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U.S. Department of Justice

Federal Bureau of Investigation

In Reply, Please Refer to
File No.

Baghdad Operations Center
June 28, 2004

DECLASSIFIED BY uc/baw 60324
ON 05-21-2009

~~(S)~~ While engaging SSA George L. Piro in casual conversation in his detention cell, SADDAM HUSSEIN provided the following information:

~~(S)~~ SSA Piro discussed with HUSSEIN Iraq's relationship with Al-Qaeda. HUSSEIN provided a brief historical account of conflicts between religion, specifically Islam, and historical rulers. HUSSEIN stated that he was a believer in God but was not a zealot. HUSSEIN believed that religion and government should not mix. Additionally, the Ba'ath Party ideology was not religiously based, as its founder was a Christian. However, HUSSEIN was clear that he opposed anyone who collaborated with the West against his country.

~~(S)~~ HUSSEIN stated USAMA BIN LADEN's ideology was no different than the many zealots that came before him. The two did not have the same belief or vision. HUSSEIN claimed he had never personally seen or met Bin Laden. SSA Piro advised HUSSEIN there is clear evidence the Iraqi Government had previously met with BIN LADEN. SSA Piro specifically cited FAROUQ HIJAZI's (BL #104), former IIS M-4 Director, meeting with BIN LADEN in Sudan in 1994, ABU HAFS AL-MAURITANI's two visits to Baghdad, and his request for financial assistance of ten million dollars. HUSSEIN replied "yes". HUSSEIN stated the Iraqi government did not cooperate with BIN LADEN. SSA Piro asked HUSSEIN "why not" since Iraq and BIN LADEN had the same enemies, United States and Saudi Arabia. SSA Piro then cited him the quote "my enemy's enemy is my brother". HUSSEIN replied that the United States was not Iraq's enemy, but that HUSSEIN opposed its politics. If he wanted to cooperate with the enemies of the United States, HUSSEIN would have with North Korea, which he claimed to have a relationship with, or China.

~~(S)~~ HUSSEIN stated that the United States used the 9/11 attack as a justification to attack Iraq. The United States had lost sight of the cause of 9/11. SSA Piro advised HUSSEIN that due to Iraq's contradiction between its statements and actions, many believe Iraq miscalculated the effects of the 9/11 attack on the American people and its leaders. Iraq denied having any connection with BIN LADEN or Al-Qaeda, but evidence showed

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continued contact between the two. HUSSEIN denied miscalculating the effects of the attack, but he did not have any options in front of him. The only choice he was given was to leave Iraq which he claimed was not an option.

~~(S)~~ SSA Piro asked HUSSEIN why was Iraq the only country to applaud the 9/11 attack, which HUSSEIN immediately denied. SSA Piro advised HUSSEIN that the Iraqi newspapers were reported to have applauded the attack. HUSSEIN stated that he wrote editorials against the attack, but also spoke of the cause which led men to commit these acts. The cause was never reviewed which could create such hatred to kill innocent people. After the attack, TARIQ AZIZ wrote personal letters denouncing the attack to two individuals, one possibly Ramsey Clarke, which AZIZ personally knew. These letters served as informal means of communications for Iraq to denounce the attack. HUSSEIN stated he could not make any formal announcement as Iraq considered itself at war with the United States. HUSSEIN was asked if that was why the request of the Iraqi Ambassador to the United Nations, MUHAMMAD AL-DURI, to attend the 9/11 memorial was denied by the Council of Four. It took the Minister of Foreign Affairs' personal request to HUSSEIN to obtain permission for the ambassador to attend the memorial. HUSSEIN stated he could not recall what transpired, but specifically remembered the ambassador attending the memorial. Again, HUSSEIN stated that the ambassador attended the memorial as a representative of the United Nations, and would not have attended as a formal representative of Iraq.

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