**Stellar Cast of Critics Slams U.N. as Anti-American, Anti-Israel**

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By: Patrick Goodenough

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On a day when U.N. member states met to endorse the controversial “Durban” declaration against racism and a speech by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad triggered yet another Western walkout, a conference near the U.N. headquarters in New York sent the world body a message – “not in our name.”

Several participants at the “Perils of Global Intolerance” conference raised the issue of ending monetary contributions to the U.N. as long as its actions continue to “delegitimize” Israel.

“Lies and propaganda are running rampant” at the U.N., said Academy Award-winning actor Jon Voight, 72, adding that the U.S. “should discontinue aid to the U.N. as long as there are anti-Semitic people running the roost.”

He challenged the notion that Zionism is racism – a viewpoint that was enshrined in a General Assembly resolution from 1975 until 1991, and which critics say has featured prominently in the U.N.’s 10 year-old “Durban” racism process.

“Zionism is philanthropy, a belief in helping others, a belief in life and freedom,” said Voight. “It is belief in God and good.”

Thursday’s event was hosted by the Hudson Institute and Touro College’s Institute on Human Rights and the Holocaust.

Among the speakers were former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee, former U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. John Bolton, Nobel Peace Prize laureate Elie Wiesel, former New York City Mayor Ed Koch and former Israeli Ambassador to the U.N. Dore Gold.

Others included Harvard professors Ruth Wisse and Alan Dershowitz, Sudanese human rights activist Simon Deng, World Jewish Congress President Ron Lauder, Syrian-born critic of Islam Wafa Sultan and American Islamic Forum for Democracy President Zuhdi Jasser.

Pointing to events at the U.N. – Ahmadinejad’s provocative speech ([full text](http://gadebate.un.org/sites/default/files/gastatements/66/IR_en.pdf)), the “Durban III” meeting, the Palestinian bid for recognition – Bolton said people should not be “shocked about what’s happening.”

“This is not a bad week for the United Nations,” he said. “This is not a momentary flaw on the long march to the sunlit uplands of the U.N.’s future. This is the way the U.N. is every day.”

“You just don’t read about it, you just don’t hear about it in the media,” he continued. “But the pervasiveness of anti-Zionism and anti-Americanism is there as an undercurrent – all the time.”

The former ambassador argued that battles can be won at the U.N. – “if you are prepared to take the necessary steps.”

He recalled Washington’s successful blocking of the PLO’s campaign to obtain membership in U.N. specialized agencies in the late 1980s, achieved by warning that the U.S. would cut off funding to any agency that enhanced the status of the PLO in any way.

“This isn’t hard to figure out:  It you want the United States to be listened to in the United Nations context, talk about money. It’s amazing what a bracing attitude you can get from doing it.”

Bolton said if the U.S. government had been willing to do so in response to the current Palestinian recognition initiative, “we wouldn’t be talking about this today.”

“If we had been willing to threaten to cut off funding for the U.N. Human Rights Council, for its activities in support of Durban III, we might have had a broader impact there as well,” he added.

“If you’re not willing to act on behalf of your principles, others will draw the inference that you really don’t care about it that much.”

**‘Confusing participation with action’**

A Canadian government minister provided some of the most stinging criticism of the U.N. and Durban III.

“If there’s one thing the self-appointed defenders of human rights can’t get enough of, it’s camping out in five star hotels in New York while slinging abuse at America and its allies,” said Jason Kenney, Canada’s citizenship, immigration and multiculturalism minister.

Kenney drew applause as he described how his government deals with the U.N.

“Canada will no longer make the mistake of confusing process with results, or participation with action,” he said. “Most importantly, we will not be afraid to stand on principle and defend our own interests and those of our friends.”

Canada was the first country to announce its withdrawal from the Durban III event, leading the way for the U.S. and more than a dozen others to do so. Canada was also the first to say it would stay away from the previous Durban conference, in Geneva in 2009.

In a similar move last July, Ottawa said it was temporarily boycotting the U.N.-linked Conference on Disarmament to protest North Korea’s appointment as rotating president. (The Obama administration, by contrast, [played down the significance](http://www.cnsnews.com/news/article/us-won-t-make-big-deal-n-korea-chairing-disarmament-body) of the North Korean leadership post and said it would not make a “big deal” about it.)

**‘A president with no concept’**

In his remarks to the conference, Huckabee cited President Obama’s speech to the General Assembly on Wednesday.

Watching the speech, Huckabee said, he had thought, “here was a man who had no medicine; here was a man who only had yet another speech.”

“And his speech, like so many lately, [was] filled with words that almost make it appear that he believes that if he applies his speech to the ills of humanity, that somehow his speech will make it all better,” he said. “Mr. Obama, you cannot speech your way into resolving the deep conflicts of the Middle East and the world.”

Huckabee also referred to the recent [shock election victory](http://www.cnsnews.com/news/article/jewish-activists-differ-was-israel-factor-republican-bob-turner-s-win) of a Republican in a historically Democratic, heavily Jewish congressional district in New York City.

That outcome, he said, sent a message that “the money and the votes are no longer going to be taken for granted in the Jewish community, because people are aware that this is a president who clearly has no concept of exactly what is at stake in the constant world of strife that goes on in the Middle East.”

Wrapping up the event, conference organizer Anne Bayefsky said the meeting had been held “to shine a light of day” on what was happening at the U.N. nearby – “to ensure that the dots between hate and violence are seared in our collective minds.”

“We said, ‘no, not in our name,’” she said. “Now it’s time to translate that resounding ‘no’ into a political message, for the United Nations and democracies around the world.”