

CUBA'S PURSUIT OF BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS: FACT OR FICTION?

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CHRISTOPHER J. DODD (D-CT) WITNESSES: CARL FORD, JR., ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR
INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH, UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE LOCATION: 419 DIRKSEN
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SEN. CHRISTOPHER J. DODD (D-CT): Good morning. I want to welcome all of you here this morning to the Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs. We convene this morning in order to review certain public statements made by members of the Bush administration in recent months concerning the topic of Cuban biological weapons capabilities and the sale of dual use technology to so-called rogue states. The issue of biological weapons is obviously a very serious matter and we in the United States Senate would refrain from the temptation to play politics with it. So too should the Bush administration, in my view. John Bolton, the Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, received a great deal of attention when he spoke on this topic on May 6 at the Heritage Foundation here in Washington. The Heritage Foundation, which I'm sure everyone in this room knows, is a conservative think tank located in this city. Secretary of State Powell attempted to downplay the significance of Mr. Bolton's statement when he was questioned about it during a subsequent television appearance. Secretary Powell at that time said, and I quote him: "As Under Secretary Bolton said recently, we do believe that Cuba has a biological offensive research capability. We didn't say that it actually had such weapons, but it has the capacity and the capability to conduct such research. That is not a new statement. I think that it is a statement that has been made previously. So Under Secretary Bolton's speech, which got attention on this issue again, wasn't breaking new ground as far as the United States' position on this subject goes," end of quote.

The, quote "previous statement," end of quote, to which Secretary Powell was referring was made by Carl Ford, our witness here this morning, who is the Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research who will be testifying briefly. It is true that Mr. Ford touched upon this subject in March of this year in the course of testimony before this committee on the subject of biological weapons. Mr. Ford spent a minute or two and four lines of his testimony on this matter. He said at that time, and I quote him, "The United States believes that Cuba has at least a limited developmental offensive biological warfare research and developmental effort. Cuba has provided dual use biotechnology to rogue states. We are concerned that such technology could support BW programs in those states. We call on Cuba to cease all BW applicable cooperation with rogue states and to fully comply with all of its obligations under the Biological Weapons Convention," end of quote.

Mr. Ford's remarks received very little attention either during the hearing or subsequently, no tribute at all to your eloquence at all, Carl. It just didn't receive that much attention. In contrast, Mr. Bolton spent considerably more time on this subject in a very different setting. He also suggested in the course of those remarks that previous U.S. intelligence assessments on the subject of Cuba's potential threat to U.S. security were, and I quote him, "unbalanced and understated that threat." It was in that context that he mentioned Cuba's, quote, "limited offensive biological warfare research and developmental effort."

Unlike Mr. Ford, Mr. Bolton omitted Mr. Ford's characterization of the program as being only in the developmental stage. So I would respectfully disagree with Secretary Powell when he said this was old news.

Were Mr. Bolton present at this hearing this morning, as I hoped he would be, we would have been asked him about the content, venue and timing of his remarks. We might have inquired why Mr. Bolton never included Cuba in his remarks last November, only six months earlier, when he testified in Geneva at the conference on compliance with the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention, where he publicly named the states of concern on BW issues. We would have also publicly -- we would have also inquired whether President Carter's impending visit to Cuba about a week after the Heritage Foundation speech, the first by any American president or former president since Castro assumed power, had anything to do with the timing of his speech. Or why no one in the State Department or elsewhere in the intelligence community sought to inform President Carter about this matter in the course of intelligence briefings of the former president in preparation of his trip to Cuba, if this was a matter of such concern to the department.

Unfortunately, Secretary Powell has refused to allow Mr. Bolton to testify on this matter today because he does not believe he is the appropriate official to answer questions about this matter. That puzzles me as chairman of this subcommittee, since he was clearly the appropriate official to attend the Heritage Foundation event on this subject. I believe that the secretary's decision is the wrong decision. Moreover, I do not know how the secretary can justify making Mr. Bolton to a non-governmental entity to speak publicly about a serious matter such as this, yet deny the United States Senate and this committee of jurisdiction access to Mr. Bolton to discuss a terribly important subject matter. I am extremely disappointed with the department's unwillingness to cooperate in this matter and I intend to accord matters before the Senate of interest to the department with an equivalent level of cooperation until this matter is resolved.

Having made these preliminary remarks, let me turn now to the witness that the department has made available to the committee, Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research, Carl Ford. Carl, I thank you for being here this morning and for the record let me state Carl Ford and I have known each other for more than 20 years. We've spent it seemed like eight months during one month traveling to China together back in 1983, I believe it was; almost 20 years ago. Let me indicate how I intend to proceed this morning, if I could. Mr. Ford has a few opening remarks which we will hear in open session. I then have a number of questions which I will ask Mr. Ford, which are not of a classified nature. I'm sure my colleague from Virginia, who has joined us here, and other members who will show up will have some additional questions of a non-classified nature to address to you. Other members will be joining us as they can here this morning. We will proceed in open session as long as we can without getting into classified matters, at which point I will go into executive session.

So, Mr. Ford, I would like you to stand if you would this morning to raise your right hand so I can administer the oath.

(Witness sworn.)

Welcome to the committee. Please be seated. And let me turn to my colleague, Mr. Allen, to see if he has any opening comments he'd like to make. SEN. GEORGE ALLEN (R-VA): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I would like to make some opening remarks. First, insofar as Mr. Ford being here, I'm glad you're here. I look forward to questioning you. I don't know how much of this, as far as your intelligence capabilities which I know are extensive, can actually be on open record. And so we'll try to cover as much as we can that is not classified, and we did have a briefing yesterday prior to this hearing with the chairman.

As far as Secretary Powell and so forth, as I understand it, Under Secretary Bolton is willing to appear at a separate hearing dealing with policy. Mr. Ford's capabilities are in intelligence and, indeed, I think that

was the purpose of this: is whether Cuba's pursuit of biological weapons, whether that's true or false or fact or fiction. And, indeed, the statements of Mr. Bolton at the Heritage Foundation and the statement of Mr. Ford before this committee a few months earlier are, from what I can see -- determine, are identical. So we have Mr. Ford here and so we can question him. I guess we could have another hearing with Mr. Bolton as far as what policy should be taken. And I think both are -- the facts are important in determining our policy, but let's get the facts straight.

And I think that we're all too aware of how important the threat is of chemical or biological weapons in the hands of rogue states or terrorist organizations, and what that could pose as a threat to the United States. The anthrax attacks in these buildings right here last fall underscored the dangers of such weapons to our country. We don't know whether that's external or internal yet, but understand the impact it can have. And looking back on those events, it shows the need for us to be vigilant in uncovering and dismantling any facilities that could produce such weapons if mass destruction were the desire, or mass destruction were the desire of malicious states or terrorist organizations.

Now, that's why I stand behind Under Secretary Bolton's remarks, which are consistent with Mr. Ford's, which says that Cuba, quote, "has at least a limited offensive biological research and development effort." And furthermore, quote, "that Cuba has provided dual use biotechnology to rogue states." So it's certainly a fact, not fiction, that Cuba has a capability to pursue biological weapons. Now, Under Secretary Bolton is not the first government official to have spoken publicly on this issue. On March 19, 2002, testimony before this very Foreign Relations Committee at a hearing addressing the threat of chemical and biological weapons, our witness here, Assistant Secretary Ford, stated the United States believed that Cuba has at least a limited developmental offensive biological warfare research and development effort.

In fact, it was Assistant Secretary Ford's words that Under Secretary Bolton has precisely echoed verbatim two months later at the Heritage Foundation, and these statements are clearly supported by intelligence reporting that I have personally reviewed. Now, throughout the past decade we've seen numerous reports addressing Cuba's bio-weapons capability. It is a well known fact that Cuba has one of the most advanced biotechnology and pharmaceutical industries in the world, ranking near the top of the World Health Organization's list of countries with the most developed biological industries, lagging only behind the G7.

The well respected and former Deputy Director of Biopreparat, Ken Alibek, the Soviet Union's biological weapons program, has acknowledged that his institute trained Cubans in developing biological weapons and agents. In his 1998 book *Biohazard*, Alibek recounts how his boss Major General Yuri Kalinin, head of the Soviet bioweapons program, made several trips to Cuba to consult on various biotechnology programs. That in itself does not prove it, but you see it's a cause for concern, and that's of public record.

Moreover, in the October issue of *Nature Biotechnology Journal*, Jose Delafuente, the former Director of Research and Development at Cuba's premier center for genetic engineering and biotechnology, reported that Cuba sold technology to Iran that could -- could -- be used to produce biological weapons. Now, Fidel Castro has himself very recently proclaimed, for example, that Iran and Cuba, in cooperation with each other, could bring America to its knees, in asserting that we had weak leadership in this country.

