

STATEMENT OF ZALMAY KHALILZAD
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TO THE UNITED NATIONS
SENATE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
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Mr. Chairman, and distinguished members of the Committee, it is a great honor to come before you as the President's nominee to serve as the U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations. I want to thank the President for his confidence in nominating me for this mission. I wish to thank Secretary Rice and look forward to continuing to work with her, should I be confirmed. I would like to express my appreciation to the leaders of Afghanistan and Iraq, with whom I have worked during the past four years in the pursuit of our common interests.

I also want to take a moment to express my deep gratitude to the many great Americans, civilian and military, and Coalition partners who have served at all levels in our efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq. I wish to honor their sacrifices, particularly of those who have lost their lives or have been wounded. I also want to recognize the sacrifices of their families, who have to endure long separations and the worries of having their loved ones deployed in dangerous circumstances.

Finally, I wish to thank my wife, Cheryl, and my two sons, Alex and Max, for their support, as well as their patience, during the past four years that I have spent abroad.

The Vital Role of the United Nations

The United Nations is an important and valuable institution. Historically, the challenge of creating an effective collective security organization has bedeviled mankind.

The United Nations, which was a signal achievement in the great period of international institution building after the Second World War, stands as the most successful collective security body in history. No other such organization has been able to undertake peace enforcement actions comparable to the one in Korea in 1950, to lead scores of peacekeeping missions over the course of decades, to achieve consensus on endorsing such strong actions as the liberation of Kuwait in 1991 or the toppling of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan in 2001. In light of this record, I agree with the view of the Gingrich-Mitchell report that an effective United Nations is in America's interest. As one of the principal architects of the United Nations, the United States placed at the foundation of the U.N. certain fundamental purposes and values – preserving peace, promoting progress, and advocacy of human rights. It is therefore vital for the United States to enable this institution to make the greatest possible contribution to advance those founding objectives.

From my experiences as U.S. ambassador in Afghanistan, I personally know that the United Nations can make a profoundly positive impact if it has the right mandate and if it is properly employed. I worked closely with the U.N. Special Representative for Afghanistan, Lakhdar Brahimi, and his successor, Jean Arnault. We continuously consulted and worked out common approaches as we advanced an ambitious agenda, with the United Nations supporting our interests in stabilizing Afghanistan and helping Afghans set out on a path toward democracy. Our partnership supported the Afghans as they created an interim government at the Bonn Conference, convened two Loya Jirgas, adopted a sound and enlightened constitution, and held national elections for president

and parliament. We worked with the Afghan Government on such key steps as the disarming and reintegrating of militias. The United Nations played a central role in enabling the return of millions of Afghans to their homeland in what has become the largest voluntary repatriation of refugees in history. It also helped Afghans establish a human rights commission. None of this was easy. Yet, all of it was made easier by working in partnership with the United Nations.

In Iraq, the United Nations played a more limited role, due to the history of the United Nations and the Iraq issue – rooted in disagreements among the members of the Security Council – and the resulting narrow mandate for U.N. operations in Iraq. Nevertheless, when I arrived as U.S. ambassador in 2005, I frequently consulted with the U.N. Special Representative, Ashraf Qazi, starting during the drafting of the Iraqi constitution and extending through the national election in 2005, the formation of the government of national unity, and the negotiation of key internal agreements on the path toward national reconciliation. Tomorrow, the Iraqi Government and the United Nations will take another step toward concluding the International Compact for Iraq, an agreement under which Iraq commits itself to key reforms and international donors commit to needed support. I believe that changing circumstances are creating opportunities for the United Nations to play a larger role in contributing to progress in Iraq.

At the same time, the United Nations has limitations, resulting from the nature of the U.N. Charter, the failure of the members of the Security Council to come to

agreements on all issues, and the unwillingness or inability of the U.N. system to confront the problems of corruption and inefficiency. When members of the Security Council cannot come to agreement, action is stymied or watered down. The organization, formed at a time when direct aggression was the principal security concern, has not always found effective means to deal with aggression undertaken through insurgency or terrorism. It has also struggled to cope with new realities that put respect for state sovereignty in tension with the imperative to address security threats emanating from failed states or transnational networks or the humanitarian consequences of massive violations of human rights inflicted by governments on their own peoples. The U.N.'s actions have sometimes been driven by coalitions with a myopic focus on a single issue or applying double-standards in judging the actions of states, particularly in the area of human rights. Also, the United Nations itself has had recent internal failures, including the Oil-for-Food scandal, instances of peacekeeping forces sexually abusing members of the local populations that they are supposed to protect, and weaknesses in management and accountability.

The challenge for the international community is to strengthen the United Nations in those areas where it has proven effective and to address the shortcomings in areas where its performance has been poor. If confirmed, I will put the weight of U.S. influence toward this end. Working with the representatives of other countries and the Secretary General, I will seek to increase the contribution of the United Nations to addressing the central security issues of our times and to make the U.N. itself a more effective institution through needed reforms.

