

Statement of William Kennard
U.S. Representative-Designate To the European Union
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
October 8, 2009

Madam Chair, Members of the Committee,

I am honored to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as United States representative to the European Union. I begin by thanking the President and Secretary Clinton for their trust and confidence in nominating me for this important position.

I would also like to introduce my wife, Deborah Kennedy, and our son, Robert, who are here with me today. Their love and support empower me in everything I do and, if I am confirmed, they will be invaluable in supporting me in my new role.

The United States and the European Union form a transatlantic community united by shared history, culture, and values. When we speak with one voice on issues of mutual concern, we do so with the moral force of 800 million democratically-governed people. We do so with the economic force of the largest trade relationship in the world, encompassing almost half of the world's economic activity. And we do so with the imperative that our transatlantic partnership profoundly affects the lives of all of our citizens. Fully one in ten American jobs is with a European-affiliated company, and the converse is true in Europe.

And as you know, beyond our formal political and economic links, we share deep ties as people, in the hundreds of thousands of our respective citizens who live in or visit each other's territory each year to conduct business, study, visit family or to experience the richness of our geographies and cultures.

The 27 member states of the European Union include some of our oldest and closest allies, as well as some of our newest and most valued partners. Together we are striving to build stability in the areas of the world beyond our borders, to construct a more prosperous and secure transatlantic space, and to finish the work of several generations in bringing security and democracy to all of Europe.

Our shared tasks are numerous: we must prevent the spread of nuclear weapons to Iran, North Korea, and elsewhere. We must build security in troubled regions of the world, in particular to Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and the Middle East. We must expand trade and help our citizens recover from the global financial crisis. And we must save our planet from the devastation of climate change.

If confirmed, I believe that my experience as a manager of people and resources -- in both the public and private sectors -- has prepared me to successfully lead our mission to the EU in Brussels. I had the honor and privilege of serving previously in government as Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission under President Clinton from 1997 to 2001. In that capacity, I advanced policies that helped to create an explosion of new wireless phones,

brought the Internet to a majority of American households and made new technology more available to schools, libraries, low-income families and people with disabilities. I also participated in a number of bilateral and multilateral consultations and negotiations on global telecommunications policy issues with countries around the world, including with the European Union and various EU member states.

For the past several years, I have worked in the private sector as a global private equity investor specializing in investments in the media and telecommunications sectors. In both the public and private sectors, I have worked on information technology issues which have transformed the way people around the world use technology to live, work and learn. I have seen firsthand the power of communications technologies to bring the world closer together and promote mutual understanding. As such, I am deeply aware of the importance of a robust and active public diplomacy as part of our diplomatic engagement with Europe. Due to the centrality of Brussels in European affairs, the U.S. Mission to the EU is uniquely able to communicate America's message, not just to our European friends and allies, but also to the rest of the world.

In sum, Madam Chair, I believe that there is much that the United States and Europe can and must do together to advance the security and prosperity of our peoples and of the world at large. If confirmed, I look forward to working with

you and the other members and the staff of this committee to achieve these goals, and I pledge to work tirelessly on behalf of the United States government and the American people.

Thank you for granting me the privilege of appearing before you today. I look forward to answering your questions.

