

Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
Chairman Richard G. Lugar
Opening Statement for the
Business Meeting on the Nomination of John Bolton
May 12, 2005

The Foreign Relations Committee meets today to vote on the nomination of John Bolton to be U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations. In this capacity, he would play an important role in securing greater international support for the national security and foreign policy objectives of the United States.

The Foreign Relations Committee has reviewed Secretary Bolton's actions with respect to several allegations. In the process, we have interviewed 29 witnesses, producing approximately one thousand pages of transcripts. We have received and reviewed more than 830 pages of documents from the State Department, USAID, and the CIA regarding the Bolton nomination. We have questioned Secretary Bolton in person for 7 hours, and we have received responses to nearly 100 questions for the record, many containing numerous sub-parts.

This effort represents one of the most intense and far-reaching examinations of a nominee in my experience. The depth and breadth of the inquiry is particularly notable given that Secretary Bolton has been confirmed four times by the Senate already and that most of us have had personal experiences with him.

After reviewing this material, it is my judgment that Secretary Bolton should be confirmed as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations. I do not believe that the evidence supports a disqualification of the President's nominee. I was struck by the portrait of Secretary Bolton that emerged from interviews of witnesses. It shows him serving in a job where some of his ideas and strategies were at odds with those above and below him at the State Department. It is clear from the transcripts that he was combative in defense of his perspectives. In some cases, this led to split memos fed up the policy chain communicating multiple points of view. Secretary Bolton's actions were not always exemplary. On several occasions, he made incorrect assumptions about the behavior and motivations of subordinates. At other times, he failed to use proper managerial channels or unnecessarily personalized internal disputes. The picture is one of an aggressive policymaker who pressed his missions at every opportunity and argued vociferously for his point of view. In the process, his blunt style alienated some colleagues. But there is no evidence that he has broken laws or engaged in serious ethical misconduct.

Secretary Bolton is Qualified to be Ambassador to the UN

At the core of any nomination process is the question of whether the nominee is qualified to undertake the task for which he or she is nominated. I have no doubts that Secretary Bolton is extremely well qualified. He has just served four years in a key undersecretary position that technically outranks the post for which he is nominated. He has succeeded in several high-profile negotiation settings. He was the primary negotiator in the creation of the successful Proliferation Security Initiative and the landmark Moscow Treaty. He played a large role in the agreement with Libya on the surrender of that nation's WMD programs and the "10 Plus 10 Over 10" agreement that resulted in \$10 billion in pledges from other G-8 countries to secure the Soviet WMD arsenal. These are among the Bush Administration's most important and indisputable foreign policy successes. Opponents have argued that Secretary Bolton's personality will prevent him from being effective at the UN, but his diplomatic successes over the last four years belie that expectation.

Few people in government have thought more about UN reform than John Bolton. He served four years as the Assistant Secretary of State overseeing international organizations under the first President Bush. He has written and commented extensively on the subject. Senator Biden acknowledged to the nominee at his hearing that, "There is no question you have extensive experience in UN affairs." Deputy Secretary Rich Armitage recently told reporters: "John Bolton is eminently qualified. He's one of the smartest guys in Washington."

Secretary Bolton also demonstrated his ability to get things done prior to becoming Undersecretary of State. Perhaps

the best example is his initiative to repeal UN Resolution 3379, which equated Zionism with racism. In May 1991, as Assistant Secretary of State for International Organizations, John Bolton refused to accept the common wisdom that repealing this infamous Resolution was impossible. He and his staff initiated a campaign to change votes in the General Assembly, even though they were advised that they would not be successful. Within a few months they had made substantial progress. By the Fall, the State Department put its full weight behind the effort. On December 16, 1991, the UN General Assembly voted to repeal the Resolution by a vote of 111-25.

In the private sector, Secretary Bolton made some blunt statements about the United Nations. Many of these statements were made in academic or think tank settings where debate on these subjects was encouraged. Many of the quotes that have been repeated by opponents came in the context of much larger speeches that were more nuanced. The fact that he has strong views and a long record of commentary on the job that he is about to undertake should not be disqualifying. During our hearing, Secretary Bolton spoke of the United Nations' important role in international security. He has emphasized that that he wants the institution to work well on behalf of international security and the interests of the United States.

