

Statement of Jeanine Jackson

Ambassador-Designate to the Republic of Malawi

Senate Committee on Foreign Relations

June 7, 2011

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

It is a great honor and privilege to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Malawi. I appreciate the confidence the President and Secretary Clinton have placed in me by putting my name forward for your consideration. I am also deeply grateful for the support of my husband Mark, a retired Foreign Service Officer.

Having previously served as Ambassador to Burkina Faso, I am aware of the importance, if confirmed, of working with this Committee and the Congress in order to advance U.S. interests in Malawi, including strengthening its democratic institutions, encouraging economic diversification, and building its health and education capacity.

Since joining the Foreign Service in 1985, I have held numerous positions overseas and in Washington. This experience, in addition to my military service, impressed upon me a clear understanding of the critical role that interagency cooperation plays both in U.S. Missions and here in Washington in developing and implementing U.S. foreign policy. My expertise with U.S. Government agencies is invaluable in my current assignment as Management Counselor of the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad. I lead large teams of U.S. Government civilians and military personnel to provide, in a hostile environment, the support platform for the

world's largest Embassy and the thirty-five U.S. Government agencies represented on its country team.

From its independence in 1964, Malawi was a one-party state under authoritarian control. Since 1994, when the people of Malawi voted in their first democratic, free, and fair elections, Malawi has strengthened its democratic institutions and has undergone peaceful transfers of power among political parties. The people of Malawi are proud that women comprise 22 percent of the Parliament.

The economy of this small, landlocked country is heavily dependent on agriculture. This creates challenges but the Malawian Government has taken steps to greatly increase productivity. Mineral deposits were recently discovered which may present opportunities for Malawi to diversify its economy. If confirmed, I look forward to assisting Malawi in addressing some of its most pressing needs with a focus on strengthening its health systems; providing quality education; and further developing democratic processes. The U.S. has active U.S. Agency for International Development, Centers for Disease Control and Peace Corps programs, many of which are supported through PEPFAR. Malawi was the first country to sign a PEPFAR Partnership Framework, and was selected to be one of eight Global Health Initiative plus countries. This year, the Millennium Challenge Corporation signed a \$350 million dollar compact with Malawi to improve access to electrical power, which should enable further economic gains.

Malawi maintains good relations with the U. S. It was the first southern African nation to receive U.S.-sponsored peacekeeping training and recently contributed troops to the UN Operation in Cote d'Ivoire

Malawi's co-operation on many issues is welcome, but we still have

concerns: we are sensitive to the need for individual freedoms, including individual preferences, and we support a political space that is open to all. If confirmed, I would work to support such a space for all Malawians.

Although Malawi is a small country and remains one of the most underdeveloped, it is nonetheless, a strategic partner of the U. S. Despite ongoing challenges, Malawi holds great promise. If confirmed, I would look forward to working with the Government of Malawi and its people on mutual goals of a healthier, better educated, more prosperous citizenry that embraces democratic values.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today. I will be happy to answer any questions.