BUSINESS MEETING

Wednesday, September 25, 2019

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 1:40 p.m., in Room S-116, The Capitol, Hon. James Risch, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Risch [presiding], Johnson, Gardner, Romney, Graham, Isakson, Barrasso, Portman, Young, Cruz, Menendez, Cardin, Shaheen, Coons, Udall, Murphy, and Merkley.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES RISCH,
U.S. SENATOR FROM IDAHO

THE CHAIRMAN. The committee will come to order, and I want to thank all of you who are here. I would preach to those that were not, but it would not do any good.

So in any event, we have a committee business meeting today where we have four resolutions and it looks like five bills. I am going to remove Senate Bill 2503. I think everybody on this committee is interested in that bill. Everybody on this committee wants to pass this bill. I think it will go quicker and smoother
if I can pull this right now and bring it back next time. I know, Senator

Menendez, did you want to say about that right now or no?

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

SENATOR MENENDEZ. I will as part of my remarks. I am deeply
disappointed in that --

THE CHAIRMAN. So am I.

SENATOR MENENDEZ. -- where we are having it pulled. I will just say, Mr. Chairman, on this, I understand that one of our fellow colleagues is holding over the bill, and that is deeply disappointing after months of negotiations. We reached a bipartisan compromise on the text agreed by Senator Rubio, the chairman, Senator Durbin, and myself to reauthorize the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom for 4 years. And then yesterday we are told that the bill is being held over, and we would have to reopen negotiations, and I am honestly confused.

We negotiated in good faith for months. Our staffs met with the current commissioners and the executive director multiple times to get their input. Senators read and then signed off on the bipartisan text. I have not heard a single objection to the bill from a senator or, for that matter, from a
commissioner, just some rumors that one or two commissioners do not like the
bill and contacted Republican staff, as they claim. Now, if there are genuine
problems with the text, I am happy to discuss them, but pulling the bill off of the
agenda because of a commissioner's whispers is not the way we should be doing
business.

My staff has been told that there is now opposition to the bipartisan
language -- bipartisan language that would require the commission to examine
the abuse of religion to justify human rights violations. And I wonder why
opposition all of a sudden because the USCIRF already does this. Why is there
opposition to putting something into law simply -- the law that some -- that the
USCIRF has done for years? They have done reports on the use of blasphemy
laws in certain countries and abuse within Saudi textbooks. Do we not want
them to look at blasphemy laws in Saudi textbooks anymore?

My staff have also heard that some object to provisions which increase
transparency of Commission activity. The idea that Republicans want less
transparency from a federally-funded congressionally-created commission is
perplexing. The agreed-upon text tackled some of the most concerning issues of
the Commission. The bill requires the disclosure of privately-funded foreign
travel, requires USCIRF staff to follow Senate ethics rules, clarify that USCIRF
employees are employees under the Congressional Accountability Act, and
provide for removal of commissioners who violate the CAA. It comes as no
surprise to me that maybe some of the current commissioners may take issue
with the new requirements precisely because they are part of the problem.

The USCIRF is a congressionally-created entity. Congress, not
commissioners, has the duty to reauthorize and, when necessary, reform the
Commission. So I really hope, Mr. Chairman, and I appreciate the work that you
put into this with us to get to a bipartisan compromise that I thought we were
ready to go with. I hope we can get back there very soon.

THE CHAIRMAN. I hope so, too, and I believe we will get back there very
soon. I think the problems are not quite as extensive perhaps as you have
outlined. But I am -- I am not the one that is carrying the torch on this, so we
will -- we will get to this. I think everybody on this committee wants a vote on
this. I suspect it is going to be a unanimous vote. Senator Shaheen.

SENATOR SHAHEEN. Do we know who is holding it up? Is it someone on
the committee or is it someone --
THE CHAIRMAN. Well, Senator Rubio has been the one that made the request, and he is -- I think if he was here today, we would probably be able to hammer that out. But as a matter of comity, I am going to hold this up. Look, the ranking member is correct. I want this as much as anybody else does, and everybody on this committee, I think. I think by doing it the way we are talking about, we will get there easier, and sooner rather than later. Senator Coons.

