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# UN snubs Blair plea for envoy to Iraq

## ● PM left isolated by White House stance

TONY BLAIR was rebuffed yesterday when he attempted to persuade Kofi Annan, the United Nations secretary general, to appoint a special representative to Baghdad.

The Prime Minister wants the UN to provide a veneer of legitimacy to the interim administration being set up by America and Britain in Iraq and says it should play a "vital" role in the country's future.

But in a private meeting with Mr Blair at the European summit in Athens, Mr Annan made clear that a special representative in Baghdad would have to have Security Council approval - which would require concessions to France, Germany and Russia on running the new Iraq. Washington would welcome the appointment of a Special Representative in Baghdad - as head of a large humanitarian effort - but balks at the prospect of another tortuous round of negotia-

BY PAUL WAUGH  
in Athens  
AND LEONARD DOYLE

Europe finally edged towards acceptance of American dominance in Iraq. France appeared to accept that the UN would have only a limited role in reconstruction and humanitarian aid for the country - but is holding out for Security Council backing.

In the most significant attempt yet to heal the transatlantic rift over the war, Paris suggested that it recognised the reality of US and British forces working on the ground while stressing the need for UN endorsement of any Iraqi interim authority.

After a day of hectic negotiations on the margins of the EU summit, Jack Straw, the Foreign Secretary, declared that there was now a "new atmosphere" uniting the Security Council members France, Germany, Russia, Britain and Spain.

In a separate initiative, leaders of the 15 EU states worked on a surprise statement on how to balance the differing roles of the UN, the US and Europe in post-war Iraq. President Jacques Chirac said the EU would organise a humanitarian airlift of casualties, while Denmark, Spain and the Netherlands offered to send peacekeeping troops to Iraq.

However, Mr Straw was keen to play down the significance of a common EU position and warned that the UN would be relegated to the "sidelines" in the reconstruction debate if the Security Council repeated the diplomatic breakdown that preceded the war.

The EU leaders were meeting in Athens to sign a treaty opening the union to 10 new members, many of which are former Communist states.

The Greek capital saw its worst rioting for 30 years as 7,000 anti-war protesters took to the streets. Police fired tear-gas after petrol bombs were hurled. The British Embassy and a British Airways office were among buildings targeted.

Joschka Fischer, the German Foreign Minister, said he saw "a rapprochement" with America over the UN role in Iraq. "The allies on the ground are responsible for the immediate security," he said.

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tions in the Security Council.

Mr Blair indicated to Mr Annan that the Bush administration would not go cap in hand to the Council. The hawks in Washington are loath to return to a forum where, in the words of a senior US diplomat, they were "badly burnt" by the failure to win legal backing for the war.

"Blair is trying to get the UN into the process in the hope that it can be formalised by the Security Council at a later stage, but he was told that that is not an option," a diplomat familiar with the discussions told *The Independent*.

As the occupying powers, Britain and America can set up an interim administration, but they require Security Council approval before a new constitution can be written for Iraq.

Under the Geneva conventions the UN must authorise the changed nature of the government, before it has international legitimacy.

The discussions came as



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# Treaty seals Europe's historic expansion to the east

BY DANIEL HOWDEN  
in Athens  
AND KATHERINE BUTLER

TWENTY-FIVE European leaders hailed a "landmark in history" yesterday when they signed a treaty in Athens formalising the European Union's expansion eastward.

At a lavish ceremony in the shadow of the Acropolis, the leaders of the 15 existing EU members and 10 newcomers signed the document which will enlarge the union in May next year. The new states are Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.

"With this step, the Union is finally overcoming the division of the European continent into east and west," the German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder declared. "Just like the Berlin Wall [in 1989], today is a reason for shared joy - joy that we are creating a united and peaceful Europe."

But Jacques Chirac, the French President, who stunned the acceding countries when he upbraided them earlier this year for supporting the US-led war with Iraq, again warned the new states to toe the line.

"This new Europe will not be able to fulfil our citizens' expectations if, as we are seeing in the current crisis, its political ambitions are not clarified and its running is not extensively rethought," he said.

"The European Union is about more than just a large

## WHERE'S TONY? PM MISSING AS LEADERS POSE FOR THE NEW EU'S FIRST FAMILY PHOTO



European Union leaders, who disagree over plans for future-EU leadership, line up for a 'family' photo - from which Tony Blair was unaccountably absent - at the summit in Athens Reuters

market, common policies, a single currency and free movement," he said pointedly. "It is more importantly about a collective ambition, shared disciplines, firm solidarity and naturally looking to the European family."

