

1 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING TO CONSIDER S.J. RES. 41, A
2 JOINT RESOLUTION APPROVING THE RENEWAL OF IMPORT
3 RESTRICTIONS CONTAINED IN THE BURMESE FREEDOM AND
4 DEMOCRACY ACT OF 2003
5 WEDNESDAY, JULY 23, 2008
6 U.S. Senate,
7 Committee on Finance,
8 Washington, DC.

9 The meeting was convened, pursuant to notice, at
10 10:05 a.m., in room 215, Dirksen Senate Office Building,
11 Hon. Max Baucus (chairman of the committee) presiding.

12 Present: Senators Conrad, Lincoln, Schumer,
13 Stabenow, Cantwell, Salazar, Grassley, Bunning, and
14 Roberts.

15 Also present: Democratic Staff: Bill Dauster, Deputy
16 Staff Director and General Counsel; Demetrios Marantis,
17 Chief International Trade Counsel. Republican Staff:
18 Kolan Davis, Staff Director and Chief Counsel; Stephen
19 Schaefer, Chief International Trade Counsel.

20 Also present: Claudia Poteet, International Trade
21 Policy Advisor; Ayesha Khanna, Detailee; Carla Martin,
22 Chief Clerk; Josh Levasseur, Deputy Chief Clerk.

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1 OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. MAX BAUCUS, A U.S. SENATOR FROM
2 MONTANA, CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

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4 The Chairman. The committee will come to order.

5 The committee meets today to consider S.J. Res. 41,
6 a joint resolution renewing the import restrictions in
7 the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act.

8 Thomas Jefferson said, "The freedom and happiness of
9 man are the sole objects of all legitimate government."
10 Today we meet to consider a resolution to advance the
11 freedom of the Burmese people. We consider S.J. Res. 41,
12 which renews import sanctions on the Burmese government.

13 Burma is a government that, time and again, has
14 repudiated the freedom and happiness of its people.
15 Instead, the Burmese government has prohibited freedom of
16 speech and press, has engaged in gross human rights
17 violations, and has made children into soldiers.

18 I have long held that unilateral sanctions are not
19 often effective. For that reason, in 2003 when Congress
20 first considered imposing sanctions on the Burmese
21 government, Senator Grassley and I worked together to
22 ensure that the import ban on Burmese products was not
23 open ended.

24 We agreed to revisit the ban on an annual basis to
25 ensure that the sanctions remain the appropriate tool to

1 address America's human rights concerns with Burma.

2 Sadly for the Burmese people, the human rights situation
3 in Burma continues to deteriorate.

4 This year was an especially chilling year in Burma.
5 The Burmese government forcibly retaliated against
6 Buddhist monks who were peacefully demonstrating against
7 the poor economic conditions in Burma, and the government
8 demonstrated its sheer disregard for the Burmese people
9 by refusing the speedy entry of international aid after
10 the cyclone in May.

11 America has responded vigorously to these
12 atrocities. Just last week, the House and Senate
13 approved tightening trade, economic, and other sanctions
14 against Burma. Our European allies have also imposed
15 import restrictions on Burmese gems, timber, and metal,
16 and they imposed financial and travel sanctions on
17 Burmese government officials.

18 The U.N. has called on the Burmese government to
19 conduct a free and fair constitutional referendum to
20 allow greater humanitarian aid and open a dialogue with
21 the political opposition. The worsening situation in
22 Burma, coupled with strengthened action on the part of
23 the international community, underscores the
24 appropriateness of renewing the import ban today.

25 Let us renew these sanctions today and fulfill our

1 worthy objective. Let us use the tools at our disposal
2 to help achieve the freedom and happiness of the Burmese
3 people. I invite my colleagues to come together to
4 approve the resolution before us today.

