

Testimony of Craig Cloud
Nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Botswana
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
September 26, 2018

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Booker and Members of the Committee: It is a great honor to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to serve as the next Ambassador to the Republic of Botswana. I appreciate the confidence the President and Secretary Pompeo have placed in me by putting my name forward. I am also deeply grateful to my incredible parents who couldn't be here today, and to my wife, Angie, and children, Wallace Anne and John Beck; I would not be here without their tremendous support.

During my twenty-six years in the Foreign Service, I have served in senior leadership positions in a number of challenging posts including, most recently, Kabul, Afghanistan. My Africa experience includes fifteen years serving in West, Central, and Southern Africa, including as Deputy Chief of Mission in Swaziland, working on democracy, health, and security issues.

Botswana is one of the United States' most reliable partners on the continent. Our work in Botswana strengthens democratic institutions, protects health and human rights, conserves the environment and natural resources, and counters transnational organized crime.

Economic ties between the United States and Botswana are growing. Our exports to Botswana in 2017 were up 120 percent from the prior year. The United States is the world's top purchaser of Botswana's diamonds, and U.S. tourists, attracted to the country's beautiful national parks and reserves, are the biggest per capita spenders in Botswana. If confirmed, I will encourage Botswana's efforts to diversify its economy and improve opportunities for American businesses.

The United States has invested more than \$900 million in Botswana's health sector through the PEPFAR program. Despite impressive progress, there are still an estimated 14,000 new infections annually. If confirmed, I look forward to protecting our PEPFAR investment and leading our interagency health team as we work with the Government of Botswana on their HIV response.

The Botswana Defence Force is one of the most professional militaries on the continent; and our military engagement remains strong. The U.S. also sponsors the International Law Enforcement Academy, which has trained more than 8,000 law-enforcement professionals from 37 African partner nations. Support to both of these institutions has improved rule of law in the country and the continent, including capacity to protect the largest population of elephants on Earth from increasingly sophisticated poaching and ivory trafficking networks. If confirmed, I will work to expand U.S.-Botswana military connections and our regional security role through education and training programs.

The U.S. Ambassador to Botswana also serves as the U.S. representative to the Southern African Development Community, and I am excited about the opportunity to work towards increased security, health, and prosperity across the region with other southern African nations.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I would be happy to answer any questions.