

**Transcript of Remarks by Senator Kent Conrad (D-ND) at hearing
of Senate Budget Committee on President's International Affairs Budget
with Secretary of State Colin Powell
February 11, 2003**

Thank you Mr. Chairman. A special thanks to you for holding this hearing. A special thanks to you, Mr. Secretary, for being here. As an American, I would just like to say how proud I was of the presentation you made [at the United Nations] and the way you conduct yourself. I think it makes us all proud.

I think no one should doubt the Congress of the United States will provide the resources necessary to defend this nation and protect American interests. There should be no doubt about that in anyone's mind. And if war comes, America will stand as one.

With that said, I have just returned from my home state, and I thought I'd share with you, Mr. Secretary, the questions that I am receiving. As I spent time in North Dakota, people came to me and asked me questions, asked me why we're not doing certain things, while we're doing others. Let me just give you a sampling of what I heard, and perhaps you can address it as you move through your remarks.

One question I have received frequently, perhaps more frequently than any other, is, "Why doesn't containment work with respect to Iraq?" I know the President has said that he believes containment is no longer viable after the attack of September 11th. People have asked me, they can see why it wouldn't work with a terrorist organization because there's no country to retaliate against, but in the case of a nation state, why doesn't containment work as it did against the Soviet Union.

To extend this, Morton Halperin has a piece in this morning's *Washington Post* arguing that containment has worked with respect to Saddam Hussein, that he's not attacked anyone since 1991. And he raises the question why it can't continue. That is a question that I've received frequently.

Second, and again a frequent question, is, "Why the difference in policy towards North Korea and Iraq?" The question that has been put to me is that [North] Korea is developing nuclear weapons, perhaps already has some, has kicked out the inspectors, and warned that they may launch a preemptive attack against us. But we say there's no crisis with respect to [North] Korea, that it can be solved diplomatically. But in the case of Iraq, where they have inspectors in, and they've not yet discovered evidence of nuclear capability, that we're prepared to launch a war against them.

A third frequently asked question is the terrorist threat against the United States. In my meetings at home this last weekend I was asked, "Senator, isn't our top priority still Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda? Aren't they suppose to attack us again, and aren't we diverting our attention by focusing on Iraq first?"

And the final question I would put to you that has been raised to me, most recently [was]

yesterday morning in a meeting with a businessman that does substantial business overseas, other businessmen who have been in my office in the last 10 days saying that they are facing an increasing tide of anti-American sentiment. That, too, was talked about in this morning's paper in an article headlined, "Sneers From Across the Atlantic, Anti-Americanism Moves to [Western] Europe's Political Mainstream," and a second story on the front page, "U.S.-Europe Rifts Widen Over Iraq."

I found a really rising tide of concern back home about this question. One man that I had breakfast with yesterday [said] that he's increasingly concerned about the anti-American sentiment he is finding in business and dealings overseas.

Those are a grouping of questions that I am receiving most frequently, and I'd be very interested in your take on all of that.