

'As Blix continued, Powell's expression was icy... There was almost an audible gasp in the chamber as Blix turned to the "clinching" evidence that Powell had presented to the Security Council the previous week. It was ambiguous and unconvincing, Blix said... Blix described the inspectors brief as theoretically "open-ended".' (*Observer*, 16 Feb., p. 18) 'It wasn't exactly a bag of goodies, was it?' remarked one senior British diplomat after Mr Blix had finished speaking. (*FT*, 15 Feb., p. 6) A key Downing St official described Blix's statement as 'A disappointment. We thought he would be tougher. It's not been the best of days.' (*Observer*, 16 Feb., p. 17)

THE INSPECTORS ARE THE ENEMY

US Secretary of State Colin Powell has said explicitly, 'The question isn't how much longer do you need for inspections to work. Inspections will not work.' (*Independent*, 23 Jan., p. 1) As predicted by a top US Senate official way back in May 2002, 'The White House's biggest fear is that UN weapons inspectors will go in.' (*Time* magazine, 13 May 2002, p. 38) Inspectors are an obstacle to war, they are part of the problem, not part of the solution as far as the US is concerned.

Thus US opposition to the French proposals circulated in the Security Council on 11 Feb. 'The French proposal, also sent to the arms inspection team, was reported last night to include doubling or tripling the number of inspectors, increasing aerial surveillance to make sure a site remains "frozen" after inspectors have seen it and using mobile customs teams to tighten up on illegal smuggling by Iraq.' (*Telegraph*, 12 Feb., p. 14)

Hence the US opposition to the fulfilment of the provisions of UN Resolution 1284, passed in Dec. 1999, which requires the drawing up by weapons inspectors of a 'work programme' including 'the key remaining disarmament tasks to be completed by Iraq'. Security Council members may press for these 'key disarmament tasks' to be set out clearly and precisely (as Resolution 1284 requires) in any new UN Resolution. The US and UK are resisting such ideas: 'They are worried that this would invite another interminable series of discussions over whether Iraq has disarmed and whether inspectors should be given more time, and may invite a third resolution.' (*Telegraph*, 22 Feb., p. 14) (See *ARROW Briefing 31* for more.)

ARROW BOOK *War Plan Iraq: Ten Reasons Against War On Iraq* by Milan Rai (Verso, 2002) 'Readable and well-sourced' *The Times* 'Excellent' *Tariq Ali* 'Required reading' *Professor Paul Rogers*

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UPHILL STRUGGLE

The US And UK Battle For A New UN Resolution

ARROW Anti-War Briefing 30 (23 February 2003)

WAR PLAN IRAQ Update Number 9

THE SCALE OF THE TASK

A second UN Resolution on Iraq is politically vital to British Prime Minister Tony Blair, and would be important in the post-conflict period when the US hopes to shift responsibilities to UN agencies. Opinion polls have clearly indicated that a majority of the British people oppose war without a second Resolution, but would support it if there was UN authorisation.

However, support for war even with UN backing is dropping. When YouGov asked on 20/21 Feb. 2003, 'Should Britain take part in a war against Iraq if there is a second resolution backing it?' 59 per cent of people said 'Yes', down from 72 per cent a month earlier. 30 per cent of respondents said 'No'. Without UN endorsement, only 21 per cent support war. (*Sunday Times*, 23 Feb., p.13) Note that a second Resolution is unlikely to explicitly 'back' military action against Iraq. (See *Briefing 28: Second Resolution*, on why even an explicit Resolution would not make this a legal or just war.)

In order to secure a new Resolution, nine of the 15 members of the UN Security Council have to vote positively in favour of the Resolution, and the five permanent members of the Security Council have to be persuaded not to use their vetoes. Already in favour of war are the US, UK, Spain and Bulgaria. Definitely opposed are France, Germany, Russia, Syria and China.

'Diplomats at the UN say opposition to war hardened last week among the "middle six" countries on the security council - Chile, Mexico, Angola, Cameroon, Guinea and Pakistan. One American estimate suggested that the balance on the council was 11—4 in favour of giving the UN inspectors more time.' (*Sunday Times*, 23 Feb., p. 2)

AVOIDING A VETO

China, Russia and France are capable of vetoing the US/UK resolution. Chinese academics have been used to indicate China is unlikely to veto a US resolution. (*FT*, 22 Feb. 2003, p. 6) China has a lot to lose, particularly with the sensitive North Korean crisis on its borders, in which the US is a key player.

