

Moscow Favorite Kerry Confirmed as New U.S. Secretary of State

By [The Moscow Times](#)

January 30, 2013

The  **Moscow Times**

WASHINGTON — John Kerry's nomination as President Barack Obama's new secretary of state sailed through the U.S. Senate on Tuesday, as his fellow senators voted overwhelmingly to confirm him to replace Hillary Clinton as the country's top diplomat.

The vote was 94-3 in favor. The two senators from Texas, John Cornyn and Ted Cruz, and Oklahoma Senator James Inhofe, all Republicans, were the only no votes. Kerry, the senior Democratic senator from Massachusetts, voted "present."

Kerry's confirmation as the first new member of Obama's second-term national security team had been expected.

The Senate agreed to vote five days after his hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. That panel, which he has chaired for the past four years, voted unanimously by voice vote earlier on Tuesday to back his nomination.

During his tenure as committee chairman, Kerry has pushed for reducing the number of nuclear weapons, shepherding a U.S.-Russia treaty through the Senate in December 2010, and has cast climate change as a national security threat, joining forces with Republicans on legislation that faced too many obstacles to win congressional passage.

He has led delegations to Syria and met a few times with President Bashar Assad, now a pariah in U.S. eyes after months of civil war and bloodshed as the government looks to put down a people's rebellion. Figuring out an end-game for the Middle East country would demand all of Kerry's skills.

Kerry, 69, a five-term senator and losing presidential candidate in 2004, is expected to be sworn in as secretary of state this week. Clinton's last day at the State Department is Friday.

(Reuters, AP)

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