5 I now recognize Senator Grassley for any opening
6 remarks that he may choose to make.

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1 OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. CHUCK GRASSLEY, A U.S. SENATOR
2 FROM IOWA

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4 Senator Grassley. The Chairman has said that the
5 human rights record of Burma is deplorable. I agree with
6 that. The abuses have been extensive and, worse yet, the
7 trends continue, with the government crack-down on
8 peaceful protests leading to the beatings, detentions,
9 and deaths of Burmese monks. There are reportedly over
10 1,800 political prisoners still in jail. That is 700
11 more prisoners than the State Department reported last
12 year.

13 The leader of the opposition has spent 12 out of the
14 last 19 years under house arrest. Since our last
15 renewal, the United Nations Security Council adopted a
16 presidential statement expressing disappointment with the
17 regime's use of violence, and underscoring the importance
18 of releasing these political prisoners.

19 We should send a strong signal to the military Junta
20 that their ongoing behavior is unacceptable. I urge my
21 colleagues to vote in favor of continuing trade sanctions
22 against Burma for another year.

23 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

24 The Chairman. Thank you, Senator.

25 Before we have a description of the resolution, I

1 notice the arrival of Senator Bunning from Kentucky. I
2 might ask if he may wish to make a statement, to say
3 something that he feels is appropriate to the matter at
4 hand.

5 Senator Bunning. The only thing that I want to do
6 is pass the Burmese sanctions bill. That is why I am
7 here.

8 The Chairman. And I want to thank you for
9 attending the markup. We do expect to have a quorum at
10 10:30.

11 Ms. Khanna, would you briefly describe the
12 resolution?

13 Ms. Khanna. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This bill
14 approves, for one year, the renewal of import
15 restrictions contained in the Burmese Freedom and
16 Democracy Act of 2003.

17 The Chairman. Thank you.

18 I will now call on Ms. Poteet, if she wishes to
19 address her description of the resolution.

20 Ms. Poteet. I have no further comments. Thank
21 you.

22 The Chairman. Do Senators have any questions
23 regarding the joint resolution?

24 [No response.]

25 The Chairman. Seeing none at the moment, the Chair

1 will recognize other Senators when they arrive. The
2 committee is in suspension until those Senators do
3 arrive, sometime between now and 10:30.

4 I see now, the Senator from North Dakota, Senator
5 Conrad, has arrived. Senator Conrad, I have made my
6 statement, Senator Grassley has made his, Senator Bunning
7 has made his. We have had a brief description of the
8 joint resolution.

9 I wish to know whether the Senator wishes to make a
10 statement. He is certainly encouraged to make a
11 statement if he chooses to do so.

12 Senator Conrad. I would like to withdraw my
13 statement. I do not have a statement. I will spare you
14 a statement.

15 The Chairman. Thank you, Senator, for coming to
16 the markup. We do expect a quorum to be here, but not
17 until about 10:30.

18 Senator Conrad. Would now be a good time to make
19 calls?

20 The Chairman. Now would be a good time to make the
21 best use of one's time in whatever way one wishes to. We
22 do expect a quorum at 10:30. Thank you. Thank you.

23 [Whereupon, at 10:12 a.m. the meeting was suspended
24 and resumed back on the record at 10:38 a.m.]

25 The Chairman. The committee will come back to

1 order.

2 Pursuant to the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of
3 2003, amendments are not in order to S.J. Res. 41. Thus,
4 the Chair will entertain a motion to report the
5 resolution.

6 Senator Grassley. I so move, Mr. Chairman.

7 The Chairman. Does any Senator require a recorded
8 vote?

9 [No response.]

10 The Chairman. Seeing none, all those in favor of
11 the joint resolution, signify by saying aye.

12 [Chorus of ayes.]

13 The Chairman. Those opposed, no.

14 [No response.]

15 The Chairman. The ayes have it. The joint
16 resolution is approved. The Chair thanks all Senators
17 very, very much for taking the time to come to report out
18 this resolution.

19 The committee is adjourned.

20 [Whereupon, at 10:39 a.m. the meeting was
21 concluded.]

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I N D E X

PAGESTATEMENT OF:

THE HONORABLE MAX BAUCUS
A United States Senator
from the State of Montana

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THE HONORABLE CHUCK GRASSLEY
A United States Senator
from the State of Iowa

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