

BUSINESS MEETING

Tuesday, September 18, 2018

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
WASHINGTON, DC.

1 The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:14 a.m. in Room SD-419, Dirksen
2 Senate Office Building, Hon. Bob Corker, chairman of the committee, presiding.

3 Present: Senators Corker [presiding], Risch, Flake, Gardner, Young, Isakson,
4 Portman, Paul, Menendez, Shaheen, Coons, Udall, Murphy, and Kaine.

5 **THE CHAIRMAN.** The business meeting of the Senate Foreign Relations
6 Committee will come to order.

7 On the agenda today are nine nominees.

8 Senator Menendez, would you like to make any comments?

9 **SENATOR MENENDEZ.** Mr. Chairman, I will introduce my remarks for the
10 record. I support all of the nominees.

11 [The prepared statement of Senator Menendez follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Mr. Chairman, thank you for calling this business meeting.

Before I get to the nominees on the agenda today, let me start by underscoring the importance of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee exercising oversight of Russia policy. We have before us a comprehensive bill - the Defending American Security from Kremlin Aggression (DASKA) that I introduced with Senator Graham – before us. This bill includes many provisions that comprise a comprehensive Russia policy – keeping the U.S. in NATO...organizing our bureaucracy to effectively defend against Kremlin aggression...as well as imposing a series of financial, energy, sectoral and oligarch sanctions.

This committee has a long history of deliberating sanctions policy, as sanctions are a tool we use as part of broad national security strategies. It's important for this committee to maintain jurisdiction over comprehensive foreign policy, and I therefore urge the chairman to mark-up the Graham-Menendez bill, and would be concerned by efforts to separate sanctions from this process.

There are a number of nominees on the agenda today, and I support all of them.

In particular, I want to mention how pleased I am with the veteran career State Department nominees before us today. They collectively have many decades worth of service to this country, and impressive regional expertise that they have brought to some of the most difficult posts across the globe.

I am particularly impressed by the nomination of Ambassador Earl Miller, a former Regional Security Officer who, among his many decorations, has been awarded the State Department Award for Heroism, as well as the Federal Bureau of Investigation Shield of Bravery.

I also want to highlight the nomination of Ambassador Donald Yamamoto to be U.S. Ambassador to Somalia, one of the most challenging posts in the world. Our military engagement in Somalia appears to be on an upward trajectory. We need to ensure that we are supporting our diplomatic and development efforts to the same degree, and I cannot think of a better nominee for this post than

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Ambassador Yamamoto, a seasoned diplomat who has served his country for nearly 40 years, much of it in Africa or in State's Africa bureau. These are the kinds of nominations that I would like to see more of.

I also want to call attention to the ambassadorial nominations in the Western Hemisphere, particularly in Nicaragua, where legitimate peaceful protests have been met with a state-sponsored, months-long massacre by the Ortega regime. Nicaragua is a challenging post that requires leadership, historical knowledge and expertise, so I am pleased by the nomination of Kevin Sullivan, a skilled and experienced career diplomat with more than twenty years of experience in the hemisphere.

I wish all of these nominees well, and urge my colleagues to support their nominations.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1 **THE CHAIRMAN.** Anyone else?

2 [No response.]

3 **THE CHAIRMAN.** Seeing no comments, I have received a letter to hold over the
4 nomination of Mr. Francisco Luis Palmieri to be Ambassador to Honduras. By the way,
5 his written answers just did come in, but apparently I know that one of our members
6 here was not able to read those yet. So we will consider him next time.

7 So we will now consider all the other items on the agenda, including the
8 following: Ms. Lynda Blanchard to be Ambassador to Slovenia; the Honorable Earl
9 Robert Miller to be Ambassador to Bangladesh; Mr. Daniel Rosenblum to be
10 Ambassador to Uzbekistan; Mr. Kip Tom to be U.S. Representative to the United

1 Nations Agencies for Food and Agriculture; Ms. Karen Williams to be Ambassador to
2 the Republic of Suriname; the Honorable Donald Yamamoto to be Ambassador to
3 Somalia; Mr. Kevin Sullivan to be Ambassador to Nicaragua; Mr. Mark Rosen to be U.S.
4 Executive Director of the International Monetary Fund.

5 Is there a motion to favorably report these nominations, en bloc, by voice vote?

6 **SENATOR KAINE.** So moved.

7 **SENATOR MENENDEZ.** Second.

8 **THE CHAIRMAN.** So moved and seconded.

9 The question is on the motion to report favorably the nominations. All in favor
10 will say aye.

11 [Chorus of ayes.]

12 **THE CHAIRMAN.** Opposed?

13 [No response.]

14 **THE CHAIRMAN.** With that, the ayes have it, and the nominations are agreed to.

15 That completes the committee's business. I ask unanimous consent that staff be
16 authorized to make technical and conforming changes. Without objection, so ordered.

17 And with that, without objection, the business meeting will adjourn.

[Whereupon, at 10:16 p.m., the meeting was adjourned.]