

**Statement of Senator John F. Kerry
Nominee for Secretary of State
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
Thursday, January 24, 2013**

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Corker, Members of the Committee:

I am enormously appreciative for the very generous comments of the Chair and Ranking Member.

I will tell you that I have enjoyed Chairing this Committee and working with all of you as much as anything I have been privileged to do in my career. I think this is one of the great Committees of the Senate and it is the only major Committee I have served on every single day since I arrived here in 1985. As you know, the Committee carries special responsibilities for the security of our nation and I thank each and everyone of you for the serious consideration you have brought to challenging issues and for the incredible cooperation I have received as Chairman. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing to work closely with all of you as we tackle some very tough problems. And I particularly welcome the new members in that regard.

I am very grateful to Secretary Clinton, Senator McCain and Senator Warren for their introductions. Secretary Clinton has been superb and we all thank her for a job well done and for her tireless efforts on behalf of the nation. She has set a high mark for her stewardship of the State Department and her commitment to country. I can pledge that, with the consent of the Senate, I will do everything in my power to build on her record and the President's vision.

Senator McCain is a longtime friend. We met here in the Senate coming from very different political positions and perspectives but we found common ground. I will always be grateful for his partnership in helping to make real peace with Vietnam by establishing the most significant process in the history of our country for accounting for the missing and

dead of any war, and then for lifting the embargo and ultimately normalizing relations with an old enemy. John had every reason to hate but he didn't. Instead, we were able to help heal deep wounds and end a war that divided too many for too long.

And as we talk about war and peace and foreign policy, I want us all to keep in our minds the extraordinary men and women in uniform who are on the front lines, the troops at war who help protect America. As a veteran, I will always carry the consequences of our decisions in my mind and be grateful that we have such extraordinary people to back us up.

And I thank my new colleague, Senator Warren, for her generous comments. She is a long time, fierce fighter for what is just and fair and if her testimony has an effect today and helps win votes for my confirmation, she will become the Senior Senator of our state in a record few legislative days!

It is humbling to appear before you in a new role as President Obama's nominee for Secretary of State. But my approach to this role, if confirmed, is also deeply informed by the 28 plus years that I've spent serving here on this Committee and in the Senate. That perspective will remain with me if confirmed as Secretary, and I'm already excited by the many ways in which we can work together and in which we must work together to advance America's security interests in a complicated and even dangerous world.

I would add that I'm particularly aware that in many ways the greatest challenge to America's foreign policy will be in your hands, not mine – because while it's often said that we can't be strong at home if we're not strong in the world, in these days of fiscal crisis, and as a recovering member of the Super-Committee, I am especially cognizant of the fact that we can't be strong in the world unless we are strong at home – and the first priority of business which will affect my credibility as a

diplomat working to help other countries create order, is whether America at last puts its own fiscal house in order.

I can't emphasize enough how critical this imperative is. People all over the world are looking to the United States for leadership. We are known as the indispensable nation for good reason. No nation has more opportunity to advance the cause of democracy and no nation is as committed to the cause of human rights as we are. But to protect our nation and make good on all our promises, as well as to live up to our ideals and meet the crisis of this moment, it is urgent that we show people we can get our business done in an effective and timely way. It is difficult enough to solve some of the problems we face, but it becomes near impossible if we ourselves replace our credibility and leverage with gridlock and dysfunction.

More than ever, foreign policy is economic policy. The world is competing for resources and global markets. Every day that goes by where America is uncertain about engaging in that arena, unwilling to put our best foot forward and win, unwilling to demonstrate our resolve to lead, is a day in which we weaken our nation itself. My plea is that we can summon across party lines, without partisan diversions, an economic patriotism which recognizes that American strength and prospects abroad, depend on American strength and results at home. It is hard to tell the leadership of any number of countries they must get their economic issues resolved if we don't resolve our own.

It is also imperative that in implementing President Obama's vision for the world as he ends more than a decade of war, we join together to augment our message to the world. President Obama and every one of us here knows that American foreign policy is not defined by drones and deployments alone. We cannot allow the extraordinary good we do to save and change lives to be eclipsed entirely by the role we have had to play since September 11th, a role that was thrust upon us.

American foreign policy is also defined by food security and energy security, humanitarian assistance, the fight against disease and the push for development, as much as it is by any single counter terrorism initiative. It is defined by leadership on life threatening issues like climate change, or fighting to lift up millions of lives by promoting freedom and democracy from Africa to the Americas or speaking out for the prisoners of gulags in North Korea or millions of refugees and displaced persons and victims of human trafficking. It is defined by keeping faith with all that our troops have sacrificed to secure for Afghanistan. America lives up to her values when we give voice to the voiceless.

