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21 Mar 02

Policy Director*

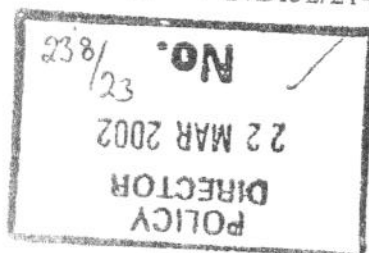
Copy to
CDS*
CSA**IRAQ – NUCLEAR WEAPONS**

1. Following yesterday's discussion with CDS on the potential for Iraq to obtain nuclear weapons in short order my staff produced the enclosed minute, which you may find of interest.
2. We have both been party to the JIC analysis of Iraq's nuclear capability which is based on the intelligence as far as we know it. Our US counterparts supported with our analysis to date and I suspect that the views you heard in the Pentagon are not held unanimously in Washington.
3. If you take a 'best case' scientific and technical approach to the issue, rather than using intelligence, then we judge that Iraq could probably complete its former simple warhead design for air delivery within about a year.
4. Despite the work going on in the Pentagon, I still cannot see a significant possibility of a large-scale military attack on Iraq taking place this year. Reading between the lines of various discussions in Washington last week, I see the US taking a calibrated approach:
 - The 'axis of evil' speech could be considered as the start of an IO campaign.
 - The US would respond to international opinion by giving UNMOVIC another chance, but with a much more intrusive regime.
 - The 'IO' campaign is part of a move to foment opposition to Saddam Hussein inside Iraq.
 - The US would consider the selective use of military force, air strikes, to aid a coup, which must come from inside the country.
 - If all the above fail then consideration would have to be given to large-scale military action.
5. Of course, the last tirt comes into play quickly should Iraq be shown to be complicit in terrorist attacks using WMD.

CDI

Enclosure:

1. D/DI52/214/10, dated 20 Mar 02: What does Iraq need to do to get the Bomb Quickly?



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