
Tuesday, November 14, 2017

BUSINESS MEETING

U.S. SENATE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
115TH CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

BUSINESS MEETING

Tuesday, November 14, 2017

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

1 The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:02 a.m., in Room 419, Dirksen
2 Senate Office Building, Hon. Bob Corker, chairman of the committee, presiding.

3 Present: Senators Corker [presiding], Rubio, Isakson, Gardner, Young, Barrasso,
4 Flake, Portman, Cardin, Shaheen, Coons, Udall, Murphy, Kaine, Markey, and Merkley.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. BOB CORKER, U.S. SENATOR FROM TENNESSEE

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

7 We are going to do just a little bit of business on the front and hopefully take care
8 of some business quickly. I know people have other meetings. Then we are going to
9 move to the hearing itself.

10 We do thank our witnesses for allowing us to do this, and we are glad you are
11 here.

12 We have a number of items on the agenda today. We will move a number of
13 nominations and Foreign Service Officer lists. We will also take up S. 1928, the
14 Multilateral Aid Review Act of 2017.

1 I want to thank Senator Coons for his leadership and hard work on this bill. I
2 want to also recognize Senators Isakson, Rubio, Young, Kaine, and Merkley for their
3 contributions to this important bipartisan legislation before our committee.

4 This bill would establish a process for conducting objective reviews on how well
5 multilateral institutions carry out their missions with our funding. The authorities
6 sunset after four review periods in 11 years.

7 Through this process, we will be able to evaluate their performance in an
8 objective way. The review will look at performance, management, accountability,
9 transparency, alignment with U.S. foreign policy goals, and efficiency.

10 The U.S. spent around \$11 billion to support the work of these entities, and we
11 owe the U.S. taxpayers good value for their money. These reviews will help us make
12 better informed decisions about how to prioritize scarce resources. It will also provide
13 solid grounds for advocating for changes and reforms.

14 Others, such as the United Kingdom and Australia, have done similar reviews of
15 their multilateral contributions --with good results.

16 I urge you to support this effort to promote greater accountability for our
17 spending on multilateral entities.

18 Senator Cardin, do you have any comments you wish to make?

**STATEMENT OF HON. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN,
U.S. SENATOR FROM MARYLAND**

1 **SENATOR CARDIN.** Yes, I do, Mr. Chairman. But before I comment on the bill
2 and nominations that are on our agenda, I want to comment regarding information
3 statistics regarding the Foreign Service that have been made public over the last week.

4 Ambassador Barbara Stephenson of the American Foreign Services Association
5 stated last week that, and I quote, "There is no denying that our leadership ranks are
6 being depleted at a dizzying speed, due in part to the decision to slash promotion
7 numbers by more than half. The Foreign Service Officer Corps at State has lost 60
8 percent of its career Ambassadors since January. The ranks of career ministers, our
9 three-star equivalents, are down from 33 to 19. The ranks of our two-star minister
10 counselors have fallen from 431 after Labor Day to 369 today and are still falling."

11 Ambassador Stephenson, who is the president of the governing board of the
12 AFSA, is imploring us to ask why.

13 I feel like I have been asking why of the administration and the State Department
14 on a lot of issues lately, including the myriad personnel, budget, and reorganization
15 matters. I am not getting a lot of answers.

16 Just as one small example, although the Trump administration lifted the Federal
17 hiring freeze in April 2017, the State Department and USAID has elected to keep its own
18 hiring freeze in place. Why? My impression is that the morale is at an all-time low at

1 the State Department and USAID causing a massive exodus of diplomatic and
2 development expertise.

3 Why is this happening? And what is the department's leadership doing about it?

4 Our President said recently that we do not need to worry about the fact that
5 many of the senior-level positions at the State Department remain unfilled because,
6 when it comes to foreign policy, his opinion is the only one that matters. Why on Earth
7 would he say that? For the thousands of FSOs around the world working to advance
8 the ideals of the United States, this was a horrible message.

9 If this sort of high-level decapitation of leadership was going on at the Defense
10 Department with three- and four-star officers resigning, and younger officers and
11 enlisted personnel suffering low morale and leaving as well or not even signing up, I
12 can guarantee you that Congress would be up in arms. Yet, here, there is silence. Why?

