

ACTION NEA-00

INFO	LOG-00	CA-00	INL-00	EB-00	EUR-00	E-00	UTED-00
	TEDE-00	IO-00	L-00	NSCE-00	OMB-00	PA-00	PER-00
	PM-00	P-00	D-00	SP-00	SSO-00	SS-00	TEST-00
	R-00	PMB-00	PRM-00	G-00	SAS-00	SWCI-00	/000W

-----F9C735 101608Z /03

R 091931Z MAR 04  
 FM CPA BAGHDAD  
 TO SECDEF WASHDC 0067  
 SECSTATE WASHDC 0075  
 WHITE HOUSE NSC WASHDC 0060  
 US DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 000042

~~SENSITIVE~~

E.O. 12958: N/A  
 TAGS: PREL, PGOV, IZ  
 SUBJECT: CABLE 0685: IRAQI NATIONAL GATHERING PARTY KICKS

OFF PUBLIC CAMPAIGN ADVOCATING STRONG TIES WITH U.S.,  
 VIBRANT PRIVATE SECTOR

SUMMARY

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1. (U) DR. HUSSEIN AL-JIBBOURI, CHAIRMAN OF THE IRAQI NATIONAL GATHERING PARTY TOLD AN AUDIENCE OF 500 FROM HIS HOME TOWN OF AL-ALAM THAT HIS PARTY WELCOMED IRAQIS FROM ALL ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES, FAVORED THE PRIVATE SECTOR AS THE BASIS FOR THE IRAQI ECONOMY AND WOULD PURSUE A FOREIGN POLICY FOCUSED ON STRENGTHENING TIES WITH THE ADVANCED COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD SUCH AS THE UNITED STATES AND THE UK. HE CALLED FOR THE RECONSTITUTION OF THE IRAQI ARMY, A RE-EXAMINATION OF THE DE-BAQATHIFICATION PROCESS, ELECTIONS UNDER INTERNATIONAL SUPERVISION AND EXPANDED CONTACTS BETWEEN CPA AND PARTIES NOT REPRESENTED ON THE IRAQ GOVERNING COUNCIL (IGC). HE AVOIDED DIRECTLY ANSWERING QUESTIONS CONCERNING HIS EVALUATION OF THE IGC, THE KURDISH ATTITUDE TOWARD KIRKUK AND HIS PARTYQS ROLE IN OBTAINING THE RELEASE OF IRAQIS DETAINED BY THE U.S. MILITARY, BUT HE EXPRESSED CLEAR SUPPORT FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF U.S. MILITARY BASES IN IRAQ AND SAID THE U.S. POSITION ON THE UNITY OF IRAQ HAS BEEN CONSISTENT AND CLEAR SINCE THE FIRST GULF WAR. END SUMMARY.

## POLITICS BEGINS AT HOME

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2. (U) DR. HUSSEIN AL-JIBBOURI, CHAIRMAN OF THE IRAQI NATIONAL GATHERING (ING) PARTY KICKED OFF THE FIRST IN A SERIES OF PUBLIC MEETINGS TO PROMOTE HIS PARTY ON FEBRUARY 26, IN HIS HOME VILLAGE OF AL-ALAM, JUST ACROSS THE TIGRIS RIVER FROM THE CITY OF TIKRIT. HE TOLD IRAQI GOVERNING COUNCIL (IGC) BEFORE THE SESSION THAT HE INTENDED TO HOLD SIMILAR MEETINGS IN THE NEAR FUTURE IN MOSUL, KIRKUK, DIYALA, BAGHDAD, RAMADI AND OTHER CITIES WHERE HIS PARTY HAS, OR WILL SOON ESTABLISH, OFFICES. OVER 500 SHEIKHS AND OTHER LOCAL LEADERS, AND ORDINARY CITIZENS, INCLUDING A LARGE NUMBER OF YOUNG PEOPLE -- AND EVEN A FEW WOMEN -- CROWDED THE AL-ALAM YOUTH CENTER TO HEAR THE INGQS MESSAGE.