Now, I'm deeply troubled by the fact that several rogue states have received technical assistance from Cuba, potentially -- again, potentially -- acquiring the technology and expertise to build biological weapons. Cuba must adhere to its commitment under the Biological Weapons Convention. Moreover, it must halt the

transfer of sensitive dual use items and materials that might be flowing to many countries, and potentially into the hands of terrorist groups that of course we consider as a direct threat to our allies or to our own national security. And we must not attempt to whitewash Fidel Castro's record and the resulting impoverishment of opportunities for those who cannot leave Cuba. And whether it's human rights abuses on a national scale, whether it's violating international accord such as the Biological Weapons Convention, or developing weapons that could be used against the United States, national security and American values must prevail over partisan politics.

Former President Carter in his recent trip to Cuba made several statements relating to the legitimacy of Cuba's biotechnology industry, dismissing verified concerns about Cuba's biotechnology efforts, capabilities and transfers. The fact of the matter remains Cuba possesses, and I quote, "at least a limited biological warfare research and development effort," end quote. And I believe that at a minimum we ought to work to prevent it from being proliferated either to rogue states or to terrorist groups. And I look forward to this hearing and thank you, Mr. Chairman, for calling it. SEN. DODD: Thank you.

Senator Chafee, any opening comments you'd like to make?

SEN. LINCOLN D. CHAFEE (R-RI): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for calling the hearing. And I was fortunate enough to go to Havana in January and did get a tour of one of the pharmaceutical plants, so I don't think there's any doubt that, as Senator Allen said, Cuba is a leader in this area and probably has the capacity to produce these types of weapons. I do think that since the dawn of time when cavemen sharpened sticks, it's human nature to pursue weapons. Whether that's good or bad, I just think it's true and I think the more important point is whether there's an intent and whether this -- where the animosity might be directed if Cuba is following this path. And I think really that's the more important point.

Certainly they had the capacity from what I saw at that pharmaceutical plant. They were developing meningitis vaccines that we use in Rhode Island. We had an outbreak of meningitis and used the Cuban vaccine. So I look forward to your testimony. Thank you.

SEN. DODD: Thank you very much.

Mr. Ford, thank you for being here.

MR. CARL J. FORD JR.: Mr. Chairman, first let me simply state that my presence here alone is not to suggest to you or the committee that the department is not prepared to answer any policy implications that might come from my presentation. The secretary is planning to be here this afternoon, as I think you know. He will take any questions that you may have directly about his views on this subject or the Heritage speech or what Mr. Bolton said. If that doesn't answer all the committee's questions, then he's prepared to have Mr. Bolton come up at a time at your convenience to answer any other questions that you may have, or other officials from the department.

SEN. DODD: I appreciate that. I was sort of going to talk to the secretary about it this afternoon. It's an awful long way to get around to it. But you obviously gave him permission to testify before the Heritage Foundation. I'm just very disappointed that a coequal branch of government -- when statements are made in a public forum as they were, provoking as much subject -- as much discussion as it did and asking that then official to appear before this committee to explain how it was that he managed to make those remarks, whether or not they were based on the kind of intelligence we've gathered. I find it disappointing that I've got

to go through the Secretary of State. Go through you. Be turned down as not the right official and then maybe down the road he can come and testify. He can show up at the Heritage Foundation. He can show up at the United States Senate.

MR. FORD: The only thing I can say is that it was certainly not the department's intention to deny you or the committee access to our policy officials. What the secretary feels strongly about, and I agree with, is that there should be a clear separation in our department from intelligence and policymakers. I don't tell them what to say and they'd better not tell me what I say. That's the way we operate. That's the way we think it's best done and so that by having us both appear, the secretary believes it puts the policy and intelligence too close together. But he has -- there's no -- on his part there is no intention not to come to you directly or send Bolton or anyone else that you might like to talk about this subject.

But when it's intelligence, you get me. When you want to talk policy, you get him or one of the other policy officials. It's simply the way that we've decided that we should operate when it comes to intelligence and policy. But I have a brief statement, if I might present.

It's my pleasure to come before the subcommittee today to discuss the issue of what we in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research assess to be Cuba's efforts to date in the area of biological warfare. My remarks in this open forum will necessarily be limited, owing to the need to protect sensitive intelligence information. But I would welcome the opportunity and am prepared to give classified remarks in a closed session.

On March 19, as you indicated, in my statement in front of the full committee, I stated I&R's judgment that the United States believes that Cuba has at least a limited developmental offensive biological warfare research and development effort. Cuba has provided dual use technology to rogue states. We are concerned that such technology could support BW programs in those states. That assessment and our concerns have not changed in the intervening two-and-a-half months.

Among the various weapons of mass destruction, biological warfare is perhaps the most difficult to clearly identify absent unambiguous, reliable intelligence information. Owing to the dual use nature of the technology and materials used to support a BW program, in today's world many nations including Cuba have in place robust biotechnology infrastructures as some of the world's best scientific talent has turned to this avenue of modern science to promote medical and agricultural advances in their countries.

Distinguishing legitimate biotech work from work that is pursued to support either offensive or defensive BW efforts or programs continues to be a difficult intelligence challenge. In a nutshell, since basic BW production does not require large sophisticated programs or facilities, it makes the intelligence assessment function more complicated. Cuba has several facilities involved in biologically related efforts in agriculture, medicine and veterinarian science which, as in any country, could be used for illicit purposes. This dual use problem presents all who are committed to combating the BW threat with the dilemma of how best to assess the capabilities of any given facility against the intent to develop biological weapons. What then can I say about the evidence for our assessment? The nature of biological weapons makes it difficult to procure clear, incontrovertible proof that a country is engaged in the illicit biological weapons research, production weaponization and stockpiling. Cuba's sophisticated denial and deception practices make our task even more difficult. That said, we have a sound basis for our judgment that Cuba has at least a limited developmental offensive biological warfare research and development effort. I am prepared to discuss the evidence we do have in a closed session or leave behind a classified statement for the record.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SEN. DODD: Thank you.

And let me just say regarding this, my concern and I think the concern of many of us is obviously as a result of 9/11 -- events even before that -- a high degree of interest in terrorism and the fact that we have now been victimized very directly by it here, how we allocate our resources, how we allocate our attention is going to be critically important. If, in fact, Cuba poses a direct threat to the United States or allies, then we need to respond to that. If they don't in that assessment, that's why the intelligence assessment is so critically important that if we're off chasing an issue here that is not substantiated by facts, then we are misallocating resources, time and attention where it could be spent in other places. And so the issue becomes very very important and if the background of how this assessment is made is also going to be very worthwhile.

I'm going to put a clock on each one of us here of 10 minutes on the first go around here, and we'll see how that works in terms of questions. Let me begin by a series of questions if I can, Mr. Ford, for you. One, has the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, which you head, recently changed its assessment with respect to Cuba's potential biological weapons capability and programs?

MR. FORD: No.

SEN. DODD: It's been the same assessment?

MR. FORD: The last time that the intelligence community did a national intelligence estimate was in 1999 and we have refined and we know a little bit more than we did then so that there has been some modification and improvement of our analysis, but no major radical or even minor change. It's basically the same judgment we made in 1999.

SEN. DODD: So the assessment by Mr. Bolton that it's unbalanced -- an unbalanced assessment in his speech that he gave before the Heritage Foundation?

MR. FORD: The history of the words on BW in that speech were, as I understand it, Secretary Bolton invited the intelligence community to provide him with some words that he could use in a speech on BW. He was very careful I think not to suggest words to the community for clearance. He asked them, what do you think? What do you say? So that they came up with the lines in the speech and presented those to I&R to take back to Secretary Bolton for his use. As I understand it, his speech was postponed. I wasn't aware of this. I had a requirement on short notice to come up and brief the committee on CW/BW worldwide.

Apparently those words that had been approved for Mr. Bolton were picked by my staff to insert in my presentation to the full committee and so that I then presented that information that had been cleared by the IC. When it came time for Mr. Bolton to give his speech a month or two later, he then took the same language that had been approved earlier by the community and stuck it into his Heritage speech. But those words were our words, the intelligence community's words, not his.

SEN. DODD: Well, when he was asked though --

MR. FORD: But the speech was his, not ours.

SEN. DODD: He characterized the 1988 report as unbalanced and underplaying the threat share posed by Cuba. You tell there was no change at all in the assessments. My first question to you. And his response in his speech by calling it unbalanced and underplaying this situation. The previous assessment. The same assessment.

MR. FORD: Right. This is not to divert the question, but I think that what Secretary Bolton intended or meant in his speech would be best asked of Secretary Bolton and, as I said --

SEN. DODD: Well, I'm just asking you as the intelligence assessment --

MR. FORD: Our assessment from 1999 to 2002 has changed little. The only thing that we would say differently is that I don't think that we would have to footnote to emphasize that it was an effort, not a program which I&R did and I think that the rest of the community now feels as strongly as we do that the evidence will support that there is a limited BW offensive development program -- effort -- but not a program. And so that the community's view has been refined. We would not longer have to make a footnote to emphasize that all of us agree that it's not a program. They would say that themselves.

