

Testimony of James Zumwalt
Ambassador-Designate to the Republic of Senegal and Republic of Guinea-
Bissau
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Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Flake, and Members of the Committee, I am honored to appear before you today. I wish to thank President Obama and Secretary Kerry for the trust and confidence they have placed in me as their nominee for Ambassador to the Republic of Senegal and to the Republic of Guinea-Bissau.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to introduce my wife Ann Kambara. Ann, until last month, also served her country as a Foreign Service Officer. We met 31 years ago when we both worked at our mission in Japan. Since then we have worked together to advance U.S. interests in a variety of countries and in Washington. When we worked together far from home, Ann became my anchor, my sounding board and my inspiration. She has supported me enthusiastically as I prepare for this new opportunity to serve. If confirmed, it would be a great honor and privilege to promote again U.S. interests in Senegal and Guinea-Bissau.

Senegal is one of our most important African partners. The transparent, free, and peaceful 2012 presidential election reinforced the country's role as a model of stable democracy in Africa. We share common values, including democracy, religious tolerance, and respect for ethnic and cultural diversity. President Macky Sall's visit to Washington DC to participate in the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit last month -- where he agreed to play a leading role to establish the Partnership on Illicit Finance, an anti-corruption and transparency initiative -- and President Obama's visit to Senegal last year further underscored the importance of our bilateral relationship. If confirmed, I look forward to strengthening our shared democratic values and our close ties.

Senegal is a leading U.S. development partner in West Africa, where investments by the United States Agency for International Development, the Millennium Challenge Corporation and other U.S. agencies are helping to build rural infrastructure, improve food security, and strengthen education and health care services. In addition, 220 American Peace Corps Volunteers play an important role in grassroots development and building people-to-people ties. To reinforce these efforts, the Government of Senegal this year unveiled an ambitious development plan, which aims to accelerate economic reforms, and mobilize private sector investment in order to boost economic growth. If confirmed, I will

continue these efforts to help Senegal achieve inclusive economic growth, including through business climate reforms to facilitate private sector-led growth. Senegal is well-positioned to build on its role as a regional business hub, and, if confirmed, I would engage U.S. and Senegalese government and business leaders to promote bilateral trade and investment.

As a regional leader, Senegal has helped to resolve conflicts across the continent – most recently by deploying peacekeeping troops to the UN Mission in Mali. As a result of Senegal’s commitment to promoting peace and security, Senegal was selected as one of six countries to participate in the African Peacekeeping Rapid Response Partnership, a \$110 million, 3-5 year initiative announced at the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit. Senegal also serves as an important partner for the United States as we work together to combat religious extremism, transnational crime, and infectious diseases in West Africa. If confirmed, I would work closely with the government and civil society in Senegal to sustain and build upon our regional partnership to promote democracy, economic development and combatting transnational threats.

Under President Sall’s leadership, we have seen significant progress in the Casamance peace process – Africa’s longest-running conflict. Negotiations continue and we hope the remaining obstacles to a long-lasting peace agreement will be resolved. We support the peace process through our Casamance advisor, based at the U.S. Embassy in Dakar. In addition, the United States Agency for International Development, the Department of Agriculture and the Millennium Challenge Corporation are also engaged in programs and projects which contribute to regional stability and prosperity. If confirmed, I would continue to prioritize the Casamance peace process in our engagement with Senegal.

Guinea-Bissau has suffered from decades of poor governance and widespread corruption, which have weakened state institutions and rendered the government ineffective in providing basic services to its citizens. However, we are beginning to see progress. Guinea-Bissau held parliamentary and presidential elections in April and May of this year, two years after a military coup. Bissau-Guineans went peacefully to the polls in the large numbers, highlighting their strong desire for democracy and responsive government.

Following the inauguration of democratically-elected President Jose Mario Vaz, the United States lifted coup-related restrictions on foreign assistance to Guinea-Bissau. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Government of Guinea-Bissau and our international partners to determine how best the United States can support democratic progress. In order for Guinea-Bissau to break its

cycle of instability, its government must address reconciliation, combat trafficking of narcotics and natural resources, and implement multi-sector economic reforms, which would increase investment, spur sustainable development, generate employment and reduce poverty. If confirmed I would continue to promote U.S interests in Guinea-Bissau from the U.S. Embassy in Dakar. Embassy Dakar officials, including one position dedicated full time to Guinea-Bissau, will continue to play an invaluable role by traveling frequently to Guinea-Bissau to build strong relationships with government, civil society, business, and religious leaders, to inform our policy, and to advance U.S. interests.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Flake, for your continuing interest in the United States' relations with Africa. We are fortunate to have the strong bipartisan support for our efforts to promote democratic values, sustainable economic development, and vibrant partnerships through people to people ties. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you, your Committee and other members of Congress in representing the interests of the American people in Senegal and Guinea-Bissau.

I would be happy to answer your questions.