

# Bush picks right-wing attack dog as UN ambassador

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9 March 2005

The nomination of John Bolton as US ambassador to the United Nations has decisively refuted media speculation that in its second term the Bush administration is turning toward multilateralism and reconciliation with erstwhile allies estranged by the illegal US war in Iraq.

Bolton, more than any figure in the Washington foreign policy establishment, personifies the administration's rejection of international law and reliance upon unilateral military aggression as its preferred instrument for pursuing US imperialist interests.

Choosing Bolton as its ambassador is an unmistakable attack on the United Nations itself and a warning that the Bush administration will actively pursue its destruction if it fails to subordinate itself fully to US global strategic objectives.

Bolton's views on the United Nations are well known. In 1994, while biding his time in right-wing think tanks between the administrations of Bush senior and Bush junior, he spoke on a panel organized by the World Federalist Association, declaring, "There is no such thing as the United Nations." He added, "If the UN Secretariat building in New York lost 10 stories, it wouldn't make a bit of difference." During the same period, he advocated a complete cutoff of US dues owed to the UN.

On January 1, 2000—more than year before George W. Bush took office—Bolton wrote an article in the right-wing *Weekly Standard* vilifying UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and affirming the policy of unprovoked militarism that would become the administration's hallmark. He described as the "Annan doctrine" the rather unremarkable assertion by the UN secretary general that the UN's Security Council was "the sole source of legitimacy on the use of force." Bolton warned, "If the United States allows that claim to go unchallenged, its discretion in using force to advance its national interests is likely to be inhibited in the future."

This was no mere ideological assertion. By that time,

Bolton and other right-wing Republicans who were to make up the Bush administration already had well-developed plans for the unilateral use of US force in invading and occupying Iraq.

In the late 1990s, Bolton was a director of the Project for a New American Century, an outfit that included most of those who were to constitute the Bush administration's national security command. The PNAC drew up explicit plans for the conquest of Iraq well before the pretexts of September 11 and weapons of mass destruction were developed by Washington.

Bolton played a key role in the Republican theft of the 2000 election. After the Supreme Court's decision halting the ballot count, he marched into the Tallahassee, Florida library where state officials were counting Miami-Dade ballots and declared, "I'm with the Bush-Cheney team, and I'm here to stop the vote."

After Bush's inauguration, Bolton was installed at the State Department as the undersecretary for arms control. The title smacked of nothing so much as the "Ministry of Peace" in George Orwell's 1984. Bolton opposed virtually every treaty written to limit arms production and distribution.

Like other members of the Republican right, Bolton opposed the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. He likewise came out against a ban on chemical weapons and even nuclear test ban treaties, declaring that supporters of such bans were "misguided individuals following a timid and neo-pacifist line of thought."

In 2001, he scuttled a UN conference called to confront illegal trafficking in small arms by affirming that Washington would reject any treaty that restricted the right of the US "constitutional right to bear arms."

A subsequent UN meeting called in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks to draft measures to strengthen a treaty restricting biological weapons by imposing verification procedures was similarly sabotaged by

Bolton's efforts. According to one report, he gloated in his success in killing the deal, telling State Department colleagues, "It's dead, dead, dead, and I don't want it coming back from the dead."

His hostility to such treaties, however, was based on fundamental principle rather than their specific merits. He essentially opposed any subordination of US policy to international law.

In 1999 he declared, "It is a big mistake for us to grant any validity to international law even when it may seem in our short-term interest to do so, because over the long term, the goal of those who think that international law really means anything are those who want to constrict the United States."

Bolton took responsibility for the "unsigning" of the treaty founding the International Criminal Court in 2002, a direct assertion of US unilateralism and a warning that Washington was embarked on a policy of aggression that would produce multiple war crimes. While the treaty did not fall under his jurisdiction as undersecretary for arms control, he took the lead in opposing it and was allowed to sign the letter formally notifying the United Nations of Washington's withdrawal. He told the *Wall Street Journal* that this was "the happiest moment of my government service."

While opposing any treaties or laws limiting US militarism and development of weapons of mass destruction, Bolton has been among the most belligerent in making false charges about such weapons to justify US attacks on other countries.

He intervened repeatedly in the United Nations arms inspection program related to Iraq, attempting to remove its leadership and impose officials who would be more obedient to US commands.

In May 2002, he delivered a speech to the Heritage Foundation broadening Bush's "axis of evil" to include Cuba, Syria and Libya, all of which he branded as "rogue states" bent on developing weapons of mass destruction and aiding terrorists, the same pretexts developed to justify the war on Iraq.

Intelligence and military officials repudiated his claims, particularly in relation to both Cuba and Syria. Even Colin Powell, who made the false case before the United Nations Security Council about Iraq's nonexistent weapons of mass destruction, reportedly chafed at Bolton's claims. Within the State Department he was widely seen as an agent for the White House and the right-wing ideologues in the civilian leadership of the Pentagon.

Bolton's rise within the hierarchy of the Republican right began as a close protégé of Jesse Helms, the racist and extreme anticommunist Senator from North Carolina. It was Helms, known as "Senator No" for his opposition to virtually all international treaties, who as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee blocked US payment of dues to the UN.

After helping Helms avoid scandal and legal charges relating to a dubious fundraising organization, Bolton was rewarded with a political appointment in the Reagan administration, where he first worked in the US Agency for International Development and then the Justice Department, then headed by Attorney General Edwin Meese.

Under Meese, he became the department's point man during the Iran-contra scandal, stonewalling attempts by Congress to elicit documents and testimony relating to the illegal scheme to fund the mercenary army organized by the CIA to attack Nicaragua. During this period, he formed close bonds with other right-wing officials involved in the affair. These include Elliot Abrams, who was forced to plead guilty of lying to Congress and is now Bush's number two man on the National Security Council, and John Negroponte, who directed much of the contra operation from the US Embassy in Honduras and is now Bush's new national director of intelligence.

While out of government, Bolton distinguished himself as an advocate for Chile's former dictator Augusto Pinochet and for the Taiwanese regime. The latter paid him some \$30,000, according to the *Washington Post*, and he reciprocated by advocating the scrapping of the 30-year-old "one China" policy, the restoration of direct US recognition of Taiwan and its admission to the United Nations.

While some Democrats have expressed dismay over Bolton's selection, his nomination will almost certainly win confirmation. Having agreed to install a defender of torture as head of the Justice Department, there is no reason to believe that the Senate will balk at a sending a rabid opponent of international law to the United Nations.

Bolton is a fitting candidate for the post, a figure who will accurately represent to the world the arrogant, brutal and predatory character of US imperialism.



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