SENATOR COONS. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, I just want to express my pleasure that there is a broad slate of bipartisan bills and resolutions before us today. I think we are at a substantive business meeting. I request to be added as a co-sponsor to Resolution 183 relating to our relationship with Japan; 236, supporting Tunisian democracy; and 277, the Buenos Aires car bombing attack. I just think it is good we are getting back to this point.

THE CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Coons, and you will be added.

SENATOR MENENDEZ. Mr. Chairman, if I may --

THE CHAIRMAN. Go ahead.

SENATOR MENENDEZ. On the broader context, I was responding to the pulling of the one legislation.

THE CHAIRMAN. Sure.
SENATOR MENENDEZ. So before turning to the rest of today’s agenda, I feel compelled to speak about the news of the past few days. The allegations made against the President, I believe, are grave and require the full attention of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. I believe we have to hold hearings to get to the bottom of what happened. Let me outline the steps I have taken and I hope we would take.

First, I sent a letter yesterday to Secretary Pompeo calling on him to clarify the role of the State Department in the deliberations surrounding security assistance for Ukraine. I have asked him whether the Department provided any support to the President’s personal lawyer, who appears to be playing the role of assistant secretary for Europe, a position for which the Administration still does not have a nominee. The same goes for Kiev where we also do not have a Senate-confirmed ambassador. Second, I also wrote to the State Department inspector general and Acting Chief of Staff Mulvaney posing similar questions that I just outlined regarding Secretary Pompeo. And finally, I have introduced the Ukraine Foreign Assistance Integrity and Accountability Act of 2019, and I would welcome co-sponsors.
Among other things, the bill would require an inspector general/State Department investigation into the Office of Budget and Management’s delays in obligating these funds. My legislation would require the State Department to share all records related to the delay in obligating of critical security assistance for Ukraine and into the Department’s role in facilitating the President’s personal lawyer’s engagement with the Ukrainian government. It would require the Administration obligate all Ukrainian security assistance funds and authorize additional funds to counter Russia malign influence across Europe. And finally, it would express solidarity with the Ukrainian people by imposing some new sanctions on Russia for its continued aggression in Eastern Ukraine.

So given the urgency of the situation, I asked you, Mr. Chairman, to consider marking it up today. I know you felt that there was short order involved. So I hope that we can get your permission to take up this legislation at the next business meeting when, along with considering DASKA and other Russia legislation, which you agreed to. I think this committee has a responsibility and an obligation to ensure that our national security process and diplomacy are not corrupted by anyone, by a President who has one interest and
one interest only, self-preservation. The committee would do a disservice to the
American people if we allow the tools of foreign policy to be used in this way.

And finally, I appreciate your support and the committee's effort on a
different matter to address toxic waste in our ocean. This bipartisan bill focuses
on improving U.S. foreign policy and international cooperation to combat foreign
sources of toxic waste and marine debris. The reality is that the toxic waste in our
ocean knows no borders. What may be a plastic wrapper floating down a river
in China today could be the micro plastic in your tuna salad tomorrow. No one
wants to swim in plastic or eat fish that fed on micro plastic. The bill has
tremendous stakeholder support, including both environmental NGOs and in the
private sector, and it is bipartisan.

And I also support all of the other legislation before us. I commend those
who have been the prime sponsors and who have joined, and as well as the
nominees that are before the committee. I support them and the FSOs.

THE CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator. First of all, let me say that yesterday
Senator McConnell committed to having the Senate Intelligence Committee and
directed the Senate Intelligence Committee to deal with the issues that -- a
number of the issues that you have raised. I am going to respect his request in

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that regard. Yesterday, the Senate unanimously approved the resolution offered
by Senator Schumer to get the transcript released. It was released this morning.
I urge every American to spend the few minutes it takes to read that and make
up their own mind on that.

As far as the Ukrainian Foreign Assistance Integrity and Accountability
Act of 2019, I -- it was delivered yesterday. I have not had a chance to read it yet
or study it. I will do so, and then we will talk about going forward on it, so thank
you very much.