13 The State Department and USAID, I would offer, are every bit as vital and critical
14 an element to our national security as the Department of Defense, the intelligence
15 community, law enforcement, and myriad of others in the Federal Government who
16 work tirelessly every day to protect our security, extend our prosperity, and promote
17 our values.

18 Folks, this situation is alarming. We put our country in danger when we do not
19 have adequate voice and resources to all of our country's national security tools.

20 Secretary Madeleine Albright once said, "In a turbulent and perilous world, the men

1 and women of Foreign Service are on the frontlines every day on every continent for
2 us."

3 This committee needs to continue to press this issue. It is our responsibility to
4 make sure that we have the diplomatic assets in place in order to represent our national
5 security.

6 Moving to the legislative item, I want to thank Senators Corker and Coons for
7 their effort on this bill.

8 Multilateral institutions are a critical part of our foreign assistance efforts. They
9 help us coordinate activities, leverage funds, and advance our national interests and
10 values. If successful, the Multilateral Aid Review Act will provide us with clear
11 metrics, reliable talent, and solid analysis of our multilateral investments.

12 Mr. Chairman, I hope every member of the committee will read the bill, because I
13 think it does spell out what our expectations are in regard to carrying out missions, the
14 right use of resources, and that we review this on a periodic basis so that we make sure
15 that our multilateral efforts are in our national security interests.

16 I think this is an important bill, and I applaud you for your work.

17 One last point, if I might. I know we have a quorum, but one last point.

18 We are getting near the end of this work period. We only have one more work
19 period remaining before we adjourn for the year. There is an extremely important bill
20 that Senators Rubio and Baldwin have been working on, the JUST Act, which would

1 require additional State Department reporting on European government efforts to
2 return or provide restitution for property wrongly seized during the Holocaust.

3 I have said this before, but time is running out on this issue. As people are
4 getting much older, fewer are surviving. And it is becoming much more difficult to
5 deal with restitution.

6 I really applaud the work that was done on this bill. I know there are many
7 members of this committee that are cosponsors, including Senators Johnson, Young,
8 Booker, Coons, Menendez, and Markey. And I would just urge the Democratic and
9 Republican staff to try to get together with the sponsors to see whether we can move
10 this bill through our committee this year.

11 And I appreciate the chairman's attention.

12 **THE CHAIRMAN.** Thank you. I would like to ask if it is possible, because I know
13 we have conflicts taking place at 10:15, if we could go ahead and move through the
14 business. If people want to make comments afterward, I am glad to hear it. Obviously,
15 we are going to have a long hearing.

16 So let me just say, we had a very unsatisfactory meeting last week with the State
17 Department, our two staffs did. I think the concerns about the State Department are
18 bipartisan in nature. I do not think they are anywhere close to having a plan to present
19 relative to the reforms that they want to make there. And I do think that we need to be

1 much more focused on holding them accountable, because I think many of the things
2 that you said, if not all, but many of them anyway, are very true.

3 With that, I understand that Mr. Ueland for the Under Secretary of State,
4 Management, has been held over, and he will be considered on the next business
5 meeting.

6 I would entertain a motion to approve the remaining nominations en bloc by
7 voice vote, including Ms. Lisa Johnson, Mr. Sean Lawler, Mr. Steve Goldstein, Ms.
8 Rebecca Gonzalez, and two Foreign Service Officer lists.

9 **SENATOR CARDIN.** So moved.

10 **SENATOR PORTMAN.** Second.

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

12 All those in favor, say aye.

13 [Chorus of ayes.]

14 **THE CHAIRMAN.** Opposed?

15 [No response.]

16 **THE CHAIRMAN.** Are there any recorded noes that any individuals would like on
17 any of these nominations?

18 [No response.]

19 **THE CHAIRMAN.** Seeing none, the ayes have it, and the nominations and
20 promotions are agreed to.

1 Next, we will move to S. 1928. First, I would entertain a motion to approve the
2 substitute amendment and the Portman amendment en bloc by voice vote.

3 **SENATOR CARDIN.** So moved.

4 **THE CHAIRMAN.** So moved. Is there a second?

5 **SENATOR PORTMAN.** Second.

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

7 The question is on the motion to approve the substitute amendment and the
8 Portman amendment en bloc.

9 All those in favor, say aye.

10 [Chorus of ayes.]

11 **THE CHAIRMAN.** Opposed?

