

RELEASE IN PART
B5, B6

From: Sullivan, Jacob J <SullivanJJ@state.gov>
Sent: Monday, February 14, 2011 6:54 PM
To: H
Subject: FW: Resolution

Worth a read. [redacted] it's an interesting analysis.

-----Original Message-----

From: Samuel Berger [mailto:sberger@redacted]
Sent: Monday, February 14, 2011 6:38 PM
To: Sullivan, Jacob J
Subject: RE: Resolution

Just came from a meeting of the Middle East experts group I co-chair with Steve Hadley.

Although the opinion on this issue was mixed, the dominant view - expressed very strongly -- was that we should abstain since a veto would convey that we don't understand the transformational nature of the past three weeks, put us on the wrong side of the stability/change equation and reduce our influence in the region. These are powerful arguments.

On balance, though, in the current context, I think you should veto for several reasons.

(1) The resolution has language (e.g. illegal) which is contrary to our policy (although there may have been some language to that effect used in the Carter Admin). If we abstain on a resolution with this language, we will face additional resolutions to operationalize this principle, which we would have to veto. This would open us to charges of hypocrisy and flip-flopping.

(2) We have already indicated that our position is that the UNSC is not the forum for these issues -- rather, between the parties (e.g. Steinberg last week). To abstain would appear that we are changing our position under pressure.

(3) Abstention would produce a meltdown in Israel, who would see this, given everything else going on around them, as throwing them off the cliff. This will make it (even) harder for us going forward.

(4) The domestic reaction would be fierce, giving the R's the point of vulnerability they have been lacking over the past three weeks. This could have consequences for the Administration, not just in its freedom of action on the Middle East but also bleeding into the domestic agenda.. A President embattled at home on the Middle East is in a weaker position to deal with the region.

The further question is whether to accompany a veto with a statement that breaks new ground (e.g. shifting the HRC formulation from "reconciling..." to a statement of US policy). The argument for is that it softens the blow of the veto. The argument against is that it will get lost in the noise and we will play a valuable card that we could play later in a more strategic way.

Having said all this, if there is any way still to get the Palestinians to withdraw the resolution (e.g. by agreeing to put some TORs on the table - along the lines of the earlier memo from Steve and me) - we should pursue that. And in any case, we should make Bibi "earn" this veto with concessions either on the ground or in their negotiating positions.

B5

B6

In any case, we will need a strategy going forward that deals with the longer-term plan of the Palestinians to seek a UNGA resolution in September recognizing a Palestinian state. Our Middle East group plans to focus on this in the weeks ahead.
Sandy

From: Sullivan, Jacob J [SullivanJJ@state.gov]
Sent: Monday, February 14, 2011 12:07 AM
To: Samuel Berger
Subject: Resolution

Looks like D-Day will be this week. What is your current thinking?