

BUSINESS MEETING

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2016

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:32 p.m. in Room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Bob Corker, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Corker [presiding], Risch, Rubio, Johnson, Flake, Gardner, Perdue, Isakson, Barrasso, Cardin, Boxer, Menendez, Shaheen, Coons, Udall, Murphy, Kaine, and Markey.

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

The CHAIRMAN. The business meeting of the Foreign Relations Committee will come to order.

I know we do not have a quorum yet, but we will go ahead and get the front end out of the way so that we, hopefully, can move quickly through it. I want to thank everybody for being here.

On the agenda for today, we have 10 pieces of legislation, one treaty, one nomination, and multiple Foreign Service Officer lists.

First, we will consider six Foreign Service Officer lists of over 400 personnel referred to the committee. I support these appointments and promotions and thank all of these officers for their service.

We will also consider the nomination of Ms. Kamala Lakhdir, a career Foreign Service Officer, to be a U.S. Ambassador to Malaysia. I want to thank my colleagues for helping the committee take these steps forward on her nomination today.

We will also consider a resolution of ratification that supports the accession of Montenegro to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

And I want to thank our chairman, Ron Johnson, for having a great hearing on that, especially when he had so many other challenging things occurring at the time, and allowing us to be able to move ahead with this today. Thank you very much.

Montenegro has implemented tough reforms to address corruption and other rule-of-law standards. More work by the Montenegrin Government will be necessary, and we should continue to encourage their progress in achieving and upholding the standards set for NATO allies.

This committee has reviewed the protocol and believes that the accession of Montenegro to full NATO membership is in the interest of the United States.

We will also consider H. Con. Res. 40 encouraging reunions of divided Korean-American families. I would like to thank Senator Kirk, Congressman Rangel, and Chairman Royce for being champions of Korean divided families. I am pleased to lend my support to this resolution.

Next on the agenda is S. Con. Res. 30 expressing concern over the disappearance of David Sneddon. I would like to thank Senator Lee for his leadership on this matter, and I am pleased to support this resolution.

I expressed my sympathy to the Sneddon family on the ongoing uncertainty about their son, David. I am confident the United States Government will continue to investigate any information that may come to light regarding David's disappearance or any American citizen missing abroad.

We will also consider S. Con. Res. 57 honoring the life of the King of Thailand. I would also like to thank Senator Hatch for introducing this timely bipartisan solution.

Also on the agenda today is S. Res. 535 expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the trafficking of illicit fentanyl into United States from Mexico and China. The United States is experiencing a prescription opioid and heroin overdose epidemic that is claiming thousands of lives each year. I want to thank Senators Markey and Rubio for their work and leadership on this important issue.

We will also consider S. Res. 537 expressing profound concern about the ongoing political, economic, social, and humanitarian crisis in Venezuela, urging the release of political prisoners and calling for respective constitutional and democratic processes. I thank Senators Cardin, Rubio, Menendez, Kaine, Gardner, and Boxer for bringing this resolution before the committee. The situation in Venezuela is tragic and people are suffering. We all hope they can find a peaceful electoral way out of this crisis.

We will consider S. 8 to provide the approval of agreement for cooperation between the Government of the United States and the Government of Norway concerning peaceful uses of nuclear energy. This will cause a civil nuclear cooperation agreement with Norway to come into effect in advance of the completion of the 90-day congressional review period, which occurs after we have adjourned on December 16th. Absent this affirmative approval of agreement, the administration will complete a trilateral servicing agreement with Norway and the IAEA, which is not subject to congressional review or oversight.

This committee has reviewed the agreement, held briefings and a hearing, and has found the agreement not to be objectionable, though we wish that the administration, as I am sure Senator Markey will echo, had not included advanced consent for retransfer for storage and reprocessing of spent fuel.

We will also consider H.R. 4939, the U.S. Caribbean Strategic Engagement Act of 2016. I want to thank Representatives Engle and Ros-Lehtinen for their work on this legislation. I thank Senator Cardin for working with us to streamline this bill to ensure

that it focuses on encouraging Caribbean nations to seek partnerships in the United States.

