



"Slightly Confused"

Hagel Struggled To Defend His Comments On Top Defense Issues

NBC's Luke Russert: "So far it seems that Hagel drank the same juice Obama did before the 1st debate."
 (Luke Russert, [Twitter Feed](#), 1/31/13)

HAGEL REPEATEDLY STUMBLED ON IRAN

"Hagel Repeatedly Struggled With Questions About Perhaps The Single Most Important Policy Decision He Will Play A Role In, The U.S. Relationship With Iran..." "Secretary of Defense nominee Chuck Hagel repeatedly struggled with questions about perhaps the single most important policy decision he will play a role in, the U.S. relationship with Iran, during his confirmation hearing on Capitol Hill Thursday morning. Hagel said at one point that he supports 'containment' — typically meant to mean accepting a nuclear-armed Iran — and calling Iran's government 'elected and legitimate.'" (Rosie Gray, "An Off-Kilter Chuck Hagel Fumbles On Iran," [BuzzFeed](#), 1/31/13)

- **"Hagel Stumbled Thursday During Questioning On Iran, Inadvertently Saying The Obama Administration Supports 'Containment' And Calling The Country An 'Elected Legitimate Government.'" "Chuck Hagel stumbled Thursday during questioning on Iran, inadvertently saying the Obama administration supports 'containment' and calling the country an 'elected legitimate government.' 'I support the president's strong position on containment, as I have said,' the former Republican senator from Nebraska told the Senate Armed Services Committee considering his nomination for Defense secretary."** (Tim Mak, "Chuck Hagel Stumbles On Iran Question," [Politico](#), 1/31/13)

Repeated Clarifications About His Stance On Containment, "Made Hagel Seem Slightly Confused."

"In a response to a question about preventing Iran from getting a nuclear weapon, Hagel referred to 'containment' — a Cold War-style tactic that is contrary to President Obama's stated favored policy of prevention. Hagel was then passed a note, looked at it, and took back his 'containment' statement, saying that the administration was against that. It was a slip, as Hagel had said previously in the hearing that his position was 'the same as president's, one of prevention and not of containment,' but one that made Hagel seem slightly confused." (Rosie Gray, "An Off-Kilter Chuck Hagel Fumbles On Iran," [BuzzFeed](#), 1/31/13)

- **National Journal's Michael Hirsh Called The Containment Exchange, "Perhaps One Of The Worst Moments In A Fairly Bad Day For Hagel."** "Perhaps one of the worst moments in a fairly bad day for Hagel came when even one of his apparent supporters, the committee chairman, Carl Levin, D-Mich., was forced to restate his position for him after Hagel twice misspoke about a

critical issue: whether the Obama administration would accept mere 'containment' of Iran's nuclear program, rather than prevention of it." (Michael Hirsh, "Is Chuck Hagel Failing?" [National Journal](#), 1/31/13)

Hagel "Seemed Unwilling To Really Justify His Former Stances" On Unilateral Sanctions. "As for his positions on unilateral sanctions — he was against them before he was for them — Hagel has seemed unwilling to really justify his former stances, just arguing that his previous votes were during a different atmosphere." (Rosie Gray, "An Off-Kilter Chuck Hagel Fumbles On Iran," [BuzzFeed](#), 1/31/13)

HAGEL "SHAKY" AND "OFF-KILTER"

Hagel "Seemed Slightly Off-Kilter" Throughout His Nomination Hearing. "Throughout the hearing, Hagel has seemed slightly off-kilter, barely getting a word in during former friend John McCain's tough questioning over Hagel's positions on the Iraq surge and getting stumped on questions about Afghanistan troop levels and other policy issues." (Rosie Gray, "An Off-Kilter Chuck Hagel Fumbles On Iran," [BuzzFeed](#), 1/31/13)

Peter Beinart: "hagel's making biden look rhetorically sure-footed." (Peter Beinart, [Twitter Feed](#), 1/31/13)

The Washington Post's Chris Cillizza: "Hagel has been pretty shaky thus far, right?" (Chris Cillizza, [Twitter Feed](#), 1/31/13)

Brookings' Tom Wright: "Not impressed by Hagel so far. This is one of the toughest jobs in govt. He needs to do better." (Tom Wright, [Twitter Feed](#), 1/31/13)

National Journal's Michael Hirsh: "For all the world Hagel looked like the guilty suspect who is nailed in the final minutes of 'Matlock' or 'Perry Mason.'" (Michael Hirsh, "Is Chuck Hagel Failing?" [National Journal](#), 1/31/13)