

**RELEASE IN FULL**

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**From:** Abedin, Huma <AbedinH@state.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 24, 2013 9:40 PM  
**To:** H  
**Subject:** Fw: Venezuela diplomat laments remark by Kerry (AP)

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**From:** OpsNewsTicker@state.gov [mailto:OpsNewsTicker@state.gov]  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 24, 2013 09:36 PM  
**To:** NEWS-Mahogany  
**Subject:** Venezuela diplomat laments remark by Kerry (AP)

CARACAS (AP) - Venezuela's foreign minister has taken issue with a comment by Sen. John Kerry during his confirmation hearing as nominee for U.S. secretary of state.

Kerry said during Thursday's hearing in Washington that depending on what happens in Venezuela, there could be an opportunity for a transition.

Foreign Minister Elias Jaua says his government regrets Kerry's remark because he was taking a stance relating to Venezuela's domestic affairs. Jaua said on state television that Venezuela hopes for relations of "mutual respect."

Kerry's comment related to the uncertain situation in Venezuela during President Hugo Chavez's long absence after undergoing cancer surgery in Cuba on Dec. 11. Chavez has not spoken or been seen in public for more than six weeks.

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