The Russian Foreign Minister, Igor Ivanov, 'was perched so firmly on the fence it must have hurt'. He suggested at first that 'there was no reason to speak about using the right of veto' at the Security Council, then added,

'Russia does not object to the right of a veto.' (*Sunday Times*, 23 Feb. 2003, p.13) Ivanov recently met Tom Lantos, a US congressperson, who offered the Russians the inclusion of three Chechen rebel groups on the US list of international terrorists 'something the Russians had long wanted.' 'He also hinted that should the regime in Iraq change, the £5 billion debt it owed to Russia would be honoured. The likelihood of Russia receiving the money, said Lantos, "clearly would be dramatically enhanced if Russia stood with us in this encounter."' (*Sunday Times*, 23 Feb., p.14)

France remains a problem. One French official said, 'We won't accept any hidden ultimatum giving a sort of legal stamp for the use of military force.' (*FT*, 22 Feb., p. 6) 'France has already threatened to veto a new resolution containing the words "serious consequences".' This has led to a watering down of the US/UK draft text. (*Sunday Telegraph*, 23 Feb., p. 28)

SECURING THE 'MIDDLE SIX'

'A Bush administration official, speaking on condition of anonymity, told the *Guardian* the US was not making economic threats—"but that's not to say these countries are not aware that we provide them with assistance".' Chile fears for its free-trade agreement with the US, awaiting ratification by both countries' legislatures, while 'a no vote could end Mexico's hopes of negotiating a better deal for the millions of Mexican illegal immigrants in the US'. Guinea receives \$40m a year in aid from the US. (*Guardian*, 22 Feb., p. 4)

A lengthy article in the *FT* recalled the 'inducements' offered to UN Security Council members to secure UN Security Council Resolution 678, before the 1991 Gulf War. Simon Chesterton of the International Peace Academy in New York noted that these 'included promises of financial help to Colombia, Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia and Zaire'. There was, he said, an agreement with the Soviet Union to help keep the Baltic states out of the 1990 Paris summit conference, and cash inducements from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. China's abstention appears to have been secured by agreements to lift trade sanctions in place since the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre, and to support a World Bank loan. 'Yemen, one of the two states to vote against the resolution, had \$70m (£43m) in annual aid from the United States cut off. Minutes after the vote was taken, a senior US diplomat reportedly told the Yemeni representative: "That was the most expensive No vote you ever cast"' (*FT*, 12 Feb., p. 6)

'Speaking before the Senate budget committee yesterday, [Colin] Powell made clear that US political and military allies would benefit from handouts. The \$28.5bn foreign budget for 2004 "will allow the United States to first target security and economic assistance to sustain key countries

supporting the war on terrorism and helping us to stem the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction"' (*FT*, 12 Feb., p. 6)

'The hope is that if those votes [of the 'middle six'] are gained then the veto-wielding major powers who are threatening to oppose an imminent attack might find themselves forced to abstain rather than appear to challenge the majority will of the UN.' (*Guardian*, 22 Feb., p. 4)

However, the US has problems with half of the 'middle six': 'France has considerable influence over the three African members, Guinea, Cameroon and Angola. It has also struck up a close relationship with Mexico (which has clashed with the Bush Administration on other fronts). In short, if France backs a resolution, it will pass; if France doesn't, probably won't.' (*Times*, 12 Feb., p. 18) The question is whether France is committed to opposing war—it can scupper the Resolution either by veto or by securing African abstentions.

THE PIVOTAL ROLE OF BLIX AND EL BARADEI

'At the moment it looks as if the United States and Britain would struggle to get the nine votes and avoid a veto,' said a Security Council diplomat. 'But it only needs another Iraqi violation to turn the momentum back the other way. The next two weeks are going to be decisive.' (*Sunday Telegraph*, 23 Feb., p. 28) Eminent British military commentator Lawrence Freedman notes that 'if the inspectors are mildly hopeful, and a majority in the Security Council concurs, it will be difficult for Britain and the US to use force without a second resolution. They would have to demand that inspections be abandoned abruptly so that war could begin.' (*Financial Times*, 12 Feb., p. 17)

This is essentially what happened in Dec. 1998, when the chief UN weapons inspector Richard Butler was called in by US Ambassador to the UN Peter Burleigh, and advised to be 'prudent' with the safety of UNSCOM staff: 'Repeating a familiar script, I told him that I would act on this advice and remove my staff from Iraq.' (Richard Butler, *Saddam Defiant*, p. 224)

Blix is not Butler. While Blix's first major report to the Security Council on 27 Jan. favoured the US (he even 'flashed the thumbs-up... to John Negroponte, the hawkish United States ambassador to the United Nations', *Telegraph*, 28 Jan., p. 2), his second 'update' was noticeably more balanced.

Blix's key sentence on 27 Jan. was: 'Iraq appears not to have come to a genuine acceptance—not even today—of the disarmament which was demanded of it.' (*FT*, 28 Jan., p. 9) On 14 Feb., Blix spoke of UNMOVIC's ongoing and future activities, talked of Iraqi cooperation on substance as well as access, and said, 'Inspections are effectively helping to bridge the gap in knowledge that arose due to the absence of inspections between Dec. 1998 and Nov. 2002.' (See 'Recent Items' <www.un.org/Depts/unmovic/>)