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MR YOUNG E.U., PUSD VIA RCS  
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FM WASHINGTON

TO IMMEDIATE CABINET OFFICE

JICTEL 216

OF 22242Z OCTOBER 90

AND TO IMMEDIATE FCO

FOLLOWING FOR CHIEF OF ASSESSMENTS STAFF FROM JICREP  
FCO FOR J R YOUNG ESQ, EMERGENCY UNIT

MIPT: IRAQ/KUWAIT: TECHNICAL AND SCIENTIFIC ASPECTS  
SUMMARY

1. CIA BELIEVE THAT IF IRAQ HAS DIVERTED ITS SAFEGUARDED FUEL, IT  
COULD POSSIBLY PRODUCE A CRUDE NUCLEAR DEVICE BY THE END OF THIS  
YEAR. SERIOUS CONCERN ABOUT THE CW/BW THREAT.

DETAIL

NUCLEAR

2. ON NUCLEAR, CIA ADMITTED THAT UNTIL RECENTLY THEIR ASSESSMENT  
HAD BEEN THAT IRAQ WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO DEVELOP A NUCLEAR DEVICE  
UNTIL THE MID TO LATE 1990S AND, EVEN THEN, ONLY WITH FOREIGN  
ASSISTANCE. BUT OTHER SCENARIOS WERE POSSIBLE. IF THE IRAQIS  
WERE TO DIVERT THE SAFEGUARDED FUEL FROM THE CIVILIAN FACILITIES,  
THERE MIGHT BE ENOUGH MATERIAL FOR THEM TO PRODUCE A SINGLE GUN  
DEVICE, USING ABOUT 36KGS OF HIGHLY ENRICHED URANIUM. THIS WOULD  
BE A CRUDE AND CLUMSY TOO LARGE FOR DELIVERY EXCEPT BY LARGE  
TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT. BUT IT COULD CONCEIVABLY BE USED AS A TERROR  
WEAPON - DELIVERED BY BOAT, BARGE OR TRUCK.

3. ALTERNATIVELY THE IRAQIS COULD DIVERT THE SAFEGUARDED FUEL  
AND BUILD ONE TO FOUR IMPLOSION DEVICES OF ONE KILOTON OR LESS.  
THIS WOULD REQUIRE MUCH MORE SOPHISTICATED ENGINEERING. SUCH A  
WEAPON COULD BE DELIVERED BY AIRCRAFT.

4. IN BOTH INSTANCES, IT WOULD TAKE THE IRAQIS - ON THE MOST  
FAVOURABLE (AND THEREFORE NOT NECESSARILY ACCURATE) ASSUMPTIONS  
ABOUT THEIR CAPABILITIES. - BETWEEN SIX MONTHS AND A YEAR AFTER  
DIVERTING THE SAFEGUARDED FUEL TO DEVELOP A DEVICE. THE FUEL HAD  
MOST RECENTLY BEEN INSPECTED BY THE IAEA IN APRIL. IF THE IRAQIS  
HAD DIVERTED FUEL IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER (AND THERE WAS NO  
EVIDENCE TO SUBSTANTIATE THIS), THE EARLIEST THEY MIGHT PRODUCE A  
DEVICE MIGHT BE THE END OF THIS YEAR. SUCH A TIMETABLE ASSUMED A  
FLAWLESS PERFORMANCE FROM DIVERSION OF THE FUEL AND THROUGHOUT  
THE ENGINEERING PROCESS. THE PROCESS WAS COMPLEX AND MISTAKES  
WERE ONLY TOO EASY. ANY MISTAKES WOULD SIGNIFICANTLY LENGTHEN  
THE PERIOD IN WHICH A DEVICE COULD BE PRODUCED.

5. EVERYTHING DEPENDED ON WHETHER THE SAFEGUARDED FUEL HAD BEEN  
DIVERTED OR NOT. THE NEXT IAEA INSPECTION IS DUE IN NOVEMBER.  
CIA SAID THAT THE IAEA WERE SHOWING SOME RELUCTANCE TO  
CARRY OUT THAT INSPECTION: IN CIA'S VIEW IT WAS ESSENTIAL.  
IF THE IAEA COULD CONFIRM THAT THE SAFEGUARDED FUEL  
WAS STILL IN PLACE THERE WOULD BE NO CAUSE FOR IMMEDIATE  
CONCERN. MEANWHILE, THE RISK HAD TO BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY (SEE  
COMMENT BELOW).

BW

6. ON BW, CIA CONFIRMED THAT THE THREAT WAS BEING TAKEN  
SERIOUSLY AT THE HIGHEST POLITICAL LEVELS IN WASHINGTON.  
ALTHOUGH IRAQ HAD NOT USED BW BEFORE, IT CLEARLY HAD BW AGENTS:  
AND THE US HAD NO ADEQUATE DETECTION SYSTEMS. THERE WAS NO

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INTELLIGENCE/



INTELLIGENCE THAT IRAQ HAD WEAPONISED BW, BUT IT HAD THE CAPABILITY TO DO SO. THERE WAS NO REASON WHY IT SHOULD NOT HAVE DONE. IRAQ WOULD NOT HAVE TO HAVE USED MUCH BW TO CREATE WIDESPREAD PANIC.

