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Sam Stein

The Huffington Post

Bolton As McCain's Secretary Of State?

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Would embattled former UN ambassador John Bolton have a place in John McCain's presidential cabinet?

The idea was brewing beneath the veneer of Bolton's address to the Conservative Political Action Conference on Friday.

Revealing information that he said had never before been made public, Bolton discussed how McCain secretly tried to shepherd his nomination to the United Nations -- a nomination that was held up in Congress over Bolton's controversial anti-UN statements and policies.

"He was very active behind the scenes," said Bolton, who was ultimately sent to the UN via a presidential recess appointment. "He thought I was the type of ambassador that ought to represent the United States at the United Nations."

Addressing an audience already skeptical of McCain's presidential nomination, Bolton offered a defense of the senator. Mostly, however, his argument amounted to criticisms of the Democratic contenders, Sens. Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton.

"The person who takes office on January 20, 2009 has to be prepared to be commander-in-chief immediately," said Bolton. "We cannot have a president who needs on-the-job training, nor a president who has problems dealing with a little bit of stress."

Even prior to the speech the possibility of a Bolton cabinet position was being batted around. The introductory speaker, Ken Timmerman, referred to the former UN Ambassador as both a "warrior of light," and "our next Secretary of State."

But Bolton himself hinted at gaps between his and McCain's outlook on foreign affairs. Without addressing the Arizona Republican by name, he warned against the ratification of the International Criminal Court, a policy anathema in conservative circles but to which McCain has offered tepid support. And after his speech was over, he deflected questions about serving as a McCain adviser or cabinet officer.

"I really don't think about that and really shouldn't think about that. The first thing we need to do is win the election," said Bolton. "I think, from talking to people here, he has a lot of work to do... in terms of bringing everybody on board."

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