SENATOR MENENDEZ. Mr. Chairman, one observation.

THE CHAIRMAN. Please.

SENATOR MENENDEZ. The resolution passed by -- agreed to -- Senator
Schumer provided and passed by the Senate speaks to the question of the
whistleblower in the intelligence community who wishes to come before the
Intelligence Community and share their story of whatever it is they feel is wrong.
That is fine. But there are a series of issues here having nothing to do with the
whistleblower, that have everything to do with the State Department that this
committee has jurisdiction and oversight on and should be engaged robustly in
them. And I would urge you separate and apart -- I know the chairman also sits on the Intelligence Committee.

But bifurcating whatever the whistleblower has to say, there are serious here. How is it that Rudy Giuliani becomes an entity of the United States to engage in Ukraine? Who made him ambassador? Who made him special envoy? Who made him whatever to do that? How is it -- what is it that the State Department did or did not as it relates to our assistance to the Ukraine?

My understanding is that they not only sent the request for the monies to be committed, that there was no policy objections to the request posed by the State Department, and no policy questions posed to them by OMB. But we need to verify it and get that information out there if that is the case. So I would urge you to consider all those things that are outside of the whistleblower issues, but surely within the jurisdiction of the committee.

**THE CHAIRMAN.** And I will do so. This matter is relatively new. It is very fluid. And as it crystallizes, we will -- I will make a decision on where we are going to go on it. I appreciate your concerns on that, and I -- in any event, if it is okay, we will go on with the business of the committee meeting. So with that --

**SENATOR SHAHEEN.** Mr. Chairman?
THE CHAIRMAN. Yeah, Senator Shaheen.

SENATOR SHAHEEN. Would it be appropriate to make a statement about another issue now? It is not on the agenda and it has to do with Afghanistan.

THE CHAIRMAN. Well, that has not bothered me, right? Oh, please make your statement.

[Laughter.]

SENATOR SHAHEEN. I just -- I just wanted to remind everybody what I am sure most people already know, and that is Afghanistan is having their presidential elections this Saturday. The ambassador -- I had a meeting with the ambassador last week, and we talked about the fact that it would be important for the United States to go on record as supporting free and fair elections given the Taliban is interested in preventing those from happening. I have been working on a resolution with Senator Tillis because we are the co-chairs of the Senate NATO Observer Group, and this is a NATO mission.

But we are going to circulate that and get as many sponsors as we can. I think it is appropriate for it to be a bipartisan resolution that says that it is in the interest of all of us that Afghanistan is able to hold their elections on time without interference. So I would hope that everybody would take a look at that.
and consider signing on because I think it is important for us to make a statement that the Afghans receive about the importance of their elections.

**THE CHAIRMAN.** Thank you. And I have a couple of questions about that, but because of our timing, I will talk to you about that privately. So with that, this is the chairman's intent here. We have got two noms. I am going to take those up first, then we will go to the resolutions, and then finally to the legislation. If there is no objection, both Mr. Boehler and Mr. Zuckerman have been in and out and around and around. We have debated it backwards and forwards. I would entertain a motion en banc to approve both Mr. Boehler and Mr. Zuckerman, then do a -- and -- excuse me -- and there is a lengthy list also -- an FSO list. I would entertain a motion to approve all three of those by voice.

**SENATOR MENENDEZ.** So move.

**VOICE.** Second.

**VOICE.** Second.

**THE CHAIRMAN.** You have heard the motion, which has been duly seconded.

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

[A chorus of ayes.]

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THE CHAIRMAN. Opposed, nay.

[No response.]

THE CHAIRMAN. The ayes have it, and the motion is passed.

SENATOR CARDIN. Recorded as “no” on the Zuckerman nomination.

THE CHAIRMAN. Pardon?

SENATOR CARDIN. Recorded no on the --

THE CHAIRMAN. Yes. Yes. Senator Cardin will be recorded “no” on Zuckerman. Anybody else wish to be recorded?

[No response.]

THE CHAIRMAN. There being none, we will move now to the resolutions.

