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SUBJECT: PERSONAL IRAQ: 19 FEBRUARY

PART ONE OF TWO

SUMMARY

1. USUN set to commend a light Iraq resolution to Powell (MIFT) along with my arguments that our tabling of the text should start a period of debate where we should focus on Iraq's failure voluntarily to disarm rather than on individual elements of co-operation. We agree that the text should be co-sponsored by the UK, US and Spain, with the UK leading in introducing it. We also agree that it should be put into blue (near final form) immediately. Negroponte understands our preference for tabling the text on 24 January but asks how Bush and Aznar can avoid saying something to the press on 22 January.

2. I signal our general approach to Blix who seems content (though unhappy with the sort of deadline we envisage). He says that UNMOVIC will write to Iraq on missiles within the next 24 hours. He adds that UNMOVIC has just received an "amazingly" detailed document on persons involved in the destruction of biological weapons which could be significant. I lobby Valdes (Chile) and Zinser (Mexico) who both want more time to judge for themselves whether inspections are fruitless, and underline Iraq's failure voluntarily to disarm with the press.

DETAIL

3. This summarises our progress on an Iraq resolution on 19 February.

PAGE 1
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Negroponte

4. At the beginning of the day, on Powell's instructions, Negroponte asked me what the lightest resolution we would need looked like. Based on current legal advice from London, we produced the text in MIFT.

5. I went to see Negroponte with the text later in the day. He gave me USUN's version of a minimalist resolution (by fax to Ricketts, Chaplin and Pattison). I said my emerging thinking was that the UKMIS draft was the right text to table. It was thin on anything with which Council members could argue and would be less frightening to the middle ground. Unlike the US draft it did not refer to serious consequences in the operative part and, instead of relying on OP4 of 1441, relied on OP1 of 1441, re-establishing the material breach suspended in OP2 of 1441. We should issue the draft to signal that we intended to move to a final debate. We should seek to focus that debate not on individual elements of co-operation but on the failure by Iraq to voluntarily disarm (e.g. in the South African model). We needed to get ourselves in a position where we were not thrown off course by individual benchmarks or judgements by Blix. The approach in the UKMIS draft, stressing that Iraq had failed to take its final opportunity, would also have resonance in terms of a final opportunity for the UN. In introducing the text we would need to make a powerful statement about what 1441 had asked for and how this had been twisted into partial, procedural, and grudging co-operation from Iraq; it was clear that substantive, active, and voluntary co-operation was not happening; if that remained the case at the end of the debate (we did not yet have to set an explicit end date) we should vote on this text. I was also inclined to see how much further information, including intelligence, I could get authority to disclose: it would help to give the real picture about Iraq's concealment of WMD.

6. Cunningham said he liked it. The rationale I advocated was the right one. As long as it was enough for the UK, he did not think Washington would have a problem. It got to the central point - Iraq had blown its final opportunity. Negroponte was also attracted to the text, and the fact that it drew on OPs 1 and 2 of 1441. He would advocate it to Powell. Rostow (USUN Legal Adviser) wondered whether people would dispute the central premise - that the final opportunity was now over. I said that this was where we would have to define our terms carefully: voluntary

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MDHIAN 8922

disarmament was not happening.

7. We then touched on the following:

- while we agreed that gentle language would make a difference for a number of middle ground members, I underlined it would not help for all of them. Zinzer (Mexico) and Valdes (Chile) (see below) had made clear that they wanted fuller information from inspections - and the consequent time - so to come to their own decision on whether inspections were useless or not;

- we agreed that we should co-sponsor the text along with Spain. The UK should lead in explaining it to the Council. Negroponte was keen we collaborate closely given the huge US equities in this issue;

- we agreed that we should put the text immediately into blue (near final form). I suggested we say that while the text itself was not negotiable, we wanted a full debate on Iraq's willingness to disarm. It was being put into blue for obvious Security Council reasons (i.e. to increase the likelihood that our resolution, rather than an alternative, was voted upon first);

- I said I understood that the President and the Prime Minister had agreed we should table the text on 24 January. We certainly did not want the text launched by Bush and Aznar in Washington, with Blair not present. Negroponte said he understood our sensitivity but would need to consult Powell. Powell was likely to ask you what Bush and Aznar should say at the microphones on 22 January when they knew full well the resolution would be launched within two days. I suggested they simply say that instructions would be sent to their UN Permanent Representatives immediately after the meeting;

- Negroponte said that Powell was interested in having Blix present his quarterly report (due under 1284) on 7 March (i.e. to be the final report on Iraqi co-operation) but understood that I would be locked in the CTC Special Meeting. I said that the CTC would not tie up the Council but was likely to tie up Arias and me. It could not be moved. I thought we could do the Blix presentation on 5 or 6 March. We would then have to work over the weekend of 8-9 March for a vote on 10 March.