SEN. DODD: I'm told by your staff that each word is selected very carefully and debated rather extensively.

MR. FORD: True.

SEN. DODD: Because each word is terribly important.

MR. FORD: That's correct. SEN. DODD: You use the word "developmental" in your testimony. Mr. Bolton specifically left the word out as well as other language. Now, is there some -- do you consider that word important?

MR. FORD: The word of course is important, but my understanding was that the words were identical but I personally have not looked at the Heritage speech. I have just simply taken it on face value that the words that we had presented to Secretary Bolton were the ones used. And I've been told that's the case. And, if that's the case, I used the exactly the same words because they were the words originally approved for Secretary Bolton to give in the speech. I just happened to give them first.

SEN. DODD: Right. Was the entire interagency intelligence community given an opportunity to review and clear your March 19 testimony?

MR. FORD: The way we normally submit for intelligence community clearance, we send for example today, we sent my testimony to the NIC, National Intelligence Council, and it's their responsibility then to ship it around to various members of the community and to come back with community approved clearance. But I was very careful in my testimony to say today I'm speaking for I&R and for Carl Ford. For CIA, for DIA, those are independent agencies and on this important subject, you should ask them directly.

Now, my sense is that they not only cleared what I said, but they also agreed with what I said. But that's something you should test for yourself by asking the various other members of the intelligence community their views.

SEN. DODD: Well, was it at your initiative that the Cuban material be included in your March 19 testimony? Or did that come from some other bureau?

MR. FORD: It was -- the requirement was to do a worldwide chemical biological warfare presentation at the unclassified level to the full committee that the chairman and others were interested in an initiative on that subject this year on the committee. So that we put together a worldwide brief. Cuba is one of the topics that it is in -- if you ask us for a worldwide brief on chemical biological weapons, Cuba would routinely and naturally appear.

SEN. DODD: Well, there was a speech given on November 19, 2001, at the Geneva meeting on specifically the subject of biological weapons and in that speech Mr. Bolton specifically left Cuba out. Do you understand why where he listed almost every other country that posed somewhat of a threat in this area, and yet Cuba was not mentioned at all in those comments at an audience gathered specifically for that subject matter. How do you explain six months at an important meeting where one might assume that the threat is as described would be mentioned whereas in a speech before a think tank here in Washington, we find an opposite disclosure? MR. FORD: Well, again I'm not trying to evade your question. It's obviously a logical and important question but it's best to ask Mr. Bolton. He was the one that gave both speeches and both presentations and he will know and can give you right from the horses mouth what his intentions were and what his thoughts were at the time.

SEN. DODD: Did you or your staff at the I&R have an opportunity to review and clear Mr. Bolton's May 6 speech before delivery?

MR. FORD: I did not personally look at the speech. Let me check and see. My staff tells me that we only looked at the intel portions of the speech.

SEN. DODD: Did your staff or you have any disagreements with the draft versions of the speech submitted for clearance by Mr. Bolton?

MR. FORD: The portions that were shown to us were ones that we had cleared through the intelligence community process earlier so that, to the best of my knowledge, since we didn't see the speech in its entirety we only saw those portions that had to do with CW or BW.

SEN. DODD: Well you were given the draft speech. Your staff was.

MR. FORD: Not to my knowledge.

SEN. DODD: Someone is saying "yes" behind you.

MR. FORD: Clarification. I misunderstood. We received the whole speech but we only commented on those portions that were from intelligence.

SEN. DODD: Right. Did you have any disagreements with the draft speech?

MR. FORD: On the intelligence side, we did not. It was a language that we had provided. And, again, the intelligence -- we don't make it a secret within our building what I&R's views are so that all of the members -- Secretary Bolton, Secretary Powell and others, all know what I&R's position on intelligence is, but it's not

our responsibility or our job to tell the policymakers what the implications of that intelligence are or what they should about particular problems in I&R.

SEN. DODD: But if you're going to get into intelligence matters and make a public speech and there are things in there that the interagency taskforce would disagree with, I presume that point would be made.

MR. FORD: That point would be made. SEN. DODD: Was the entire interagency intelligence community given the opportunity to review and clear the full content of Mr. Bolton's May 6 Heritage Foundation speech.

MR. FORD: I don't know.

SEN. DODD: Want to check with their people? You want to ask?

MR. FORD: I'm sorry?

SEN. DODD: Want to ask your people?

MR. FORD: I don't think they would know either. I'll take the question.

SEN. DODD: Well, who would be responsible for ensuring that interagency clearance is requested and received?

MR. FORD: The normal process is that if you have a speech that you want cleared with the intelligence community, you bring that to I&R. I&R sends it to the National Intelligence Council. The National Intelligence Council then clears it through the rest of the community. And when we get it back, it has the stamp of approval from the intelligence community. In this particular case, the speech itself was not a matter of intelligence community responsibility and so the only things that were cleared or focused on were those parts that contain sources and methods and and/or that reported to be the intelligence community's view.

SEN. DODD: Let me ask you one additional question. My time is up. Just to wrap up this line of questioning. It was not until March obviously until your testimony here on March 19 that the administration publicly commented on this specific issue. What factors influenced the decision to address this issue publicly? Did any administration officials in the State Department, other than those in the Bureau of I&R or in any other governmental agencies discuss with you the inclusion of the Cuba matter in your March 19 public testimony?

MR. FORD: No, sir, they did not.

SEN. DODD: Senator Chafee.

SEN. CHAFEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Is there any evidence in the past number of years or decades of the Cuban military using any biological weapons in any of their adventures around the world, whether it's Angola or anywhere else?

MR. FORD: Senator Chafee, I would prefer when we start talking about what I know -- beyond my unclassified statement, I would prefer to take that question in closed session, if you don't mind. SEN.

CHAFEE: Very good. And can you answer how quickly and easily a biomedical project can be converted into a bioweapons project?

MR. FORD: Senator, it's one of the great difficulties for intelligence analysts is that most of the procedures for building an offensive biological warfare capability are -- if you have the capability to do the civilian research on vaccines and various other pathogens, that it is a simple matter to turn that into a -- at least a limited offensive capability. We have difficulty even trying to determine where all this work would be done. It doesn't require a large building, it doesn't require a lot of special facilities. If you have the facilities to do medical biotechnological research, you have the facilities to build a biological weapon, unfortunately.

SEN. CHAFEE: I think one of the reasons we're having this hearing is that there's a perception that that speech to the Heritage Foundation was counter to administration policy. It went too far, and certainly there seems to be a lot of spin control going on. Even right after the speech the Secretary of Defense is putting a different look on it. Major General Speer, commander of the Southern Command, is putting another look at it, at the words that Secretary Bolton used. And here we're even splitting hairs between whether it's an effort or a program. Is that accurate? It's an effort, it's not a program? I don't know the difference, they seem the same to me. And so I guess the main point is that the State Department has a responsibility to have a unified position and to make sure that everybody is not saying things to one group that they're not saying to another. Do you agree with my assessment of the situation here this morning?

MR. FORD: I would take some exception to the characterization that there's not much difference between a program and an effort. There really is a difference. We've never tried to suggest that we have the evidence, the smoking gun to prove proof positive that they had a program. A program suggests to us something far more substantial than what we see in the evidence. But we feel very confident about saying that there is -- they're working on an effort that would give them a limited BW offensive capability. And that's serious enough for us to tell you about it. If we didn't think it was important, if we didn't think that that was a dangerous thing to occur, we would have looked at the evidence and said that this is all bogus and there's nothing here worth reporting. I wouldn't have given it in my March 16 speech, I wouldn't be back here today telling you they have a limited offensive BW capability if I didn't think that was a pretty important thing for you to know.

SEN. CHAFEE: I guess my follow up question would be then why would the Secretary of Defense, of all people, not be concerned that there's an effort 90 miles away from our borders? I mean, he said "I haven't seen the intelligence" the day after Secretary Bolton's speech.

MR. FORD: Again, as an alumni of the Foreign Relations Committee staff, one of the things I did learn - - not a lot of things, but I learned something -- is don't answer questions like that. I mean --

(Laughter.)

The fact is that I'll let the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense and all those people speak for themselves, and I'm not going to characterize or explain what the chairman meant by a certain comment. I understand your question and I understand the concerns, but all I can give you is my best assessment. As the secretary -- my only instruction from the secretary is to tell the truth and that's what I'm doing and so that I can give you our best judgment on what we think is happening in Cuba on BW. I have a sense of where the community is on this issue and there is really no difference between us. But if you want to test that, I would --

rather than take my word for it, I would suggest that you have CIA and DIA and others come up and tell you directly in their testimony.

SEN. CHAFEE: Thank you very much.

MR. FORD: Thank you, Senator.

SEN. DODD: We've been joined by Carl Levin of the Armed Services Committee. And, Carl, we'll get to you in a minute, but I want to stick if I can with a committee member.