Secretary Bolton has the confidence of the President and the Secretary of State

Beyond qualifications, we should recognize that Secretary Bolton has the confidence of the President and the Secretary of State. The President has made it clear that this is not a casual appointment. He wants a specific person to do a specific job. President Bush has a reform agenda in mind at the UN. This reform agenda is generally supported by the UN Secretary General, who has put forward a reform plan of his own. The President wants John Bolton, an avowed and knowledgeable reformer, to carry out that reform agenda. Kofi Annan has welcomed John Bolton's appointment.

I would emphasize that Secretary Bolton is being appointed to a position that is within the chain of command of the President and the Secretary of State. The Ambassador to the UN reports directly to the President and the Secretary of State. In fact, historically, this ambassadorship has reflected directly on the President. The ambassador is seen as the President's voice at the UN. Consequently, there are few positions in government where the President should have more latitude in choosing his nominee.

In my judgment, it would take absolutely extraordinary circumstances for the Senate to say, "Mr. President, you can't have your choice to carry out your directives at the UN, even though the Senate has approved him for four other high-ranking positions and he is extremely knowledgeable about the task that you are giving him."

At times during this process, opponents have suggested that Secretary Bolton sits outside the mainstream in the Bush Administration. Senator Biden devoted several minutes of his opening statement at Secretary Bolton's hearing to this point, saying that "Your views, based on what you've said in the past, seem to be contrary to the direction the President and Secretary now want to take this administration." The problem with this assertion is that President Bush is telling us that this is not so. President Bush is telling us that Secretary Bolton accurately represents his views about the UN and how that institution should be reformed. President Bush is saying that Secretary Bolton is his considered choice to implement his policies and diplomatic initiatives at the UN.

Some observers who want a different program than the President's may not agree with the President's choice, but the results of the 2004 election give the President the responsibility and the right to nominate like-minded representatives and to define who a like-minded representative is.

Secretary Bolton is a Key to Reform

We have ample evidence that the United Nations is in need of reform. The Foreign Relations Committee held the first Congressional hearing on the UN's Oil-for-Food scandal more than a year ago. Since that time, through the work of Paul Volcker, our colleague Senator Coleman, and many others, we have learned much more about the extent of the corruption and mismanagement involved. This knowledge has supported the case for reform.

We know that billions of dollars that should have been spent on humanitarian needs in Iraq were siphoned off by Saddam Hussein's regime through a system of surcharges, bribes, and kickbacks. This corruption depended upon

members of the U.N. Security Council who were willing to be complicit in these activities. It also depended on U.N. officials and contractors who were dishonest, inattentive, or willing to make damaging compromises in pursuit of a compassionate mission.

United Nations reform is not a new issue. The structure and role of the United Nations have been debated in our country almost continuously since the UN was established in 1945. But in 2005, we may have a unique opportunity to improve the operations of the UN. The revelations of the Oil-For-Food scandal and the urgency of strengthening global cooperation to address terrorism, the AIDS crisis, nuclear proliferation, and many other international problems have created momentum in favor of constructive reforms at the UN.

Secretary General Kofi Annan has proposed a substantial reform plan that will provide a platform for further reform initiatives and discussions. 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 has become closely associated with the United States' efforts to reform the UN. If he goes to the UN and helps achieve reform, the UN will gain in credibility, especially with the American people. If reform moves forward, Secretary Bolton will be in an excellent position to help convince skeptics that reform has occurred and that the United Nations can be an effective partner in achieving global security. If we reject Secretary Bolton without even granting him a vote on the Senate floor, President Bush's hand will be weakened at the UN. We will recover; but we will have wasted time, and we will have strengthened the position of reform opponents.

