

BUSINESS MEETING

Tuesday, February 14, 2012

U.S. SENATE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
WASHINGTON, D.C.

1 The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:20 p.m. in Room S-116, The Capitol,
2 Hon. John Kerry, chairman of the committee, presiding.

3 Present: Senators Kerry, Boxer, Menendez, Cardin, Casey, Shaheen, Coons,
4 Durbin, Udall, Lugar, Corker, Risch, Rubio, and Isakson.

5 THE CHAIRMAN. There are several legislative items, nominations, a Foreign
6 Service officer list on the agenda.

7 Let me begin with the legislative items. We have two bills on the agenda that
8 Senator Durbin introduced: S. 1023, the Haiti Reforestation Act of 2011; and Senate 414,
9 the International Protecting Girls by Preventing Child Marriage Act.

10 Let me just say to all the members these are the same bills that passed not just the
11 committee but the Senate, the full Senate, last year. So, obviously, I hope they are going
12 to pass again, and I will support them fully and I hope everybody here will. I want to

1 thank Senator Durbin for his leadership on them. When he gets here, if he wants to say
2 something on that, we will recognize him.

3 On the four resolutions on the agenda, I think we are only going to be voting on
4 two of them today. I am holding over S.Res. 344, which is the resolution introduced by
5 Senators Rubio and Menendez regarding Nicaragua and I am doing so with their
6 cooperation. I appreciate it. Our staffs are working on language, and I expect it will be
7 moved very, very quickly once those changes are in place and that should happen in
8 short order. And I want to thank Senator Rubio and Senator Menendez for their
9 leadership on this resolution.

10 On the resolution on Syria, introduced by Senator Casey and cosponsored by
11 Senator Rubio and others, Senator Lugar has requested that we defer consideration
12 until the committee has had an opportunity to hold a hearing on Syria. I support the
13 Casey resolution and would have voted in favor of it today, but I do respect and agree
14 with Senator Lugar that I think it is important to have the hearing and we will do so.

15 But I do want to say something quickly, if I can, about Syria. In the last few days,
16 I have met with a number of the foreign ministers from the region, and yesterday I had
17 a conversation with Foreign Minister Abdallah of the Arab Emirates who just came back

1 from meeting with Sergei Lavrov in Moscow. And I would report to everybody here
2 that he was encouraged by the conversation with Minister Lavrov.

3 And the Arab League, as you all know, has expressed deep concerns about
4 where things are with respect to Syria. In my conversation with the Foreign Minister,
5 we talked about ways in which the Arab League can continue to move and ways in
6 which we, through NATO and the United Nations, all together can try to have a greater
7 impact on what is happening there.

8 I would report to my colleagues that there may have been a time when the
9 region's leaders feared that Assad's removal might precipitate chaos, but the level of
10 violence the Syrian Government is using against its own people, including the
11 continued shelling of Homs in recent days, makes it abundantly clear that it is only
12 through Assad's removal that chaos is going to ultimately be averted. There is now a
13 consensus in the Middle East that Assad not only needs to go but is, frankly, doomed,
14 though there is not a consensus over how long it will take to affect that removal.

15 The courage and the determination of the Syrian people in the face of
16 unspeakable violence has, obviously, been remarkable, and all of us still hope that a
17 full-scale civil war can be averted.

1 I want to commend Senator Casey, Senator Rubio, and others who want to press
2 this issue. It is important to press and we need to have that hearing and we will have it
3 as soon as we possibly can.

4 Senator Casey?

5 SENATOR CASEY. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. I just want to say maybe
6 three things.

7 Number one is I want to thank Senator Rubio and others who are on this with
8 me, I know Senator Boxer, Senator Isakson, and Senator Durbin, many Senators from
9 both parties.

10 But I just hope—and I do not agree with the idea of having everybody respect
11 the spirit within which that proposal was made. I just hope that we can continue the
12 sense of urgency that I think I hear in your voice to move this as fast as possible because
13 the scale of this violence is just stunning. I mean, 6,000 people being killed in that
14 country by their own government is the equivalent of 50,000 Americans, for example, in
15 terms of the percent of the population. So that is number one, a sense of urgency.

