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# **Business Meeting**

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*Tuesday, March 11, 2014*

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UNITED STATES SENATE COMMITTEE ON  
FOREIGN RELATIONS  
113<sup>TH</sup> Congress, Second Session

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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. Robert Menendez, chairman of the committee, presiding.

3 **PRESENT.** Senators Menendez, Boxer, Cardin, Shaheen, Coons, Udall, Murphy,

4 Kaine, Markey, Corker, Rubio, Johnson, and Flake.

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

6 We have four treaties on the agenda, five resolutions, and 12 nominees.

7 I know that Senator Shaheen, who is the author of one of the resolutions, along

8 with others, has another meeting to go to. So I would be happy to recognize her on

9 International Women's Day, S. Res. 376.

10 **SENATOR SHAHEEN.** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you and Senator

11 Corker for all of your help in negotiating the resolution that is before us.

12 I would just like to point out that Saturday was International Women's Day. We

13 have been celebrating that as International Women's Day since 1911, and this resolution

14 is to recognize International Women's Day again.

15 The resolution honors the economic, political, and social achievements of

16 women, and it recognizes the barriers that women around the world in too many places

1 still continue to face in their effort to achieve human rights and opportunities. I think  
2 the committee is supportive of this resolution.

3 But I would just like to also say that sometimes we do not appreciate the  
4 significance that these kinds of actions by the Foreign Relations Committee and the  
5 United States Senate has for people around the world, in this case women who in so  
6 many countries, unfortunately, still face so many obstacles. And so it really does make  
7 a difference for us to be on the record talking about the importance of advancing  
8 opportunities and human rights for women.

9 So, Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for letting me speak first and hopefully  
10 all of the committee will support the resolution.

11 **THE CHAIRMAN.** Thank you, Senator Shaheen. I know that I am supportive of it. I  
12 am sure others are as well. We will get to that in a moment.

13 While we have a voting quorum, we have four treaties on the agenda today to  
14 consider en bloc that will strengthen the U.S. fishing industry, our coastal communities,  
15 protect consumers, and support sustainable fisheries around the globe. The committee  
16 has received no opposition to any of these treaties, has heard support from the National  
17 Fisheries Institute, the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, the Joint Ocean  
18 Commission Initiative, the Alaska Bering Sea Crabbers, and dozens of other fishing  
19 associations, businesses and restaurants.

1           The agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter, and Eliminate Illegal,  
2 Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing is the first global treaty to focus specifically on  
3 pirate fishing and implements minimum standards for states to control port access by  
4 foreign fishing vessels, ensures that illegally harvested fish do not enter the  
5 international stream of commerce.

6           The Convention on the Conservation and Management of High Seas Fishery  
7 Resources in the North Pacific Ocean will establish the North Pacific Fisheries  
8 Commission, which will adopt and implement conservation and management measures  
9 for unregulated fish stocks in the North Pacific. It includes robust monitoring standards  
10 to help preserve vulnerable marine ecosystems and species in the convention area.

11          The Convention on the Conservation and Management of High Seas Fishery  
12 Resources in the South Pacific will establish the South Pacific Regional Fisheries  
13 Management Organization to protect habitats and marine ecosystems, develop effective  
14 monitoring, compliance, and enforcement procedures to prevent pirate fishing.

15          And last, the Amendment to the Convention on Future Multilateral Cooperation  
16 in the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries updates the 1979 convention, brings it in line with  
17 modern international fisheries governance while reforming the budget contributions in  
18 a way that is expected to reduce payments by the United States to the organization by a  
19 substantial amount.

20          Senator Corker, would you like to speak to any of these?

1           **SENATOR CORKER.** I am going to make the same lengthy comments. Just kidding.

2           [Laughter.]

3           **SENATOR CORKER.** I want to thank all the people on the committee but also off the  
4 committee that have specific interests regarding these treaties. I think you and I both  
5 have been — I know we have been approached by a number of people off the  
6 committee in particular that have a lot of interest in this. And I appreciate the way you  
7 and others on the committee have worked to make this happen. So thank you, and I  
8 support them also.