There are Resolutions 6, 7, 8, and 9. Again, these have been hashed out really well as far as the staff is concerned. This is Senate Resolution 183, as amended by the preamble amendment, Senate Res. 236, Senate Res. 277, Senate Res. 318, as amended by the revised Merkley First Degree 1 Amendment. So I am told that we have all the issues hammered out on that. I would -- I would accept a motion to approve the full resolutions en banc.

VOICE. So move.
THE CHAIRMAN. It has been moved and seconded that we approve all four en banc. Senator Cruz, did you have debate or were you --

SENATOR CRUZ. No, I was just going to ask consent to be added to Senate Resolution 318 as a co-sponsor.

THE CHAIRMAN. There being no objection, it will be so ordered.

Is there anything further?

[No response.]

THE CHAIRMAN. If not, all those in favor of the motion, signify by saying aye.

[A chorus of ayes.]

THE CHAIRMAN. Opposed, nay.

[No response.]

THE CHAIRMAN. The ayes have it. Those four resolutions I have read have been adopted.

SENATOR ROMNEY. Mr. Chairman, was that the -- Tunisia, that was 236?

Is that right?

THE CHAIRMAN. It was, yes.

SENATOR ROMNEY. I would like to be shown also as a co-sponsor of that.
The Chairman. If there is no objection, you will be added.

Senator Menendez. Mr. Chairman, I would ask to be added as a co-sponsor to the TAIPEI Act.

The Chairman. Is there objection?

[No response.]

The Chairman. Hearing none, it is so ordered.

Senator Merkley. Mr. Chairman?

The Chairman. Senator Merkley.

Senator Merkley. Can I be added as -- recorded “no” on Mr. Zuckerman?

The Chairman. Yes, you may.

Senator Merkley. Thank you.

The Chairman. The clerk will add you as a “no.” Okay. The first thing we are going to take up is the -- did you want to take this one up first or not? All right. Senate Bill 1678, the TAIPEI Act. Is there any debate or is there a motion on Senate Bill 1678 -- excuse me -- the manager’s amendment on Senate Bill 1678, the TAIPEI Act. The chairman will entertain a motion.

Voice: So move.
THE CHAIRMAN. Is there a second?

SENATOR MENENDEZ. Second.

THE CHAIRMAN. Moved and seconded that the manager’s amendment to the TAIPEI Act, Senate Bill 1678, be adopted. Is there debate?

[No response.]

THE CHAIRMAN. There being no debate, all those in favor, signify by saying aye.

[A chorus of ayes.]

THE CHAIRMAN. Opposed, nay.

[No response.]

THE CHAIRMAN. The ayes have it, and the motion is passed.

SENATOR CRUZ. Mr. Chairman?

THE CHAIRMAN. Now, with the -- yes, Senator Cruz.

SENATOR CRUZ. I would ask consent also that I be added as a co-sponsor to S. 1678, and also 1838, and 2372.

THE CHAIRMAN. There being no objection, it is so ordered.

Now, let us go to final passage on -- Senator?

SENATOR ROMNEY. Mr. Chairman, same request on my behalf.
The Chairman. Senator -- it will be so ordered. Senator Gardner.

Senator Gardner. I just want to make a few comments on the bill itself.

The Chairman. Okay. Well, would you make a motion to adopt the bill?

We have adopted --

Senator Gardner. I move to adopt S. 1678 --

The Chairman. As amended by the manager's package.

Senator Gardner. As amended by the manager's amendment.

The Chairman. Okay. Is there a second?

Senator Menendez. Second.

The Chairman. Is there debate? Senator?

Senator Gardner. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for bringing this up.

Obviously with the news that in recent days of the Solomon Islands and Kiribati changing their allegiance or their recognition of Taiwan to China, China's continued harassment and bullying and economic activities throughout the region pose a significant threat to Taiwan's democracy and economy, and it is time the United States do more as we stand with Taiwan. It is time the United States do more to stand with Taiwan.
We have passed a number of great legislative actions and measures over the past several years -- the Taiwan Travel Act, the Asian Reassurance Initiative Act, and a number of other provisions. This is one more way to stand with those countries who will stand with Taiwan to create rewards and opportunities for those that stand with the United States as we stand with Taiwan.

