
BUSINESS MEETING

Thursday, March 26, 2015

UNITED STATES SENATE COMMITTEE ON
FOREIGN RELATIONS
114TH Congress, First Session

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

1 The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 11:22 a.m., in Room SD-419, Dirksen
2 Senate Office Building, Hon. Bob Corker, chairman of the committee, presiding.

3 Present: Senators Corker [presiding], Flake, Gardner, Perdue, Barrasso,
4 Menendez, Boxer, Cardin, Murphy, and Kaine.

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

5 **THE CHAIRMAN.** Listen, we have got over 350 personnel that we are going to be
6 able to promote and move along. And I want to thank the minority for their
7 tremendous cooperation, along with the American Foreign Service Association who we
8 have worked very closely with. Both sides have vetted these people, and I thank
9 everybody for interrupting their day to cause this happen so the two-week period we
10 are gone these people can go on about their lives.

11 So with that, our outstanding, distinguished, great ranking member, I do not
12 know if you have any comments that you would like to make.

STATEMENT OF HON. BOB MENENDEZ, U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW JERSEY

13 SENATOR MENENDEZ. You know, Mr. Chairman, there is a Spanish saying, "Ese
14 huevo quiere sal," which means this egg wants a little salt on it.

1 [Laughter.]

2 **SENATOR MENENDEZ.** But thanks anyhow. Let me say that I am glad, and I am just
3 doing this for the record because we have such an expansive audience here. I am glad
4 that we are putting these lists through the committee because I am acutely aware of the
5 damage and pain in delay in considering these lists can cause. I said it a year ago, and I
6 will say it again today that these hardworking Foreign Service officers that we will vote
7 on today deserve the recognition and promotions they have earned. And it is my hope
8 that we can work with the full Senate leadership to make sure these lists are confirmed
9 by the full Senate today before the upcoming recess.

10 But let me make two quick points that I think — I feel compelled to make about
11 the seven names that have been struck from the list. First, I understand that some of
12 them are being nominated for these positions for the first time just this year, and that
13 there are unresolved questions that could not be answered in a short timeframe. I
14 understand that, and there is precedent in the committee for doing that.

15 However, I would like to say that if we had some more warning about this
16 business meeting and the desire to strike these names, we may have been able to
17 facilitate answers to the questions and gotten them through. Now we will have to wait,
18 and I just think that is unfortunate. My hope is that any outstanding questions can be
19 resolved quickly and we can move them at the next business meeting.

1 But there are other names that are struck from these lists that were also struck
2 more than one at now the majority's request in the last Congress, and this brings me to
3 my second point. These names have been known to us for some time, and I believe we
4 have a responsibility to handle decisions about their promotions in a fair and timely
5 way. And so, I will not drive the point any further other than to say we need to have a
6 discussion and a review about those who are struck from the list because I think we —
7 on this particular point we may have a different point of view on some of these
8 individuals.

9 **THE CHAIRMAN.** Well, as always, and I would love for anybody else to make a
10 comment certainly before anybody gets here and we have enough to vote. But I
11 certainly as always will be glad to sit down and talk about it, and appreciate the
12 comments, and again, people being here on short notice. Senator Cardin?

13 **SENATOR CARDIN.** Mr. Chairman, let me just underscore the point that Senator
14 Menendez made. First, we appreciate having these positions acted on at this time, so
15 we want to move forward, and as I understand, some names have been stricken. I do
16 not know the details about that because these are personnel issues, so we do not
17 generally talk about them in a public setting.

18 And I agree with Senator Menendez. If there are some concerns, particularly
19 those who on the list for the first time, we need to resolve those concerns, and that is
20 how we go about doing it. But if it has been more than once, it seems to me that we

1 need to make a decision, and if necessary, have a closed session so that we understand
2 the reasons, and that we can take collective action either to approve or not approve the
3 position. But to just keep it in abeyance I do not think is fair to the person. And I do
4 not know the circumstances here at all, so I would just urge us if it becomes a lengthy
5 issue, let us resolve it one way or the other, but not just keep it open.

6 **THE CHAIRMAN.** Okay. I think that is fair, and more than glad to work with you
7 towards that end. Any other comments?

8 [No response.]

9 **THE CHAIRMAN.** Iran discussion?

10 [No response.]

11 **THE CHAIRMAN.** Budget discussion?

12 [No response.]

13 **THE CHAIRMAN.** East Asia?

14 **SENATOR GARDNER:** Mr. Chairman, there are several people on this list from
15 Colorado. I would congratulate them. I am happy to read their names if you would
16 like.

17 [Laughter.]

18 **SENATOR GARDNER:** — particularly related to Charles Jess of Colorado. I do
19 appreciate the chairman's willingness to attend the event we held last night. It was a
20 great event with our ambassadors from across East Asian nations, and certainly look

1 forward to working with you to continue our relationship and build stronger
2 relationships.

