

Statement of Frank Garcia
Nominee for Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of African Affairs
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
March 5, 2026

Chairman Ricketts, Ranking Member Coons, and Members of the Committee – I am honored to appear before you today as President Trump’s nominee for Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of African Affairs. I appreciate the time you and your staff have given me and, if confirmed, I look forward to working with you.

If confirmed, I will advance America First priorities on the African continent and ensure our engagement is disciplined, strategic, and firmly rooted in the protection of core U.S. national interests, as outlined in the National Security Strategy.

On a personal note, I’m thankful my sister Terri is here. I know our brother Michael and our parents are smiling down from heaven. They taught us three lifelong tenets: God, family, and country. As part of the Greatest Generation, they served as a Navy nurse and an Army technical sergeant. They didn’t talk about service, they lived it.

I also want to thank my wife, Bridget, and our seven children and eight grandchildren for their love and support. There’s a country song, “Thank God for Unanswered Prayers.” Today I simply thank God for answered prayers: Bridget and our family are that answer for me. And for anyone wondering how to thrive with seven children and eight grandchildren: zone defense.

I served in the U.S. Navy for 28 years, with many assignments in the AFRICOM area of responsibility. My first touch on the continent was as a junior officer visiting the port of Mombasa, Kenya, which sparked a fascination with Africa that has stayed with me. I currently serve on the House Intelligence Committee for nearly fifteen years of focus Africa, traveling frequently with Members and staff. Thank you, Team HPSCI, past and present.

My time in Africa left an indelible mark: peace is precious, and it is not maintained by hope alone. That is why I embrace President Trump’s National Security Strategy of Peace through Strength. Strength, guided by principle and paired with credible diplomacy, deters aggression, protects the innocent, and creates space for

human dignity to flourish. If confirmed, I will bring that same sense of duty to the work ahead.

For too long, U.S. policy in Africa has emphasized aid and dependency, with open-ended commitments and a focus on spreading divisive ideologies. President Trump and Secretary Rubio have reset this relationship toward trade and investment for mutual benefit. Many African partners have welcomed a pragmatic approach that prioritizes opportunity and cooperation over lectures. If confirmed, I will ensure our policy is guided by a realistic calculation of costs, risks, and benefits to U.S. interests.

By 2050, one quarter of the world's population will be African. The continent is at a strategic inflection point where lasting prosperity hinges on a secure, representative government and the selection of reliable partners. A healthy, better educated workforce, paired with abundant natural resources, can create opportunities that benefit both African nations and the United States. The Lobito Corridor model advanced by the Trump Administration is one example, promising increased trade, jobs, and investment. If confirmed, we will build on this momentum by prioritizing U.S. investment in high-return sectors where partnership can help make America safer, stronger, and more prosperous.

With opportunity comes risk, especially when governance fails to provide the security and judicial framework that prosperity requires. President Trump and Secretary Rubio recognize that peace is the foundation of growth and have moved aggressively to support peace efforts in troubled areas across Africa. The Washington Accords for Peace and Prosperity that brought together the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, ending more than 30 years of conflict, are historic. The United States will remain steadfast in supporting these accords and in holding the parties to their commitments.

Instability in regions such as the Sahel and North Africa, fueled by illicit trafficking and terrorist expansion, poses direct risks to U.S. interests and citizens. Our counterterrorism efforts will remain focused on preventing attacks against the homeland and U.S. interests. We will build reciprocal relationships with key partners to degrade transnational threats from ISIS and al-Qaeda affiliates, engage regional governments, and work with allies to promote stability. African nations

must play a greater role in protecting their own regions, with the United States supporting local leadership, not substituting for it.

If confirmed, I will ensure every dollar the United States invests in Africa advances our national security and economic priorities. All assistance, including lifesaving health and humanitarian efforts, will be focused, strategic, and aligned with U.S. interests. Our approach will be disciplined and results-driven, applying Secretary Rubio's principle of privileging trade over aid, opportunity over dependency, and investment over assistance.

Members of the Committee, thank you for your consideration and for the time, energy, and focus you and your staff devote to Africa. I look forward to your questions.