

**Statement of Larry Edward André, Jr.**  
**Nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to Djibouti**  
**Senate Committee on Foreign Relations**  
**October 3, 2017**

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Booker, and Distinguished Members of the Committee, I am honored to come before you as President Trump's nominee to be the next United States Ambassador to the Republic of Djibouti. I am grateful to the President and Secretary Tillerson for their confidence in me. If confirmed, I will work with this Committee and the Congress to advance U.S. interests.

I am supported here today by my wife, Ouroukou André; by my father, Larry Edward André Sr. and his wife, Claudia André; and by my friends and colleagues. My daughter, Ruhyyih Rahman André, could not attend due to her responsibilities working for an American firm in the renewable energy sector in Kenya. She shares my enthusiasm for all that Africa and America can accomplish together.

Mr. Chairman, Under Secretary for Political Affairs Thomas Shannon recently presented the Administration's four main policy goals for Africa at the U.S. Institute of Peace. If confirmed, I will lead our team at Embassy Djibouti to further those four goals: advancing peace and security, countering the scourge of terrorism, increasing economic growth and investment, and promoting democracy and good governance.

Since 2002, Djibouti has hosted the only enduring U.S. military installation in Africa, Camp Lemonnier. It is a crucial platform for our armed forces to advance security throughout the region. Serving as the headquarters of the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa, the installation is home to over 4,000 American soldiers. Ensuring the long-term viability and maximum operational flexibility of this important security presence is a key priority. If confirmed, I look forward to a highly productive and mutually supportive relationship with the Commander of the Combined Joint Task Force.

The Government of Djibouti counters terrorism beyond its borders by contributing peacekeeping troops to the African Union Mission to Somalia in its fight against al-Shabaab. We help train and equip Djibouti's peacekeepers.

As for increasing economic growth, the World Economic Forum recently listed Djibouti as the sixth fastest-growing economy in the world, with a GDP growth rate of seven percent. Despite the small size of its market, this growth and Djibouti's strategic position present opportunities for U.S. business. If confirmed, I will lead our embassy team to further those opportunities.

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee, Djibouti's security and prosperity gains can best be protected in the long-term by strong democratic institutions. To that end, Djiboutians

need to develop a more competitive, transparent, and accountable political system. Next year's legislative elections will give us an opportunity to encourage further progress on key democratic institutions.

Having spent my career serving at U.S. embassies in dangerous security environments, I feel deeply the responsibility of an Ambassador toward all resident Americans and to all U.S. government employees. If confirmed, I will lead our team in Djibouti to take all necessary measures to promote the security of American citizens and of U.S. government colleagues.

Finally, I close with a few words about my preparation for the great responsibility for which you are considering me. My career in Africa began thirty-four years ago as a fresh-out-of-college Peace Corps Volunteer living and working in a small village in West Africa. As a diplomat since 1990, I have focused my career almost exclusively on Africa. As Ambassador to Mauritania since September 2014, I lead a highly productive inter-agency team engaged in advancing specific goals. We live up to our motto, "One Mission, One Team."

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, if confirmed, I will look to you for counsel and support as I seek to build on the achievements of my predecessors and their teams in advancing an American-Djiboutian partnership based on shared values and shared interests. I welcome any questions you may have. Thank you very much for your kind consideration of my nomination.