Effectively Advancing U.S. Objectives through the United Nations

The United States, like all countries, faces the challenge of how best to make common cause with others in support of our goals. No one should doubt the legitimacy of U.S. decisions to act unilaterally, when taken through our own democratic processes and in accordance with our rights under international law. Yet, collective action is often the preferable course to take. Some problems cannot be solved alone. Others are too costly to solve alone. In still other cases, when we could act alone, we can take advantage of the possibility for burden sharing. Also, we can enhance the legitimacy of our actions in the eyes of others by enlisting friends and allies to work with us. We can strengthen this legitimacy still further if decisions taken through the United Nations endorse our actions.

Though events will drive a good deal of the work of the United Nations, I will place priority on several political and security issues:

- Increasing efforts to stabilize and strengthen Afghanistan, Iraq, and Lebanon as immediate objectives in the transformation of the Middle East, which is the defining challenge of our time.
- Achieving Iran's compliance with Security Council and IAEA requirements regarding its nuclear programs and supporting international efforts to achieve the

complete, verifiable, and irreversible abandonment by North Korea of its nuclear programs, thereby preventing the spread of dangerous weapons and associated technologies to other state or non-state actors.

- Ending the massive humanitarian crisis in Darfur in order not only to save the lives of innocents but also to fulfill the commitment of the United States and the international community to a “responsibility to protect” peoples from large-scale atrocities and genocide.
- Strengthening the capability of the United Nations to undertake and manage peacekeeping operations effectively.
- Refocusing the U.N. commitment to human rights – one of its core precepts enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights – to address the most egregious cases of human rights violations.
- Promoting effective approaches to address climate and clean energy objectives in a way that supports economic growth in the coming decades.

If confirmed, I will pursue these objectives through two means. The first is through the formal channels of U.N. decision making in the Security Council and other fora. I believe that there is great scope for constructive, collaborative action through results-oriented partnership, involving allies and other countries as well as the U.N.

Secretariat. I will also explore the possibilities of new ways of working within the United Nations. The world's democracies could increase their influence if they work more closely together through the Democracy Caucus. I will engage those democratic countries that see promise in this approach and develop with their representatives a common agenda and political strategy to achieve our shared goals. I will also reach out to friends, as well as encourage like-minded countries to reach out to their friends, in the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 to discuss how we might make common cause on issues of mutual importance. Finding new ways of working with the countries in these blocs will be a priority during my tenure.

The second means to advance our national security goals with regard to these issues comes by virtue of the presence of representatives from around the world – a setting that enables extensive informal engagement and that represents an opportunity that I will take advantage of to work selected key issues pro-actively. Because most countries send senior representatives who have substantial authority to transact business, we can engage in discussions at the United Nations in ways that the obstacles of time and distance make more difficult in other channels, particularly when resolving issues requires regional approaches. I will seize the opportunity inherent in the setting of the U.N. to explore how we might make progress on these issues.

Increasing the Effectiveness of the U.N. through Reform

As we discuss the need for reform, it is important to recognize that many organizations and agencies within the United Nations system carry out vital work and produce results. U.N. vaccination programs have helped to stem the spread of diseases such as polio and measles. The World Health Program led the global effort to eradicate smallpox, helped contain SARS, and focused early on the threat of a human pandemic of avian flu. The World Food Program is at the forefront of combating hunger and malnutrition and was instrumental in providing relief supplies to millions of victims of the Indian Ocean tsunami and the earthquakes that have recently struck South Asia. In Darfur, U.N. agencies are providing food, water, shelter, and healthcare. The U.N. Democracy Fund has made a promising start in supporting democracy promotion and civic society organizations.

At the same time, we should recognize that every organization needs to adapt in response to a dynamic environment. This typically requires adjustments to ensure that the organization maintains mastery of its core business, which involves defining the mission in the right way and keeping a sharp focus on performance. It also means ensuring that the organization has the right means to achieve its mission, particularly in terms of personnel, management practices, decision making processes, and creating an appropriate balance between ends and means. Only then can an organization produce the expected results and use resources in the most efficient possible manner. In this regard, the United Nations is no exception: it needs to evolve in order to keep its focus on the

most pressing challenges and to reform internally to improve its efficiency and effectiveness.

Adapting to a changing environment. The world has changed tremendously since the founding of the United Nations. While the core mission continues to be security, the nature of the principal security challenges has changed. Today's threats emanate less from the risk of wars among the great powers but rather from instability in the Middle East, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the consequences of state failure, and the rise of non-state actors. Though the United Nations has made significant adaptations to meet these challenges, its evolution must continue to ensure its relevance to the most pressing challenges of the day. In terms of structural change, the United States is open-minded about considering adjustments in U.N. structures to ensure that these reflect current realities, particularly in terms of the distribution of effective power.

