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Subject: OUTTELS:DD:CONF:PERSONAL PERSONAL: IRAQ: FOREIGN
SECRETARY'S CONVERSATION:NYMIS/FCOLN-16195631
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FROM PRIVATE SECRETARY

SUBJECT: PERSONAL PERSONAL: IRAQ: FOREIGN SECRETARY'S CONVERSATION
WITH US SECRETARY OF STATE, 16 SEPTEMBER

SUMMARY

1. The Foreign Secretary and Powell agree that we will only get a peaceful Resolution if we prepare for war. The Administration is determined to pursue the idea of a declaration but Powell, at least, is willing to look at how a declaration could help get inspectors back into Iraq. Powell recommends that the PM explain (again) the UK view of a declaration to the President.

DETAIL

2. The Foreign Secretary met Colin Powell for half an hour in New York on 16 September to discuss the fusion of US and UK draft Iraq Resolutions. Powell said that he had spoken to Annan three times in the last 14 hours about the possibility of an Iraqi letter agreeing to unconditional access for inspectors. Annan had said that he had made clear to the Iraqis that there would be a new Resolution; nothing Iraq did would stop it. Powell had told Annan that, after President Bush's speech, we had maximum leverage and would not back off. But Powell thought it possible that Annan would receive a letter and want a meeting of the Security Council. Negroponte said they were working with the Bulgarian President of the Council to discourage such a meeting.

3. The Foreign Secretary said that overall the argument was going well. The Egyptians and others were complaining about where regime change as an objective left them. But their point was

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easily disposed of: Saddam Hussein had a choice, either complying with SCRs and surviving; or failing to comply and his regime ending up being changed as a consequence of the international community enforcing compliance.

4. Turning to the composite draft produced that morning by the US and UK Missions (by fax to Chaplin), the Foreign Secretary said that there was the issue of a prior Iraqi declaration. Although failure by Iraq to deliver would be a casus belli in the US draft Resolution, it would not work for the UK. Powell said that the US view was that non-production of a declaration would indicate non-compliance. But, more than that, any declaration would be graded. The US was looking for a serious response. If the response was not, then Saddam would clearly be playing games, and that should be considered as a casus belli. The US was looking for some Iraqi expression of seriousness, something they could measure. They wanted to assess Iraqi seriousness before they got rolling on inspectors. By requiring a declaration up front, they could be giving the Iraqis a chance. Powell said that the Prime Minister and President needed to talk about the role of a declaration: there was still some uncertainty in the Administration about what the UK wanted/could live with.

5. The Foreign Secretary said that he feared that a declaration could be a trap for us, not Saddam. If we demanded a full, final and complete declaration, there was a real chance that Saddam would deliver a Rolls Royce reply in order to "scatter his enemies". In our view, a full, final and complete declaration could only be done with the inspectors. There was a danger that Saddam would deliver bullshit of a quality to satisfy that part of the coalition that wanted to peel away. But a declaration could be folded into the process in a different way. First we should focus on getting inspectors in. We could ask for a declaration after we had agreed practical arrangements but before inspectors arrived, ie an updating declaration. Powell asked what would happen if such an updating declaration was inadequate? Greenstock said that the Security Council could then say that inspectors would check the points over which there was disagreement.

6. Powell said that his hunch was that the Iraqis would be forthcoming. They knew what we knew, and what we did not. They would send something which matched what we knew. In that case we could say we had a "serious basis" for inspectors to go in. If, on the other hand, the Iraqis gave something thin, there would be no point in sending inspectors; we would move to Op Para 6. The Foreign Secretary said that he did not see the issue in such black and white terms: the Iraqis would calibrate their response to satisfy the French and Russians, but not the US and UK. We preferred the test to rely less on subjective judgement, say, by setting a rendezvous date for inspectors.

7. The Foreign Secretary said that the Prime Minister had been consistent in giving prominence to the importance of inspectors since the Crawford meeting in April. A declaration would be a diversion from our long-standing position. Powell said that we had given his team something to work on.

8. On the detailed text, they agreed that there were no real differences between us on the conditions under which inspectors would go in, and on the modalities. Powell drew attention to the

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importance of language at the end of para 4 giving full support to Blix to have what he required. Greenstock asked about how fierce the US wanted to be over "all necessary means"? In conversation with David Manning, Condi Rice had seemed to indicate that this was not an absolute requirement for the President. We thought that the US needed to talk to Russia before putting this to the Security Council. If we tried with the Council and failed, we would be further back than if we had not tried at all.

9. Powell said that Ivanov was coming to Washington on Thursday for a tete-a-tete dinner. He would work him over. But, in the end, he assessed that Putin wanted to be on this train; we could get Putin to sign up to most everything. He reminded the Foreign Secretary that the US was going to deliver the French...

10. Powell asked about the status of the UK dossier; he kept reading leaks in the Guardian, Times and Telegraph. For his own part, he was laying less stress on (disputable) dossiers and more on the fact that Saddam had (indisputably) violated SCRs for the last 11 years.

11. Greenstock asked whether the US was fixed on two Resolutions, one on WMD, the other dealing with other elements. The Foreign Secretary pointed out that two Resolutions would both fulfil President Bush's promise and help Villepin off a hook. There was a brief discussion about timing, Powell accepting that the second Resolution could be tabled later so as not to blur the focus on WMD. At the launch of the first Resolution, a briefer could preview a second focusing on other issues.

GREENSTOCK

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