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IRAQ LIMITED

DESKBY FOR RESIDENT CLERK - PLEASE PASS TO SOS'S PARTY/RICKETTS

SUBJECT: PERSONAL IRAQ: 5 MARCH

## SUMMARY

1. Most delegations will now attend 7 March meeting at Ministerial level. Iraqis will also be at the table. We draw up new ultimatum language with USUN (MIFT). Tafrov (Bulgaria) says that his Prime Minister is being pulled in both directions - he says Blair/Bush phone calls will be necessary just to secure Bulgarian support (and that co-sponsorship is, at present, out of the question).

## DETAIL

2. This records developments on Iraq on 5 March.

7 March

3. At Council informal consultations it was agreed that the Iraqis would have a seat at the table and be able to make a statement (impossible to object to in practice). The Guinean Presidency said vaguely that they "assumed" that there would be the same time allotted for speakers as on previous occasions (around 8 minutes at the last discussion). France, Germany, Spain, Syria, Mexico, Guinea, US, UK, Russia, Chile, China and Angola all confirmed their Ministers would attend. Cameroon, Bulgaria and Pakistan were still waiting for answers.

Negroponte and Arias

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4. I joined Negroponte (USUN) and Arias (Spain) to talk through next steps. Negroponte said that, while Chile and Mexico had asked for both an ultimatum and benchmarks, the US had said all along that benchmarks were out. An ultimatum might be enough of a fig leaf. I said that London had been thinking about a benchmark on interviews outside Iraq. Negroponte said that he could not countenance this - it simply risked delaying the military timetable.

5. On the ultimatum itself:

- Negroponte said that Wolf (AS Non-Proliferation, State) was concerned about asking Iraq to "demonstrate unconditional, active and full co-operation". The danger was that Blix would say this was the case. We agreed we had to avoid this risk;

- we agreed we needed language on Iraq demonstrating a genuine change of heart. But this had to be something that could not be played back at us, e.g. in a statement by Saddam saying he had taken an "unconditional and irreversible decision". Cunningham suggested we were looking for a "strategic decision" to disarm that "convinced" Council members;

- we agreed that one key test of that change of heart was Iraq yielding its WMD;

- I suggested that our ultimatum would need to be accompanied by hard argument that, while Iraq had managed to wrap up the inspectors, underneath it all, Iraq continued with its unsatisfactory co-operation, deception, and concealment;

- I warned that some would say that any judgement on Iraqi compliance should be based on an inspectors' report. We would need to make clear that the decision on whether Iraq had taken a strategic decision to disarm was for the Council. We would also need to make clear on 7 March that it was impossible for the inspectors to disarm Iraq without such a decision;

6. I said that we would need to say that we were determined to see Iraq disarmed early and comprehensively. We could not agree to the proposals of some to relapse into the processes of a resolution (1284) for which they had not voted. Nor could we turn our backs on 1441 which we had unanimously agreed and damage the UN's credibility.

7. Negroponte said Blix had told him the previous day that in the present circumstances he would not say again what he had on 27 January (Duffy told us just before the meeting that Blix had, if anything, been more negative with the US on 4 March than he had been with us the previous day).

8. Cunningham asked who would mention the last set of failed inspections - the Inter-Allied Control Commission that had failed to disarm Germany in the inter-war period. I said that there were some dangers with raising this example - a lot had changed since then, including the creation of the UN. Cunningham mentioned that Flescher had retracted his regime change statement (that the US aim was disarmament and regime change). Tommy Franks had said that the military aim was disarmament, and that this point would

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also be dealt with in Powell's speech. Lastly, Arias expressed concern over the Germany/Russian/French statement saying that the three countries would not let a resolution pass that authorised the use of force (by fax to UND, MED, NPD). Negroponte said that we were not focussing on the veto - we had to focus on getting 9 votes.

UK/US/Spanish experts

9. Following the meeting our experts got together to discuss language for the ultimatum and key arguments to deploy on 7 March.

