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U.S. Department of Justice

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Interview Session Number: 17
Interview Conducted by: SSA George L. Piro
Arabic/English Translation: SSA [REDACTED]
LS [REDACTED]

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~~(S)~~ Saddam Hussein (High Value Detainee #1) was interviewed March 23, 2004 at a military detention facility at Baghdad International Airport (BIAP), Baghdad, Iraq. Hussein provided the following information:

~~(S)~~ Prior to the start of the interview, Hussein was advised that today's discussion would be a continuation of the previous meeting. He was informed this discussion would include the viewing of the remaining portion of a documentary regarding the situation in southern Iraq in 1991 in the aftermath of the first Gulf War. Made in 1993, the film is titled "Saddam Hussein's Latest War" and is narrated by British commentator Michael Wood. The interviewer began today's viewing of the documentary approximately twenty-two minutes and thirty seconds into the program.

~~(S)~~ Hussein questioned the source of the figure 300,000 provided by a speaker in the documentary as the estimated number of Shias killed in southern Iraq by the Iraqi government. The interviewer noted that this figure had been discussed during the portion of the documentary viewed in the previous session and its source was the Iraqi government. According to the film, the Iraqi government informed the Kurds that this number of Shias had been killed. The interviewer added that this message from the Iraqi government is believed to have been intended as a warning to the Kurds not to defy the government.

~~(S)~~ The film depicted scenes of Iraqi government actions against the Marsh Arabs in southern Iraq including the poisoning of water resulting in the killing of fish, the destruction of villages, and the draining of the marshes. Hussein commented that some of the scenes shown did not appear to have been filmed at the site of the marshes. As the documentary continued, one scene showed a Marsh Arab female commenting on the

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treatment of her people by the Iraqi government. She stated that they had nothing left and had to leave their homes with only a few possessions. Hussein laughed and asked, "What did she have before? Reeds?"

~~(S)~~ The documentary then showed additional scenes and provided commentary about the Iraqi government's treatment of the Shias in southern Iraq, the Kurds in northern Iraq, and the Marsh Arabs. The film discussed the possibility of placing Hussein on trial for these atrocities. Hussein stated, "Now that they have apprehended me, let them put me on trial."

~~(S)~~ The film then ended after a total of approximately fifty-five minutes and fifty seconds. Upon asking the interviewer, Hussein was informed this documentary was made in 1993.

~~(S)~~ Regarding the assignment of certain senior Iraqi leaders to positions in southern Iraq in 1991 who would bear the responsibility of dealing with the Shia uprising, Hussein stated, "We assigned responsibility to whoever was going to handle the situation." Hussein denied that he previously stated he did not want to know the details of how the uprising would be stopped and that he only wanted to know the results. Hussein asked, "Who says I did not want to know how?" Upon being informed by the interviewer that Hussein made this previous assertion, he stated that any person's main goal would have been to stop the disturbances and to end the "treason."

~~(S)~~ The interviewer noted that this documentary shows the cost, human and otherwise, of stopping the treason. Hussein stated that nothing was shown in this film. According to Hussein, it shows individuals who were apprehended by the Iraqi government and some government officials who "behaved in a wrong manner when they struck them." He acknowledged that the documentary shows scenes of other topics.

~~(S)~~ The conversation turned to a discussion about the definition of treason versus a revolution. The interviewer reminded Hussein that he had observed a portion of the film in the previous session claiming that President Bush encouraged the Shia to revolt against the Iraqi government in 1991. The interviewer further reminded him that Hussein previously stated that the Shia, after Bush's encouragement, turned against their

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own country and that Hussein previously stated he considered the Shia to be traitors. The interviewer noted that some would describe the Ba'ath Party in the same fashion regarding various coup attempts and successful coups in 1959, 1963, and 1968. The interviewer further noted to Hussein that some describe a failed uprising as treason, while a successful one is viewed as a revolution. Hussein stated, "I do not have a comment." He added that it was "beneath him" to comment about this documentary. Hussein characterized the film as not being objective and opined that it was made as further justification for "what was being done against Iraq" including the partitioning of the country.