H.R. 4481, the Education for All Act of 2016, is also on the agenda. This act restores our committee's role in providing authorities and direction for a USAID program that has been appropriated without such guidance from our committee for over a decade. This bill authorizes programs to help countries provide quality basic education, the lack of which is a significant barrier to economic growth.

We will also consider H.R. 2845, the African Growth and Opportunity Enhancement Act of 2015. AGOA has been an important part of our engagement with Africa. This bill asks the President to direct more resources toward helping African businesses trade with United States.

The Millennium Challenge Corporation, MCC, amendment represents the M-CORE bill this committee approved at our June 23rd markup. I want to commend Senators Cardin, Isakson, Coons, and Flake for bringing this bipartisan legislation to the committee.

I also want to thank Senator Barrasso for his constructive input on how we can improve MCC oversight. Our amendment includes Senator Barrasso's recommendations.

I need to take breath here, Senator Cardin.

We will also consider H.R. 1150, the Frank R. Wolf International Religious Freedom Act. I thank Senator Cardin for working with us to bring this legislation before the committee. This bill, as amended, reinforces the 1998 law to strengthen the role of the Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedoms and enhances the congressional oversight of the State Department. This legislation enjoys broad interfaith support, and we will be seeking to have this bill passed in the Senate by unanimous consent so the amended legislation may be taken up and approved by the House this week.

Lastly, and this is not on the agenda, we have a resolution that I would like to present to Senator Boxer.

Senator BOXER. Oh, you are kidding.

[Laughter.]

Senator BOXER. I am surprised. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. This is going to be her last business meeting, and we appreciate all you have done for this committee and the United States Senate.

Serving the Senate since 1993, Senator Boxer has been the longest-serving woman in the history of the Committee on Foreign Relations with 18 years of service.

I want to thank her for her patriotism and commitment to this institution and our country.

When I ran for the Senate and was elected 10 years ago, Senator Boxer was well-known in Tennessee, and I just want to say it has been a privilege for me not only to know you as a well-known Senator but to know you well.

Senator BOXER. That is so sweet.

The CHAIRMAN. It has been a blessing. We wish you well.

[Applause.]

Senator BOXER. Thank you.

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

Senator CARDIN. Mr. Chairman, if I might, if I could just say a word or two and then perhaps yield to Senator Boxer, and then I would like to say a few more things about today's agenda and about our committee.

Some of the great pleasures of my life serving in the United States are the friends that I made. I knew Senator Boxer when she was Congresswoman Boxer. I knew of her incredible talent, but we became buddies here in the United States Senate.

The people of California have been blessed to have an incredible advocate on their behalf on so many issues, but our Nation has been blessed. Indeed, the global community has been blessed.

There are so many things we could talk about with Senator Boxer on the environmental issues. But I think on this committee, what you have done for women and girls around the world is just incredible.

In Afghanistan, you have made a huge difference in the lives of so many young children, and I just really want you to know how much we all appreciate what you have done.

This is family, and we are very proud of our sister, so congratulations for just an incredible career.

Senator BOXER. Thank you so much. I just want to say this is such an honor to have this resolution. Good Lord, we do not agree on anything, so this is special that you got this done.

[Laughter.]

Senator BOXER. And no one said, "I signed in protest." That was good.

[Laughter.]

Senator BOXER. But each of you, as I look at you, we have worked so well together, and sometimes we fought—sometimes, once in a while, not that often. But I can truly say every member of this committee I have worked with on issues that we all care about, and Jim on the Ethics Committee, being just dedicated to our work. It doesn't matter when you are in there what party you are in. A lot of my love for this committee comes from that same point.

These two gentlemen, the chairman and the ranking member, working hand in glove constantly in an age where it is not expected, and we are so thrilled to see it.

Whoever said politics stops at the water's edge is right. This committee has to be nonpartisan because nothing less is at stake than the security of every man, woman, and child that we fight for every day.

I will close with this because—Senator, it is hard to talk fast, but I am just going to close with this. I have seen many chairmen. Bob, and I have seen this Bob, and I have seen John Kerry, Richard Lugar, I could go through the list, Joe Biden, I could go through the list, wonderful people all, friends all.

And when I got the ability to move forward on the first-ever subcommittee that dealt with women's issues all over the globe, it was a wonderful moment because everyone said, "You know, you are right, Barbara. We need to do this."

