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U.S. Department of Justice



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(S) While engaging SSA George L. Piro in casual conversation, Saddam Hussein providing the following information regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD):

(S) Saddam Hussein read SSA George Piro a poem he recently wrote. SSA Piro used this opportunity as a segue to discuss Hussein's speeches. SSA Piro advised Hussein that after hearing several poems from him, SSA Piro is now able to recognize Hussein's writing style, which was prevalent in a speech SSA Piro recently read. It was clear to SSA Piro that Hussein wrote his own speeches, which he confirmed further, stating all his writings came from the heart. Hussein claimed he did not enjoy reading his speeches, preferring instead to have his speeches read by others, such as news broadcasters. Hussein described the feeling of writing his speeches and giving them was the same as taking an exam.

(S) SSA Piro then asked Hussein if he wrote his own speeches and they come from the heart, then what was the meaning of his June 2000 speech. Hussein replied this speech was meant to serve a regional and an operational purpose. Regionally, the speech was meant to respond to Iraq's regional threat. Hussein believed that Iraq could not appear weak to its enemies, especially Iran. Iraq was being threatened by others in the region and must appear able to defend itself. Operationally, Hussein was demonstrating Iraq's compliance with the United Nations (UN) in its destruction of its Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD).

(S) Hussein stated Iran was Iraq's major threat due to their common border and believed Iran intended to annex Southern Iraq into Iran. The possibility of Iran trying to annex a portion of Southern Iraq was viewed by Hussein and Iraq as the most significant threat facing Iraq. Hussein viewed the other countries in the Middle East as weak and could not defend themselves or Iraq from a attack from Iran. Hussein stated he believed Israel was a threat to the entire Arab world, not specifically Iraq.

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~~(S)~~ Hussein continued the dialogue on the issues relating to the significant threat to Iraq from Iran. Even though Hussein claimed Iraq did not have WMD, the threat from Iran was the major factor as to why he did not allow the return of the UN inspectors. Hussein stated he was more concerned about Iran discovering Iraq's weaknesses and vulnerabilities than the repercussions of the United States for his refusal to allow UN inspectors back into Iraq. In his opinion, the UN inspectors would have directly identified to the Iranians where to inflict maximum damage to Iraq. Hussein demonstrated this by pointing at his arm and stated striking someone on the forearm would not have the same effect as striking someone at the elbow or wrist, which would significantly disable the ability to use the arm. Hussein indicated he was angered when the United States struck Iraq in 1998. Hussein stated Iraq could have absorbed another United States strike for he viewed this as less of a threat than exposing themselves to Iran.

~~(S)~~ Hussein further stated that Iran's weapons capabilities have increased dramatically, while Iraq's have been eliminated by the UN sanctions. The effects of this will be seen and felt in the future, as Iran's weapons capabilities will be a greater threat to Iraq and the region in the future. Hussein stated Iraq's weapons capabilities were a factor in the outcome of the Iraq-Iran War. Initially during the war, Iraq had missiles with a limited range of approximately 270 Kilometers (km), while Iran had no viable missile capability. The Iranians obtained long-range missiles from Libya which could strike deep into Iraq. The Iranians were the first to use the missiles, and struck Baghdad. Hussein claimed he warned the Iranians through a speech he gave, to cease these attacks. But the Iranians again attacked Baghdad. Iraq's scientists came to him and advised him that they could increase the range of Iraq's missiles to also reach deep into Iran. Hussein directed them to do so. Iraq responded to Iran's attacks by striking Iran's capital, Tehran, with its own missiles. Hussein stated the Iranians were up in arms to Iraq's strikes. Hussein stated that Tehran was more vulnerable to missile strikes due to its geographical design. Baghdad, on the other hand, was geographically spread out and broken up into districts making Iran's missile strikes less effective. Hussein identified this as the "war of the cities" and Iraqi actions were in response to Iran's. At that time, Hussein recognized that Iran was at a disadvantage, as Iraq had the technology to design and develop its missiles, while Iran was

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forced to obtain its missiles from Libya. Iraq was limited only by its own production while Iran was limited by the quantity it could obtain.