12 [No response.]

13 **THE CHAIRMAN.** With that, the ayes have it. The amendments are agreed to.

14 Are there any further amendments?

15 **SENATOR GARDNER.** Mr. Chairman? Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the
16 work of the committee on the Multilateral Aid Review Act of 2017.

17 I have two amendments here. I would like to thank Senator Rubio for joining me
18 as a cosponsor on both of these amendments.

19 One addresses the issue of Taiwan. It talks about using the United States' voice
20 and our vote in international organizations to make sure that we are advocating for the

1 addition of Taiwan as an observer to such organizations and entities. We did it last year
2 with Interpol, and I believe we should stand up for Taiwan as a great partner and an
3 especially important voice in these international organizations.

4 The other amendment is addressing North Korea. In a meeting that Senator
5 Markey and I hosted with a former resident of North Korea, a high-level defector, the
6 Deputy Ambassador to the United Kingdom, he said that the one thing that could make
7 a difference in North Korea is cutting off diplomatic relations with North Korea, other
8 nations around the globe that have not done that yet, and isolating, diplomatically,
9 north Korea as much as possible.

10 So this amendment would use our voice and vote in international organizations
11 and entities to do just that, to make sure that we are stressing the importance of
12 diplomatic isolation of the North Korean regime.

13 And I think these two amendments present a very significant contrast. You have
14 Taiwan, somebody that we want to partner with, somebody that is an incredible
15 partner, somebody who abides by and respects the rule of law, that cannot participate
16 in these international organizations. And then you have North Korea that has been
17 sanctioned almost greater than any other nation on the face of this planet by the United
18 States, and yet they are allowed to be in the United Nations. They are allowed to be a
19 full part of the diplomatic community.

1 So I think this is just a good contrast where, why is the nation that is testing
2 nuclear bombs in violation of every sanction possible being treated better than Taiwan
3 that is a great international partner?

4 So I am going to withdraw these two amendments for the sake of moving
5 forward on 1928, but I do think it is important that we continue this conversation.

6 I thank you for the work that you have been doing on this legislation.

7 **THE CHAIRMAN.** Thank you. And I do want to point out that, as a new member
8 on this committee, you passed one of the most meaningful pieces of legislation that has
9 ever been passed on North Korea. I know we have had legislation passed since that
10 time, and I know there is a Banking Committee piece that has passed out on sanctions. I
11 understand you are working very closely with us and with the sponsors of that bill to
12 add your language there, and I just want to thank you for being so focused on that part
13 of the world and your leadership of that committee.

14 And thank you for withdrawing these, so that we can work constructively
15 toward another end on the bill I am talking about.

16 Is there a motion to approve the legislation as amended?

17 **SENATOR CARDIN.** So moved.

18 **THE CHAIRMAN.** Is there a second?

19 **SENATOR KAINE.** Second.

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

1 The question is on the motion to approve S. 1928, as amended.

2 All in favor, say aye.

3 [Chorus of ayes.]

4 **THE CHAIRMAN.** Opposed?

5 [No response.]

6 **THE CHAIRMAN.** With that, the ayes have it. The legislation, as amended, is
7 agreed to.

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

10 With that, the committee stands adjourned exactly at 10:15, as we said. We will
11 see Finance Committee members later. Thank you so much. I appreciate it.

12 **SENATOR COONS.** Mr. Chairman?

13 **THE CHAIRMAN.** Yes, sir?

14 **SENATOR COONS.** If I could just briefly thank you for working with me on this
15 bill, and thank Senator Cardin, and thank everybody who has been a cosponsor.

16 We spend \$10 billion a year on the United Nations, World Bank, and a lot of
17 other organizations, and I appreciate this approach, and I appreciate Senator Merkley's
18 amendment that will make the whole methodology more transparent.

1 I think we have to continue on a bipartisan way to work to make sure that what
2 foreign aid we are investing is done well and wisely, and I appreciate the opportunity
3 to work together on the bill.

4 **THE CHAIRMAN.** I appreciate being able to work with you on this. I think people
5 understand, too, this also gives us the ability with this data to strongly support those
6 agencies that we believe ought to be strongly supported if they are producing good
7 results, so thank you.

8 **SENATOR COONS.** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

9 **THE CHAIRMAN.** So with that, we will now move to the hearing.

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