

BREAKING THROUGH THE **Bubble**

Former American envoys oppose Bush nominee to U.N.

Challenging the White House, 59 former American diplomats are urging the Senate to reject John R. Bolton's nomination to be U.S. ambassador to the United Nations. "He is the wrong man for this position," they said in a letter to Sen. Richard Lugar, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. The Indiana Republican has scheduled hearings on Bolton's nomination for April 7. Their criticism dwelled primarily on Bolton's stand on issues as the State Department's senior arms control official. But the former diplomats also chided Bolton for his "insistence that the U.N. is valuable only when it directly serves the United States." That view, they said, would not help him negotiate with other diplomats at the United Nations.

Schiavo's husband plans autopsy

The feud between the brain-damaged woman's parents and husband escalated when the latter requested an autopsy once she dies in order to prove that she could not have recovered. George Felos, the attorney for husband and guardian Michael Schiavo, said the chief medical examiner for Pinellas County, Dr. John Thogmartin, had agreed to perform an autopsy before her remains are cremated. He said that Michael Schiavo, who has convinced courts that his wife told him years ago she would not want to be kept alive artificially under such circumstances, wants definitive proof showing the extent of her brain damage. An attorney for Schiavo's parents, David Gibbs III, said her family also wants an autopsy.

First lady takes a trip to Afghanistan

First lady Laura Bush set out for a quick visit to Afghanistan, a war-torn country where American forces are still battling a stubborn Taliban-led insurgency. Mrs. Bush has wanted to visit Afghanistan for a couple of years but delayed the journey, mostly because of security concerns. Her trip was kept secret until just before she left from Andrews Air Force Base near Washington. She arrived in Kabul at midday Wednesday and spent about five hours on the ground, spending most of her time being briefed on educational initiatives for Afghan women. She also met with President Hamid Karzai and had dinner with U.S. forces at Bagram Air Base north of Kabul.

U.S. officials promise quick aid after quake

U.S. officials are promising rapid assistance to victims of the latest earthquake off the coast of Indonesia, reacting to criticism that the government responded too slowly to the tsunami that struck the region in December. "We're applying what we've learned from the previous earthquake so that we can be prepared to be responsive quickly and in a meaningful way," deputy State Department spokesman Adam Ereli said. The response was swift to Monday's quake, with the State Department and American science agencies all sending out warnings and alerts to the area. The quake struck at 11:09 a.m. EST and within a half-hour the U.S. Geological Survey had sent out a report of the tremor with a preliminary magnitude of 8.2. It was later upgraded to 8.7. A second, 6.7-magnitude quake, occurred around 1:30 p.m. EST, the survey said.

- Compiled by Sarah Moser from <http://www.msnbc.com>



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