The Foreign Relations Committee's Inquiry

In the days immediately following Secretary Rice's March 7 announcement of Secretary Bolton's nomination, most Democrat members of this Committee expressed their opposition to the nomination on policy grounds. A March 8 Associated Press report states, "Almost immediately after Bolton's nomination was announced, Democrats objected." The March 8, edition of the Baltimore Sun said, "Reaction from Senate Democrats promised contentious confirmation hearings for Bolton when he goes before the Foreign Relations Committee..." In several cases the statements by Democrats were unequivocal in opposition. In several other cases, statements were very negative, leaving open only the smallest of possibilities that the Senator would ultimately support the nominee. In all of these cases, objections were based on Secretary Bolton's supposed attitudes toward the United Nations. Senator Dodd said that Secretary Bolton's "antipathy to the U.N. will prevent him from effectively discharging his duties as our ambassador." Senator Kerry said that the Bolton nomination "was the most inexplicable appointment the President could make to represent the United States to the world community." Senator Boxer said of Secretary Bolton, "He's contemptuous of the U.N." By March 31, still almost two weeks before the Bolton hearing, a Los Angeles Times report noted, "Democrats are likely to vote unanimously against John R. Bolton when his nomination to be U.S. ambassador to the United Nations comes before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee...according to Democratic and Republican lawmakers and aides."

Senators have the right to oppose a nominee because of his substantive views and his past statements. However, it is important to acknowledge that the ethical inquiry into Secretary Bolton's background has been pressed by members who *planned* to vote against him even before we began interviewing witnesses. They have the right to ask questions, and the Committee has a responsibility to follow up credible allegations. But we also should understand that at times the inquiry has followed a more prosecutorial path than most nominees have to endure.

The Committee staff has worked long and hard to run down the salvo of unsubstantiated allegations that were leveled at Secretary Bolton at the last business meeting. The end result is that many of the accusations have proven to be groundless or, at worst, overstated. New information has cast others in a different light.

With regard to the most serious charge -- that Secretary Bolton sought to improperly manipulate intelligence -- the insights we have gained do not support the conclusion. He may have disagreed with intelligence findings, but in the end, he *always* accepted the final judgment of the intelligence community, and *always* delivered speeches in their cleared form.

During this inquiry, there has been the implication that if the nominee challenged or opposed the conclusions of intelligence analysts, he somehow committed an ethical violation. I think we need to be very precise that arguing in favor of one's own reading of intelligence within the context of an internal policy debate is not wrongdoing. Intelligence reports are not sacrosanct. They involve interpretation, and they are intended to stimulate debate.

This Committee has held numerous classified briefings. The word "briefing" is a misnomer, because as Senators, we spend much of the time during briefings questioning the panel. We probe to determine not just what analysts think, but why they think it. And often we challenge their conclusions.

Earlier this year, for example, our Committee held a highly classified briefing on North Korea in which one of our members pointedly disputed the conclusions of the briefer. There was a blunt exchange of views and no resolution to this disagreement was achieved. I am doubtful that any of us who have attended a good number of intelligence briefings have not done the same thing. My point is that the act of challenging or disputing intelligence conclusions is not in and of itself wrong. Some have appeared shocked that Secretary Bolton might have challenged intelligence conclusions or advanced alternative interpretations, even though the same thing happens every day in multiple departments and agencies.

Congress has the benefit of something called the "speech and debate clause." Article I Section 6 of the Constitution states that members of Congress: "Shall in all Cases, except Treason, Felony and Breach of the Peace, be privileged from Arrest during their Attendance at the Session of their respective Houses, and in going to and returning from the same; and for any Speech or Debate in either House, they shall not be questioned in any other Place." The Founders put this extraordinary provision in the Constitution because they saw the value in debate. The context surrounding arguments within an administration over intelligence is different, but the principle is the same. Policymakers should be free to exert opinions and interpretations during the policy-making process.

Clearly there are lines that should not be crossed. Some may argue that Secretary Bolton crossed these lines. But the proof is in the result. After fighting for his interpretation, Secretary Bolton conformed to the clearance process and gave the speeches as they had been approved.