I share with the President the conviction it is equally imperative we assert a new role in a world of increasing failed and failing states. Burgeoning populations of young people, hungry for jobs, opportunity, individual rights and freedom are rebelling against years of disenfranchisement and humiliation. A fruit vendor in Tunisia who ignited the Arab awakening wanted dignity and respect. He wanted to sell his fruit without corruption and abuse. The youth of Tahrir Square who brought Egypt its revolution represented a generational thirst for opportunity and individual participatory rights of governance--not a religious movement. The developed world can do more to meet the challenge and responsibility of these aspirations. With the help of all the members of this Committee, I am determined to help President Obama meet this moment.

The world is well aware we face a number of immediate, dangerous challenges, particularly in the Middle East and South and Central Asia. Given our extraordinary interest in non-proliferation, we must resolve the questions surrounding Iran's nuclear program. The President has made it definitive--we will do what we must to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. I repeat here today: our policy is not containment. It is prevention and the clock is ticking on our efforts to secure responsible compliance. This Administration, working with

Congress and an unprecedented international coalition, has put into place crippling sanctions on Iran. President Obama has stated again and again, he prefers a diplomatic resolution to this challenge, and I will work to give diplomacy every effort to succeed. But no one should mistake our resolve to reduce the nuclear threat.

Nearly 42 years ago Chairman Fulbright first gave me the opportunity to testify before this Committee during a difficult and divided time for our country. Today I can't help but recognize that the world itself then was in many ways simpler, divided as it was along bi-polar, Cold War antagonisms. Today's world is more complicated than anything we have experienced – from the emergence of China, to the Arab Awakening; inextricably linked economic, health, environmental and demographic issues, proliferation, poverty, pandemic disease, refugees, conflict ongoing in Afghanistan, entire populations and faiths struggling with the demands of modernity, and the accelerating pace of technological innovation shifting power from nation-states to individuals.

With the end of the Cold War, Henry Kissinger pointed out in his superb book on Diplomacy: "None of the most important countries which must build a new world order have had any experience with the multistate system that is emerging. Never before has a new world order had to be assembled from so many different perceptions, or on so global a scale. Nor has any previous order had to combine the attributes of the historic balance-of-power system with global democratic opinion and the exploding technology of the contemporary period." That was written in 1994. It may be more relevant today.

So this really is a time for American leadership, a time for fresh thinking, and a time to find ways to work together to maximize the impact of all America's resources, including the United States Senate.

If I am confirmed, one of the first things I intend to do is to sit down with Senator Menendez and Senator Corker and all the Members of the

Committee to talk about how we can have a constructive dialogue and a collegial relationship because, even as we pride ourselves on the separation of powers and the unique oversight role the Committee plays, the challenges in the world are so enormous that we would do our country a disservice if we did not identify the ways we can help each other confront a unique set of questions globally.

If you confirm me, I would take office as Secretary proud that the Senate is in my blood – but equally proud that so too is the foreign service. My Dad’s work under Presidents, both Democratic and Republican, took me and my siblings around the world for a personal journey that brought home the sacrifices and commitment the men and women of the foreign service make every day on behalf of America. I wish everyone in the country could see and understand first-hand the devotion, loyalty and amazingly hard, often dangerous work that our diplomats on the front lines do. Their’s is service which earns our country an enormous return on our investment. I will be proud and honored to represent them and I will work hard to augment our public diplomacy so that the story is told at home and abroad.

Everyone on this Committee knows well the road ahead is tough. But I believe just as deeply that global leadership is a strategic imperative for America, not a favor we do for other countries. It amplifies our voice and extends our reach. It’s the key to jobs, the fulcrum of our influence, and it matters – it really matters to the daily lives of Americans. It matters that we get this moment right for America and it matters that we get it right for the world.

One discussion that I particularly look forward to beginning with you, my colleagues, and with our country, is about the commitment we make in our foreign affairs budget – less than one percent of the entire budget of the government. Not just in my briefings at the State Department but in my conversations with business leaders and in my trips to crisis areas, war zones and refugee camps in some of the poorest countries on earth, I

have been reminded of the importance of the work our State Department does to protect and advance America's interests and do the job of diplomacy in a dangerous world.

In this debate, and in every endeavor, I pledge to work closely with this Committee and the Congress – not just because it will be my responsibility, but because I will not be able to do this job effectively without your involvement and ideas going forward.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee. I know there's a lot of ground to cover and, as a veteran of this Committee, I know we do best when we are engaging in a dialogue. I look forward to doing that now.