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Interview Session Number:
Interview Conducted by:

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SSA [REDACTED]

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Arabic/English Translation: [REDACTED]

~~(S)~~ Saddam Hussein (High Value Detainee #1) was interviewed on February 24, 2004 at a military detention facility at Baghdad International Airport (BIAP), Baghdad, Iraq. Hussein provided the following information:

~~(S)~~ Prior to the start of interview, Hussein was informed this session would be a continuation of the discussion of the history of Iraq. In particular, today's conversation would cover events leading up to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

~~(S)~~ Hussein stated that after the war with Iran from 1980-88, Iraq was trying to rebuild. Hussein likened the situation with Kuwait as similar to when two individuals fight, the fight ends, and the two parties go their separate ways. Thereafter, one of the previous disputing parties is bothered by someone else who also wants to fight. Then, there is no choice but to fight again.

~~(S)~~ According to Hussein, Khomeini and Iran would have occupied all of the Arab world if it had not been for Iraq. As such, Iraq expected the Arab world to support them during and after the war. However, Iraq saw the opposite regarding support, especially from Kuwait. At the end of the war as Iraq began the rebuilding process, the price of oil was approximately \$7 per barrel. In Hussein's opinion, Iraq could not possibly rebuild its infrastructure and economy with oil prices at this level. Kuwait was especially at fault regarding these low oil prices.

~~(S)~~ In an effort to solve the situation and stimulate economic recovery, Iraq sent Dr. Hammadi, Iraqi Minister of Foreign Affairs, to Kuwait. Hammadi, and the Iraqi leadership's conclusion after the meeting was that the oil price situation was not just the responsibility/work of the Kuwaitis. Iraq believed

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some other entity, some larger power was behind this "conspiracy."

~~(S)~~ Iraq also sent government officials to Saudi Arabia to convince the Saudis to pressure Kuwait. In addition, the Saudi Minister of Oil came to Iraq and held talks about oil prices, the Iraqi economy, and the actions of Kuwait. Hussein claimed that a Kuwaiti official said, "We'll make the economy in Iraq so bad, one would be able to sleep with an Iraqi woman for ten dinars." Hussein told the Saudis that if Kuwait did not stop interfering in Iraqi affairs, he would make the Kuwaiti dinar worth ten fils.

~~(S)~~ Hussein stated that when Kuwait was faced with the facts regarding "stealing" Iraqi oil using the practice of slant drilling, they admitted to having taken "only two and a half billion barrels." They stated this fact as if it was not significant.

~~(S)~~ Regarding the problems with Kuwait, Iraq sent delegates to other Gulf countries which Hussein does not remember. These delegates explained the Kuwaiti situation and the Iraqi situation. The other countries promised to correct oil prices at the next meeting of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

~~(S)~~ At the next OPEC meeting, a decision was made to fix the oil price at \$16-17 per barrel, as remembered by Hussein. Kuwait concurred with this decision. Thereafter, the Kuwaiti Minister of Oil or Minister of Foreign Affairs stated Kuwait would not abide by the OPEC decision.

~~(S)~~ ^(S) Regarding loan debts owed to Gulf countries as a result of support received during the Iran-Iraq War, Hussein stated these were not loans and were supposed to be free aid from these countries. The countries had originally used the word "loan" as a formality only to disguise the purpose of the funds from Iran. When Iraq was informed the money was actually from loans, Iraq held discussions with these countries, including Kuwait, in order to resolve these debts. Because the money had been "registered as loans" to Iraq, Iraq could not secure loans from other countries in order to rebuild.

(S) Hussein stated that twice he discussed a change in oil prices to \$25 per barrel. Once, when the price per barrel

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reached \$50, Hussein dictated a letter to Tariq Aziz, which was sent to the Thoura Newspaper. In the letter, he told the oil-producing countries that they should not take advantage of the industrialized nations. Hussein asked them to reduce the price per barrel to \$25. He commented that this was strange at the time as Iraq had oil and could use the money. When the price dropped to \$7 per barrel in 1989-90, Hussein called for an increase to \$24-25 per barrel. In Hussein's opinion, this price would not burden the consumer or hurt the producer.

~~(S)~~ Regarding the kind of message Kuwait's action or lack of action sent to Iraq, Hussein stated "this confirmed our information" that there was an "conspiracy" against Iraq, the Iraqi leadership, and Iraq's economy. In Hussein's opinion, the visit of US General Schwarzkopf to Kuwait also provided further confirmation. His visit included "sand planning" or wartime preparations for the invasion of Iraq confirming what Hussein and the leadership already believed. Previous to this event, Kuwait's relationship with the United States and Great Britain was well known. When noted to Hussein that the US military visits many countries throughout the world conducting exercises which are not indicators of a "conspiracy", Hussein asked, "In what other country did Schwarzkopf do 'sand planning' like Kuwait?" Hussein further questioned which other countries Schwarzkopf conducted negotiations with in order to enter for defensive purposes. Hussein acknowledged that he understands the existence and nature of exercises conducted by the United States in Egypt and Jordan. However, when exercises or planning cast Iraq as the enemy and include ways to defend Kuwait or attack Iraq, this is a different situation than the other exercises.

~~(S)~~ Hussein discussed the perception in the West regarding Iraq in the months leading up to the war in Kuwait. After Iraq's defeat of Iran, the media discussed Iraq as a military threat to the region. Iraq, however, was not "within Soviet circles" and was attempting to rebuild its economy. Iraq was also starting to build its relations with United States.

