Statement of Senator Dianne Feinstein Opposing the Nomination of John Bolton to be U.N. Ambassador

May 26, 2005

Washington, DC – *U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) today announced her opposition to the nomination of John Bolton to be the United States Ambassador to the United Nations. Senator Feinstein inserted the following statement into the Congressional Record:*

"Mr. President, I rise today to express my opposition to the nomination of John Bolton to be the next United States Ambassador to the United Nations. Simply put, he is the wrong man at the wrong time for what is an important and critical position.

At a time when the reputation of the United States is at an all time low in many parts of the world and our military is stretched thin, we need a representative at the United Nations who can engage and work with our friends and allies to forge multilateral solutions on: the War on Terror, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, global poverty, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and global warming just to name a few. Yet, throughout his career, John Bolton has demonstrated an unrestrained contempt for diplomacy and international treaties.

In a letter to Senator Richard Lugar, Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, 102 former American diplomats representing both Democratic and Republican Administrations urged the Committee to reject Mr. Bolton's nomination because of his 'exceptional record of opposition to efforts to enhance U.S. security through arms control. The letter notes that Mr. Bolton:

- Led the effort against ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty;
- Blocked a more robust international agreement to curb the proliferation of small arms;
- Led the effort to block the Ottawa Landmine Treaty;
- Led the effort to have the United States withdraw from negotiations to formulate a verification system for the Biological Weapons Convention and;
- Led the campaign to have the U.S. withdraw from the ABM Treaty.

What sort of message do we send to our friends and allies by nominating an ideologue and not a consensus builder for this leading post at the United Nations? I, for one, am unaware of another nominee to an international body who has garnered so much opposition from individuals who have served on the front lines of American diplomacy.

The fact is, these 102 U.S. diplomats who have written in strenuous opposition to Mr. Bolton recognize that dialogue, cooperation, and, yes, compromise are essential if we are to build alliances and enlist the support of other states in tackling the common problems we all face.

By opposing virtually every meaningful arms control treaty over the past few years, John Bolton has placed his faith in a unilateral, go-it-alone foreign policy that has stretched our military thin and dramatically weakened respect for America in the world.

I had hoped that President Bush would make the rebuilding of our friendships and alliances a priority for the next four years. The nomination of Mr. Bolton sends precisely a different signal that the U.N. will continue to be our rhetorical whipping boy.

We all know that we cannot afford to go it alone in taking on the great challenges in front of us. It is faulty to assume that once he arrives at the United Nations headquarters in New York, John Bolton will suddenly discover a new faith in diplomacy and international agreements.

It is also a stretch to assume that John Bolton will likewise discover a newfound faith in the United Nations and its mission. Many of Mr. Bolton's comments about the United Nations have been raised before but they are worth repeating. Such as:

- 'There is no such thing as the United Nations. There is an international community that occasionally can be led by the only real power left in the world and that is the United States when it suits our interest and we can get others to go along (1994 Global Structures Convention, New York);

- The secretariat building in New York has 38 stories. If you lost ten stories today it wouldn't make a bit of difference' (1994 Global Structures Convention, New York);

- 'If I were redoing the Security Council today, I'd have one permanent member because that's the real reflection of the distribution of power in the world…the United States' (2000 Interview with Juan Williams on National Public Radio).

As my friend and colleague Senator Biden has stated, when you listen to quotes such as these, you wonder why Mr. Bolton would even want the job of Ambassador to the United Nations. Indeed, given his disdain for the institution and the other members of the Security Council, Mr. Bolton is unlikely to find a receptive audience for his ideas and initiatives much less be able to in forge alliances to protect American interests and increase global security.

How successful is Mr. Bolton likely to be in enlisting United Nations support for:

- Promoting political stability and economic development in Iraq and Afghanistan;
- Stopping the genocide in Darfur;
- Convincing North Korea and Iran to forgo their respective nuclear weapons programs;
- Combating the global HIV/AIDS pandemic;
- Stopping the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and;
- Fighting the War on Terror?

To say the least, I have little confidence in Mr. Bolton's chances for success if he is confirmed and his inability to be an effective and constructive ambassador will produce disastrous consequences for American foreign policy. In response to the mounting criticism of the President's nomination, the Administration has attempted to shift the debate from Mr. Bolton's qualifications to the need for reform of the United Nations.

A vote for Mr. Bolton is a vote for reform at the U.N., they argue. A vote against Mr. Bolton is a vote for the status quo. A blunt, no-nonsense approach is needed to get the job done. Nothing could be further from the truth. Mr. Bolton has made it clear that he does not have faith in multilateral diplomacy or the mission of the United Nations. Why should we expect him to be committed to a more effective United Nations? How effective is a blunt manner if the individual is unprepared to listen or compromise?

United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan has produced a report on recommendations for reforming the U.N. so that it can better tackle the challenges of the new century. The United States should play a meaningful and constructive role in that debate. But, his inflexible views and harsh temperament suggest to me that Mr. Bolton will himself be the issue at the U.N.— not the steps that need to be taken to improve the workings of the institution.

Let me turn now to several allegations have been made about Mr. Bolton's past conduct as Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security that raise serious questions about his fitness to serve as United States ambassador to the United Nations. As detailed in the Minority Report of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on his nomination, Mr. Bolton:

- Sought to replace two intelligence analysts, Christian Westermann, a State Department analyst in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, and the National Intelligence Officer (NIO) for Latin America at the Central Intelligence Agency, who refused to back his assertion that Cuba was developing a biological weapons program;

- Exaggerated intelligence on Cuba's biological weapons program and Syria's nuclear activities to fit his own personal views, and;

- Pushed for the dismissal of a State Department official he wrongly accused of purposefully withholding a document.

Supporters of Mr. Bolton's nomination argue that these charges should fall by the way-side because no one lost their job and his statements largely reflected the views of the Intelligence Community. Even if you assume that this is true, Mr. Bolton's efforts to trash intelligence analysts and pattern intelligence to fit his views, had a chilling effect on the Intelligence Community and its ability to provide sound, credible intelligence.

Robert Hutchings, the former Chairman of the National Intelligence Council, told the Foreign Relations Committee: '[W]hen policy officials come back repeatedly to push the same kinds of judgments, and push the Intelligence Community to confirm a particular set of judgments, it does have the effect of politicizing intelligence, because the so called 'correct answer' becomes all too clear…..it creates a climate of intimidation and a culture of conformity that is damaging.'

Given the failure of pre-war intelligence on Iraq and the profound negative impact that failure had on the credibility of the United States in the international community, we should not send a representative to the United Nations who has sought to conform intelligence to his stated views and punish those who disagreed with him.

Indeed, the next United States Ambassador to the United Nations may very well be charged with gathering international support to convince Iran and North Korea to abandon their nuclear weapons programs. A person of Mr. Bolton's credibility on intelligence matters is unlikely to garner much support and, indeed will likely face stiffer opposition.

Surely the President can find another nominee who is committed to multilateral diplomacy and appreciates, rather than denigrates, the goals and mission of the United Nations.

Despite what the Administration may assert about Mr. Bolton's 'blunt' manner, such an individual will be far more effective at representing United States interests, shaping alliances to confront problems that transcend borders, and encouraging U.N. reform.

Mr. Bolton has made a career out of shunning diplomacy, blasting the United Nations, ignoring the advice of others, and moving ahead with a foreign policy that emphasizes arrogance over leadership.

In these difficult times, he's a risk, not an asset, in advancing our national security interests abroad and on that basis does not deserve the Senate's support in confirming his nomination."

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