

JOHN BOLTON TIME WARP

John Bolton, July 21, 2004

Finally, the world is safer today than one year ago because of an event unprecedented in modern history: after years of isolation and being caught up in a web of sanctions, the leader of a regime made a simple, but profound strategic choice he came to the conclusion that his pursuit of weapons of mass destruction made his country and his regime not more, but less secure. It is not just the outside world that has benefited.

[snip]

Colonel Qhadadfi has made a strategic choice to put his people before his unjustified fears of a U.S. invasion.

John Bolton, December 5, 2007

Second, the NIE is internally contradictory and insufficiently supported. It implies that Iran is susceptible to diplomatic persuasion and pressure, yet the only event in 2003 that might have affected Iran was our invasion of Iraq and the overthrow of Saddam Hussein, not exactly a diplomatic pas de deux. As undersecretary of state for arms control in 2003, I know we were nowhere near exerting any significant diplomatic pressure on Iran. Nowhere does the NIE explain its logic on this critical point.

Not to mention the fact that Bolton claims to be ignorant of the pas de deux that the Iranians, at least, attempted in 2003.

In the spring of 2003, shortly before I left government, the Iranian Foreign Ministry sent Washington a detailed proposal for comprehensive negotiations to resolve bilateral differences. The document acknowledged that Iran would have to address concerns about its weapons programs and support for anti-Israeli terrorist organizations. It was presented as having support from all major players in Iran's power structure, including the supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. A conversation I had shortly after leaving the government with a senior conservative Iranian official strongly suggested that this was the case. Unfortunately, the administration's response was to complain that the Swiss diplomats who passed the document from Tehran to Washington were out of line.

Finally, in October 2003, the Europeans got Iran to agree to suspend enrichment in order to pursue talks that might lead to an economic, nuclear and strategic deal. But the Bush administration refused to join the European initiative, ensuring that the talks failed.

I guess Bolton can claim to be ignorant of the pas de deux because it involved icky Europeans. As, I might add, did the Libya agreement.