16 Number two is I just hope we can maintain that, but I also want to make sure
17 that we do not lose sight of the fact that nothing in this resolution talks about arming

1 anyone. It solely focuses on helping the people that should be helped with all kinds of
2 important aid.

3 And I think just speaking with one voice—and this is the last point I will make—
4 having the United States Senate on the record because candidly, folks, we are in the U.S.
5 Senate and this body really has not spoken to this tragedy in the way that I think we
6 should have to date. So I hope we can make that sense of urgency.

7 THE CHAIRMAN. Well, Senator Casey, I mean, I completely agree with you, and I
8 think Senator Lugar feels the urgency too. And I think it is good to have a hearing. I
9 think this meeting today and the statements that Senators are making today are very,
10 very important. I intend to try to schedule that hearing for literally, I guess, the
11 Tuesday we are back, hopefully, and we could move on the resolution that same week.
12 So I do not think this is a long delay.

13 Senator Boxer?

14 SENATOR BOXER. Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I have to say I am very
15 disappointed that we are not voting on this today. With full respect for Senator Lugar—
16 you know, I think the world of Senator Lugar, but I think Senator Casey's remarks were
17 pretty controlled. Everything we do here sends a signal—everything we do. And
18 things we do not do send a signal. And we are talking about a resolution that is just

1 essentially calling it the way it is, condemning Russia for standing against the Syrian
2 people, condemning Iran for providing military assistance, deploring the violence, and
3 calling on Assad to step aside. We know there are perils here. We know we are going
4 to have a hearing. We are going to find out nobody exactly knows where everybody is
5 on what side. We all know that. But the beauty of this resolution is it is of the moment.

6 So I do not know if there is any way, but I mean, we are going out. You are not
7 going to be able to have the hearing for 10 days. That is 10 days of more killing, more
8 violence, more babies getting killed, bloodied, and that is all out there. And I am just
9 wondering if there is a way—and I know it is not such great protocol and we do
10 everything here the way we do it. But if there is a way to sit with Senator Lugar and
11 Senator Casey and his chief Republican cosponsor, Senator Rubio, and try to refine this
12 in a way to get it done now or get it done this week before we leave. I do not feel good
13 about leaving here without addressing this and going away for a week. And if there is
14 any way—and my chairman and Senator Lugar, you have worked beautifully together.
15 If there is a way to meet Senator Lugar's objections or make it clearer what we are
16 trying to do, I am simply urging you to do it because I think non-action here sends a
17 signal and it is the wrong signal to the world.

18 THE CHAIRMAN. Senator Corker?

1 SENATOR CORKER. So my comments are not directed at the authors of this
2 resolution or any other resolution.

3 But I find what we do here is totally feckless. I mean, if this is so important, why
4 do we not pass an authorization? I mean, what we do around here is we have these
5 meaningless resolutions that send a signal, and what they do, of course, is give the
6 administration the ability to act on something under the cover of the Senate, but we
7 never have the courage just to authorize something. And I think these things actually
8 diminish the Foreign Relations Committee. It to me shows no real courage or will to
9 pass a resolution and say, hey, administration, do whatever you wish.

10 So I think all these resolutions actually, as I mentioned, diminish this body,
11 diminish the committee, diminish the Senate, and in the process, make us even more
12 irrelevant to the foreign relations process. And that does not speak to the plus or minus
13 of this resolution or some of the other resolutions, but it is a really simplistic way out of
14 taking a position on anything and I wish we would stop doing all of these resolutions. I
15 know we have to do them from time to time for gratuitous things in our own States, but
16 a resolution on something that is significant to me just diminishes this.

17 And I probably will vote present on these. I do not know what I am going to do
18 because we are not really doing anything. We are just acting like we are doing

1 something. It is a waste of time and we should be focused on real things in this
2 committee or not meet.

3 THE CHAIRMAN. So what is it that the Senator wants to do?

4 SENATOR CORKER. Well, I do not know. I mean, basically the Syrian thing allows
5 the administration to have substantial material and technical support. I do not know
6 what that means exactly. But I think what it could mean is that we are willing to tell
7 them to sell arms or give arms to Syria. If that is what we want to do, let us authorize it
8 and let us pass it.