Blix

PAGE 3
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16-033
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8. When I saw Blix earlier in the day, I laid out my evolving thoughts on strategy in more general terms. We would want to focus on whether Iraq was choosing voluntarily to disarm - inspections were an instrument for effective verified voluntary disarmament, not a process to make a reluctant disarmer disarm.

9. Blix seemed happy enough with this. He said he would be issuing his decision on missiles to Iraq within the next 24 hours. Their reaction was foreseeable. They would say UNMOVIC was wrong and should test the missiles. UNMOVIC would say that this was not necessary - their capability had been assessed by the experts. We tried to tease out from Blix specifically what his decision on missiles would cover. Blix was not drawn, saying only that Wolf was taking the maximalist line that everything ever "tainted" by association with the missile programme (even light bulbs he suggested ironically) should be destroyed. He appeared to agree with my suggestion that they should stick to the resolutions and "normal" UN practice.

10. Blix continued that nothing had happened on interviews and the analysis of the decree was that this did not add up to much. But UNMOVIC had just received from Iraq a list of those involved in the destruction of WMD on the biological side. This was an "amazingly" detailed account of those who took place in the 1991 destructions, with the names of those involved by category of WMD (he allowed us a glance: five or more names under categories including warheads, R-400, and transport). He acknowledged that interviewees might be scripted but this could also be potentially significant. He also felt that, if Iraq had such detail, surely they had more documentation.

11. Blix said that the college of Commissioners would meet on 24 and 25 February. He would present the "clusters" document on the morning of the 24th, allowing the Commissioners the rest of the day to study it. They would then discuss it on 25 January and he would allow further comments during the course of the week. The document would be finalised by 3 March. Blix did not intend to submit it to the Council - this was an exercise to help UNMOVIC define the key remaining disarmament tasks due under 1284 - but would do so if asked. He thought some in the Council would want it, whether or not the US liked the document. Blix said that, of course, Iraq would say "why didn't you tell us sooner?". I underlined that we were likely to say that, if Iraq did not

PAGE 4

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rapidly demonstrate it was engaging in voluntary disarmament, this document was academic.

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PAGE 5
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PART TWO OF TWO

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12. Blix said he had only given the UK his suggested draft resolution, though he had given a few delegations the accompanying paper (my telno 271). I said that we were likely to go for a much cleaner approach signalling the end game on Iraq. We would say that the Council had to realise that this would be out of the hands of the UN unless it decided that Iraq had to start the process of real disarmament and was willing to authorise force if it did not. Iraq would have to be convinced to disarm within the period of final debate. Blix said he was not averse to a deadline, but he continued to believe that 15 March was not theoretically doable. I said that, once decisions were made, we would be clear with Blix in private what our timelines were. We still hoped to avert the use of force - but we had to be realistic.

Mexico/Chile

13. As part of our exchanges with non-Permanent Members (DPR and I will have talked to all 10 delegations in one from or another this week) I saw Valdes (Chile) and Zinser (Mexico). I said that a draft might be presented to the Council soon, to form the basis of final decisions. I set out what was at stake. They both described their capitals' difficulties in coming to a determination of what was truly a material breach. They thoroughly disliked being courted by opposing sides, with no independent benchmarks or facts to guide them. Neither would like to be the 9th vote. World opinion was now focussing on the horrid

PAGE 1

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implications of war: how could their Governments vote to authorise it on the present evidence? Time and enhanced inspection powers were attractive, not because Iraq could be disarmed that way, but because a firmer foundation for a final decision would then be available. Short of this, they could not see their Governments being able to choose between the US and France/Germany. I said I understood. But we would set out some very telling arguments why the 1441 route was closing. They would then have to come to a view.

Press Comment

14. Since no members of the Council made an intervention in the Open Debate, and since Negroponte had used the UN microphone on 18 February to keep our main points in view against the prevailing wind, I made a brief public statement on 19 February. I said that everyone wanted both full disarmament and no war, but no-one had said how in the circumstances. The vital ingredient set out by 1441 was Iraq's voluntary disarmament. Inspections were an instrument, not a substitute, for that. Unless that vital ingredient turned up in weeks not months, the Council would have to conclude that its resolutions were being defied. Questions followed: I ducked any specific steer on what draft resolution or when. (Full transcript to News Department).

COMMENT

15. Some progress today, not towards the actual securing of a second resolution but towards a sensible strategy for initiating the end-game. We have tested the Blix benchmark possibilities and, separately from but concurrently with the Americans, set them aside as too risky. Blix is forewarned and should not be surprised when we take action.

The decisions he is coming to on missile destruction are important, and we want him to stay tough for all of that.

16. At least within USUN, the Americans are responding to our tactical suggestions and not over-acting with other Council Members. We need to see whether the Washington system can do likewise.

Desk Officer for Iraq:

and on

PAGE 2
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