I know I have spoken to Jeanne. It is not as if only a woman would carry these issues, but it is a reminder to everyone that we do see the world through a slightly different lens. That is just the beauty of diversity, and Jeanne is going to pick up a lot of these particular issues, and a lot of the rest of you will as well on other subjects.

But it has been a joy, and I am going to close with this. I am so loath to say this, but it is so perfect that I end with this. I was disappointed we did not pass a piece of legislation that I wanted you to pass today. That is a joke.

[Laughter.]

Senator BOXER. It is true that we did not, but I know—

The CHAIRMAN. We are going to get it done.

Senator BOXER [continuing]. We are going to get it done after I leave. But if I did not say that, it would not be Barbara Boxer.

[Laughter.]

Senator BOXER. I cannot let you get away with everything today.

Fond memories, made me a better person, God bless each and every one of you in the days and the years ahead in keeping our country strong and safe.

Thank you.

[Applause.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator CARDIN. Mr. Chairman, if I might, later this week, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will celebrate its 200th anniversary, when the first standing committees were approved by the United States Senate on December 10th.

This committee has had a very, very proud history. I know I speak for all the members on the Democratic side, and I think I also speak for the Republican side, to congratulate our chairman, Bob Corker, on an incredible 2-year leadership of this committee.

This has been a very difficult time. Your leadership has shown the strength that we wanted in our chairman, the fairness to include all members of our committee in the work of this committee. You have been able to get the type of unity that we needed to preserve the appropriate role for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and you have made it an honor to serve on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

So I want to congratulate you for an incredible 2 years as chairman.

[Applause.]

Senator CARDIN. Mr. Chairman, I know we have a long agenda, and I very much appreciate what is included on this agenda. I think what might be easier—I was going to go through all the items on the list, and they are important items, and I do want to comment on what we have done. Perhaps the best way, if we start into the agenda, I will comment as we get to the legislation.

The CHAIRMAN. Very good. Thank you very much.

The first order of business for today's agenda will be six Foreign Service lists.

Senator Cardin, do you have any comments on these?

Senator CARDIN. I support all of them and move their adoption.

The CHAIRMAN. Would anyone else like to speak to the list?

[No response.]

If there is no further discussion on these lists, I would entertain a motion to approve these lists en bloc by voice vote.

Senator CARDIN. So moved.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there a second?

Senator SHAHEEN. Second.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. So moved and seconded.

The question is on the motion to approve six Foreign Service lists en bloc.

All those in favor, say aye.

[A chorus of ayes.]

The CHAIRMAN. Opposed?

[No response.]

The CHAIRMAN. With that, the ayes have it, and the appointments and promotions are agreed to.

Next, I would like to ask the committee to proceed to a voice vote on the consideration of Ms. Kamala Lakhdhir to be U.S. Ambassador to Malaysia.

Senator Cardin, do you have any comments?

Senator CARDIN. I strongly support the nomination and move her adoption.

The CHAIRMAN. Would any member like to be recognized?

[No response.]

If there is no further discussion on the nomination, I would entertain a motion to approve her by voice vote.

Senator CARDIN. So moved.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there a second?

Senator MENENDEZ. Second.

The CHAIRMAN. Moved and seconded.

The question is on the motion to approve the nomination.

All those in favor, say aye.

[A chorus of ayes.]

The CHAIRMAN. All opposed?

[No response.]

The CHAIRMAN. With that, the ayes have it. The nomination is agreed to.

Next, I would like to consider the treaty on the agenda.

Senator Cardin, do you have any comments on this treaty?

Senator CARDIN. Is this Montenegro?

The CHAIRMAN. Yes.

Senator CARDIN. Yes, Mr. Chairman. First, let me thank you very much for bringing the Montenegro NATO accession treaty today.

I want to acknowledge the distinguished Ambassador for Montenegro, who is present in our committee room, and thank him for his availability to our committee.

It was clear that this small country has made significant contributions to the alliance efforts around the world and made the necessary internal reforms to address governance, rule of law, and corruption.

This progress appears all the more remarkable for the fact that Montenegro has been subject to a wave of anti-NATO and anti-Western propaganda emanating from Russia. I congratulate the manner in which the country has responded, and I am very happy that we are making it clear that Russia does not have a veto over

the decisions of the NATO alliance, and I strongly urge my colleagues to support the accession.