Look no further than what is happening in Hong Kong as what Taiwan’s future looks like should Chinese aggression, bullying, and disregard for democracy and autonomy be allowed to move forward without the United States standing up. So thank you very much for the support of the bill, and I look forward to moving this through the process.

THE CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator. Is there further debate?

[No response.]

THE CHAIRMAN. There being no further debate on the motion to Senate Bill 1678, all those in favor, signify by saying aye.

[A chorus of ayes.]

THE CHAIRMAN. Opposed, nay.

[No response.]

THE CHAIRMAN. The ayes have it.
I will go to Senate Bill 1590, Rescuing Animals with Rewards Act. There is no manager’s amendment on it. I will consider a motion to --

Senator Merkley. So move.

Senator Menendez. Second.

The Chairman. Senator Merkley has moved. Senator Menendez has seconded. Is there debate?

Senator Merkley. Mr. Chairman?

The Chairman. Senator Merkley.

Senator Merkley. I will say briefly that the international trafficking in wildlife is having a huge impact on species across the world. This gives the State Department authority to offer rewards for information to understand those trafficking networks or to pursue specific criminal networks. The State Department has had a rewards program, but they have never had authorization for it, and I think this will provide a strong foundation for them to expand that and expand their attack on this illegal trade.

The Chairman. Well said, Senator Merkley. It certainly is an appropriate issue that you are focused on. We deeply appreciate it.

Senator Udall. Mr. Chairman?
THE CHAIRMAN. Senator?

SENATOR UDALL. Could I be added as a co-sponsor to that?

THE CHAIRMAN. Senator Udall will be added as a co-sponsor. So we have a motion pending to adopt Senate Bill 1590.

SENATOR MENENDEZ. So move.

VOICE. Second.

THE CHAIRMAN. Moved and seconded. We now have a motion. Is there further debate on Senate Bill 1590?

[No response.]

THE CHAIRMAN. There being none, all those in favor, signify by saying aye.

[A chorus of ayes.]

THE CHAIRMAN. Opposed, nay.

[No response.]

THE CHAIRMAN. The ayes have it. Senate Bill 1590 has been approved.

We will now move to Senate Bill 1838. This one has been a work in progress for a long time. The committee has worked really hard on this.
Everybody should be -- everybody should be proud of the work that was done on this bill. It is truly a bipartisan bill on a very difficult, depressing matter. We have before us the -- a manager's amendment, and it incorporates Merkley 1 and 3 first-degree amendments, and adds language directing the Administration consider appropriate adjustments to current U.S. export controls with respect to the supply of crowd control and surveillance equipment to Hong Kong. Is there a motion to adopt the manager’s amendment?

SENATOR CARDIN. I move to adopt.

SENATOR CRUZ. Second.

THE CHAIRMAN. Senator Cardin moved. Senator Cruz second. Is there debate?

VOICE. [Off audio.]

THE CHAIRMAN. Okay. There being no further debate, all -- I am sorry.

SENATOR MENENDEZ. On the manager's amendment.

THE CHAIRMAN. Okay. We will go -- we will get to debate after the manager's amendment.

All those in favor of the manager's amendment, please signify by saying aye.
[A chorus of ayes.]

**THE CHAIRMAN.** Opposed, nay.

[No response.]

**THE CHAIRMAN.** The ayes have it, and the manager’s amendment has been adopted.

Now, we need a motion to adopt Senate Bill 1838, as amended by the manager’s amendment. Is there a motion?

**SENATOR CARDIN.** So move.

**THE CHAIRMAN.** Senator Cardin has moved.

**VOICE:** Second.

**SENATOR CARDIN.** Can I be heard for just one 1 minute?

**THE CHAIRMAN.** Yes.

**SENATOR CARDIN.** First, I really do want to thank Chairman Risch and Ranking Member Menendez for your patience on this bill and the work that was done. Senator Rubio and I have worked on this bill with a lot of members of the committee. It is absolutely essential that we speak out in regards to what is happening in Hong Kong. We know that the Chinese government has infringed upon the autonomy after it was anticipated. We have legislation here that
provides certain responsibilities for the continuation of the special status in Hong Kong.