Reforming internal processes. If confirmed, one of my principal goals will be to promote effective, efficient, transparent, accountable, and ethical management of the United Nations. In preparing for this appointment, I have read many well-documented and -reasoned critiques of the United Nations. These highlighted problems in its personnel system, ethics and internal oversight, management structure, mission as expressed in mandates, and professionalism and discipline in the area of peacekeeping. I wish to applaud the key role that members of this Committee, as well as members of the House of Representatives, have played in identifying needed reforms and in supporting

our Mission at the U.N. as it pursued change. If I am confirmed, I look forward to working with you in pursuing further reform.

It is vital for the U.S. taxpayer to have confidence that we are receiving value for the money we pay in dues and assessments. I believe that the United States should pay its dues in full and on time. However, unless the United Nations takes affirmative steps to overcome the legacy of corruption from the Oil-for-Food scandals and improves its accountability and transparency, the U.N. will lose support among the American people. In turn, this will understandably erode their willingness to remain one of the principal funders of the organization. Reform is imperative.

The optimal approach, in my view, is to focus on two or three discrete but meaningful reforms, build consensus for these changes, and implement them before moving on to the next ones, rather than to pursue a long list of major changes all at once. If confirmed, I would seek to consult with interested members of this Committee with respect to the best starting point and would continue to seek your advice as we proceed. In this sense, reform should be viewed as a continuing, rolling process, not an action taken at a single point in time.

My initial thinking is that we should select our first priorities for action from the following areas:

- Ensuring that professional merit is the standard by which candidates are chosen within the personnel selection processes, while continuing to ensure geographic diversity;
- Strengthening ethics rules and oversight to root out and deter corruption and to establish accountability and transparency;
- Bringing U.N. management practices up to modern standards, particularly in terms of structuring decision making, strategic planning, and measuring and assessing performance;
- Streamlining U.N. mandates to focus the organization on its core missions and to avoid diffusion of effort and resources; and
- Strengthening professionalism and discipline in U.N. peacekeeping forces, particularly by building on the preliminary steps taken over the past two years to eliminate the sexual abuse of members of local populations by soldiers serving in those forces.

I am gratified that Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon has pledged to make U.N. reform his prime goal. He has made welcome initial statements, including his willingness to make a personal financial disclosure and his intent to authorize an external audit of U.N. funds and programs. He will have a particularly good chance to follow up

on these statements with strong actions during the first months of his tenure. We should support him to make the changes he believes are necessary. I look forward to working in partnership to advance an ambitious reform agenda.

If confirmed, I will engage like-minded countries to develop political strategies that will achieve results. We should examine the lessons, or underlying logic, behind the successful performance of many U.N. agencies and explore how these might be carried over in other areas. We should examine the reasons motivating some countries to oppose needed changes and explore ways that their legitimate interests can be addressed in the context of reform. Progress will require persistent efforts at persuasion and coalition building, as well as a willingness to bargain for incremental steps.

The question will inevitably arise about whether and how we should use the leverage we have as a major contributor to the U.N. budget. There is a tension here. On the one hand, there are missions that we wish the U.N. to perform, which means that paying our dues is not only our obligation but in our interest. On the other hand, we cannot be indifferent to a failure to step up to needed reforms. This is particularly true because the support of the American people for funding the U.N. will diminish unless changes take place. If confirmed, I will work with Congress to examine how we can best use our leverage, financial and otherwise. I will also work to find the right balance between supporting U.N. activities through assessed and voluntary contributions.

Increasing the Effectiveness of the U.S. Mission

If I am confirmed, I will take a fresh look at how we conduct business at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations – how well we are organized to engage in multilateral diplomacy, what priorities we have set, whether we are attracting the most talented personnel, and other issues. I will ensure that we are setting clear goals, prioritizing among them, developing realistic strategies, and funding those strategies adequately. I may need the help of the Committee, as well as your counterparts in the House of Representatives, to take steps that make service at the United Nations more attractive, thus ensuring that we get the best possible personnel for the mission.

If confirmed, I will take an approach at the United Nations that is similar to the way I worked in Kabul and Baghdad. I will focus sharply on the interests of the United States. At the same time, I am ready to engage, to listen, and to work with others in a cooperative spirit. I will pursue our goals by understanding the interests and concerns of others and by working patiently and persistently – and in common – to find a way forward. I am hopeful that this approach can also produce results at the U.N.

If confirmed, I will work hard to advance the values of the American people. In my previous assignments, I have found that while cultures differ, people around the world yearn for certain universal values. I will seek to advance an agenda to promote those common interests – a world in which we can take collective action against threats to security, in which freedom and democracy are expanding, in which the rule of law

becomes more widespread, and in which all nations enjoy economic prosperity. I will seek to make the United Nations as effective as possible in this mission. I will be results oriented and give it my all.