Senator Allen.

SEN. ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Just so that I get a few facts straight here. The young woman had a chart that was up that shows your statement, Mr. Ford, on March 19, 2002, before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and then this supposedly controversial statement by Under Secretary of State John Bolton at the Heritage Foundation on May 6, 2002. If you could, is that -- on the top is your testimony. Is that an accurate transcription of your testimony?

MR. FORD: Yes, sir, it appears to be.

SEN. ALLEN: Okay, and under that is the May 6 statement at the Heritage Foundation by Mr. Bolton, and I can ask you if that's -- that's how it's been reported.

MR. FORD: But it was my understanding that this was correct. This is what I had been told: that both of our statements were identical.

SEN. ALLEN: You both used the term that -- you both used the phrase that Cuba has at least a limited developmental offensive biological warfare research and development effort, right? SEN. DODD: That's incorrect. I've got the text of the speech here, if you want to read it. The direct line is, "The United States believes Cuba has a limited offensive biological warfare research and development effort." The developmental you got was not in the speech.

SEN. ALLEN: Well, that's yours. The evidence I have -- I guess we ought to get a transcript of -- if there is a court reporter at the Heritage Foundation. All right. Well, it seems to be substantially the same. Now, let me ask you this: did you both state that Cuba has provided dual use biotechnology to rogue states?

MR. FORD: Yes.

SEN. ALLEN: And did you both state that "We are concerned that such technology could support BW, or biological warfare programs, in those states"?

MR. FORD: I said that, yes.

SEN. ALLEN: Right. This is where I think the main concern, at least my main concern is, is that according to the National Intelligence Council, Iran maintains a significant chemical and biological weapons

program and will continue to develop and expand its CBW, or chemical and biological warfare, programs. Now, Iran is on the State Department's designated state sponsors of terrorism list. Is that correct?

MR. FORD: That's correct.

SEN. ALLEN: And does the United States government believe that Cuba's assistance to Iran is simply helping Tehran's public health program? Or do we know, if you can state in open hearing?

MR. FORD: We don't know, but I would like to expand my answer in closed session if I might.

SEN. ALLEN: Fair enough. Well, should we -- or can we assume that the transfer of sophisticated biotechnology, which has a dual use, from Cuba to rogue states is for a benign purpose? Can we make any assumption or can you answer that?

MR. FORD: I certainly wouldn't make that assumption myself, and I wouldn't see it only as a one-way street that the sharing of chemical, biological and even nuclear weapons technology is a concern of mine and I think the intelligence community. So that while I'm concerned about what Cuba and its biotechnological capability may be providing other countries like Iran, I'm also concerned about their associations with countries that also have a chemical or biological warfare capability and there can be an exchange of ideas, exchange of capabilities and, again, is part of the process of showing an interest and watching very carefully what they're up to in Iran and Iraq, Syria, Libya, wherever else they may be talking to people. SEN. ALLEN: Without getting into the names of countries which we had in the top secret briefing yesterday afternoon, we do have different levels of concern or levels of -- and understanding of the levels of capabilities of different countries in the world in their capacity, whether they're programs or efforts to produce biological or chemical weapons. Isn't that correct?

MR. FORD: That's correct.

SEN. ALLEN: And while Cuba may not be as high in their capabilities as other countries, there is clear evidence that they are transferring at least dual use biotechnology that could be used, could potentially be used in biological or chemical weapons to countries that do have a greater capacity than even Cuba does. That's --

MR. FORD: That's --

SEN. ALLEN: I'm following yours, but I'm trying to be more specific.

MR. FORD: That's correct, Senator. And just so that you understand what I've said, is that -- although we'd make a distinction between a program and an effort, it's not to suggest that an effort can't hurt you. A program, in our minds, is really -- the standard that we're using to compare is the Soviet Union during the Cold War, the Russians, and what sort of program they had which include test facilities, weapons development, weapons production, the weaponization process in its sort of entirety.

If you look at what we see going on in Cuba, we don't see that sort of thing. But the fact is that with BW you don't have to put it in a 130 millimeter Howitzer shell and deliver it -- or deliver it by a rocket for it to be dangerous. Unfortunately, it's the sort of thing that can be carried by individuals and brought here in an unconventional way. So an effort, no matter how small or how suspicious -- how much evidence we have, it's

still something for us in the intelligence community to worry about and report to you as something you ought to know about.

SEN. ALLEN: Now, as you know, Cuba is a signatory -- and thank you for that comment and insight. Cuba is a signatory to the Biological Weapons Convention and if you stand behind your statement of March 19, which you say you have, that Cuba has at least a limited developmental offensive biological warfare research and development effort, then wouldn't Cuba be in violation of the BWC?

MR. FORD: A very good question, Senator. It was one of the reasons that when I had a choice, I chose to be an intelligence officer rather than a policy official in this administration. I simply report to the policy people what I think is happening in Cuba or Iran or in North Korea, or wherever, and it's up to the people who are in the verification and monitoring and arms control business to determine whether or not it's a violation of an arms control agreement, international or multilateral, bilateral, whatever it might be. And while I have a superficial and general knowledge of these arms control agreements, I would be entirely the wrong person to make that judgment without further study. It's not normally my job and so I don't really look at it that closely. I won't have any more to say in closed session either.

SEN. DODD: Carl, you took on a strong policy position on March 19. That wasn't just intelligence on the Senator's question. You called on Cuba to cease all biological cooperation with rogue states and fully comply. Now, that implies that you've got a full awareness of what the treaty is. That's not an intelligence there, that's a policy statement.

MR. FORD: It also suggests that I'm not perfect. If you've noticed that in my testimony today that I looked at it much more carefully than I did the Cuba part on my March 16 statement, which had to be done very quickly. I have been very careful to state what I&R's position is on the intelligence and I've dropped off that last sentence. I did say it on the 16th, you're right. If I had to say it again today I wouldn't, because it is a policy issue and I simply was -- what happened, without my really knowing it -- I should have known, I should have focused on it, was those words were approved for Secretary Bolton in a speech and I simply stole them from him in haste, to put them in a broader speech. And I should have caught it, didn't and I uttered those policy statements, as you correctly point out.

SEN. DODD: Sorry, George.

SEN. ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Reclaiming whatever the few moments I have.

You were not chastised by anyone for that last sentence, were you?

MR. FORD: No.

SEN. ALLEN: All right.

MR. FORD: I chastised myself because it was my rule that I broke, not yours.

SEN. ALLEN: Fine. In all of this, I want to say to the chairman, for a matter of -- I think your statement is accurate and I don't think you have any worry about it. I know people thrive on process around here, and that's important I suppose. The substance is what I care about and the truthfulness of both those assertions are what is most important. Senator Dodd, you are correct and I stand corrected. The word developmental

was not in Bolton's speech. But as far as all of the statements about concern for technology, supporting BW programs in other states and transferring it and the dual use, it's all correct. But I just want to say for the record that word developmental in the first sentence wasn't there, but all the rest of the concerns are the same. I want to clarify that. I'm sorry for having made an incorrect assertion.

SEN. DODD: Not at all.

SEN. ALLEN: Let me ask you this, if you could answer, Secretary Ford. There are many states who have -- many countries that have biotechnology and pharmaceutical industries that are sophisticated. Why would states such as Iran go to Cuba for biotechnology equipment, and not purchase more advanced technologies from those available elsewhere and despite the economic incentives to do so? Isn't it true that European countries control the sales of dual use biotechnologies to rogue states such as Iran, because they recognize the nefarious intentions or potential intentions of such countries as Iran?

MR. FORD: It's my understanding that countries in Europe and the United States, we all very carefully try to monitor the most egregious dual use capable sorts of biomedical equipment and do put limits on it. To suggest that we're perfect at that or that it's effective, unless there is a total boycott, sanctions against a country, I'm sure that there are certainly ways for Iran to buy it in other parts of the world. But it does suggest that from a country like Cuba they would have fewer restrictions, I would think, and it would be easier for countries like Iran to get some of the things that they want and may turn to Cuba to do that. Cuba has clearly decided that it's a very important money maker for them and so that they are prepared to sell this equipment to anybody who wants to buy it, including Iran and Syria and Libya and Iraq and other states that we have concerns about.

SEN. ALLEN: Well, that is my concern, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, is what -- even if Cuba were innocently thinking that they're just making money because they're a generally impoverished country and they're making money, what are those others going to do with it? I would like to simply close by, if I could, ask that the following attached documents be entered into the record. One is a brief history of concerns and questions and suspicions about Cuba's biological weapons program. Secondly is excerpts from Biohazard, the chilling true story of the largest covert biological weapons program in the world by Ken Alibek, who I referenced earlier. And then an article by Maria Wurlowe (sp) "Does Cuba Have Biochemical Weapons?" And I'd like to --

SEN. DODD: Without objection, so ordered. And before I turn --

SEN. ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. SEN. DODD: Thank you, Senator. Before I turn to Senator Levin, I just want to come back. In reading the speech that Mr. Bolton gave, and this is -- because he was on some paragraph.

