

France likely to veto U.N. war resolution

Steven Thomma
Knight Ridder Newspapers

WASHINGTON (KRT) — Secretary of State Colin Powell said Sunday that the United States might win a majority of votes this week in the United Nations Security Council for a U.S.-backed final ultimatum to Saddam Hussein, but that the resolution still could be vetoed by France.

Powell did not identify any new Council members who now intend to vote with the United States, and he made clear that with or without U.N. support, America intends to invade Iraq soon unless Hussein proves within days that he is disarming. If a majority of Council members endorse the attack however, that would add the United Nations' moral legitimacy to the action and perhaps reduce resentment of it around the world.

"We will have to wait and see when the vote is taken sometime this week, but I am encouraged by the discussions I have been having

with a number of members of the council," Powell said on NBC's "Meet the Press."

A vote could come as soon as Tuesday. The U.S.-British-Spanish-backed resolution would give Iraq until March 17 to disarm or face war. The United States needs nine votes from the 15-member Security Council, made up of five permanent members, each with veto power, and 10 elected members.

Three permanent members — France, Russia and China — have vowed to block it. France, in particular, has taken the lead in opposing any step toward war.

"I would not be surprised if they vetoed," Powell said on Fox News. "It would be unfortunate if France decided to veto this resolution ... and France would not be looked upon favorably in many parts."

The only other declared votes so far for the U.S.-backed ultimatum come from Spain and Bulgaria. But President Bush, Powell and other top U.S. officials have been pressing the

10 elected Council members very hard to side with the United States, even as French President Jacques Chirac has tried to rally them against the resolution.

White House National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice said Sunday on CBS's "Face the Nation" that they have not really done a serious vote count at this point. "We have some indications here and there," she said. The foreign minister of Guinea, a Security Council member, will meet with senior administration officials this week in Washington, Rice said.

"If the United Nations Security Council does act in a positive way, and we hope it will, then clearly military force will be appropriate and there will be support for that through the United Nations," Powell said. "If the United Nations Security Council fails to act ... the president has always said he reserves his option" to act without U.N. backing.

If anything, U.N. rejection of a resolution giving Iraq until March 17 to

disarm could accelerate war rather than delay it, Powell implied. Absent a formal ultimatum, the United States would be free to act before that date, he suggested.

After the U.N. vote, Bush intends to issue a public ultimatum to Hussein telling him to disarm or face invasion within days, according to senior administration officials who spoke on condition of anonymity. That Bush speech will be a warning as well to any arms inspectors or humanitarian aid workers inside Iraq that the time has come to leave, the officials said.

Powell disputed that the United States is acting alone, noting support from nations including Australia, Bulgaria, Portugal, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the independent nations of the former Soviet Union.

"We need to knock down this notion that nobody is on our side, that we're totally isolated," he said on Fox. "So many nations recognize the danger and they do it in the face of public opposition."

Indeed, British Prime Minister Tony Blair faces widespread revolt by members of his Labor Party if the United Nations rejects the resolution this week and he continues to stand with the United States behind invading Iraq, press reports said Sunday.

As Powell and Rice worked a TV diplomacy end game on the eve of possible war, American bombers launched their sixth strike in eight days in southern Iraq, using precision-guided weapons Saturday night to target four Iraqi military communications sites.

Also Saturday night, the military dropped 720,000 informational leaflets in Iraq. The leaflets included messages encouraging Iraqi troops to surrender and directing all Iraqis to radio frequencies that broadcast messages about how their lives would be better without Hussein in power.

Knight Ridder Newspapers correspondents Fawn Vrazo and Peter Smolowitz contributed to this report. © 2003, Knight Ridder/Tribune Information Services.

News briefs

Eight shot, two stabbed at Times Square club

NEW YORK (KRT) — Eight people were shot and two more stabbed in a brutal melee at a Times Square club that erupted when a man brandished a chrome-plated pistol and shouted: "I'm tired of this shit. Let's light this place up!"

The brawl touched off a terrifying stampede early Sunday as some 200 people fought to escape the Broadway City Arcade, a cavernous entertainment complex at 241 West 42nd St. Frantic patrons spilled down an escalator from the second-floor dance space, and at least two more people were injured during the rush to the doors around 2:40 a.m.

As police arrived, skirmishes broke out below the club's marquee and along the typically family-friendly street — between Seventh and Eighth Avenues — that includes Madame Tussaud's wax museum and the Broadway musical "The Lion King."

