



Επισημαίνεται τέλος ότι στη Σύνοδο έχει προσκληθεί και ο ΓΓ του ΟΗΕ κ. Κόφι Ανάν.

#### ΕΠΙΣΤΟΛΗ ΜΠΛΑΙΡ ΣΤΟΥΣ ΕΥΡΩΠΑΙΟΥΣ ΗΓΕΤΕΣ ΓΙΑ ΙΡΑΚ

Το σύνολο των βρετανικών εφημερίδων αναφέρεται στην επιστολή που απέστειλε ο Βρετανός πρωθυπουργός Τόνυ Μπλαιρ στους ευρωπαϊούς ηγέτες χθες ενόψει της Συνάντησης του Ευρωπαϊκού Συμβουλίου τη Δευτέρα. Η INDEPENDENT σημειώνει ότι ο Τόνυ Μπλαιρ σε μία «σκληρή» επιστολή υποστηρίζει ότι ο Σαντάμ Χουσεϊν «ήδη παραβιάζει» το ψήφισμα 1441 του ΟΗΕ. Η Η DAY TELEGRAPH σε σχετικό δημοσίευμα επισημαίνει ότι ο βρετανός πρωθυπουργός στην επιστολή του πτόν έλληνα πρωθυπουργό κ. Κώστα Σημίτη, η οποία όπως σημειώνεται είναι αυτή που στάλθηκε και στους υπόλοιπους ευρωπαϊούς ηγέτες, αναφέρει ότι εάν ο Ιρακινός ηγέτης αποτύχει να συνεργασθεί η εγκαταλείψει τη χώρα «θα πρέπει να είμαστε σαφείς ότι ο Σαντάμ θα αντιμετωπίσει άμεσες και σοβαρές συνέπειες».

ΠΑΠΑΔΑΚΗΣ

EUROPEAN UNION

# 'War' summit fuels fear over Greek control

By George Parker in Brussels and Kerin Hope in Athens

When Greece took control of the rotating presidency of the European Union in January, many in Brussels feared the worst. Europe, according to the usual prejudices, could look forward to six months of relative inactivity, punctuated by moments of chaos.

Unfortunately for Athens, events so far have done little to dispel those prejudices.

After a slow start the Greek presidency this week burst into life with plans for an emergency EU "war" summit fraught with danger.

Everyone agrees this is a moment when Europe needs firm leadership. But some in Brussels ponder whether a Greek government riven by political rivalries is best placed to provide it.

Costas Simitis, Greek prime minister, thinks the summit in Brussels on Monday will force EU leaders to bury their differences over Iraq. Others fear the Greeks have organised a showcase for EU disunity.

Greece was deeply hurt when it was not informed that eight European countries had signed a joint letter expressing sympathy with the US over Iraq. Mr Simitis felt he had a duty to try to bring squabbling EU members back together.

But this is a summit many countries do not want. Tony Blair was among those arguing that to hold such an event only 72 hours after Hans Blix's second UN report on weapons inspections was too risky.

Nothing in the way the Greeks have organised the summit has quelled those fears. Most member states only heard it was definitely going ahead by reading news agency reports from Athens on Monday morning.

By Wednesday, when EU ambassadors met in Brussels to try to prepare the ground for their heads of government, there was still no detailed agenda.

Meanwhile Athens had not decided on a guest list. On Wednesday morning the Greek foreign ministry announced that 13 EU candidate countries would be invited, but by the afternoon the invitation had been revoked amid much acrimony. Greek diplomats in Brussels explained to baffled colleagues that the confusion arose from having to deal with "three different decision-making centres" in Athens.

The episode highlighted deepening divisions between Mr Simitis and the energetic foreign minister George Papandreou, the Socialists' rising star.

To prevent Mr Papandreou from taking over the presidency agenda, Mr Simitis appointed one of his own team, Tassos Yiannitsis, as European affairs minister. As a result there are three power centres in Athens, often speaking with a different voice, and not enough diplomats with Brussels experience to staff them.

Away from Iraq, senior EU officials point to "a lack of urgency" from the Greek presidency over preparations for the spring EU summit.

However, Greece has succeeded in breaking the deadlock on an EU savings tax, and is hopeful of resolving another long-standing dispute over a common energy tax. "These are early days, and we know from experience that the Greeks usually deliver in the end, even if the preparations for meetings can be a bit haphazard," said one EU veteran.

Kofi Annan, UN secretary-general, is to attend Monday's summit.

By Richard Beeston,  
Roland Watson  
and Phillip Webster

THE world's most powerful nations locked horns last night as Hans Blix prepared to deliver a crucial arms report to the UN Security Council that will determine Iraq's fate and possibly the future of the United Nations itself.

