

~~TOP SECRET~~ [redacted]

(b)(3)

SENIOR EXECUTIVE INTELLIGENCE BRIEF  
8 November 2002  
PASS SEIB 02-261 CHX

**Iraq: To Flood Civilian Areas in War, Blame US** [redacted]

(b)(3)

*Saddam is preparing in the event of war to sabotage a few dams or to release river water to stave off advancing military forces, leaving them more vulnerable to counterattacks,* [redacted]

[redacted] Baghdad almost certainly would accuse the US of destroying water resources--forbidden under the Geneva Convention--and of creating dire humanitarian conditions for the Iraqi people.

(b)(3)

-- The Iraqi Government during the Gulf war claimed the US deliberately targeted water infrastructure, a charge that resonated in foreign media, especially in Muslim countries.

(b)(3)

[redacted] *to breach all major dams would create a prolonged humanitarian crisis, and even a partial release of water would complicate relief operations.* Breaching major dams on the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers would interrupt food supplies, damage crops, waste water needed for irrigation, disrupt water and sanitation systems in urban areas, and increase the risk of diseases like malaria.

(b)(3)

-- Based on discharge capacity and potential for flooding in populated areas, the Al Habbaniyah-Tharthar and the Al Qadisiyah dams are critical on the Euphrates and could affect more than 1.6 million people. Flooding from the Al Habbaniyah-Tharthar Dam would damage transportation and utilities infrastructure, local industries, and agriculture. Water from the Al Qadisiyah Dam would destroy agriculture, local fishing, and tourist industries.

-- A breach of the Saddam Dam--which has the largest storage capacity of any Iraqi dam on the Tigris--would damage wheat and barley crops and the water supply in Mosul, home to 1.7 million people.

-- The extent of flood damage depends in part on the amount of local rainfall and if enough water accumulates behind the dams during the October through May rainy season. Currently, water levels are below full capacity, but some major dams do have sufficient water for flooding. [redacted]

(b)(3)

Iraq's release of water from its southern river canals in combination with flooding from dams might cause large-scale agricultural losses in the short term and spoil drinking water supplies. About 80,000 people downstream are vulnerable to flooding because the marshlands cannot absorb large amounts of floodwater.

-- A shortage of drinking water would create a crisis in the southern city of Al Basrah, home

~~TOP SECRET~~ [redacted]

(b)(3)

~~TOP SECRET~~ [redacted]

(b)(3)

to more than 1.3 million people. [redacted]

(b)(3)

***Turkey potentially could decrease the amount of water available to Iraq to use against attackers during a war.*** Central and southern Iraq especially depend on Turkish water to replenish reservoirs, and the Tigris's water largely comes from Kurdish-controlled reservoirs in northern Iraq. [redacted]

(b)(3)

***After wartime flooding, rebuilding Iraq's water sector would be expensive.*** Even if Iraq does not deliberately inundate large areas--or if its water infrastructure suffers little collateral damage--rehabilitating Iraq's crumbling water and sewage infrastructure could cost more than \$1 billion [redacted]

(b)(3)

-- Water repairs also could become a volatile postwar issue between the southern Shia, whose water needs have long been neglected by Saddam, and elites and regime supporters used to better water services. [redacted]

(b)(3)

[redacted]

(b)(3)

~~TOP SECRET~~ [redacted]

(b)(3)