

Statement of Thomas Dougherty
U.S. Ambassador-designate to Burkina Faso
before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee
Tuesday, July 13, 2010

Mr. Chairman and Distinguished Members of the Committee,

It is an honor to appear before you today as the nominee for United States Ambassador to Burkina Faso. I appreciate the confidence and trust the President and Secretary of State have shown in me and I am grateful to receive this distinguished Committee's consideration.

Most of my Foreign Service career has been in Africa or in Washington working on African issues. If confirmed, it will be a privilege to return to Africa to lead the efforts of an interagency team committed to the growing partnership between the United States and Burkina Faso.

Thanks to the leadership of the U.S. Embassy in Burkina Faso and to the commitment for economic and political reform by the Burkinabe government and people, relations between our countries are strong. If confirmed, I pledge to work to deepen the bilateral partnership through programs and policies that foster sustainable development, institution building, good governance, economic reform, respect for human rights, and regional stability.

Our mission in Burkina Faso must include keeping the country on a path to multiparty democracy. We will continue to encourage the strengthening of democratic institutions, respect for human rights, and adherence to constitutional rule. We support a free and open electoral process in Presidential elections this November, in municipal elections in 2011 and Parliamentary elections in 2012.

Burkina Faso faces great economic challenges including poverty, disease, illiteracy, and food insecurity. The United States supports Burkina Faso's efforts to address these issues through diverse assistance programs. A five-year, \$481million Millennium Challenge Corporation Compact entered into force on July 31, 2009, aims to reduce poverty in Burkina Faso through economic growth with investments in roads, improved agricultural productivity, land use rights, and primary education. Substantial U.S. Agency for International Development

(USAID) assistance targets health, agricultural development, and food security. An active and expanding Peace Corps program has over 100 volunteers working to improve rates of school enrolment and retention, support small business development, and provide HIV/AIDS education.

If confirmed, I will work to promote bilateral trade and commerce between the United States and Burkina Faso. The Burkinabe government has taken steps to combat corruption, and recent efforts at fiscal transparency -- supported by personnel and programming from our Treasury Department -- are resulting in greater transparency in the budget-making process. If confirmed, I will also work to leverage our assistance programs with those of other donors to help reduce poverty and to support Burkina Faso's transition to a market economy.

Burkina Faso has been a valued partner to the United States in promoting regional security and combating terrorism. The Burkinabe have played a prominent and positive role in mediating conflicts in the region, most notably in Cote d'Ivoire, Togo, and Guinea. Burkina Faso, in addition to its membership in the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership, has contributed troops to African Union and United Nations peacekeeping missions, and recently deployed a battalion to support U.N. operations in Darfur. If confirmed, I will work to maximize the effectiveness of our military and civilian security cooperation with Burkina Faso.

If confirmed, I will above all endeavour to protect American citizens and interests, to increase mutual understanding between the American and Burkinabe people, and to reflect American values in all of our interactions with the government and people of Burkina Faso.

Thank you for inviting me to appear before you today. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.