It has been charged that Secretary Bolton sought to retaliate in some way against analysts and others with whom he disagreed. Our staffs have looked into these cases thoroughly, and in each one I believe the allegations are overstated. In the case of Christian Westermann, the INR analyst whom the committee heard about from Carl Ford, the dispute was over a procedural issue and Mr. Westermann continued in his job. We should recall that the focus of Mr. Ford's complaint was that Mr. Bolton should not have raised his objections directly with Mr. Westermann, not that Mr. Bolton was wrong to raise the issue. Our Democratic colleagues last month made much of the fact that after this incident Secretary Powell had to go all the way down to INR to boost morale. But we heard last week from Secretary Powell's chief of staff that such visits were not uncommon. It was part of the Secretary's leadership style to visit with staff in the 'bowels of the building,' including INR.

In the case of the NIO for Latin America, e-mails the committee staff has viewed make it clear that Secretary Bolton's primary objection was over disparaging and inaccurate comments the analyst made to members of Congress about a speech. Secretary Bolton took his complaint to the CIA. Although the NIO has said he feels his career was damaged by Secretary Bolton, his superiors fully backed him at the time, and other witnesses have told the Committee that if he did not get the promotions he felt he deserved, it was for other reasons. Again, as far as Secretary Bolton was concerned, the dispute was procedural. There was no attempt to fabricate intelligence.

Other allegations related to managerial style show the same pattern upon examination —disagreement over procedure, not policy. In the case of Ryon Ryu, a mid-level civil servant in the non-proliferation bureau under Secretary Bolton, no policy issues were involved at all. Secretary Bolton believed — incorrectly, according to Mr. Ryu's supervisor —that Mr. Ryu had deliberately neglected to share information with Bolton's office. Some months later, Mr. Ryu was up for a job that would have required him to work closely with Secretary Bolton. Secretary Bolton, perhaps regrettably, expressed his opposition to working with Mr. Ryu. Mr. Ryu was given another prized post instead, an assignment to the deputy secretary.

The case of the State Department attorney, also raised by the other side, is even more off the mark. This attorney fully supported what Secretary Bolton wanted to do. It was only because of miscommunication that Secretary Bolton thought the attorney had given out wrong information on a case involving sanctions against a Chinese company. The State Department Legal Advisor, Will Taft, told our staff that he quickly straightened things out. The attorney stayed on the case, and he even wrote the affidavit that Secretary Bolton later submitted to court.

Staff also looked at a new case that came up. Secretary Bolton's chief of staff, we learned, went to an INR analyst to complain that he had inappropriately attached to a CIA document a cover memo that took exception to some of the CIA's findings regarding China. No action was sought against the analyst and none was taken. The issue was procedural, no intelligence was manipulated, and Secretary Bolton was not even directly involved, because he was out of the country at the time.

Secretary Bolton's credibility has also been called into question regarding his testimony before our Committee on April 11. Senator Biden questioned whether Mr. Bolton really went to the CIA to learn about the National Intelligence Council. Stuart Cohen, the acting head of the NIC, said that while he could not recall why Secretary Bolton wanted to come, it was "perfectly reasonable" to believe that was the reason. In fact, he added, "I was delighted at the prospect that somebody would come out wanting to know more about the NIC." He also said that Secretary Bolton only talked about reassigning, not firing, the NIO just as Mr. Bolton testified. Our investigation has found nothing contrary to Secretary Bolton's claim that his dispute with Mr. Westermann was over procedure, not policy.

Former Ambassador to South Korea Thomas Hubbard called the Committee after Secretary Bolton's testimony about a controversial speech he gave in South Korea. Secretary Bolton testified that Ambassador Hubbard had thanked him for the speech afterwards. The ambassador told us he indeed had thanked Secretary Bolton afterwards, but only for making certain changes in the speech that he had requested. Ambassador Hubbard told our staff that he wanted to correct the record on that point, but he was not accusing Secretary Bolton of being deliberately misleading.

