

PRESIDENT OBAMA'S FIRST 100 DAYS
FOREIGN POLICY HIGHLIGHTS
The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission
Southern Baptist Convention

AFGHANISTAN

Obama seeks more troops from Europe, all he gets is commitment of around 5,000 for election security and training. “As expected, European allies agreed to provide up to 5,000 new troops for Afghanistan, the White House said yesterday. But 3,000 of them are temporary deployments to provide security for the August elections in Afghanistan. A further 1,400 to 2,000 soldiers will also be made available, to form embedded training teams for the Afghan Army and the police. Obama is raising the number of US troops this year to about 68,000 from the current 38,000, which will significantly Americanize the war. But the new strategy, which the Europeans have pressed for, is aimed at creating larger and better-trained Afghan security forces that can defend and allow the West to leave. The new training forces are important, Obama emphasized in a news conference after the meeting.” “Europeans Offer Few New Troops for Afghanistan,”
http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/05/world/europe/05prexy.html?_r=2&ref=world

CHINA

Clinton declared human rights issues will not be an integral part of US relations with China. “‘Successive administrations and Chinese governments have been poised back and forth on these issues, and we have to continue to press them. But our pressing on those issues can’t interfere with the global economic crisis, the global climate change crisis, and the security crisis,’ she told reporters in Seoul, South Korea.” “Clinton: Chinese Human Rights Can’t Interfere with Other Crises,”
<http://www.cnn.com/2009/POLITICS/02/21/clinton.china.asia/index.html>

CUBA

Obama drops travel and remittance restrictions with no concessions from Castro. Release of political prisoners not required. “President Barack Obama is allowing Americans to make unlimited trips and money transfers to family in Cuba and easing other restrictions Monday to usher in a new era of openness toward the island nation ruled by communists for 50 years.” “US Lifts Travel Restrictions on Cuba,”
http://www.nbcnewyork.com/news/us_world/NATL-Obama-to-Lift-Restrictions-on-Cuba-.html

IRAN

Obama offers to reopen diplomatic ties. Iran announces it has control of complete cycle for processing nuclear fuel. “US President Barack Obama has offered ‘a new beginning’ of engagement with Tehran in an unprecedented direct video message to the Iranian people... But Mr. Obama warned: ‘This process will not be advanced by threats.

We seek instead engagement that is honest and grounded in mutual respect. The United States wants the Islamic Republic of Iran to take its rightful place in the community of nations. You have that right - but it comes with real responsibilities.’ Reacting to the message, Ali Akbar Javanfekr, a senior advisor to Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, said the US had to recognise its past mistakes if it wanted to engage Iran. ‘By fundamentally changing its behaviour America can offer us a friendly hand,’ he told Reuters news agency. ‘Unlimited sanctions which still continue and have been renewed by the United States are wrong and need to be reviewed,’ he said. In separate Nowruz messages to the Iranian people, neither Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei nor President Ahmadinejad mentioned Mr Obama's speech. Ayatollah Khamenei said world powers had been convinced they could do nothing to halt the progress Iran was making on its nuclear programme.” “Obama Offers Iran ‘New Beginning,’”
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/7954211.stm>

IRAQ

Very little change in policy compared to Bush. “President Obama, admitting belatedly and begrudgingly the success of George W. Bush's surge strategy, decided to keep large numbers of troops there for another 19 months and an unspecified number after that. Responsibly, he decided not to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory.” Michael Barone, “Back to the Future,”
http://townhall.com/columnists/MichaelBarone/2009/04/21/back_to_the_future_obamas_foreign_policy

Land: Obama Iraq speech 'vindicated' Bush policy

Posted on Mar 6, 2009 | by Michael Foust
 NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Southern Baptist ethics leader Richard Land says he has plenty of disagreements with President Obama but believes the commander-in-chief was on the right track during a recent major policy speech on Iraq.

During his Feb. 27 speech at Camp Lejeune, N.C., Obama said the U.S. will end its combat mission in Iraq by Aug. 31, 2010, but will leave a "transitional force" of between 35,000-50,000 troops there to: train, equip and advise Iraqi security forces; conduct "targeted counter-terrorism missions"; and protect ongoing civilian and military efforts. Under an agreement signed with the Iraqi government during the Bush administration, all U.S. forces must be out of Iraq by the end of 2011.

