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DESERT CROSSING SEMINAR

AFTER ACTION REPORT BRIEFING

July 22, 1999

Classified By: CINC CENTCOM/Multiple Sources

Reason 1.5A

Declas: X4

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* On June 28-30, 1999, U.S. Central Command hosted the Desert Crossing Seminar, a senior level interagency effort in which participants were asked to identify insights on how to manage change in a post-Saddam Iraq

* Seminar participation included:
  * Department of State
  * Department of Defense
  * National Security Council
  * Central Intelligence Agency

Enhance interagency planning for Iraq crisis by:

- Identifying most crucial interagency issues

- Identifying interagency interests

- Identifying interagency responsibilities

- Examining proposed phases and concepts for "Desert Crossing" draft plan

Goal was problem identification, not solutions

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- **Four moves used to structure issue discussion:**
  - ▸ Move 1 = June 99.........Pre-Concept
  - ▸ Move 2 = July 99..........Concept Phase I
  - ▸ Move 3 = October 99.....Concept Phase II
  - ▸ Move 4 = March 00.......Concept Phases III & IV

- **Scenario ranged from uncertainty surrounding Saddam's departure, through chaos in the aftermath, to improving conditions.**

- **Challenging and "worst case" elements in scenario**

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Two Levels of Discussion & Interaction

- **First level focused on Deputies:**
  - ▶ 3 Deputies (Blue) Teams
  - ▶ Iraq (Red) Team
  - ▶ Coalition (Green) Team

- **Second level focused on Principals:**
  - ▶ Deputies debated and developed recommendations for principals
  - ▶ Principals deliberated--determined relevancy, priority, responsibilities, and identified new issues

PrincipalsTeam

▸ **Gen Anthony Zinni (USCENTCOM)**
▸ (DoS/NEA)
▸ (DoS/PM)
▸ (DoS/IO)
▸ (DoD/S&TR)
▸ (JS/J-5)   b b
▸ (DoS)
▸ (USAID/OFDA)
▸ **Amb (Ret.)**
▸ (CIA)
▸ (DoD/SOLIC)
▸ (DoD/ISA)
▸ (DoS/NEA)
▸ (DoS/PRM)
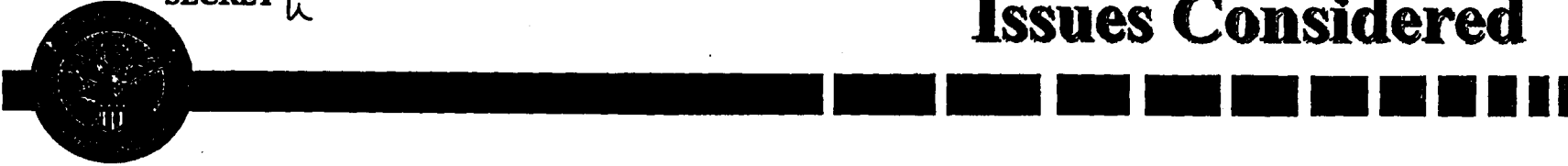
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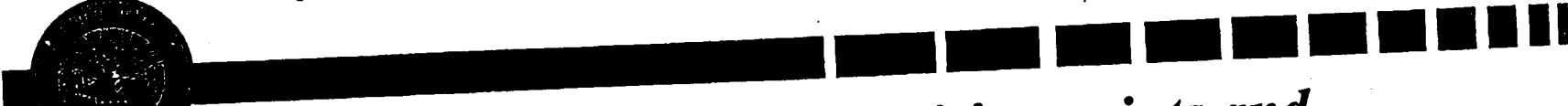
Issues Considered

1. What are the key U.S. decision points and conditions for intervention?
2. How do we manage Iraq's neighbors and other influential states?
3. How do we build and maintain the coalition?
4. What are the major refugee assistance challenges external to Iraq?
5. What is the appropriate role for co-opted elements of Iraqi military power?
6. How do we contain Shia and Kurdish threats to the stability of Iraq and prevent fragmentation?
7. What is the U.S. role in establishing a transitional government in Iraq?
8. How do we synchronize humanitarian assistance, civilian, and military activities during combat and/or peace enforcement operations?
9. How do we reestablish civil order in the wake of combat operations?
10. What is the U.S. exit strategy and long-term presence in Iraq?
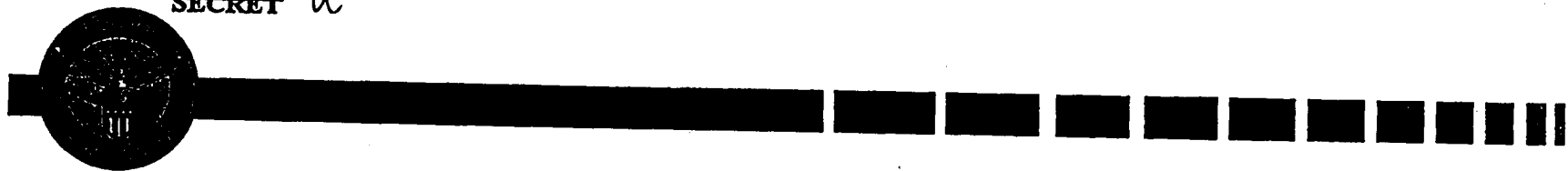
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Issue Highlights from
Principals Team

What are the key U.S. decision points and conditions for intervention?