~~(S)~~ Soon, the United States made Iraq its enemy through three means or for three reasons. First, the "Zionist" power and influence in the United States dictates foreign policy. Any country viewed as a threat to Israel, such as Iraq, becomes a target of the "conspiracy." Hussein offered proof of this position stating Israel issued an official statement saying that

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any peace agreement with Arab countries must include Iraq. Hussein claims Israel is not hoping for peace, only that other countries abide by their wishes. Israel used its influence over the West against Nasser in Egypt similar to its position vis-a-vis Iraq. This "Zionist" influence extends throughout the United States to include elections. Secondly, there were formerly two superpowers in the world, the United States and the Soviet Union. According to Hussein, the world's existence then was "better than now" as it was easier for two powers to agree rather than attempt to get many to agree. Each of the two superpowers attempted to get other countries to side with them, forging a balance of power in the world. With the collapse of this balance, however, the United States was left alone as the sole superpower. The United States is now viewed as attempting to dictate its will to the rest of the world including Iraq. When countries do not agree with United States, such as Iraq, they become enemies. The third reason the United States made Iraq its enemy is for economic purposes. Certain entities within the United States, including weapons manufacturers and elements in the military, favor war due to the financial profit which can be reaped. This is true for companies selling everything from carpets to tanks in support of a war. Hussein added that America discovered the war in Afghanistan was not enough to sustain the profit making of the military-industrial complex of America. Thus, the war began with Iraq. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, all of these internal and external reasons combined to compel the United States to make Iraq its enemy.

(S) Prior to the invasion of Kuwait, Hussein stated there was a meeting of the Iraqi Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) in which a discussion of the matter took place. The Iraqi leadership of the RCC had hoped the Saudis would "interfere" and have a solution. The Deputy Chairman of the RCC had traveled to Saudi Arabia to solicit their assistance but returned without success. Thereafter, the matter could only be discussed and decided upon in favor of military action. Hussein acknowledged the possibility that one or more RCC members opposed or voted against the invasion, but he does not specifically remember any such opposition. He does not remember if a majority or all of the RCC members agreed on military action. Hussein stated, "I was against attacking if a solution could be found." The last attempt at reaching a solution occurred during the previously referenced visit to Saudi Arabia in which the Deputy Chairman of the RCC met with the brother of Kuwaiti leader Sheikh Sabah.

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~~(S)~~ The final decision to invade Kuwait was made in order to "defend by attacking." Hussein further justified the invasion based upon historical facts. He stated history dictates that Kuwait is a part of Iraq.

~~(S)~~ Hussein stated the objective of the invasion was "the one announced." That is, Kuwaitis were to rule themselves and would decide what kind of relations they would have with Iraq. As for the Kuwaiti leaders, Hussein stated they were "conspirators" against Iraq, Kuwait, and all Arab countries. These leaders kept conspiring even after they left Kuwait upon invasion by Iraq. They were controlled by the United States.

~~(S)~~ Because of the country's "conspiracy" with the United States, Kuwait did not expect the "blow to them." Hussein stated Kuwait deserved "ten blows." Kuwait was not as strong militarily as Iran. Kuwait's lack of defensive positions is not indicative of the absence of plans with the United States. The plans discussed during the previously referenced "sand planning" may have been offensive in nature, not defensive. The reasons for Iraq's invasion existed, with or without the presence of American forces. As they did in the most recent war, the United States "created" the reasons to fight Iraq in Kuwait in 1991. Hussein denied creating this "conspiracy" as a justification for the invasion of Kuwait. He claimed documents discovered by Iraq in Kuwait prove the existence of the Kuwaiti "conspiracy" with the United States.

~~(S)~~ Hussein remarked, "We can discuss this for days." The United States and twenty-eight other countries took seven months to mobilize forces for the war in 1991. This mobilization occurred because of the power of Iraq and perceived military threat it posed. This threat motivated US politicians to support action against Iraq. In addition, the financial interests of companies that could profit from a war also motivated support for action against Iraq. The preemptive strike by Iraq into Kuwait was conducted so that defensive lines could not be completed. Hussein reiterated the lack of American forces in Kuwait does not mean there was not a "conspiracy."

~~(S)~~ Hussein restated that the goal of the invasion of Kuwait was to allow Kuwaitis the right to "decide the way they wanted to deal with Iraq." Hussein denied that the declaration of Kuwait as the 19th Province of Iraq contradicts his previous

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statement. According to Hussein, a Kuwaiti government was established after the invasion and included a prime minister and various other ministers. Hussein denied that Iraqi RCC member Ali Hasan Al-Majid was appointed Governor of Kuwait. He added that the Kuwaiti cabinet decided to "join the Iraqis." When questioned whether the Kuwaitis were given a choice, Hussein asked whether Iraqis were given the choice to voice their opinion regarding the recent war against Iraq. He continued that Iraq's acts with respect to Kuwait were more logical than the United States position on Iraq in the most recent war. Hussein stated the designation of Kuwait as the 19th Province was "deserved and logical." In 1961 or 1962, then Iraqi President Qassem wanted to make Kuwait a district of Iraq.

~~(S)~~ Hussein emphasized that he has already explained why no other actions were taken to avoid the invasion as well as the reasons Kuwait was designated the 19th Province. The political solutions for this matter were completely removed when America attacked. Hussein claimed Iraq "would have gone the other way" if the United States had not attacked. With political solutions exhausted, two options remained. Iraq could have withdrawn from Kuwait, with attacks against their forces not likely to stop during the withdrawal. Iraq would have been the "laughing stock" of the world. Iraqi forces would have been especially reluctant to fight if Kuwait had not been declared as the 19th Province. The other solution, and the appropriate one, was not to withdraw and to declare Kuwait as the 19th Province so that Iraqi forces would fight with greater vigor.

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