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S 315 /02

Foreign Policy Adviser to the Prime Minister,  
and Head of the Defence and Overseas Secretariat

23 October 2002

IMMEDIATE

*Dear Sir,*

**IRAQ: CONVERSATION WITH CONDI RICE**

I spoke to Condi this morning at 1145 hrs.

**THIS LETTER IS EXTREMELY SENSITIVE AND SHOULD BE SHOWN ONLY TO THOSE WITH A REAL NEED TO KNOW. IT MUST NOT BE COPIED FURTHER. IT MUST NOT BE SHOWN TO OTHER US INTERLOCUTORS.**

I said that after yesterday's difficult discussions among P5 Perm Reps in New York, the Prime Minister thought the time had probably come to engage Foreign Ministers directly in the debate. We were unlikely to make much progress as long as the drafting of the Resolution was in the hands of Lavrov and Levitte. He had therefore asked the Foreign Secretary to talk to Colin Powell about a meeting of the P5 at Foreign Minister level early next week, following the APEC Summit and the European Council in Brussels. I knew that the Foreign Secretary would be broaching this with Powell shortly. Condi said she thought this was an attractive idea. She would talk to Powell about it.

I said that the Prime Minister also thought we should revisit the possibility of agreeing the wording of a short second Resolution that the P5 would table if Saddam violated the terms of the first Resolution. If we could secure this, the French and the Russians would have acknowledged, in writing, that they would be ready to use "all necessary means" if Saddam were again in material breach. Condi had doubts. She said the difficulty would be that the French or the

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Russians would quibble over whether Saddam had committed a violation serious enough to trigger the follow up action provided for by the second Resolution. I said this did not affect the issue directly. We might well be faced with this argument whether or not we had prepared a second Resolution. Condi said she would reflect.

Condi said yesterday's P5 discussion seemed to centre on French objections to the language dealing with: "material breach"; "serious consequences"; and Op 5, where Paris and Moscow wanted to substitute the Blix letter. She said that these points were unacceptable to Washington. The US had gone a long way in meeting French and Russian difficulties. The earlier reference to "all necessary means" had been dropped from the current draft; there was agreement to go back to the Council to assess any Blix report of violations; and it was clear to everyone that a second Resolution could be tabled by the French whatever the US or UK might prefer. The Administration could not give more ground, anyway on the substance. There had been lots of publicity about US concessions already. Today there were two editorials in major US newspapers (I think the Washington Post and the New York Times) saying that it was time for Washington to put down its draft Resolution and invite the Security Council to vote: either the UN backed the Resolution; or the US went to war.

I said I understood the political pressures. But the effect of tabling the Resolution on a take-it or leave-it basis would not necessarily be clear cut. The French and Russians might put down a counter-draft. It might attract more support than our own. Condi accepted this but said that we would have to veto the counter-draft just as the French and Russians would no doubt veto ours. I said this was a possible scenario but deeply unattractive. This was why we favoured raising the discussion among the P5 to Foreign Minister level and seeing whether de Villepin and Ivanov could deliver where Levitte and Lavrov would not.

Condi asked whether the US and the UK still had the same red lines and on the draft Resolution. Essential elements for the US were:

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- Maintaining the references to "material breach" and "serious consequences"
- Retaining the wording "...false statements or omissions... and failure by Iraq at any time to comply..."
- Standing firm on the terms of the inspection regime
- No further weakening of Op12

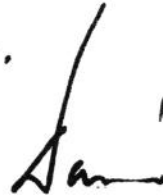
I said that our willingness to co-sponsor the Resolution demonstrated that we were in firm agreement on the elements that the Resolution should contain. But I accepted that there might be differences on where to compromise if there were a serious negotiation. This was a matter for the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary. I would consult them. Condi said it would be very helpful to have a conference call between the Foreign Secretary, Colin Powell, herself and me to discuss this. She would try to set one up.

Condi ended by saying that the French still seemed to misunderstand US determination. They apparently believed that when pushed to the wall, the Administration would concede on the Resolution. They were mistaken. They should realise that Washington was ready to go it alone if it had to; and the consequence would be that the UN would be marginalised for a long time to come. I said quite a few people in Paris understood this; but perhaps not Chirac. His grasp of the issue seemed to me to be uncertain, and sometimes emotional. I suggested Condi should tell the Elysee what she had just told me. She said she would phone de la Sabliere later today.

### Comment

As I told the Foreign Secretary when I briefed him on this call, signs of mounting impatience in the White House with the whole UN process. Apparent evidence, too, that this is pushing the White House to consider putting the Resolution down, and challenging the French (and Russians) to block it. Condi's mood this morning was that the US had made enough concessions. If the UN process failed, Paris and Moscow would be responsible for the broken UN china. Despite this, I think she is open to a meeting early next week of the P5 Foreign Ministers to try to find a way through.

I am copying this letter to Peter Watkins, CDS and Sir Kevin Tebbit (MOD), Sir Andrew Turnbull, John Scarlett and Desmond Bowen (CO), Sir Michael Jay (FCO), C, Sir Francis Richards (GCHQ), Eliza Manningham-Buller (Security Service), Sir Christopher Meyer (Washington), Sir Jeremy Greenstock (UKMis New York), Sir John Holmes (Paris), Sir Paul Lever (Berlin), Sir Roderic Lyne (Moscow), Sir Nigel Sheinwald (UKRep Brussels), Sir Emyr Jones Parry (UKDel NATO), Sir Stephen Wall and Jonathan Powell.

*Yours etc.,*  


**DAVID MANNING**

Simon McDonald  
FCO