9           **THE CHAIRMAN.** Thank you for your cooperation.

10          Is there any member who wishes to speak to any of these treaties?

11          **SENATOR MARKEY.** Mr. Chairman?

12          **THE CHAIRMAN.** Senator Markey?

13          **SENATOR MARKEY.** Thank you.

14          And it is just to say there is rampant illegal fishing going on around the world  
15 and it damages our fishermen, our seafood industry, our restaurants, and these treaties  
16 really go a long way toward policing that globally, which will help to enhance the  
17 domestic American fishing marketplace in a way that we have not seen.

18          And I thank you and Senator Corker for processing this in very bipartisan  
19 fashion.

20          **THE CHAIRMAN.** Thank you for chairing some of the hearings that we had.

1           **SENATOR CORKER.** Massachusetts happens to be one of those places that cares  
2 about these treaties.

3           **THE CHAIRMAN.** Any other member wish to speak to any of the treaties?

4           [No response.]

5           **THE CHAIRMAN.** If not, I would like to consider the resolutions of advice and  
6 consent for these treaties by voice vote, if there is no objection.

7           All those in favor, say aye.

8           [Chorus of ayes.]

9           **THE CHAIRMAN.** Opposed, say no.

10          [No response.]

11          **THE CHAIRMAN.** The ayes have it, and the treaties are favorably reported to the  
12 Senate.

13          The next order of business are five resolutions.

14          S. Res. 361, introduced by Senators Cardin, Rubio, Corker, and myself,  
15 recognizing the threats to freedom of the press and expression in the People's Republic  
16 of China and urging the People's Republic to take meaningful steps to improve freedom  
17 of expression as befits a responsible international stakeholder.

18          S. Res. 365 on Venezuela. In the past month, the Venezuelan Government has  
19 sanctioned violence against protestors, jailed and persecuted its critics, and sought to  
20 silence press freedoms. The resolution calls for an end to violence, asks the OAS to

1 facilitate dialogue, and calls on President Obama to enact individualized sanctions  
2 against those responsible for killing peaceful protestors. I believe we must take a stand  
3 in the hemisphere against this kind of violence and violation of human rights.

4 S. Res. 375, the Central African Republic, by Senators Coons and Flake,  
5 concerning the crisis in the Central African Republic, supports the U.S. and  
6 international efforts to end the violence, protect the people of the Central African  
7 Republic, and address the root causes of the conflict.

8 I understand that Senator Coons has a couple amendments to his resolution, and  
9 I will recognize you in a minute to offer them. I am trying to get through all of these.

10 And also, as we heard, S. Res. 376, International Women's Day, which I think  
11 Senator Shaheen has done a good job of discussing.

12 And S. Res. 377, Greek Independence Day.

13 I would seek to move them en bloc subject to members' comments and the two  
14 amendments that Senator Coons has.

15 Senator Corker?

16 **SENATOR CORKER.** No. Thank you for the work. I appreciate all the members who  
17 have brought these interests before us, and I support all of them also and look forward  
18 to hearing the amendments from Senator Coons.

19 **THE CHAIRMAN.** Senator Cardin?

20 **SENATOR CARDIN.** Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for your help.

1 I just want to underscore the importance of the resolution in regards to the  
2 People’s Republic of China, urging them to take steps to improve the freedom of  
3 expression. China is becoming, as I think everyone here would acknowledge, a much  
4 more important player in the international scene in so many different arenas. So I think  
5 it is important for us to point out the expectation that China will take more aggressive  
6 steps to improve some of its basic rights.

7 It is interesting. Reporters Without Borders ranks China 173rd out of 179 in  
8 terms of press freedoms. So I think it is important to discuss the resolution.

9 I just want to thank the chairman and thank the ranking member and thank  
10 Senator Rubio for his critical help in the subcommittee.

11 **THE CHAIRMAN.** Senator Coons, would you like to offer your amendments and  
12 speak to your resolution?

13 **SENATOR COONS.** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes. If I might offer an amendment  
14 in the nature of a substitute. It makes very minor technical changes. It updates  
15 numbers and makes a few otherwise non-substantive changes.

