

**“Saddam and senior Ba’ath Party members discussing  
Iraqi laws, pardons, and various other issues including  
a meeting with U.S. Congressman Bill Richardson”**



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**Saddam:** Peace be with you.

**All:** And with you too, Sir.

**Saddam:** In the speech, it was mentioned that we shall give devious people a new chance to see how they... and for us to see how they can take advantage of it and we will help them getting rid of evil [*misconduct*]. Don't we have to implement this?

**UM1:** [*Inaudible*].

**Saddam:** Yes, what can you do? So, there is a copy of this; did you bring the copy, 'Abd?

'**Abd:** A copy of the speech, Sir?

**Saddam:** Yes, is it on the table to my right?

'**Abd:** Yes, Sir.

**Saddam:** And we will hear from the Minister of Labor and Social Affairs, the Director of Public Security...

'**Abd:** Yes, Sir.

**Saddam:** Dr. Munthir and the Military Security, maybe they have a remark as each one has a different field of specialty.

'**Abd:** Yes, Sir.

**Saddam:** The main idea is to... pardon them. However, we should specify a sentencing period and pardon them. For example, he who spent one year should be released, he who spent two years should be released, and so he who spent three years. I mean three years at the most should be released. He who received the death sentenced shall be reduced to life in prison, and he who...

**Latif:** Good morning, Sir.

**Saddam:** Good morning, come on in Comrade Latif. Good morning... good morning... good morning, come on in, Taha. Good morning, all.

**All:** Good morning, Sir.

**Saddam:** Before you got here, I was talking about the content of the speech and giving a chance to devious people and those who miscondacted etcetera. Dr. Munthir and the Legal Department will put it in a legal framework. The key point of the decision is that there are light sentences for those who spent one year shall be released, and other sentences for those who spent two or three years shall also be released. As for the death sentence, it shall be reduced to life in prison.

Fugitives and defaulters shall be released. A sentence to cut off one's ear shall be replaced by one year in prison. I mean, be easy on sentencing people. However, this pardon shall not include certain people, such as those who committed adultery, dealt with drugs, homosexuals...

**'Abd:** Government money embezzlement.

**Saddam:** Government money embezzlement, spying, etcetera. I mean things of such nature that shall be made clear to the public as the exception to the pardon from an educational perspective. Just so I do not forget, I thought I would mention that there are dangerous gangs, I mean it is not an individual criminal act; they form a gang like the one that was on television slaughtering, killing, etcetera, stealing, and alarming the security on a large scale. If the pardon includes these people I do not believe they will gain people's sympathy when they are sentenced.

**Latif:** They worry people.

**'Abd:** And they encourage others.

**Saddam:** Therefore, we need to identify... identify them. These gangs are known, and we can...

**Latif:** [*Inaudible*].

**Saddam:** We can select them for exception based on their case number.

[*Time Stamp: 05:03*]

**Tariq Aziz:** It explained to us...

**Saddam:** We can find three or four cases and we will let the sentence take its course without hindering it, along with another sentence that will be addressed to the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, explaining that such and such sentence does not include such and such case numbers. This would be better for us as it is one thing among other general ones. The fugitive military people shall also be included, and the lawsuits that are still open shall also be included, isn't that so?

**Latif:** To stop them.

**Tariq Aziz:** Stopping the legal interventions.

**'Abd:** Stopping the legal interventions.

**Saddam:** What does stopping the interventions mean?

**'Abd:** It means they shall be released without any procedure or investigation.

**Saddam:** For those detained?

**Abd:** Yes, because these people are detained and not sentenced.

**Saddam:** Hmm.

**Latif:** Sir, releasing the detainees and -- [*Interrupted*]

**Saddam:** There are cases for those detained that can cause them the death sentence. So how did you stop the interventions and execute all cases?

**Latif:** We stopped only the ones related to the military that surrendered and regretted their action or were arrested -- [*Interrupted*]

**Saddam:** The military and no other lawsuits?

**Latif:** No, no, just the fugitives, defaulters, and [*inaudible*].

**Saddam:** The fugitives.

**Latif:** Only. We made the interventions apply to military only.

**Saddam:** This is in brief the summary of the decision. Read it to the comrades to see if they have any remark or if they have any remark about the idea, because the idea led to the speech and the speech was circulated among you, therefore, we must implement it.

