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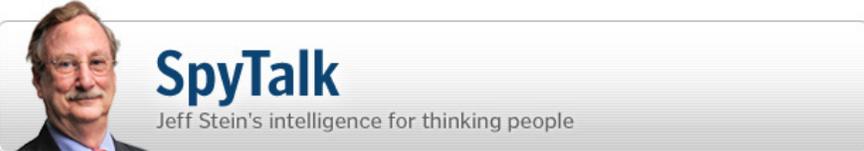
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CIA unit's wacky idea: Depict Saddam as gay

During planning for the 2003 invasion of Iraq, the CIA's [Iraq Operations Group](#) kicked around a number of ideas for discrediting Saddam Hussein in the eyes of his people.

One was to create a video purporting to show the Iraqi dictator having sex with a teenage boy, according to two former CIA officials familiar with the project.

"It would look like it was taken by a hidden camera," said one of the former officials. "Very grainy, like it was a secret videotaping of a sex session."

The idea was to then "flood Iraq with the videos," the former official said.

Another idea was to interrupt Iraqi television programming with a fake special news bulletin. An actor playing Hussein would announce that he was stepping down in favor of his (much-reviled) son Uday.

"I'm sure you will throw your support behind His Excellency Uday," the fake Hussein would intone.

The spy agency's Office of Technical Services collaborated on the ideas, which also included inserting fake "crawls" -- messages at the bottom of the screen -- into Iraqi newscasts.

The agency actually did make a video purporting to show Osama bin Laden and his cronies sitting around a campfire swigging bottles of liquor and savoring their conquests with boys, one of the former CIA officers recalled, chuckling at the memory. The actors were drawn from "some of us darker-skinned employees," he said.

Eventually, "things ground to a halt," the other former officer said, because no one could come to agreement on the projects.

They also faced strong opposition from James Pavitt, then head of the agency's Operations Division, and his deputy, Hugh Turner, who "kept throwing darts at it."

The ideas were patently ridiculous, said the other former agency officer.

"They came from people whose careers were spent in Latin America or East Asia" and didn't understand the cultural nuances of the region.

"Saddam playing with boys would have no resonance in the Middle East -- nobody cares," agreed a third former CIA official with extensive experience in the region. "Trying to mount such a campaign would show a total misunderstanding of the target. We always mistake our own taboos as universal when, in fact, they are just our taboos."

A U.S. official, speaking on condition of anonymity, declined to confirm the accounts, or deny them.

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"While I can't confirm these accounts, if these ideas were ever floated by anyone at any time, they clearly didn't go anywhere," the official said.

The reality, the former officials said, was that the agency really didn't have enough money and expertise to carry out the projects.

"The military took them over," said one. "They had assets in psy-war down at Ft. Bragg," at the army's special warfare center.

"The agency got rid of most of its non-paramilitary covert action in the 1980s, after [Bill Casey](#) died," said the third former official. "He was a big fan of covert action, but neither [Bob Gates](#), who succeeded him as acting [CIA] director, or any after him, wanted anything to do with it."

"There was a flurry of activity during the first Gulf War," the official added, "but [Gen. Norman] [Schwarzkopf](#) made it clear he had to approve everything, and he basically approved nothing, except, reluctantly at first, surrender leaflets. By the late '90s there were very few people left who knew anything about covert action or how to do it."

The leaflets also had "unintended consequences," the former official added.

"In the perverted logic of Iraq, the Iraqi soldiers decided they had to have a leaflet to surrender, so they fought us to get one."

According to histories of the 2003 invasion, the single most effective "information warfare" project, which originated in the Pentagon, was to send [faxes and e-mails](#) to Iraqi unit commanders as the fighting began, telling them their situation was hopeless, to round up their tanks, artillery and men, and go home.

Many did.

Hear a further discussion of the videos on PRI's [The World](#).

By Jeff Stein | May 25, 2010; 6:00 AM ET
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At a certain point, we must bring "intelligence" back to American intelligence. Too much corruption and consultant with no brains.

Jack Bauer is pretend, the product of mediocre writers, yet that is their model for intelligence. Apparently, Bauer and Mitch McConnell, but I digress.

Or maybe Kiefer Sutherland is their model for intelligence...

Heh.

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Oh, and I forget: Don't you have some civilians to torture and bomb?
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