16 The larger resolution, if I might just take a moment. I am grateful to Senator  
17 Flake for his partnership in moving this forward. We held a hearing last December in  
18 the Africa Subcommittee on the ongoing atrocities in the Central African Republic. As  
19 many of you know, there have been months and months of violence that has resulted in  
20 more than a million refugees. Over the half of the population is desperately in need of



1 humanitarian assistance. There have been horrific, documented stories of mass killings,  
2 lynchings, and an exodus of Muslim citizens from CAR.

3 I am pleased the UN Secretary-General has recommended the UN peacekeeping  
4 mission to augment the current AU-led mission with U.S. support. They are waiting for  
5 action by the Security Council.

6 This resolution condemns the violence, atrocities, and abuses committed in CAR,  
7 and calls on our President to work with our multilateral partners to develop a strategy  
8 to support cessation of violence and I think to deal with what is a significant  
9 humanitarian challenge in Central Africa.

10 So I would like to thank the chair and ranking and, again, Senator Flake for his  
11 partnership.

12 **THE CHAIRMAN.** I would like to vote on these two amendments now and then  
13 consider any other comments, and then after voting on the amendments, consider all  
14 the resolutions en bloc, subject to anybody else's comments.

15 So all those in favor of the amendments will say aye.

16 [Chorus of ayes.]

17 **THE CHAIRMAN.** Opposed will say no.

18 [No response.]

19 **THE CHAIRMAN.** The ayes have it and the resolution is now amended.

1 Is there any member who wishes to speak to any of the resolutions? Senator  
2 Rubio?

3 **SENATOR RUBIO.** So we do not lose a quorum, do you want to vote on them and I  
4 will reserve my comments?

5 **THE CHAIRMAN.** That would be great.

6 So I would move all of the resolutions that I have spoken about in order. If there  
7 are no other amendments, I will move that the resolutions be considered, as amended,  
8 en bloc by voice vote. Without objection.

9 All those in favor, say aye.

10 [Chorus of ayes.]

11 **THE CHAIRMAN.** All those opposed, say no.

12 [No response.]

13 **THE CHAIRMAN.** The resolutions are favorably reported.

14 We now have 12 nominees to consider en bloc, and then I will come back to any  
15 comments any member wants to make. My understanding is that there is no objection,  
16 and so is there anyone who wishes to speak to the nominees?

17 [No response.]

18 **THE CHAIRMAN.** If not, I will move the 12 nominees to be considered en bloc.

19 All those in favor will say aye.

20 [Chorus of ayes.]

1           **THE CHAIRMAN.** All those opposed will say no.

2           [No response.]

3           **THE CHAIRMAN.** The ayes have it and the nominees are favorably reported.

4           At this time, I would be happy to accept any comments.

5           **SENATOR RUBIO.** Just thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the speed at which the  
6 committee moved on the Venezuelan resolution. This is an issue that is kind of lost in  
7 the news lately, given some of the other things that are going on around the world.

8           A 30-second synopsis for those who have not followed it: We have a very  
9 serious crime problem in Venezuelan. The students in Venezuela protesting crimes that  
10 occurred on campus took to the streets a few weeks ago to protest. The government  
11 cracked down, but not on the criminals. They cracked down on the students leading the  
12 broader protests. And what you have now are all-out acts of violence not just  
13 committed by uniformed agents of the government, but they have these groups they set  
14 up called colectivos which are basically militias of un-uniformed individuals riding  
15 motorcycles armed with guns and weapons who are pulling up to these protests and  
16 basically firing into the crowd.

17           There are now 20 people dead in Venezuela, over 500 injured. Over a thousand  
18 have been jailed. Of the 20, 11 have gunshot wounds directly attributable to these  
19 government groups. Another one was run over by a government vehicle. This is all  
20 occurring right underneath our nose in this hemisphere.

1           And so I would encourage as many of our colleagues as possible to cosponsor  
2 this.

3           Here is my last point. When I first got to the Senate, I used to see all these  
4 resolutions and say, well, this is just paper. What does this matter? This matters. They  
5 pay attention to this.

