Opening Statement of Junaid Munir
Nominee for U.S. Ambassador to Djibouti
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
November 10, 2026

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and distinguished Members of the Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to address you today. I am honored that President Trump has nominated me to be the U.S. Ambassador to Djibouti.

I want to thank my parents who flew in from our hometown of Grand Rapids, Michigan to be here today; they have instilled in me from an early age the importance of serving the country and giving back to the American people for everything they have given our family. I am currently serving as Charge d'affaires at the U.S. Embassy in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire and my wife and our 8-year-old son are there; a Senate hearing didn't strike our little guy as important enough a reason for him to be away from his friends at school. I am grateful to the two of them for their support as well.

I also want to express special gratitude to Senator Daines who visited Abidjan this past February. We had a productive visit advancing several key commercial priorities and his encouragement following the visit gave me the confidence to pursue this position.

Over a 22-year-career of service at some of our most challenging posts in the Middle East and Africa including serving three times as Deputy Chief of Mission and twice as long-term Charge d'affaires, I have mobilized high-energy, high-morale teams to advance core American interests. I know Djibouti from previous postings – particularly from my time as DCM for Yemen – I speak its two national languages and am with familiar the key national interests that we can advance there.

Djibouti is a key security partner of the United States and plays an important role in the global economy. It hosts Camp Lemonnier, the United States' only enduring military base in Africa, which allows us to project power and maintain counterterrorism operations in Africa and the Middle East. It borders the Bab Al-Mandeb Strait, a major trade juncture at the opening of the Red Sea, through which one-third of annual global container traffic and approximately 5 million barrels of

oil a day flow. It provides a landing station for subsea cables that connect Africa to the rest of the world, and its ports are the gateway for most imports and exports to Ethiopia – one of the continent's fastest-growing economies. As the United States shifts away from aid and dependency toward trade and investment in Africa, the Trump Administration has engaged Djibouti to deepen our commercial and economic links. By strengthening these commercial ties, the United States seeks to offer Djibouti a viable alternative to the dependency risks associated with other foreign investors, most notably China.

If confirmed, I will prioritize the welfare of U.S. citizens in Djibouti and advance the Administration's policy objectives in fostering commercial diplomacy and deterring illegal immigration. I will work to encourage a business climate in Djibouti conducive to U.S. investment and fair competition.

If confirmed, I will devote myself fully to this assignment, our commercial and security priorities, and the welfare of U.S. citizens in Djibouti.

Thank you, and I look forward to answering your questions.