Land and other leaders who backed the war and believe the Bush troop surge has been a success took heart when Obama told the Marines, "We sent our troops to Iraq to do away with Saddam Hussein's regime -- and you got the job done. We kept our troops in Iraq to help establish a sovereign government -- and you got the job done. And we will leave the Iraqi people with a hard-earned opportunity to live a better life -- that is your achievement; that is the prospect that you have made possible."

The Wall Street Journal published an editorial with the headline, "Obama's Bush

Vindication." Obama, after all, during the presidential campaign was highly critical of Bush's handling of the war.

During his Feb. 28 "Richard Land Live" radio program -- a portion of which was replayed March 4 on his "For Faith and Family" broadcast -- Land read the editorial.

"I do want to point out one place where President Obama, I think, has taken the right step and in doing so has vindicated much of Bush's foreign policy on Iraq," Land said, partially paraphrasing the editorial but making it clear it was his position as well. "It was never very likely that President Obama would come out and praise George W. Bush for his handling of the Iraq war. And in his speech at Camp Lejeune ... he didn't. Then again, we didn't quite expect to find ourselves praising President Obama for his handling of Iraq. But I find myself in the position of doing so."

Land added, "[Obama] helped to do away with the criticism that I've had of him. He has not been, up until this point, in my opinion, sufficiently affirming of what our country has accomplished and what the Iraqis have accomplished."

The Wall Street Journal editorial noted that Obama again acknowledged that U.S. forces had "succeeded beyond any expectation."

"President Obama," the editorial said, "also recognized that Iraqis themselves have made significant political progress, and that 'there is renewed cause for hope in Iraq.' That's a far cry from his message of last July, when he told reporters, after visiting Iraq, that 'So far, I think we have not seen the kind of political reconciliation that's going to bring about long-term stability in Iraq.'

"But more important than Mr. Obama's implicit repudiation of his own positions as a candidate (and the implicit vindication of Mr. Bush's position, to say nothing of John McCain's)," the editorial said, "is his decision to maintain a sizable U.S. military presence in Iraq -- in the range of 35,000 to 50,000 troops -- past the August 2010 'withdrawal' date. That 'transitional force' is roughly the size of the U.S. military presence in South Korea through the Cold War. And its mission, involving training of Iraqi forces, U.S. force protection and 'targeted counterterrorism missions,' largely describes what the U.S. is already doing in Iraq."

Obama, the editorial said, is "showing a commitment to Iraq's continued democratic progress" and is "making clear the strategic advantage of having a stable U.S. ally in the heart of the Persian Gulf."

Land agreed.

"Good for Mr. Obama," Land said after reading part of the president's speech. "I want to give Mr. Obama credit where credit is due. I appreciate that he has acknowledged what our military has done. I applaud him for acknowledging what the Bush administration has

handed off to him in Iraq, and that is an opportunity to help stabilize that region with a democratic ally named Iraq."

ISRAEL/PALESTINE

Obama addresses the Palestinian problem by promising \$900 million to rebuild Gaza.

"What The Washington Post does not say, but what FOX News points out is that this cruel decision by the Obama administration to cut off poor children in Washington, D.C. comes at the very time this administration is giving \$900 million to Gaza. There, in what some call the Palestinian territories, parents fired guns in the air to celebrate when America was attacked on 9/11. There, parents gave children candy to celebrate the 3,000 American deaths that occurred on that terrible day. There, parents attend school programs where little children dance and sing—while dressed as suicide bombers! This is not your mother's PTA! Secretary Hillary Clinton has tried to reassure us that our \$900 million will go to 'rebuild Gaza' and for 'humanitarian purposes.' We have seen how Hamas—the terrorist group that controls Gaza—uses 'hospitals' to store weapons and 'ambulances' to re-supply rocket launch teams. It's hard to see how Members of Congress and this administration can justify cutting off American kids—while helping those who in Gaza who hate America. I would like to see a listing of the senators who voted down D.C. Opportunity Scholarships while voting to send our money to the Gaza Strip. That list, at least, would provide us all an education." Ken Blackwell, "Expelling Kids in D.C., Enrolling Them in Gaza,"

http://townhall.com/Columnists/KenBlackwell/2009/04/25/expelling_kids_in_dc_enrolling_them_in_gaza