6           I did an interview on CNN International a few weeks ago, and I have heard  
7 repeatedly from students in Venezuela who saw the interview and were uplifted by it  
8 because what does the government and what do oppressors tell people when they rise  
9 up and speak on behalf of their rights. Nobody cares about you. Nobody is paying  
10 attention. You do not matter to anybody. The fact that the United States of America  
11 and the U.S. Senate recognize what is happening in Venezuela and speak out, as we  
12 have done here today, matters to these people. It truly does inspire them and it lets  
13 them know not only are they not forgotten, but that we care and that we are on their  
14 side. And I think that is important.

15           Anytime in the world that people stand up and acclaim their universal rights as  
16 human beings to freely express themselves and to address their legitimate concerns  
17 about the direction of their country, they should not be met with bullets. And that is  
18 what is happening in Venezuela, and every time that happens, the people of our  
19 country need to be firmly on their side.

1 Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for moving on this so quickly. Thank you for  
2 sponsoring it, and I would encourage as many of you as possible to cosponsor it as well.

3 **THE CHAIRMAN.** Thank you.

4 Senator Kaine?

5 **SENATOR KAINE.** Mr. Chair, I would like to be added as a cosponsor.

6 One of the reasons people may not know the story as well as others is not only  
7 other world events, but there is a crackdown on the press in Venezuela as well,  
8 including CNN itself. It has been suggested that they be thrown out of the country  
9 because of some of their reporting. And I think this resolution is kind of equivalent to  
10 the China resolution earlier, and it also speaks for journalistic freedom and freedom of  
11 expression which is important.

12 **THE CHAIRMAN.** I want to share Senator Rubio's concerns, and I appreciate his  
13 advocacy here. Venezuela is at the heart Latin America, and its people, despite having  
14 huge oil reserves, cannot get basic foodstuffs on the shelves of the stores in the country.  
15 It has a 57-58 percent inflation rate and it has a 1 percent gross domestic product  
16 growth in its economy. It should be doing far better. And the consequences in  
17 Venezuela, in addition to all the human rights and democracy questions that Senator  
18 Rubio so eloquently spoke to, also has consequences. If we have a challenge in  
19 Venezuela that dissolves into greater civil unrest than the consequences and an  
20 economy that ultimately cannot sustain itself based upon the incredible super-inflation

1 that is taking place, there is a ripple effect through all types of countries in the  
2 hemisphere that are presently receiving the largesse of the Venezuelan Government in  
3 free oil and/or reduced oil deposits. That would have a ripple effect throughout the  
4 hemisphere and Central America.

5 This is a serious issue. The chair intends to work with others to go beyond an  
6 expression of the resolution and look at some legislation. But I appreciate the  
7 leadership that has been shown here on a bipartisan basis.

8 Senator Cardin?

9 **SENATOR CARDIN.** I fully concur in the comments made about Venezuela.

10 I just really want to underscore the seriousness of what is happening in Ukraine.  
11 I know you and the ranking member are working on a resolution, and I just appreciate  
12 the joint leadership of this committee working to resolve issues so that we can speak  
13 with one voice. What is happening with Russia's interference in an independent  
14 country is outrageous, and I know that we all want to provide the appropriate relief to  
15 Ukraine so that the government can move forward and the appropriate accountabilities  
16 for those who are interfering with the independence of the Ukraine. I just really wanted  
17 to underscore the importance of the work that our two leaders are doing on this  
18 committee and look forward to, I hope, an early resolution that we can move forward.

19 **THE CHAIRMAN.** I appreciate the Senator's comments. Sometimes time is certainly  
20 of the essence. The Ukraine is an example of that. Time is of the essence to make an

1 impact. And the ranking member and I are working towards getting things done. I  
2 expect we ultimately will.

3 **SENATOR CORKER.** I could not agree more that time is of the essence.

4 **THE CHAIRMAN.** If there is no other member seeking to speak, this business meeting  
5 is adjourned.

**[Whereupon, at 2:35 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]**