9 SENATOR BOXER. I thought you said it did not do anything.

10 SENATOR CORKER. The administration can do it anyway. Why do we not
11 authorize something? Why do we not do like Senator Menendez and Senator Kirk did
12 on Iran where we actually do something versus passing resolutions that have no force
13 of law?

14 THE CHAIRMAN. Well, it is interesting. Let me just begin by saying, look, I know
15 there are frustrations that build up around here about a lot of different things, but I do
16 not want the Senator to impugn or diminish the effect of what the Senate Foreign
17 Relations Committee does with respect to some of these resolutions or other things that
18 we engage in.

1 I certainly have not heard the Senator come to me or express a specific proposal
2 with respect to what you would like to do on Syria.

3 There is a free Syrian military. They have refuge in Turkey today. There are
4 other things being kicked around, but frankly, Senator, no entity has yet resolved
5 exactly what it wants to do with respect to Syria because Syria is a little bit more
6 complicated than Libya and other places. There is a 300,000-plus person army still very
7 supportive of Assad. Hezbollah is still supportive of Assad. Iran is still supportive of
8 Assad. The business community is still supportive of Assad. They are sort of sitting on
9 the fence trying to figure out where things are going. Turkey has not yet moved to arm.
10 The Arab League did not move the other day to arm.

11 So let us put this in its proper context. I will tell you on personal experience
12 whether it is in Kosovo or in any number of countries, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India in
13 some regards, Southeast Asia, and different places, when we pass a resolution, those
14 resolutions are read by and passed around by and used by groups for organizing
15 purposes, for manifestations of support for fundraising, for morale, and for other
16 purposes. And I just think the Senator is making an enormous mistake to diminish the
17 impact of these kinds of messages.

1 There were times when Voice of America did nothing except pass information
2 and news from the West to people. But talk to those people who are free today, and
3 they will tell you that the only thing that kept them alive and that kept them going was
4 the Voice of America and the messages they got.

5 So I think it is all well and good to sit here, and you know, we can be critical of
6 these things but I would be critical of them with a measure of reality about sort of
7 where we are and where we are heading here and what the options are.

8 If the Senator has a proposal to specifically provide aid, military assistance,
9 whatever it is, we are here. I have never refused anybody the right or the opportunity
10 to debate anything here. This is the place to do it. That is why we are on this committee
11 and I welcome it. So I would welcome whatever proposal or option the Senator wants
12 to lay. He can amend the resolution if you have an amendment to it.

13 But I would not be dismissive of what this committee does, particularly when it
14 urges the President to do certain things. And I tell you when we do things up here, I
15 think it has an impact on what the administration thinks about it, and I hear that from
16 them sometimes before we pass a resolution and sometimes afterwards.

1 So one way or the other, I would hope the Senator would step back and think
2 carefully about what has an impact here and what does not. And I am open to anything
3 more concrete and specific if the Senator has that proposal.

4 SENATOR CORKER. Could I respond?

5 THE CHAIRMAN. Absolutely.

6 SENATOR CORKER. My comments actually go to all of the resolutions. And if
7 there are concrete thoughts that the Foreign Relations Committee has, I think we should
8 write and authorize a piece of legislation and try to pass it. I am actually not going to
9 step back. I am going to step forward and say that, again, if people on this committee
10 have a strong sense of what this country ought to be doing in another country, we
11 ought to be drafting authorizing legislation that lays it out. We should not diminish
12 ourselves by constantly passing meaningless things. You know, the Voice of America—
13 if somebody wants to be on the board of Voice of America, that is great. But this is the
14 Foreign Relations committee, and I think we diminish ourselves constantly fiddle-
15 faddling around with resolutions. And I will stop.

16 THE CHAIRMAN. Well, I will tell you what I am going to do for the Senator. I am
17 going to have an analysis given to him on the effect of our resolutions in various
18 countries through the years, and I think it might open his eyes a little bit.

1 SENATOR CARDIN. Mr. Chairman, I just really want to take exception to Senator
2 Corker's comments as to the relevancy of the resolutions that we debate here. I think it
3 is extremely important that the United States Senate express itself on matters of
4 international importance. I can tell you putting a spotlight on the issue by the United
5 States Senate has an incredible impact on world opinion and on the resolve of America.
6 And so I find what we do in this committee and on the floor of the Senate expressing
7 ourselves on matters that are occurring internationally to be what the international
8 community expects in leadership from the United States. And I would urge us to
9 recognize the importance of the work that we are doing here and treat it with that
10 seriousness.