That speech was one of several by Secretary Bolton that opponents of the nomination have questioned. Our investigation showed that many of these speeches and Congressional testimony were preceded by strong policy debates within the administration. As one witness told our staff, "That's how good policy is made." In each case we found that, in the end, Secretary Bolton delivered a speech that was properly cleared and that expressed official U.S. policy.

One of the most sensationalized accusations against Secretary Bolton is that 11 years ago, he chased a woman around a Moscow hotel throwing things at her. This is problematic first because the behavior described seems so out of place. But secondly, because it has been very difficult for our staffs, despite many hours of interviews on this matter, to ascertain just what happened.

The woman, Melody Townsel, who lives in Dallas, admits that she is a liberal Democrat who worked for Mothers Opposing Bush in the last election. Ms. Townsel also told our staffs that her original accusation, contained in a letter that was made public, may have been too strong in some places. She said: "Chasing' may not be the best word." What she meant was that Secretary Bolton would approach her whenever he saw her at the hotel where they were both staying because, as she describes it, she did not want to meet with him over a legal matter. It is important to remember that Secretary Bolton was a private lawyer at that time. He was not representing the U.S. government. He was working for a company against which Ms. Townsel had made some very serious charges — charges which proved unfounded — that could have cost his company an important USAID contract in the former Soviet Union.

Ms. Townsel provided no eyewitnesses to the incidents, which are said to have occurred in public or open areas of the hotel. Moreover, although she claimed this was a highly traumatic encounter and that she told several people about it, staff had difficulty finding others who knew about it. Three people whom Ms. Townsel identified as having heard her complaints at the time of the events told staff that they had no recollection of Ms. Townsel mentioning Mr. Bolton. Her boss, Charles Black, of Black, Manafort, Stone and Kelly, who hired her for the post, said she never mentioned it to him. Neither did her immediate supervisor back in Washington. An employee of a sister company who assisted Ms. Townsel in making her charges against the prime contractor on her project and with whom she said

she was in close touch at the time, also knows nothing about it. Staffs talked to three representatives of the contractor, a small Virginia firm which has long experience working for USAID overseas. Those officials also heard nothing about this encounter. They said that Secretary Bolton was in Moscow at that time, but he was working as a consultant for a health project they were involved in, not doing legal work for them. We did find one of her friends and co-workers from that time, who was not in Moscow, who recalls talking with her by telephone about it, as well as a subordinate of hers in a later USAID-funded project who recalls her mentioning it.

Ultimately, the results of the lengthy investigation into this isolated, long-ago incident are, at most, inconclusive. Ms. Townsel went on to another USAID project in the former Soviet Union, and the company she accused of mismanagement was awarded more USAID contracts and continues to be well regarded. The original charge against Secretary Bolton appears to be overstated. On the basis of what we do know, there is nothing to offset Secretary Bolton's long record of public service in several different administrations.

Context of the Allegations

It has been charged that collectively the allegations against Secretary Bolton form an unacceptable pattern of behavior. This is an unfortunate argument by opponents, because it depends on doubts arising from an intense investigation of accusations, many of which had no substantiation. By its nature, it also discounts the dozens of positive testimonials on Secretary Bolton's behalf from former co-workers who attest to his character and effectiveness.

We need to think clearly about the context of the allegations leveled against Secretary Bolton. First, this has been an extremely public inquiry. By its nature, it has encouraged anyone with a grudge or disagreement with Secretary Bolton stretching back to 1983 to come forward and tell their story. There have been no thematic limits on the allegations that opponents of the nominee have asked to be investigated. I would simply submit that no one working in Washington in high-ranking positions for that long would come out unscathed from such a process. Any assertive policy-maker will develop opponents based on stylistic differences, personal disputes, or partisan disagreements. Most members of this Committee have been in public life for decades. If we were nominated for a similar position of responsibility after our terms in the Senate, how many of us would want the same standard to be applied to our confirmation process? How many of us would want any instance of conflict or anger directed at our staffs or our colleagues to be fair game?

