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ID# 323770

THE WHITE HOUSE
CORRESPONDENCE TRACKING WORKSHEET

00072

INCOMING

DATE RECEIVED: APRIL 23, 1992

NAME OF CORRESPONDENT: THE HONORABLE JOHN D. DINGELL

SUBJECT: EXPRESSES CONCERN REGARDING THE FAILURE OF
THE ENERGY DEPARTMENT TO STOP IRAQ'S NUCLEAR
WEAPONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM AS WELL AS OTHER
NUCLEAR PROLIFERANT COUNTRIES

ROUTE TO: OFFICE/AGENCY	(STAFF NAME)	ACTION		DISPOSITION	
		ACT CODE	DATE YY/MM/DD	TYPE RESP	C COMPLETED D YY/MM/DD
NICK CALIO		DJ	ORG 92/04/23	NC	fi 92/04/20
REFERRAL NOTE: _____			R 92/05/17		1 1
REFERRAL NOTE: _____					
REFERRAL NOTE: _____		DJ	I 92/5/18		1 1
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REFERRAL NOTE: _____		DJ	I 92/5/18		1 1
REFERRAL NOTE: _____					
REFERRAL NOTE: _____		DJ	I 92/5/18		1 1
REFERRAL NOTE: _____					

COMMENTS: ENCLOSURE

ADDITIONAL CORRESPONDENTS: MEDIA:L INDIVIDUAL CODES: 1230
MAIL USER CODES: (A) _____ (B) _____ (C) _____

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| *ACTION CODES: | *DISPOSITION | *OUTGOING | * |
| * | * | *CORRESPONDENCE: | * |
| *A-APPROPRIATE ACTION | *A-ANSWERED | *TYPE RESP=INITIALS | * |
| *C-COMMENT/RECOM | *B-NON-SPEC-REFERRAL | * OF SIGNER | * |
| *D-DRAFT RESPONSE | *C-COMPLETED | * CODE = A | * |
| *F-FURNISH FACT SHEET | *S-SUSPENDED | *COMPLETED = DATE OF | * |
| *I-INFO COPY/NO ACT NEC* | | * OUTGOING | * |
| *R-DIRECT REPLY W/COPY * | | | * |
| *S-FOR-SIGNATURE * | | | * |
| *X-INTERIM REPLY * | | | * |
- *****

REFER QUESTIONS AND ROUTING UPDATES TO CENTRAL REFERENCE
(ROOM 75, OEOB) EXT-2590
KEEP THIS WORKSHEET ATTACHED TO THE ORIGINAL INCOMING
LETTER AT ALL TIMES AND SEND COMPLETED RECORD TO RECORDS
MANAGEMENT.

April 30, 1992

Dear John:

Thank you for your recent letter to the President expressing your belief that the Department of Energy could have prevented the flow of nuclear weapons technology to Iraq.

Please know that I have shared your comments with President Bush. In addition, I have provided copies of your letter to several of the President's other advisors in this matter for their review.

Thank you again for writing.

With best regards,

Sincerely,

Nicholas E. Calio
Assistant to the President
for Legislative Affairs

The Honorable John D. Dingell
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

NEC:JHH:

bcc: w/ copy of inc to NSC - for direct response
bcc: w/ copy of inc to Dept. of State - FYI
bcc: w/ copy of inc to Dept. of Energy - FYI
bcc: w/ copy of inc to Dept. of Defense - FYI

JOHN D. DINGELL, MICHIGAN, CHAIRMAN

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U.S. House of Representatives
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations
of the
Committee on Energy and Commerce
Washington, DC 20515-6116

April 22, 1992

The Honorable George H.W. Bush
 President of the United States
 The White House
 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
 Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I want to bring to your personal attention a matter of extreme importance. Last year, the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a closed hearing with the Department of Energy (DOE) on Iraq's nuclear weapons development program. The Subcommittee held this hearing because of its long-standing concern that the technology and materials for nuclear weapons be kept from terrorists and proliferant nations. In the case of Iraq, the Subcommittee's investigation demonstrated that the DOE blundered a unique opportunity to curtail the flow of sensitive nuclear weapons technology to Iraq at a time when it could have made a significant difference.

