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USA

From: David Manning  
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PRIME MINISTER

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## IRAQ: CONVERSATION WITH CONDI RICE

I spent twenty minutes on the phone with Condi this morning. We discussed the contents and handling of a draft UNSCR.

I said that:

- The draft must not be a transparent device to justify military action. The focus must be the return of Inspectors, and WMD. If Bush tabled something that could not easily be dismissed as a transparent pretext for immediate military action, there would be a wide measure of international support. Aznar and Berlusconi had told you as much yesterday when you were in Spain. I was confident that a lot of other European leaders would rally to such a Resolution too.
- This did not mean that the Resolution should not be tough on Saddam. But it would need nice judgement and strong nerves to get the balance right. We would need to build elements into the draft as part of the strategy. Once the international community had signed up, we would be in a different place.
- The Russians would be key. It was essential that Bush did a great deal of heavy lifting with Putin before the Resolution was tabled.

.. We had seen Bush

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do this over, eg, ABMT, the NATO/Russia Council, US deployments in Central Asia, etc.

- France would also be crucial to the argument. You were talking to Chirac today and would let Bush have an account of the conversation tomorrow. Personally, I thought that the French would rally to a well constructed, even if tough, UN Resolution, as long as they believed that the US purpose in tabling it was genuine.
- We needed a Resolution that made it clear that this was Saddam's last chance. But the question of an ultimatum would need great care. It might be worth adopting a strategy in two parts: an initial Resolution that stipulated strict conditions with the implication that further action would follow swiftly if these were not met. Thereafter, if Saddam failed to fulfil the conditions, we would need a second Resolution containing an ultimatum. Countries that had supported the first Resolution would find it correspondingly harder to oppose the second. I stressed that these were preliminary thoughts, and that you would want to explore the pros and cons of an ultimatum, and its timing, when you saw Bush tomorrow.

Condi did not contest any of this. She said that the current plan was for the President's speech at the UNGA on 12 September to focus on a clear demand that Iraq must forswear WMD. This would be accompanied by the announcement that the Americans were tabling a draft Resolution. Current White House thinking was that this should include the following (I was able to scribble down only the core points):

- There must be full Iraqi WMD disarmament under the international supervision of the Security Council.
- There must be unrestricted access for UNMOVIC throughout Iraq.
- "Witnesses" to the WMD programme must be free to leave and be interviewed outside Iraq, by UNMOVIC, at any time.
- The Inspectors must be empowered to destroy any prohibited material that they discovered.

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- UNMOVIC must have force protection.
- The Iraqis must accept any requirements for no-fly or no-drive zones.
- Saddam must accept the presence of the UN humanitarian agencies, and human rights monitors, in Iraq.
- Saddam must undertake not to support terrorism, to cease the oppression of the Iraqi population; to give a full account of all those still missing from the Gulf War; and to cease the illicit trading of oil.
- The Resolution would conclude by saying that if Saddam adhered to these conditions, it would bring about a new openness, and a new domestic political situation. This would in turn lead to a new international relationship with Iraq.

I said that this sounded pretty good at first hearing. Force protection for UNMOVIC would be a hard sell (

    ). We should see what the traffic would bear. I repeated that we would need negotiating fat that could be given to the Russians. If necessary we might put force protection in this category. Condi agreed. I welcomed the fact that the Administration were not now thinking of specifically stipulating regime change. Condi said that, as we had discussed before, Saddam's acceptance of the other conditions would lead to a radically different regime anyway. I said that we should find some way, either in the Resolution or in accompanying speeches, of emphasising that our quarrel was with Saddam not with the Iraqi people. Our aim should be to isolate him, as we had tried to isolate Milosovic, while making it clear that we looked forward to welcoming the Iraqi people back into the international mainstream. Condi agreed.

I asked about Condi's earlier ideas for elections. I said stipulating these in the Resolution would kill it. The Chinese would be among those who would oppose. Condi agreed. The Administration had discarded the idea.

### Comment

As I said to you afterwards, further encouragement. White House thinking about the contents of the Resolution has come back to earth and looks broadly plausible. And their view of handling (a serious text, working with Putin etc)

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seems close to ours. We must hope all this survives Cheney and the NSC meeting starting this evening. But on this evidence, the Administration may now be ready to make a genuine effort to go the UN route. Cementing this at Camp David will be a real prize.



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