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Statement by the Honorable John R. Bolton, Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations, in the General Assembly on the Resumed 10th Emergency Special Session on Illegal Israeli Actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the Rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, November 17, 2006

Madam President,

Just yesterday the Third Committee passed a resolution stressing the need to avoid politically motivated and biased-country specific human rights resolutions. It called upon member states to resist the "selective targeting of individual countries" and to avoid "double standards". To be sure, many of the sponsors of that resolution are notorious abusers of human rights themselves, and were seeking to deflect criticism of their own policies. But we find it deeply ironic that here we are, just one day after the Third Committee called upon member states to act with "impartiality and objectivity", discussing a highly politically motivated and biased-country specific resolution against a country that has for decades been the target of the General Assembly -- Israel.

The United States will vote against this resolution. Once again, the General Assembly, meeting in this Emergency Special Session, is presented with a one-sided, unbalanced resolution addressing the Israel-Palestinian conflict. This resolution, like others before it, masks an agenda that has little to do with the Israel-Palestinian conflict, which in any event is not addressed in an honest and even-handed manner. This resolution's deficiencies are numerous and familiar. Because this resolution fails to take a realistic, fair, and constructive approach to the Israel-

Palestinian conflict, it will fail to advance the aspirations of the Palestinian and Israeli people for a more secure, peaceful, and prosperous life, a goal so many of us share.

Unfortunately, this type of resolution serves only to exacerbate tensions by serving the interests of elements hostile to Israel's inalienable and recognized right to exist. In doing so, it deepens suspicions about the United Nations that will lead many to conclude that the organization is incapable of playing a helpful role in the region.

The challenge of advancing toward the vision of two states, Israel and Palestine, living side-by-side in peace and security, requires serious and determined efforts by the parties and the constructive support of countries in the region and the international community. Regrettably, we continue to see little in the way of constructive support for genuine efforts to move toward the two-state goal.

However, in a larger sense, the United Nations must confront a more significant question - that of its relevance and utility in confronting the vast array of global challenges in the twenty-first century. We believe that the United Nations is ill served when its members seek to transform the organization into a forum that is little more than a self-serving and polemical attack against Israel or the United States. Moreover, the nature of group dynamics in this organization is seriously hampering the principles on which this organization was founded. While we know there are many who would prefer to see improved cooperation, a more effective General Assembly, and relevance of our actions to the real world, this resolution is another

example of moderate elements being held hostage by a few extreme states or those whose parochial political agendas distort the ostensible purpose of this and other resolutions.

Since its inception earlier this year, the Human Rights Council, has quickly fallen into the same trap and de-legitimized itself by focusing attention almost exclusively on Israel. Meanwhile, it has failed to address real human rights abuses in Burma, Darfur, the DPRK, and other countries. Sadly, the Human Rights Council appears to be developing into an organ that is worse on this score than its predecessor.

This problem of anti-Israel is not unique to the Human Rights Council. It is endemic to the culture of the United Nations. It is a decades-old, systemic problem that transcends the whole panoply of UN organizations and agencies. Beyond the General Assembly, the Security Council, and the Human Rights Council, the sponsors of today's resolution have diverted the efforts of non-political UN bodies such as UNESCO, the International Telecommunications Union, the International Postal Union, and the International Labor Organization with one-sided polemics irrelevant and indeed harmful to the non-political mandates of these agencies, and unhelpful to the cause of the Palestinian people and regional peace. These efforts serve only to erode the credibility of the United Nations and undermine the goal of resolving the underlying conflict.

The consequences of this persistent, unconstructive, biased approach are painfully clear - not one single Palestinian is helped and the United Nations continues to be discredited by its

inability to confront the serious challenge of the Israel-Palestinian conflict in a serious, responsible manner.

Member states must choose. Do we desire a viable United Nations system, composed of agencies respected for their role in conflict resolution, human rights, economic development, education and culture, or will we continue to acquiesce to a narrow agenda of bias, stalemate, and polemics? Member States must demonstrate the will to break with the past and make the United Nations a relevant voice not only for the Israel-Palestinian conflict, but for all the conflicts and issues worldwide that are equally in need of the UN's attention.