

Prime Minister

15 (a-f)

①<sup>a</sup>



The promised paper  
on propaganda.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

SECRET AND PERSONAL

It suggests the Times (which have been obvious for some time) & at means of propagating them.

21 August 1990

Dear Charles,

Iraq/Kuwait

The task is to get on and do it. Confer with proposals, & will

You wrote to Dominic Asquith on 13 and 14 August about counter-propaganda against Iraq. Mr Waldegrave replied on 14 August. The Foreign Secretary held a meeting yesterday. This letter sets out more fully what we are doing.

The main targets for a propaganda effort should be the Iraqi people, other Arabs sympathetic to Iraq and the wider Muslim world. Material will need to be carefully tailored for different audiences. The general theme needs constant repetition - that the crisis is wholly Saddam Hussein's fault because of the illegal and unjustified annexation of Kuwait. There are two other main themes which we need to emphasise. First, that Saddam Hussein is a failure. Particular points to bring out would be:

- (a) Number of lives lost in the Gulf war and nothing gained;
- (b) Economic cost of the war and Baathist rule: Iraq is a naturally rich country impoverished by debt and underdevelopment;
- (c) The disservice he has done the Arab cause by diverting attention from the plight of the Palestinians, dividing the Arab world and, by his behaviour, tarnishing the Arab people in the eyes of the world.
- (d) Military ineptitude - having to hide his soldiers behind a screen of foreign civilians, women and children.

The second theme is Saddam Hussein's brutality. Material would concentrate on

- (a) The track record inside Iraq (see, for example, the enclosed Research Department paper);
- (b) Subversion of friendly neighbouring states, including the use of terrorism in pursuit of his aims.

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Can we think of such a specialist? give overall direction. Agree?]

Waldegrave to Yes  
coordinate?  
C 87  
21/8

[You might suggest that hire in a specialist from private sector, with experience

in this field, to



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- (c) The fact that foreign workers of all nationalities are fleeing Kuwait and Iraq, initially for economic reasons but increasingly because of the brutality meted out to them by the Iraqis.

All these themes need urgent amplification. Propaganda material will need to be disseminated

Overt

Wider Arab audiences can be reached through the BBC, the Arabic press and the British press. We are already in close touch with the BBC and have set up weekly briefing sessions with them. The Arabic Service are helpfully finding Arab and Islamic voices to put the case against Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. We can help them do this. The Arabic press can be approached in London and Paris as well as in capitals. The Arabic press in London has become more influential since the close-down of Beirut as a media centre. The press here have regular briefings at the FCO and we shall continue to ensure that they get plenty of material. Mr Waldegrave has used one of these briefings to get across our message on Saddam Hussein. Other Arab media will be supplied by Posts with material. We are preparing specific guidance to add to the general material they receive. The British press can best be targeted through briefings to reliable Middle East experts. A list is being drawn up.

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If the Prime Minister thinks that these are the right lines of action they will be rapidly followed through and amplified. The Foreign Secretary is asking Mr Waldegrave to take charge.

At the WEU and EC meetings in Paris today there was much interest in the Foreign Secretary's references to the need for political warfare. He promised to circulate a paper. Not all these ideas are suitable for EC discussions. But there would be clear advantage in getting European and American resources to work on the same lines.

(S L Gass)  
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq  
10 Downing Street

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THE BRUTALITY OF THE IRAQI REGIME UNDER SADDAM HUSSAINIntroduction

1 The Ba'ath Party seized power in a military coup in July 1968, and has ruled Iraq ever since. Saddam Hussain became Vice President in 1969 and succeeded President Hassan al-Bakr in 1979, though he had been the real power in Iraq since the mid 1970s.

2 Since 1968 the regime has ruled by fear: it is one of the most repressive in the world. The government, with Saddam Hussain at its head, consists of ruthless men who do not hesitate to use violence to suppress any suspicion of opposition. Tens of thousands of Iraqis have been killed or have disappeared over the years, most of whom have gone unreported. Iraqi dissidents and exiles have been hunted down and assassinated abroad. The government has subjected its citizens to forced relocation and deportations, arbitrary arrest and detention, torture, disappearance and summary and political executions almost as a matter of course.

3 Saddam Hussain has set the tone for the system of murder and repression and has personally killed opponents. He surrounds himself in an aura of terror, and over the years he has progressively killed or edged out all possible rivals. Often, this is done under the veil of revolutionary justice. For example, RCC decree No 6 of November 1986 (which is still in force) prescribes the death penalty for the deliberate and public insult of the President, the RCC, the Ba'ath Party and the National Assembly.