Second, as mentioned, the oldest allegation dates back all the way to 1983. Thus, we are subjecting 22 years of Secretary Bolton's career to a microscope. This included service in many government jobs, as well as time spent in the private sector. Given the length of John Bolton's service in high-ranking positions, it is inevitable that he would have conflict with co-workers of various ranks and political persuasions. He would have had literally thousands of contacts, meetings, and issues to deal with during his career. In this context, the volume of alleged incidents is not that profound.

Third, in John Bolton's case unsubstantiated charges may seem more material than they are because he has a reputation for being an aggressive and blunt negotiator. But this should not be a disqualifying factor, especially for a post that historically has included a number of blunt, plain-spoken individuals, including Jeane Kirkpatrick and our former colleague Pat Moynihan. In fact, President Bush has cited John Bolton's direct style as one of the reasons that he has picked him for this particular job.

The Senate Nomination Process

It is easy to say that any inquiry into any allegation is justified if we are pursuing the truth. But as Senators who are frequently called upon to pass judgment on nominees, we know reality is more complicated than that. We want to ensure that nominees are qualified, skilled, honest, and open. Clearly, we should pursue credible reports of wrongdoing. But in doing so, we should understand that there can be human and organizational costs if the inquiry is not focused and fair.

We have all witnessed quality nominees who have had to endure a contentious nomination process that opened them up to any charge leveled from any direction. Both Republicans and Democrats have been guilty of employing

prosecutorial tactics to oppose nominees with whom they did not agree. Some would say that nominees are fair game. If they accept an appointment, they enter the public arena where no quarter will be given. But we need capable people who are willing to serve our government and the American people. Among all the other qualifications, it seems that we require nominees to subject themselves and their families to partisan scrutiny. This has implications well beyond the current nomination.

Our Democrat colleagues have recognized this fact when they have defended Democrat nominees in the past. With respect to one nominee in October 1993, Senator Biden said, “The Senate does nothing to fulfill its responsibility to advice and consent on Presidential nominations, and does nothing to enhance its reputation as the world’s greatest deliberative body by entertaining a long and disagreeable litany of past policy disagreements nor by entertaining anonymous and probably false allegations.” With regard to a troubled 1999 nomination, Senator Dodd quite insightfully stated that “I am one, Mr. Chairman, who worries deeply about our ability to attract the best our society can produce to serve our country. It is not easy to submit yourselves and your families to the kind of public scrutiny that a nomination of this magnitude involves. We have got to sort out some way in which we can go through this process without making it so discouraging to people that those who watch the process who think one day they might like to serve their country will be discouraged from doing so in any administration, and I am deeply, deeply worried that if we do not get a better handle on this, that will be the net result of what we accomplish.” Senator Dodd also provided comments for a March 1, 1997, Washington Post article about the travails of a different nominee. He said, “It’s getting harder and harder to get good people to serve in government. Advice and consent does not have to be abuse.”

In an investigation of this type we constantly have to ask where we draw the line. Where does legitimate due diligence turn into partisanship? Where does the desire for the truth turn into a competition over who wins and who loses? Not every line of inquiry is justified by our curiosity or even our suspicions.

Positive Testimony

The Committee has focused a great deal of energy examining several accusations against the nominee. This may leave some observers with the false impression that John Bolton’s service has been dominated by discord and conflict. We need to acknowledge that a great many officials with whom he has worked have endorsed him and many subordinates have attested to his managerial character. In the interest of fairness, I would like to cite just a few of the comments received by the Committee in support of Secretary Bolton.

Former Secretaries of State James Baker, Larry Eagleburger, Alexander Haig, Henry Kissinger, and George Shultz; Former Secretaries of Defense Frank Carlucci and James Schlesinger; former Ambassadors Jeane Kirkpatrick and Max Kampelman, former National Security Adviser Richard Allen; former Arms Control and Disarmament Agency Director Kenneth Adelman; former Assistant Secretary of State David Abshire; and former Department of State Counselor Helmut Sonnenfeldt strongly endorsed Secretary Bolton in a letter to the Committee, saying: “It is a moment when we must have an ambassador in place whose knowledge, experience, dedication and drive will be vital to protecting the American interest in an effective, forward-looking United Nations.... Secretary Bolton, like the Administration, has his critics, of course. Anyone as energetic and effective as John is bound to encounter those who disagree with some or even all of the Administration’s policies. But the policies for which he is sometimes criticized are those of the President and the Department of State which he has served with loyalty, honor and distinction.”

