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~~(S//NF)~~ **SUBJ: ATTEMPTS BY IRAQI DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER TARIQ 'AZIZ TO FIND A SOLUTION TO THE IMPASSE BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL AND IRAQ; IRAQI PUBLIC RESPONSE TO PRESIDENT SADDAM HUSAYN'S DECISION TO SET A SIX-MONTH DEADLINE FOR UNSCOM INSPECTORS**

Central Intelligence Agency

26 January 1998

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SOURCE A [REDACTED]
CONTEXT A [REDACTED]

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~~(S//NF)~~ 1. [REDACTED]

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AS(b)(3)

OF 16 JANUARY 1998, IRAQI DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER TARIQ (('AZIZ)) CONTINUED HIS ATTEMPTS TO FIND A DIPLOMATIC SOLUTION TO THE CRISIS BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL (UNSC) AND IRAQ. 'AZIZ'S EFFORTS PARALLEL IRAQI PRESIDENT (('SADDAM)) HUSAYN'S ATTEMPTS TO END THE SANCTIONS IMPOSED BY THE UNSC VIA IMPLEMENTATION OF LESS DIPLOMATIC MEASURES SUCH AS SETTING DEADLINES AND WORKING PARAMETERS FOR UN SPECIAL COMMISSION (UNSCOM) INSPECTORS.

~~(S//NF)~~ 2. [REDACTED] ALTHOUGH 'AZIZ CONTINUES TO WORK ON (b)(1) SECURING SUPPORT FROM UNSC PERMANENT MEMBERS FRANCE AND RUSSIA, 'AZIZ HAS DECIDED (b)(3) TO PLACE HIS MOST VALUABLE RESOURCES INTO ESTABLISHING A DIRECT LINE OF COMMUNICATION WITH SENIOR REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE, PRIMARILY SENIOR U.S. OFFICIALS AT THE U.N. HEADQUARTERS IN NEW YORK. 'AZIZ'S PRIMARY IRAQI INTERLOCUTOR ON THIS ISSUE IS NOT FOREIGN MINISTER MUHAMMAD SA'ID KAZIM

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AL-((SAHHAF)) BUT RATHER THE IRAQI PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE UNITED NATIONS, AMBASSADOR NIZAR ((HAMDUN)). ALTHOUGH 'AZIZ DISCUSSES AND COORDINATES GENERAL ISSUES WITH SAHHAF, 'AZIZ VIEWS HAMDUN AS A MORE CAPABLE DIPLOMAT. (b)(1)

'AZIZ HAS TOTAL CONFIDENCE IN HAMDUN, MAINTAINS A DIRECT LINE OF COMMUNICATION WITH HIM. AND DISCUSSES ISSUES APPLICABLE TO THE UNSC WITH HAMDUN ON A DAILY BASIS. (b)(3)

'AZIZ HAS ENTRUSTED HAMDUN WITH THE TASK OF TRYING TO CONVINCE SELECTED SENIOR U.S. OFFICIALS (NFI) TO ENGAGE IN DIRECT TALKS WITH THE IRAQI GOVERNMENT TO FIND AN ALTERNATIVE SOLUTION TO THE IMPASSE BETWEEN THE UNSC AND IRAQ. (b)(1) (b)(3)

(S//NF) 3. AS OF MID-JANUARY, SADDAM'S DECISION TO SET A SIX-MONTH DEADLINE FOR UNSCOM INSPECTORS TO COMPLETE THEIR ACTIVITIES IN IRAQ WAS WELCOME NEWS TO A LARGE PERCENTAGE OF THE IRAQI POPULATION LIVING IN BAGHDAD. COMMENT: THIS LATEST MOVE BY SADDAM HAS HELPED INDIRECTLY TO STRENGTHEN SADDAM'S POSITION AS LEADER OF IRAQ. (b)(1) (b)(3)

SADDAM'S DECISION TO APPLY PRESSURE TO THE UNSC IS PERCEIVED BY THE AVERAGE IRAQI AS A LEGITIMATE EFFORT BY SADDAM TO END UNSC SANCTIONS AGAINST IRAQ. ALTHOUGH CURRENT LIVING CONDITIONS INSIDE IRAQ ARE SIMILAR TO WHAT THEY WERE IN MID-1997, THE IRAQI PEOPLE ARE AWARE THAT CONTINUED DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN THE UNSC AND IRAQ ON THE FUTURE OF THE INSPECTIONS WILL LEAD ONLY TO FURTHER CONFRONTATION AND NOT TO A SOLUTION. THEREFORE, THE AVERAGE IRAQI IS PREPARING FOR THE WORST, I.E., CONTINUED MARGINAL LIVING CONDITIONS FOR THE REMAINDER OF 1998 AND THE POSSIBILITY OF ANOTHER MILITARY CONFRONTATION BETWEEN IRAQ AND A NEW COALITION LED BY THE UNITED STATES. (b)(1) (b)(3)

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