



British Embassy
Moscow

From the Ambassador

Sir Roderic Lyne KBE CMG

10 Smolenskaya Naberezhnaya
Moscow 121099

Telephone:

Facsimile:

E-Mail:

6 March 2003

Peter Ricketts Esq CMG
Political Director
FCO

Dear Peter,

**IRAQ/RUSSIA: IVANOV'S VISIT, THE END GAME, AND THE PRIME MINISTER'S
CALL TO PUTIN THIS EVENING**

1. Tony Brenton reports (Washington tel. 294) that the Americans are sanguine about avoiding a Russian veto. As you know, I am less sanguine – unless the French budge. It is very hard for the Russians to move out in front of the French; and, as Ivanov's behaviour suggested yesterday, they are still in a French armlock. They feel relatively safe behind the French rampart: they assume the worst flak will hit the French and the Germans.
2. I doubt if Ivanov knows for certain where Putin will come out. The game Ivanov is playing (by teaming up with the Franco-German front, and in his endless public warnings) is:
 - (a) to try to help deny us 9 positive votes on a Resolution authorising war, on the assumption that the Resolution will not then be put to a vote, and that Russia can avoid a definite position. Certainly it is their aim, as the Foreign Secretary told Colin Powell, to try to avoid being on the opposite pole to us. Ivanov will not mind using any tactical device to complicate the situation in order to avoid a defining moment.
 - (b)
- 3.
4. On the debit side, Ivanov will have reported that, despite his warnings of a veto, the atmospherics were good, confirming his belief that "whatever happened on Iraq, Russia would



remain partners with us and the US" and that "after some time, we would be together in the same team again".

5. He will also have reported – to Villepin and Fischer, as well as to Putin – that we are not totally confident, and are looking at possible concessions over language.

6. So where do we go from here?

7. I have just heard that the PM will be speaking to Putin at 1900 London time. I don't know what particular points you have in mind, but, from here, the key is:

- to stay in tandem with Washington (Condi's tough line with Sergei Ivanov has registered)
- to reiterate the firmness of our stance (in case Ivanov has blurred the message)
- to get across to Putin that he can't avoid a decision
- to underline that the stakes are very high, and that a veto would carry much more downside than Ivanov suggests (especially in Washington)
- to offer Putin some carrot-embedded reasons of principle to justify support for us
- and – if available – to offer a small concession (i.e. as proposed to Ivanov), but obviously well short of the 1-2 months for which Ivanov bid.

8. I have had a go at recasting the arguments of principle – essentially the message the PM gave Ivanov, with knobs on. See annex.

9. If Putin shows an interest in the concession, it will have to be made clear that this is a last chance for the Russians to come to an agreement with us, not the beginning of a new round of haggling in New York. We should try if possible to negotiate with the Kremlin,

. I note that the PM has offered to see Putin at any point. He presumably will not wish to do so unless we are fairly certain of success. An alternative would be to ask Putin to receive the Foreign Secretary as an emissary. (Another alternative would be a visit by David Manning, but in protocol terms it would be harder for Putin to see him; and Prikhodko's behaviour to the Americans a week ago was truculent.)

yours ever,

Roderic

Roderic Lyne

DECLASSIFIED

CONFIDENTIAL

IRAQ: ARGUMENTS TO USE WITH PUTIN

Build-up

- Crystal clear to us that Saddam does not intend to disarm/comply with UN – now - or at any time in the future. (Your experts must know this too.)
- Only two options: either he capitulates under pressure of imminent attack and certain defeat; or force.
- Divisions in the international community and proposals for delay are simply encouraging Saddam to ignore Arab pressure to go into exile, ignore the realities of his situation, and think, if he plays for time, the pressure will go away.
- It won't. Patience is fast running out in Washington.

Pitch

- We and the Americans are going to put the Resolution to a vote [next week etc]. We have the positive votes we need.
- I know this will be awkward for you, but your support is crucial.
- This isn't just about Russia's relations with America and Britain, though I am very concerned about the damage that would be done, if we had a major split, to all that you and I have achieved over the past three years and want to go on achieving. And I'm also concerned about the mood in Washington. People are going to be judged on whether they stand with Saddam or Bush.
- But it's more than that. It's about two fundamental questions of principle which will determine what will happen in the world for years to come.
- The first is proliferation. We have a very big problem, and it's getting worse. I am seriously worried about Iran, about Libya, about North Korea of course, and about the potential risks in Pakistan. The international community has let this drift and there's trouble in store. We have to start turning the proliferators around before it's too late. We have to work together on this. We can't go around attacking everyone; but if Iraq gets away with it, it's open house for everyone.

CONFIDENTIAL

DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED

CONFIDENTIAL

- If we don't want 5 or 10 more states on our doorstep with NBC, we've got to send the message that the Iraqi threat is over. Dealing with it – through capitulation or a quick, effective military operation – will help us to stabilise the Middle East (it's what the moderate Arabs privately want). And, with this behind us, we can get together to bring the full range of diplomatic pressures to bear on those who proliferate or support terrorism.
- The second principle is the multilateral approach. This now hangs in the balance. I have persuaded George Bush to do this through the UN because I want to preserve the Security Council and I want the UN – and all of us, Russia included – to have a say in what happens thereafter in and around Iraq. I think that's as much in Russia's interest as in the UK's. But, if the Resolution is vetoed, the Americans aren't going to walk back to the UN in a hurry. There are some people in Washington who'd be only too pleased not to.
- The stakes could not be higher, for all of us. This is a defining moment.

[Resolution : Variant on OP 1 / Private Understanding / Emissary?]

CONFIDENTIAL

DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED
CONFIDENTIAL AND PERSONAL



cc:

Sir David Manning KCMG
No 10 Downing Street

Matthew Rycroft Esq
No 10 Downing Street

Sir Jeremy Greenstock KCMG
UKMis New York

Sir John Holmes KCB CVO CMG
Paris

Sir Paul Lever KCMG
Berlin

Tony Brenton Esq
Washington