

Bush Gives Bolton Recess Appointment

- [Arms Control Today](#)

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President George W. Bush used a recess appointment to install [John Bolton](#) as U.S. permanent representative to the United Nations Aug. 1, circumventing primarily Democratic opposition after a bruising five-month Senate battle.

The recess appointment will allow [Bolton](#), who served as undersecretary of state for arms control and international security during Bush's first term, to hold the UN post through the end of the congressional session next year without a Senate vote.

Bush made the appointment after Republicans twice failed in efforts to muster the necessary 60 votes needed to force an up-or-down vote on the nomination.

[Bolton](#) took up residence in New York at a time when the UN Security Council might be called upon to weigh in on two proliferation issues on which he took a hard line in his previous post. Most notably, the council might be asked to consider how to handle concerns that North Korea and Iran are developing nuclear weapons.

With Bolton at his side, Bush chided Democrats for "partisan delaying tactics." Bush told reporters, "I'm sending Ambassador Bolton to New York with my complete confidence." Senate Democratic Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) said Bush had abused his power in making the appointment and sent a "seriously flawed and weakened candidate to the United Nations."

Democrats had insisted that administration officials supply information on two issues. The first involved Bolton's interactions with intelligence agencies regarding Syria; the other concerned requests Bolton made to the National Security Agency (NSA) to reveal the identity of U.S. officials mentioned in NSA intercepts. Transcripts of NSA-monitored conversations do not normally identify any U.S. officials by name. High-ranking officials such as Bolton are entitled to request that the agency reveal the relevant identities, but Democrats had insinuated that Bolton might have used the information to smear bureaucratic opponents. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice had opposed releasing the material, saying it could discourage open debate within the administration.

Democrats and a few key Republicans had also raised concerns about several disputes between Bolton and career officials, as well as his Department of State superiors, over how intelligence information had been used. ([See ACT, June 2005.](#))

Moreover, soon before the president granted the recess appointment, the State Department was forced to acknowledge that Bolton had provided inaccurate information to the Senate. State Department spokesperson Sean McCormack said July 28 that Bolton should have revealed that he had been interviewed by the State Department's inspector general about since-disproven December 2002 U.S. claims that Iraq had sought to procure uranium from Niger.