

**Testimony of Louis Byron Susman**

**Ambassador-Designate to the Court of St. James's  
July 7, 2009**

**Senate Foreign Relations Committee**

Thank you, Madame Chairwoman and members of the distinguished Senate Foreign Relations Committee, for the great privilege of appearing before you today. I would also like to thank Senator Durbin and Senator McCaskill for their warm and generous remarks.

Here with me today, and sharing in my excitement and gratitude, are my wife and partner of 50 years, Marjorie; my daughter Sally Susman and her partner Robin Canter; and my son Billy Susman and his wife Emily Glasser. Whatever successes I have achieved in life would not have been possible without their love and support.

I am deeply honored to be nominated by President Obama as the United States' next Ambassador to the United Kingdom. I am grateful to the President and Secretary Clinton for the trust and confidence they have expressed in me and for providing me with this wonderful opportunity to heed the President's call for national service.

I come from the Midwest, the heartland of America, and my life to me embodies the cherished concept that, through hard work and perseverance, the American Dream is accessible to all. For me, this opportunity to represent the United States – the culmination of a rewarding 45-year career as a lawyer, leader, manager, and philanthropist – is a chance to repay my debt to the country that made living this dream possible.

If confirmed, I will draw upon my full range of experience in the private practice of law and banking; my membership on business and non-profit boards; and my service on the United States Commission on Public Diplomacy, which I fulfilled at the request of President Reagan, in carrying out my duties as Ambassador. On many occasions, my business and political experiences have taken me to the United Kingdom and given me the opportunity to engage with Britain's economic and political leadership. I look forward to renewing these acquaintances as I work

to further the President's agenda and our special relationship with the United Kingdom.

This special relationship is deeply rooted in our enduring values of democracy, rule of law, and tolerance; a shared history, culture, and language; and a mutual ability and willingness to bring real diplomatic, financial, and military assets to the table for joint action to promote and defend our common interests. Nonetheless, there has been unfounded speculation in some quarters of late that our relationship with Britain is somehow not as robust as it once was.

Madame Chairwoman, I want to be very clear: In war and in peace, in prosperity and in times of economic hardship, America has no better friend – and no more dependable ally – than the United Kingdom.

In Afghanistan and Iraq, our brave men and women in uniform have served side by side with their British comrades to combat insurgents and advance security and stability. Our intelligence and law enforcement services cooperate in an unparalleled manner to keep our homelands safe from foreign threats. And American and British diplomats, policy experts, and political leaders coordinate frequently and intensely on nearly every international issue of concern, ranging from Iran's nuclear program and Middle East peace to the global economic crisis and climate change.

In short, our relationship is rich, mutually beneficial, and special by any definition. However, we must not be complacent about nurturing this relationship with our most important ally, whose partnership is so critical in confronting the many challenges that we jointly face. Therefore, one of my foremost priorities, if confirmed, will be to ensure that these deeply ingrained linkages with the United Kingdom not only continue to thrive, but are strengthened even further. At a time when American and British companies and workers are going through real hardships, I will also do all I can to reinforce the strong ties of trade and investment that serve both our economies and that have provided nearly a million jobs on both sides of the Atlantic.

As we and the United Kingdom contend with the most serious economic challenges in decades, a critical priority for the U.S. Ambassador will be to sustain Britain's focus on and engagement in those critical international issues where we have strong shared interests. An important aspect of this effort will be to effectively employ all the tools of our public diplomacy to encourage and mobilize the support of the British people for shared U.S.-U.K. objectives, such as defeating

al Qaeda and helping the Afghan and Pakistani governments secure their countries. Even among our closest allies, there remains work to be done in improving America's public image. To this end, if confirmed, I will be a vigorous advocate for and practitioner of public diplomacy. I pledge to energetically reach out to all of the communities across the whole of the United Kingdom that compose Britain's diverse ethnic and religious fabric.

We would be unable to achieve these goals and further our national interests in Britain without a dynamic and skilled team at Embassy London. If confirmed, I will commit myself to providing the leadership and unity of purpose that this talented group of individuals deserves, and I will ensure that we are proactive in preparing for two significant management challenges on the horizon: The 2012 Summer Olympics in London and finalizing plans for the construction of a new embassy that ensures the security of our employees, provides solid value, and positively represents the United States.

Madame Chairwoman, members of the Committee, the opportunity to serve the country that has offered me so much is an honor that humbles me beyond words. If confirmed, I pledge to represent the American people with dignity and dedication reflective of the character of our great nation and to work diligently to advance America's values and interests. Thank you for your time and attention, and I look forward to your questions.

