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# Business Meeting

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Wednesday, October 12, 2011

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U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

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COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

1           The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:14 p.m. in Room S-216, The Capitol,  
2 Hon. John F. Kerry, chairman of the committee, presiding.

3           **PRESENT.** Senators Kerry [presiding], Boxer, Menendez, Cardin, Casey, Webb,  
4 Shaheen, Coons, Durbin, Udall, Lugar, Rubio, and Lee.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN F. KERRY,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM MASSACHUSETTS**

5           **THE CHAIRMAN.** The committee will come to order.

6           I am just going to quickly start the process so we can accelerate for everybody  
7 here. We are actually a minute early, but this way, we can accelerate it notwithstanding  
8 we have some Republicans coming.

9           Just very quickly, while we wait to get a full quorum in order to be able to vote,  
10 we are going to be passing on the nomination of the first Ambassador to South Sudan,  
11 and you know, I just want to say that I think everybody here ought to be pleased with  
12 the diplomacy of the last few years. It is a success story really for efforts made under  
13 the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. To his credit, President George Bush got John

1 Danforth involved as a Special Envoy, and he did a terrific job in helping sort of bring  
2 what others had already been engaged in in the CPA. And it was kind of languishing,  
3 to be honest with you, about a year and a half, 2 years ago. It did not look like we  
4 would get over the line, and a lot of folks got involved in it. Happily it moved to the  
5 point of a vote on independence, a referendum, and then subsequently the actual  
6 moment of independence.

7 And Susan Page, who is the nominee, was present at the creation of the world's  
8 newest country. She was one of the mediators on the Comprehensive Peace Agreement,  
9 and I think it is particularly fitting she is going to return now as the first Ambassador.  
10 So that is a really nice note.

11 Immediately after the business meeting, Senator Shaheen is going to be chairing  
12 the nomination hearing for Mike McFall to be our next Ambassador to Russia, and I  
13 think this is a good opportunity for members of the committee, who want to, to  
14 examine this complicated but very important relationship with Moscow.

15 And then turning to today's agenda, we have got a number of important  
16 nominations, in addition to South Sudan, the nominees for Bahrain, Luxembourg,  
17 Bangladesh, Sweden, Cape Verde, Mali, and some other positions. And we are  
18 considering three Foreign Service officer lists.

1           So I would like to move all of the nominations out of committee today. I do not  
2 know of any requests for a roll call on any of the agenda items. So I would propose, if  
3 there is a motion to do so, to have a vote en bloc on the entire agenda.

4           **SENATOR BOXER.** So moved.

5           **THE CHAIRMAN.** Do we have enough people to do that?

6           **SENATOR CASEY.** Mr. Chairman, may I say a word about Bahrain?

7           **THE CHAIRMAN.** Positively, sure.

8           **SENATOR CASEY.** Just really quickly, I just want to highlight the administration  
9 has been considering an arms sale to Bahrain. I believe -- and I think this is widely  
10 shared -- that based upon the repression of democratic reform in that country, that we  
11 should delay that. I sent a letter, joined by Senator Menendez, Senator Cardin, Senator  
12 Durbin, and Senator Wyden, to the administration to do that. And I want to make that  
13 point as we are considering the ambassadorial nomination.

14          **THE CHAIRMAN.** Fair enough.

15          Anybody else want to be heard?

16          **SENATOR RUBIO.** Mr. Chairman?

17          **THE CHAIRMAN.** Senator Rubio?

18          **SENATOR RUBIO.** I just want to echo that as well. I think we should all be  
19 concerned about the direction that Bahrain has gone. I know we were trying to work  
20 with your office on, within the next few days, trying to put together a letter as well that

1 elicits our concern as well about the direction of that and giving arms sales as a  
2 potential leverage point to make our case on that issue.

3 **THE CHAIRMAN.** Fair enough. Let me just say to everybody that I think  
4 everybody shares those concerns. I know I do.

