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Fact Sheet

Office of the Spokesman

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Redirection of Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) Experts Short-term Program

Objective:

Support the redirection of former Iraqi weapons of mass destruction (WMD) scientists, technicians and engineers to civilian employment and discourage emigration of this community from Iraq. The short-term program is intended to jump-start this process through the creation of the Iraqi International Center for Science and Industry (IICSI), which would:

- facilitate the development and funding of projects designed to:
- prepare WMD personnel for private employment in Iraq, and
- support national reconstruction;
- identify and prioritize the target WMD community for inclusion in long-term program;
- target program activities to engage individuals with relevant WMD skills.

The Program will work extensively, though not exclusively, with the Iraqi Ministry of Science and Technology (MoST), which has absorbed many WMD personnel from the former Iraqi Atomic Energy Commission and Military Industrial Commission, both of which played important roles in Iraq's WMD programs.

Plan:

Launch a series of "quick-start" projects designed to serve as building blocks for the long-term Program; rapidly raise awareness among Iraqi WMD personnel of the Program as a preferable alternative to leaving the country in search of suitable employment; and engage the target audience of former WMD personnel with critical qualifications and skills, who, if they were to emigrate, could significantly advance the WMD programs of other states or terrorists. Five quick-start projects are outlined below:

(1) Workshops on Establishing Science, Technology and Engineering Priorities for National Reconstruction (6 workshops of 100 participants each)

Each workshop, which would correspond roughly to key Iraqi priorities (e.g. energy research, environmental protection, information technology, agriculture, chemical research and production, and industrial development), would focus on how WMD experts in our target audience could contribute to critical reconstruction activities. Coordination with other ministries (e.g. Water, Agriculture and Environment) will be needed to ensure integration of the workshops' output with national priorities. The first workshop should begin early in 2004, and implementation schedules for five additional workshops developed by June, 2004.

(2) Redirection Training for Iraqi WMD Scientists, Technicians and Engineers (six seminars of 25 - 50 participants each)

To identify and assess those in the Iraqi scientific community who are part of the target WMD community and provide appropriate training for redirection. Run initially by Coalition (U.S., U.K. and Australian) instructors, technical seminars on specific topics of importance to national reconstruction (e.g. desalination; air, water and soil sampling; or modern university science curricula) would, upon completion, qualify participants who were part of the target community for inclusion in future, larger projects.

(3) Peer-level Interviews with WMD and Selected Non-WMD Scientists at Various Locations around the Country

Scientist-to-scientist meetings with Iraqi WMD personnel (as already identified) and scientists with WMD-related expertise (especially biology, chemistry and nuclear physics) should shed light on the extent of relevant expertise in the Iraqi scientific community and engage persons of interest in future redirection projects.

(4) Contact and Engagement with WMD Scientists and Technical Personnel in Basra and Mosul

In addition to known WMD personnel, elements of our target community may be located in Basra and Mosul, particularly in the field of biological warfare. Whether or not university faculty scientists and their graduate students in these cities were directly involved in WMD work is unknown, but WMD-related expertise may exist in the universities and industrial and other research entities in these cities, and needs to be assessed, identified and steered to relevant redirection projects.

(5) Desalination Demonstration Project

Tackling Iraq's water problems is of the highest priority. Modern desalination technology offers a partial solution. Researching, designing and adapting this technology to Iraq would involve a sufficiently broad set of scientific and technical requirements that a project could absorb and employ a significant number of individuals with WMD-related skill-sets. A demonstration project will be developed with the Ministry of Science and Technology based on existing technology, and will support the retraining of Iraqi scientists, technicians and engineers both in Iraq and the U.S. If successful, the project could lead to long-term partnerships for developing and producing desalination plants in Iraq for both national use and export.

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