

May 7, 2005: Bolton right for the U.N. - Whittier Daily News

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May 7, 2005 Not only should the Senate confirm the appointment of John Bolton as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, members ought to give him a standing ovation for meritorious service under four administrations, including that of Bill Clinton. The outcry against the career State Department official seems manufactured by liberal factions and seems to have little to do with Bolton. If the 56-year-old, outspoken Bolton were the "serial abuser" of subordinates as branded, surely such a reputation would have been anathema to positions of trust under Presidents Ronald Reagan (assistant attorney general), George H.W. Bush (assistant secretary of state for International Organization Affairs), Bill Clinton (U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom) and George W. Bush, whom he serves as undersecretary of state for Arms Control and International Security. Numerous unnamed sources have been quoted in recent news stories, couching his direct demeanor as ill suited for the delicate diplomacy they feel necessary in the world body. Ironic, too, that Democratic lobbying group MoveOn.org is leading the effort to stop the Bolton appointment. Certainly party leader, Howard Dean, who brought the organization into prominence during his campaign for the presidential nomination, is no stranger to straight talk and bombast. So clearly it's not about Bolton but about Democratic attempts to thwart the president and with him, the GOP majority. Consider Bolton in the same vein as the Democrats' attempts to block Bush's judicial appointments. It's unfortunate because Dems along with all Americans will benefit from Bolton in a leading role at the United Nations. Who better to deliver a stern message for continuing the reform already begun than the man who is criticized because he doesn't mince words, leaves no room for interpretation? While critics call him a loose cannon, his aim was steady and unwavering in the effort to overturn the General Assembly's decades-old resolution equating Zionism with racism. The United States' role since it facilitated the founding of Israel has been of support for the tiny nation surrounded by enemies at home and within the United Nations. Bolton marks the 1991 repeal of the official hate-mongering as a career highlight. Last week Secretary General Kofi Annan asked for support for his own efforts at reform from a visiting delegation of Jewish leaders. To his credit, Annan has made the inclusion of Jews a priority during his tenure. Certainly Bolton would join Annan in that effort. Bolton can also point with pride to his refusal to endorse the U.N.-backed International Criminal Court and his critical assessment of the U.N.'s role in Iraq, which consisted of basically looking the other way as the despotic Saddam Hussein ignored U.N. resolutions and sanctions. Against the backdrop of the oil-for-food scandal, that lack of discipline is as understandable as it is deplorable. Bolton aptly called it "exploitation." Yet Bolton nonetheless believes this once-august international community still can be a force for good and that the United States must take a leadership role. Congress ought to welcome a U.N. envoy who believes if the United Nations is to regain any semblance of authority in world affairs, it must return to the principles upon which it was founded as a forum for mediation, not arbiter for all global decision making. Part of that turnaround is letting go the absurd notion that the Security Council is the "sole source of legitimacy on the use of force," as pronounced by Annan during the 1999 Kosovo bombing, a move sanctioned by NATO. Such arrogance would be laughable if administrators at the United Nations didn't believe their illegitimate claim. Some may want a U.S. representative to the United Nations who will stand by and accept such attempts to usurp national sovereignty. Not us and not the numerous former ambassadors, State Department personnel and international religious leaders who endorse the Bolton appointment. Bolton is above all a sincere salesman for American ideals and democracy. That will undoubtedly ruffle international feathers at the United Nations but Bolton is exactly what America needs, a strong champion of democracy.