The remarks were aimed at Poland, Hungary and the Czech

Republic which joined Britain, Spain, Italy, Denmark and Portugal in backing the US at the United Nations. Pro-American sentiment runs high in the former Iron Curtain countries and M. Chirac's comments forecast potential difficulties in the new EU. France and Germany have traditionally

dictated the Union's political direction, and are only now coming to terms with the prospect of a shift in the power balance. The Polish President, Aleksander Kwasniewski, made his position clear yesterday, saying: "We want Europe to be based on wise transatlantic ties."

A succession of leaders de-

scribed the impending enlargement as a landmark. "This Union represents our common determination to put an end to centuries of conflict and transcend former divisions on our continent," the leaders said in a joint statement.

It is not the end of the political process though, as

formal accession will be confirmed only after a series of referendums. Hungary, Slovenia and Malta have all registered yes votes in recent weeks and the remaining countries will all have to ratify the treaty, except Cyprus.

The main contrast between the 10 countries joining the

Union now, and the last enlargement, when Austria, Finland and Sweden joined, is in the relative size of their economies. The new wave includes Poland, which will become the fourth largest member state in terms of population, but the acceding states only have a combined gross

domestic product equivalent to that of the Netherlands.

Three more EU candidate countries - Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey - were present in Athens. The first two are expected to join in 2007 but Turkey's path is blocked, largely by Cyprus, where a peace plan for the divided island has failed.

## Giscard d'Estaing rejects EU opposition on plans for new leadership

PLANS TO give the European Union a powerful new "president" and foreign minister looked certain to go ahead last night after Valéry Giscard d'Estaing gave his strongest indication yet that smaller EU states would not be allowed to block the proposals.

The former French president, who is drawing up a

BY PAUL WAUGH  
Deputy Political Editor

new European constitution for the enlarged EU, said "democracy" meant that the majority of its population, rather than a majority of member countries, should determine its shape.

M. Giscard d'Estaing, the chairman of the Convention on

the future of Europe, said there was general agreement on the need for a new EU foreign minister to combine responsibilities now shared between Javier Solana, the EU foreign policy chief, and Chris Patten, the external relations commissioner.

But he admitted there was still substantial division between the bigger and smaller

states over the proposals to replace the six-month rotating presidency of the European Council with a president serving for a minimum of five years.

The post, which is intended to allow the EU to punch its weight on the international stage, is likely to come into effect in 2006 along with the new constitution and sweeping

reductions in the number of commissioners. Tony Blair and Anders Fogh Rasmussen, the Danish Prime Minister, have already been touted for the job. But although the idea is backed by the "big five" of Britain, Germany, France, Spain and Italy, it is opposed by nine member states and nine states that will be joining. Many

fear it would marginalise them from the main decisions of an enlarged 25-member EU.

All 18 repeated their opposition to the reform yesterday. But M. Giscard d'Estaing, whose 105-member convention has been working on the proposals for more than a year, said: "One thing to take into account is the number of states, but we also

have to take into account their populations, because we operate in a democracy here."

"At the moment, there is quite a broad majority of the population represented which is in favour of a somewhat more stable presidency." Two smaller countries, Denmark and Sweden, had also backed the moves, he said.



Valéry Giscard d'Estaing: 'We operate in democracy'



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# Police fire tear gas in clashes with anti-war protesters

By DANIEL HOWDEN in Athens

GREEK POLICE fired tear gas as anti-Iraq war protesters hurled Molotov cocktails during violent clashes close to the venue of the EU summit in Athens yesterday.

The confrontation, described as the worst in the city for 30 years, began when protesters attempted to push through a police cordon in Syntagma Square in the centre of the city. A small group separated from the main crowd and began throwing petrol bombs and red paint at police, who responded with volleys of CS gas.

Broken glass from the Molotov cocktails mingled with the smashed windows of shops as clouds of gas hung in the air, driving marchers out of the square towards the United States Embassy.

Thousands waved red banners, rainbow flags, and placards denouncing Tony Blair for his role in the Iraq conflict. A faction of the Greek communist party occupied the headquarters of British Airways, unfurling a banner that de-



Molotov cocktails were used to attack the police

nounced "Killers, Imperialists." Protesters threw rocks, bottles of paint and petrol bombs at the Italian and British embassies. Dozens of shop fronts, bus stops and rubbish bins were smashed and set on fire.

