

### Bolton Is Still Unfit to Serve (altnet - The Progress Report. July 27, 2006)

This Thursday, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will hold hearings on the nomination of U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations John Bolton. Bolton was nominated to the post last year by President Bush but failed to win Senate confirmation after a series of problematic disclosures about his past, particularly a record of mishandling intelligence and a pattern of intimidating subordinates.

5 The timing of this week's hearings is no accident. The White House is attempting to rally support for the Bolton nomination by politicizing the escalating conflict in the Middle East, arguing that this moment of geopolitical peril requires a permanent representative at the U.N. But the truth is that Bolton's record over the past year has highlighted the desire of an individual who was sent to the U.N. not to make it stronger, but to undermine it. Bolton is no more worthy for the U.N. post now than he was a year ago.

#### 10 **Un-Diplomatic**

Bolton has managed to offend many U.S. friends and allies in just over a year at the U.N. Sen. Joseph Biden (D-DE) said, "Bolton's performance at the U.N. confirms my conviction that he is the wrong person for this job." Sen. Christopher Dodd (D-CT) added, "Many ambassadors at the U.N. feel that he hasn't done a good job there. He's polarized the situation." Prior to being appointed to the U.N., Bolton was described by a former State Department colleague as "a quintessential kiss-up, kick-down sort of guy."

15 Representatives of the U.N. member-states now appear to agree.

The New York Times reported that "many diplomats say they see Mr. Bolton as a stand-in for the arrogance of the administration itself." Edward Luck, a professor of international affairs at Columbia who closely follows the United Nations, said Bolton's "confrontational tactics have been very dysfunctional for the U.S. purpose." After a confrontation with Bolton, Algeria's U.N. Ambassador Abdullah Baali said the U.S. stance that "you take it or you leave it is not helping the Security Council, and is not helping the cause of peace in the Middle East."

20 An ambassador with close ties to the Bush administration told the Times that he originally tried to work with Bolton, but complained that, "all he gives us in return is, 'It doesn't matter, whatever you do is insufficient.' ... He's lost me as an ally now, and that's what many other ambassadors who consider themselves friends of the U.S. are saying." "He is not an easy man to get close to," Ambassador Adamantios Vassilakis of Greece said. "Some people have the possibility to build consensus. Others operate in other ways." Ambassador Oswaldo de Rivero of Peru said, "He lives in another world, with this belief that he is morally superior and the U.S. is more moral than all the countries around the world. It is a pity." [...]

#### **Waning Influence**

In an impassioned speech last month, Malloch Brown constructively criticized the U.S. approach to the U.N., arguing, "[T]he prevailing [U.S.] practice of seeking to use the U.N. almost by stealth as a diplomatic tool while failing to stand up for it against its domestic critics is simply not sustainable. You will lose the U.N. one way or another." (The video is available on SecurityPeace.org.) Brown argued that the constant attacks against the U.N. have made its role "in effect a secret in Middle America even as it is highlighted in the Middle East and other parts of the world."

30 Bolton has been part of the problem. He once quipped, "If [the UN Secretariat building] lost 10 stories, it wouldn't make a bit of difference." Demonstrating that he could dish it out but not take it, Bolton overreacted to Brown's comment, calling it a "very, very grave mistake" that would result in the U.N. being the "victim." In the wake of dissension between the member-states over the Iraq war, Brown argued that "what you needed was an ambassador who would heal, not deepen, rifts."

35 But the rift has indeed widened, causing the U.S.'s influence to wane. Bolton recently admitted that he could not disclose who he would support to replace Annan when his term expires at the end of the year because "it would probably be the kiss of death for that person."

UN ambassador nominee John Bolton attempts to woo senate committee using folksy commercial persona (photo montage)



<http://blogs.citypages.com/canderson/2005/04/index.asp>



<http://www.metimes.com/cartoons/index.php>

A desperate John Bolton, facing a second day of grilling from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, affected a down-home, folksy persona, implying (using a container of Quaker Oats) that "supporting me is the right thing to do, and the tasty way to do it." The committee appeared unamused. Posted by [Corey Anderson](#) at [April 13, 2005](#) (satire)

**Assignment:** What tensions become visible in the characterization of Ambassador Bolton about the relationship between the US Administration and the UN?