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Opening Statement of the Honorable **Ed Royce (R-CA)**, Chairman
House Foreign Affairs Committee Hearing:
“U.S. Interests in Africa”
May 18, 2017

(As prepared for delivery)

This hearing will come to order. Today we focus on U.S. interests on the continent of Africa. As Members know, this Committee has been at the lead of U.S.-Africa policy for many, *many* years. Last Congress was no different, with several laws passed:

- The ***Electrify Africa Act*** will bolster power and electricity projects across the continent, spurring economic growth;
- The ***END Wildlife Trafficking Act*** combats the threat posed by the illegal poaching and trafficking of elephants, rhinos and other animals – the profits linked to extremist groups;
- The ***Global Food Security Act*** improves our ability to respond to food emergencies; and
- We also successfully reauthorized the ***Africa Growth and Opportunity Act*** to expand opportunities for increased trade and investment.

Not too long ago, the Committee fought to establish landmark programs like PEPFAR and the *Millennium Challenge Corporation*. As this work was done in a bipartisan way – *we operate the same way today*. I would like to thank Ranking Member Engel, Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Bass for their leadership on these issues.

With nearly one billion consumers, Africa has huge potential as both a trading partner and a U.S. job-creator. Some of the fastest growing economies in the world are African, including 6 of the top 13 countries that grew the fastest over the last three years. This makes our economic engagement on the continent *critical*. But according to a recent news report, Chinese engagement with the continent “may be the largest global trade-and-investment spree in history.” *Simply put: the U.S. cannot get caught watching from the sidelines.*

Our efforts to combat Islamist extremism is not confined to the Middle East. ISIS affiliates and al-Shabaab in Somalia, Boko Haram in Northern Nigeria, and the al-Qaeda affiliate throughout the Sahel region must be addressed head-on through counterterrorism initiatives and support for African partners. One witness today will tell us about his exploits fighting wildlife traffickers, some linked to terrorists. Efforts to strengthen democratic institutions and government capabilities must go hand-in-hand with our efforts to address these challenges. Unfortunately, too many African countries are off the democratic track.

Critical situations require immediate leadership and direction from the U.S government. With three famines looming on the continent, deliberate deprivation of humanitarian aid by South

Sudan's political leaders, and ongoing political instability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the U.S. must remain active and engaged.

I am pleased by last week's nomination of Ambassador Mark Green to lead USAID. We look forward to working with this former Committee member to continue to provide communities with lifesaving aid from the American people. Aid also helps open African markets to sell U.S. goods and services. However, I am concerned by the delay in appointing an Assistant Secretary for Africa at the State Department. And the Department needs to demonstrate how the Administration's proposed budget cuts don't put this progress in jeopardy.