This one paragraph was yours, but your staff said they read the whole speech and had the whole speech and looked at it. And so he asked the question here, "Why was the '98 report on Cuba so unbalanced?" And I'm quoting the speech here. My first question to you was: has there been any change in the assessment on Cuba? Your answer was, no, substantially not.

MR. FORD: No, there has not.

SEN. DODD: So is that statement unbalanced? Is that an inaccurate statement based on I&R's assessment?

MR. FORD: I &R's position is that, as I have stated and that I will elaborate on later, but how people characterize that is not my call. They can -- we're just --

SEN. DODD: Well, if you're getting a speech to look at and you see where someone's about to make administration -- make a characterization that the work of your agency only three years earlier was unbalanced --

MR. FORD: It wouldn't be the first time that someone took a shot at the intelligence community. I mean, it's not our responsibility to put words into mouths of policymakers.

SEN. DODD: Did you raise then and raise any objections to that word being used even though you understand the policy. But I mean but I've told someone to say something about my office and said that's incorrect. It's not -- if you feel that's incorrect. I presume that you feel that's incorrect. Is that right?

MR. FORD: It certainly is not I&R's position.

SEN. DODD: Good. Okay. Well, when you look at the whole speech, you know it seems to me that you've paragraph after paragraph here. You know, we went through a period back in the eighties when we had a lot of assessments about the Soviet Union. It turned out to be terribly wrong and you know in terms of their capabilities, economically and otherwise. My concern is here look if Cuba's got this stuff, I want to know it. Want to deal with it immediately. And if they don't, we don't want to raise specters here that divert attention, resources and the like when they ought to be going elsewhere. That's my concern.

And so, when you get a speech like this when I have I&R disagreeing -- I understand you agree with certain pieces here, but there is a lot of rhetoric around this made by a very high ranking administration official that has had to be corrected. As Senator Chafee's pointed out by various people trying to spin this correctly, that worries me and concerns me as we're trying to make decisions both in the administration of the Congress about how to allocate resources, time and attention. So that's the reason I raised that.

Senator Levin.

SEN. CARL LEVIN (D-MI): Thank you. And thank you, Mr. Chairman and our colleagues, for allowing me to --

SEN. DODD: Not at all.

SEN. LEVIN: -- join you here for a few minutes here just to ask a few questions. Your prepared remarks indicate the difficulty in differentiating between legitimate biomedical technology and illicit offensive biological warfare technology because the technology is essentially identical. Is that correct?

MR. FORD: That's correct, Senator.

SEN. LEVIN: So that's where we get into the dual use issue. How many countries other than Cuba are supplying dual use biomedical technology to these states such as Iran? Do we have some pretty good allies that are doing the same thing?

MR. FORD: I don't know, Senator. And I have to take the question and get back to you. I don't normally -- I just don't have that in my notes or --

SEN. LEVIN: Can you find out how many of our NATO allies are supplying technology to Iran of the same type?

MR. FORD: Yes, sir.

SEN. LEVIN: Would it surprise you to find out that some are?

MR. FORD: No.

SEN. LEVIN: Have we protested that to them?

MR. FORD: I don't know.

SEN. LEVIN: Can you find that out for us?

MR. FORD: Yes. SEN. LEVIN: The use of the words "has an effort" is an unusual construction of the English language. Now, you've said there's a distinction between effort and program this morning.

MR. FORD: That's correct.

SEN. LEVIN: Usually when you are making an effort, you are making an effort. You don't have an effort usually. And it's suggested there was a different construction when this was first drafted and then the word "program" was changed to "effort." Is that correct?

MR. FORD: No, sir.

SEN. LEVIN: So this was always structured as "has an effort." It was never "making an effort?"

MR. FORD: Well, the history has been told to me. I didn't live it, so I can only give you my version of it. But my understanding is that the issue of whether it was a program or an effort goes back at least to the 1999 national intelligence estimate and that at least the distinction that we make is that a program has certain classic signatures that we developed in the intelligence community from looking at the Soviet Union and Russian CW/BW programs and it has certain components and that that is called a program because it has a multifaceted mini-components to it that are all designed to create military weapons that can be delivered by conventional military forces, artillery units, air forces et cetera.

An effort, in our minds, is the research and development necessary to create BW weapons in the laboratory that can be delivered in conventional means by putting into a weapon that may have already been built and you've bought from Russia for conventional purposes or more likely delivered in some

unconventional way. And that it stops short of being a full fledged 100 percent major program to develop a stockpile of hundreds, thousands of biological weapons.

SEN. LEVIN: I think you've been asked, but if so forgive me for asking this again, but there was a newspaper account in the Washington Times of May 7 that stated that a senior administration official said Washington has gathered broad and deep evidence of Cuba's pursuit of biological weapons. Have we?

MR. FORD: I've characterized I&R's position, which I think also reflects the community, that we believe that the evidence -- our judgment is that the evidence supports a limited development offensive BW capability.

SEN. LEVIN: Is it broad and deep evidence of the pursuit of biological weapons -- the focus on the word "weapons?"

MR. FORD: Clearly we're suggesting that Cuba is working on biological weapons. SEN. LEVIN: And that we have broad and deep evidence of their pursuit of weapons? Is that a fair characterization?

MR. FORD: I was not the senior administration official that the Times was talking about.

SEN. LEVIN: Your judgment.

Is that a fair characterization?

MR. FORD: It was no one on my staff. I would not have characterized it as broad and deep. I would say that there is substantial information about Cuba's BW program.

SEN. LEVIN: All right. Do you know who issued that statement?

MR. FORD: No.

SEN. LEVIN: It does not reflect, however, in your judgment your finding? Your characterization.

MR. FORD: I didn't say it. I would characterize it slightly different.

SEN. LEVIN: And have you attempted to find out who mischaracterized it?

MR. FORD: No. I have asked the question myself and wondered who that was but I haven't -- no one has admitted it to me.

SEN. LEVIN: But you have sought to find out. Is that it?

MR. FORD: Like anybody, I've followed this and I've asked the question, I wonder who said that?

SEN. LEVIN: Why?

MR. FORD: Well, I just thought it was interesting. Clearly the committee here thought it was interesting and I've certainly got more questions about Cuba BW in the last month or so than I ever realized that you could ask, quite frankly.

SEN. LEVIN: You then will submit to the committee, I believe, if I'm allowed to ask that, Mr. Chairman. I think I can't ask that so I have to ask you whether or not it would be all right if we ask our witness to submit those two lists to the committee that I suggested.

SEN. DODD: Yes. Make that a --

MR. FORD: Be happy to, Senator. I'm not sure how long it will take us. It may already be prepared and I'll just go ask somebody to give it to me or it may be we'll have to do a little bit of work, but we'll put it together for you.

SEN. LEVIN: Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SEN. DODD: Let me -- that Miami Herald story which, I think that was the same article in which the words "broad and deep" --

SEN. LEVIN: May not have been, though maybe.

SEN. DODD: Well, there's another Miami Herald -- that was the Washington Times -- Miami Herald of October of last year contained a story claiming that Cuba has sold to Iran production technology for a recombinant hepatitis B vaccine, Interferon used for treatment for viral diseases and some forms of cancer, and a variety of other things used for heart attacks, stroke. The story was based on the 1999 -- and this was a public story, so I'm not asking about any classified information. But a 1999 Cuban defector, Dr. Jose Delafuente, who formerly directed Cuba's center for genetic engineering in biotechnology. He oversaw the work of 350 scientists in what would be their major, I gather, research facility in the area of biotechnology. Are you familiar with this individual?

MR. FORD: Yes.

SEN. DODD: Dr. Delafuente, a defector, told the Miami Herald that -- I quote him, he had "no reason to believe that Cuba's sale of technology to Iran was malicious, although the outcome could be," end of quote. Isn't it virtually impossible to deny a country access to dual use technology in the BW area?

MR. FORD: Extremely -- extraordinarily difficult.

SEN. DODD: In other words, are almost all commercial technologies in the pharmaceutical area adaptable to BW purposes as well?

MR. FORD: Yes.

SEN. DODD: Is Cuba going -- that's the only country which has -- well, you've answered you don't that, but you're not going to be surprised if -- in fact, you will state as a matter of record there are other countries, allies of ours, who do sell dual use technology in the pharmaceutical area to Iran and other rogue states.

MR. FORD: It certainly wouldn't surprise me, I just don't know it for a fact.

SEN. DODD: What dual use technology has Cuba sold or otherwise made available to rogue states? Which ones? What are the countries that have made -- we don't bother that question. And would anything they sell in this area be automatically classified as dual use? MR. FORD: What I can say about this -- I do touch on this subject briefly in my classified presentation and if you don't mind -- I'm not trying to avoid the question, but it would really be better for me to answer this in the closed session.