The violence embarrasses Greece's Socialist government, which is midway through an EU presidency already troubled by

Europe's sharp divisions over the Iraq war. Anti-American sentiment runs high in a country where opinion polls have consistently shown more than 95 per cent of Greeks oppose the conflict in Iraq.

Daily marches have been held since the conflict began and protest groups are angry at the government for opening Greek airspace to the US military and placing no restrictions on the use of an American Navy base on Crete.

"Europe was wounded by the support some countries, especially Britain, gave to the United States over the war," the newspaper *Eleftherotypia* said yesterday. "These defectors must return (to the EU) after their criminal blunder."

Police estimated more than 8,000 protesters were involved in the clashes. At least five people were injured, including a police officer and a cameraman, and the police said they had arrested more than 50 demonstrators.

The Greek authorities, who were expecting the protests, had mounted an unprecedented security operation in the city.



Riot police firing pepper spray at the anti-war protesters during the clashes in Athens yesterday

Thanassis Stavrakis/AP

Some 20,000 police officers were on duty, and key streets were blocked off.

The Acropolis and several other ancient sites and museums were closed to the pub-

lic, while road access to Athens' airport was disrupted by the security.

The government declared a public holiday in the city, as traffic restrictions across

the capital made commuting impossible.

Ancient Athens' public centre, the Agora, provides the backdrop to the summit. The centrepiece ceremony, which

saw the signing of the EU's accession treaty yesterday, took place at the Agora's Stoa of Attalos, a massive colonnaded monument at the foot of the Acropolis that was restored in

the 1950s. It is only the second time the Stoa of Attalos has been used for a public function. It was used in 1985 for hosting an exhibition when Athens was the Cultural Capital of Europe.

## Blair and Chirac patch it up, but the Mills & Boon moment is missing

THE PERFECT Mills & Boon moment was at hand. After being apart for more than 10 long weeks, Tony Blair and Jacques Chirac finally got some time alone together yesterday when they peeled off from the EU summit in Athens.

As their eyes met across the tranquil courtyard of Zappeion Hall, a fountain burbling gently between them, the longed-for rapprochement looked to have finally arrived.

But within seconds, the rude reality of the war on Iraq interrupted as a police helicopter buzzed overhead

By PAUL WAUGH in Athens

and blaring sirens signalled that riot police had engaged thousands of peace activists protesting in the capital.

The shattered ambience did not prevent Mr Blair and M. Chirac having their longest meeting since their Le Touquet tête-à-tête in February but it set the tone.

They shared an aim of burying the hatchet, though not in each other's backs. Onlookers claimed that the pair tried to make their *entente* a bit more cordiale, chatting about the Middle

East, the EU and Iraq.

Mr Blair's aides said it was a purely chance meeting and simply added to their increasingly warm phone calls in recent weeks. "This is not the kiss and make-up summit. We passed that point some time ago," a spokesman said primly.

"The Prime Minister went to get some fresh air and President Chirac had the same idea. They met and had a good 20-25 minutes together.

"It was very friendly, very useful, perfectly amicable ... completely

spontaneous." Not quite the language of love.

Given the months that diplomats spend carefully choreographing every second of these summits, it was hard to believe that the pair had just bumped into each other. But the message from No 10 was clear: Mr Blair was not going to go out of his way to exchange pleasantries with the French leader.

Despite the warm words, it was clear that wounds were raw and even the handshake between the two men was not seen in public.

It was, however, a day of

great symbolism for the new Europe, in the ancient city that gave birth to democracy. Leaders of 25 nations signed an accession treaty designed to heal the deepest divisions of the 20th century. A ceremony in the shadow of the ancient Acropolis saw 10 nations sign up for membership of the European Union, including eight former Communist countries.

Given that the Olympic Games are to return to their original home next year, it was perhaps fitting that the signing ceremony turned into a marathon. In

theory, each leader had three minutes for a speech but what with all the book-signing and bowing, it made the Oscars look a model of brevity.

When Mr Blair had his turn, his reference to "whatever differences we may have" was greeted by a shrug from M. Chirac and a sudden interest in the presidential shoes. Mr Blair looked a million miles away as the French leader made his speech.

After the ceremony was over, it was time for the traditional "family photo" of EU leaders. But Mr Blair



Tony Blair and Jacques Chirac: 'Amicable'

EPA

wasn't sticking around.

Ostensibly, he had to get back for the War Cabinet today. Yet Mr Blair clearly couldn't bear the prospect

of small talk, let alone meeting M. Chirac again. On a day of symbolism, nothing was more symbolic than his early exit.