

U.S. PRESSED TO MAKE CHANGES IN IRAQ UN RESOLUTION

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U.N. Security Council members pressed the United States to give Iraqis more authority over their political and military future in a draft resolution endorsing the official end of the occupation on June 30.

France, after council consultations on Wednesday, said the U.S.-British-sponsored resolution should not be adopted until two weeks after an interim Iraqi government is chosen.

According to French Ambassador Jean-Marc de la Sabliere, the council should "make sure the government is well accepted by Iraqis" and that Iraqis should have an input on the transition to self-rule.

The draft resolution, presented to the council members on Monday, would back the formation of a sovereign interim Iraqi government but allow a U.S.-led multinational force to take "all necessary measures" to keep the peace.

Several council members, including Russia, China, Germany, Chile and Algeria, wanted the mandate of the foreign troops to be limited rather than open-ended, unless the new Iraqi leaders asked for a renewal.

But U.S. Ambassador John Negroponte, who will become the American ambassador in Baghdad, said the resolution did not need to be rewritten or micromanage every function of a new interim Iraqi government. He said junior diplomats would meet on Thursday to "fine tune" the document.

On France's proposal, Negroponte said consulting Iraqis might not leave enough time to adopt the resolution before June 30. "I assume our French colleague wants the resolution passed before the transfer actually takes place," he told reporters.

NO VOTE UNTIL BRAHIMI SUBMITS REPORT

No vote is scheduled until a report from U.N. envoy Lakhdar Brahimi, who is helping to select a president, a prime minister, two vice presidents and 26 ministers. They would stay in office until elections for a national assembly, due in January 2005.

Most members expect the resolution to be adopted, albeit with some changes.

China distributed a three-page paper, including proposals that would give Iraq's interim government control over its own police and troops. It also said the mandate for foreign forces in Iraq should expire in

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January 2005, but could be renewed by the Security Council if Iraq requested it.