

March 16, 2003

U.S. Names Iraqis Who Would Face War Crimes Trial

By ELISABETH BUMILLER

WASHINGTON, March 15 — For the first time, the Bush administration has identified nine senior Iraqi officials, including Saddam Hussein and his two sons, who would be tried for war crimes or crimes against humanity after an American-led attack on Iraq, a senior American official said.

The list of names — compiled, but not published, by American intelligence agencies — includes members of Mr. Hussein's inner circle who sit atop a hierarchy of 2,000 members of the Iraqi elite.

Administration officials said they had planned to send the list of people to Baghdad with a delegation from the Arab League in hopes of persuading the men to leave the country with Mr. Hussein as way to avoid a war. But that trip, planned for Friday, was called off.

If the people on this list were to leave and there was a new leadership willing to disarm and "open up" Iraq, a senior official said, then it could avoid war.

But the chances of that appeared ever dimmer today as Mr. Bush prepared at Camp David for an emergency summit meeting on Sunday in the Azores with Prime Minister Tony Blair of Britain and Prime Minister José María Aznar of Spain.

Around the world, including in Washington and in other American cities, protesters assembled to demonstrate against an impending war. In his national radio address this morning, however, Mr. Bush said bluntly that "there is little reason to hope that Saddam Hussein will disarm" without the use of force.

Late today, France, Russia and Germany, which have led the opposition to a war in Iraq, issued a joint declaration calling for a meeting of foreign ministers at the Security Council on Tuesday to "approve a list of prioritized disarmament tasks and to decide on a implementation timetable which is both demanding and realistic." Their statement contained no specific proposal.

A new meeting, following an already scheduled report Tuesday by one of the chief United Nations weapons inspectors, Hans Blix, would revive talks that stalled last week after France and Russia rejected a British list of demands on Iraq, and the United States rejected a proposal by Chile for a disarmament timetable.

In Iraq, in a development that could complicate American war plans, the Foreign Ministry said that a top aide to Mr. Hussein had invited the chief weapons inspectors, Mr. Blix and Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei, to visit Baghdad "as quickly as possible" to discuss disarmament. United Nations officials said the two men would consult with the Security Council on Monday on whether to accept the invitation.

In his radio address, Mr. Bush reminded his listeners that it was the 15th "bitter anniversary" of Mr. Hussein's chemical weapons attack on the Iraqi Kurdish village of Halabja. The attack, Mr. Bush said, "provided a glimpse of the crimes Saddam Hussein is willing to commit, and the kind of threat he now presents to the entire world."

Using some of his most graphic language yet in describing Mr. Hussein's Iraq, Mr. Bush added: "We know from human rights groups that dissidents in Iraq are tortured, imprisoned and sometimes just disappear. Their hands, feet and tongues are cut off, their eyes are gouged out, and female relatives are raped in their presence."

Mr. Bush, seeming to prepare the nation for war, said that if force was required to disarm Mr. Hussein, "the American people can know that our armed forces have been given every tool and every resource to achieve victory."

The president then turned his remarks to the Iraqis, and said that "the people of Iraq can know that every effort will be made to spare innocent life, and to help Iraq recover from three decades of totalitarian rule."

In Kuwait, as troops in the teeming desert base of Camp Virginia waited for orders to invade Iraq, the commander of the Army's V Corps said that the United States would not seek specifically to kill Mr. Hussein. In an interview Friday, the commander, Lt. Gen. William S. Wallace, said that the United States military instead planned to destroy the infrastructure and government controlled by Mr. Hussein to open the way for a representative government.

Mr. Hussein's fate was secondary, General Wallace said, although he expected fighting to be concentrated in and around Baghdad. The Pentagon has long said that as a military commander, Mr. Hussein would be a legitimate target, as would anyone in an Iraqi command post.

The White House has said that if there is a war, Mr. Hussein will not be allowed to stay in power.

"The regime is the target, not one individual," General Wallace said.

"Saddam is representative of that government, and eliminating him or making him a target is not necessary for the toppling of the regime. I don't care what happens to him, as long as what is left in his aftermath is a foundation for a new Iraqi state."

Like his remarks, the list of officials released today continued a running psychological campaign against the Iraqi elite. President Bush and his senior advisers have repeatedly warned Mr. Hussein's loyalists that they have a choice between exile or prosecution.

In addition to Mr. Hussein and his two sons, Uday and Qusay, the administration's list for prosecution included Ali Hassan al-Hamid, who was the governor of Iraqi-occupied Kuwait in 1990, and Muhammad Hamza al-Zubaidi, who the administration says was responsible for atrocities against the Shiites in southern Iraq in early 1991. There are about a dozen people on the list in all, a senior official said. But he said that for now the United States would only publicly name nine.

"This is the group that we would expect to depart if there's a departure or that we'd expect to apprehend if there's a use of force," a senior administration official said. "They are wanted for the crimes of the regime."

Other Iraqi officials on the list included Aziz Salih Numan, the second governor of Iraqi-occupied Kuwait; Izzat Ibrahim, the deputy commander in chief of the Iraqi military; who is close to Mr. Hussein; Abid Hamid al-Tikriti, the presidential secretary, who is considered Mr. Hussein's alter ego; and Husni Abd al-Latif Tufek, the

ministry, who is close to Mr. Hussein; ABID HAMID AL-HAKBI, the presidential secretary who is considered Mr. Hussein's alter ego; and HAMM ADU AL-LAHI YEMAN, the director of the special security organization that the administration said is in charge of hiding Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.

The administration said that Mr. Hussein's son Uday was responsible for ordering torture, rape and looting of dissident communities within Iraq and that his son Qusay oversees the special security organization and the elite Republican Guard.

Mr. Bush spent his day making what the White House said were diplomatic calls to prepare for the Azores meeting, which the administration has billed as a final chance to bring a deeply divided United Nations together on an ultimatum that Mr. Hussein disarm. The United States, Britain and Spain offered a draft Security Council resolution that would give Mr. Hussein a deadline of Monday to disarm or face an attack, but so far the only other nation on the 15-member Security Council to openly support it has been Bulgaria.

This morning, Mr. Bush spoke for at least the fifth time this week to his closest ally, Mr. Blair. He also spoke to Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of Italy, who supports the administration on Iraq.