

SECRET  
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Extract from a minute



PM/02/057

PRIME MINISTER

Iraq: Conversation with Powell: No US Interlocutors

1. As you know, I travelled to Washington for meetings on Tuesday with Secretary of State Colin Powell.

2. Powell gave me revised language from State for OPs 9 and 10,

I said the language looked OK to me, though later in the conversation I emphasised to Powell that legally and politically it was almost certain that we would need a second Resolution explicitly authorising military action were the UK to be involved in such action against Saddam.

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6. On the UK position, I said that I had spoken to you on Sunday and you had said that you favoured a two Resolution approach. I went through the arguments in favour. In the real world, there was bound to be a further discussion in the SC if there were any non-compliance by the Iraqis, and (since we did not control the agenda) a second Resolution. On this latter, the only question was who took the initiative - us (US/UK) or others. Of course, I said, I accepted that Blix could not determine whether the US could go to war [see Blair/Bush phone call 14/10] but we were all bound to rely on Blix's reports as to the facts about non-compliance, on which the US and others would then make their own judgements.

7. On the British political environment, I said that whilst one could never be totally certain, I was as certain as I could be that there would be insufficient support in Cabinet and the parliamentary Party to allow us to go to war without clear UN backing. I was completely certain that there would be monumental political controversy: and this ran into the legal problems which were more hazardous for us than the US. I was getting advice on the domestic legal consequences of such military action and would share this with him.

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10.

11.

12.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Jack Straw'.

(JACK STRAW)

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

16 October 2002

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