NORTH KOREA

Launches long range rocket, US does nothing. Emboldened by apparent Obama weakness NK breaks commitment to nuclear talks and decides to restart nuclear program. "North Korea on Tuesday ordered international nuclear inspectors out of the country and said it would 'never again' take part in denuclearization talks, dealing a harsh, early setback to the Obama administration's hopes of disarming the defiant regime. In a strident reaction to a United Nations rebuke over its recent rocket launch, the government in Pyongyang took several provocative actions, including announcing that it would resume building nuclear weapons. The White House said North Korea had taken 'a serious step in the wrong direction,' but it offered no hint as to how it plans to restart the long-stalled drive to abolish the communist nation's nuclear program." "North Korea says 'Never Again' to Nuclear Arms Talks,"

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-north-korea15-2009apr15.0.7869085.story>

PAKISTAN

Becoming more unstable. Taliban controls the Northwest. "Pakistan on Monday signed a deal with Islamic hardliners recognizing the rule of Sharia law in the northwest Swat valley in a bid to end violence in the troubled region. The sharia deal, widely seen as a

government concession to militants, followed talks between ministers in the troubled North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and a local militant leader, Soofi Mohammad, on formalising the implementation of Islamic law. The agreement will cover Pakistan's Malakand area, one of the districts of NWFP, which includes the Swat valley and is home to around three million of the estimated 20 million people who live in the northwest province. 'All laws against sharia will be abolished and sharia will be enforced under this justice system,' provincial information minister Mian Iftikhar Hussain told reporters in the regional capital Peshawar.' "Pakistan Signs Sharia Deal with Militants," http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle08.asp?xfile=data/international/2009/February/international_February1224.xml§ion=international

RUSSIA

Obama offers to not deploy missile shield if Russia helps with Iran. Russia says no deal. "President Obama offered to consider scrapping plans for a missile defense shield in Europe if Russia helps rein in Iran's nuclear program, the Russian newspaper Kommersant reported. The article said Obama wrote to Russian President Dmitry Medvedev to tell him Russia's aid in resolving the threat from Iran would make the missile shield plans unnecessary, according to an account from Russian news agency RIA Novosti. A senior administration official told FOX News that Obama sent a letter to Medvedev but 'we won't comment on the specifics.'" "Report: Obama Offers to Scrap Missile Shield If Russia Cooperates on Iran," <http://www.foxnews.com/politics/first100days/2009/03/02/report-obama-offers-scrap-missile-shield-russia-cooperates-iran/>

SOUTH/CENTRAL AMERICA/MEXICO

- ***Obama shows close interest in Hugo Chavez and Daniel Ortega, bolstering anti-US regimes and lending them clout.*** "We have at times been disengaged, and at times we sought to dictate our terms,' Obama told the summit to loud applause. 'But I pledge to you that we seek an equal partnership. There is no senior partner and junior partner in our relations.'" "Barack Obama Offers Olive Branch to Chavez, Ortega, and Latin America," <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/apr/19/obama-latin-america>
- ***NAFTA problems.*** "The Obama administration violates the NAFTA treaty by banning trucks from Mexico (population 109 million), refuses to ratify the free trade agreement with Colombia (population 44 million) and, despite our need for alternative fuels, makes no move to rescind the 54 cent tariff on sugar ethanol from Brazil (population 191 million). Michael Barone, "Back to the Future," http://townhall.com/columnists/MichaelBarone/2009/04/21/back_to_the_future_obamas_foreign_policy

