

CONFIDENTIAL

PERSONAL : MIPT: IRAQ: DEVELOPMENTS ON 16 MARCH
From: UKMIS NEW YORK

TO DESKBY 170500Z FCO
TELNO 453
OF 170147Z MARCH 03
INFO IMMEDIATE CABINET OFFICE, CANBERRA, HQDSF, MODUK
INFO IMMEDIATE PJHQUK, SECURITY COUNCIL POSTS,

Elements of Statement on Iraq - 17 March

- As you know, we have worked very hard in the last few days in a final effort to seek a Council consensus on Iraq. In an effort to reunite the Council, I proposed last week an ultimatum which would challenge Iraq to take a strategic decision to disarm.

- There were three key elements to the compromise I proposed:

- tough but realisable tests, including a first-ever unequivocal commitment to disarmament by Saddam Hussein;

- a realistic but tight timetable for completion of those tests given the urgent need for Iraq to comply after 12 years of prevarication;

- and, in line with Resolution 1441, an understanding that if Iraq failed the tests, further steps could not be blocked by an unreasonable veto in the Council.

- Having held further discussions with Council members over the weekend and in the last few hours, we have had to conclude that Council consensus will not be possible in line with Resolution 1441. One country in particular has underlined its intention to veto any ultimatum "no matter what the circumstances". That country rejected our proposed compromise before even the Iraqi government itself and has put forward suggestions that would walk away from the unanimous agreement of the Council in 1441 - those suggestions would amount to no ultimatum/no pressure/and no disarmament;

- Given this situation, we have agreed that we will not pursue a vote on the draft UK/US/Spanish resolution in blue;

- The communiques and press statements that issued at the Azores summit explain the position of our governments on the way forward. Now that the Council has convened to "consider the situation and the need for full compliance" as required under OP12 of Resolution 1441, the co-sponsors reserve their right to take their own steps to secure the disarmament of Iraq.

Contact: or on Firecrest

GREENSTOCK

Sent by UKMIS NEW YORK on 17-03-2003 01:47

Received by No10 on 17-03-2003 03:19