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United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

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January 23, 2001

INFORMATION MEMORANDUM
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TO: The Secretary
FROM: NEA - Edward S Walker, Jr.
SUBJECT: Origins of the Iraq Regime Change Policy

Handwritten notes:
NEA
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See note
have 1/24/01

You asked about the origin of our regime change policy in Iraq. It is the Iraq Liberation Act of 1998 (attached). It states that the sense of the Congress is that:

It should be the policy of the United States to support efforts to remove the regime headed by Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq and to promote the emergence of a democratic government to replace that regime.



The statement by the President on the occasion of the signing of the Act was highly nuanced in its support for regime change. However, subsequent statements by the President and other senior officials clarified the policy and made it more concrete.

- Over the long-term the best way to address that threat is through a government in Baghdad -- a new government -- that is committed to represent and respect its people, not repress them; that is committed to peace in the region...Let me say again, what we want and what we will work for is a government in Iraq that represents and respects its people, not represses them, and one committed to live in peace with its neighbors.

- Statement by the President, 11/15/98

- The hard fact is that so long as Saddam remains in power, he threatens the well-being of his people, the peace of his region and the security of the world. The best way to end that threat once and for all is with a new Iraqi government -- a government ready to live in peace with its neighbors...

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government that respects the rights of its people. Bringing about a change in Baghdad will take time and effort. We will strengthen our engagement with the full range of Iraqi opposition forces and work with them effectively and prudently. - *President's Address to the Nation, 12/16/98*

- Now, over the long-term the best way to end the threat that Saddam poses to his own people in the region is for Iraq to have a different government. We will intensify our engagement with the Iraqi opposition groups, prudently and effectively. We will work with Radio Free Iraq, to help news and information flow freely to the country. And we will stand ready to help a new leadership in Baghdad that abides by its international commitments and respects the rights of its own people. - *Remarks of the President on Iraq, 12/19/98*

The regime change policy evolved further, to emphasize the fact that we expect the Iraqi people themselves to be the source of regime change.

- On January 21, Secretary of State Albright announced the appointment of Frank Ricciardone as Special Representative for Transition in Iraq (sic)...He outlined U.S. intentions to help Iraq resume its rightful place in the region -- a goal the United States believes can only be achieved under new Iraqi leadership. He emphasized U.S. desire to work with Iraqis -- who alone can make this happen -- inside Iraq and outside Iraq, as well as with Iraq's neighbors who share the same objectives. - *President's Report to the Congress on Iraqi Non-Compliance with UNSC Resolutions, 3/3/99*

Is he still on THE JOB?

Is he still on the job?

- In the final analysis, change has to come from the Iraqi people themselves. - *Testimony of Undersecretary of State Pickering before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 3/17/99*

Attachments:

- Tab 1 - Iraq Liberation Act of 1998
- Tab 2 - ILA Signing Statement of October 31, 1998

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