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Foreign and Commonwealth Office
London SW1A 2AH

From The Minister of State

Prime Minister

14 August 1990

Mr Waldegrave will hold a press conference with the
Arab press tomorrow to put the case in terms they can
understand & based on view of X below he will go easy
on Charles, no personal attacks on Saddam Hussein.

You asked in your letter of 13 August to my Private Secretary
about material for propaganda against Saddam Hussein. This
is, of course, not difficult to come by and the press has been
full of horror stories both from the past and from the
present. I attach a list of some of the best known horrors
going back to 1959.

There is a problem about this approach, however. The more the
Government trumpets Saddam's atrocities, the more the question
comes up, why did you go on doing business with him for so
long? (We, like the Americans, kept credit lines open
throughout the Iran/Iraq war, for example.) What is more we
now have a large number of potential hostages to add to the
unfortunate Ian Richter who is still in jail in Baghdad. My
own view is that there is really no need for the Government to
feed the flames of anti-Saddam feeling because they are
blazing merrily away in any case. I do not think that
propaganda in this country is really the issue; it is winning
the battle in the Arab states which is important and that is a
much more complex issue. They do not doubt Saddam's
ruthlessness; that is probably partly why the radicals respect
him.

The Rt Hon William Waldegrave

Charles Powell Esq
No.10 Downing Street
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THE BRUTALITY OF THE IRAQI REGIME UNDER SADDAM HUSSAIN

Introduction

1 The Ba'ath Party seized power in a military coup in July 1968, and has ruled Iraq ever since. Saddam Hussain became Vice President in 1969 and succeeded President Hassan al-Bakr in 1979, though he had been the real power in Iraq since the mid 1970s.

2 Since 1968 the regime has ruled by fear: it is one of the most repressive in the world. The government, with Saddam Hussain at its head, consists of ruthless men who do not hesitate to use violence to suppress any suspicion of opposition. Tens of thousands of Iraqis have been killed or have disappeared over the years, most of whom have gone unreported. Iraqi dissidents and exiles have been hunted down and assassinated abroad. The government has subjected its citizens to forced relocation and deportations, arbitrary arrest and detention, torture, disappearance and summary and political executions almost as a matter of course.

3 Saddam Hussain has set the tone for the system of murder and repression and has personally killed opponents. He surrounds himself in an aura of terror, and over the years he has progressively killed or edged out all possible rivals. Often, this is done under the veil of revolutionary justice. For example, RCC decree No 6 of November 1986 (which is still in force) prescribes the death penalty for the deliberate and public insult of the President, the RCC, the Ba'ath Party and the National Assembly.

Human Rights Organisations

4 Human Rights Organisations, such as Amnesty International and Middle East Watch, have consistently condemned Iraq's record. Most recently, in February 1990, the Middle East Watch's report on human rights in Iraq commented as follows:

"Iraq is a well organised police state and its government is one of the most brutal and repressive regimes in power today. ... With the exception of freedom of worship, the Iraqi government denies its citizens all fundamental rights and freedoms and ruthlessly suppresses even the smallest gestures of dissent."

5 In February 1989, Amnesty International, in its report entitled: "Children: Innocent Victims of Political Repression", highlighted brutality towards children as routine in Iraqi prisons - mainly to make them give information about relations. To quote a short passage:

"At least 30 methods of torture have been used in Iraqi prisons. ... We have received reports of

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children having been victims of beatings, whippings, sexual abuse and electric shock treatment. Some young people are reported to have died after torture."

6 A final general example of the Iraqi regime's appalling disregard for human life was the eight year Iran-Iraq conflict, in which over 100,000 Iraqis and over 250,000 Iranians died.

ExamplesA) Attempted Assassination of President Abdul Karim Qassem in 1959.

Saddam Hussain, at the age of 22, played a prominent role in this abortive attempt to assassinate the Iraqi President. According to David Hirst, in today's Guardian, it was not his first. In his teens he is said to have murdered a shepherd, and before 1959 had committed three more murders.

B) Murder of Nasir Al-Hani, first Foreign Minister after the 1968 Ba'athist coup. In 1968, his body was found riddled with bullets in a ditch outside Baghdad. This was the first of a series of Ba'athist political killings which it was believed was to assure that Saddam Hussain had no rival.

C) Hardan Tikriti, former Ba'athist Defence Minister. In 1971 he was machine gunned down in Kuwait by Iraqi security.

D) 1 July 1973 Attempted Coup, led by the Director of Security, Nazim Kazzar. This was followed by mass executions of Iraqi officers, including Kazzar.

E) Assassination in London on 9 July 1978 of General Abdul Razzak al-Naif, (a former Prime Minister of Iraqi for a short period in 1968). The Iraqi murderer, Salim Hassan, was caught and is currently serving a life sentence for terrorist murder in a British prison.

F) Saddam Hussain becomes President of Iraq: In July 1979, Saddam Hussain replaced President Hassan al-Bakr. In the following purge, some accounts suggest that 500 senior Ba'athists were executed in the first two weeks of his Presidency. The purge was not only directed against dissidents (Kurds, Communists and disaffected Shia), but also against Ba'athists and old associates who might have been a threat to him. The deaths not only occurred via quasi-legal proceedings in the revolutionary courts, but also by the security apparatus who shot victims in the street, including central Baghdad. At least five members of the RCC were murdered, with Saddam insisting that a number of his colleagues on the RCC personally did the killing.

G) Execution of Bakr Sadr, April 1980; Shia religious leader. This was followed by another purge of army officers, with at least twenty being executed.

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- H) Destruction of the town of Al Dujayl (40 miles NE of Baghdad):
In July 1982, an assassination attempt occurred near this village. According to a report in the Economist, Iraqi security's retaliation was swift and brutal. 150 families disappeared, assumed murdered, and the rest of the inhabitants (the village had 2,000 people) were deported, the men were sent north and the women and children to the south. The village was then completely destroyed.
- I) Murder of Sayed Mahdi al-Hakim in Khartoum in January 1988:
Leading Iraqi Shia exile who fled Iraq in 1969, and brother of the leader of a prominent Shia opposition group in Iraq. According to the press, the Iraqi authorities are held responsible for the death of twenty two members of the Hakim family.
- J) CW Attack on Kurdish Village of Halabja, 16 March 1988:4-5,000
Kurdish civilians were killed. The attack was aimed at revenge on the Kurdish inhabitants who had assisted the Iranians and as a warning to other Kurds of what to expect if they defied the Baghdad authorities"
- K) Saddam Hussain's son, Udai: On 19 October 1988, Udai Saddam Hussain killed a Palace employee. Though in detention for a period of three months, he was released without charge and sent to the Iraqi Embassy in Geneva. He was subsequently expelled from Switzerland and is currently back in Iraq.
- L) Execution of Journalist for the Observer, Farzad Bazoft on 15 March 1990, and Swedish national, Jalil Mahdi Salih Nu'aymi on 11 July 1990

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