7. AS TO MISSILE DELIVERY, IRAQ HAD THE CAPABILITY AND THE MISSILES, AS WELL AS THE WARHEADS. THERE WAS NO EVIDENCE THAT THEY HAD PRODUCED BW WARHEADS FOR THEIR MISSILES, BUT AGAIN NO REASON WHY THEY SHOULD NOT HAVE DONE. BUT IT WAS UNLIKELY THAT THE IRAQIS HAD AIRBURST CAPABILITIES.

8. WE ASKED ABOUT THE BW THREAT OUTSIDE THE IMMEDIATE AREA OF OPERATIONS, INCLUDING TO WESTERN CAPITALS. CIA SAID THAT THE THREAT WAS REAL. BUT, ALTHOUGH THERE HAD BEEN IRAQI THREATS TO QUOTE TAKE THE WAR TO YOUR CITIES UNQUOTE, THERE WAS LITTLE EVIDENCE AND NO INTELLIGENCE TO SUGGEST THAT THE IRAQIS MIGHT CONSIDER THE USE OF BW AGAINST, POPULATION CENTRES. CIA'S VIEW WAS THAT IRAQ WOULD TEND TO REGARD BW MUCH MORE AS A WEAPON OF LAST RESORT, IF ONLY BECAUSE THEY HAD LITTLE EXPERIENCE IN ITS USE AND COULD NOT BE CERTAIN OF ITS IMPACT. BUT THERE WOULD BE LITTLE WARNING IF THE IRAQIS WERE TO USE BW. WITH THE LACK OF ADEQUATE DETECTION SYSTEMS, IF BW WERE USED AGAINST, EG, SAUDI OIL FIELDS, IT WOULD CAUSE MAJOR DISRUPTION AND WIDESPREAD CASUALTIES. ONE UNCERTAINTY WAS HOW PERVASIVE BW MIGHT BE. DESERT CONDITIONS (WITH HIGHER ULTRAVIOLET LEVELS) MIGHT DISSIPATE ANTHRAX MORE QUICKLY THAN PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE IN OTHER CLIMATES MIGHT SUGGEST.

9. WE ASKED ABOUT ANY DEPLOYMENT OF BW IN THE FIELD. CIA HAD NO INTELLIGENCE, ALTHOUGH THEY HAD NOTED THE CONSTRUCTION OF ATYPICAL BUNKERS IN KUWAIT. THESE WERE SIMILAR TO THOSE AT SALMAN PAK WHERE MUCH OF IRAQI R AND D ON BW TOOK PLACE. IT WAS POSSIBLE THAT THESE BUNKERS WERE USED TO STORE BW AGENTS.

CW

10. MOST IRAQI CW WAS UNITARY AND THEREFORE HAD A SHORT SHELF LIFE. IRAQ HAD A BINARY CAPABILITY BUT MUCH SMALLER STOCKS. UNLIKE WITH BW, IRAQ HAD NUMEROUS DELIVERY OPTIONS AND CONSIDERABLE EXPERIENCE.

11. THERE WOULD BE LITTLE WARNING TIME OF IRAQI USE OF CW. DIVISIONS WITH CW WEAPONS HAD ALREADY BEEN MOVED UP: DECONTAMINATION UNITS WERE IN PLACE. THERE WOULD THEREFORE BE NO MOVEMENT INDICATORS.

12. WARNING WOULD BE EQUALLY SHORT IF IRAQ USED CW MISSILES. THERE WAS AN ADDITIONAL PROBLEM IN THAT MUCH OF THE MISSILE INFRASTRUCTURE HAD BEEN DISPERSED SINCE AUGUST. ONE HAD TO ASSUME THAT THE CW CAPABLE MISSILES WERE BOTH HIDDEN AND WITHIN RANGE OF TARGETS IN SAUDI ARABIA. CIA WERE TRYING TO IMPROVE THEIR TECHNICAL COVERAGE SO AS TO IDENTIFY THE MOBILE LAUNCHERS (THERE WAS NO PROBLEM IN FINDING THE FIXED SITE). BUT AS YET THEY HAD HAD LITTLE SUCCESS AND DID NOT EXPECT ANY IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE.

13. CIA WERE UNCERTAIN WHETHER IRAQ WOULD USE CW IN THE EARLY STAGES OF ANY HOSTILITIES. THEY HAD SHOWN NO COMPUNCTION OVER ITS USE IN IRAN, BUT THEN THEY HAD NOT FACED AN OPPONENT WHO COULD RETALIATE IN KIND. WE ASKED WHETHER THOUGHT HAD BEEN GIVEN TO ISSUING THREATENING WARNINGS TO IRAQ AGAINST THE USE OF CW. STAN MOSKOWITZ CONFIRMED THAT IT HAD. NEVERTHELESS, CIA THOUGHT THAT IF IRAQ WAS ABOUT TO BE PUSHED OUT OF KUWAIT, CW WOULD BE USED.

COMMENT

14. WE HAVE REPORTED (BUCHANAN'S LETTER OF 17 OCTOBER TO YAGHMOURIAN, NPDD, FCO) US CONCERN THAT THE NEXT IAEA INSPECTION TAKE PLACE AS SCHEDULED. YOU MAY WANT TO CONSIDER BRIEFING ROLAND SMITH, THE HEAD OF NPDD, ABOUT THE ABOVE CIA ASSESSMENT WITH THE VIEW TO A POSSIBLE UK APPROACH TO THE IAEA TO STIFFEN THEIR RESOLVE.

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IRAQ/KUWAIT