- Wide ranging debate
- Suggested end state
  - Iraq should remain unified
  - The Government of Iraq should observe its international obligations (e.g., WMD) and subscribe to international norms (e.g., decent treatment of its own people, recognition of borders)
  - Iraq must not be threatening to its neighbors
  - Iraq should be a stable country
- Suggested criteria for success
  - Destruction of Iraq's WMD capabilities
  - Incorporation/elimination of Republican Guard into Iraqi Army
  - Stabilized and growing oil economy
  - Government with respect for international obligations and norms

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How do we manage Iraq's neighbors and other influential states?

- Chaos in Iraq may boost secessionist activity by Iraqi Kurds leading to unilateral Turkish intervention

  – U.S. must balance Turk-Kurd relations early

- U.S. involvement in Iraq may lead Iran to prevent the establishment of a "hostile" government

  – United States must quickly engage Iran to prevent destabilizing reactions

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How do we build and maintain the coalition?

- Humanitarian assistance objectives
  - Politically easier to build
  - Most countries sympathize with Iraqi people
- Regime change objectives
  - Contentious issue in region and among U.S. allies
  - U.S. commitment to put troops on ground for large invasion may be required to gain support

What are the major refugee assistance challenges external to Iraq?

- Many countries will be resistant to opening borders to refugees
  - Turkey will not permit refugees to enter
  - Saudi Arabia and Kuwait were highly resistant in Desert Storm
  - Willingness to assist corresponds directly to level of international financial and material assistance
- Early dialog with coalition and international and non-government organizations needed

What is the appropriate role for co-opted elements of Iraqi military power?

- For the long term, Iraq may require a strong military
  - Long borders
  - Many neighbors
  - Deter against foreign intrigue

- Exiled Iraqi military leaders might be useful in engaging Iraqi units as coalition forces move forward

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How do we contain Shia and Kurdish threats to the stability of Iraq and prevent fragmentation?

- Iran might consider a strategy to weaken and fragment Iraq through support of Kurdish and Shia secessionists

- Kurdish moves to cement autonomous nature of northern Iraq would likely result in a Turkish military response

What is the U.S. role in establishing a transitional government in Iraq?

- "Inside-out" (Bosnia model)
  - Vetting of potential leaders is impossible task
  - Long term stability requires legitimate/credible indigenous leaders
  - May be resistant to US/Coalition influence

- "Outside-in" (Japanese model)
  - Failed government requires complete rebuilding
  - Authorities pursue policies in line with US goals

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How do we synchronize humanitarian assistance, civilian, and military activities during combat and/or peace enforcement operations?

- No "High Commissioner"
- Must be determined prior to intervention
  - Enact PDD-56 process ASAP
  - Consult with allies
  - Consult with IOs, NGOs

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*How do we reestablish civil order in the wake of combat operations?*

- Identify and co-opt industrious persons who have been able to maintain services in the absence of material and financial support from Baghdad

- Concern that protracted crisis would destroy infrastructure argues for swift, large-scale and decisive action

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What is the U.S. exit strategy and long-term presence in Iraq?

- Iraq on path to serve as a pillar of regional stability (e.g., vis-à-vis Iran)

- Indigenous leadership that has internal and external legitimacy and credibility

- Ending of military intervention does not mean end of engagement
  - Humanitarian assistance will continue
  - Reconstruction/business activities
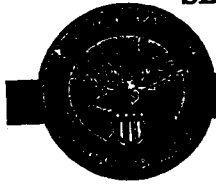
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Key Observations
from Discussions of
Deputies and Principals

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Key Observations

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- Deliberate planning needs to become interagency
  - The development of a Pol-Mil plan should begin immediately
  - Regime crisis may require rapid U.S. action on short notice
  - Regime change may not enhance regional stability
  - WMD issues warrant additional attention

Key Observations (Continued)

- Management of Iran is critical to mission success
  - Iran's anti-Americanism could be enflamed by a U.S.-led intervention in Iraq
  - Iran possess the ability to raise the cost and the consequences of intervention
  - Lifting sanctions on Iran may be a part of a full Iraqi policy

Key Observations (Continued)

- Ambiguous opposition role clouds U.S. policy development

  - Lack of information on internal Iraqi opposition conditions severely hampers contingency planning

  - Iraqi exile opposition weaknesses are significant

  - The United States should be prepared to initiate, on short notice, a dialog with leaders of key ethnic groups in Iraq

Key Observations (Continued)

- Coalition dialogue should begin immediately

  - Active support from coalition partners is critical to mission success

  - Differing visions of a unified Iraq complicate end-state articulation

  - Arab coalition may undermine accomplishment of U.S. policy objectives

  - A long-term, large scale military intervention may be at odds with many coalition partners

- Iraq's economic viability is key to long term regional stability

  - Iraqi stabilization necessitates debt/claims forgiveness
  - The relaxation of economic sanctions early in the crisis may be a key determinant in the ability of the United States to influence events in Iraq

Suggested Next Steps for CENTCOM

- Conduct a detailed review & analysis of "Key Observations" from seminar

- Identify CENTCOM priorities and action plan
  - What issues should be acted upon (and by whom)
  - Update draft Desert Crossing plan as appropriate

- Conduct follow-on engagements with Principals
  - Encourage initiation of PDD-56 process
  - Agreement on issues to be acted upon & ownership

- Establish intelligence taskings to fill gaps