a community.

I met my amazing wife, Brooke, in California. She has since become my partner in diplomacy and in life and we now have three wonderful children. At the height of the Internet boom, we decided to move to her hometown of Louisville, Kentucky, where the daily practice of building a community is as old as the frontier generations. I embraced the city and it embraced me. Even

when I am not there, I always try to channel Louisville's spirit of generosity, hospitality, and warmth.

I brought this spirit to Sweden when I served as the US ambassador there at an important time. During my years there, Sweden held the presidency of the EU, and Wikileaks posed unforeseen challenges to the diplomatic community. Together with our Swedish counterparts, our embassy team built stronger relations on behalf of trade, security and human rights, earning a medal for exemplary diplomatic service in the process.

I look forward to building on this diplomatic success if confirmed as Ambassador to the United Kingdom.

We live in a complex world, and the challenges we face today not only demand strategies that can evolve with the speed of change, but also wisdom and perspective. Standing with our UK ally, we must continue to advance our common agenda of ensuring our security, delivering economic growth, and safeguarding our shared values.

That's the work our two governments are engaged on right now – on all topics and at all levels. To list them all would fill my allotted time, but you know them well: (i) our work together in Afghanistan where, after us, the UK is the largest troop contributor to the NATO mission; (ii) our work together on the transatlantic trade & investment partnership, which the UK strongly supports, (iii) our work together to on every security challenge of our times -- whether it is securing a lasting peace in the Middle East, providing humanitarian assistance to Syrian refugees, or calling for Iranian compliance with nonproliferation standards. Together, the United States and the United Kingdom support democracy and freedom across the globe.

Progress in these areas and others is only possible if we continue our long history of cooperation. As we saw in the Boston marathon and the solidarity shown with Boston at the start of the London marathon a week later, it is the nature of our friendship that we always keep moving forward. Together.

What Britain means to us can be summed up in so many ways, but here's one I like that came up in a conversation with our youngest son. When talking about the possibility of moving to London, I mentioned the fabled "special relationship." He asked me what that meant. My first attempts were long and failed. Words like "allies" didn't work. "Historic bilateral bonds" was met with a blank stare. I thought for a while and then said, "We're best friends." That worked.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, if confirmed, I will serve with deference to this body, to your colleagues in Congress, and to the administration that has nominated me to be the next steward of this key post. I will serve with the utmost respect for the time-tested bonds shared by our great nations. I will serve with purpose and optimism, knowing that the eyes of all people are upon us.

I thank you for your time and look forward to your questions.