11 Now, in response to the Syria resolution, Mr. Chairman, I would hope that we
12 could find a way to act on this. The reason I say that is if you take a look at what this
13 resolution does, look at the resolve clauses --there are 14 resolve clauses that all express
14 issues that I think are important: condemns the ongoing, widespread, and symptomatic
15 violence of human rights; maintains that Assad has lost all claims to legitimacy due to
16 the perpetuation of mass atrocities; and on. It talks about what we all know to be the
17 facts. We have been going through this now for months. We have been commenting on
18 it. I think it is time for the United States Senate to be on record.

1 Now, I understand and support ongoing hearings in this committee. I think we
2 should have ongoing hearings. I think it is critically important. I understand that one
3 of the problems that we have is it is tough for us to get a lot of information because of
4 the repressive nature of the Syrian regime and the inability of NGO's to be able to
5 operate in that country and the inability of having an open and free press. So a lot of
6 the information we have is more difficult for us to obtain.

7 My concern, if we just wait for 2 weeks, is that the circumstances on the ground
8 will continue to change. I think it is important for us to speak up for what we know is
9 happening in Syria. And I have looked at the resolution that Senator Casey has brought
10 forth with the others, and I think it expresses what we all know to be the case. And I
11 would hope that we would find a way to move this resolution sooner rather than later.

12 THE CHAIRMAN. Richard? Or do you want me to turn to Senator Coons first?
13 Senator Coons?

14 SENATOR COONS. I will be very brief.

15 I would like to be a cosponsor.

16 THE CHAIRMAN. So ordered.

17 SENATOR DURBIN. Senator Kerry?

18 THE CHAIRMAN. Senator Durbin?

1 SENATOR DURBIN. At a meeting I wish you could have attended, Senator
2 Corker—it was in Chicago in one of the suburbs, and it was a meeting with Syrian
3 Americans, Muslim and Christian, doctors, engineers, entrepreneurs whose families
4 have been killed. And they said to me what were you doing. Do you even know this is
5 going on? And I said, of course, we know it is going on. We are doing everything we
6 can to stop this bloodshed. That meeting took place September 11th of last year, and
7 look what is still happening here.

8 I would find it more difficult to explain why we did nothing today than passing
9 this resolution. Passing this resolution at least expresses our position. I would bet,
10 Senator, that you and I have both joined in voting for many, many resolutions
11 expressing our positions on foreign policy issues. I am sure we have. And that
12 expression has meaning to the people we represent and to those around the world who
13 monitor what we are saying and what we are doing.

14 I was disappointed, in fact angry, that two members of the UN Security Council
15 walked away from us when we tried to pass a resolution just 2 weeks ago dealing with
16 this. I think that was a serious dereliction of duty on their part. I think we need to
17 continue to put the pressure on them and on Assad to stop killing innocent people. This

1 is part of the message to get that done. Let us do it today rather than try to explain
2 tomorrow why we were too busy and did not think it was that important.

3 THE CHAIRMAN. Can I also say, Senator Corker, that one of the things that
4 happens around here is—and we are a legislative body. Obviously, we have the right to
5 pass a very specific requirement for the administration, et cetera, but generally
6 speaking, in foreign policy there is a cooperative effort at least and a deferral at best.
7 Now, deferral is not always appropriate because we may feel very strongly in our
8 prerogatives in foreign policy that the administration is not moving fast enough. And
9 that is perfectly legitimate, in which case we would go further. But inevitably there is
10 always a kind of movement toward something. You kind of build up over a period of
11 time. And legitimacy is gained by virtue of those steps at times, and I think sometimes
12 that may begin with a resolution. It may end with a declaration of war in certain places
13 or with something less, with a permission to the President to conduct affairs like in Iraq
14 which began, incidentally, with resolutions not unlike these. So I think you kind of
15 have to recognize there is a process which, impatient as we all are and imperfect as the
16 system is, nevertheless often gets us to where we want to go.

