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DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

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SPOT COMMENTARY

CIA/DI

SPCOM-SR-91-664

16 March 1991
1500 EST

IRAQ-KUWAIT: SITUATION REPORT #664

Saddam's TV Address

Saddam spoke on Iraqi television today for the first time since the ceasefire. He said he had waited until feelings had quieted down so his words would be better understood. He admitted to widespread domestic disturbances, calling the rebels "stooges and agents of foreign enemies." He said the same people provoking sedition now had done so in the past, implying that Iran was behind the revolt in the south. [REDACTED]

Saddam said the domestic unrest was occurring while Iraq was still "bleeding from the consequences of the vicious aggression committed by 30 countries," referring to the US-led coalition. He warned that if the insurrectionists succeeded, Iraq would become another Lebanon. But he said the rebellion was being crushed and the Iraqi people rejected any division of Iraq. [REDACTED]

Saddam reaffirmed some of the democratic reforms that were approved last summer but never implemented and said he was creating a new ministry to take on the task of reconstruction and restoration of services to the citizens. [REDACTED]

Comment: The rhetoric, intended for both domestic and foreign audiences, was vintage Saddam, and he appeared composed throughout the prerecorded speech. [REDACTED] that the address will be viewed as a sign of desperation as Iraq's battered army struggles to cope with surging disorder. [REDACTED]

The democratic reforms mentioned probably include a new National Assembly which will be popularly elected and have an expanded religious and ethnic membership. Also, Saddam probably will offer popular presidential elections. However, Saddam gave no timetable for these changes in today's speech, and the reforms probably are cosmetic, intended to fan his diminishing domestic support. [REDACTED]

Prepared by:

[REDACTED]

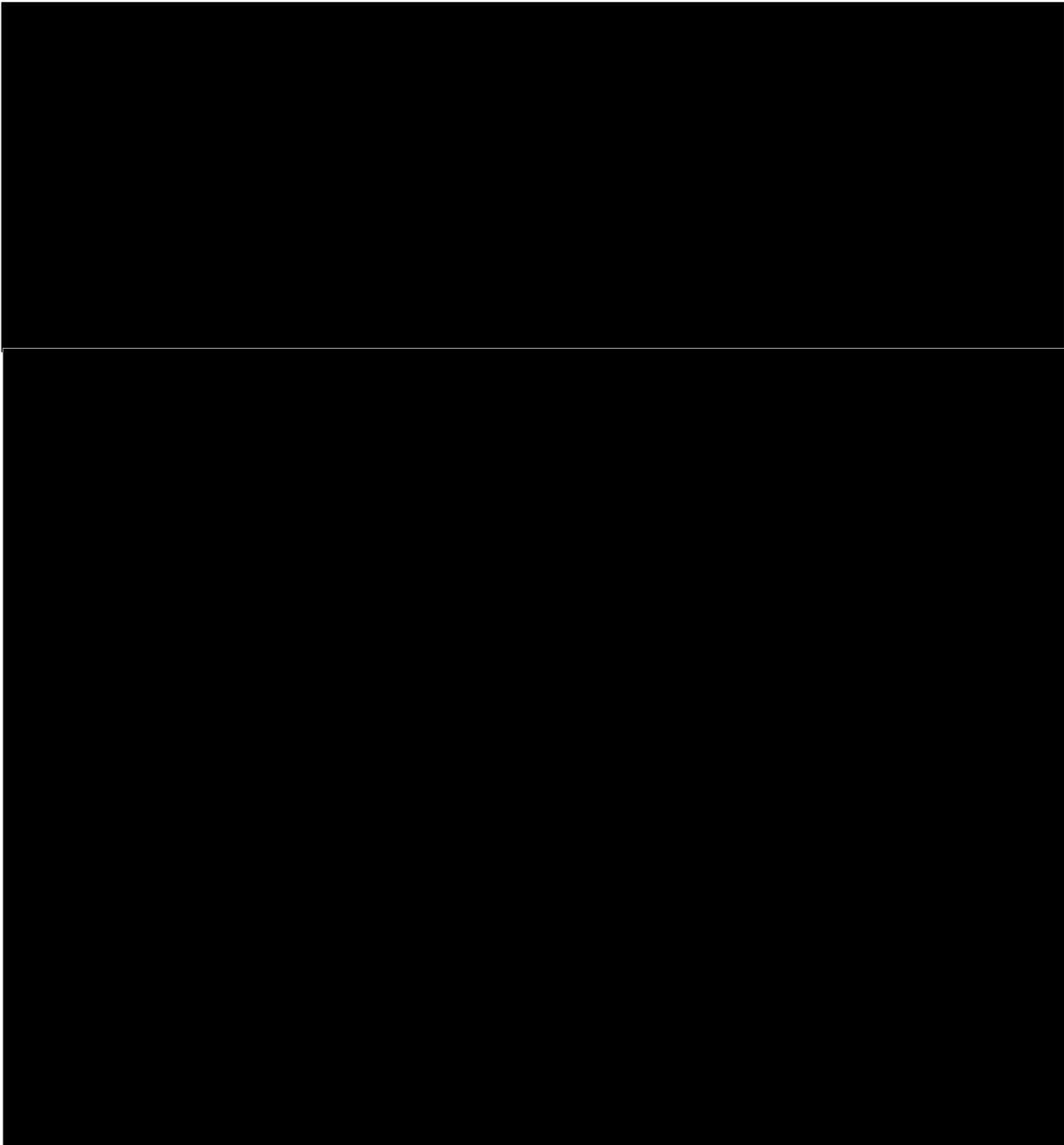
Senior Duty Officer, CIA Operations Center, [REDACTED]

