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cc: Peter Ricketts

Simon Fraser

Thanks - I don't think we should be putting to Ministers a commentary, on the different scenarios, though I don't disagree with you. I think you should focus on the & what we should do to put the pieces together afterwards - eg para 10 onwards - which will vary a bit, though not fundamentally, depend on where we end up. When we know where we are, in a week or so's time, we should consider a submission to Ministers with proposals: Peter Ricketts' Minute is relevant here too. 18/3

Michael Jay

MICHAEL JAY

## IRAQ: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM

1. You asked for thoughts on this. DSI have done some rudimentary analysis of short-term risks and opportunities which I attach. This minute looks a bit further. I have not copied it widely.
2. There are, broadly speaking, five scenarios:
  - (i) we get a second Resolution with a majority and no veto, and then launch a military campaign.
  - (ii) The US (and probably the UK) proceed to a military campaign with no second Resolution - ie bypassing further Security Council action.
  - (iii) We secure a majority for a Resolution but it is vetoed by one or more of the permanent members - and then the US (and UK) proceed to military action.
  - (iv) We fail to secure a majority for a Resolution in the Security Council (and the vote against includes some veto powers) and then the US (and UK) proceed to military action.
  - (v) We do not act with the US, either for political or legal reasons.
3. As I see it, in purely international terms, the above list is in descending order of preference, but others disagree on the relative disadvantages of (ii) and (iii). In domestic political terms option (ii) would be worse than (iii) for the Government.
4. What are the implications? There is one general condition affecting all of the following analysis. The short and long-term political consequences will depend on the success of the military action, the post-War political settlement and what we discover about Saddam. The better these go the more we may get away with.

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5. Under the **first scenario** described above the political damage would be contained. UN processes would have been observed and there would be international backing for military action. This scenario, however, at present looks unlikely.

6. Under the **second scenario** the UN would have been sidelined. Its role would have been weakened but its procedures would not have been directly violated. The implications would be more damaging than in the broadly comparable case of Kosovo because there is less international support for military action against Iraq. But the damage should be reparable. The French and Germans might privately prefer this scenario. However there would be intense short-term criticism of the US and UK. Other consequences, also true for scenarios (iii) and (iv), would include:

- A serious division in Europe which would not be easily overcome.
- Strong opposition in domestic public opinion including the Labour Party, and possible failure to secure a House of Commons majority.
- The risk of extreme reactions in the region and a heightened risk of terrorist action against Britain and the US.
- Spill over into other international fora, especially WTO/Doha.
- Difficulty pulling people together for Iraq aftermath action.

7. The **third scenario** would have additional serious implications for the international legal system. The US (and UK) would go into military conflict without UN authority. A veto (or more than one veto) would have been overruled in doing so – including by Britain. Among the international ramifications in addition to those mentioned in paragraph 6 we could also expect:

- A strong reaction from the other Permanent members, possibly leading to an “Anglo-Saxons versus the rest” mentality in the Security Council.
- A fundamental weakening of the UN Security Council veto – notably in the longer term of the British veto, both because its weight is most directly comparable with that of the French veto and because the British would have been associated with the act of overriding the veto(s).
- In the longer-term, a serious weakening of the credibility of our attempt to advance Security Council reform.
- Refusal by the Americans in the future to seek multilateral endorsement.

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8. All these arguments would also apply in the case of the **fourth scenario**. In addition there would be a stronger element of North/South division because the US (and UK) would be seen to be acting against the majority will of the Security Council in addition to the veto of one or more Permanent Members.

9. If, **fifth scenario**, we did not act with the Americans the consequences for our relations with them would be serious, and we would also have lost the EU debate comprehensively. The domestic political repercussions would be enormous. We would need to rebuild in both Europe and the US.

#### Implications for UK policy

10. The prospects under most scenarios are disturbing. Britain would be seen to have played a leading role in the outcome. We pushed the US to take the issue to the UN in the name of upholding the international system. If we were then to be thought to ignore the UN system in supporting US military action our credibility both as mediators with Washington and as supporters of the UN would be damaged.

