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From:

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IRAQI CAPACITY TO HIT BACK

1. The Secretary of State asked for advice on Iraq's capacity to retaliate with weapons of mass destruction (WMD) if attacked by the US. The attached JIC papers (produced in November 2000 and May this year) address the Iraqi WMD threat. The papers' key judgements remain unchanged.

2. The main conclusions to draw from both papers are:

(a) Iraq probably has the capability to strike Israel and other countries in the region with missiles tipped with chemical and biological warheads;

(b) it is highly unlikely that Iraq possesses a nuclear weapon, but it has the motive and technology to develop a radiological device (i.e. one which could disperse radioactive material with conventional explosives);

(c) UN sanctions have prevented the reconstruction of Saddam's conventional military machine. Although Iraqi forces are still large and well-organised by regional standards, a military offensive outside Iraq's borders would be limited by shortfalls in equipment and logistics.

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3. UN weapons inspectors were able to destroy significant elements of Iraq's WMD programmes between 1991-98. Since then, UN sanctions have hindered (but not prevented) Iraq from redeveloping its WMD programmes. Since the last UN inspections in December 1998 hard intelligence has been lacking, but we judge that Iraq has resumed R&D on its chemical, biological, nuclear and missile programmes. Our current assessments are:

Nuclear

Recent intelligence indicates that R&D on nuclear weapons continues and that Iraq is seeking equipment for a uranium enrichment programme. If sanctions were lifted, we judge that it would take Iraq at least 5 years to produce a nuclear weapon. While we have no evidence that Iraq possesses radioactive dispersal devices ("dirty bombs"), we judge that Iraq has the motive and technology to manufacture them.

Missiles

We judge that Iraq probably managed to hide up to twenty 650km range Al Hussein missiles from UN weapons inspectors, although there must be some doubt as to their serviceability after 10 years of storage. In the past 18 months, an injection of \$20 million and pressure from Saddam Hussein has reportedly accelerated progress to develop other long range missiles. This includes:

- R&D to extend the range of the short range Al Samoud missile to 2-300km (potentially bringing Israel and Kuwait City within the reach of a chemical or biological warhead)
- and initial R&D on missiles with a range of up to 2000km (bringing much of Southern Europe within range).

Chemical and Biological Weapons (CBW)

Iraq's CBW capabilities are our greatest concern. Following Allied strikes during Operation Desert Fox in December 1998, Iraq has rebuilt facilities formerly associated with its chemical weapons (CW) programme. It could produce agents within weeks of a decision to do so and is technically capable of producing warheads for chemical and biological weapons. We judge that Iraq was able to conceal large quantities of chemical and biological stocks from UN weapons inspectors.

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6 4. In underlining our concerns about Iraqi WMD to the media, we have drawn on the attached press lines.

5. Later this month the JIC will be reviewing our key judgements on Iraqi WMD, and assessing the threat of onward proliferation of WMD expertise and technology from Iraq to || terrorist groups.

Head, UNMOVIC and Regional Proliferation Section
Non-Proliferation Department

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IRAQI WMD – PRESS LINES

- Our calls for a new approach to Iraq (based on increasing the trade in civilian goods) do not signal a relaxation in our disarmament standards. We will continue to insist on the need for UNMOVIC inspectors be allowed into Iraq
- We believe the Baghdad regime is still hiding weapons of mass destruction in a range of locations. In these circumstances, more important than ever that UNMOVIC and IAEA inspectors are given unrestricted access to all relevant sites
- UN measures have played a vital role in frustrating Saddam's ambitions to develop weapons of mass destruction (WMD)
- But despite tight controls on imports of military and weapons-related technology, the Baghdad regime has continued to pursue ballistic missile, nuclear, chemical and biological programmes in breach of its UN obligations
- The Iraqi regime has admitted hiding chemical, biological weapons and missile parts in the desert (buried in the sand), caves and railway tunnels
- We believe it still has chemical and biological weapons and the means to deliver them in a range of locations
- The Iraqi regime has admitted manufacturing large quantities of chemical warfare agents including Sarin, Tabun, Mustard and VX
- It also admitted producing biological warfare agents such as anthrax, botulinum toxin, gas gangrene, ricin and aflatoxin
- UN weapons inspectors have been unable to account for:
 - 4,000 tonnes of so-called precursor chemicals used in the production of chemical weapons
 - 610 tonnes of precursor chemicals used in the production of VX
 - some 31,000 chemical weapons munitions
 - large quantities of growth media acquired for use in the production of biological weapons - enough to produce over three times the amount of anthrax Iraq admits to having manufactured

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- the effects of biological and chemical weapons are horrendous:
 - exposure to **mustard gas** can cause painful, long-lasting blisters and damage to the lungs; survivors may suffer chronic lung damage, chest pain, and cancer of the mouth, throat and skin;
 - nerve agents such as **sarin**, **tabun** and **VX** cause death within minutes through nervous system disruption; one teaspoon of sarin has the potential to cause up to 10,000 deaths; VX is even more toxic; one drop can kill;
 - **botulinum toxin** poisons the nervous system causing impairment of the senses and paralysis leading to death within hours;
 - **anthrax** causes death within one to five days; victims are killed by the poisons produced by the anthrax bacteria as they grow in body tissues. Less than a teaspoon of anthrax has the potential to kill over one million people.
- We believe the Baghdad regime has recently accelerated its weapons programmes. For example:
 - a) Saddam's ballistic missile programme has made continued progress and facilities damaged by Operation Desert Fox in 1998 have been repaired. In the absence of inspections, we believe that he is planning to extend the range of his current missiles beyond the 150km limit imposed by the UN
 - b) we are concerned by reports of increased nuclear procurement. We think R&D on a nuclear weapons programme has restarted. If sanctions are lifted, we believe that Saddam could develop a nuclear weapon within 5 years
 - c) and we believe that the Iraqi regime continues its biological and chemical weapons programmes.
- The international community cannot afford to ignore Saddam's hidden weapons
- Saddam has used chemical weapons against Iran, and against the Kurds of northern Iraq at Halabja, attacking and killing them with mustard gas and the nerve agent tabun
- If we allow Saddam to develop weapons of mass destruction he will use them again. For this reason, we are now promoting a new UN approach which would tighten controls on the export of military and weapons-related technology to Iraq; SCR1352 (passed in June) signalled unanimous Security Council support for this aim
- We will continue to press for the earliest possible resumption of UN weapons inspections to ensure Iraq's full compliance with its disarmament obligations.

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