APPROVED FOR RELEASE
DATE: JAN 2001

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The speech was not subtle in its warnings to Kurdish rebels in the north and their backers. We still believe Saddam will use whatever means necessary to put down the rebellion. 

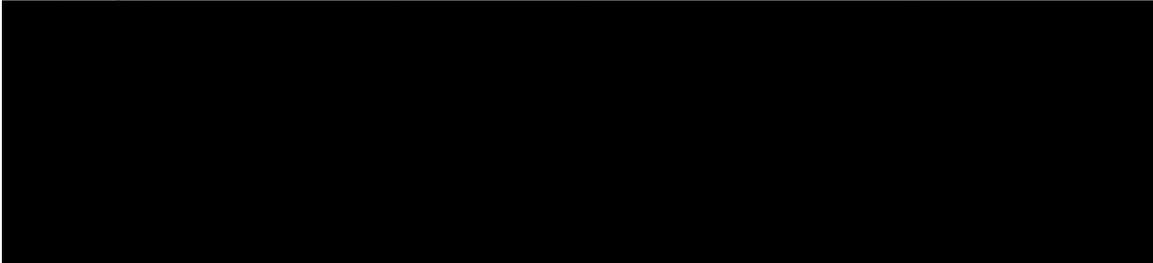


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Resistance Hanging On in the South

Reports of continued fighting in southern Iraq indicate the opposition there survives despite strenuous efforts by the regime to pacify the vital Tigris and Euphrates River valleys.



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Baghdad Regrouping Survivors from Kuwaiti Theater

Special intelligence indicates Iraq's military leadership is trying to reconstitute the forces that escaped Operation Desert Storm. A senior Army official proposed combining the remnants of five infantry divisions--the 25th, 26th, 27th, 31st, and 48th--into one or two divisions and redeploying them to Qal'at Salih, where they will be closer to fuel and ammunition stocks. A senior Iraqi military official revealed that two Republican Guard infantry brigades and a Guard mechanized brigade have been attached to the Hammurabi Armored Division, probably in addition to the organic elements of the division that survived the war.

Comment: Baghdad is feeling hard pressed to send reinforcements to Kurdistan, but has been reluctant to move forces there from Mesopotamia so far because it fears the insurgents would re-emerge quickly after the troops departed. The regime almost certainly hopes to resolve this problem by reconstituting some fraction of the forces previously deployed to the Kuwaiti Theater. By scraping together the remnants of several divisions into conglomerate forces, the Iraqis probably could form a number of brigade- or division-strength units. Baghdad probably would use these forces primarily to garrison the centers of unrest in the south, allowing the intact divisions that did not take part in the war--and have been bearing the brunt of the fighting against the insurrection in the south--to move north and deal with the Kurds.

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