17 Senator Rubio?

18 SENATOR RUBIO. Thank you.

1 Senator Corker raises an interesting point. In fact, when I first got here, I used to
2 ask—my daughter asked me what do you do all day. I said I sign on to letters and I
3 vote on resolutions, I mean, stuff of that nature. So I used to wonder does this stuff
4 even matter. Who cares about this stuff? And then the people who are against it
5 started complaining and the people who were for it started thanking me, and I realized
6 for some weird reason people actually care what the United States Senate thinks about
7 these issues.

8 And then as I have gotten an opportunity to travel, I have actually had people
9 who are aware of some. In one instance, we were in Libya shortly after the change
10 there, and they were aware intimately. Some of the people were aware intimately of
11 some of the things that had happened here and the discussions that we were having
12 and, quite frankly, said they drew inspiration from them, which blew me away because
13 there are not too many things happening here that are inspirational to me, but
14 apparently they were to them.

15 So I will just say two things on Syria, which I do not think Senator Corker
16 questions or anybody. One is it is in our national interest at a time when we are looking
17 for ways to ratchet up pressure on Iran. I do not think of anything more frustrating to

1 them. Obviously, the sanctions are. But the loss of Assad and that government would
2 really be devastating to Iran's ambitions for the region.

3 And the other is human rights. It is so critical we always be on the right side of
4 history as a nation at a time when I think the world is really — people talk about the rise
5 of China, the rise of Russia. I wish them well. But the issue becomes whose set of
6 values are going to predominate in the 21st century. And I think we have seen in the
7 United Nations Security Council what the values of Russia and China are which is they
8 reserve the right to use these things to repress their own people in order to hold onto
9 power. And we are standing up and saying these are wrong and we are going to be
10 part of the community that condemns it.

11 So I do think it kind of matters what we say or do here only because the people
12 that do not like it complain, and the people who do like it thank us.

13 So I do not know what it is going to be today and I do not know what Syria is
14 going to look like 2 weeks from now. We may have to rewrite this thing to regret the
15 loss of, God knows, what could happen. So whatever way is fine. I hope we can vote
16 on it today or this week.

17 THE CHAIRMAN. Well, Senator Rubio, I would love for you to be able to tell your
18 kids and others that a lot of exciting things are happening here. One of the ways that

1 could happen is if we did not require 60 votes to vote for judges and then get 100 votes
2 when they are voted on. So I think we could make this place a lot more exciting.

3 Senator Lugar?

4 SENATOR LUGAR. Mr. Chairman, let me just say I think the gravity of the
5 situation is clear and the need for our committee to be heard would make a large
6 difference.

7 The problem I have in one part is technical, and that is the amendment that was
8 circulated, I believe, first of all, last Thursday at a time when many members were
9 preparing to leave town for the weekend and come back into this. So the opportunity
10 for consideration even among ourselves has been limited.

11 But beyond that, I remember the last hearing we had of the committee. The
12 administration, to say the least, was trying to be informative, but was very indecisive
13 when I raised question of what would happen in the event that Assad left or was
14 replaced. The witnesses said, frankly, we do not have any idea.

15 I raise that point because I think we need to hear from the State Department or
16 from somebody regarding what they see as the status of this. We also need at least to
17 have some conversation, formal or informal, among ourselves about the actual
18 language that might be utilized ultimately by our Government. I agree with Senator

1 Corker's point. There may be a temptation to say this is an authorization and that there
2 is a sentiment here in the committee to do this or that or so forth when we really did not
3 want to go that far. We were advising, at least at this particular juncture, how we saw it.

4 So I appreciate the urgency and the desire of many members to vote, and it is not
5 my purpose really to simply be a delayer. But I think this is going to have grave
6 ramifications for our foreign policy and for our armed forces, and it is a part of the
7 context of a number of crises in the area that may intersect with each other. So I would
8 hope that there might be some patience of members to at least consider having a
9 hearing and some further discussion and some examination of the amendment carefully
10 so that when we do act we have then some impact and are confident that we were on
11 the right track.

