

Testimony of Barry B. White
Ambassador-Designate to the Kingdom of Norway
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
September 15, 2009

Madam Chair and Members of the Committee:

I am very pleased and honored to be nominated by President Obama to become the next United States Ambassador to the Kingdom of Norway and I thank him for his trust and confidence. I am here this morning with my wife and partner of 42 years, Eleanor White. If I am confirmed, Eleanor would be an invaluable asset to me, to our Embassy team in Norway and indeed to the United States. I am also accompanied by our three sons: Josh, a journalist and the parent, along with our daughter-in-law Nikki, of our newborn granddaughter, Samantha, Adam, currently completing a master's degree, and Ben, who has just begun a job with AmeriCorps in Madison, Wisconsin. We are extremely proud of all of our children!

I began my professional career after law school as a Commissioned Officer in the United States Public Health Service, stationed in Washington, D.C., working in the office of the Surgeon General. I am very excited about the opportunity to return to public service at this stage of my career.

I believe that over the course of my career, I have built the leadership, management, administrative and diplomatic skills required to serve effectively as our country's Ambassador to Norway. On numerous occasions, prominent institutions have placed me in leadership positions and looked to me for creative solutions, management, diplomacy and advice.

I have been a lawyer and a partner with the Boston-based law firm of Foley Hoag LLP for 40 years, representing clients in all types of domestic and international businesses. I have observed the breadth and strength of U.S. business and its success in the international marketplace, underscoring the importance of continuing efforts to expand global business and trade.

Early in my career I was elected by my partners to reorganize the management structure of my law firm, and then served for over 13 years as the firm's Chairman and Managing Partner. For those of you familiar with law firms, I think you will understand that those years honed my skills as a diplomat and a good listener and problem solver.

My leadership experience was enhanced by my service as the Chair of Lex Mundi, the largest worldwide organization of independent law firms, and initiator of its Pro Bono Foundation that provides pro bono legal services to social entrepreneurs around the world.

I have been involved in numerous economic and business development activities, including the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce, Professor Michael Porter's Initiative for Competitive Inner Cities, the Massachusetts Alliance for International Business and the American-Asian Chamber of Commerce.

If confirmed, I would put this experience to work for the American people. Our ties with Norway run deep, from the waves of Norwegian immigrants to our sixty years as close allies inside NATO. We stood side by side

throughout the Cold War, and today, American and Norwegian soldiers and civilians stand together in Afghanistan to combat the insurgency and develop a safe, sovereign, and secure nation.

Our relationship with Norway is a global partnership reaching far beyond NATO, contributing to what Secretary Clinton has called “smart power” – harnessing all the tools of diplomacy and development to solve the world’s most pressing problems. Norway has made significant contributions to the pursuit of peace in regional conflicts across the globe and is a generous contributor to international development and humanitarian relief efforts. We share a commitment to promoting human rights, democracy, and freedom throughout the world. If confirmed, I will work to preserve and expand this invaluable partnership with Norway.

Norway is an important business partner of the United States. Our growing trade relationship measures over one billion dollars per month and is free of major disputes. My focus, if I am confirmed, would be to improve upon and increase economic development opportunities both for U.S. companies in Norway and Norwegian firms in the United States. The Norwegian government’s recent decision to purchase the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter built by Lockheed Martin as its next generation fighter is one example of a win-win outcome that will contribute to U.S. exports and industrial cooperation with Norway, while ensuring military interoperability for decades to come.

Another of my priorities would be to foster cooperation with Norway in energy and environmental matters, especially focusing on the effects of global climate change. With our common strategic interest in the Arctic,

Norway is a natural partner in these fields. I believe the United States can work together with Norway in pursuit of new opportunities in oil and gas, while also advancing renewable energy and other developing technologies and preserving our environment.

With the Senate's confirmation, I would work to take advantage of renewed European support for the transatlantic relationship to deepen people-to-people contacts between Norway and the United States. I would give my full support to public diplomacy efforts to reach out to people throughout Norway and to provide educational exchange opportunities for Norwegians to study in the United States and expand these opportunities wherever possible. There is no better way to build understanding than to expose someone directly to life in America.

If I am confirmed, I will be fortunate to become the Chief of Mission of a well-run, effective embassy team in Norway. I pledge to work tirelessly with the outstanding team in Norway to maintain the Embassy's excellent reputation, and to serve U.S. interests to the best of my ability.

Thank you for providing me with this opportunity to appear before you. I would be pleased to answer any questions that you may have.