"People went crazy," said Franklin Santiago, 21, of Manhattan, who was shot in the knee and spoke to the New York Daily News Sunday from his hospital bed.

Police were questioning two men in their 20s Sunday night.

One suspect was arrested at a hospital where he was being treated for wounds suffered in the melee. Another was arrested at the club. Their names were not released.

Police last year announced a crackdown on gang violence in Times Square. Cops said they believed this latest violence was not gang-related — but sparked by two rival groups of teens from Far Rockaway, Queens.

Mayor Michael Bloomberg said the melee does not mean that Times Square is once again becoming a haven for hoodlums, drug dealers and prostitutes. "It is a very safe place," he said.

— Greg Gittrich © 2003, New York Daily News.

Strike on Broadway continues for third day

NEW YORK (KRT) — Striking musicians kept the curtain down on Broadway for a third day yesterday, as losses in ticket sales and tourism mounted with no end in sight. Neither the League of American Theatres and Producers nor the striking musicians appeared willing to budge.

A city official pegged the economic loss at \$7.2 million.

Members of Local 802 of the American Federation of Musicians were joined on the picket lines Sunday by some of Broadway's biggest stars, including Harvey Fierstein of "Hairspray," Brian Stokes Mitchell of "Man of La Mancha," Kevin Richardson of "Chicago" and Brad Oscar of "The Producers."

"We're artists, and a machine is a dead thing," said Fierstein, explaining why he did not want to go on stage with computerized music as a substitute for the striking musicians.

The two sides differ over the union's longstanding staffing minimums for Broadway houses, which range from three to 26 musicians, depending on the size of the theater. Meanwhile, theatergoers lined up at box offices for refunds and scrambled to see shows not affected by the strike.

Many holding canceled tickets to major hits like "Hairspray" and "The Producers" tried to trade them for future seats, only to be told they might not be available for months.

"If the show is sold out, what can we do?" said Patty Haubner of the League of American Theatres and Producers.

In Times Square, Brad Van Nostrand handed out flyers for shows that are still running. Nonmusicals unaffected by the strike. "The small-

er Off-Broadway shows are making out like bandits," he said.

Still, with fewer theatergoers coming into the city, he did not expect that to last.

At "Cabaret," the only Broadway musical not under contract with Local 802, flack Adrian Brown said lines of those hoping to snap up last-minute tickets were longer than usual.

— Celeste Katz, Jane Furse © 2003, New York Daily News.

Cuba protests solitary confinement of spies

HAVANA (KRT) — The Cuban government on Sunday protested a U.S. decision to put five convicted Cuban spies in solitary confinement, calling it "an utterly unnecessary and irrational act" and a violation of "fundamental principles of law."

American prison officials couldn't be reached for comment. In the past when they have put the same spies in solitary, the officials have said it was for the inmates' protection.

Leonard Weinglass, a lawyer for Antonio Guerrero, one of the convicted agents, told a Havana radio station: "None of them belongs in solitary confinement. It is completely unjustified as all of them are model prisoners."

The five were jailed on espionage-

related charges in Florida in September 1998 and later convicted. The Cuban government has since treated them as folk heroes, plastering their photos on billboards, T-shirts and banners all over the island.

Gerardo Hernandez, Ramon Labanino, Guerrero, Rene Gonzalez and Fernando Gonzalez have all protested their convictions, saying they were in South Florida infiltrating anti-Castro groups to try to protect their country from attack.

Now in solitary, they are not allowed visits from their attorneys or from Cuban government representatives, their attorneys say. Nor can they use the telephone, Cuban officials said. They are scheduled to appeal their convictions in a federal court in Atlanta by April 7.

A communique from Cuban diplomats in Washington said the prisoners' "exemplary behavior does not warrant this kind of treatment. There is reason to believe they are singled out because they are political prisoners."

Prosecutors have said the spies were a threat to U.S. security and some allegedly tried to infiltrate U.S. military bases.

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WHY: It's Dead Week. Release some stress from papers, exams, and upcoming finals.

WHEN: Mon-Weds. Workshops will be from 1:00 to 4:00. All other activities will be all day from 8:00-5:00.

WHERE: University Counseling & Testing Center Student Resource Center, Room 213

Answer: Got Stress?



NO PROBLEM!