This legislation will complement that, give us the information we need to make sure that the autonomy of Hong Kong is being respected as well as the human rights of the people that live in that place. So I just want to thank again the leadership of this committee. I think it is an important bill for us to pass.


SENATOR MERKLEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have an amendment that I have withdrawn upon conversation with the chairman and his team. But under -- it essentially says, look, we are not going to allow the export to the police of Hong Kong or the police auxiliary tear gas, pepper spray, rubber bullets, water cannons, and bean bag -- bean bag rounds. I think -- thought it was a very clear and crisp strategy, but export controls get complicated. So I understand that there is a desire to make sure there are no unintended consequences, but I do intend to bring this issue back. And, Mr. Chairman, I understand you share the concern about these items going to the police, and that we will have a chance to work together on this.
THE CHAIRMAN. You are correct on that, Senator Merkley. And, first of all, let me say that a lot of credit should go to the ranking member on this. He raised this in a -- in some meetings we have had and in committee, and these are very, very legitimate concerns. As you indicated, they are complicated.

On September 10th, Senator Menendez and I with the chairman and ranking member of the Banking Committee, the other distinguished senator from Idaho being the ranking -- being the chairman, sent a letter to the Administration about U.S. policy regarding the export of crowd control equipment to Hong Kong. We are moving forward on that. There certainly is not, I think, disagreement. I think we are just in the weeds on the details, but we will work -- we will together.

SENATOR MERKLEY. Great. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN. I appreciate it.

SENATOR MENENDEZ. Mr. Chairman, if I may.

THE CHAIRMAN. Yes, Senator Menendez.

SENATOR MENENDEZ. First of all, I want to commend Senator Cardin and Senator Rubio. There was a lot of work that went into this bill to get it to the
point that we have the consensus we have today. So I want to commend them on
their legislative skills in doing that.

The chairman and I had an opportunity to meet right across the table there
with some of the most dynamic, incredibly inspiring young people who are
leading the effort in Hong Kong, and they spoke about this bill as something they
are critically looking forward to see happen. So I want to commend the chairman
for finally bringing it up here after it has all been worked out. And on this final
issue that Senator Merkley raised, I have raised it. We are working together. I
think the chairman is in common cause with us as it relates to it, and I think -- I
am optimistic that we are going to get there.

THE CHAIRMAN. Thank you. I associate myself with those remarks.

Those young people are brave, and it was an honor to meet them.

SENATOR GARDNER. Mr. Chairman?

THE CHAIRMAN. Senator Gardner.

SENATOR GARDNER. We have a committee hearing tomorrow to continue
this conversation, for those of you on the subcommittee, at 10:45 tomorrow.

THE CHAIRMAN. Thank you so much. I appreciate it.
Senator Menendez. Could we highlight for the record that the chairman
associated himself with my remarks?

[Laughter.]

The Chairman. This one time. Thank you. Good work to the committee
on this. So do we have a motion pending? Are we at final passage? Have we
had the motion? We have.

All those in favor of final passage of this bill, signify by saying aye.

[A chorus of ayes.]

The Chairman. Opposed, nay.

[No response.]

The Chairman. The ayes have it, and Senate Bill 1838 has passed to the
floor of the Senate.

We have lastly Senate Bill 2372, which Senator Menendez described in his
opening statement in way too clear a detail for something right after lunch. But
in any event, those of us -- and we are all concerned about marine debris. This is
appropriate. The parties who worked on this are certainly to be commended for
that.
We have a manager’s amendment to this bill which clarifies several portions of the legislation and incorporates elements of the first-degree amendments that were filed. I will be supporting the manager’s amendment. So is there a motion to adopt the manager’s amendment?

Senator Menendez. So move.

Senator Shaheen. Mr. Chairman, can I be added as a co-sponsor?

The Chairman. Can we get -- can we get a second on that?


