

Party lines: *people, places and politics*

Kuwaitis go all out for refugees

Karl Rove, President Bush's deputy chief of staff, chatted with Sheikhha Rima Al-Sabah (second from left) as Daiby Rove visited with Kuwaiti Ambassador Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah and Hassan al-Ebraheem of the Kuwait-American Foundation (right) before the start of a benefit dinner Wednesday for Iraqi refugee relief.



By Kevin Chaffee
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THE EVENT: The Kuwait-America Foundation's Tribute to Friendship benefiting Iraqi refugee relief.

STAR POWER: There was plenty of discreet rubbernecking among the 100 or so corporate heavyweights who shelled out \$1 million and change to dine with film goddess and refugee goodwill ambassador **Angelina Jolie**, not to mention a who's who of Bush administration heavyweights, Supreme Court justices and top military brass at the black-tie dinner hosted by Kuwaiti Ambassador Sheikh **Salem Al-Sabah** and his wife, Sheikhha **Rima Al-Sabah** at their residence Wednesday night.

Miss Jolie, 29, who received one of the foundation's humanitarian awards, commanded all eyes from the moment she swept in wearing a black trumpet-flared silk gown that displayed her curvaceous figure to maximum advantage.

"I am very glad she is not the typical socialite one sees at Washington parties," **Maureen Scalia**, wife of Justice **Antonin Scalia**, joked as she caught a glimpse of the Oscar-winning actress' sleek silhouette in the embassy's flower-filled drawing room.

Miss Jolie appeared to fret after learning she was seated between her co-honoree, former Secretary of State **Colin L. Powell**, and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. **Richard Myers** at dinner. "I'm a little nervous," she confessed with a sigh.

Molly Raiser, head of the evening's beneficiary organization, the United States Association for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), was quick to reassure her.

"Oh, don't worry. They'll probably be nervous, too."

WHO WAS THERE: The presence of White House Deputy Chief of Staff **Karl Rove**, Deputy Defense Secretary **Paul Wolfowitz**, Justice **Anthony Kennedy**, Secretary of Transportation **Norman Mineta**, Secretary of Energy **Samuel Bodman**, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development **Alphonso Jackson**, Gen. **Peter Pace**, Multi-National Force Commander Gen. **George Casey** and Sens. **Chuck Hagel** and **Thad Cochran** was a major draw for corporate honchos from Dow Chemical, Boeing, General Motors, Coca-Cola, ChevronTexaco, ConocoPhillips, ExxonMobil and Shell. They all paid a minimum \$10,000 apiece to dine on lobster with caviar, truffle risotto and loin of lamb with post-dinner entertainment by **Marvin Hamlisch**, singer **Mark McVey**, the Master Chorale of Washington and the Washington Concert Chorus Children's Chorus.

"We're not in Kuwait, or in Iraq yet, but we'd sure like to be," said one oil executive whose company made a sizable donation and then "gave a few seats back" to the cause.



MOST INTERESTING GUEST: Iraqi Minister of Women's Affairs **Narmin Othman**, who may have upset a few tummies when she cataloged the brutal killings and mass graves of the Saddam Hussein regime just before the baked Alaska was served. Ms. Othman, who wore a Western-style skirt and blouse, had noted earlier that about 70 percent of Iraqi women in Baghdad and the Kurdish areas "dress like me. In the South, only about two percent [are unveiled]."

BEST ONE-LINER: Mr. Hamlich telling the crowd that "if this were a Jewish occasion, I'd be telling you to turn your plates over to find out who can take the flowers."

YOU HAD TO BE THERE MOMENT: While Mr. Powell was waiting in line for his car, he was heard to bellow playfully that Mr. Rove was to blame for taking away all of his perquisites – limousine, security detail and even his cell phone mere hours after he had left office.

Mr. Rove's reply: "General, may I carry your [goody] bag for you?"



RIMA'S TRIUMPH: Mrs. Al-Sabah, a self-described workaholic who "did the letters, the meetings, the follow-through, the decor, the programs, the guest list and the seating," got all the credit from her proud husband and everybody else for pulling off the event even though, as Mr. Powell humorously quipped, "She drives us all crazy. I can only handle Rima once a year."

But it was was "the right cause at the right time and very close to my heart," as the glamorous blondcq sheika put it, and "donors responded immediately" to her plea for funds to help more than 300,000 refugees stranded in Saudi Arabia and Jordan return home.

"You can tell by the tremendous response that she is the top embassy hostess in Washington now," said inveterate social observer **Esther Coopersmith**. "She loves Washington, and Washington loves her."

Actress Angelina Jolie (center left) talked with fellow honoree former Secretary of State Cohn L. Powell at the fund-raiser. Iraqi Minister of Women's Affairs Narmin Othman (left) greeted Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz.