

**Opening Statement of John McIntyre  
Nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of Eswatini  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
September 19, 2024**

Thank you, Chairwoman Duckworth and Ranking Member Risch, and distinguished Members of this committee. It is my great honor to appear before you as the nominee to be the next U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of Eswatini. I am grateful to the President and Secretary Blinken for their confidence in me, and I hope to earn your trust as well. If confirmed, I pledge to work closely with you to advance U.S. interests in Eswatini.

I would not be here before you today without the support of my family. My parents, Curt and Midge McIntyre, instilled in me, as well as my sisters, Catherine and Courtney, the value of service, especially to our great nation. It is an honor for me to carry on this family tradition. My Foreign Service career brought me to Kosovo, where I met my amazing wife, Flora Zylfijaj. Flora, along with my in-laws, Ruzhdi and Fatime Zylfijaj, embody perseverance and grace. Flora and I strive to emulate the excellent examples our parents set with our own children, Emma and Ian.

I have been privileged to serve 25 years in the Foreign Service and over a third of my career as Charge d’Affaires or Deputy Chief of Mission at embassies

as diverse as Brunei, Trinidad and Tobago, and Jamaica. First and foremost, the safety and well-being of U.S. Citizens has been and will remain paramount.

Likewise, I am fully committed to promoting respect for human rights and fundamental freedom and advancing good governance. If confirmed, these will be foundational priorities for me as U.S. Ambassador to Eswatini.

Eswatini's 1.2 million people belong to the story of a growing, modernizing African continent, a young and dynamic continent that in a few decades will account for one out of every four people on the planet. Eswatini have large aspirations for the future. The United States should be a partner of the people of Eswatini in making these aspirations a reality.

I recognize, however, that we face serious challenges in Eswatini. If confirmed, I commit to use my position as Ambassador to emphasize the need for Eswatini to improve its record on human rights and strengthen its democratic processes. Senate Resolution 174, unanimously agreed to on April 15, indicated how seriously the U.S. Senate views these issues, and I will say here today that I share that seriousness and urgency. I will speak candidly to King Mswati III and his government about what we see in Eswatini, and what our concerns are.

If confirmed, I will also continue to call for a thorough and transparent investigation into the killing of the pro-democracy activist Thulani Maseko in January 2023. His killing, which remains unsolved but bore all the hallmarks of a

targeted assassination, was an abomination, one that cannot remain unaddressed. If confirmed, I will continue the Embassy's good work of engaging with and directly supporting the individuals and groups who preserve Maseko's legacy and continue to call for greater civil liberties and opportunities for political participation in Eswatini.

Our engagement with Eswatini must be multifaceted and balance the full range of our interests, including engagement with one of 12 countries around the world, and the only country in Africa, that maintains diplomatic relations with Taiwan.

If confirmed, I will seek to sustain and deepen our work in the areas where we have ongoing and successful cooperation – in particular, in the area of health. Our PEPFAR programming is not only vital to the well-being of the people of Eswatini, but to global health security. Despite Eswatini's having the world's highest HIV prevalence, over a decade and a half of U.S. government assistance, coupled with strong political will and leadership from the Government of Eswatini, has brought the country to near HIV epidemic control.

This is the kind of programming that changes lives – that saves lives. It is central to our work in Eswatini, and if confirmed, I will ensure that it continues and grows.

If confirmed, I pledge that Mission Eswatini's policies and programs will reflect the Administration's and congressional priorities. I hope my testimony affirms for the Committee that, if confirmed, I will be the United States' primary advocate for these priorities. It is truly an honor to appear before you today, and I look forward to your questions.