~~(S)~~ Hussein recognized that Iran continued to develop its weapons capabilities, to include its WMD, while Iraq had lost its weapons capabilities due to the UN inspections and sanctions. Hussein was asked how Iraq would have dealt with the threat from Iran once the UN sanctions were lifted. Hussein replied Iraq would have been extremely vulnerable to an attack from Iran, and would have sought a security agreement with the United States to protect it from threats in the region. Hussein felt such an agreement would not only have benefitted Iraq, but its neighbors, such as Saudi Arabia. SSA Piro agreed that such an agreement would have assisted Iraq immensely. SSA Piro noted due to the history between the two countries, it would have taken some time before the United States would have entered into such an agreement with Iraq.

~~(S)~~ Further, SSA Piro advised Hussein that paragraph 14 of UN Resolution 687 states that the disarming of Iraq was part of a total disarmament of the entire region, however, that portion of the resolution was not enforceable. The threat from Iran would have loomed over Iraq, especially as Iran had continued to advance its weapons capabilities. SSA Piro commented that under those circumstances, it would appear that Iraq would have needed to reconstitute its own weapons program in response. Hussein replied that Iraq would have done what was necessary and agreed that Iraq's technical and scientific abilities exceeded others in the region.

~~(S)~~ Hussein commented he allowed the UN inspectors back into Iraq to counter allegations by the British Government. Hussein stated this was a very difficult decision to make, but the British Government had prepared a report containing inaccurate intelligence. It was this inaccurate intelligence on which the United States was making their decisions. However, Hussein admitted that when it was clear that a war with the United States was imminent, he allowed the inspectors back into Iraq in hopes of averting war. Yet, it became clear to him four months before the war that the war was inevitable.

~~(S)~~ Hussein reiterated he had wanted to have a relationship with the United States but was not given the chance,

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as the United States was not listening to anything Iraq had to say. Further, he was concerned about the United State's advanced technological capabilities and resources.

~~(S)~~ On another matter, Hussein stated he only recalls using the telephone on two occasions since March 1990. Additionally, Hussein did not stay at the same location for more than a day, as he was very aware of the United States's significant technological capabilities. Hussein communicated primarily through the use of couriers to communicate or would personally meet with government officials to discuss pertinent issues. Hussein stated that a technologically under-developed country, such as Iraq, was vulnerable to the United States.

~~(S)~~ The discussion then turned to the new interim President of Iraq, Sheikh Ghazi Al-Yawar. Hussein stated Al-Yawar came from a good family and would be favored by the other countries in the region, especially Saudi Arabia. Hussein stated it appeared the United States had put a lot of thought into Al-Yawar's appointment, as Al-Yawar was a good selection. SSA Piro told Hussein the selection of Al-Yawar was not solely made by the United States, but was a joint effort by the United States and UN. The selection of the new Iraqi Government was based on the needs voiced by the Iraqi people. The new Iraqi Government has a strong foundation on which to build on as it progresses in its work to serve the Iraqi people. SSA Piro then asked Hussein how he personally felt about their discussion of a new President and Government in Iraq. Hussein began to respond in reference to Al-Yawar, but SSA Piro stopped him and asked how he personally felt. SSA Piro reminded Hussein that he had previously made it clear to SSA Piro that he still considered himself the President of Iraq. However, it is clear now to everyone that he is no longer the President, as there is a new President who is representing the country and the people of Iraq. SSA Piro told Hussein he is no longer the President of Iraq; he was done. Hussein replied yes he knows, saying what could he do as it was God's choice. SSA Piro asked him if he had any thoughts about his future and Hussein stated that it was in God's hands. SSA Piro pointed out to Hussein that God was very busy and that God had more important issues than he and SSA Piro. Hussein agreed, at which point, SSA Piro told Hussein that his life is nearing its end, and asked him if he wanted the remainder of his life to have meaning, to which he responded yes.

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(S) SSA Piro informed Hussein that he had surrounded himself with weak individuals, who are now refusing to take any responsibility for the actions of the former government. The other High Value Detainees were putting the blame for all of Iraq's mistakes on Hussein, to which Hussein replied by saying what could he do. Hussein recognizes that he may bear the responsibility or blame while others will attempt to distance themselves.

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