As early as April 1989, DOE nuclear nonproliferation experts had concluded that Saddam Hussein's threat to construct a nuclear bomb was real and must be stopped. These dedicated career employees were acting with the same "real sense of urgency" that you called for over one year later when you met with the Desert Shield troops in Saudi Arabia on Thanksgiving Day 1990. At that time, you warned "[t]hose who would measure the timetable for Saddam's atomic program in years may be seriously underestimating the reality of that situation and the gravity of the threat." This grave Iraqi threat was the reason why these DOE career employees felt the urgency in 1989 to involve DOE Secretary Watkins, the State Department and the National Security Council to insure that the necessary actions be taken. Incredibly, their efforts to sound the alarm were thwarted.

As the Federal agency with the expertise and responsibility for designing, manufacturing, and testing nuclear weapons, and as a member of the Intelligence Community, the DOE should have been out front in galvanizing U.S. government support to stop Iraq as well as other nuclear proliferant countries. Inexplicably, other issues seemed to have a higher priority at the DOE.

The Honorable George H.W. Bush
April 22, 1992
Page 2

The significance of the failure to involve Secretary Watkins should not be underestimated. If he had been given the opportunity to act on the recommendations of his staff of experts, who had been watching Saddam's efforts to build the bomb, the widespread and covert Iraqi procurement network, which reached into the world's most sophisticated industrial concerns, could have been significantly curtailed. At the same time, it is entirely possible that Iraqi "scientists" would have been barred from attending an international symposium on explosives detonation held in the late summer of 1989 in Portland, Oregon. A top DOE weapons expert later characterized this symposium, which was sponsored by the United States government, as "the place to be in September 1989 if you were a potential nuclear weapon proliferant."

One month after the Portland fiasco, you issued a National Security Directive on U.S. Policy toward the Persian Gulf. Classification restrictions prevent me from elaborating in this letter on the details of your Directive. However, I tend to believe that this October 2, 1989 Directive would have had an entirely different focus had Secretary Watkins been privy to the concerns held by his own staff in early 1989. If this had been the case, Saddam Hussein could very well have experienced far greater difficulty in acquiring from the world's marketplace the wherewithal for his nuclear weapons program.

It is outrageous that a country such as Iraq was allowed to reach the brink of acquiring deliverable nuclear weapons, particularly with the knowledge and apparent assistance of the United States. Military action, I am sure you will agree, is normally not the preferred method for putting a crimp in a proliferant nation's weapons program. The problem with Iraq was that by the time Saddam invaded Kuwait on August 2, 1990, our options had been greatly reduced. The resultant war with Iraq and the subsequent inspections by nuclear experts under United Nations auspices have hopefully slowed or temporarily eliminated the immediate nuclear threat, although this is more likely due to bad timing on the part of Saddam in his invasion of Kuwait than to an effective policy by the Administration to curb the spread of nuclear weapons.

Mr. President, it is time we stop playing "Russian Roulette" with nuclear proliferants. This past February, the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency publicly stated that proliferation is one of the top threats to our national security. If this is the case, and I have firmly believed this for over two decades, the American people, and indeed the entire world, rightfully expect that the best possible talent will be brought

The Honorable George H.W. Bush
April 22, 1992
Page 3

to bear on these problems by the United States government. Regrettably, I am not confident this is being done. The performance of certain DOE officials entrusted with these critical responsibilities has not been encouraging.

There is another problem I feel compelled to share with you. Top-notch employees will not be attracted to the DOE as long as it subjects its employees to "bureaucratic execution" when individuals, who are concerned about important matters, conflict with others who place a premium on maintaining the status quo. We saw this at our hearing on Iraq, where the nuclear non-proliferation experts who wanted to stop Saddam instead found themselves stopped, and later punished, by the very Department they were diligently trying to serve. This practice is not unique to the DOE. It must change or the American people will not see the results they have every right to expect from their government.

An important step would be your recognition of those DOE employees who tried, in 1989, to warn Admiral Watkins long before it was fashionable to express concern about Saddam's nuclear intentions. This would send a message that you are serious about how this job is performed. Curiously, while not recognizing its own employees, the Department has recognized four DOE laboratory employees who served on the post-war U.N. nuclear inspection teams in Iraq. These contractor employees recently received the Exceptional Public Service Award. While such recognition was undoubtedly deserved, and this Subcommittee is grateful for the important service performed by the teams sent to Iraq, it is ironic that those who wanted to act before the horse was out of the barn are not similarly honored.

