

Testimony of Barbara McConnell Barrett
Ambassador-Designate to Finland
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Hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of this Committee, I consider it an extraordinary privilege to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be the United States Ambassador to Finland. I am grateful to President Bush and Secretary Rice for their trust. If confirmed, I intend to demonstrate that their trust is well placed, by building upon the excellent existing relationships between our countries and by advancing American interests in Finland.

I thank Arizona Senator Jon Kyl for introducing me today.

I recognize that it is a demanding responsibility to serve the public as an Ambassador of the United States of America. Thirty three years ago this spring I began my journey in public service as an intern in the Arizona State Legislature. My respect and admiration for governmental leadership was inspired by observing then-Senate Majority Leader Sandra Day O'Connor. She was a leader among her colleagues, an advocate of transformative legislation and a champion of meaningful causes. During my legislative experience, I learned the importance of serving constituents and making practical improvements to people's lives through public service.

Meanwhile, in business, I was an executive of two *Fortune* 500 companies, chairman of the board of a small bank, CEO of the American Management Association, a fellow at Harvard's Institute of Politics and on the boards of two aircraft manufacturers and an airline. Tangential to business I have learned to fly a plane and shoe a horse.

Mr. Chairman and members of this committee, if confirmed as Ambassador, I will advance the priorities of the U.S. Mission in Finland. The first priority of our Embassy is continuing high-level bilateral cooperation with Finland to combat terrorism. In 2006, Finland was one of the first countries to sign the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, an effort co-established by the United States and the Russian Federation. Additionally, Finland has actively participated in counterterrorism and non-proliferation initiatives sponsored by both the United Nations and European Union. The Finnish Civil Aviation Authority has fully implemented U.S. Federal Aviation Administration security directives regarding air carriers operating to the United States.

I understand the sensitivity of their aviation cooperation because I am a pilot and served on the Phoenix airports board and the U.S. Civil Aeronautics Board and was second in command at the FAA. Serving today at the governance level of defense, technology and engineering companies, I work with some of the world's most pressing national security issues, starting with terrorism. Ensuring the

welfare and safety of American citizens at home and abroad would be among my highest priorities. So, if confirmed, I will continue to advance our high level of coordination between Finland and the United States to deter, detect and defeat terrorism.

A second Mission priority is our cooperation with Finland on peacekeeping and regional stability, especially in Kosovo and Afghanistan. Finland, a long time advocate for Kosovo, has been instrumental in mustering international support for this new nation, and has deployed more than 400 troops with NATO forces there. In Afghanistan too, Finns are part of NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). Finland demonstrates its long-term commitment to Afghanistan not just by contributing troops, but also through development assistance, poppy eradication and other counter-narcotic efforts.

My work with the U.S.-Afghan Women's Council inspired Thunderbird's Project Artemis, a program that trains and mentors Afghan women entrepreneurs. Working with Afghan students, doctors, business leaders and American troops on Afghan soil makes me respect and profoundly appreciate Finland's support. Having observed circumstances both in the Balkan states and in Afghanistan and having met with government officials in both places, Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will work to ensure that Finland's important contributions to peace and stability in Kosovo and Afghanistan continue -- and receive our recognition.

The Mission's third priority is promoting pro-growth innovation for energy security and the environment. During 2008 Finland is chairing the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Finland is also a global leader in bio-fuels and renewable energy with a quarter of its total energy consumption derived from renewable sources. As a sister of an LNG supertanker captain I understand the disparate distribution of petroleum and other fuel reserves and the resultant urgency of diversifying fuel sources. On this and many other topics Finland and the United States will mutually benefit from an exchange of information gained from research, innovation and thoughtful leadership. Through the years I have instigated, organized and chaired countless international symposia, large and small. If confirmed, energy and the environment will be topics of my focused engagement.

Another priority of the U.S. Mission is to enhance mutual understanding and protect and promote U.S. interests. Dating back to John Morton, a U.S. immigrant from Finland and a signer of the Declaration of Independence, the Finnish people have proven that they understand and share our core values, including an abiding belief that all people deserve freedom, democracy and human rights. Finland has been recognized for its lack of corruption, respect for democracy and its consistently high quality, universal education. Finland is a true friend of the United States and a transatlantic advocate of beliefs we share.

As Chairman of the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, Thunderbird School of Global Management and the International Women's Forum, I have led delegations to China, Russia, South Africa, Israel, Jordan, Ireland, Chile, El Salvador, Colombia, Peru, Argentina, Ecuador and other important nations. I have lectured at the Moscow School of Politics, spoken on college campuses, and visited medical clinics and elementary schoolrooms in rural villages on six continents. I know the importance of academic, scientific and cultural exchanges. If confirmed, I will foster and sustain our relationship with Finland by energetically engaging personally with the Government and the people of Finland to advance our shared values and interests. And I will do my utmost to lead by example and support our Embassy's efforts to expand communication and engagement through vigorous public diplomacy.

A final priority element for the U.S. Mission in Finland that I will mention is expanding economic opportunities for bilateral trade and investment. The potential is vast for enhanced economic cooperation between the United States and Finland and through Finland to other parts of the European Union, the Baltic States and Russia. Finland is a leader in research and development with leading edge advancements in technology, biotechnology, telecommunications and equipment. While practicing law in Arizona, I was Chairman of the Arizona District Export Council, the Arizona World Affairs Council and the U.S. Secretary of Commerce's

Export Conference. I worked to advance the market for American goods and services by hosting and leading trade missions, seminars and other trade advancement efforts. During the Uruguay Round of GATT, I was a trade advisor involved in efforts to improve global protection of intellectual property. At the Civil Aeronautics Board, I participated in bilateral and multilateral negotiations between the United States and nations in Europe, Asia and Latin America. If confirmed, I will continue Ambassador Ware's efforts to create opportunities for U.S. companies by expanding our trading and investment relationships.

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the Committee, my personal interest and my professional experience in defense, international business, aviation, public policy and law prepare me well for Ambassadorial duties. My life experience has been strengthening political and economic ties with other nations and achieving results through mutual understanding, communication and collaboration: in short, diplomacy. If confirmed, I pledge to do everything I can to lead an Embassy that represents the finest values of the United States, and I will do my level best to advance American interests by strengthening the bonds between the United States and Finland.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you.