The CHAIRMAN. Does any other member wish to speak?

I am going to go back and forth, if that is okay.

Senator JOHNSON. Not to repeat, but I certainly want to thank the chairman and ranking member for support of this resolution.

You are correct. Montenegro has made great strides in reform, both militarily as well as legal reform, trying to drive out corruption. We had a great hearing on it.

And again, I just urge my colleagues to support the resolution.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Shaheen?

Senator SHAHEEN. Yes, I would echo what has been said, but I would also ask that we encourage leadership to bring this to the floor before we go into recess and end this session of Congress. I think the best message we could send to Russia, as they are looking at their future plans in Europe, is the message that we want Montenegro to join NATO and to be part of the European bloc that protects all of Europe.

The CHAIRMAN. Anyone else?

[No response.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you both for your leadership on this issue.

If there is no further discussion on this, I would entertain a motion to approve this by voice vote.

Senator CARDIN. So moved.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there a second?

Senator KAINE. Second.

The CHAIRMAN. So moved and seconded. Thank you so much.

The question is on the motion to approve the treaty.

All those in favor, say aye.

[A chorus of ayes.]

The CHAIRMAN. Opposed?

[No response.]

The CHAIRMAN. With that, the ayes have it. The treaty is agreed to.

Next, we will consider S. Res. 537, the Venezuelan resolution.

Senator Cardin, do you have any comments you want to make?

Senator CARDIN. Mr. Chairman, I just really want to thank you for your help in getting this resolution before us today. It is a resolution that I worked on with Senators Rubio, Menendez, Kaine, Boxer, and other members of this committee.

It is a heart-wrenching narrative that emerged from Venezuela in which economic unraveling, lack of food and medicine, the deterioration of the rule of law, and rising levels of corruption have created an unstable situation where citizens face tremendous hardship.

So I am glad that we are speaking as a body on this issue, recognizing that Venezuela is in crisis and needs international understanding.

The CHAIRMAN. Any others?

Senator RUBIO. Mr. Chairman, I just want to echo that I thank everyone, especially Senator Menendez, for his work on this issue in general.

I just want to point out to everyone that what has happened to Venezuela is nothing short of a coup d'etat. The constitutional order has been ignored and completely canceled. The Supreme Court has been overtaken, the media, the like. It is not a democracy any longer, not even the facade of a democracy. The impact that it is having on the region is extraordinary.

I encourage my colleagues, when you have the chance, to read the report. This is one of the richest countries in the world, and you have people literally selling their hair for pennies to try to be able to feed their families.

So it is a catastrophic situation that is coming to bear here rapidly, and it is having an impact on South Florida and I believe of the region. So I encourage everyone who has not kept up-to-date with it, because a lot of other issues have been going on, to really look into the tragic humanitarian and political tragedy that is occurring in Venezuela.

The CHAIRMAN. I could not agree more.

Anyone else?

[No response.]

The CHAIRMAN. If there is no further discussion on this resolution, I would entertain a motion to approve all three Cardin amendments en bloc by voice vote.

Senator CARDIN. So moved.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there a second?

Senator BOXER. Second.

The CHAIRMAN. So moved and seconded.

The question is on the motion to approve all three Cardin amendments en bloc by voice vote.

All those in favor, say aye.

[A chorus of ayes.]

The CHAIRMAN. Opposed?

[No response.]

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

Are there any further amendments?

[No response.]

The CHAIRMAN. Hearing none, is there a motion to approve the resolution as amended?

Senator KAINE. So moved.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there a second?

Senator BOXER. Second.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. So moved and seconded.

The question is on the motion to approve S. Res. 537, as amended.

All those in favor, say aye.

[A chorus of ayes.]

The CHAIRMAN. Opposed?

[No response.]

The CHAIRMAN. With that, the ayes have it. The resolution, as amended, is agreed to.

Next, we will consider S. Res. 535, the fentanyl resolution.

Senator Cardin, do you have any comments you would like to make?

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I strongly support this resolution, and I want to thank Senators Markey and Rubio for bringing this forward, calling upon the United States for counternarcotics cooperation with Mexico and China.

