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From: David Manning
Date: 11 September 2002

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PRIME MINISTER

cc: Jonathan Powell
Alastair Campbell
Sally Morgan
Stephen Wall
Anna Wechsberg
Matthew Rycroft

IRAQ: CONVERSATION WITH CONDI RICE

As you know, I managed to speak briefly to Condi at 1215 hrs.

I thanked her for sending us the draft of Bush's UNGA speech tomorrow. It made a strong and persuasive case about the horrors of Saddam and his regime, and the threat that he posed to the international community. But in my view it lacked an ending. Bush needed to expand the concluding sentence on the role of the UN. The way to do this was to announce that he would be proposing a new UNSCR within the next few days. This would have immediate impact at the UN, and great resonance in Europe and more widely. At present the speech left us hanging. We knew what Bush was against but it was, at best, only implicit as to what he thought the UN should do about it.

Condi asked whether you would share this reaction. I said that you had read the speech. I was confident that this was your view too. As I had said to her yesterday, the President should use the speech to make a virtue of going the UN route so that we could carry as much of the international community with us as possible. A concluding commitment to a new Resolution would be the best possible hook.

Condi said that she took the point. She would speak to the President right away. She thought that "he would probably be ready to do this for the Prime Minister".

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Comment

Fingers crossed. It will make a huge difference if Bush personally announces that the US intention is to ask for a new Resolution. We shall have to manage if he leaves it to Colin Powell, but this will be very much second best.



DAVID MANNING

NB We should not mention to any of our US interlocutors that the White House has sent us the speech; nor that I have pressed them to include an explicit commitment to a new UNSCR.

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