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Bush appoints Bolton to U.N. post

President bypasses Senate, appointment lasts until Jan 2007

MSNBC staff and news service reports
Updated: 4:44 p.m. ET Aug. 1, 2005

WASHINGTON - President Bush sidestepped the Senate and installed embattled nominee John Bolton as ambassador to the United Nations on Monday, ending a five-month impasse with Democrats who accused Bolton of abusing subordinates and twisting intelligence to fit his conservative ideology.

"This post is too important to leave vacant any longer, especially during a war and a vital debate about UN reform," Bush said. He said Bolton had his complete confidence.

Bush put Bolton on the job in a recess appointment — an avenue available to the president when the Congress is in recess. Under the Constitution, a recess appointment during the lawmakers' August break would last until a newly elected Congress takes office in January 2007.

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Aug 1: President Bush explains reasons for the recess appointment of John Bolton to be U.S. ambassador to the United Nations.

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Within five hours of his appointment, Bolton arrived at the U.S. mission in New York to begin work. He refused to speak with reporters.

Bolton joined Bush and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice at the announcement ceremony and said he was honored and humbled by the president's appointment. "It will be a distinct privilege to be an advocate for America's values and interests at the U.N. and, in the words of the U.N. charter, to help maintain international peace and security," he said.

Bush said that Bolton's nomination had been supported by a majority of the Senate but that "because of partisan delaying tactics by a handful of senators, John was unfairly denied the up-or-down vote that he deserves."

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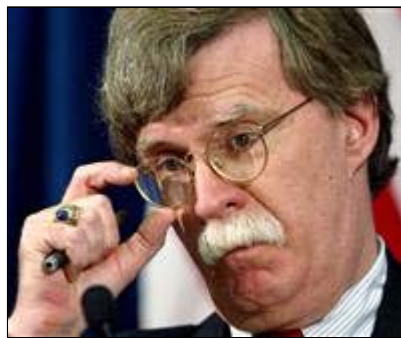
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Bush had refused to give up on Bolton even though the Senate had voted twice to sustain a filibuster

against his nominee. Democrats and some Republicans had raised questions about Bolton's fitness for the job, particularly in view of his harsh criticism of the United Nations.

U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan welcomed Bolton's appointment and steered clear of the controversy over whether Bolton would be weakened by the recess appointment. "We look forward to working with him as I do with the other 190 ambassadors, and we will welcome him at a time when we are in the midst of major reform," Annan said. He said the manner of Bolton's appointment was Bush's prerogative.

Senate Democratic Leader Harry Reid of Nevada said Bolton was a "seriously flawed and weakened candidate." He charged that Bush "chose to stonewall the Senate" by using a recess appointment.



Issei Kato / Reuters file

John Bolton

Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, R-Tenn., said, "The president did the right thing by sending Mr. Bolton to the U. N. He is a smart, principled and straightforward candidate, and will represent the president and America well on the world stage."

Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass., sharply criticized the move.

"It's a devious maneuver that evades the constitutional requirement of Senate consent and only further darkens the cloud over Mr. Bolton's credibility at the U.N.," Kennedy said."

Sen. Christopher Dodd of Connecticut, a senior Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said, "The president has done a real disservice to our nation by appointing an individual

who lacks to the credibility to further U.S. interests at the United Nations.”

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