Mr. Chairman, I am sure all members of this committee have had meetings around our State, meetings with different groups, about the drug problems in every community in America. We have seen the opioid abuses lead to heroin, lead to synthetic drugs and fentanyl. It has caused untold deaths. Fentanyl is a drug that those who are using narcotics are not aware of its strength, and it causes them to go into crisis.

So I thank very much our colleagues for bringing this to our committee's attention, that we must do more within the jurisdiction of our committee to control the importation of fentanyl.

The CHAIRMAN. Would anyone else like to speak?

Senator MARKEY. Mr. Chairman, if I may?

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Markey, yes, sir?

Senator MARKEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator Rubio and I have introduced this resolution. This is the public health crisis in the United States, and we join with Senator Shaheen on this resolution, calling for its passage.

Fentanyl, just to give you a little bit of an idea about how bad this is right now, we are going to have 2,000 people die in Massachusetts from opioid overdoses this year. Of them, 1,500 will have fentanyl in their blood system, 75 percent.

Now, Massachusetts is 2 percent of America's population. So if you multiply that by 50 and this epidemic was hitting the whole country at the rate it is sitting Massachusetts, the rate it is hitting New Hampshire, the rate it is hitting Florida and several of the States, but not the country, that would be 100,000 deaths, of which 75,000 would come from fentanyl.

So what we are trying to do with this resolution is to get out of this storm, this class 5 hurricane, which is already on shore in certain States, but it is ready to hit.

What it does is it calls for our Government to work much more closely with the Chinese Government, which is the source, principally, of this chemical, this artificial substance that has been created and is coming into our country, and with the Mexican Government, where it is kind of fabricated and turned into a product that then comes into the cities and States of our country.

So this is something that in my opinion is going to wind up dwarfing any other issue that we work on. That is why doing this in the context of even deliberating on the current bill is so appropriate because far, far many more people are going to be terrorized by this than will ever be terrorized by what is happening in Aleppo today. This is a threat to families on the streets of our country, which is why I am proud to be able to work with Senator Rubio in a bipartisan fashion on this amendment.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you both. Any other comments?

Senator RUBIO. I would just add that the fentanyl is now with carfentanil, which is a new threat or an additional threat. It is actually animal tranquilizer. It is what they use to tranquilize like an elephant.

This stuff is coming in in the mail, basically. It is being shipped in FedEx, UPS. I do not mean to single out any companies. I am just saying—I just did—

[Laughter.]

Senator RUBIO.—and others. It is being sent in from these countries, and it is by far—I encourage everyone to talk to your hospitals and first responders, and they are going to tell you that they are seeing just dozens of these. And the agents to reverse it do not even work anymore because of how strong it has gotten.

It is also manufactured, by the way—and we saw the loss of Prince, who died. He died because he took fentanyl in pills labeled as Percocet.

So that is what we are dealing with here now. It is a very serious problem.

The CHAIRMAN. The lacing that is occurring with fentanyl, and the fact that it can come in a FedEx package this size equal to truckloads of other types of materials is really wreaking havoc on our society. I appreciate both of you bringing attention to this.

Any other comments on this?

If there is no further discussion on this resolution, I would entertain a motion to approve both Markey amendments en bloc by voice vote.

Senator CARDIN. So moved.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there a second?

Senator JOHNSON. Second.

The CHAIRMAN. So moved and seconded.

The question is on the motion to approve both Markey amendments en bloc by voice vote.

All those in favor, say aye.

[A chorus of ayes.]

All opposed?

[No response.]

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

Are there any further amendments?

[No response.]

Hearing none, is there a motion to approve the resolution, as amended?

Senator CARDIN. So moved.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there a second?

Senator SHAHEEN. Second.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. So moved and seconded.

The question is on the motion to approve S. Res. 535, as amended.

All in favor will say aye.

[A chorus of ayes.]

The CHAIRMAN. Opposed?

[No response.]

The CHAIRMAN. With that, the ayes have it. The resolution, as amended, is agreed to.

Our next order of business that I would ask that we consider en bloc by voice vote are the remaining resolutions before the committee. That is S. Con. Res. 57, S. Con. Res. 30, S. Con. Res. 40.

Senator Cardin, any comments?

Senator CARDIN. I support all those resolutions.