SEN. DODD: But let me just -- and, again, I don't want to draw you into policy. But it seems to me if in fact what you said is true, and I believe it to be the case, it is very difficult in the pharmaceutical area and dual use technology to be able to characterize it as strictly BW and not BW because of the potential use of it, the capabilities. It seems to me if that's the case, then it would make more sense for the United States to deny Iran, Syria and other rogue states access to vaccine production technology, whether it's from Cuba, France or any other country. That, it seems to me, ought to be where the effort ought to be if in fact they're getting it from so many different sources. Do you agree with that?

MR. FORD: Well, again, as you suggest, that's -- I obviously have a personal view and a sense of -- for policy, but that's really not my field. Of course, I think that we should try to do what we can to ensure that rogue states like Iran don't get nuclear, chemical or biological technologies, dual use or otherwise, from -- not only from Cuba but from any of our friends, allies, other rogue states. But I admitted upfront that it's very, very difficult and it's -- in fact, in measuring things it's much easier to deal with the nuclear problem than it is the biological weapons problem, because there's a difference in scale, difference in evidence, difference in requirements. And so that BW is probably the most difficult for us to deal with.

SEN. DODD: Dealing with the Carter visit, were you aware that President Carter was going to be making a visit to Cuba?

MR. FORD: I was aware that he was going to Cuba. I'd read it in the newspapers or heard it on TV.

SEN. DODD: Were you aware about the time that the Bolton speech was cleared by your agency -- or your department?

MR. FORD: I didn't -- frankly, I didn't know that Secretary Bolton's speech was scheduled, or when it was going to be. I --

SEN. DODD: It didn't raise any concerns in your mind that this may have been a speech given in response to the upcoming visit of a former president?

MR. FORD: I didn't make the connection. I could understand why others might. But I simply was focused on another problem during that period of time, and I really didn't pay much attention to either the speech or, unfortunately, President Carter's trip to Cuba.

SEN. DODD: Did you participate in President Carter's intelligence briefings prior to his recent visit to Cuba? MR. FORD: No, Mr. Chairman, I did not. I understand he received one, but it was from CIA or somebody. It wasn't from myself or my staff.

SEN. DODD: So you're not aware whether or not he was briefed about BW programs in Cuba?

MR. FORD: I don't know.

SEN. DODD: Is any of our information about Cuba's BW capability or its programs based on Cuban scientists who actually have worked in the programs?

MR. FORD: All of our information is indirect.

SEN. DODD: So the answer is no?

MR. FORD: No.

SEN. DODD: And there have been a number of defectors to come out of Cuba from the scientific community.

MR. FORD: That's correct.

SEN. DODD: But none of the information on which we base this conclusion is drawn from those sources?

MR. FORD: Of course, we look at all the information available to us: scientists, intelligence officers, emigres of various sorts from Cuba. And these people have talked at various times and in various levels of detail about a limited offensive BW capability. That's why we came up -- I mean, we didn't just pull it out of the air.

SEN. DODD: But none of them had any direct --

MR. FORD: None of them had direct evidence.

SEN. DODD: Except Dr. Delafuente.

MR. FORD: Again, we're getting to an area where for me to explain my reasoning and rationale, I really need to talk about the whole range of information.

SEN. DODD: No, I understand. But my point is he was -- he directed the biotechnology programs in Cuba, oversaw 350 scientists. He was asked whether or not there's any information, if there was a malicious intent behind the export of dual technology to Iran and he said none. Now, the capability is there, he quickly added. But there is one person who did have a direct knowledge, because of his role, a defector, and says no. But no one else in the scientific community who will give us direct evidence to contradict his statement. Is that correct?

MR. FORD: Again, let me talk about the whole subject more in closed session. But I won't -- I'm not suggesting that your characterization is incorrect, or that you are not making a valid point.

SEN. DODD: On the treaty violations -- again, ... that statement. You've already said, well, we'll bring that up with others along the way. It gets a little complicated. There's an Australian group and other things that make this a little more difficult question.

MR. FORD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SEN. DODD: I thought you might appreciate that. Secretary Powell has stated that -- and I'm quoting him -- "Cuba has a biological offensive research capability." Although the secretary also stated, and I quote him, "We didn't say that it actually had such weapons, but it has the capacity and the capability to conduct such research." Under Secretary Bolton and yourself have both stated that Cuba has, quote, "limited offensive biological research developmental effort." I wonder if you could help us understand what constitutes a capability. We're getting down to words and I don't want to get so bogged down in the minutia, but these are pretty important conclusions and obviously you're going to hear a lot about it, we have heard a lot about it here. For example, what kind of laboratories, reagents, agent cultures, equipment, bio-containment facilities must a country possess in order to have such a capability, but not necessarily a program? And how would these facilities differ from those needed to support a pharmaceutical R&D company, or a university medical school specializing in tropical diseases, for example?

MR. FORD: Cuba has, in our judgment, the trained personnel, medical and scientific, the knowledge of - as supported by their research into various diseases, both human and animal. They have the research facilities, including bio-containment facilities. They have everything you need to build an offensive biological weapon. They don't need anything else. The difference between that and a program is an arbitrary intelligence community judgment that to have a program, you need to be able to have a factory that tests the weapon, that puts the weapon in a bomb or a shell and/or does research and development on that sort of weapons program, and has a unit within the military specifically designated for a weapons capability. That whole process of BW warfare is called a program. One, we don't see that in Cuba, we don't identify it having a program, but it has everything else in order to build the bug that could be used against persons, livestock or crops. SEN. DODD: I've got a major production facility in my state, the Pfizer Corporation in Groton, Connecticut. Eight hundred scientists are there. Research facility, a fantastic one. Are you suggesting to me that -- I mean, obviously there's -- what exists there, because it is a great laboratory and research facility, and production facility as well, that that's a capability because they're able to produce Viagra? Picking a drug out of the air here. That they may be -- that capability --

MR. FORD: I know that's not personal.

SEN. DODD: That capability -- no one is suggesting, Carl.

MR. FORD: What I --

SEN. DODD: You don't need to defend yourself.

MR. FORD: I clearly don't think --

SEN. DODD: You know what I'm getting at here.

MR. FORD: I understand.

SEN. DODD: See, what my point is, that that capability -- that's a capability. Does that capability to produce one pharmaceutical product with all the scientists and so forth, is that the analogy we're making here? And is there evidence that the Cuban pharmaceutical industry, biotechnology industry, is aggressively pursuing production of products that are non-BW in areas to deal with animal husbandry issues, crop issues,

human illness? Or is there an absence of that that would then heighten the degree of concern about a capability that doesn't seem to be doing anything else, unlike Pfizer's?

MR. FORD: I always suspected that the people in Connecticut probably didn't like me very much. But beyond that, I assume that -- you're right. We're really talking about -- there is the capability at medical biological research facilities in the United States. They have a capability for BW. And I would point to the fact that we're not quite sure -- in fact, as I read the newspapers and talk to my colleagues, we all suspect that the anthrax that was used here in the United States, even against the Senate, could very well have been produced right here in the United States. So clearly that capability is there. The difference between what goes on here in the United States and what we see in Cuba is that they have -- clearly have a capability, and we have seen them working with bad things that could make biological weapons, and they don't like us. They may have good reason for that. You know, that's a different call. But the fact is that they are worried about the United States. They are afraid that we are going to use a weapon of mass destruction, biological they've argued, or more likely in their minds probably some sort of nuclear weapon, and that that gives them cause -- that gives them a reason why they might want to use this capability to use a weapon. SEN. DODD: Would they have any justification for that? Have we ever had any plans to use --

MR. FORD: I think they have -- you know, obviously I see it from -- Americanized. I don't think they have any justification at all.

SEN. DODD: Have we ever had any plans to --

MR. FORD: And I think it's a terrible mistake if that's what they in fact believe.

SEN. DODD: Have we ever had any plans to use biological weapons against Cuba?

MR. FORD: I personally don't know. I hope to God we didn't, but you know I can't speak for what happened back in the '50s and '60s and stuff. I don't know.

SEN. DODD: But the fact is they don't like us. We don't like them. That's a major factor in the conclusion?

MR. FORD: Certainly in my conclusion that -- I'm not particularly worried about the medical facilities and capability for BW in Connecticut or London or even Paris.

SEN. DODD: Unless there's someone who doesn't like us.

MR. FORD: But I am worried about it in Iran, in Iraq, North Korea and Cuba.

SEN. DODD: Yes, I agree.

MR. FORD: But to say that it wasn't a factor in my thinking that the position between -- or the feelings between Cuba and the United States would be -- it obviously is a factor in my assessment.

SEN. DODD: Senator Chafee.

SEN. CHAFEE: Thank you.

