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U.S. Department of Justice

Federal Bureau of Investigation



In Reply, Please Refer to  
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Baghdad Operations Center  
February 7, 2004

Interview Session Number: 1  
Interview Conducted by: SSA George L. Piro  
SSA [redacted]  
Arabic/English Translation: [redacted]

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~~(S)~~ Saddam Hussein (High Value Detainee #1) was interviewed on February 7, 2004 at a military detention facility at Baghdad International Airport (BIAP), Baghdad, Iraq. Hussein provided the following information:

~~(S)~~ Hussein stated he has served the Iraqi people for a very long time. He considers his greatest accomplishments to be the social programs for the citizens of Iraq and improvements in other sectors of the economy including enhancements to education, the health care system, industry, agriculture, and other areas that generally enhanced the way of life for Iraqis.

~~(S)~~ In 1968, Iraqi people "barely had anything." Food was scarce, both in rural villages as well as in cities. Farmland was neglected and agricultural methods were primitive. The Iraqi economy depended entirely on oil production, with most being exported from Iraq by foreign companies and not controlled by the government. As the country of Iraq manufactured very few products, most goods had to be imported. The health care system was "primitive" and the mortality rate was very high, particularly among the poor. The infant mortality rate was very high, estimated at 40-50 percent, with many deaths occurring during pregnancy or delivery. The literacy rate was around twenty-seven percent, with those classified as "literate" often not capable of true proficiency in either skill. Roads were almost non-existent in rural areas and "very bad" in the cities of Iraq. Limited educational opportunities existed at the university level, even in Baghdad. Many cities had no college whatsoever. Generally, only wealthy individuals could afford to send their children to a university.

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~~(S)~~ Hussein improved all of the areas previously discussed. He considers this his greatest accomplishment and "service" to the Iraqi people.

~~(S)~~ In response to a question regarding Hussein's own mistakes, Hussein agreed that all humans make mistakes, and only God is free of error. He noted that the interviewer was "smart" and it appeared he had read reports from Hussein's previous interviews. Hussein stated, "Perhaps, a conversation between two such educated people will not be useful or successful." If one says he is perfect, he is saying he is like God. Hussein added that not all of his efforts were viewed as successful in some people's eyes. Hussein compared this evaluation of himself by others and the existence of differing viewpoints to his own views about the American system of government, of which he is "not convinced." He pointed out that approximately 30 million people live in poverty in America, but US residents do not consider this a "crime." Hussein stated he would never accept that for Iraq. When prompted by the interviewer a second time regarding Hussein's own mistakes, he asked, "Do you think I would tell my enemy if I made a mistake?" Hussein said that he would not identify mistakes he had made to an enemy, like America. He pointed out that he does not consider the interviewer an enemy, nor the American people, but the American system of government.

~~(S)~~ Hussein stated it is not only important what people say or think about him now but what they think in the future, 500 or 1000 years from now. The most important thing, however, is what God thinks. If God believes something, He will convince the people to believe. If God does not agree, it does not matter what the people think. Hussein added that a "traitor" provided information which led to his capture. As a "guest" at the location and as an Iraqi, he should not have been given up to US forces. The grandchildren of this "traitor" will hold him accountable and tell this to future generations.

~~(S)~~ In the future, Hussein believes he will be known for fairness and as having "faced oppression." Ultimately, what the Iraqis think will be up to them. Hussein stated Iraqis would not compare leaders of the pre-Islamic era to the Islamic era.

~~(S)~~ Hussein believes Iraqi citizens were able to exercise their rights to self-govern as guaranteed by the interim

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Constitution in 1990. This occurred because the people had a leader and a government to lead them.

~~(S)~~ Hussein believes Iraq "will not die." Iraq is a great nation now, as it has been at times throughout history. Nations generally "go to the top" only once. Iraq, however, has been there many times, before and after Islam. Iraq is the only nation like this in the history of the world. This "gift" was given to the Iraqi people by God. When Iraqi people fall, they rise again. Hussein believes the Iraqi people "will take matters into their own hands," rule themselves, and, with God, decide what is right. Hussein hopes that Iraq will advance in all areas, financial, religious, etc. He added that, as a humanitarian, he hoped the same for the American people.

~~(S)~~ Hussein was quoted a passage from the book "Zabibah and the King," commonly attributed as his writing, where the deputies shout, "Long live Zabibah. Long live the people. Long live the army." The deputies do not, however, shout "Long live the king." Hussein was asked whether the Iraqi people will forget or fail to shout for him, to which he replied no. He said, "It's in God's hands." Hussein emphasized the king is not the main subject of the book, rather the people. He stated God comes first, then the people. Hussein added Jesus Christ was considered "from the people" as Mary was of the people and Christ lived among the people. Being faithful is a cherished thing in life, being a traitor is the worst thing. Hussein stated, "God wanted to tell us don't be surprised when people are traitors to you." Hussein ended this portion of the discussion by saying "a prisoner can not do anything for the people." He said he still has to have faith in God and repeated "It's in God's hands."

~~(S)~~ Hussein stated the National Progressive Front, a political party, first existed as the National Front from 1970-1974. The National Front consisted of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), the Communist Party, and the Ba'ath Party. Political parties express differences in Iraq as occurs in other countries. Some groups, including the Kurds, did not believe in socialism along the same ideological lines as the Ba'ath. In 1991, the National Progressive Front never actually came into being because of failure to pass the Constitution which was due to the first Gulf War.

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~~(S)~~ Hussein considered any individual who was faithful to Iraq, and to the people, to be a part of the Ba'ath. The Ba'ath takes responsibility for successes and mistakes. In 1989 and again in 2002, Hussein attempted, unsuccessfully, to convince his "colleagues" of the need for multiple political parties in Iraq. In Hussein's opinion, one party was not good for Iraq. Hussein stated, "Life does not accept only one idea. It accepts only one God." Hussein continued saying that a political system similar to America's, with multiple parties, would cause "too much commotion" for the Iraqi people and they would have to be forced to accept it. Hussein said, "I wish there were parties other than the Ba'ath." Differences, from family through the people to the government, are good. Hussein ended this portion of the discussion by stating, "Currently, the only political parties existing in Iraq are the ones with the weapons."

~~(S)~~ Hussein was quoted another passage from "Zabibah and the King" which states, "I'm a great leader. You must obey me. Not only that, you must love me." He was then asked whether a leader can obtain greatness through his achievements for his people or demand greatness through fear. Hussein responded that fear will not make a ruler and will not make people love a ruler. Love comes through communication. The "author" of this book is comparing this King to past kings. He did not want to emphasize or advocate the idea of the monarchy to the people as the "author" does not approve of this form of government. Thus, the King died and Zabibah lived, as a symbol of the people.

~~(S)~~ Hussein believes people will love him more after he passes away than they do now. People are resisting the occupation of Iraq, now and before, under the "banners" of Hussein. Now, however, Hussein is not in power and is in prison.

~~(S)~~ Hussein stated people love someone for what they have done. During his Presidency and before, he accomplished much for Iraq. He concluded a peace agreement with Barzani (the Kurds) in the north in 1970. Hussein nationalized the Iraqi oil industry in 1972. He supported the 1973 war against Israel in Egypt and Syria. Iraq survived eight years of war with Iran from 1980-1988 and the first Gulf War shortly thereafter. Iraq lived through 13-14 years of a boycott. Hussein asked whether the boycott still existed, and was told no. Despite all the hardships and issues endured by Iraq, one hundred percent of the

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people voted for Hussein in the last elections. In Hussein's opinion, they still supported their leader.

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