12 SENATOR BOXER. Senator, would you yield to me for a question?

13 SENATOR LUGAR. Of course.

14 SENATOR BOXER. Because I hear what you are saying.

15 And as Senator Rubio has stated, this thing is so dynamic and changing not for
16 the better. We do not know where we will be, but we all can agree on this. Even
17 Senator Corker, I think, would agree with the statement, that what is going on there is a
18 travesty to humanity, that children are being cut down, et cetera, that when there was a

1 move to do something about it, two countries stood in the way. And these things we
2 know.

3 So it just seems to me we have to have enough agreement on this committee
4 between you and Senator Kerry to work with Senators Casey and Rubio, who are the
5 leads on it, and somehow hammer out something that we can take up before we left
6 that does not comment on the things you fear, which is to somehow suggest that we
7 have an answer. We do not have an answer. But this is the United States. We are the
8 guardian of human rights and human freedom, and we speak out when we see these
9 problems.

10 So I would ask my friend is there any way that he would be willing to sit down
11 with our chairman and the two primary sponsors of this to work out just a statement of
12 response.

13 And I think when Senator Kerry talks about the Voice of America, what he is
14 basically saying is we have always had an echo chamber for the ideals of the American
15 people.

16 And I think between the four of you, I think the rest of us would feel very
17 comfortable with that, and maybe we can have an off-the-floor agreement if it did not
18 worry you—in other words, if it was basically a statement of what has gone on, because

1 as far as I know, the Senate has not spoken out. Then before we leave, Harry and Mitch
2 McConnell could get together and work. It is just an idea. Would the Senator be open
3 to something like that?

4 SENATOR LUGAR. No. I would prefer that we proceed to have the hearing.

5 SENATOR BOXER. That is unfortunate. That is very unfortunate. I am very sorry.
6 And I strongly disagree.

7 THE CHAIRMAN. Bob?

8 SENATOR CASEY. Real quick. I would reiterate or associate myself with what
9 Senator Boxer said. There has to be a way. I talked about urgency before. There is even
10 more urgency because we have a break coming up. There has to be a way to make
11 some statement.

12 Damien on my staff just passed me a note. I will not read it, but here is the gist of
13 it. We are having a debate about process here and the bad guy is Assad, and every
14 minute we blabber on about process—and I realize it is not just process. People are
15 worried about the implications of process, but we can come up with something that
16 says the United States Senate says the following about the brutal slaughter there. I am
17 willing to take out a clause. I am willing to work with anybody. But the idea that we

1 are just going to wait for a hearing—I think 2 weeks does not make sense. There has got
2 to be a way to do this.

3 SENATOR ISAKSON. Mr. Chairman?

4 THE CHAIRMAN. Senator Isakson?

5 SENATOR ISAKSON. I am a cosponsor and I have been listening intently and
6 appreciate all the remarks that have been made. But maybe there is a sweet spot here.

7 I do not think there is any doubt—and if somebody does not agree with this,
8 speak up or else you have been coerced by me to agree. But I think everybody here
9 condemns Assad and the tragedy of his going against the Syrian people. The resolution
10 of condemnation is a clear and specific signal like the one you talked about and Mario
11 talked about in terms of what people see. And in that resolution, refer to the Senate
12 Foreign Relations Committee as a committee of the whole needs to further investigate
13 those things the United States of America can do to help the people who are being
14 injured in Syria. So maybe you can do both things. Maybe you can have a
15 condemnation resolution today that directs a hearing to carry out specific action later on
16 in support of the innocent Syrian people.

17 SENATOR BOXER. That is a Solomon-like idea.

1 THE CHAIRMAN. Senator Isakson, Senator Lugar has consented to this, and I
2 think it is good. What we will try and do, Senator Casey, we will meet. If you all will
3 let us sort of act as a rough group here, we will pull together an appropriate
4 condemnation in recognition of what is happening, of the efforts of the Syrian people.
5 We will not embrace specific action steps that might be interpreted in any mistaken
6 way, but make those subject to the hearing. The hearing will take place the minute we
7 get back, and then we will meet again to operate out of that process.

8 So what I would like to do then, if everybody would consent, I would ask
9 unanimous consent we have a business meeting on Thursday with the purpose of
10 considering a revised resolution. Is everybody in agreement? Any objection to that?

11 [No response.]

