

In his own words: John Bolton's views on world issues

US president's outspoken new security adviser is known for his hardline stances on American foreign policy



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Former US Ambassador to the United Nations John Bolton speaks at the Conservative Political Action Conference in Oxon Hill, Maryland, on February 24, 2017. Joshua Roberts / Reuters

Former United Nations ambassador John Bolton is the latest foreign policy hawk to [join Donald Trump's administration](#), replacing HR McMaster as national security adviser. A fierce supporter of the 2003 invasion of Iraq and frequent commentator on Fox News, his views on dealing with hot spots such as Iran and North Korea have sparked controversy.

Below is a selection of his recent comments on foreign policy challenges facing the United States:

Iran nuclear deal

"I think it's a strategic debacle for the United States. You can always tinker around the edges, and the question is whether putting lipstick on a pig is really going to make a difference here. I think the answer to that's clearly no." - March 20 on Fox News.

"The inconvenient truth is that only military action like Israel's 1981 attack on Saddam Hussein's Osirak reactor in Iraq or its 2007 destruction of a Syrian reactor, designed and built by North Korea, can accomplish what is required. Time is terribly short, but a strike can still succeed." - March 2015 in a *New York Times* op-ed titled "To Stop Iran's Bomb, Bomb Iran".

North Korea's weapons programme

"It is perfectly legitimate for the United States to respond to the current 'necessity' posed by North Korea's nuclear weapons by striking first." - February 28 in a *Wall Street Journal* commentary titled "The Legal Case for Striking North Korea First". He added: "Given the gaps in US intelligence about North Korea, we should not wait until the very last minute."

"How do you know the North Koreans are lying? Because their lips are moving." - March 9 on Fox News.

"I think the only diplomatic option left is to end the regime in North Korea by effectively having the South take it over." -- September 2017 on Fox News.

China trade and Taiwan policy

"They're stealing our intellectual property. We're just supposed to sit there, is that the answer? I don't buy it. I am a free trader but I don't think that means just getting pounded into the ground when another country does not abide by the commitments it made." - March 22 on Fox News.

"It is high time to revisit the 'one-China policy' and decide what America thinks it means, 45 years after the Shanghai Communique. Mr Trump has said the policy is negotiable. Negotiation should not mean Washington gives and Beijing takes." - January 2017 in the *Wall Street Journal*, where he also advocated for closer military ties with Taiwan.

Russia

"The recent Russian presidential election was a chance for #Putin to practice election meddling on his own elections so he can do it better elsewhere. We need a long term strategy to deal with countries like #Russia and #China with long standing rulers." - March 21 on Twitter.

"It's an act of defiance. It's saying to London and the other western capitals, 'what are you gonna do about it?' Well, I think there should be a very strong answer to that." - March 15 on Fox News, regarding the poisoning, allegedly by Moscow, of a former Russian spy in the UK.

Syria, Iraq

"Rather than striving to recreate the post-World War I map, Washington should recognise the new geopolitics. The best alternative to the Islamic State in north-eastern Syria and western Iraq is a new, independent Sunni state." - November 2015 in a *New York Times* op-ed, in which Mr Bolton referred to such a state as "Sunni-stan".

"The US ought to abandon or substantially reduce its military support for Iraq's current government. Despite retaining a tripartite veneer of Kurds, Sunni Arabs and Shiite Arabs, the capital is dominated by Shiites loyal to Iran." - June 2017 in the *Wall Street Journal*.

Also in the *Wall Street Journal*, on Syria: "The Trump administration must take a clear-eyed view of Russia's intervention. The Syrian mixing bowl is where confrontation between American and Russian forces looms. Russia's interference, particularly its axis with Mr Assad and Tehran's mullahs, critically threatens the interests of the US, Israel and our Arab friends."

Pakistan

"Putting too much pressure on Pakistan risks further destabilising the already volatile country, tipping it into the hands of domestic radical Islamicists, who grow stronger by the day." - August 2017 in the *Wall Street Journal*, referring to US accusations that Pakistan provides a safe haven for the Afghan Taliban and other groups.

Mr Bolton added that the US should address the question of China in its South Asia policy, holding Beijing "accountable for the misdeeds that helped create the current strategic dangers".

