

~~TOP SECRET/~~ [redacted]

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SENIOR EXECUTIVE INTELLIGENCE BRIEF
19 March 2003
PASS SEIB 03-064CHX

Iraq: Regions Set for Central, Southeastern Defense [redacted]

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The assignment of additional military deputies to the regional security commands and reconfiguration of zone boundaries last weekend suggest Iraq is trying to maximize control of the Tikrit-Baghdad-Al Kut axis and bolster defense of Al Basrah and the southern oilfields. Regional commanders will issue instructions if communications with Baghdad are lost.

- The Central Region Command, under Saddam's son Qusay and the Minister of Defense, includes five of six Republican Guard divisions protecting lines of approach to Baghdad.
- The Southern Region Command under 'Ali Hasan al-Majid has three military deputies who possess a breadth of strategic, operational, and administrative experience, including in the south. Al-Majid, who also was regional commander in 1998, directs regular Army forces in southern Iraq.
- The regime probably is counting on al-Majid to stiffen resolve and instill fear in the dispirited regular Army units who must respond to coalition forces crossing the Kuwait border [redacted]

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The Northern Region Command boundaries are unchanged, and Iraqi military forces are positioned to counter Turkish or Kurdish operations or to undertake contingency plans with little or no warning. The weakest security zone is the Central Euphrates Region Command, which has mainly border and security forces to counter a coalition advance. [redacted]

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