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MIPT: IRAQ/KUWAIT: NEXT STEPS AT THE UNITED NATIONS:

COMMENT

1. THERE IS CLEARLY MERIT IN THE PROCEDURE WHEREBY A DEBATE IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL ON THE IRAQ DESPOLIATION OF KUWAIT SHOULD BE THE LEAD IN TO A COUNCIL RESOLUTION AUTHORISING THE USE OF FORCE. I AM VERY SCEPTICAL INCIDENTALLY ABOUT THE PROSPECTS OF OUR BEING ABLE TO KEEP THE LATTER FIRMLY UNDER WRAPS WHILE WE PROCEED OPENLY WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE FORMER. MOST PEOPLE HERE WILL INSTANTLY SPOT THAT THE MEDIA SHOW IS A CURTAIN-RAISER FOR SOMETHING MORE SERIOUS.
2. WE SHALL HAVE TO TAKE CARE TO ENSURE THAT THE TWO ELEMENTS REMAIN COUPLED. THIS MUST MEAN IN PRACTICE THAT THE TIMING OF OUR PREPARATION OF THE DRAFT RESOLUTION AND ITS PRESENTATION TO OTHER COUNCIL MEMBERS MUST BE ALLOWED TO DETERMINE THE TIMETABLE FOR THE DEBATE, RATHER THAN VICE VERSA. WE MUST AVOID BEING DRAWN INTO AN UNREALISTICALLY FAST TIMETABLE, GEARED TO OUR READINESS TO STAGE THE DEBATE, WHICH THEN PREVENTS US FROM SECURING THE BEST POSSIBLE OUTCOME WHEN IT COMES TO A VOTE ON THE RESOLUTION. THIS MEANS ENSURING THAT NO FINAL GO-AHEAD TO THE KUWAITI/GCC MEDIA SHOW IS GIVEN UNTIL WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT WE ARE GETTING THE KEY PERMANENT MEMBER DUCKS IN A ROW FOR ADOPTION OF THE RESOLUTION.
3. LIKE PICKERING, I PERSONALLY SOMEWHAT REGRET THAT THE IDEA OF A DEADLINE WAS NOT INCLUDED IN THE STRATEGY AGREED WITH BAKER. I RECOGNISE THAT IT HAS DISADVANTAGES. BUT IT SEEMS TO ME THE BEST WAY TO RECONCILE THE INEVITABLE PRESSURES TO "GIVE PEACE A LAST CHANCE" WHILE NOT ALLOWING ENFORCEMENT ACTION TO BE INDEFINITELY DELAYED. IT WILL BE MORE DIFFICULT TO SECURE COUNCIL SUPPORT FOR A RESOLUTION WHICH PERMITS MILITARY ACTION TO BE TAKEN FROM THE DAY OF ITS ADOPTION.
4. I BELIEVE THAT PICKERING'S IDEAS ON THE TIMING AND HANDLING OF A SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION MAKE A LOT OF SENSE. IT WILL BE ESSENTIAL TO SELL OUR DRAFT IN CAPITALS, BEGINNING WITH THE CAPITALS OF OTHER PERMANENT MEMBERS. WE NEED THE FIRM BASIS FOR ACTION

PROVIDED BY THEIR AGREEMENT TO SUPPORT A RESOLUTION (OR IN THE CASE OF THE CHINESE, AT LEAST READINESS TO ABSTAIN) BEFORE WE CAN MOVE ON TO ACTION WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL AND WE NEED THEIR COMMITMENT ON A TEXT IF WE ARE SUCCESSFULLY TO RESIST PRESSURE FOR UNACCEPTABLE CHANGES BY THE NON-ALIGNED. ON TIMING, THE SCENARIO WHICH I DISCUSSED WITH PICKERING WOULD PERMIT A COUPLE OF WEEKS SLIPPAGE, WITHOUT BRINGING RESOLUTION OF THE ISSUE TOO UNCOMFORTABLY CLOSE TO THE END OF THE YEAR. BUT WE SHALL OF COURSE HAVE TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT BOTH THE ABILITY OF THE YEMENI PRESIDENT TO DELAY MATTERS A LITTLE AND THE PROBLEM OF HOLIDAYS TOWARDS THE END OF DECEMBER.

5. ALTHOUGH IT IS STRICTLY SPEAKING NONE OF MY BUSINESS HERE, SINCE NONE OF THE COUNTRIES CONCERNED ARE CURRENTLY ON THE SECURITY COUNCIL, I IMAGINE WE AND THE FRENCH (AND PERHAPS ALSO THE U S) WILL BE GIVING SOME CONSIDERATION TO THE QUESTION OF WHEN TO BRING IN THE EPC 12, OR AT LEAST THE WEU FORCE CONTRIBUTORS. SINCE MUCH OF THE NEXT STEP PROCESS IS GOING TO BE UNDERTAKEN UNDER THE GLARE OF PUBLICITY ANYWAY, THERE IS A RISK THAT, IF WE LEAVE THE EUROPEANS TOO LATE, THEIR REACTION WILL BE UNNECESSARILY NEGATIVE. THIS RATHER POINTS TOWARDS CONSULTING THEM IN THE SAME TIME FRAM AS THE NON-NON-ALIGNED AND THE MAJORITY OF THE NON-ALIGNED ON THE SECURITY COUNCIL.

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