I'd like to just follow up on "they don't like us" and I guess that's the root of my dispute over this whole issue. And it's no different from -- you could say that the Russians didn't like us, but look at what we have accomplished in a detente and a conciliation. You can say the North Vietnamese didn't like us, but look at what's happening between these two countries now. Though the Chinese didn't like us back in the Korean War, but look at what's happening. And why isn't there more of an effort here with Cuba, 90 miles away, to bridge across and to maybe assume that they do like us, instead of assuming they're aggressive. And it's no different as to whether Canada is capable of having biological weapons, they're our allies. And I do think I maybe can dispute this, that the signals coming from that island 90 miles south of us are positive and that things are changing. Their ally the Soviet Union is now our ally. Visitors are pouring in, whether Canadian, Swiss, Swedes, Americans and the olive branch is being extended. Why isn't the rhetoric reflecting that from the State Department?

MR. FORD: Well, as I suggested earlier, those questions are legitimate, important questions, but those should be directed at Secretary Powell or others at State Department who are responsible for developing our policy on Cuba. What I can say is that we in I&R are telling the secretary, and we believe, that Cuba has a limited development offensive BW effort.

SEN. DODD: We've been joined by Senator Nelson. I apologize, I didn't see him walk in the room.

Bill, welcome.

SEN. BILL NELSON (D-FL): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'm curious about your statement BW capability with regard to crops. Could you expand on that?

MR. FORD: I will try. I would be the first to admit that I'm not a biotechnical expert. I wouldn't know a biological weapon if I stumbled over one, so I -- within those restrictions I will say that, as I have been told, that the research and capabilities of Cuba include work on various biological agents, pathogens, that could be effective against both people, livestock and crops. And I had taken that as a pretty fundamental basis of biological weapons so I didn't question it. I didn't ask them which crops. I'm assuming they're talking about those close by that you know well, that -- both the cattle industry and the fruits and vegetables in Florida would be clearly, at least on my list of things to be worried about.

Now, I think that -- I don't want to give you the impression that we are suggesting to the secretary or anybody else that there is a person with a satchel on his way to Dade County or to Saint Pete with a bag of biological weapons. Indeed, we think that if you want to talk about intentions, that it is has to do with their fear of the United States and wanting to have a deterrent, wanting to have something in their capability that they could strike back at us. I certainly see no indications that there is a first strike capability or effort to attack the United States. It's simply an effort that would give them a capability if at some point in the future they thought important to attack using a biological weapon. I think that would be a huge mistake for any country to attack the United States with such a weapon, but that's the future and I can't read all of the -- I don't have a crystal ball.

SEN. NELSON: So you see their weapons capability as more defensive in their planning, as opposed to offensive? MR. FORD: They have an offensive capability, but I think that they see -- the Cubans see it as a

deterrent, not as something that they are -- have decided in a back room in Havana that they're going to use against the United States tomorrow, next week, next year, five years from now.

SEN. NELSON: And that being your conclusion, perhaps -- Mr. Chairman, you might have already asked this. Perhaps in detail you went into this, or perhaps this is for the closed session, about the potential of exporting those particular BW agents to other countries. Have you gotten into that?

SEN. DODD: We've talked a lot about it. Senator Allen has talked a lot about it, we have as well. But if you -- it's a big subject, so don't hesitate. I'm sure Carl won't mind answering.

SEN. NELSON: Given the nature of your last answer that they -- in your opinion that you seem to be of the opinion that their BW elements are more constructed in a defensive nature than offensive nature. Well, how does that work into whether or not they would be exporting and do we have any evidence of exports to other countries?

MR. FORD: We are concerned about the pattern of trade activities that Cuba has maintained in their biomedical, biotechnical equipment use so that many of the things that they sell and trade with other countries have a dual use capability. A number of the countries that Cuba deals with are considered adversaries or potential adversaries of the United States and obviously we're concerned about that technology, whether it's dual use or not, being transferred to those countries.

SEN. NELSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SEN. DODD: I think it's time to go into a closed session. Do you have something else, Senator, you wanted to raise?

SEN. ALLEN: Yes, if I may. Just a few points. As far as Cuba a few questions here and also Cuba's past use potentially, or just get your view on the possible past use of chemical and biological weapons by Cubans and get clear what former President Jimmy Carter's assertion was, whether you agree or disagree with it.

Back in 1988 columnists Robert Novak and Roland Evans revealed that the Soviet Union was of course, back in '88, was still in existence. They were supplying Cuban troops who were fighting in Angola. The United States and South African were supporting Jonas Savimbi, the UNITA group, and they cited evidence scrupulously documented by the senior United Nations consultant on chemical warfare, Dr. Oban Hendriks (sp) of Belgium and toxicologist, certified that residue from chemical weapons including sarin was found in the areas of recent action. When questioned then by Senator Dennis DeConcini about the rumors, Dr. Hendriks replied quote "there is not doubt any more that the Cubans were using nerve gases against troops of Mr. Jonas Savimbi." The columnists also went on to say how Hendriks had warned the United States that if Soviet/Cuban managers in Angola used gas in the past, they could in the future.

More evidence also is in 1998 from South Africa where Wouter Basson, former head of South Africa's covert chemical weapons program, had given a sworn statement implicating Cuba. He said South Africa was forced to begin its chemical weapons program after Cuba had used chemical warfare on South African troops fighting in Angola, South Africa. This is before they became a free country for all people.

But nevertheless were fighting on the side of the United State with Savimbi and they felt that their troops were defenseless and unprepared for it. Can you confirm or deny those assertions as far as the Cubans' efforts in the Angola war back in the late eighties?

MR. FORD: I don't have any personal knowledge of those events. It doesn't mean that they're true, false, don't know. If you don't mind, Senator, I will -- it's an important question. I will take it and find out and report back to you what the intelligence community thinks about those reports. I'd point out that they are talking about chemical weapons, not biological weapons and our judgments are slightly different. I mean chemical weapons are somewhat easier to deal with in terms of knowing whether or not they're there or not. Biological weapons are just much more difficult to deal with.

SEN. DODD: But do we have any evidence that there are chemical weapons in Cuba?

MR. FORD: No.

SEN. ALLEN: Well, some of the concerns that, as far as the transfers, say to Iran, are chemical and biological weapons. Granted they may be different obviously in their properties but many times are associated together for logical reasons and they have --

MR. FORD: But let me -- particularly since I'm on an unclassified level -- before I misspeak let me just make sure and double check both your question and my response to Senator Dodd to make sure that I'm accurate and complete on the chemical as well as what happened in Africa and what we think happened in Africa.

SEN. ALLEN: I appreciate that. Finally, on -- then let me put -- since we're unclear whether Under Secretary Bolton used the word "development" twice in one sentence or "developmental", let me quote from washingtonpost.com, May 14, 2002 on former President Carter's statements in Cuba. And this is what it says, quote "I asked them" -- regarding State Department people "I asked them specifically 'Is there any evidence that Cuba has been involved in sharing any information to any other country on Earth that could be used for terrorist purposes?'" Carter said, end quote. And the answer -- this is President Carter's comments, "And the answer from our experts on intelligence was 'No'." Now, is that an accurate statement on the part of former President Carter that our experts on intelligence say, no, there is no evidence about Cubans sharing information with any other country on Earth that can be used for terrorist purposes?

MR. FORD: As I indicated earlier, senator, I don't have any personal knowledge of what CIA or someone else may have briefed President Carter on. So I can't speak to that.

SEN. ALLEN: Let's assume you are -- let's stipulate you are not in the room. You did not brief him. He did not ask you questions or anyone else.

MR. FORD: If he had asked me the question I would one: make the clear distinction between terrorism and any questions he may have about Cuban BW effort -- capabilities. On terrorism, there are a number of groups and individuals that are terrorists, that are resident in and/or travel frequently to Cuba. That's a fact. They are sort of the who's who of various terrorist groups in Latin America and also other parts of the world. Do I have extensive knowledge that the Cuban government is directly supporting terrorist activities against the United States or in other parts of the world, I can't go that far.

SEN. ALLEN: Well, former President Carter said that it is no. In fact, says that the United States, this was at their biotechnology facility, the United States had no proof Cuba shared bioweapons data.

MR. FORD: See, I would make the distinction between the questions about terrorism and the questions about BW. My sense is that I'm worried, and my statement suggests my worry, that Cuba with a what I believe to be a limited offensive BW effort, has had biomedical contact with a number of countries in the world that worry and bother me. And so the connection with biological weapons with Iran and other places is based on simply the fact that they are involved economic, commercial relations with Iran on biomedical devices, capabilities and research. So that's why we're worried.

SEN. ALLEN: Have you read former President Carter's statements, to the extent you can believe what you read in washingtonpost.com or elsewhere? I think washingtonpost.com is accurate. I want to say that they do a very good job.

SEN. DODD: It's your local paper. I'd be careful.

SEN. ALLEN: Well, washingtonpost.com is a great Web site.

MR. FORD: In preparation for this hearing, I did not go back and review either the transcript or the press reports of President Carter's comments. I recall at the time reading in both the Washington Post and the Washington Times -- SEN. ALLEN: Both fine newspapers.

