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(S) While engaging SSA George L. Piro in casual conversation, Saddam Hussein providing the following information regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD):

(S) Hussein stated that the United Nations' (UN) Weapons Inspections had achieved its objectives of disposing Iraq of its WMD. Iraq does not have any WMD and has not for sometime. Hussein was advised that many were of the opinion that Iraq was reluctant to cooperate with the UN Weapons Inspections process. Hussein replied that Iraq had cooperated for seven years and granted access to the entire country to the weapons inspectors, to include the Presidential Palaces. Hussein was challenged on Iraq's cooperation, one example of which was the concealment of WMD components by Hussein Kamel. Hussein stated that Hussein Kamel's true character became known to everyone. Hussein admitted there were individuals in the Iraqi government who were initially reluctant to cooperate with the weapons inspectors. Those individuals were loyal hard working people dedicated to their work. It was difficult for them to be told one day to open all of their files and turn over all of their work and government secrets to outsiders. It took time and occurred in steps. However, by 1998 Iraq had complied with the UN resolutions; yet, Iraq was attacked at that time by the United States, without justification or the UN's authorization. Hussein further stated the Iraqis would not have stored WMD in the Presidential Palaces, as the government and the Iraqi leadership would have been at risk. WMD was and would have been stored in the desert, in remote locations. The palaces represented the sovereignty of Iraq, and it was very difficult for the Iraqis to turn over access to outsiders, but did so to demonstrate their cooperation.

(S) Hussein claimed the strikes against Iraq by the United States in 1998 and in response to the alleged assassination attempt of former President George Bush were unprovoked and unjustified. The United States did not obtain or receive UN concurrence for either attack. Even though, both attacks were the decisions of the United States, Hussein felt the UN had exceeded its authority and charter in regards to Iraq. Hussein was reminded that Iraq was a signatory body of the UN. Hussein attempted to use the Iraqi strike against the USS Stark

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as an example to demonstrate Iraq's ability to openly admit to mistakes. Hussein claimed Iraq acknowledged the strike and its mistake. Hussein believed the UN resolutions and sanctions on Iraq were based upon the United States' position. Hussein was advised of Libya's cooperation with the UN, including their decision to dismantle their WMD; and because of this, Libya's international standing has improved and sanctions may soon be lifted. Hussein was further advised many would place the blame on Iraq for its problems as a result of its hard-line position with the UN. Hussein stated Iraq in the past had a good relationship with the United States and Iraq always wanted to maintain that relationship which would have benefitted both countries. Hussein cited that in the late fifties, the number of Iraqis trying to obtain visas for travel to the United States far surpassed the number at other embassies, including the Russian Embassy.

~~(S)~~ Hussein stated WMD was for the defense of Iraq's sovereignty. Iraq demonstrated this with the use of WMD during the Iraq and Iran War, as Iran had threatened the sovereignty of Iraq. Yet, Iraq did not use WMD during the 1991 Gulf War as its sovereignty was not threatened. Iraq's neighboring Arab countries were frightened of Ayatollah Khomeini and Iran. During a meeting involving several Arab countries, Saudi Arabian officials voiced their fears concerning Iran. The Saudis stated even though the United States was their ally, the United States was too far away while Iran was on their border. Hussein claimed during this meeting, he suggested that they reach out to Ayatollah Khomeini with a peace offer, and then if Iran rose up against them, Iraq would be the first to confront Iran's aggressiveness. The others were too fearful of Iran, and Iraq was the only one who stood up to them.

~~(S)~~ Hussein was reminded of a speech he gave in June, 2000, where he stated that he would not disarm until the region was disarmed; and his own words could be taken as an admission that Iraq possessed WMD. Hussein claimed his intention was for the region to be fully disarmed. Hussein was advised his speech did not project that message. He requested a copy of his speech and said he would then provide clarification. Hussein was informed the Coalition had gathered information indicating that Iraq was either maintaining or re-developing its WMD capability. Hussein denied this. He was then asked if others within his country would do this without his knowledge. Hussein said no,

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and claimed on several occasions he held meetings with all of his ministers and asked them specifically if Iraq had WMD that he was unaware of. All of his ministers stated no, as they cited they knew Hussein's position on WMD matters clearly. Hussein claimed his position was that Iraq did not have WMD.

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