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COMMISSION EUROPEENNE

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

FROM : SERVICE PORTE-PAROLE
TO : C.E. WASHINGTON
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cc. aux Membres du Service du Porte-Parole

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Reaction to passage of US law on Iran and Libya (P. Guilford)

Note to the particular attention of Washington

Following the US House of Representatives' decision to approve the d'Amato Bill on sanctions against companies investing in the oil industries of Iran and Libya and the White House's subsequent confirmation that it would sign it when it receives it from Congress,
the Commission made the following reaction:

It is clear that the version adopted by the House will become law, once it has been signed shortly by the US President. The EU needs to study the details before taking a final view, and needs to check a) how much it has been toughened up, and b) how much discretion the President has when applying the law.

However, it is already clear that the law is extraterritorial in nature, and as such is unacceptable to the EU. The EU has consistently opposed it for this reason, and will act to defend its interests.

The EU is every bit as determined to combat terrorism in all its forms and whatever its source. Let it not be forgotten that Europe has often been the hardest hit by terrorist actions allegedly carried out with the support of these two countries - Lockerbie is a case in point. The EU is highly sensitive to the threat of terrorism and will not shirk its responsibilities in fighting it. We happen nonetheless to believe that passing extraterritorial laws that strike America's friends is by no means the best way of achieving such an objective.

Asked how the EU might defend its interests, the Commission said that the EU Anti-boycott Regulation currently being drafted to counteract the Helms-Burton law on Cuba could be used by the Council to apply to the Iran-Libya legislation as well, if the Council chose to add it to the list laws covered by the Regulation.

On the Anti-boycott Regulation itself, the Commission discussed it today and is expected formally to propose it to the Council next week.

Best regards,
N. G. van der Pas

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