

Statement of
The Honorable Patrick Leahy

United States Senator
Vermont
June 15, 2010

Statement Of Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.),
Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee
Hearing On The Nomination Of James Cole To Be Deputy Attorney General
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Today the Judiciary Committee considers the President's nomination of Jim Cole to be Deputy Attorney General. We are proceeding promptly with a hearing on the nomination to fill this important position at the Department of Justice, just as we did when President Bush nominated Mark Filip to be the Deputy in 2007. The number two position at the Justice Department is vital to our national security and to our system of justice.

It has been nearly a year and a half since Eric Holder was sworn in as the 82nd Attorney General of the United States. In that brief time, Attorney General Holder has made great strides toward restoring the Department of Justice and the American people's confidence in Federal law enforcement. Morale has improved throughout the Department. Key parts of the Justice Department, like the Civil Rights Division and the Antitrust Division, are now recommitted to their essential missions, and are showing results. The Department has been aggressive in attacking crime, particularly violence related to drug cartels, and has also demonstrated a renewed commitment to aggressively combating fraud.

The Department has effectively confronted national security challenges as part of a coordinated effort across the entire Government. Its prosecutions of those arrested for threatening our national security are yielding important intelligence, as well as convictions and extended sentences. These are difficult problems, but Attorney General Holder and the Justice Department have played constructive roles in confronting them with integrity and a commitment both to our national security and to our core rights and values.

I start by thanking Jim Cole and his family for their willingness to contribute to these efforts. He is an experienced prosecutor and has a well-deserved reputation for fairness, integrity and toughness. He has a great familiarity with the criminal justice system and the Department of Justice. He understands the issues of crime and national security that are at the center of the Deputy Attorney General's job. He served as a career prosecutor within the Department of Justice for a dozen years, prosecuting complex and high-profile corruption cases, and helping to manage the Public Integrity Section within the Justice Department.

He also served as special counsel for a House of Representatives' investigation into allegations of improper conduct by the then-Speaker of the House and was fair throughout. In the private

sector, he has led internal investigations into fraud and corruption. He is leaving a successful career in private practice to rejoin the Department.

His nomination has received strong endorsements from Republican and Democratic public officials and high-ranking veterans of the Justice Department. In a few moments, for example, Jack Danforth, a Republican colleague from Missouri in the Senate, a former U.N. Ambassador and former State Attorney General, will formally introduce him to the Committee. I know that Senator Cardin also has some thoughts to share from his experience with him during that House ethics investigation.

I hope that members of this Committee will be fair to the nominee. This should not be an occasion for partisanship. The responsibilities of the Deputy Attorney General are too important to the safety and security of all Americans for that.

The Deputy Attorney General is pivotal to the continued restoration of the Justice Department. The Deputy Attorney General is responsible for the day-to-day management of the United States Attorneys' Offices throughout the country and key components within the Justice Department. In the absence of the Attorney General, he serves as Attorney General. He makes sure that the Department is on top of its criminal justice and national security responsibilities day in and day out. This is a crucial position that we should work to fill without unnecessary delay.

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