



*Senator Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
State Department: Policy and Programs
Witness: The Honorable Colin Powell, Secretary of State
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Mr. Secretary, welcome. Although much of this city will soon be focused on the political season, the world does not stop turning, and the country confronts a lengthy foreign policy agenda in the coming months. Let me highlight several issues of concern to me.

On Iraq, our policy appears to be in limbo. The June 30th deadline for transfer of sovereignty is looming. Mr. Sistani's demand for elections has put in doubt our ability to proceed with key parts of the November 15th agreement, which is starting to look a little more difficult to implement.

I agree that we need to end the appearance of occupation as soon as possible. But it is also vital that Iraqis have confidence in the process and believe that a neutral referee will be on the scene after June 30, so that current disputes do not escalate into civil war.

We have squandered several opportunities to meaningfully share the burden more fully with our friends in Iraq. I hope that we do not miss what may be a final opportunity. I think the elements are there to sufficiently broaden the coalition.

I look forward to hearing your thinking on a possible UN role in Iraq's future, and on the possibility of holding direct elections for a transitional government. On the security side, our ultimate goal should be to make the military mission a NATO operation, and I would appreciate an update on the recent discussions with our NATO allies.

On Afghanistan, I am pleased that the Administration has agreed to expand the international security force beyond Kabul. But progress has been much too slow. And the Administration's security solution – the small Provincial Reconstruction Teams – is inadequate to the task. So, too, are the resources for reconstruction. Afghanistan is again the world's top supplier of opium; we must do more to help it construct a legal economy. We're doing a lot of good – but we've got to do better.

I want to commend you for your recent op-ed piece in the Moscow press, with which I agree completely. Russia, as you observed, has traveled an enormous distance since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Like you, however, I am concerned about recent backsliding in Russian democracy – especially regarding the rule of law and independent media – and also about continuing Russian brutality in Chechnya and meddling in Georgia and Moldova.

One issue that begs for a coherent policy is nuclear proliferation. Yesterday, the President delivered an important speech on the subject; I'm glad he has turned his attention to this subject in a more concentrated way. I support many of the President's proposals, such as encouraging countries to criminalize proliferation activities, getting all countries to sign and implement Additional Protocols with the IAEA, and enhancing the IAEA's oversight of safeguards and verification. We can't just rely on the preemptive use of force if we are to contain this deadly threat.

But I still worry that, in too many cases, ideology trumps our nonproliferation policy. The President says he wants to re-examine an essential bargain of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty: that in return for not pursuing nuclear weapons, states can receive assistance for civilian nuclear power applications. But there is another bargain central to the NPT which this Administration likes to ignore: that the nuclear powers will gradually move away from nuclear weapons while non-nuclear weapon states refrain from acquiring them.

Over the last three years, the United States has undermined our message that other nations must forego the bomb – during this period, the Administration has raised the specter of possible use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapons states, begun exploring new nuclear weapons of dubious utility, and walked away from the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

A year ago, Deputy Secretary Armitage testified that he saw no crisis in North Korea, because "I think we have got some time to work this." But he added: "I don't think, given the poverty of North Korea, that it would be too long after she got a good amount of fissile material...that she would be inclined to engage with somebody, a non-state actor or a rogue state."

I hope the Administration heeds your friend's warning.

The Administration has been working on the North Korea issue, with varying degrees of intensity, since it took office. In that time, the situation has gone from bad to worse. North Korea has kicked out international inspectors. It has removed the 8,000 fuel rods that had been stored at Yongbyon, and says it has reprocessed them. We are left to wonder when the Administration will view North Korea's growing stockpile of nuclear material as an urgent matter that warrants serious negotiation.

In Pakistan, after numerous assurances that no proliferation was occurring, we are now told that Dr. A.Q. Khan acted for years to sell nuclear technology without the knowledge or consent of the Pakistani government. Quite frankly, I think that is incredibly fictitious. I look

forward to hearing the Administration's assessment of this matter, and how the United States should respond.

A year ago, the Administration doubted the usefulness of international inspections. Today, we must conclude that the inspectors in Iraq did a good job. The IAEA deserves credit for its inspections in Iran over the last year. And we have agreed that the IAEA will help monitor the dismantlement of Libya's program. Such an important institution deserves our strong support, not the slighting of the agency.

Finally, let me say a few words about the budget. I commend you for again securing a significant increase in the foreign affairs budget. You have done much to strengthen the capabilities of the State Department, and I think that will be one of your lasting legacies.

The major increases are devoted to the Millennium Challenge Account and combating HIV/AIDS, two programs that are just getting off the ground. But these increases appear to have come at a price. Development assistance programs – which the President pledged would not suffer as a result of the Millennium Challenge Account – are reduced in the 2005 budget request. So are refugee programs and aid to Russia and other neighboring states; other important programs, such as anti-narcotics programs and international broadcasting, are essentially straight-lined, with no increases for inflation. We are a global power, with global responsibilities, and we can't let our attention on Iraq and the Middle East cause us to lose our focus on other vital regions and programs.

There's a lot more to say, Mr. Chairman, but in the interest of time, I will stop there. look forward to hearing from the Secretary.

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