3 **THE CHAIRMAN.** Thank you.

4 **SENATOR MENENDEZ.** Mr. Chairman, since we have time —

5 **THE CHAIRMAN.** Let us talk about Cuba.

6 **SENATOR MENENDEZ.** Well, we do not have enough time to do that.

7 [Laughter.]

8 **SENATOR MENENDEZ.** Let me just say as we move to the budget debate shortly, I
9 just hope the chairman talks — I have on my side — to some our colleagues about
10 thinking about very serious foreign policy issues in the snapshot of a budget
11 amendment.

12 **THE CHAIRMAN.** Yes.

13 **SENATOR MENENDEZ.** And, you know, I understand messaging as much as anybody
14 else. I have been around a bit, you know. But some of these things may seem
15 inconsequential to those who are offering it, and I am sure they feel very strongly about
16 it. But they have resonance, and when it is not structured with the type of attention that
17 this committee under your leadership this year and together in the past, has taken very
18 difficult issues and structured it in a way that is thoughtful so that we have most of the
19 time a united view on what our foreign policy should be in some very difficult places in
20 the world. It is a challenge.

1 And I hope some of our colleagues would just think about the greater good then
2 the momentary message that can be achieved by some of these amendments. I have
3 said that to several of my colleagues who are inclined to try to do something on our
4 side, and I just hope that that is, you know, something that they really will consider
5 because it does have meaning.

6 **THE CHAIRMAN.** Well, I could not agree more, and I do not know if anybody else
7 wants to make a comment. But I think, you know, we have the Kirk amendment that is
8 coming up. I have looked at it, and it looks to me like it is should a 100-zip kind of deal.
9 I know you are not co-sponsoring. I am not co-sponsoring. But do you agree with that,
10 by the way, in looking at it?

11 **SENATOR BOXER.** What does it do?

12 **THE CHAIRMAN.** It just sets up a definite neutral reserve fund so that in the event
13 there are violations in the JPOA or in the final agreement, sanctions can be put in place.
14 It does not look like to me — it looks to me, again, a lot like the amendment yesterday
15 that was put forth, you know, that you can almost take on voice. But I would love —

16 **SENATOR BOXER.** It sounds like it is —

17 **THE CHAIRMAN.** Hey, Tim. Sit over here with us. So we are almost there.

18 **SENATOR MENENDEZ.** You can sit there temporarily, Tim. You sit on this side over
19 here.

20 [Laughter.]

1 **SENATOR KAINE.** I am a rookie mistake.

2 **SENATOR MENENDEZ.** I understand Senator Murphy is on his way, too.

3 [Laughter.]

4 **SENATOR MENENDEZ.** Now, that is the ultimate southern gentleman.

5 **THE CHAIRMAN.** If somebody could get a photograph for the *Atlanta Journal*, I
6 would appreciate it.

7 [Laughter.]

8 **VOICE:** If I could get Tim to cross the line.

9 **SENATOR BOXER.** Are there any cameras out there to catch this moment in history?

10 **THE CHAIRMAN.** I think we are close. But do you agree with that, what I just said,
11 though, about the —

12 **SENATOR MENENDEZ.** Well, look, even — you know, I love Senator Kirk —

13 [Laughter.]

14 **SENATOR MENENDEZ.** — and we have worked extremely hard together. But even
15 this, you know, I am sure it will receive a very significant vote, but it does not say have
16 sanctions, but if there is a minor, you know, violation of the agreement, if there is a
17 major violation of the agreement. It does not differentiate, and so —

18 **THE CHAIRMAN.** We may need to get him to amend that.

19 **SENATOR MENENDEZ.** I mean, I think — I am for sanctions if at the end of the day
20 there are violations to the agreement. But I understand the difference between a rather

1 insignificant violation of the agreement and a very significant one. So this is just by of
2 example of the type of —

3 [Applause.]

4 **SENATOR MENENDEZ.** We have it, but, oh, my god, I am losing money —

5 [Laughter.]

6 **THE CHAIRMAN.** Is there any more discussion on the matter before us?

7 **VOICE:** Hey, Corey, we have email.

8 [Laughter.]

9 **THE CHAIRMAN.** Is there any more discussion —

10 All in favor of the business that is before us — that is before us —

11 **SENATOR MENENDEZ.** And, Mr. Chairman, the business before us is the foreign
12 relations list of —

13 **THE CHAIRMAN.** Moving the foreign —

14 **SENATOR MENENDEZ.** — of candidates, Foreign Service officers, promotions.

15 **THE CHAIRMAN.** Not the Kirk amendment to the budget.

16 **SENATOR MENENDEZ.** Right, okay. I will second that.

17 **THE CHAIRMAN.** Okay. Everybody okay?

18 [A chorus of ayes.]

19 **THE CHAIRMAN.** Thank you. I appreciate it. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 11:31 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]