3. (U) DR. HUSSEIN REVIEWED THE BIRTH OF HIS PARTY IN 1991 AND HIS FLIGHT TO NORTHERN IRAQ FOLLOWING THE FAILED COUP CARRIED OUT BY SEVERAL OF HIS RELATIVES IN THE REPUBLICAN PALACE FOLLOWING THE FIRST GULF WAR. HE SAID HIS CONTACTS WITH KURDISH PARTIES HAD TAUGHT HIM MUCH ABOUT POLITICAL LIFE, BUT THAT HE HAD DECIDED TO BUILD HIS PARTY ON AN INCLUSIVE PLATFORM. NOTING THAT MANY IRAQI PARTIES HAD FORMED ON ETHNIC, RELIGIOUS, OR SECTARIAN BASES, HE STRESSED THAT HE WANTED TO ATTRACT ALL IRAQIS -- SUNNI, SHIQA, CHRISTIAN, SUFI, ARAB, KURD, TURKMAN -- TO WORK TOGETHER ON THE BASIS OF BUILDING THE IRAQI NATION. HE CALLED THE ING A BIG TENT WHERE THERE WOULD BE ROOM FOR ALL.

### THE ING PLATFORM

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4. (U) FOLLOWING DR. HUSSEINQS SPEECH, HIS POLITICAL ADVISOR, RAQAD KHATAB, OUTLINED THE INGQS POLITICAL PLATFORM. HE LISTED SIX GOALS:

- ESTABLISHMENT OF A BROAD-BASED DEMOCRACY OF THE PEOPLE;
- ENSURING THE UNITY OF IRAQQS LAND AND PEOPLE;
- BUILDING THE ECONOMY ON THE BASIS OF THE PRIMACY OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR;
- ESTABLISHING STRONG, BALANCED RELATIONS WITH ALL NATIONS, WITH PRIMACY GIVEN TO THE ADVANCED COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD LIKE THE UNITED STATES AND THE UK;
- BUILDING A NEW INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY FREE FROM

TERRORISM; AND

-- BROAD PARTICIPATION IN THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMY.

KHATAB ALSO SET FORTH EIGHT PROPOSALS:

-- EXPAND THE BASE OF POPULAR PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL PARTIES;

-- CONDUCT GREATER DIALOGUE BETWEEN CPA AND PARTIES NOT REPRESENTED ON THE IGC;

-- HOLD COMING ELECTIONS ON THE BASIS OF A NATIONAL CENSUS UNDER INTERNATIONAL SUPERVISION;

-- ACCELERATE THE REBUILDING OF IRAQ IN ORDER TO PROVIDE

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-- RECONSTITUTE THE IRAQI ARMY;

-- RE-EXAMINE THE DE-BAQATHIFICATION PROCESS;

-- REDUCE THE NUMBER OF NIGHT TIME RAIDS IN DIYALA, SALAH AD-DIN, KIRKUK, MOSUL, ANBAR AND BAGHDAD, AND USE THE POLICE TO ROUND UP WANTED PERSONS; AND

-- PROVIDE SUPPORT TO THE ING ON AN EQUAL BASIS WITH OTHER PARTIES.

