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SENIOR EXECUTIVE INTELLIGENCE BRIEF  
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PASS SEIB 02-289CHX

**Iraq: Opposition To Highlight Unity at Conference** [redacted]

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*Key members of the Iraqi opposition probably regard their meeting in London this weekend as their best opportunity in the past decade to position themselves to participate in shaping a successor government and are publicly willing to set aside differences, at least temporarily.* Some 300 people are expected to attend the conference, approximately the same number who attended earlier ones in 1992 and 1999.

-- The latest conference will be attended by the Iranian-backed Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, an Iraqi Shia umbrella group which did not attend the 1999 conference and has been wary of contact with the US. [redacted]

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The conference is likely to result in a statement calling for a democratic, unified Iraq in compliance with UN Security Council resolutions and create an advisory committee to pursue this objective. These measures could improve the opposition's image and strengthen public diplomacy efforts that highlight Iraqi regime abuses and counter Iraqi propaganda.

-- Conference documents are consistent with US policy objectives in Iraq [redacted] and organizers appear united on the message the conference is intended to send.

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-- The 1992 and 1999 conferences produced general statements of commitment to overthrowing Saddam and establishing a democratic Iraq but were not followed up with unified antiregime actions. [redacted]

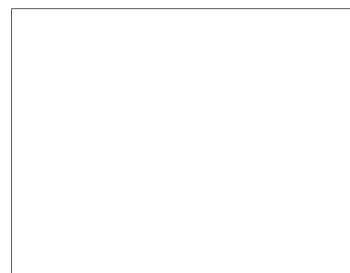
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Infighting and divisions within the opposition remain significant. [redacted] Participants as of yesterday had yet to agree on the number of independent attendees, and several groups were pressing for their own lists of invitees.

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-- Some Sunni oppositionists have complained that the conference is dominated by Shias and Kurds, which they believe will play badly with Iraqis who fear sectarian civil war or revenge killings if Saddam is removed. [redacted]

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