11. Our position in the future would be potentially more uncomfortable if we came under pressure to support a wider American agenda in the Middle East, for example including heavy pressure on Iran and Syria with the implicit threat of force. There would also be implications in other areas of policy such as the EU Convention, the future of ESDP and our aspirations to Euro membership.

12. We therefore need a positive agenda so that we can be seen to be working for a restoration of transatlantic relations, European unity and the UN. This should include the following:

- (a) Strong pressure for European involvement in Iraq day after, including the French and Germans, and insistence that this should be under UN auspices.
- (b) Ring fencing as far as possible other areas of EU cooperation including ESDP operations in Macedonia and/or Bosnia.
- (c) Other strong signals of pro-European policy orientation, including a major CFSP policy initiative (eg on Arab reform) or a constitutional initiative in the Convention to signal that we continue to have ambitions in and for Europe.
- (d) Working in a more concerted way on the Americans to call in the debt they would have to us – for example for a really serious initiative on the Middle East Peace Process this year; US movement in the EU's direction on Kyoto and more public partnership on global issues.

13. We should be cautious about the idea of launching a serious initiative on Security Council reform on the back of this crisis unless we are prepared to risk

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our own veto. We would be acting from a position of weakness, and the prospects of retaining our existing veto powers in a new arrangement would surely be reduced. Nevertheless we would need to come forward with some new clear thinking about international structures for dealing with non-proliferation and the formation of coalitions of the willing within consenting international structures.



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Director for Strategy and Innovation

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## IRAQ – RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

1. In 1991 we were caught out by the speed at which the situation unfolded. We were consequently less effective than we should have been in dealing with the risks success created and in taking advantage of the opportunities.
2. It might be interesting to produce a quick register of the risks and opportunities of quick, successful, UN-sanctioned military action leading to the installation in Iraq of an international administration (ie a best case scenario). This may help us to focus on some of the issues we may confront quite early on the morning after.
3. We have identified the following risks, almost all of which have been considered elsewhere:-

### Iraq internal

- Internal rebellion; major unrest
- External military intervention (eg by Turkey; Iran)
- Power vacuum (providing ideal conditions for criminal elements; drugs; people-trafficking)
- Iraqi oil fields rendered unusable

### Regional

- Pressure on weak governments in the region
- Israelis use the opportunity to escalate activities (eg settlement building)
- Unpredictable US agenda for the region after Iraq

### General

- Terrorist attacks - in the region or elsewhere
- Increased popular support for terrorism
- Leakage of WMD materiel and expertise (to eg Syria)
- Countries close to developing WMD accelerate programmes (Iran?)
- General atmosphere makes progress on international initiatives difficult (eg Cancun)
- Overstretch – making it hard to deal with other problems (eg Sierra Leone; Afghanistan; India/Pakistan)

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- Encourages US pre-emptive action elsewhere
- International system weakened in the long term.

4. Less thought has been given to the opportunities, which we have identified as follows:-

#### Regional

- MEPP: possible to get things moving again (but are the Americans willing...)
- Political/economic reform in the Arab World: what happens in Iraq will inevitably have an impact elsewhere. A new era in the region
- Kurdish issue: scope for moving this in the right direction (but perhaps not too far...)
- New economic/trade opportunities in Iraq and elsewhere
- Get US troops out of Saudi

#### General

- Non-proliferation: we will have shown what we are prepared to do to tackle proliferation. Scope to increase pressure on the problem cases?
- Renewed capacity to tackle other important issues (eg North Korea, Zimbabwe, India/Pak, European integration)
- Public perceptions: opportunity to change perceptions, both in the UK and more widely, of how we should tackle security threats. (This was one of the points which came up at the Leadership Conference.)
- Global economic recovery: may be influenced by a sense of optimism
- International system: opportunity to push ahead with restructuring and reform. UN reinforced.

4. What impact would seeking and failing to get a second resolution have on these risks and opportunities? It would increase a lot of the specific risks identified above by:-

- weakening the international legitimacy of US-led action (so eg increased risk of terrorism; pressure on regional governments);
- reducing the effectiveness of any Day After work (so eg increased chance of a power vacuum forming in parts of Iraq or external intervention);
- damaging the UN and the wider international system;
- damaging wider UK policy interests especially in Europe but also elsewhere.

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6. These wider consequences are considered in the covering minute.



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