The Chairman. Okay. Senator Gardner. Senator Shaheen, you wish to be --

Senator Shaheen. Can I be added as a co-sponsor?

The Chairman. You may. You will be added as a co-sponsor. So is there further debate on Senate Bill -- excuse me -- on the manager’s amendment to Senate Bill 2372?

Senator Udall. Mr. Chairman?

The Chairman. Senator Udall.

Senator Udall. Mr. Chairman, I have several amendments to offer, but I am not going to offer them at this point. I want to very much congratulate
Senator Sullivan and Senator Whitehouse for their work on this piece of legislation, Save Our Seas. I do not think, though, that the way this legislation stands, this is going to correct everything. I think we have got a real serious problem on single-use plastic. I think we need to be more aggressive. We need to go further. And so I hope that when we bring this bill to the floor, we can do provisions that then will do that. I am also working on legislation. But I think it is a great piece of legislation on the recycling part, the government policies, but we need to be -- we are in a plastic crisis. We are producing too much, and so we need to -- we need to get a reduction in place is where we are headed in terms of the legislation. So thank you very much.

THE CHAIRMAN. This is a worldwide problem, and I think we are at the incipient stages of it. And it is going to take more work, there is absolutely no question about that. Is there further debate?

SENATOR BARRASSO. Mr. Chairman, thank you. The similar bill in the jurisdiction of the Environment and Public Works Committee passed the committee unanimously this morning, Save Our Seas.

THE CHAIRMAN. Thanks for that information. Is there further debate on the manager’s amendment to Senate Bill 2372?
[No response.]

THE CHAIRMAN. There being none, all those in favor of the motion to adopt the manager's amendment, please signify by saying aye.

[A chorus of ayes.]

THE CHAIRMAN. Opposed, nay.

[No response.]

THE CHAIRMAN. The ayes have it.

We now have before us Senate Bill 2372, as amended. Is there a motion to adopt?

SENATOR MENENDEZ. So move.

THE CHAIRMAN. It has been moved.

VOICE: Second.

THE CHAIRMAN. It has been seconded. Is there debate on the bill itself?

[No response.]

THE CHAIRMAN. There being none, all those in favor, signify by saying aye.

[A chorus of ayes.]

THE CHAIRMAN. Opposed, nay.
[No response.]

THE CHAIRMAN. The ayes have it, and Senate Bill 2372 has been adopted.

That completes the committee's business. I ask unanimous consent that

staff be authorized to make technical and conforming changes.

Without objection, it is so ordered.

With that, the committee will be adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 2:07 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED BY
RANKING MEMBER BOB MENENDEZ

AMIA Jewish Community Center Bombing Resolution

Twenty-Five years after the attack on the Argentina Israelite Mutual
Association (AMIA) Jewish Community Center, one of the deadliest terrorist
attacks in Argentina’s history, justice has still not been served. The investigation
into this heinous attack has been marked by international inaction, political
interference, investigative misconduct, and even allegations of cover-ups.

This bipartisan resolution commemorates the lives lost that day while also
calling for accountability for those 85 victims. And in positive news on this
front, I also want to recognize President Macri’s decision on July 18 to designate
Hezbollah as a terrorist organization for its role in these attacks.

TAIPEI Act

As the Co-Chair of the Senate Taiwan Caucus, I am pleased to support the
TAIPEI Act, Mr. Chairman, and I ask Unanimous Consent to be added as a
cosponsor.

This week marks the loss of yet two more of Taiwan’s diplomatic allies on
President Trump’s watch. Congress must step in to ensure that the United States
is committed to maintaining Taiwan’s diplomatic space. This bill allows us to
offer incentives – or punishments - to countries who are considering altering their relationship with Taiwan.

**S. 183, United States-Japan Alliance Resolution**

I was pleased to introduce, along with the Chairman and Senators Markey, Gardner, Coons and Shaheen, the resolution reaffirming the vital role of the United States-Japan alliance in promoting peace, stability, and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region. It is a 70-year relationship of common interests and common values fundamental to U.S. engagement in the Indo-Pacific and around the globe.