The CHAIRMAN. Are there any members who would like to speak to any of these resolutions?

[No response.]

The CHAIRMAN. If there is no further discussion on the resolutions, I would entertain a motion to approve these en bloc by voice vote.

Senator CARDIN. So moved.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there a second?

Senator UDALL. Second.

The CHAIRMAN. So moved and seconded.

The question is on the motion to approve these resolutions en bloc.

All in favor, say aye.

[A chorus of ayes.]

The CHAIRMAN. Opposed?

[No response.]

The CHAIRMAN. With that, the ayes have it. The resolutions are agreed to.

Next, we will consider S. 8, the Norway 123 Agreement.

Senator Cardin, do you have any comments on this?

Senator CARDIN. Mr. Chairman, thank you for bringing forward this. I am a cosponsor of the resolution, under your leadership. The bill will ensure congressional oversight of our nuclear cooperation with Norway. So I support the resolution.

The CHAIRMAN. Does anyone else wish to speak to this?

I started to call on you before you raised your hand, Senator Markey.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, very much.

I do commend Norway as one of our closest allies and recognize the need to conduct nuclear research at Norway's Halden research reactor. But I am very concerned that we are offering affirmative support to 123 Agreements that do not meet the gold standard. I believe that as we get deeper into the 21st century, that should be our standard, regardless of how close an ally any of the countries are with whom we are reaching these agreements.

This agreement is going to provide Norway with advanced consent to transfer U.S.-obligated spent fuel to the United Kingdom and France for reprocessing. That sends the wrong signal to other countries considering pursuing this technology, and I am particularly concerned about East Asia, and I am concerned that the negotiators of this 123 Agreement did not push to remove the advanced consent clause.

It is the larger principle that is at stake here, despite the small amounts of material that are involved in this agreement. We should not water down our global opposition to reprocessing. It should be our gold standard.

If we do not stand for that, we are going to come back in another 15 or 20 years as other countries in the Middle East and in East Asia ask for the same kind of treatment, and we will then have that catastrophic event that was created because we did not give the political leadership.

So I believe there is a profound danger that we are unleashing here as we create this exemption, and I just wanted to state my opposition to this pathway, on principle.

The CHAIRMAN. So for what it is worth, Senator Markey and I have met on several occasions regarding non-gold-standard agreements, and I could not agree more.

I think we find ourselves in a place where even though this is an imperfect 123 Agreement, it is better than what is going to be in place if we just allow an administrative agreement to take place in the time to lapse.

So I share your concerns. I wish that all of these agreements were in the gold-standard fashion that you have expressed. You know we have talked about this on many occasions.

But this is putting us in a better place than letting the time elapse and enter into an administrative agreement between the United States and Norway.

Are there any other comments or questions?

[No response.]

The CHAIRMAN. If there is no further discussion, I would entertain a motion to approve the legislation by voice vote.

Senator CARDIN. So moved.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there a second?

Senator JOHNSON. Second.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. So moved and seconded.

The question is on the motion to approve S. 8 by voice vote.

All in favor will say aye.

[A chorus of ayes.]

The CHAIRMAN. Opposed?

Senator MARKEY. No.

The CHAIRMAN. And I will record you as a no, if that is okay.

With that, the ayes have it, and the substitute agreement is agreed to.

Are there any other further amendments?

[No response.]

The CHAIRMAN. The question is on the motion to approve H.R. 4939, as amended.

Are we in the right place here? I do not know how we got to the House.

Okay, the question is on the motion to approve S. 8.

All in favor will say aye.

[A chorus of ayes.]

The CHAIRMAN. Opposed?

[No response.]

The CHAIRMAN. With that, the ayes have it. The legislation is agreed to.

Next, we will move to H.R. 4939, the U.S.-Caribbean Strategic Engagement Act of 2016.

Senator Cardin, do you have any comments you would like to make?

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate this issue being brought up for today's business meeting. I congratulate my colleague in the House, Congressman Engle, for his work on this.

It is legislation, I think, that shows our commitment to our partnership in the Caribbean, and I support it.

The CHAIRMAN. Would anyone else like to speak to the legislation?

If there is no further discussion, I would entertain a motion to consider the substitute amendment by voice vote.