During a day of unprecedented megaphone diplomacy, America and Britain pressed the case for a new resolution authorising military action against President Saddam Hussein while France, Germany and Russia emphasised their determination to avert war through a beefed-up inspection regime.

President Bush gave warning that the UN would become an irrelevant debating society if it failed to live up to its threats: President Putin said that he might use the Russian veto to prevent war.

Everything now depends on a 20-minute report from Dr Blix, the chief weapons inspector, on Iraq's compliance with UN demands that it disarm. A declaration that Iraq is stalling would help the hawks. But if Dr Blix says that Baghdad is beginning to co-operate, or that the inspectors need more time, advocates of containment would gain the upper hand and force Britain and America to decide whether to go to war alone.

Also at stake is the future of the UN and Nato, which have safeguarded international secu-

rity for more than half a century, but are in danger of becoming obsolete.

President Bush insisted that the UN had to follow through on its last resolution threatening "serious consequences" if Iraq did not disarm. He said: "The decision is this for the United Nations: 'when you say something, does it mean anything?' The UN Security Council can now decide whether or not it has the resolve to enforce its resolution."

If the Security Council failed to rise to its responsibility, it would "fade into history as an ineffective, irrelevant debating society".

Tony Blair meanwhile wrote to his EU counterparts saying: "While we all, of course, regard military action as a last resort, we must make clear that no member state rules it out if needed to uphold the authority of the Security Council."

He added that Saddam had one last chance to co-operate unconditionally with the UN disarmament resolutions or leave, "but failing that we should be clear that Saddam faces immediate and serious consequences in the absence of full and immediate co-operation. The [Council] should move quickly to a second resolution."

Jack Straw, the Foreign Secretary, told the Commons: "For the international community now to lose its nerve would significantly undermine the authority of the UN and make the world a much more dangerous place, as dictators

got the message that international war was mere words."

The White House and Downing Street both seized on news that independent experts had found Iraq to be developing missiles with a range beyond the limit set by the UN. "If these reports are correct, it is very serious and Iraq would be in breach of Resolution 1441," Mr Straw said.

But Tariq Aziz, the Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister, denied that the missile programmes breached UN limits, saying: "Our missiles have a much shorter range and don't have a guidance system. Therefore they sometimes fall 5 to 10km beyond their target. That's not dangerous."

And as US and British forces continued to pour into the Gulf, their partners in Europe and beyond dug in their heels. President Putin said that Moscow was prepared to use its veto if necessary to stop a war, but he added: "I do not think it is helpful to get into debate about this at the moment."

Jean-Pierre Raffarin, the French Prime Minister, told the Senate in Paris that Baghdad had showed a change in attitude. "The change is going in the right direction. Our aim is to obtain Iraq's disarmament and we think that we can achieve this objective by developing the inspections."

Gerhard Schroder, the German Chancellor, told his Parliament that the number of UN weapons inspectors should be "doubled or tripled" and reinforced with "technical

# Battle lines drawn on day of decision

● Bush demands UN backing for force against Iraq  
● Russia threatens to use its veto

material, infrastructure and specially qualified personnel".

Joschka Fischer, the German Foreign Minister who will chair today's UN meeting, appeared to have made up his mind. "Iraq is not in material breach," he said. "There is no reason to wage war."

But Colin Powell, the US Secretary of State, signalled that Washington was prepar-

ing to enter a new phase of tougher diplomacy when he said that he intended to ask France and Germany why they were pressing for more inspections. "The question I will put to them is 'Why more inspection? And how much more time? Or are you just delaying for the sake of delaying in order to get Saddam Hussein off the hook?'"

**Iraq crisis** 8 PAGE SPECIAL PULL-OUT SECTION

## Who is Blix?



He is the enigmatic Swedish diplomat whose monastic lifestyle is enhanced by fine wines and oriental rugs, but today the words of Dr Hans Blix, left, will determine if there is war with Iraq. Inside, Times writers profile the international lawyer with his finger on the trigger.

# Blair and Bush warn Europe to prepare for war

EUROPEAN DIVISIONS with the United States and Britain over whether to go to war in Iraq will be painfully exposed at the United Nations Security Council in New York today.

France and Germany were told yesterday to "show backbone and courage" by President George Bush, while Tony Blair fired a separate broadside demanding they leave open the option of military action.

Diplomats said Britain and the US will make a push for mil-

itary action - once Hans Blix, the chief UN weapons inspector, presents his report on Iraq. The meeting will be attended by foreign ministers of the 15 members of the council.

BY STEPHEN CASTLE in Brussels, ANDREW GRICE in London and DAVID USBORNE in New York

Mr Bush said in Florida yesterday that, "when it's all said and done, free nations will not allow the United Nations to fade

into history as an ineffective, irrelevant debating society".