Human Rights Organisations

4 Human Rights Organisations, such as Amnesty International and Middle East Watch, have consistently condemned Iraq's record. Most recently, in February 1990, the Middle East Watch's report on human rights in Iraq commented as follows:

"Iraq is a well organised police state and its government is one of the most brutal and repressive regimes in power today. ... With the exception of freedom of worship, the Iraqi government denies its citizens all fundamental rights and freedoms and ruthlessly suppresses even the smallest gestures of dissent."

5 In February 1989, Amnesty International, in its report entitled: "Children: Innocent Victims of Political Repression", highlighted brutality towards children as routine in Iraqi prisons - mainly to make them give information about relations. To quote a short passage:

"At least 30 methods of torture have been used in Iraqi prisons. ... We have received reports of

children having been victims of beatings, whippings, sexual abuse and electric shock treatment. Some young people are reported to have died after torture."

6 A final general example of the Iraqi regime's appalling disregard for human life was the eight year Iran-Iraq conflict, in which over 100,000 Iraqis and over 250,000 Iranians died.

### Examples

A) Attempted Assassination of President Abdul Karim Qassem in 1959.

Saddam Hussain, at the age of 22, played a prominent role in this abortive attempt to assassinate the Iraqi President. According to David Hirst, in today's Guardian, it was not his first. In his teens he is said to have murdered a shepherd, and before 1959 had committed three more murders.

B) Murder of Nasir Al-Hani, first Foreign Minister after the 1968 Ba'athist coup. In 1968, his body was found riddled with bullets in a ditch outside Baghdad. This was the first of a series of Ba'athist political killings which it was believed was to assure that Saddam Hussain had no rival.

C) Hardan Tikriti, former Ba'athist Defence Minister. In 1971 he was machine gunned down in Kuwait by Iraqi security.

D) 1 July 1973 Attempted Coup, led by the Director of Security, Nazim Kazzar. This was followed by mass executions of Iraqi officers, including Kazzar.

E) Assassination in London on 9 July 1978 of General Abdul Razzak al-Naif, (a former Prime Minister of Iraqi for a short period in 1968). The Iraqi murderer, Salim Hassan, was caught and is currently serving a life sentence for terrorist murder in a British prison.

F) Saddam Hussain becomes President of Iraq: In July 1979, Saddam Hussain replaced President Hassan al-Bakr. In the following purge, some accounts suggest that 500 senior Ba'athists were executed in the first two weeks of his Presidency. The purge was not only directed against dissidents (Kurds, Communists and disaffected Shia), but also against Ba'athists and old associates who might have been a threat to him. The deaths not only occurred via quasi-legal proceedings in the revolutionary courts, but also by the security apparatus who shot victims in the street, including central Baghdad. At least five members of the RCC were murdered, with Saddam insisting that a number of his colleagues on the RCC personally did the killing.

G) Execution of Bakr Sadr, April 1980; Shia religious leader. This was followed by another purge of army officers, with at least twenty being executed.

H) Destruction of the town of Al Dujayl (40 miles NE of Baghdad):  
In July 1982, an assassination attempt occurred near this village. According to a report in the Economist, Iraqi security's retaliation was swift and brutal. 150 families disappeared, assumed murdered, and the rest of the inhabitants (the village had 2,000 people) were deported, the men were sent north and the women and children to the south. The village was then completely destroyed.

I) Murder of Sayed Mahdi al-Hakim in Khartoum in January 1988:  
Leading Iraqi Shia exile who fled Iraq in 1969, and brother of the leader of a prominent Shia opposition group in Iraq. According to the press, the Iraqi authorities are held responsible for the death of twenty two members of the Hakim family.

J) CW Attack on Kurdish Village of Halabja, 16 March 1988:4-5,000  
Kurdish civilians were killed. The attack was aimed at revenge on the Kurdish inhabitants who had assisted the Iranians and as a warning to other Kurds of what to expect if they defied the Baghdad authorities"

K) Saddam Hussain's son, Udai: On 19 October 1988, Udai Saddam Hussain killed a Palace employee. Though in detention for a period of three months, he was released without charge and sent to the Iraqi Embassy in Geneva. He was subsequently expelled from Switzerland and is currently back in Iraq.

L) Execution of Journalist for the Observer, Farzad Bazoft on 15 March 1990, and Swedish national, Jalil Mahdi Salih Nu'aymi on 11 July 1990

Middle East Section  
RAD FCO  
14 August 1990