



MI6 plotted the toppling of Saddam Hussein nearly 18 months before the invasion of Iraq in 2003, secret papers revealed.

Spy chiefs discussed with Downing Street a plan that was layered 'like an onion', with ministers openly supporting 'regime change' while behind the scenes working closely with those carrying out a coup.

The intelligence service also made clear in newly declassified papers that the 'prize' for removing the Iraqi dictator was 'new security to oil supplies'.

The documents will add weight to critics' claims that this was the real reason the U.S. and Britain went to war, and not because they feared Saddam possessed weapons of mass destruction.

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