TURKEY

Obama calls for admittance of Turkey to EU, though European nations are worried about removal of travel restrictions and potential for terrorists to enter Europe. “The implications of all this, as (French Foreign Minister) Kouchner stated in an interview, are extremely serious. ‘I was very shocked by the pressure that was brought upon us (for NATO not to elect Anders Fogh Rasmussen, the prime minister of Denmark, as its new secretary-general),’ he said. ‘Turkey’s evolution in, let’s say, a more religious direction, towards a less robust secularism, worries me.’ This is to put it in the mildest possible way. It’s not just a matter of a Turkish political party undermining Turkey’s own historic secularism. It is a question of Turkey trying to impose its Islamist and chauvinist policies on another European state—and indeed on the whole NATO alliance. And if this is how it behaves before it has been admitted to the European Union, has it not invited us all to guess how it would behave when it had a veto power in those councils?... President Obama’s emollient gifts were on display at the NATO summit, where he eventually persuaded the Turks to withhold their veto on the appointment of Prime Minister Rasmussen. Accounts differ as to the price of this deal, but a number of plum jobs and positions now appear to have been awarded to Turkish nominees. Much more important, however, the foreign minister of France has reversed his previous position and has now said: ‘It’s not for the Americans to decide who comes into Europe or not. We are in charge in our own house.’ Put it like this: Obama’s ‘quiet diplomacy’ has temporarily conciliated the Turks while perhaps permanently alienating the French and has made it more, rather than less, likely that the American goal of Turkish EU membership will now never be reached. And this is the administration that staked so much on the idea of renewing our credit on the other side of the Atlantic. This evidently can’t be done by sweetness alone. On the question of Turkey’s accession, I used to be able to make either case. Admitting the Turks could lead to the modernization of the country, whereas exclusion could breed resentment and instability and even a renewal of pseudo-Ataturkist military rule. On the other hand, admission would put the frontiers of Europe up against Iran and Iraq and the volatile Caucasus, so that instead of being a ‘bridge’ between East and West (to use the unvarying cliché), Turkey would! become a tunnel. The Strasbourg crisis clarifies the entire picture and should make us grateful to have been warned in such a timely fashion. Turkey wants all the privileges of NATO and EU membership but also wishes to continue occupying Cyprus, denying Kurdish rights, and lying about the Armenian genocide. On top of this, it now desires to act as a proxy for Islamization and dares to waste the time of a defensive alliance in trying to censor the press of another member state! Kouchner was quite right to speak out as he did, and the Turkish authorities will now be able to blame the failure of their membership scheme not on the unsleeping plots of their enemies, but on the belated awakening of their former friends.” Christopher Hitchens, “Ankara Shows Its Hand,” <http://www.slate.com/id/2216518/>

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Obama calls for nuclear weapons ban. “And how did he propose to start? By negotiating a new nuclear arms control treaty with Russia, getting the Senate to ratify the nuclear test ban treaty and stopping U.S. production of fissile material. That's all Cold War stuff. Disarmament talks with the Soviets were a central feature of American foreign policy from the late 1960s to the late 1980s, a time when a U.S.-Soviet nuclear war would have produced enormous destruction. But the prospect of a U.S.-Russian nuclear war today is pretty much nil. It's worthwhile to continue the Nunn-Lugar program of corralling Russia's loose nukes -- one of the few issues Obama worked on as a senator -- but making disarmament talks with Russia a first priority is a policy out of the distant past.” Michael Barone, “Back to the Future,”
http://townhall.com/columnists/MichaelBarone/2009/04/21/back_to_the_future_obamas_foreign_policy

TERRORISM

- ***Obama refuses to speak of “war on terror”.*** “Secretary of State Hillary Clinton says the Obama administration has indeed abandoned the term ‘global war on terror.’ Clinton says that while she hasn’t seen any specific orders, the new administration in Washington simply isn’t using the phrase. The term was a rallying cry for President Bush after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. But the use of the term “global war on terror” is widely disliked overseas. Reporters asked Clinton about the phrase Monday as she headed to Europe for a week of diplomatic meetings. She said the absence of the ‘war on terror’ language speaks for itself. Pundits have noted the absence, but top administration figures have had little to say on the subject.” “Clinton: ‘War On Terror’ Phrase Won’t Be Used,”
<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=102532656&ft=1&f=1001>
- ***Obama releases classified memos on torture, weakening the US ability to interrogate suspected terrorists.*** “Although evidence shows that the Army Field Manual, which is available online, is already used by al Qaeda for training purposes, it was certainly the president's right to suspend use of any technique. However, public disclosure of the OLC opinions, and thus of the techniques themselves, assures that terrorists are now aware of the absolute limit of what the U.S. government could do to extract information from them, and can supplement their training accordingly and thus diminish the effectiveness of these techniques as they have the ones in the Army Field Manual.” Michael Hayden and Michael Mukasey, “The President Ties His Own Hands on Terror,”
http://online.wsj.com/article_email/SB123993446103128041-1MyQjAxMDI5MzI5NTkyMzU0Wj.html

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