

Statement of Scott Gration  
Nominee for Ambassador to Kenya  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
April 05, 2011

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

It is an honor to appear before you this afternoon as you consider my nomination to be our country's next Ambassador to the Republic of Kenya. I am truly grateful to President Obama and to Secretary Clinton for the confidence they have placed in me and for the nomination to represent our nation in Kenya. If confirmed, I will work with you and the Congress to advance American interests in Kenya and to promote a common understanding between our two countries.

I would like to introduce my wife, Judy—mother of our four children and my full partner in over 35 years of public service. If I am confirmed, Judy will bring a wealth of knowledge to this assignment. She was born in Nairobi and spent her childhood in Kenya, where both of her parents are buried.

Like Judy, I was also raised in Africa, in Congo and Kenya, where I learned Swahili and developed a lifelong interest in this region. In 1974, I returned to Kenya to do humanitarian work. In the early '80s, I served as an F-5 instructor pilot with the Kenyan Air Force for two years. During the last 20 years, I've returned to Kenya numerous times—on military duty, as CEO of Millennium Villages, and with an NGO working to increase access to safe drinking water.

For more than five decades, Kenya has been one of our most reliable partners in Africa. If confirmed, I look forward to leading our diplomatic efforts in this important period of Kenya's history.

Since the terrible period of post-election violence in 2007, Kenyans have embarked on an ambitious program of reform. Implementing the new constitution, cooperating fully with the ICC, and advancing accountability are critical elements that must be in place to ensure a peaceful, transparent, and credible presidential election next year.

As the reform process moves forward, I am committed, if confirmed, to working both privately and publicly to protect human rights, to fight corruption, and to promote democratic values, development, accountability, and national reconciliation.

The 1998 attack on our Nairobi Embassy that killed 218 is a solemn reminder of the constant terrorist threat. The conflict in Somalia continues to increase Kenya's security and humanitarian challenges. If confirmed, I will support the Government of Kenya's effort to secure its borders, to protect its citizens, and to care for those seeking refuge.

If confirmed, you can count on me to protect Americans living and traveling in Kenya. I will work with the estimated 20,000 Americans in Kenya; to seek ways to strengthen economic and cultural ties between Kenya and the United States.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, if confirmed, I will be grateful and proud to serve as the next U.S. Ambassador to

the Republic of Kenya. I would be pleased to respond to any questions you might have.

Thank you.