Senator COONS. So moved.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there a second?

Senator KAINE. Second.

The CHAIRMAN. So moved and seconded.

The question is on the motion to approve the substitute amendment.

All those in favor, say aye.

[A chorus of ayes.]

The CHAIRMAN. Opposed?

[No response.]

The CHAIRMAN. With that, the ayes have it. The substitute amendment is agreed to.

Are there any further amendments?

[No response.]

The CHAIRMAN. Hearing none, is there a motion to approve the legislation as amendment?

Senator CARDIN. So moved.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there a second?

Senator BOXER. Second.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. So moved and seconded.

The question is on the motion to approve H.R. 4939, as amended.

All those in favor, say aye.

[A chorus of ayes.]

The CHAIRMAN. Opposed?

[No response.]

The CHAIRMAN. With that, the ayes have it, and the legislation, as amended, is agreed to.

Now we will consider H.R. 4481, the Education for All Act of 2016.

Senator Cardin?

Senator CARDIN. Mr. Chairman, again, I thank you for bringing this forward. I strongly support it and urge my colleagues to support the legislation.

The CHAIRMAN. Anyone else?

[No response.]

The CHAIRMAN. If there is no further discussion, I will entertain a motion to consider the substitute amendment by voice vote.

Senator CARDIN. So moved.

The CHAIRMAN. Second?

Senator MENENDEZ. Second.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. So moved and seconded.

The question is on the motion to approve the substitute amendment.

All in favor, say aye.

[A chorus of ayes.]

The CHAIRMAN. Opposed?

[No response.]

The CHAIRMAN. With that, the ayes have it. The substitute amendment is agreed to.

Are there further amendments?

[No response.]

The CHAIRMAN. Hearing none, is there a motion to approve the legislation, as amended?

Senator CARDIN. So moved.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Second?

Senator JOHNSON. Second.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. So moved and seconded.

The question is on the motion to approve H.R. 4481, as amended.

All in favor will say aye.

[A chorus of ayes.]

The CHAIRMAN. Opposed?

[No response.]

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

Now we will consider H.R. 2845, the AGOA Enhancement Act of 2015.

Senator Cardin?

Senator CARDIN. Mr. Chairman, again, I appreciate that this is before us today. I want to thank Senators Flake, Coons, and Isakson for introducing the Millennium Compacts for Regional Economic Integration Act, or the M-CORE Act, with me last year. The bill passed our committee earlier. This new authority for MCC is included in H.R. 2845, so I would urge colleagues to support this legislation.

The CHAIRMAN. Any other discussion?

Senator Coons?

Senator COONS. I will just briefly, if I might, thank Senator Cardin for his real leadership on getting us over the finish line in terms of MCC regional compact authority.

And thank you, Mr. Chairman, for working so closely with the ranking member on such a wide range of bills for today's markup. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you so much.

If there is no further discussion, I would entertain a motion to consider the Corker amendment by voice vote.

Senator CARDIN. So moved.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there a second?

Senator BOXER. Second.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. So moved and seconded.

The question is on the motion to approve the Corker amendment.

All in favor, say aye.

[A chorus of ayes.]

The CHAIRMAN. Opposed?

[No response.]

The CHAIRMAN. With that, the ayes have it. The amendment is agreed to.

Are there further amendments?

[No response.]

The CHAIRMAN. Hearing none, is there a motion to approve the legislation, as amended?

Senator CARDIN. So moved.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there a second?

Senator ISAKSON. Second.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. So moved and seconded.

The question is on the motion to approve H.R. 2845, as amended.

All in favor will say aye.

[A chorus of ayes.]

The CHAIRMAN. Opposed?

[No response.]

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

Lastly, we will consider H.R. 1150, the Frank R. Wolf International Religious Freedom Act.

Senator Cardin?

Senator CARDIN. First, Mr. Chairman, let me say, when you are voting on a bill that includes Frank R. Wolf's name, I cannot see anyone voting against it. He has been a real champion throughout his lifetime and career on human rights issues.

I do want to thank Senator Rubio for his work on this legislation. There were some concerns that were expressed, and we were able to work through those concerns. I thank him for that. The department had concern about reporting on nonstate actors which engage in religious persecution, as it may undermine U.S. Government diplomatic efforts to hold governments accountable for abuses committed within their territory.

