

John Bolton Will Push Preventive War at the UN

by Michele Steinberg

John Bolton deserves “any job he wants.”
—Vice President Dick Cheney, quoted in the *Los Angeles Times*, March 8, 2004

For those people who were still clinging to the delusion that the second George W. Bush Administration would be a “kinder, gentler” entity, the appointment of John Bolton to be the new U.S. ambassador to the United Nations should be a shock of reality. Coming at the time that the Bush Administration is in a full court press for regime change in Damascus, the appointment of the Administration’s leading WMD disinformation specialist, and the architect of the passage of the Syrian Accountability Act, is a particularly provocative gesture.

European leaders who had met just a few weeks ago with Bush, and with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, also took the Bolton appointment as a particular slap in the face, given his in-your-face unilateralist profile.

Let’s be clear: Liberal hand-wringing is not going to stop the Bolton nomination. Despite the outrageousness of his oft-quoted statement at a 1994 panel discussion for the World Federalist Association, that if the UN building “lost 10 stories, it wouldn’t make a bit of difference”—it is not Bolton’s dislike of the United Nations that disqualifies him.

What disqualifies him is that John Bolton doesn’t like *nations*, and wants the world to submit to an American “sole superpower.” He’s the kind of Bush Administration jackass who accuses John Kerry of telling America that we had to “ask permission” to defend ourselves from terrorism.

In a balanced administration, the UN appointment might be no big deal; but in such an *unbalanced* administration, having Bolton at the UN could endanger U.S. national security. This is especially true, because when Bolton doesn’t have the information or intelligence to back up his desired policy,

he *makes it up*—with the help of the network of neo-con lie factories like the American Enterprise Institute, the Israeli intelligence-linked Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA), and similar outfits. Bolton’s record on WMD is shameful.

Throughout 2002, Bolton, as Assistant Secretary of State for Arms Control, lied and spread panic about Iraq’s alleged weapons of mass destruction in lockstep with his real boss, Dick Cheney. But in July 2003, Bolton went too far, and was caught red-handed trying to force-feed a pack of lies to Congress about Syria. Bolton was trying to immediately expand the Iraq War over the Syrian border, and to ram the Syria Accountability Act through Congress.

The *International Herald Tribune* and Knight-Ridder newspapers reported, in July 2003 that the CIA essentially pulled Bolton’s planned testimony to the House International Relations Committee, and spelled out its objections to Bolton’s report in a 35-page memo to Congress.

A government source told Knight-Ridder that Bolton’s testimony went way beyond anything the U.S. had ever said about Syria’s weapons programs. The CIA’s objections were so great, the source told Knight-Ritter, that Bolton’s testimony had to be killed. Bolton had prepared the way for his appearance, in June 2003, saying that the United States was “looking at Syria’s nuclear program with growing concern.” Yet the CIA’s report to Congress in April 2003, said “in principle, broader access to Russian expertise provides opportunities, should it decide to pursue nuclear weapons.” In other words, minus the spin, Syria has no nuclear program.

Without the intervention of the CIA at the time, the *Congressional Record* would have been flooded with Bolton’s raw sewage, and in the frenzy of the White House triumphalism (remember, “Mission Accomplished” and the *U.S.S. Abraham Lincoln*), the United States might have been at war

with another country—based on lies. But who is there now in the Administration to stop Bolton from lying about weapons of mass destruction and other alleged threats, now that political hack Porter Goss has purged the top CIA professionals in charge of Operations and Intelligence, and has stacked the agency with appointees who served him on the House Intelligence Committee to cover up the false intelligence reports about Iraq?

The UN podium is too big a soapbox to give to a prevaricator like John Bolton.

Bolton's Agenda

Bolton is a true-believer in the neo-con agenda—a flag officer in the ranks of the Bush Administration “chicken-hawks.” When not serving in a government post, Bolton holds a number of positions to which he returns between government jobs: a director of the Project on a New American Century (PNAC), imperial dream factory for the neo-cons; board of advisors of the Likud-aligned JINSA; vice president of the American Enterprise Institute; initiator of the anti-Russia New Atlantic Initiative; activist with the Federalist Society; and fellow at the Manhattan Institute. All controlled by neo-cons and chicken-hawks.

