

Chairman Kerry Statement at Nomination Hearing for Wendy Sherman to be Under Secretary of State

Washington, DC – This morning, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee held a nomination hearing for Ambassador Wendy Sherman to be Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs. Chairman John Kerry (D-MA) provided a statement for the record praising Ambassador Sherman as an exceptional and dedicated public servant who brings a depth of foreign policy and political experience to this position.

“There is no doubt in my mind that, if confirmed, she will do a tremendous job in this critical diplomatic post. We need diplomats of her caliber to guide us through the challenges we face today. In the past months alone, we have all been captivated by the incredible wave of change sweeping the Middle East. We have been inspired by the people in Tunisia and Egypt who demanded freedom and dignity and an end to repression and corruption. And we have been moved by the courageous uprising in Libya that has led to the downfall of Moammar Qaddafi.”

“But we have also watched with increasing horror as the Syrian government uses violence and brutality against its own people. And we need to beware of the downward spiral taking place in Yemen, and the dangerous implications for the region if the government in Sanaa were to leave a power vacuum in its wake. Clearly, it is a time of great possibility, but also of great danger, in a region that is vital to U.S. interests.”

The full text of Chairman Kerry’s hearing statement is below:

I am pleased that this morning the Senate Foreign Relations Committee is welcoming Ambassador Wendy Sherman, an exceptional public servant whom the President has nominated to be Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs.

Ambassador Sherman brings a tremendous depth of foreign policy and political experience to this position. She served as Assistant Secretary of State for Legislative Affairs, as well as Counselor to the Secretary of State, during the Clinton Administration. She is also familiar with Capitol Hill, having served as Chief of Staff to Senator Barbara Mikulski. There is no doubt in my mind that, if confirmed, she will do a tremendous job in this critical diplomatic post.

We need diplomats of her caliber to guide us through the challenges we face today. In the past months alone, we have all been captivated by the incredible wave of change sweeping the Middle East. We have been inspired by the people in Tunisia and Egypt who demanded freedom and dignity and an end to repression and corruption. And we have been moved by the courageous uprising in Libya that has led to the downfall of Moammar Qaddafi.

But we have also watched with increasing horror as the Syrian government uses violence and brutality against its own people. And we need to beware of the downward spiral taking place in Yemen, and the dangerous implications for the region if the government in Sanaa were to leave a power vacuum in its wake. Clearly, it is a time of great possibility, but also of great danger, in a region that is vital to U.S. interests.

Amid these challenges in the Middle East, we still have to manage our involvement in many other regions. This spring, for example, the Committee held a series of hearings on how to

approach our engagement in Afghanistan and Pakistan. We will spend \$120 billion in Afghanistan this fiscal year alone. We must be sure that scarce resources are being used effectively and constructively, and we must also be aware that large expenditures can constrain our ability to act elsewhere.

As the world has seen in the past several weeks, our budgetary constraints are forcing increasingly painful trade-offs. We cannot afford to be the world's first responder whenever a crisis arises – we need strong multilateral partners who can help us shoulder this burden. At the same time, I take very seriously the notion that no other country in the world has our resources, capabilities, or expertise to save lives, mitigate disasters, and prevent catastrophes. We have managed to accumulate tremendous wealth, power, and influence – and with that comes equivalent responsibility. When we fail to act, the world all too often is silent as well. Even as we work to address the budget crisis facing our country we must not shortchange our ability to conduct foreign policy—the money we spend abroad is not a gift to foreign nations. It is an investment in our national security.

And, make no mistake: going forward, we will face an incredibly wide range of foreign policy challenges, including the growing economic and political potency of China, India, and Brazil, as well as that of a host of emerging powers, like South Africa, Indonesia, and Turkey. More than ever, our national security interests are closely interconnected with our economic interests.

What this time demands from our leading diplomats is not only remarkable commitment and skill, but remarkable versatility. And I am very gratified that the President has nominated someone with all of those talents to such an important position.

Ambassador Sherman, we thank you for your continued dedication to public service and to helping lead the Department of State through such a decisive period in our foreign policy. I look forward to your testimony.

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