MR. FORD: That's right. And listening to the radio and television remarks he made and the general thrust of the issues that were discussed. But I --

SEN. ALLEN: All right. Since you have your general views of all of that, and if you have any recollection, do you think that his statements of lack of concern on the part of the United States as far as Cuba were an accurate description of our actual policy and the actual concerns of our country, insofar as Cuba's biological weapons capabilities? And also the dissemination or proliferation thereof elsewhere to rogue states?

MR. FORD: Well, I don't question -- at least that sounds, as I recall, what President Carter asserted and I don't --

SEN. ALLEN: Right. But was that an accurate description of our position and concerns?

MR. FORD: Well, I&R's position, which is the only one I can talk directly to, is that we clearly -- I wouldn't have mentioned it to you before in March. I wouldn't be here today if I didn't believe that we had good evidence to suggest that there was something to be concerned and worried about. Is it the number one danger posed to the United States? Do I go home and worry about it every night and can't sleep? No, it's not at the top of my priority list in terms of the greatest threats posed to the United States. But that's my intelligence judgment. I've got a number of other things, if you're going to worry about it, that I'd like to add to the list. It's on my list. It's something that I think that the committee and certainly my bosses in the executive branch need to know about, and I certainly don't quarrel with them saying that they're concerned about it in their public statements. But that's about as best I can do in terms of Carl Ford and I&R's view.

SEN. ALLEN: You've been very diplomatic in many respects here, and I would just state my impression is that the president -- former President Carter's statements are inconsistent with your testimony on March 19 before this committee, but I'll not make you --

MR. FORD: Well, he probably would say that too, but I --

SEN. ALLEN: Okay. Well, good. Fine. Thank you.

SEN. DODD: Thank you.

Senator, further questions?

SEN. NELSON: Mr. President -- Mr. President? Mr. Chairman --

SEN. DODD: Had a nice ring to it. SEN. NELSON: That does have a nice ring to it, doesn't it. May I divert here just a little bit because of the credentials of our witness. We just passed a resolution sponsored by me out of this committee a week and a half ago, commending those brave souls in Cuba who have signed the petition on the Varela Project.

And the question that often comes up is of those 11,000 brave souls that put their name on a petition to Castro's government, is the Castro government going to clamp down on them? Which was one of the reasons for us passing the Senate resolution to try to draw all the more attention -- world attention to their very courageous action. Do you have any information with regard to any plans or any actions that the Castro government has taken, or would be taken against those citizens who signed the petition in Cuba?

MR. FORD: Senator, I share your concern. We are watching closely. At this point I don't know of any evidence that suggests that there has actually been a specific case of retaliation or punishment or any impact. That doesn't mean there hasn't been or that there won't be, I just haven't seen it yet.

SEN. NELSON: What is it, as you observe the changing conditions internally in Cuba, that would suddenly allow this seed to germinate and sprout, where people would suddenly stand up and defy the Cuban government by, according to the Cuban constitution, coming forth and signing a petition of which 10,000 names were required to put an issue in front of the national assembly? What is changing there that suddenly allowed that seed to germinate and sprout?

MR. FORD: Well, I suspect that you know more -- have forgotten more than I know about Cuba, so I'm not going to --

SEN. NELSON: I'm interested in your observations from your world.

MR. FORD: But I don't find that all that surprising. One, it isn't the first time that people have taken great risk to speak out or make a choice about what they thought was going on in Cuba. They've been coming here, risking their lives for as long as I can remember, and so that that was always a signal to me that -- when a person will get on a boat that doesn't float and set out across from Cuba to the United States risking their and their family's life, it suggests to me that they really want to get here.

SEN. NELSON: I'll tell you what's different about that and this though is that this, they put their name on the line and they're staying in Cuba. In the situation you just described, people are trying to flee. MR. FORD: I accept that, Senator, but I would make the argument that the courage involved and the process -- the thought process is not all that difference, because there is no guarantee that you can get out. You might be picked up by Cuban police or Cuban Coastguard and if caught trying to escape, you're going to be punished. I think -- the other part of it though is that I think that there -- it's very difficult over an extended period of time to keep people from expressing their political, social views and that it's not just Cuba. I mean, we've seen changes that we never would have imagined, and the intelligence community didn't pick up on, in the former Soviet Union, now Russia. But we've also seen changes throughout Eastern Europe, China, a lot of places that we've seen changes. So the notion that people in Cuba would be any different or be any less willing to take and state their desire for democracy and greater freedom doesn't surprise me. But I'm not a Cuban expert. There may be a very good reason that an expert up here would say, yes, I've got this piece of paper that says this is why this is happening now. I frankly did not react as being something new and different. I was a little surprised but pleased that this sort of approach had emerged in Cuba.

SEN. NELSON: Well, I too surprised, very pleased and if you see any evidence either that you can share publicly or privately that in fact there is any retribution against these 11,000 plus courageous souls, I want you to share that with me.

MR. FORD: Yes, sir, will do.

SEN. NELSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SEN. DODD: Thank you, Senator Nelson. Let me just make a couple of closing observations if I can. First of all, we appreciate your being here, Mr. Ford, and your statement at the outset that obviously you deal with intelligence matters, Mr. Bolton deals with policy, I presume the two of you have met from time to time with the secretary simultaneously.

MR. FORD: That's not -- in this case I have -- I've met with the secretary on this issue, I've met with Bolton -- Secretary Bolton on this issue, but not together. The only time that Bolton and I were together was we met once briefly with Secretary Armitage, Secretary Bolton and myself, a week, 10 days ago.

SEN. DODD: The point I make is the one I did at the outset, and that is my -- I want to express it again, my disappointment here. I appreciate your being here, but Mr. Bolton is the under secretary. This is a -- it's not about the personalities on this committee, it's this committee, the Foreign Relations Committee of the United States Senate. And when an under secretary makes a speech to a, quote, "political organization" here in town and then refuses -- or is told he cannot come to testify before a standing committee of the Congress on the subject matter of that speech, it is terribly disappointing. That's unhealthy in this country. There is a responsibility that the executive branch owes to the legislative branch, with our oversight responsibilities, to appear before us and to respond to questions that are raised. If it was comfortable enough for him to submit his remarks to the intelligence group -- department at the State Department and then give a speech that received wide publicity, and then not be allowed to come before this committee, that is deeply disturbing to me beyond the specifics here. That is deeply disturbing. I understand the secretary is prepared to testify and then, if necessary, to have Mr. Bolton come up. That's a rather long, circuitous route. It would have been just as easy for him to be here this morning, to go over this, to respond to the questions. So I wanted to make that point again to you.

Secondly, I think it's -- I'm sorry my colleague from Virginia has left, because I wanted to make this statement in his presence as well. I happen to believe that most people admire immensely what President Carter did by going down to Cuba and giving a very blunt and frank talk in the presence of Fidel Castro. And the Cuban people were given a unique opportunity, not allowed to any Cuban by the way, to express their views on national television and radio. When he called for democracy in that country, when he specifically referred to the Verella group that my colleague from Florida has and their rights, that's the first time that a person of that level and rank has gone down and used the opportunity in the public forum that he was given to really be of a very honest and frank expression I think of the views of many Americans.

Whatever else we may disagree about here, none of us harbor anything but a fervent desire and hope that the Cuban people be free. And they are not free. They live under a dictator. That's the long and the short of it. Now, your characterization I think is accurate. I mean, in the sense that this is a far lower priority, for all the obvious reasons we don't need to go into, than other places around the world that pose a threat to us. And I think Senator Nelson is correct, there are some interesting -- (break in audio.) The question is whether or not we're going to be clever enough to pick up on those signs, to listen carefully to the dissident community with Cuba.

I have great admiration for those who have fled and placed their lives on the line to come to this country. I have even a heightened degree of admiration for those who are dissidents who decided to stay, and I say that with all due respect for those who had to make the decision to leave. But for those who have stayed and done the 20 and 25 and 30 years in prison, we ought to listen carefully to their advice and counsel as to how proceed. And President Carter I think did a wonderful, wonderful job and all Americans, whether you agree with everything he said or every comment made, I think he's opened up some new opportunities here regarding change in Cuba that weren't present otherwise.

And I wasn't going to say this, but since the characterization that he may have misspoke, he was given information. He specifically asked about whether or not there were particular problems in this area. He was told there were not. I don't for a second question the veracity of President Jimmy Carter, and I don't know many Americans who ever would. So when he had a briefing and he was asked about concerns, he was told this matter did not come up and I take him at his word and believe that most Americans would as well.

But we're grateful for your testimony and I'd like to spend a few minutes with you in closed session to go over some of the issues you could not, and rightfully could not, raise in a public forum. And I'd invite my colleague Senator Nelson to join us for that purpose. And the public session of this committee will stand adjourned.

(Adjourn)

END.