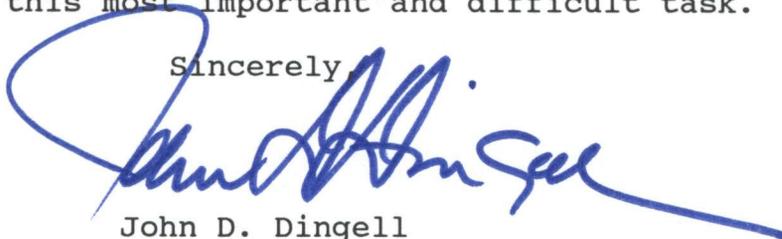
We understand that since the Gulf War, there has been some revamping of the Federal Government's nonproliferation efforts. However, as our experience with the DOE has shown, merely reshuffling the same old players into new organizational configurations within the government will not produce the results you may desire.

I am enclosing a copy of the Subcommittee's hearing record. I hope it will be studied carefully as I believe it provides a basis for strengthening our nonproliferation efforts. The lessons that can be learned from what has occurred at the DOE must not go unheeded. Bureaucratic ineptness must give way to sound policy direction, strong leadership, effective communication, and rapid implementation. With bold leadership from the Administration and support by the Congress, our world

The Honorable George H.W. Bush
April 22, 1992
Page 4

can become a safer place. For our part, please be assured of the Subcommittee's complete cooperation with you and the Executive Branch agencies in this most important and difficult task.

Sincerely



John D. Dingell
Chairman
Subcommittee on
Oversight and Investigations

JDD:des

Enclosure

cc: The Honorable Thomas J. Bliley, Jr.
Ranking Republican Member
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations

The Honorable David L. Boren
Chairman
Select Committee on Intelligence
U.S. Senate

The Honorable John Glenn
Chairman
Committee on Governmental Affairs
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Claiborne Pell
Chairman
Committee on Foreign Relations
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Dante B. Fascell
Chairman
Committee on Foreign Affairs
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Dave McCurdy
Chairman
Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable James A. Baker, III
Secretary of State
Department of State

The Honorable George H.W. Bush
April 22, 1992
Page 5

The Honorable Richard B. Cheney
Secretary of Defense
Department of Defense

The Honorable Robert M. Gates
Director
Central Intelligence Agency

The Honorable James D. Watkins,
Admiral, USN, Retired
Secretary of Energy
Department of Energy

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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Comments:

NUCLEAR NONPROLIFERATION

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS
OF THE

COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND COMMERCE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED SECOND CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

CONCERNING

FAILED EFFORTS TO CURTAIL IRAQ'S NUCLEAR WEAPONS PROGRAM

APRIL 24, 1991

Serial No. 102-95

Printed for the use of the Committee on Energy and Commerce



NOTICE OF DEED RECORDATION

TO ALL WHOM THESE PRESENTS SHALL COME, I, the undersigned, do hereby certify that the within and foregoing instrument of writing, to-wit: a certain deed, bearing date of the 1st day of January, 1992, and recorded in the office of the County Clerk of this County, in Book 10, Page 10, is a true and correct copy of the original instrument as the same appears from the records of said County Clerk.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and the seal of said County at the City of Los Angeles, California, this 1st day of January, 1992.

Notary Public in and for the State of California

Holloway 8/992

JH
PRZ
98-099-E

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44805	REFERRAL NOTE:	DJ	I 92/5/18		- - - - -
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	REFERRAL NOTE:	DJ			

COMMENTS: ENCLOSURE

Enclosures filed in
Oversize Attachments #

5118

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MAIL USER CODES: (A) (B) (C)

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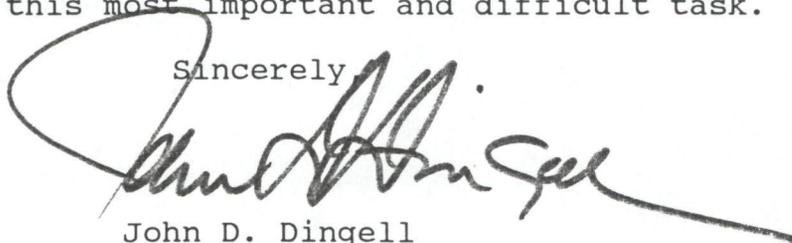
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Chairman
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The Honorable Dante B. Fascell
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The Honorable James A. Baker, III
Secretary of State
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Department of Defense

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Admiral, USN, Retired
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