**S. Res 236, Tunisia-U.S. Partnership Resolution**

I am also pleased to introduce the Tunisia resolution, along with Senator Romney, reaffirming the strong partnership between Tunisia and the United States. As instability mounts around Tunisia’s borders, it is critical that we reaffirm our support and our shared values, interests, and pursuit of long-term stability and security.

**Other Resolutions**

I also support passage of S. Res. 318, a resolution to support the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and S. 1590, the Rescuing Animals With Rewards Act, and I commend my colleagues, especially the Chairman and Senator Merkley, for their introduction.

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**STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED BY SENATOR TOM UDALL**

Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member.

I first want to thank you both and all of the members of the Senate who have joined in this effort to tackle plastic pollution.

We are beyond a tipping point in the plastic waste crisis. And it is high-time that Congress and the administration acknowledge this crisis and take action.

We only need to look around our very own neighborhoods and communities to see that plastic is polluting our rivers and streams . . . parks and public places . . . streets and sidewalks . . . nearly all of our landscapes -- in addition to our oceans and beaches.
This is not just a coastal or ocean state problem. Plastics are everywhere. And they don’t break down.

This is a national and international crisis in every corner of the globe.

Wildlife everywhere are exposed, consuming plastic that is mistaken for food.

And they are not alone—all of us are consuming plastic as well.

Reports show that humans are consuming a credit card’s weight worth of plastic each week -- through our drinking water, our air and our food, where plastic particles have broken down to the microscopic level and are entering our bodies.

The U.S. Geological Survey scientists recently published a report titled, "It is raining plastic."

The scientists found that plastics showed up in over 90 percent of the rainwater samples taken at eight different sites, mostly between Denver and Boulder, Colorado—including sites that are 10,000 feet above sea level.

I will vote for this legislation—but I have to say that it is very modest compared to a massive problem and I need to raise a word of caution.

We won’t make true progress until we address the root of the problem: we must reduce the amount of plastic we generate in the first place.

Many of us support recycling and are avid recyclers. But this is not a problem we can recycle our way out of. We are far past that option.

And we cannot shift the blame to developing countries, to Asia in particular, pointing the finger that they are responsible for the marine debris.

The truth is we are pumping the planet with plastic. And the United States is a major contributor.

Plastic production has increased exponentially -- from 2.3 million tons in 1950 to 448 million tons in 2015. Production is expected to double that by 2050.

Half of all plastics ever manufactured has been manufactured in the last 15 years.
Every year, about 8 million tons of plastic waste escapes into the oceans from coastal nations.

According to U.S. Census Bureau data for 2018, 78 percent of U.S. plastic waste exports was sent to countries with poor waste management practices.

That’s about 157,000 large shipping containers -- about 429 per day -- of U.S. plastic waste sent to countries already overwhelmed with plastic waste that are major sources of plastic pollution to the ocean.

For too long, we have kidded ourselves that what we put in our blue bins is getting recycled.

For too long, those items were buried in landfills or incinerated -- because plastic recycling in the United States is just not economic.

For too long, we have shipped our plastic waste overseas -- where the infrastructure to recycle the waste doesn't exist either.

And the plastic has piled up . . . and found its way into our environment, our wildlife, and our own bodies.

As the plastic companies have made profits, plastic pollution has created a financial crisis for our states and local governments that are burdened with the ballooning and overwhelming costs of handling plastic waste.

The true costs of plastic production are being off-loaded – principally to local government and the taxpayers. To us.

Producers are making private profits, and creating socialized costs.

And we are missing out on opportunities for commercial innovation in developing sustainable and biodegradable packaging.

States and local governments are aggressively trying to reduce the source of the waste.

We need to match that at the Federal level.

I am currently preparing legislation that will meet this challenge.

I am working with other members of Congress, including Senator Merkley and Representative Lowenthal, to focus on cutting waste at the front end and to put the onus of responsibility where it belongs: on the producers.

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Wednesday, September 25, 2019
So, while I’ll vote this bill out of committee, I urge us to improve it and the other components of Save Our Seas on the floor -- by tackling the problem head on to reduce plastic pollution in the first instance.