

Letter to the Editor

Cautious Pessimism

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It is all very well for Nancy Soderberg to urge Canadians to give George Bush the benefit of the doubt (Is Bush Worth a Second Look?) in his final term, but the most recent evidence is not encouraging.

He has given a slap in the face to the rest of the world by proposing to appoint as US ambassador to the United Nations John Bolton – one of the most extreme Washington nationalists who denounces international law as an affront to American sovereignty.

He has alarmed the global development community by nominating as president of the World Bank Paul Wolfowitz – the Pentagon unilateralist who masterminded the US war in Iraq.

Even at today's 90-minute summit in Texas, it is Bush's obsession with security against terrorism that dominates the trilateral agenda. Mexico's concerns about the draconian treatment of its undocumented emigrants or Canadian frustration about the US government's NAFTA-illegal duties on softwood lumber may come up at lunch on the Crawford ranch, if at all.

Given these ominous signals, the second look we give George Bush for the next four years should be one of continuing caution.