



# DCI Red Cell

Director of Central Intelligence

A Red Cell Special Memorandum

10 March 2003

In response to the events of 11 September, the Director of Central Intelligence commissioned CIA's Deputy Director for Intelligence to create a "red cell" that would think unconventionally about the full range of relevant analytic issues. The DCI Red Cell is thus charged with taking a pronounced "out-of-the-box" approach and will periodically produce memoranda and reports intended to provoke thought rather than to provide authoritative assessment. Please direct questions or comments to the DCI Red Cell at [redacted]

## Anticipating Saddam's Last-Gasp Gambits [redacted] (b)(3)

**As Saddam's options diminish, he may exploit the latest Blix report or President Bush's press conference for last-minute ploys in the hope of forestalling an invasion. Saddam might announce his intention to comply with key demands, perhaps by hauling all his WMD to visible inspection zones, agreeing to honor a "full-compliance" deadline along the lines of Canada's proposal, turning over Zarqawi or other terrorists, or offering to go into exile after negotiations to "safeguard Iraqi interests." Saddam might even fake a coup, expecting an UNSC call for the US to stay its hand until the Iraqi political situation was sorted out. Any or all such 11th-hour gambits might induce war-wary states to dispatch delegations to Iraq, the presence of which might, in Saddam's calculus, complicate US military action.** [redacted] (b)(3)

The Red Cell was asked to speculate on the sorts of last-minute tactics Saddam might use to forestall an imminent invasion once the UNSC concludes its deliberations. (S//NF)

## Last Dance—The "Saddam Stall" [redacted] (b)(3)

Although Saddam is probably gratified that he has sown divisions in the UNSC, he may be concerned that this will not do him much good in light of continued US resolve. As Saddam calculates ploys to buy additional time before US action, he may mine aspects of the latest Blix report or President Bush's recent press conference for ideas. In doing so, he might take particular care to hit sensitive notes that: (b)(3) (b)(3)

- Take advantage of the desire [redacted] (b)(1) [redacted] to thwart US action or at least delay an invasion as long as possible. (b)(3) (b)(3) (b)(1) (b)(3)

- Seem directly responsive to points raised in the Blix report and in the US President's press conference so that the US would face overwhelming pressures to pursue these in the interest peace. [redacted] (b)(3)

## Empty the Cookie Jar [redacted] (b)(3)

Saddam's track record of drawing out inspections *ad nauseum* suggests that seeming to make new concessions on WMD inspections would be one option. In agreeing to destroy his missile stocks, Saddam can claim that he has displayed willingness to sacrifice his WMD to thwart an invasion. He can now cite Blix, who noted the missile destruction as a significant positive development, and, if feeling imminent US military heat, offer to follow up on an more extensive scale—while saving selected weapons of choice should he face an invasion. Saddam might: (b)(3)

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- Exploit US/UK interest in a short deadline by offering his own "date certain" for full compliance as Iraqi officials "discover" new weapons caches. Saddam might see a "short deadline" for full WMD disclosure—two months out or so—as well worth the loss of inventory if he believed the worldwide gratitude and relief at his "concession" would force a US delay until hot weather. Saddam would be confident he could later wriggle out of his own deadline.

[redacted]

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- Take up the US President's challenge and start to place suspected WMD materials "in a parking lot" or open field—inviting the UN and even the US to inspect and destroy the material. Saddam might believe that yielding to a White House dare would significantly increase pressure on the US to agree "inspections are working."

[redacted]

(b)(1)  
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- Build on UNMOVIC claims that Iraq is being more responsive on interviews with scientists by allowing a set number of carefully selected experts to be taken abroad—with their immediate families—for interviews. Again, the idea would be to ostensibly meet a UN and US demand, and to force calls for a delay in military action until "free and unfettered interviews" were complete.
- Invite the US to set up a base in Iraq to join the search for WMD, a possibility raised in one intelligence report. If Saddam made such a desperate offer in public, calls for the US to exploit this "dramatic concession" before starting a war would be loud and long. [redacted]

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**Exit Saddam** [redacted]

(b)(3)

Saddam might also try to stall by addressing President Bush's comments that exile is an acceptable outcome as long as a successor regime disarms. We can conceive a range of imaginative ways that Saddam might use this opening to create confusion and pressure on the US to "wait for the dust to settle" before embarking on war.

- **Exile offer.** Saddam could accept the Saudi offer of exile but first require "brief" negotiations over terms that would guarantee the safety of Saddam himself, his entourage, and their families, and would define the modalities by which a successor regime would disarm. Saddam could invite a high-level foreign emissary—such as the Russian or Saudi foreign minister—to Baghdad, dragging out talks while Saddam plots his next move.
- **Resignation.** Saddam might try to achieve similar results by resigning and putting someone in his place who could be controlled from behind the scenes.
- **Fake coup.** Because so many foreign states have hoped for a brave general to depose Saddam, the dictator might stage a coup himself, using his doubles to sow confusion about his fate—perhaps even "executing" one a la Ceausescu—and continuing to run the show from behind the scenes. A loyal general might pretend to

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take power and proclaim intentions to fully cooperate in disarming Iraq, turning over a limited number of weapons to show his sincerity but preserving most of Iraq's capability. Once Saddam thought weather or political conditions no longer permitted a US invasion, he could reemerge in a counter coup and regain power.

- **Election day.** Saddam might try to use the US President's vision of a democratic Iraq to "agree to pressure from the West" for a transition to democracy. Saddam could agree to call a constituent assembly that would result in internationally monitored "free elections" and a transfer of power to take place in a few months. [redacted]

(b)(3)

**Join the War on Terrorism** [redacted]

(b)(3)

Saddam might exploit the more detailed US charges linking him to terrorism and offer to "join the war" by tracking down and expelling the al-Qa`ida members believed to be in Iraq. Just as Saddam dispatched Abu Nidal when the terrorist was no longer useful, Saddam might arrest Zarqawi and some of his supporters and promise to turn them over to the West, once details are worked out—which would prove to be a process sufficiently long to make US military action more difficult.

- Given warnings about the poison plant by both the US President and Secretary of State, Saddam could say that, although he does not control northeast Iraq, he invites foreign forces—even those of the US—to go after al-Qa`ida in the Kurdish areas.

[redacted]

(b)(3)

**Create a Diversion.** [redacted]

(b)(3)

Although it would be more difficult for Saddam to orchestrate a sufficiently large diversion to disrupt a US invasion, several gambits remain available to a desperate dictator.

- **North Korea.** Saddam might see escalating tension in Korea as the best prospect of diverting the US from Iraq. He might offer Kim Chong-il a massive monetary incentive to stage a military confrontation with the US.
- **Middle East.** Saddam might try to stall US action by destabilizing a key US ally in the Middle East.

[redacted]

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- **Terrorist attack.** Using Iraqi security personnel positioned abroad, Saddam could launch a major terrorist attack or series of attacks against the US or US interests that he would try to attribute to al-Qa`ida.

- **Preemptive strike.** A really desperate Saddam looking for any way to stall a US attack, even for a few days, might gamble on preemptive WMD strikes on the US forces deploying against him. Saddam would know that such action would draw down on him possibly unprecedented military wrath, but he might count on the shock value of first use of WMD to induce calls for a ceasefire before more WMD was used.

[redacted]

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