Andrew Natsios, the current USAID Administrator and M. Peter McPherson, a former USAID administrator, along with 37 officials who worked with John Bolton during his years at USAID wrote: “We know John to be a forceful policy advocate who both encourages and learns from rigorous debate. We know him to be a man of balanced judgment. And we know him to have a sense of humor, even about himself. John leads from in front with courage and conviction – especially positive qualities, we believe, for the assignment he is being asked to take on. He is tough but fair. He does not abuse power or people. John is direct, yet thoughtful in his communication. He is highly dedicated, working long hours in a never-ending quest to maximize performance. Yet he does not place undue time demands on his staff, recognizing their family obligations. What he does demand from his staff is personal honesty and intellectual clarity.”

Another letter from former Attorneys General Ed Meese and Dick Thornburgh; former Governors William Weld and Frank Keating; former Counsels to the President C. Boyden Gray and Arthur Culvahouse Jr.; and 39 other distinguished officials stated: “Each of us has worked with Mr. Bolton. We know him to be a man of personal and intellectual integrity, deeply devoted to the service of this country and the promotion of our foreign policy interests as established by this President and Congress. Not one of us has ever witnessed conduct on his part that resembles that which has been alleged. We feel our collective knowledge of him and what he stands for, combined with our own experiences in government and in the private sector, more than counterbalances the credibility of those who have tried to destroy the distinguished achievements of a lifetime.”

Another letter came from 21 former officials who worked with John Bolton in his capacity as Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs. It states: “Despite what has been said and written in the last few weeks, John has never sought to damage the United Nations or its mission. Quite the contrary – under John’s leadership the organization was properly challenged to fulfill its original charter. John’s energy and innovation transformed IO from a State Department backwater into a highly appealing work place in which individuals could effectively articulate and advance U.S. policy and their own careers as well.”

A letter also arrived from 43 of John Bolton’s former colleagues at the American Enterprise Institute. It stated: “As we have followed the strange allegations suddenly leveled at Mr. Bolton in recent days and reflected among ourselves on our own experiences with him, we have come to realize how much we learned from him, and how deep and lasting were his contributions.... Contrary to the portrayals of his accusers, he combines a temperate disposition, good spirit, and utter honesty with his well-known attributes of exceptional intelligence and intensity of purpose. This is a rare combination and, we would think, highly desirable for an American ambassador to the United Nations.”

Former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher wrote in a recent letter to Secretary Bolton: “To combine, as you do, clarity of thought, courtesy of expression and an unshakeable commitment to justice is rare in any walk of life. But it is particularly so in international affairs. A capacity for straight talking rather than peddling half-truths is a strength and not a disadvantage in diplomacy. Particularly in the case of a great power like America, it is essential that people know where you stand and assume that you mean what you say. With you at the UN, they will do both. Those same qualities are also required for any serious reform at the United Nations itself, without which cooperation between nations to defend and extend liberty will be far more difficult.”

Conclusion

During this inquiry, we have spent a good deal of time scrutinizing individual conversations and incidents that happened several years ago. Regardless of how each Senator plans to vote today, we should not lose sight of the larger national security issues concerning UN reform and international diplomacy that are central to this nomination.

The President has tapped Secretary Bolton to undertake this urgent mission. Secretary Bolton has affirmed his commitment to fostering a strong United Nations. He has 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 has stated his belief in decisive American leadership at the UN, and underscored that an effective United Nations is very much in the interest of U.S. national security.

I believe that the President deserves to have his nominee represent him at the United Nations. I am hopeful that we will vote to report this nomination to the whole Senate.

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