

112TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. 1245

To provide for the establishment of the Special Envoy to Promote Religious Freedom of Religious Minorities in the Near East and South Central Asia.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 22, 2011

Mr. BLUNT (for himself and Mr. LEVIN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

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## A BILL

To provide for the establishment of the Special Envoy to Promote Religious Freedom of Religious Minorities in the Near East and South Central Asia.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Near East and South  
5 Central Asia Religious Freedom Act of 2011”.

6 **SEC. 2. SPECIAL ENVOY TO PROMOTE RELIGIOUS FREE-**  
7 **DOM OF RELIGIOUS MINORITIES IN THE**  
8 **NEAR EAST AND SOUTH CENTRAL ASIA.**

9 (a) APPOINTMENT.—The President may appoint a  
10 Special Envoy To Promote Religious Freedom of Religious

1 Minorities in the Near East and South Central Asia (in  
2 this Act referred to as the “Special Envoy”) within the  
3 Department of State. The Special Envoy shall have the  
4 rank of ambassador and shall hold the office at the pleas-  
5 ure of the President.

6 (b) QUALIFICATIONS.—The Special Envoy should be  
7 a person of recognized distinction in the field of human  
8 rights and religious freedom.

9 **SEC. 3. DUTIES.**

10 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Special Envoy shall carry out  
11 the following duties:

12 (1) Promoting the right of religious freedom of  
13 religious minorities in the countries of the Near  
14 East and the countries of South Central Asia, de-  
15 nouncing the violation of such right, and recom-  
16 mending appropriate responses by the United States  
17 Government when such right is violated.

18 (2) Monitoring and combating acts of religious  
19 intolerance and incitement targeted against religious  
20 minorities in the countries of the Near East and the  
21 countries of South Central Asia.

22 (3) Working to ensure that the unique needs of  
23 religious minority communities in the countries of  
24 the Near East and the countries of South Central

1 Asia are addressed, including the economic and secu-  
2 rity needs of such communities.

3 (4) Working with foreign governments of the  
4 countries of the Near East and the countries of  
5 South Central Asia to address laws that are dis-  
6 criminatory toward religious minority communities  
7 in such countries.

8 (5) Coordinating and assisting in the prepara-  
9 tion of that portion of the report required by sec-  
10 tions 116(d) and 502B(b) of the Foreign Assistance  
11 Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2151n(d) and 2304(b)) re-  
12 lating to the nature and extent of religious freedom  
13 of religious minorities in the countries of the Near  
14 East and the countries of South Central Asia.

15 (6) Coordinating and assisting in the prepara-  
16 tion of that portion of the report required by section  
17 102(b) of the International Religious Freedom Act  
18 of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6412(b)) relating to the nature  
19 and extent of religious freedom of religious minori-  
20 ties in the countries of the Near East and the coun-  
21 tries of South Central Asia.

22 (b) COORDINATION.—In carrying out the duties  
23 under subsection (a), the Special Envoy shall, to the max-  
24 imum extent practicable, coordinate with the Assistant  
25 Secretary of State for Population, Refugees and Migra-

1 tion, the Ambassador at Large for International Religious  
2 Freedom, the United States Commission on International  
3 Religious Freedom, and other relevant Federal agencies  
4 and officials.

5 **SEC. 4. DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATION.**

6 Subject to the direction of the President and the Sec-  
7 retary of State, the Special Envoy is authorized to rep-  
8 resent the United States in matters and cases relevant to  
9 religious freedom in the countries of the Near East and  
10 the countries of South Central Asia in—

11 (1) contacts with foreign governments, intergov-  
12 ernmental organizations, and specialized agencies of  
13 the United Nations, the Organization of Security  
14 and Cooperation in Europe, and other international  
15 organizations of which the United States is a mem-  
16 ber; and

17 (2) multilateral conferences and meetings rel-  
18 evant to religious freedom in the countries of the  
19 Near East and the countries of South Central Asia.

20 **SEC. 5. CONSULTATIONS.**

21 The Special Envoy shall consult with domestic and  
22 international nongovernmental organizations and multilat-  
23 eral organizations and institutions, as the Special Envoy  
24 considers appropriate to fulfill the purposes of this Act.

1 **SEC. 6. FUNDING.**

2 Of the amounts appropriated or otherwise made  
3 available to the Secretary of State for “Diplomatic and  
4 Consular Programs” for fiscal years 2011 through 2015,  
5 the Secretary of State is authorized to provide to the Spe-  
6 cial Envoy \$1,000,000 for each such fiscal year for the  
7 hiring of staff, the conduct of investigations, and nec-  
8 essary travel to carry out the provisions of this Act.

9 **SEC. 7. DEFINITIONS.**

10 In this Act—

11 (1) the term “countries of the Near East”—

12 (A) means Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran,  
13 Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya,  
14 Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria,  
15 Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen;  
16 and

17 (B) includes the West Bank and Gaza; and

18 (2) the term “countries of South Central Asia”  
19 means Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India,  
20 Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan,  
21 Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbek-  
22 istan.

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