

**Statement of Gene A. Cretz**  
**U.S. Ambassador-Designate to Ghana**  
**Before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations**  
**July 12, 2012**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, I am honored to appear before you today, and grateful to President Obama and Secretary Clinton for the confidence they have placed in me as their nominee for Ambassador to the Republic of Ghana.

I am joined today by my wife Annette, my son U.S. Air Force Captain Jeffrey Cretz, and my daughter Gabrielle whose love and support have carried me throughout my 31 years in the Foreign Service. Without them I would not be here today. In addition, I would note that my son has honorably served his country through three deployments to Afghanistan and the Middle East.

My journey began as a Peace Corps volunteer in Kabul, Afghanistan before joining the Foreign Service in 1981. I have served in Islamabad, Damascus (twice), New Delhi, Tel Aviv (twice), Beijing, Cairo, and most recently as United States Ambassador to Libya. If confirmed as the next U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Ghana, I will draw upon these experiences to advance U.S. interests in Africa. I am very proud of the role the United States played to help the courageous people of Libya gain their freedom from the 42-year dictatorial rule of Muammar Qadhafi. One only has to visit Libya today to witness a people breathing freedom for the first time to realize how important our efforts were.

Ghana is a “good news” country as President Obama stated in his remarks during President Mills’ March visit to the Oval Office. A democracy since 1992 and an economic success story with GDP growth rates reaching a historic high of over 13.5 percent in 2011, and sustaining a growth rate of at least 8 percent in 2012, Ghana’s record of achievements speaks for itself. Having successfully completed its first \$547 million Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Compact in February, Ghana is eligible to receive its second compact focused on improving access to reliable power. We have seen the Ghanaian people benefit from improved schools, health services, roads, and basic infrastructure as a result of sound macro-economic policy and debt relief. If confirmed, I will maximize the talents and skills of Embassy personnel, advance existing USAID programs, and implement a second MCC Compact, if approved.

United States exports to Ghana have grown 186 percent over the past five years, and two-way trade is expected to reach an all-time high, surpassing the \$2 billion mark in 2012 as Ghana continues its impressive economic development. Companies such as GE, IBM, Baker Hughes, Cargill, Archer-Daniels-Midland Company (ADM), and others are investing in Ghana precisely because Ghana is a model for economic development in West Africa. I look forward to ensuring that the promotion of U.S. commercial interests remains an integral part of our statecraft. Home to a lively, free media, an apolitical military, and blessed with

cocoa, gold, mineral reserves, and natural resources, Ghana is setting the standards for democracy and economic development on the continent of Africa. If confirmed, I will explore new and innovative approaches to expand commercial ties between the United States and Ghana.

Ghana has held five free and fair national elections since 1992, and witnessed two peaceful transitions from one political party to another in 2000 and 2008. National and legislative elections are scheduled for this December, and if confirmed, I expect to witness Ghana achieve its sixth consecutive peaceful and transparent democratic election. The people-to-people links made strong through more than 50 years of a continuous and vibrant Peace Corps presence; Fulbright, Humphrey, Community College Initiative (CCI) and Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (YES) student exchange programs; and military cooperation through our International Military Education and Training Program, the Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance Program, the State Partnership Program with the North Dakota National Guard, and Africa Command's Africa Partnership Station are among the initiatives I will continue to advance if confirmed.

Ghana and the United States share an interest in countering terrorism and promoting regional stability. Ghana is one of Africa's premier peacekeeping partners. If confirmed, I will support Ghana's capacity to promote regional and global stability. This includes combating escalating drug trafficking and human trafficking. Protecting the safety and welfare of U.S. citizens will be a top

priority.

Political power in Ghana remains highly centralized and Ghana faces challenges in managing its oil resources. With a GDP per capita of \$1,286 in 2010, Ghana is a lower middle-income country. The Government is committed to a path of reducing Ghana's aid dependency in the medium to long-term. U.S. development efforts are focused on maintaining sustainable, broad-based economic growth through initiatives such as Feed the Future and the Partnership for Growth. The G-8 New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition, announced by President Obama under the U.S. G-8 presidency, strongly supports private sector investment in agricultural development and nutrition; and Ghana is one of the first three countries where the New Alliance will be launched. If confirmed, my priority will be to work with the Government of Ghana to enhance Ghana's economic vitality and to promote U.S. commercial opportunities in Ghana.

President Obama chose Ghana as the site for his historic speech in 2009 about "a new moment of promise for Africa." Ghana is living up to that promise, and our continued cooperation will enhance the partnership further. As one of only four countries in the world selected for the Partnership for Growth, I intend to work closely with our Ghanaian partners to support Ghana's development efforts, not only in the areas of power and credit as highlighted in the Joint Country Action Plan, but also in areas such as food security and health.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, for the opportunity to address you today. If confirmed, I look forward to working with

you in representing the interests of the American people in Ghana. I am happy to answer any questions you have.