12 THE CHAIRMAN. So we will meet at a time. I will let you all know. We will get a
13 quick quorum. We ought to be able to do it fairly quickly and rapidly and
14 appropriately, get it to the floor on Thursday, and have the Senate pass it before we get
15 out of here. Subject to the call of the Chair, it will be either tomorrow or Thursday. We
16 will get the business meeting as soon as we can get the language done. We will get the
17 Majority Leader.

18 And I think this has been a good discussion and a profitable process.

1 SENATOR CORKER. So, Mr. Chairman, I think it is very good, and Johnny Isakson
2 always has a way, I think, of suggesting things that bring people together, and I
3 appreciate him for that.

4 My comments—I want to say one more time—are not specific to this particular
5 resolution. It is really about all the resolutions we do. What we do—the
6 administrations end up taking our resolutions, which are not very thoughtful because
7 they do not really say that much, and using those to build a case to launch military
8 operations and do things as if the Senate has, in fact, spoken on those. And I just hope
9 that over time we will move to a place where instead of doing that, we will actually
10 state what it is that we think the administration ought to be authorized to do. Again,
11 we saw that in the most recent efforts where we really played no role in Libya, and I just
12 think we would be less diminished if we would actually take our work in that direction
13 versus the numbers of resolutions that have no bearing.

14 THE CHAIRMAN. Actually, again, with all respect, I think we did play a role and it
15 was a pretty important role both publicly and privately as individual Senators, and it
16 had an impact on policy, I will tell you, because I met with the Council. I was the first
17 person to meet with the Council. I met with them in Cairo. And what we said with

1 respect to our public statements had a profound impact on their sense of where we
2 were going.

3 Now, let me just read you all—I told you I would give you a report that analyzes
4 this. This is from a CRS report. Although “sense of” proposals have been—quoting—
5 have no force in law, foreign governments pay close attention to them as evidence of
6 shifts in U.S. foreign policy priorities. On domestic issues, agencies also monitor “sense
7 of” provisions because they may be an early signal that Congress will alter formal
8 statutory provisions if the informal nature of “sense of” provisions does not influence
9 agency policy.

10 So there is a lot more evidence of this, and I think it is important for the
11 committee. I am going to have this put together as a research product for all the
12 committee members to understand the impact of what we do here.

13 Senator Coons?

14 SENATOR COONS. Mr. Chairman, if I could just --

15 THE CHAIRMAN. We have some other resolutions we need to move on. Do we
16 have a quorum still? Yes, we do. I want to make sure we get this done.

1 SENATOR COONS. Just briefly. Everyone can see why I enjoy so much serving
2 with Senator Isakson. He does have the ability to summarize things and move them
3 forward.

4 In my own limited experience, I have had somewhat the same response as
5 Senator Rubio, wondering whether resolutions have an impact. In the Africa context, I
6 have been struck at how much attention foreign governments, resistance movements
7 pay to sense of the Senate resolutions. But one concrete example that also I think speaks
8 in favor of Senator Corker's view was the LRA Disarmament and Northern Uganda
9 Recovery Act where there was a steady escalation from floor speeches to resolutions to
10 an actual bipartisan bill enacted into law to try and direct the administration to move on
11 a specific challenging international policy.

12 So I will just agree with you generally. I think resolutions have an impact. But
13 there will be instances when, if the chairman can get us to a majority position, it is well
14 worthwhile authorizing as well.

15 THE CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator.

16 Senator Inhofe, unfortunately, was not able to be here at the business meeting,
17 but he did want to point out that he is very pleased to be supporting the Egypt
18 resolution, along with Senators Boxer and Durbin.

1 Everybody here is aware of the standoff that we have currently with respect to
2 Egypt with respect to the prosecution of civil society workers, whether they are
3 American, Egyptian, or otherwise.

4 The stakes are very high right now. This resolution, I believe, is very important, I
5 do think will have an impact, and I think it is an important one because it will send a
6 signal to Tantawi and the other folks there that the relationship really is in jeopardy if
7 the assault on civil society continues. And I think the resolution makes clear what our
8 position is but it does so in a constructive, thoughtful way that at the same time could
9 encourage the relationship to continue to grow.

