

John Bolton: Wrong For America

John Bolton: A Terrible Choice

John Bolton is a disastrous choice to be our Ambassador to the United Nations. Right now, the U.S. needs to work through the UN more than ever to make the world a safer place for Americans. Bolton, however, has made a career out of belittling and dismissing the UN, suggesting at one point that “if the UN secretary building in New York lost 10 stories, it wouldn’t make a bit of difference.” He advocates a go-it-alone foreign policy that alienates our allies and strengthens our enemies. He has a history of rash behavior. And he has consistently put his own priorities over those of his country by refusing to obey orders.

Talking Points

- Bolton cannot reform an institution he does not respect

John Bolton does not advocate fixing the UN as much as dismantling it. He has repeatedly disparaged the UN, declaring that the majority of Congress “not only do not care about losing the General Assembly vote but actually see it as a ‘make my day’ outcome.” He has dismissed the idea of a UN outright, likened U.S. payment of UN dues to “surrender,” and declared that the U.S. should be the only permanent member of the Security Council.

- Bolton believes we don’t need to work with others to achieve our goals

At a time when America needs partners, John Bolton will isolate us further in the world. He has consistently argued that the United States should “reject the illusionary protections of unenforceable treaties,” and his idea of cooperation is America choosing a path and the world filing in behind. “The international community,” he said, “occasionally can be led by the... United States when it suits our interest and we can get others to go along.”

- Bolton makes rash choices and disobeys orders

John Bolton has a history of diplomatic failure. His abrasive and antagonistic style endangers America. In 2002, Bolton told a conference on arms control that the U.S. resents non-profit groups when they promote their views at the UN – in direct contrast to actual U.S. policy. And in 2003, he single-handedly brought nuclear weapons negotiations to a halt by insulting the North Korean delegation. We cannot trust John Bolton to represent us at the UN, but if he becomes our Ambassador, we can be virtually sure that he will represent himself.

What to Expect From John Bolton

Apart from what Sen. John Kerry called a “confirmation conversion” three years ago, when he stood to be confirmed by the Senate as Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, Bolton has been remarkably consistent in his contempt for international cooperation and his inability to exercise discretion and sensitivity in his work. The quotations listed and acts illustrated in this brief paint an all-too-clear picture of what we could expect from an Ambassador Bolton stationed at UN Plaza.

Bolton on the United Nations and International Cooperation

- "[M]any Republicans in Congress—and perhaps a majority—not only do not care about losing the General Assembly vote but actually see it as a 'make my day' outcome. Indeed, once the vote is lost... this will simply provide further evidence to why nothing more should be paid to the UN system." *The Washington Times*, 1998
- "If the UN secretary building in New York lost 10 stories, it wouldn't make a bit of difference." 1994 Global Structures Convocation, New York, NY.
- “There is no such thing as the United Nations. There is an international community that occasionally can be led by the only real power left in the world and that is the United States when it suits our interest and we can get others to go along." 1994 Global Structures Convocation, New York, NY.
- Called General Assembly Resolutions and international conference declarations, (such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Agenda 21, and the Millennium Declaration) “mind-numbing.” *Policy Review. Bring Back the Laxalt Doctrine*, 2000.
- "If I were redoing the Security Council today, I'd have one permanent member because that's the real reflection of the distribution of power in the world." National Public Radio with Juan Williams, 2000.

Bolton on International Treaties and Justice for Perpetrators of Genocide

- “The Senate vote [on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty] is also an unmistakable signal that America rejects the illusionary protections of unenforceable treaties." *The Jerusalem Post*, 1999.
- Renouncing the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court “was the happiest moment of my government service.” *The Wall Street Journal*, 2002.
- "Support for the International Criminal Court concept is based largely on emotional appeals to an abstract ideal of an international judicial system." Statement before the House International Relations Committee, 2000.

Bolton on Human Rights and Nongovernmental Organizations

- “We do not support the promotion of international advocacy activity by international or non-governmental organizations, particularly when those political or policy views advocated are not consistent with the views of all member states.” Statement to the UN Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects, 9 July 2001. This stands in stark contrast to the official policy of the United States, which is to support and strengthen the involvement of non-governmental organizations in international processes.

What Others Are Saying About Bolton and His Nomination

- “A disaster.” Aide to an Ambassador on the UN Security Council.
- “We need alliances, we need friends. To go up there and kick the U.N. around doesn't get the job done.” Senator Chuck Hagel (R-NE).
- “[T]his is just about the most inexplicable appointment the President could make to represent the United States to the world community...Quite simply, Mr. Bolton's nomination carries with it baggage we cannot afford.” Senator John Kerry (D-MA).
- “This is a disappointing choice and one that sends all the wrong signals.” Senator Harry Reid (D-NV).
- “Intemperate and contentious.” Reagan White House Spokesperson Marlin Fitzwater on Bolton, when he held unauthorized press conferences to condemn special prosecutors as an official in the Department of Justice.