I think this legislation strikes the right balance, but it is an issue that I think our committee will continue to monitor to make sure that governments are held accountable for actions within their country.

I want to acknowledge Congressman Smith and the work that he has done on religious freedom, and I would urge my colleagues to support the legislation.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Would anyone else like to speak to this? I know numbers of people were involved.

Senator FLAKE. I just want to thank Senator Rubio and Senator Cardin for including the language I had on religious visas. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Very good.

If there is no further discussion, I would entertain a motion to consider the Rubio substitute amendment by voice vote.

Senator CARDIN. So moved.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there a second?

Senator JOHNSON. Second.

The CHAIRMAN. So moved and seconded.

The question is on the motion to approve the Rubio substitute amendment.

All in favor, say aye.

[A chorus of ayes.]

The CHAIRMAN. Opposed?

[No response.]

The CHAIRMAN. With that, the ayes have it. The amendment is agreed to.

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

Senator CARDIN. So moved.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there a second?

Senator JOHNSON. Second.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. So moved and seconded.

The question is on the motion to approve H.R. 1150, as amended.

All in favor, say aye.

[A chorus of ayes.]

The CHAIRMAN. Opposed?

[No response.]

The CHAIRMAN. With that, the ayes have it, and the legislation, as amended, is agreed to.

That completes the committee's business.

Senator Kaine. Mr. Chair?

The CHAIRMAN. Yes, sir?

Senator Kaine. If I may, just one other business item that I tried to click as we were at the front end saying kind things about the chair and about Senator Boxer. Another committee member has of milestone that is a pretty important one.

On Election Day, Senator Cardin achieved 50 consecutive years in elected office beginning with his election as a youngster.

Senator Cardin. I am trying to keep that quiet.

Senator Kaine. He doesn't like you mentioning it, but that is a pretty impressive record. Those of us who do it understand how challenging that is.

So congratulations.

[Applause.]

Senator Cardin. In Maryland, you can run for office when you are in your teens.

[Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. Well, I am thankful that you will be serving with us on a continual basis, and I think that makes you definitely a part of the establishment.

[Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. Jeanne?

Senator Shaheen. Mr. Chairman, I wanted to pick up on Senator Boxer's brief comment as she was giving her remarks earlier about the bill that did not get passed, and that is the Women, Peace and Security Act, something that Senator Boxer has been working on—

The CHAIRMAN. I see that you are taking up her mantle very quickly.

Senator Shaheen [continuing]. For now 4 years.

This is legislation that the House passed just recently without debate. I think it is important because there is real evidence that women have a critical role to play in all stages of conflict resolution. We know that when women are supported, that they tend to give back to their families, to their communities. And making sure that they have a place at the table when we are trying to resolve conflicts I think is very important.

I know there were some procedural concerns about the legislation, but I just want to put everybody on the committee on notice that this is not going away just because Senator Boxer is not going to be here. I think this is legislation that is important for us to pass. It sends an important message to women in countries around

the world that they need to be at the table as we are deciding their fate.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, and I look forward to calling Senator Boxer when she is doing whatever she is going to be doing after the first of the year to share with her that we have addressed this issue. I received a call from President Carter, and I talked to Kristi Noem last night, and there were some issues that we would like to work out. But we will begin that again.

I know the President has had in place since 2011 an executive order of sorts to deal with this, and we would like to see what the impact of that has been. But we understand it is going to be something that, hopefully, we will resolve together, and thank you both for making comments in that regard.

Senator BOXER. Mr. Chairman, make sure that you call me, but will you be calling me as you are Secretary of State? This is what I am hoping for.

Oh, I should not have said that.

Let's see—

The CHAIRMAN. That will never happen now. That's for sure.

[Laughter.]

Senator BOXER. Let me say, I strongly would oppose the nomination.

[Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Thank you so much. That completes the committee's business. I ask unanimous consent that staff be authorized to make technical and conforming changes.

Without objection, so ordered.

With that, and without objection, the committee will stand adjourned.

Thank you all, and I wish you all a warm and meaningful holiday. I hope most of you will stay for the hearing, but, hopefully, we will finish up this week. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 3:11 p.m., the meeting was adjourned.]
