Department of State

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Subject: Iraq Reacts Angrily to US Denial of CHEMICAL USE

Ref: A/124, A/129, A/130, A/132

1. Iraq's senior leadership has reacted swiftly and angrily to our public denials of Iraq's use of chemical weapons. This is evidence given publicly to their rebuttal.

2. A senior Iraqi leader has reacted swiftly and angrily to the denial of Iraq's use of CW by US Department of Defense. At a press conference held by a foreign correspondent, the Iraqi leadership rejected our charges calling them "improper." They also accused the Western bloc of "criminal" acts, and Iraq denied having any connection with them.

3. The decision by the US to launch a military action against Iraq is based on the belief that Iraq has used chemical weapons.

4. The Iraqi leadership has already begun to prepare for a military conflict with the US.
2. (U) SENIOR IRAQI LEADERS HAVE REACTED SWIFTLY AND ANGRILY TO THE CONDEMNATION OF IRAQI USE OF CW BY DEPT PRESS SPOKESMAN MARCH 5. ON MARCH 6, MINISTER OF DEFENSE ADMIRAL KHARALLAH AT A PRESS CONFERENCE WITH FOREIGN JOURNALISTS REJECTED OUR CHARGES CALLING THEM "HYPOCRITICAL." THAT SAME EVENING IRAQI TELEVISION AND RADIO NEWS ANNOUNCERS READ VERBATIM TEXT OF FOREIGN MINISTRY STATEMENT UN #621591 IN WHICH AMONG OTHER THINGS OUR STATEMENT WAS AGAIN DECLARED "HYPOCRITICAL" AND CHARACTERIZED AS HAVING BEEN "IMBALANCED" AND OVERLY DIPLOMATIC IN DEALING WITH IRAN'S "AGGRESSION AGAINST IRAQ" THE MINISTER'S STATEMENT WENT ON TO DENOUNCE THE US POSITION AND SAID THAT IT WAS IN LINE WITH PREVIOUS ALLEGED US [ILLEG] INTENTIONS TOWARD IRAQ. THE STATEMENT CONCLUDED BY RECALLING USE OF ATOMIC WEAPONS AGAINST JAPANESE CITIES IN WWII TO SHORTEN THE WAR AND REDUCE CASUALTIES AND SAID THE US IS "THE LAST COUNTRY WITH THE RIGHT TO SPEAK ABOUT THE ETHICS OF WAR."

3. (U) LATER THE SAME EVENING, IRAQI TELEVISION CARRIED THE SPEECH OF PRESIDENT SADDAM HUSSEIN TO THE AREA LABOR CONFERENCE WHICH IS MEETING IN BAGHDAD. IN HIS SPEECH, SADDAM NOTED THE US CHARGES AND IMPLIED THAT THE US WAS SUPPORTING IRAN BY REPEATING ALLEGATIONS WHICH WERE USED BY IRAN TO COVER ITS BATTLEFIELD FAILURES. HE ACCUSED THE US OF TRYING TO CURRY FAVOR WITH IRAN IN AN EFFORT TO BUILD BRIDGES TO IT

4. (C) THE IRAQIS APPARENTLY HAVE BEEN STUNNED BY OUR PUBLIC CONDEMNATION.