In a toughly worded letter to EU leaders ahead of an emergency summit in Brussels on Monday, Mr Blair said Saddam Hussein was already in "material breach" of UN resolution 1441.

The message to France and Germany was unmistakable: President Saddam's position makes him liable for "serious consequences" - a code for war. In his letter, Mr Blair argued

that, "while we all of course regard military action as a last resort, we must make clear that no member state rules it out if needed to uphold the authority of the Security Council."

Such a pledge is unlikely to find favour with Gerhard Schröder, the German Chancellor, who has repeatedly excluded the possibility of taking part in military action against Iraq. Yesterday Mr Blair failed to resolve his differences with Mr Schröder during a tele-

phone conversation. Downing Street said: "There's a shared objective but a difference of view in how we get there."

In the German parliament yesterday, Mr Schröder vowed to fight to prevent war and said a majority of Security Council members backed his view that the arms inspectors should be given more time and resources.

"We can disarm Iraq without war. I see grasping this chance as my responsibility," he said. "It cannot be wrong that extra-

ordinary efforts for peace should be undertaken..."

But Mr Blair fears that the EU might water down its previous stance on Iraq on Monday following the campaign of opposition to a war by France and Germany. He believes that such a "signal of weakness" would only give comfort to President Saddam. A request by the Prime Minister for an invitation to be extended to leaders of 10 nations that will join the EU next year was rebuffed.

## THE SUN SAYS

### True friend

**TONY BLAIR should have learned an important lesson by now.**

All those people in Europe he feels so close to couldn't give a monkey's about him.

First it was Chirac, Schroeder and that bloke from Belgium who did the dirty on him.

Now a letter from Mr Blair to the premier of Greece, who is EU president, is blatantly leaked.

It's simple, Tony. In Europe, it's every man for himself.

**Stick with the friend you can trust through and through — America.**

# Britain and US to risk French veto

BY ANTON LA GUARDIA  
GEORGE JONES  
AND TOBY HARNDEN  
IN WASHINGTON

BRITAIN and America are almost certain to press for a United Nations resolution authorising war next week, even if it provokes a veto by France, officials said yesterday.

The final decision will be taken on the strength of the UN weapons inspectors' report to the Security Council today. But senior officials made clear that only a dramatic change of attitude by Saddam Hussein would hold them back from tabling a

resolution for military action in the coming days.

France claims that a majority of the UN wants to give more time for inspections. But London and Washington believe they can win over a large group of waverers and ensure that Russia and China abstain, leaving France largely isolated.

The resolution would amount to a stark challenge to Paris: climb down or cast your veto and risk the future of the UN.

One senior Bush administration official said: "Seeing the UN process through to a vote would show that it was France and not the US or

Britain that was abandoning the UN."

This would be an important change of tactics from the 1999 Kosovo campaign, when the West preferred to go to war without UN approval rather than risk a Russian veto.

A senior British source predicted: "There is not going to be a lot of haggling over diplomatic text. This is a straightforward decision for heads of government. I don't expect a French veto. It's all to play for."

The Prime Minister yesterday opened what may be the most important diplomatic battle of his career with a

letter to fellow European Union leaders, who will be meeting for an emergency summit on Monday in Brussels. The gathering will also be attended by Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary General.

Mr Blair stressed that time had almost run out for a peaceful solution under the terms of last November's UN Security Council resolution 1441, which gave Iraq a "final opportunity" to comply.

In the letter to the Greek prime minister, Costas Simitis, the current holder of the rotating EU presidency, and copied to other leaders, Mr Blair said that if the Iraqi leader failed to co-operate or

leave the country "we should be clear that Saddam faces immediate and serious consequences".

Mr Blair's most important task will be to ensure that the summit does not try to halt the war. "While we all of course regard military action as a last resort, we must make clear that no member state rules it out if needed to uphold the authority of the Security Council," he wrote.

But the Prime Minister will need to undermine the support for France, Germany and Belgium, which are leading the move against war.

His campaign may be made easier by reports that inspec-

tors have concluded that Iraq's al Samoud missile breaches the 80-mile legal limit imposed by the United Nations.

Mr Blair said: "Any evidence that comes to light of a failure to declare honestly and any evidence of a breach of Resolution 1441 is extremely important because it indicates the futility of simply going on with more and more and more time, when it is perfectly obvious they are not co-operating."

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### **Annan invitation**

**Brussels:** Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary-General, above, has been invited by the European Union to address an emergency summit on Iraq next Monday, three days after UN weapons inspectors report to the Security Council. He has accepted the request in principle, according to diplomatic sources. (Reuters)