

**Statement of Michael Arthur Raynor**  
**Nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Senegal and Republic of**  
**Guinea-Bissau**  
**Senate Foreign Relations Committee**  
**August 5, 2021**

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Risch, and Members of the Committee:

I am honored to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee to serve as ambassador to the Republic of Senegal and to the Republic of Guinea-Bissau. I am grateful to the President and Secretary Blinken for their trust and confidence in me, and am deeply indebted to my wife Kate, my son Bradley, and my daughter Emma for their sacrifices and support throughout my Foreign Service career.

During more than 31 years as a Foreign Service Officer, I have developed substantial policy and managerial experience and a record of inclusive leadership fostering interagency collaboration, strong performance by diverse teams, and high morale in challenging environments. As Ambassador to Ethiopia, I advanced our bilateral priorities at the time, which included supporting the country's transition toward democratic governance and free-market economics, launching new programs to bolster human rights and counter ethnic strife, strengthening peacekeeping and counter-terrorism efforts, and facilitating major growth in U.S. commercial investments. I am devastated by the current situation there. As Ambassador to Benin, I elicited strong security cooperation, helped improve the country's business climate and U.S. commercial prospects, and strengthened the country's democratic trajectory. As Assistant Chief of Mission in Afghanistan, I led some of the United States' largest foreign assistance and justice sector programs as well as the embassy's large and complex management and security operations, while regularly engaging Afghan leaders on governance and security concerns. As Executive Director of the Bureau of African Affairs, I led the State Department's management and crisis support for more than 50 African posts.

If confirmed as the next U.S. ambassador to Senegal and Guinea-Bissau, my highest priority will be the interests, welfare, and security of American citizens. Whether ensuring responsive consular services, advocating for U.S. businesses, or strengthening partnerships to confront regional instability, this priority will guide every Embassy objective and activity. If confirmed, I will also do everything I can to ensure that the dedicated women and men serving at the U.S. Embassy in Dakar are secure, healthy, and provided every opportunity for success.

Our close partnership with Senegal spans more than 60 years and is rooted in our shared values of democracy and human rights; peace and security; and economic opportunity and prosperity. Senegal's long democratic tradition of peaceful transitions of power, free and fair elections, a robust private press, and a strong civil society is unique in West Africa and serves as a model for the region.

Senegal's dynamic economy has achieved impressive growth while creating new opportunities for U.S. investment. While the pandemic has hampered this progress and worsened the economic strains felt by Senegal's large youth population, U.S. public and private investments can play a key role in reigniting the country's growth. Embassy Dakar and Washington counterparts are pursuing a number of possibilities for U.S. investment that will strengthen Senegal's economy and its long-term democratic governance and security.

Senegal is a key security partner in West Africa and a critical ally in the United States' efforts to promote stability and counter violent extremism. It is a major contributor to peacekeeping missions across Africa and regularly hosts regional military exercises in partnership with the United States and France.

If confirmed, I will work to strengthen the United States' essential democratic, commercial, developmental, and security partnerships with Senegal.

In Guinea-Bissau, the United States has sustained its programs and partnership despite pandemic-related challenges, and there is scope to expand our bilateral relationship further in the days ahead. If confirmed, I will seek to advance our two countries' shared interests in bolstering democracy, promoting stable and responsive civilian governance, advancing development and economic opportunity, and countering drug trafficking.

Senegal and Guinea-Bissau are dynamic nations with extraordinary histories and extraordinary potential. I am honored by your consideration of me to serve in such an important posting. If confirmed, I will welcome advice and input from you and your staff on any aspect of the United States' multi-faceted relationships with Senegal and Guinea-Bissau. I will also be pleased, if confirmed, to welcome you and your staff in Senegal and Guinea-Bissau and to keep you up to date on the activities of the U.S. Embassy in Dakar.

Thank you for the opportunity to address you today. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.