

**Statement of David Gilmour**  
**Ambassador-Designate to the Togolese Republic**  
**Before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee**  
**Thursday, July 30, 2015**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, I am honored to appear before you today, and grateful to President Obama and Secretary Kerry for the confidence they have placed in me as their nominee for Ambassador to Togo. I am also grateful for the support of Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Linda Thomas-Greenfield.

I am joined today by my wife Judith Martin, who has spent a lifetime in the Foreign Service, first with her father S. Douglas Martin, a career State Department Officer, and later as my cherished partner as we traveled the world together and raised our family in eight overseas posts and in Washington during the 29 years of my Foreign Service career. Also here is our son Tristan. Our other two children, Miles and Schyler, will be watching online from Texas. I would also like to acknowledge my father, John Gilmour, who could not be here today. He worked 34 years in local government, serving the citizens of the small town where I grew

up in Michigan. Everything I know about respect, integrity and dedication to public service, I learned from my dad.

Mr. Chairman, I believe my service in four African posts and in senior positions in the Bureau of African Affairs in Washington, as well as postings elsewhere in the world, including as Deputy Chief of Mission in Panama, have prepared me for this assignment. If confirmed, I will draw upon these experiences to advance U.S. interests in Togo and the West African region.

The United States and Togo enjoy a strong relationship and broad mutual interests. With a population of nearly seven million inhabitants, Togo lies at the heart of West Africa, a region that is important to the security of the United States, and to which the United States has longstanding cultural ties. If confirmed, I will do my utmost to broaden and strengthen our mutual pursuit of this shared agenda.

Mr. Chairman, our policy priorities in Togo are to safeguard the welfare of American citizens, promote a representative democracy and good governance, improve maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea, promote human rights, improve the capacity to combat transnational crime, advance commercial opportunities

for U.S. businesses, and improve the quality of health care and education. To achieve these goals, the United States has a range of programs supporting public health, security sector reform, international peacekeeping and economic development. If confirmed, I commit to working closely with our international partners to help Togo promote empowerment and prosperity for all Togolese, regardless of their ethnic, religious, regional or political affiliations.

The United States established diplomatic relations with Togo in 1960 following its independence from a French-administered trusteeship. Togo is recovering from fifteen years of political and economic isolation that began in the early 1990s due to political instability. Togo's long cycle of decline ended in 2007, following largely free and fair legislative elections. The political situation has stabilized over the past few years, and presidential and legislative elections, held in 2010 and 2013, respectively, were recognized by the international community as free and fair, despite some shortfalls. Most recently, April's presidential elections were judged credible by international observers, and the United States congratulated the people of Togo for exercising their democratic rights before, during, and after the vote. The country is presently at peace. Should I be confirmed, one of Embassy Lomé's top priorities will be to support and maintain a

peaceful, transparent and fair political climate, thereby consolidating and expanding on the democratic gains of the past several years.

A stable, peaceful and prosperous Togo serves American interests and expands Togo's ability to contribute to regional stability. The United States maintains a good relationship with the Togolese military, which has been a willing partner in key areas such as maritime security and international peacekeeping. If confirmed, I look forward to maintaining our strong partnership with Togolese security officials to effectively police and regulate Togolese waters in the Gulf of Guinea. Additionally, if confirmed I hope to strengthen Togo's capacity to engage in peacekeeping missions through the Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance program, which has been active in Togo since 2009, and has assisted with the training and deployment of Togolese peacekeeping forces to Mali, Darfur, Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, Burundi, Sudan, Chad, and the Central African Republic. Also, beginning in 2013, the Government of Togo has stepped up its effort to curb wildlife trafficking, making several seizures and arrests. The United States is providing technical expertise and material support to help the Togolese law enforcement community overcome this rising challenge. If confirmed, I look forward to maintaining our strong partnership with the Togolese on this issue.

Poverty continues to breed corruption and crime, smuggling, and trafficking in persons. If confirmed, I will support Togo's efforts to address these challenges, which also threaten the national interests of the United States. The Government of Togo recognizes that an improving but still challenging investment climate and a developing but still weak private sector are key impediments to Togo's prospects for sustained economic growth, and eliminating poverty. If confirmed, I will take advantage of available initiatives to promote a healthy economy, including identification of public-private partnerships that include American companies and that enjoy United States Government guarantees. The Embassy will look to use regional programs offered through the U.S. Agency for International Development to strengthen Togo's developing role as a regional trade hub, as well as to help ensure that the country makes the most of Lomé's deep-water port, which is a significant contributor to the Togolese economy. If confirmed, I will encourage the Togolese Government and Togolese entrepreneurs to take full advantages of the opportunities and preferences provided by AGOA.

Development assistance to Togo provided through the U.S. Agency for International Development focuses primarily on improving Togo's national public health capacity; USAID's West African Regional Health Office runs multiple health

programs in Togo, including HIV/AIDS prevention. Through the Department of Defense's HIV/AIDS Prevention Program monitored by Embassy Lomé, 50 newborns were born free of HIV to HIV positive mothers last year. This year that program has been expanded to include 150 mothers. If confirmed, I will look to employ such existing initiatives, including the multilateral partnership of the Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM), to assist the Togolese Ministry of Health in improving basic public health programs and treating and eradicating disease. The Embassy in Lomé will also continue to support a robust Peace Corps presence in country with a programmatic focus on health, especially on HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and distinguished Members of the Committee, for this opportunity to address you. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you in representing the interests of the American people in Togo. I am happy to answer any questions you have.