10 I just left. I was down at the State Department for the luncheon and reception for
11 the Chinese Vice President. And I will tell you the conversations there were very much
12 focused on the criticality of what is happening in Egypt right now. And the difficulty is
13 that if you move to cut off everything right now too quickly, you could really wind up
14 with a far, far worse situation.

15 The challenge for Egypt is enormously economic. When I was there most
16 recently, the occupancy of the hotels was about 4 percent in Cairo. Tourism is basically
17 cut off. And they know that unless they restore the economy, which begins with
18 tourism, it is impossible to do what they need to do to sustain the revolution. They

1 have gone from \$40 billion-plus of reserves down to about \$15 billion now. And one of
2 the things we have gotten them to agree to is move with the IMF, to deal with the IMF
3 and accept IMF constraints. And I think this resolution that we put together, frankly,
4 respects the ability for that progress to continue to be made. But it remains, obviously,
5 a very tricky relationship.

6 I would just mention very quickly that one of the things that I want to focus
7 attention on with respect to Egypt—I have raised this personally previously with
8 Mubarak when he was there and subsequently with the new government. But we have
9 a resident in Massachusetts by the name of Colin Bauer who had two young sons who
10 were stolen from Massachusetts literally illegally, against the law, against court order,
11 on phony passports, and taken back to Egypt against a U.S. court order. And we are
12 working now with the father to get those sons either returned or to have adequate
13 visitation rights.

14 So there is a lot at stake in the relationship with Egypt, and I hope this resolution
15 will be a first step in sending a signal that American patience is being tested by some of
16 the steps that are being taken now.

17 The last resolution we are going to consider today is introduced by Senator
18 Rubio, and it honors the life and legacy of Laura Pollan, a Cuban dissident who

1 founded the Ladies in White group, who recently passed away. And I urge everybody
2 on the committee to support this resolution.

3 So is there anybody who wants to say anything about any of the resolutions, the
4 two resolutions, that are on the agenda for today?

5 SENATOR BOXER. I move them.

6 THE CHAIRMAN. They are moved. Is there any further debate?

7 [No response.]

8 THE CHAIRMAN. If not, all in favor, say aye.

9 [Chorus of ayes.]

10 THE CHAIRMAN. All those opposed, nay?

11 [No response.]

12 THE CHAIRMAN. The ayes have it and the resolutions are agreed to.

13 I thank everybody.

14 Finally, just turning to the nominations, there are three Foreign Service officer
15 lists, but we are also considering several nominations, including Anne Richard to be
16 Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees, and Migration; Tara Sonenshine to
17 be Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy; and Nancy Powell to be Ambassador
18 to India.

1 I support all of these nominations on the agenda. I urge everybody to do so. I
2 am not aware of any requests for a roll call. If there are not, I would move that we take
3 en bloc the entire agenda.

4 SENATOR BOXER. Second.

5 THE CHAIRMAN. It is seconded.

6 We also need to vote on the Durbin bill that I mentioned earlier at the outset.
7 Two bills. Correct. And I move we make those en bloc as part of the nomination list
8 and the nominations individually.

9 SENATOR BOXER. Second.

10 THE CHAIRMAN. Therefore, all those in favor of the en bloc nominations and
11 list—

12 SENATOR RISCH. Mr. Chairman, I apologize for the delay. What are the two we
13 are voting on besides the noms?

14 THE CHAIRMAN. There are two bills that previously passed the entire Senate:
15 Haiti Reforestation and the Prevention of Child Marriage.

16 SENATOR RISCH. I want to be recorded on the reforestation act as no, Mr.
17 Chairman.

18 THE CHAIRMAN. All in favor of the en bloc, say aye.

1 [Chorus of ayes.]

2 THE CHAIRMAN. Opposed, nay?

3 [No response.]

4 THE CHAIRMAN. The ayes have it, and Senator Risch wants to be recorded as a no
5 on the reforestation act and Senator Risch will be recorded as a no on Haiti
6 reforestation.

7 Is there any other business to come before the committee?

8 [No response.]

9 THE CHAIRMAN. If not, we will convene either tomorrow or Thursday for the
10 reconsideration on Syria.

11 Thank you everybody.

12 We stand adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:00 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]