

Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
Senator Richard G. Lugar
Opening Statement for
Nomination Hearing of John Bolton
April 12, 2005

The Foreign Relations Committee meets today to continue its consideration of President George W. Bush's nomination of John Bolton to be U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations. Given the importance of this position, it is vital that we act both expeditiously and thoroughly in evaluating the nominee. Yesterday, the Committee had the opportunity to engage the nominee in three extensive rounds of questions, which lasted more than 7 hours. I appreciate the patience of the Secretary Bolton in responding to the many questions and concerns posed by our members.

Secretary Bolton affirmed his commitment to fostering a strong United Nations. He expressed his intent to work hard to secure greater international support at the UN for the national security and foreign policy objectives of the United States. He stated his belief in decisive American leadership at the UN, and underscored that an effective United Nations was very much in the interest of U.S. national security.

We also heard Secretary Bolton's views on UN reform. The United States must be a leader in the effort to improve the United Nations, particularly its accountability. At a time when the United States is appealing for greater international help in Iraq, in Afghanistan, and in trouble spots around the world, a diminishment of UN credibility because of scandal reduces U.S. options and increases our own burdens. Secretary Bolton outlined his plans to work closely with Secretary General Kofi Annan to achieve meaningful reform that advances transparency and accountability at the UN.

Committee members discussed the need to expand upon the important steps taken by President Bush and Secretary Rice to reinvigorate relationships with allies and partners. Secretary Bolton agreed that this is an imperative mission for the next Ambassador to the UN.

Today, we will undertake further inquiry into Secretary Bolton's actions with respect to a speech he delivered related to biological weapons development in Cuba. It has been alleged that he attempted to alter the professional conclusions of an intelligence analyst with whom he disagreed and that he subsequently sought to disadvantage that analyst's career. This subject occupied a substantial share of the hearing yesterday. Secretary Bolton has denied any impropriety and urged that all information related to these events be made public by the State Department.

As part of this process, today we will hear testimony from Mr. Carl Ford, who served as Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research from 2001 to 2003. We appreciate his willingness to join us for the purpose of reviewing the events in question. We also appreciate his patience in spending several hours last week with Committee staff in preparation for this hearing.

I thank our witness and all members of the Committee for their cooperation.

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