



PROJECT on Middle East Democracy

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Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
**“Foreign Policy Priorities in the President's
FY2010 International Affairs Budget”**

Hart Senate Office Building, Rm 216, May 20, 2009, 1:30 pm

The Senate Committee on Foreign Relations hosted Secretary of State **Hillary Clinton** to discuss the FY2010 budget for the Department of State. The hearing was moderated by the Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations, Senator **John Kerry** (D-MA). Senator Kerry praised Secretary Clinton for the work she's done thus far and cited the twenty two countries and 70,000 miles she's traveled as evidence of how hard she's working. Kerry expressed enthusiasm in his assertion that **“diplomacy is once again at the forefront of American foreign policy”**. He is optimistic for the success of the administration's efforts in reaching out to Iran and reviving the Middle East peace process and praised their understanding of the interconnectedness of the security problems throughout the world.

Kerry praised the FY2010 State Department budget, claiming that the 53.8 billion dollars requested will help rebuild U.S. diplomatic and development institutions, increase necessary civilian assistance to Pakistan, recognizes the vital role of humanitarian assistance, and sustains U.S. efforts to fight HIV and AIDS in Africa. Kerry also expressed his optimism that they would be able to pass an authorization bill which rebalances the priorities between State and DoD which has not been done since 2002.

Ranking Member **Richard Lugar** (R-IN) declared that the current budget request might be only a start to how much is needed to accomplish the department's goals. He expressed disappointment that the funds requested for the International Monetary Fund were not requested in this budget but in the supplemental budget request. While Senator Lugar is supportive of providing the funds he believes that by requesting them through the supplemental bill the administration unnecessarily truncated debate on the issue. Lugar asserted that **it is critical for the U.S. to provide support to nations under stress from the global financial crisis as he believes it could cause a retreat of democracy and an increase in violent conflict is possible void of such support.**

Secretary Clinton began her remarks by pledging a comprehensive approach to putting smart power into action, reiterating the Obama administration's pledge to employ all the tools at their disposal including defense, diplomacy and development. According to Secretary Clinton the FY2010 budget, with a seven percent increase in the funding for state and foreign operations, recognizes the need to revitalize and expand America's civilian presence both at home and abroad. Primary to her approach is a focus on three areas: investing in strengthening the people who make up our civilian and foreign workforce, investing in sound policies, and investing in rebuilding and strengthening our partnerships abroad. Specifically, Secretary Clinton expressed

concern for strengthening USAID whose budget has increased dramatically since its inception but over which time has witnessed a one third reduction in staff.

On Afghanistan and Pakistan, Secretary Clinton spoke of the need for a new strategic communications strategy and asserted that we “could win the war on the ground and lose it in the media”. She also re-iterated the administration's support for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian crisis.

Clinton also spoke about how the FY2010 budget shows the administration's commitment to new forms of engagement including large increases in development aid. The budget includes one billion dollars for educational programs, 1.6 billion for food security, 4.1 billion for humanitarian assistance, and 4.1 billion for multilateral organizations including support for peacekeeping operations. She also discussed her recent announcement of the creation of a virtual student foreign service.

Senator Kerry began the questioning of Senator Clinton by discussing the committee's meeting with Israeli Prime Minister **Benjamin Netanyahu** in which they were given the impression that Netanyahu is willing to take steps to move peace forward. Kerry wondered where the Secretary of State saw the process regarding settlements headed. Clinton responded by re-iterating the administration's support for a two state solution as well as their commitment to engage intensively in the peace process. “It is clear that the settlement activity has to cease”, declared Clinton, as it changes the realities on the ground and is of extreme symbolic importance in the region.

Kerry agreed wholeheartedly with Secretary Clinton and followed up by asking what the Arab world could do to move peace forward. Clinton cited the Arab Peace Initiative as the kind of action which the administration would like to observe. She asserted that confidence building measures are necessary on both sides to move forward with the peace process.

Senator **Barbara Boxer** (D-CA) discussed the recent appointment of **Melanne Verveer** as Undersecretary for Global Women's Issues and expressed her concern with the rights of women in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan, and in Afghanistan. Secretary Clinton thanked Senator Boxer for her leadership on establishing the Office of Global Women's Issues and said the administration is focused on defending women around the globe.

Senator **Robert Menendez** (D-NJ) raised the issue of Pakistan not having the capacity or the monitoring mechanisms necessary to receive the amount of aid which has been proposed. He shared the sentiments of other senators that the aid could potentially fall into the wrong hands and could be used to achieve the wrong objections. Clinton admitted that this is a concern and explained that they are in the process of identifying partners who can be held accountable such as international and local NGOs.

Senator **Ben Cardin** (D-MD) raised the issue of providing humanitarian assistance to Iraqi refugees in the United States, in Syria and Jordan, and those displaced within Iraq. Secretary Clinton discussed a recent initiative to provide cellular phones to refugees to educate them on the

options available and pledged that the refugee issue is one of the most critical for Ambassador **Christopher Hill**.

Senator **Chris Dodd** (D-CT) also expressed concern that U.S. aid could be used to bolster Pakistan's nuclear stockpile. Secretary Clinton explained that they are “very firm in their conviction that our aid will not fund the stockpile”. She also expounded on the past forty years of U.S. policy in Pakistan as being entirely inconsistent. She blamed the current situation on failed policies in the 1980's and more recently U.S. support for former President **Pervez Musharraf**. She was steadfast in declaring the administration's support for the democratically elected government in Pakistan.

Senator **Bob Corker** (R-TN) discussed a recent lunch with the president of Pakistan and Afghanistan and expressed his disappointment with the inability of the Afghan president to articulate what the goal of the U.S. presence is in his country. He detailed an amendment he's supporting which attempts to define metrics and benchmarks to better define our mission in Afghanistan. Secretary Clinton explained that the administration is developing metrics and aims to hold themselves accountable in Afghanistan.

Senator **Russ Feingold** (D-WI) asked Secretary Clinton to explain exactly how funds are being dispersed in Pakistan. Clinton responded by explaining that there has been no regularity in how the funds are dispersed but they are pursuing means by which to establish regularity.

Senator **Bob Casey** (D-PA) asked Secretary Clinton to explain her confidence that Pakistan's nuclear arsenal is secure to which Clinton responded that both the intelligence they are receiving and the cooperation from the Pakistani government has reassured her.

Senator **Kirsten Gillibrand** (D-NY) expressed her feeling of disappointment on a recent trip to Pakistan when a Japanese funded school was pointed out to her and there was no American equivalent. Secretary Clinton responded that while USAID has been funding rule of law and democracy promotion programs predominantly, they are also pursuing projects with tangible deliverables. Senator Lugar explained a school project in Lahore which the department should examine.

Senator Kerry concluded the hearing by putting forth that the budget should perhaps include specific allocations for the new appointee on women's issues. Secretary Clinton agreed that this should be considered.