

**Fw: Ap story**

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**From:** Mills, Cheryl D MillsCD@state.gov

RELEASE IN FULL

**To:** hdr22@clintonemail.com

**Subject:** Fw: Ap story

See below

----- Original Message -----

From: Hill, Christopher R

To: Mills, Cheryl D

Sent: Thu Mar 12 20:21:41 2009

Subject: Ap story

Fyi.

Republicans oppose Obama pick for Iraq ambassador

By ANNE FLAHERTY

Associated Press Writer

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WASHINGTON (AP) \_ At least three Republican senators have said that President Barack Obama should reconsider his pick to become the next U.S. ambassador to Iraq, dimming the chances that Christopher Hill could be confirmed.

Sens. John McCain of Arizona, Lindsey Graham of South Carolina and Sam Brownback of Kansas said this week that they were disappointed with Hill's appointment, which was announced Wednesday by Obama.

During the Bush administration, Hill led nuclear disarmament talks with North Korea. While considered a seasoned negotiator, Hill was regarded by many Republicans as too willing to make concessions to try to prod Pyongyang to give up its nuclear weapons.

If confirmed Hill would replace Ryan Crocker as America's top diplomat in Baghdad.

The swift negative reaction from Congress does not bode well for Hill's appointment. He would have to be confirmed by the Senate, where Democrats hold a narrow majority and procedural rules require 60 votes to cut off debate.

All three senators cited a lack of experience in the Middle East to explain their opposition to Hill.

Brownback also referred to his "evasive and unprofessional" past dealings with Congress, while McCain and Graham referred to his "controversial legacy" in a joint statement released late Thursday.

"The U.S. embassy in Baghdad is the world's largest, and our next ambassador will take the helm at a particularly critical time in our efforts in Iraq," Graham and McCain wrote. "The next ambassador should have experience in the Middle East and in working closely with the U.S. military in counterinsurgency or counterterrorism operations. Mr. Hill has neither."