5 But I also share a concern for our strategic interests in the region and some very  
6 delicate balance with respect to those interests. Bahrain is an interesting place. There  
7 have been actually, notwithstanding the obvious problems of the democratic reform at  
8 this point, it is a country that has engaged in a lot more reform up until the uprisings  
9 than almost any other country in the region. That is number one.

10 Number two, there are obviously other important strategic interests with respect  
11 to Bahrain. Always we have to assert the rights and democratization and reform  
12 efforts. But I would caution us to think carefully about how best to achieve those at this  
13 particular moment. I have talked to Senator Wyden and others who have some  
14 concerns about it, and I have talked to the Secretary, Secretary Clinton, about it.

15 I think it may be thoughtful for us -- and we should convene and talk about this -  
16 - to maybe do a sense of the Senate that expresses some of those concerns and works  
17 constructively to try to move forward but also does not preclude sort of shooting  
18 ourselves in the foot and not leveraging some of the things that we have. Everybody  
19 knows we had a very high-cost event with Saudi Arabia as a consequence of the

1 Mubarak transition, and given what you all will be briefed on later today about Iran, I  
2 think it is important to just be thoughtful and cautious about it.

3 So that is what I would say, and I would love to chat with you about the concept  
4 of a sense of the Senate maybe as a way to express some of our concerns.

5 **SENATOR BOXER.** Mr. Chairman?

6 **THE CHAIRMAN.** Yes.

7 **SENATOR BOXER.** I did not get to go on your letter. I wanted to but it took a little  
8 longer because my initial sense was tempering what you were telling me, which was  
9 very unhappy, with what John Kerry has said. Since I am so proud that I am the  
10 chairman of the Human Rights Subcommittee here, it is hard to turn your back on the  
11 people who have written to us about this.

12 So, Senator Rubio, I worked with you on your letter. You are talking about the  
13 3P Human Security, Arms Control Association, Freedom House, Human Rights First,  
14 Just Foreign Policy, Peace Action West, United Methodist Church, Norwegian Forum  
15 for Environment and Development, Physicians for Human Rights, The Friends  
16 Committee, Human Rights Watch, Open Society Policy Center, Project on Middle East  
17 Democracy. And when you go into their letter, what you find out is there has been a  
18 fierce crackdown there, more than 40 people killed by security forces, and four died  
19 from torture and medical neglect. More than 1,600 people have been arrested. And it

1 goes on and on about religious sites being destroyed and people being fired on, et  
2 cetera.

3 And so we are that beacon, and I just think we need to do more than a sense of  
4 the Senate. I would support that. I think it does not do any harm. I think it is good.  
5 But, you know, my staff tells me when they went to a meeting about this, the big  
6 driving force was some arms sales person who said, well, the price of these missiles are  
7 going up in a week or 2. This is very, very serious.

8 And so I wanted to commend Senator Casey. I did not want to even read this  
9 letter because my heart goes in the direction that says is it not wonderful -- the Arab  
10 Spring. But yet, still I do not think we can turn our backs on this. So I hope that we will  
11 send a strong signal to the administration on this, and I hope that we will do what  
12 Senator Kerry wants to do. I think it is in our strategic interest that these revolutions go  
13 well, that these evolutions go well. So I am concerned and again want to praise my  
14 colleague for taking the lead on this.

15 **THE CHAIRMAN.** Thank you, Senator Boxer. Absolutely. And one thing I assure  
16 every member of the committee is we are not going to turn our backs on it.

17 We are waiting for a motion to entertain an en bloc vote and get everybody out  
18 of here.

19 **SENATOR BOXER.** So moved.

20 **SENATOR LUGAR.** Second.

1           **THE CHAIRMAN.** Is there any further debate?  
2           [No response.]  
3           **THE CHAIRMAN.** If there is none, all in favor say aye.  
4           [Chorus of ayes.]  
5           **THE CHAIRMAN.** All opposed, nay.  
6           [No response.]  
7           **THE CHAIRMAN.** The ayes have it.  
8           We have concluded our business. Thank you very much.

**[Whereupon, at 2:24 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]**