**Statement of Devin Kennington**
**Nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to Somalia**
**Senate Foreign Relations Committee**
**November 10, 2026**

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Shaheen, and distinguished Members of the Committee,

I am honored to come before you today as President Trump's nominee to be the next United States Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Somalia. I am deeply grateful to President Trump and Secretary Rubio for their confidence in me.

My career has taken me to some of Africa's most challenging hardship posts and conflict zones, including a previous tour in Mogadishu. I am grateful to my family for their sacrifices and steadfast support, and it would be a tremendous honor to return to Somalia to serve as Ambassador.

The United States is resetting its relationship with African governments. We are moving away from aid and dependency toward trade, investment, and mutual benefit, and we are reexamining old policies that did not work. Few places were more in need of such reexamination than Somalia.

For decades the United States was the single largest international donor to Somalia, spending billions on security, development, and food assistance to help the country recover from state collapse, address terrorist insurgencies, and alleviate humanitarian suffering. Yet little changed. The country remains dependent on international support, while many politicians focus on personal financial and political interests over uniting to address security and governance challenges. Terrorists continue to find safe havens to plot and conduct attacks. Continuing an open-ended resource commitment will not address these challenges but rather continue a self-defeating cycle of dependency that serves neither the interests of the United States taxpayers nor the people of Somalia.

For these reasons, the United States has embarked on a new approach, and if confirmed as Ambassador, one I would continue to implement. Already the U.S. has made clear to the Somali government and international partners alike that it is time for them to take greater ownership. If confirmed, I will continue the work

already begun to shift the burden off the United States and hand over programs to other actors with more vested interests.

Nevertheless, we must remain vigilant against terrorist threats against the homeland and against Americans. We have an interest in continuing close cooperation with the Somali federal government, especially when it comes to security and law enforcement and immigration priorities.

I understand the working environment in Mogadishu is intense and restrictive. If confirmed, the safety, security, and wellbeing of mission staff and Americans will always be my top priority. I will work to ensure the Embassy maintains the appropriate safeguards to accomplish our mission securely and effectively.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, Members of the Committee, I thank you for this opportunity to appear before you. I look forward to your questions.