

GulfWire

Perspectives



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DIplomacy AND WEAPONRY'S 'TUG OF WAR' **by John Duke Anthony**

EDITOR'S NOTE

Kuwait TV last night broadcast live an interview with GulfWire Publisher Dr. John Duke Anthony for its prime time news program. Among other viewers were relatively new arrivals to Kuwait: namely, representatives of the over 100,000 American and British troops deployed in Kuwait. Below is an edited and unofficial transcript of the interview.

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KUWAIT TV

Q.: Dr. Anthony, the United States is continuing its consultations with members of the United Nations Security Council. Could this mean that it still intends to introduce a new resolution in spite of the indication by France and perhaps Russia, too, that they will veto a second resolution?

A: It could. One is not literally at the end of the road, at least as of today. Diplomacy is not at an end in the sense that a war has been launched. As a result, practically anything theoretically, and even politically, is possible. One can assume that the American officials involved in such a seemingly last ditch effort have not given up completely on trying to find a creative artifice aimed at reaching common ground [with the other members] that would produce a satisfactory settlement short of war.

Because of the way the United States has behaved thus far, such a device would almost certainly have to be seen by Washington as achieving the desired Iraqi compliance with standing UN Security Council resolutions. Whether this can be done, and the equally

important question of how it could be done short of the use of force, as the United States continues to threaten, remains to be seen.

Q.: We heard today that Colin Powell stated that ALL options remain open. Does this mean that this is a last warning?

A.: It's difficult to say. If one takes the word "all" literally, it could mean any number of things. In addition to Secretary Powell's indicating that "all options" remain open, his alluding to what might "imagine" as possible seemed similarly cryptic and open to varying interpretations. Either or both concepts could imply that the introduction of a truly creative idea to achieve the desired result short of the use of force, even at this late point, would be studied carefully. It could mean that the United States remains open to giving serious and favorable consideration to any formula or device that would achieve the stated objective of dismantling and destroying Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.

Q.: How So?

A.: What to one person is heard or read as a clear statement can be read or heard by someone else quite differently both at the time the statement was made and subsequently. Take, for example, a statement that President Bush has repeatedly made since 9-11: namely, that he will "do whatever is necessary to protect the United States and the interests of the American people." It's a measured statement. It has a nice ring and cadence to it. To a first-time listener, it sounds impressive.

But it's no secret that increasing numbers of Mr. Bush's many critics have concluded that Mr. Bush has hardly done "whatever is necessary" to achieve the desired result. To the contrary, many believe he has done quite a few things that were unnecessary. The latter, in direct contrast, have increased his difficulty in protecting the United States and the interests of the American people.

Q.: Is war inevitable, or do you think diplomacy can work?

A.: In any case where war has not begun, it is always possible that diplomacy can succeed. One cannot rule out the potential for there to be an eleventh hour breakthrough that many had not thought would be possible. It helps to keep in mind the tactical wisdom of Frederick the Great, who is alleged to have said, "Diplomacy not backed by force is like an orchestra without a violin" - it's unlikely to get the job done, or it can be the main reason why a stated goal failed to be accomplished.

Various features of the way American diplomacy in this case has been conducted thus far can be viewed in this light. Diplomacy's practitioners, for example, have been keen for Saddam to view as fully credible the United States' explicitly stated intent to use force if necessary in order to obtain Baghdad's compliance. Were the situation otherwise, practitioners of statecraft argue, the target of one's rhetorically stated threat might be tempted to call the diplomatists' bluff. This is a significant feature of what various American diplomats have been doing,

certainly up to this point, even as the game comes down to the eleventh hour.

Kuwait TV: Thank you.

Dr. John Duke Anthony is President and CEO, National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations; Publisher of GulfWire; and Secretary of the U.S.-GCC Corporate Cooperation Committee. All three are Washington, D.C.-based non-profit and nongovernmental organizations dedicated to educating Americans and others about the Arab countries, the Middle East, and the Islamic world.

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