

Statement for the Record
Ambassador-Designate David M. Hale
Committee on Foreign Relations
Wednesday, October 19, 2005

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

I am deeply honored that President Bush has nominated me to serve as U.S. Ambassador to Jordan, and I am grateful for the opportunity to appear before you today. I appreciate the confidence that Secretary Rice has placed in me, and I assure you that if I am confirmed I will spare no effort in carrying out my duties to protect American citizens and advance our interests in Jordan and the region. It is a source of particular pride for me to be considered for this posting in Jordan, a country I've come to know and respect in the course of two assignments. Arguably, our relations have never been closer, and I am honored to be given the duty to deepen and strengthen further our ties with our stalwart partner, Jordan.

Jordan has been and will continue to be a crucial partner in the Middle East as we seek to address four pressing and related challenges: building a free, prosperous, and democratic Iraq; making America and the world safer by fighting terrorism; realizing the vision of two democratic states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security; and supporting the expansion of democratic rights and economic opportunities for people across the region. Jordan, situated as it is at a geographic and strategic crossroads in the Middle East, has a significant role to play and significant interests at stake in each of these matters. Jordan's leaders recognize this fact, and share our strategic vision for the region. They have provided bold leadership and tangible support as we have worked together to meet these challenges successfully.

At a time when the people and leaders of Iraq are in urgent need of the support of their neighbors, Jordan's positive contributions have stood out. If confirmed, I will be committed to maintaining that strong support for Iraq, and to ensuring that it is coordinated with our own efforts. Jordan, a predominantly Sunni Muslim country, has put aside sectarian differences and worked vigorously to support the success of a unified, peaceful, democratic Iraq. Jordanian Prime Minister Badran visited Baghdad on September 10 of this year, becoming the first Arab leader to do so in the post-Saddam era. King Abdullah and other senior Jordanian officials have repeatedly called upon all Iraqis to engage in the political process, and have specifically urged Sunni Arabs to participate in the constitutional referendum and upcoming parliamentary elections. Jordan has been an active partner in bolstering Iraqi security forces, continuing among other things to train Iraqi police cadets at a facility near Amman and deploy an army field hospital in Fallujah that has treated thousands of Iraqi patients.

Jordan has been a brave and unflinching ally in the Global War on Terror. Jordan is on the front lines of this conflict. The Jordanian Government has experienced considerable success in fighting extremists, disrupting several terrorist plots including

ones targeting American and Jordanian government installations. It has also doggedly pursued and prosecuted those responsible for terrorist crimes such as the 2002 assassination of U.S. diplomat Laurence Foley. King Abdullah has also initiated a dialogue within the community of Islam on the need for a faith-based response to extremism: He has promoted the “Amman Message,” a declaration that stresses the tolerant, moderate nature of Islam, and condemns terrorism and the tactics and false claims employed by extremists in an attempt to lend religious authority to their crimes. If confirmed, I will work with the Government of Jordan to ensure our continued close cooperation in defeating terrorism and countering the influence of extremists.

Jordan is one of only two Arab nations that have signed peace treaties with Israel. Since Jordan signed its accord with Israel in 1994, it has sought to play a helpful role in bringing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to a close. King Abdullah has encouraged all Palestinian factions to unite behind the leadership of PA President Mahmoud Abbas, and has made clear that Jordan stands ready to meet any requests for assistance made by the Israelis and Palestinians. Jordan offers an example to other countries in the region of the benefits that accrue to those states that choose the path of reconciliation and co-existence over the path of confrontation. If confirmed, I will work with the Government of Jordan as it intensifies and expands its relationship with both the Israelis and the Palestinians. As the people of Gaza seek to establish a firm economic and institutional base for the future and the Israeli Government and Palestinian Authority look to make further progress along the roadmap towards the realization of a two-state solution, we can count on our Jordanian partners to facilitate this process.

This is an exciting time in Jordan, as its leaders and people work to expand the political liberties and economic opportunities of each of its citizens, and give every Jordanian the skills needed to compete in the global marketplace. Jordan has already embarked on an ambitious program of political and economic liberalization, and will soon release the report of its “National Agenda” commission, which will lay out the country’s reforms for the next decade. Through our USAID and other assistance programs, we are proud to be supporting players as Jordan charts its homegrown course on the road of economic and political reform. As Jordan is the recipient of one of our largest assistance programs, if confirmed I will ensure that every dollar spent advances our reform, development, and security goals for the region. I will also continue to take every opportunity to promote America’s public diplomacy message directly with the Jordanian people, in Arabic and in English.

I have already had the pleasure of welcoming many Members of Congress, including the esteemed members of this committee, and professional staff members to Amman, and I have witnessed first-hand the benefit of direct contact between the Congress and foreign leaders. I certainly encourage each of you to consider traveling to Jordan in the future and, if confirmed, I look forward to welcoming you there.

Thank you.