10. On language for the ultimatum, we came up with two main formulations (MIFT). USUN favoured Alternative 2 and were going to put this to Powell. We asked USUN whether there was a danger the text would be seen as another impossible threshold. USUN argued that it should be possible to "yield" WMD (as opposed to destroying it) and all relevant information within a week.

11. On tactics for 7 March, Duffy said that USUN had suggested the following elements to Washington:

- the need to underline that continued reports of partial co-operation were not enough;
- the need to deploy strong arguments against the French/Russian/German memorandum and the fact that we would not accept containment;
- the fact that the debate was diluting/forgetting the requirements of 1441;
- the fact that inspectors could not disarm a non-co-operating Iraq;
- the fact that all the evidence added up to Iraq not taking a strategic decision to disarm. The proposal for more time for inspectors had to be seen in that light.

12. Duffy said that the US were also drawing up a list of questions that would put Blix on the spot about Iraqi co-operation (e.g. asking what progress had been made in accounting for chemical bombs and 22m warheads). We agreed that the questions we posed of Blix would have to be quite punchy and set in a clear overall context to have the greatest effect (not least as Blix would seek to evade many of them - Duffy wondered whether we should indeed push again where answers were not provided). We agreed that we needed more material drawing out key points from the clusters document. We could and should use it to illustrate just how much Iraq has not done with respect to inspections. We should also highlight the huge gaps in knowledge as an illustration that we could not benchmark, nor define key tasks, without Iraqi co-operation. Duffy said that the BW section was interesting in illustrating that the inspectors had not been able to uncover the full nature of the programme until Iraq admitted it (Duffy passed us some key points on the French/Russian/German position, and on the clusters document, later in the day - by fax to Ricketts, Pattison, Tanfield, Dowse).

13. Duffy asked what we thought about the US making the point that

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out of 100 sites identified , the inspectors had only visited 5. said that this might be somewhat risky, not least as Blix might be tempted to rubbish US intelligence with which he had not been enamoured. A better tack was to say that the key inspection successes had all come from intelligence. That same intelligence also revealed an overall picture of denial and deception that we could not ignore (comment: we might also take advantage of the fact that we predicted that Iraq would destroy the Al-Samouds, find "newly discovered" documents, and agree to "private" interviews). We also agreed we needed to think of the best way to deflate the air in Villepin's balloon, e.g. applauding the high sentiments expressed by previous delegations, but laying out to what the French/German/Russian statement really amounted.

Tafrov

14. Tafrov spoke to me on 5 March to say that the situation in Sofia was very bad and that the PM was being pulled in all directions. In such circumstances, Bulgarian co-sponsorship was not up for grabs. We should aim for Bulgarian support - even that would take calls from Blair and Bush.

Stiernlof

15. also talked to Stiernlof (UNMOVIC). He said that they had not yet finished editing the clusters document. Their main efforts were directed to expanding the 1998-2002 section while the other changes would be mostly minor editorials. They had not yet decided on the exact dynamics of how or when they would circulate the document on 7 March. At present they planned to focus on the quarterly report as well as providing an update on what had happened since it had been released. Blix was likely only to mention the release of the clusters document and hint at the possible release of the work programme and key tasks. Stiernlof did not deny that delegations might follow this up with more detailed questions. Stiernlof said that experts were still looking at the new material produced by the Iraqis so it was too early to conclude if it amounted to movement on substance. There was nothing dramatic at this stage. Overall, in his view, the recent pattern of Iraqi co-operation was not their usual effort of repeating previous unsubstantiated claims - this was a more genuine scientific effort. said that it was just more deception, as we had predicted the previous week.

COMMENT

16. We would be grateful for as much specific punchy material we can draw on for 7 March, e.g. on the clusters document. I know work has already begun on this in London and that we now need further to firm up arguments and to fill in the detail.

Desk Officer for Iraq:  
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