In a March 9 article in *Common Dreams*, reporter Matthew Rothschild noted that in his State Department post, “Bolton was known as Powell’s minder . . . the neocon mole who reported back to Cheney and Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz if Powell was straying too far from their agenda.” According to a former high-level State Department source, Bolton, and his top assistant in 2002, David Wurmser, were especially keen to sabotage the work of the State Department’s Intelligence and Research (INR) section, which was the only intelligence agency to dispute the claims that Iraq possessed nuclear weapons of mass destruction. INR noted in the 2002 National Intelligence Assessment (NIE) that Iraq was *not* getting uranium from Africa for nuclear bombs. INR also proved Dick Cheney to be lying over Cheney’s claim that aluminum tubes seized (before they got to Iraq) by UN monitoring teams were obtained for nuclear weapons.

Bolton’s agenda is unilateral, preventive war, based on the 1992 “Defense Policy Guidance,” prepared when Dick Cheney was then Bush 41’s Secretary of Defense. That 1992 document became the basis for the manifesto of preventive war that appeared in 2000 as the “Rebuilding America’s Defenses: Strategies, Forces and Resources for a New Center,” published by PNAC for Dick Cheney, then running for Vice President. It became the basis for the September 2002 “Cheney Doctrine” of preventive war that led to the invasion of Iraq, and the future unilateral invasion of any other country identified as an enemy.

One of Bolton’s key playbooks is the 1996 war plan, “Clean Break,” written for then-Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu by a neo-conservative team, including Bolton’s aide, David Wurmser. Other co-authors were Douglas Feith, now Undersecretary of Defense; Richard

Perle; and Meyrav (Mrs. David) Wurmser. That war plan, financed by the Jerusalem/Washington think-tank, the Institute for Advanced Strategic and Policy Studies (IASPS), for Netanyahu to deliver to a joint session of the U.S. Congress, announced a U.S.-Israeli alliance to declare war on the Palestinians, Iraq, Syria, and Iran. The Oslo treaty recognizing the Palestinian Authority was to be torn up, and “regime change” in Iraq, Syria, and Iran was to be the U.S. policy.

In 1998, to further the “Clean Break” scheme, Bolton joined with the Bush Administration warmongers, Cheney, Elliott Abrams, Richard Perle, Paul Wolfowitz, Douglas Feith, and others, in signing a letter to then-President Bill Clinton, warning him that Iraq posed “a threat in the Middle East more serious than any we have known since the end of the Cold War. . . . The only acceptable strategy is one that eliminates the possibility that Iraq will be able to use or threaten to use weapons of mass destruction. In the near term, this means a willingness to undertake military action as diplomacy is clearly failing. . . . it means removing Saddam Hussein and his regime from power. That now needs to become the aim of American foreign policy.” The neo-con disinformation mills then spent the next four years churning up faked intelligence reports to “justify” the attack on Iraq that Clinton rightly rejected.

Skeletons in the Closet

In giving a free pass to Porter Goss as CIA Director, Alberto Gonzales as Attorney General, and John Negroponte as National Intelligence Director, the Senate has rubber-stamped the U.S. legalization of torture, and the use of lies and disinformation to go to war. With the Bolton nomination, it is time for the Senate to draw the line, and the leading Republicans on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Sen. Richard Lugar (R-Ind.) and Chuck Hagel (R-Neb.) should be commended for being wary of confirming Bolton.

Bolton is gunning for China over Taiwan; for North Korea, which demanded that he be excluded from the six-party talks in 2003; and for Iran, about which he demands military action, as he did with Iraq in 1998.

In addition, there are two immediate areas that should be opened in blocking the Bolton nomination:

- 1998 allegations that the National Policy Committee, a tax-exempt group that Bolton had headed, channelled foreign money into the Republican National Committee. A 1998 minority report by Democratic Senators of the Committee on Governmental Affairs, stated that evidence suggests “that foreign money played an important role for the RNC in the mid-term elections of 1994,” and Bolton is cited in that report.

- Payments from Taiwan: In 2002, *The Nation* magazine exposed that Bolton had received tens of thousands of dollars from a secret Taiwanese secret slush fund, to advocate independence for Taiwan. In the mid-1990s, Bolton appeared before Congress to testify in favor of relations with Taiwan, never disclosing to Congress that he was their paid agent.