

**Statement by
Robert Stephen Beecroft
Nominee for U.S. Ambassador to Egypt
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
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Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Corker, and Members of the Committee, I am honored to appear before you today as the President's nominee to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to the Arab Republic of Egypt. I am deeply grateful to President Obama and Secretary Kerry for their support and confidence, and if confirmed, I look forward to working closely with you and other Members of Congress to advance the interests of the United States.

I am also pleased to share this hearing with Stuart Jones and Dana Smith. I look forward to working closely with them on the many issues facing the region.

Mr. Chairman, I have spent much of my career working in the Middle East, including assignments in Syria and Saudi Arabia and as Ambassador to Jordan and to Iraq. My experience has made me acutely aware of Egypt's strategic importance inside and outside the region and the need for effective U.S. engagement with Egypt: as the most populous Arab country, Egypt represents fully a quarter of the Arab world. It also hosts the Arab League. Its long-standing cultural influence and importance as an opinion leader and bellwether for trends across the region is well-known. Egypt is the third largest market for U.S. goods and services in the Middle East, and the United States is the second largest source of foreign direct investment in Egypt. Approximately eight percent of global maritime commerce flows through the Suez Canal every year, and a total of 427 U.S. flagged vessels – including over 85 U.S. military vessels – moved over 1.9 billion tons of cargo through the Suez in 2013. And I cannot stress enough the importance of Egypt's upholding of its Peace Treaty with Israel, which has delivered over 35 years of stability to the region. After repeated conflicts beginning in 1948, the two countries have not seen war since 1973. In the ensuing years, Egypt has even played a constructive role supporting our mediation on other tracks of the Arab-Israeli Conflict.

Conditions in Egypt thus have implications for the security of Israel and our allies in the Arab world and beyond. Increased instability in Egypt would not only open space for violent extremist strongholds, but also encourage migrant flight that could place added strain on our Southern European allies. It would threaten global commerce, with an ensuing ripple effect on international economies.

For these reasons and more, we have crucial interests in Egypt: preserving regional peace and stability with Israel and all of Egypt's neighbors; countering the transnational threats of terrorism and weapons trafficking; creating economic prosperity and increased opportunities for foreign investment; and building inclusive, democratic institutions and civil societies that deter the emergence of violent extremism and form the bedrock of prosperous, equitable economic growth. As President Obama said in his May 28 address at West Point, "...support for human rights and democracy goes beyond idealism – it is a matter of national security."

While views on how to advance our interests in Egypt may differ, there is agreement that Egypt's success as a secure, prosperous, pluralistic, and democratic state remains vitally important to the United States. If confirmed, I commit to work with Congress to help achieve this goal and promote a constructive U.S.-Egypt partnership that furthers our interests.

I want to commend the American personnel and local staff at our U.S. Mission who have been carrying out courageous and difficult work during a tumultuous time. The Mission has remained actively engaged with Egyptian government officials, political parties, and civil society. Twelve Cabinet-level agencies at the Mission are advancing our national security objectives, protecting the welfare of American citizens and business, and pursuing our work with the government and people of Egypt. If confirmed as ambassador, I look forward to joining in their efforts.

It is a distinct honor to have been nominated by President Obama to serve as U.S. Ambassador to Egypt, and I thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. Chairman Menendez and Ranking Member Corker, I look forward to answering any questions you or Members of the Committee may have.