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Hearing of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations

Appointment of Three Ambassadors

419 Dirksen Senate Building, February 6, 2008, 1:00 PM

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee held a hearing for the appointment of three ambassadors. The ambassadors to be were the Honorable **Margaret Scobey** for the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Honorable **James F. Moriarty** for the People's Republic of Bangladesh, and **Ms. Deborah K. Jones** for the State of Kuwait. Presiding over the hearing was **Senator John Kerry**.

Margaret Scobey cited the importance of continuing to “strengthen the U.S.-Egyptian partnership in advancing peace, and **encourage Egypt to take the lead in economic and political reform in the region.**” Although citing the positive longstanding relationship with Egypt and Egypt's attempts to open its society, Scobey recognizes the problems that still exist. She mentions **the work that needs to be done regarding human rights abuses, slowed down political progress, and censorship**, using the detention of Ayman Nour as an example.

Sen. Kerry asked Scobey about the effectiveness of aid policy in overcoming the “hurdles” caused by the perceptions given to it by U.S. foreign policy. She answered that **aid was only one of the tools used by the U.S. to give itself a more positive image, but public forums and “honest efforts” to explain our policies were very important in overcoming any wrong perceptions.** She went on to saying that using aid as leverage in Egypt did not work because the Egyptian government did not always give in to requests.

Deborah Jones told the committee that she was going to work to “consolidate and expand” **the support of Kuwait “into a broader political, social, and economic arena” to “to build and sustain a stable and democratic Iraq, at peace with its neighbors.”** She also affirmed her dedication to combating extremist ideology and “rooting out” terrorists that threaten the peace and security of the region. Jones **applauded Kuwait's democratic advancements in the past few years, such as women gaining the right to vote, increased press freedoms, and large voter turnouts.**

When asked by Sen. Kerry what advisable steps could be taken to combat Islamic extremism, Jones answered by saying that the **U.S. is “vastly capable of competing with ideas” by providing a public forum that would encourage people to debate.** She said extremism was an issue of education and by demonstrating how democracy works, the U.S. could more effectively convey its message.