(S) Hussein stated that an accused individual should be allowed to defend himself. He asked whether Iraq was afforded the opportunity to defend itself regarding the information in this film. Hussein questioned the appropriateness of interviewing the President of Iraq about such a "propaganda film." He added, "We should stop this program." Hussein asserted that he had answered all of the interviewer's questions. He affirmed that he would not comment on such propaganda films.

(S) Hussein acknowledged that Muhammad Hamza Al-Zubaidi and Kamal Mustapha Abdallah were sent to Nasiriyya in 1991 to confront the Shia uprising in that area. Similarly, Hussein Kamil was sent to Karbala, Ali Hasan Al-Majid was sent to Basra, and Izzat Ibrahim Al-Duri was sent to Al-Hilla.

(S) Hussein described Al-Zubaidi as a "comrade in our party" who had reached the leadership position of Prime Minister. Hussein stated that he considers every Iraqi to be a good person until that person demonstrates otherwise to him. He characterized Al-Zubaidi as "good." Hussein acknowledged that Al-Zubaidi was one of the few Shia in the Iraqi senior leadership. When asked whether Al-Zubaidi was respected by his colleagues, Hussein stated, "That is another thing, something different." Hussein refused to explain this comment any further. He added, as previously stated, that he will only say good things about his comrades. Based upon Hussein's answer, the interviewer stated that one might presume that Al-Zubaidi was not in good standing with his colleagues. Hussein replied that the interviewer could presume as he wished, positively or negatively, about Al-Zubaidi. He added, "I gave my answer."

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(S) Hussein acknowledged that Abdallah was a distant cousin and member of the Ba'ath Party. He stated that Abdallah served as an officer in the Iraqi Army but was not "in the government." Abdallah assumed the same duties as any other military officer in the army. Hussein stated that he does not remember the location of Abdallah's assignments. When asked whether Abdallah held the position of Secretary General of the Republican Guard (RG) and Special Republican Guard (SRG), Hussein replied, "I thought the questions related to what happened in the South." The interviewer noted that Hussein's perspective on members of the Iraqi leadership is important. Hussein reiterated that he has faith and trust in anyone, whether in the party, the government, or the military, until that person "behaves badly." He added that if he does not describe someone as "bad" that means the person is good. Hussein further characterized a "bad" person as someone who behaves in a manner contrary to the trust existing between him and the person.

(S) Hussein stated that during the war with Iran, the RG assumed duties on the front lines leaving Baghdad and the Presidential Palace unguarded. Thus, the SRG was formed, first of companies, then with regiments. At that time, many young officers served in the SRG including Abdallah. He would later become commander of the SRG. However, the commanders of the SRG and RG were not necessarily Hussein's relatives. Abdallah was one of the many individuals in the Iraqi leadership. Hussein stated that Abdallah performed his duties as would any other officer.

(S) When questioned about the instructions given by the Iraqi leadership to Al-Zubaidi and Abdallah regarding the response necessary for the Shia uprising in southern Iraq, Hussein stated, "I explained during the last meeting." Hussein added that during the last session he also explained how information regarding the situation in southern Iraq in 1991 was communicated back to the Iraqi leadership. The interviewer noted to Hussein that Al-Zubaidi and Abdallah are in the custody of coalition forces. Hussein stated, "What do I want from them?" He asked rhetorically, "Do you think I would answer based upon who is in custody?" He added, "I am afraid of no one. I am only afraid of God." Hussein stated his answers are not based upon who is in custody but upon what he believes to be the truth. His answers are not dependent upon who is alive or dead. Hussein stated that he is not the type person who would blame someone

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because that person is dead, such as blaming the late Hussein Kamil. He added, "I will only talk about myself." Hussein recommended that the interviewer talk directly to Al-Zubaidi and Abdallah as they "know themselves better."

~~(S)~~ Hussein reiterated a statement made during a previous interview saying "any person answering you who, if it lessened their burden, and it does not harm my reputation, I will accept."

~~(S)~~ The interviewer ended the questioning telling Hussein that he did not wish to further delay his (Hussein's) prayer and meal time. Hussein stated, "Any government, if it is to lessen its sins in the eyes of God, then it should do so." He added, "The sins of a government are not few." Hussein ended the session saying that it was good that the interviewer did not prevent him from praying, as this would be one less sin.

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