DODGING SOME QUESTIONS, FACING SOME HARD ISSUES  
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5. (U) FOLLOWING KHATABQS PRESENTATION, DR. HUSSEIN TOOK QUESTIONS FOR NEARLY ONE HOUR. HE DODGED SOME ISSUES, BUT WAS FORTHRIGHT IN THE FACE OF OTHERS. ASKED ABOUT THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE IGC, HE TOLD THE CROWD HE HAD KNOWN MANY OF ITS MEMBERS FOR YEARS, HAVING LIVED AMONG THEM IN SAUDI ARABIA AND SYRIA. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION ABOUT HIS PARTYQS ROLE IN OBTAINING THE RELEASE OF DETAINEES, HE REPLIED THAT THE U.S. MILITARY HAD RELEASED MANY DETAINEES PRIOR TO THE EID. ASKED FOR HIS EVALUATION OF JALAL TALABANIQS POSITION REGARDING KIRKUK, HE ONLY REPLIED, QKIRKUK IS A CITY FOR ALL, A CITY OF PEACE.Q HOWEVER, WHEN SOMEONE ASKED WHETHER THE U.S. SUPPORTED TALABANIQS KURDISH NATIONALISM, HE POINTED OUT THAT THE U.S. HAD FORCEFULLY AND CONSISTENTLY SUPPORTED THE UNITY AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF IRAQ, AND HAD OFTEN REPEATED ITS STANCE SINCE 1991. ON THE ISSUE OF U.S. MILITARY BASES, HE SAID HE UNDERSTOOD SOME BASES WOULD BE BUILT IN THE SOUTH. HE ADDED THAT HE STRONGLY SUPPORTED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF U.S.

BASES SINCE THE U.S. HAD BASES IN SEVERAL ADVANCED COUNTRIES LIKE THE UK, JAPAN AND KOREA. HE ADDED THAT HE DID NOT UNDERSTAND WHY PEOPLE SHOULD REGARD THE ISSUE AS A SENSITIVE ONE.

6. (U) REGARDING THE COMING TRANSITION TO IRAQI SOVEREIGNTY, HUSSEIN REVIEWED THE PROPOSAL TO USE CAUCUSES TO ELECT A TRANSITIONAL NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, NOTING THAT THE PROPOSAL HAD NOT RECEIVED SUFFICIENT SUPPORT AND THEREFORE

THE WAY AHEAD WAS UNCLEAR. IN RESPONSE TO A QUERY ABOUT THE PRESENCE OR ABSENCE OF REFERENCES TO ISLAM IN THE TRANSITIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE LAW (TAL), HE SAID CPA ADMINISTRATOR BREMER HAD SAID THE TAL WOULD BE BASED ON ISLAM. HE SAID HE WAS OPTIMISTIC THAT IRAQIS WERE PREPARED FOR DEMOCRACY AND BELIEVED THAT THE ECONOMY WOULD IMPROVE IN THE COMING YEAR AS OIL REVENUES CONTINUED TO RECOVER. HE ADVOCATED A STRONG ROLE FOR WOMEN IN A NEW IRAQ, NOTING THAT WOMEN WERE WORKING IN EVERY ING OFFICE.

COMMENT  
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7. (SBU) THE ING RALLY HAD MUCH THE SAME FEEL OF SIMILAR MEETINGS IN MANY DEMOCRATIC COUNTRIES, THOUGH IT LACKED THE PIZAZZ THAT ACCOMPANIES MOST SUCH GATHERINGS IN THE U.S. EXPRESSIONS OF SUPPORT FOR HIS MOVEMENT WERE FEW, BUT SO WERE CRITICISMS OF HIS PLATFORM. THE QUESTIONS POSED TO DR. HUSSEIN REFLECTED THE PRIME CONCERNS OF THE LOCAL POPULATIONS AND ARE MUCH THE SAME AS WE HEAR IN OUR MEETINGS. THE UNITY OF IRAQ, AND ESPECIALLY SUSPICION OF THE KURDS, DOMINATES THE POLITICS OF THIS AREA, AS DOES DISTRUST OF THE IGC (DUE TO THE LACK OF A SALAH AD-DIN REPRESENTATIVE, AMONG OTHER THINGS) AND CONCERN OVER DETAINEES. MANY OF OUR CONTACTS ALSO BELIEVE DISBANDING THE IRAQI ARMY WAS A MISTAKE AND MOST TELL US THEY BELIEVE DE-BAQATHIFICATION HAS GONE TOO FAR.

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