**UM1:** Yes.

**Latif:** To materialize the human, educational, and national concepts mentioned in the speech of President Leader Saddam Hussein on the occasion of the 27<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the great 17<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> of July Revolution, by giving the chance to him who deviated -- [*Interrupted*]

**Saddam:** The glorious.

**Latif:** The glorious?

**Saddam:** The glorious revolution.

**Latif:** [*Inaudible*] the great.

[*The staff debates about the word "great" versus "glorious"*]

**Latif:** The speech says the great.

**UM1:** The great [*inaudible*] and the glorious Qadisiyya of Saddam. This is how it should be legally.

**Saddam:** Yes, I thought [*inaudible*]. That is fine.

**UM1:** Keep it.

**Saddam:** Yes.

**Latif:** By giving a chance to him who deviated under this factor or that, or under the devil's influence to hasten forward, make the required correction, and desist from the deviation abyss to -- *[Interrupted]*

**Saddam:** *[Inaudible]*.

**UM1:** Yes.

**Latif:** To the strong virtue and patriotism base. *[Saddam is whispering to someone in the background]* Pursuant to the provisions of paragraph A of article 42 of the constitution, the Revolutionary Command Council decided on the following: First, Iraqi residents shall be exempt of the remaining period of time left in their verdicts as follows: 1- Anyone who spent three years of his verdict term if he was sentenced for a period that exceeds 10 years in prison. 2 - Anyone who spent two years of his verdict term if he was sentenced for a period that does not exceed 10 years in prison. 3 - Anyone who spent one year of his verdict term if he was sentenced to be in prison.

**Saddam:** In prison, meaning for a period that does not exceed five years.

**Latif:** That does not exceed five years. Second -- *[Interrupted]*

**Saddam:** I mean this legal term.

**Latif:** Iraqi juveniles shall be exempt from their remaining verdict term if their families guarantee that they will behave well and a Party comrade confirms this. Second, the stipulated provisions take effect -- *[Interrupted]*

**Saddam:** "A Party comrade" as per your term and one of the members of the Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party confirms this.

**Latif:** And this will be confirmed by?

**Saddam:** A member of the Arab Ba'ath Socialist party.

**Tariq Aziz:** A member of the Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party.

*[Time Stamp: 10:01]*

**Saddam:** Or a member of the Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party.

**Latif:** Yes. Second, the provisions stipulated in article 1 of this decision shall take effect on juveniles for premeditated crimes. Third, the convicted shall be exempt from the punishment of hand severing if he spent two years between confinement and lockup. Fourth, the pardon shall include those convicted prior to the effectiveness of this decree, after they finished the terms stipulated in articles 1, 2 and 3 of this decree. Fifth, A - The pardon provisions stipulated in articles 1, 2 and 4 of this decree shall not take effect on those convicted of premeditated crimes unless reconciliation with the victim's family takes place. B - The victim's family means his legal heirs. Sixth, a resident and a juvenile shall be excluded from the terms stipulated in article 1 and 3 of this decree if they memorize four of the longest Surahs of the Holy Quran and understand the Ba'ath curriculum [*the sound of stirring sugar in tea cups is audible in the background*]. Seventh, the death sentences issued prior to this decree taking effect shall be reduced to life in prison after becoming conclusive. Eighth, A - It shall be stopped -- [*Interrupted*]

**Saddam:** Use "the Revolution curriculum" instead of "the Ba'ath curriculum."

**Latif:** According to the Revolution curriculum or the Ba'ath Revolution?

**Saddam:** And understand the Revolution curriculum.

**Tariq Aziz:** The 17<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> of July Revolution.

**Saddam:** Yes.

**Latif:** Yes. Seventh, it shall be reduced -- [*Interrupted*]

**Saddam:** Because what is the Revolution curriculum?

**Latif:** Yes, it is the Party curriculum, yes. Seventh, the death sentences issued prior to this decree taking effect shall be reduced to life in prison after becoming conclusive. Eighth, A - The measures taken with regard to anyone who committed the crime of fleeing or deserting the military or being at default shall be completely stopped if he remorsefully surrendered, or if he was arrested prior to this decree taking effect. B - He who is sentenced to the punishment of ear severing shall be pardoned of this sentence. [*Inaudible background talk*] No, this -- [*Interrupted*]

**Tariq Aziz:** This one shall be pardoned [*inaudible*].

**Saddam:** No, this is part of something else, comrade [*inaudible*].

**Latif:** Yes. B - The provisions of paragraph 1 of this article shall take effect on any fugitive or anyone deserting or defaulting from military service who surrenders within two weeks of this decree taking effect if he was inside Iraq, and within one month if he was outside Iraq. C - He who is sentenced to the punishment of ear severing shall be pardoned of this sentence. Ninth, if he, who was pardoned pursuant to the provisions of this decree, commits again a similar premeditated crime or misdemeanor, he shall be prosecuted for the punishments for which he was pardoned in addition to the new crime, as this will be indisputable because there is a law

about it [*the sound of pages turning is audible in the background*]. Tenth, residents and juveniles who are convicted of the following crimes shall be exempted from the pardon mentioned in this decree: first, drugs; second, spying; third, murder associated with stealing; fourth, government money embezzlement and stealing; fifth, offending [*assaulting*] the employees or those tasked with a public service.

**Saddam:** Dr., why can't we use "offending those tasked with a public service" on the Armed Forces, the Interior Security Forces, and the Party members tasked with a public service?

**Latif:** Sir, just for clarification because there are people tasked with a public service but they are not employees.

**Saddam:** Yes?

**Latif:** Every employee is tasked with a public service, but everyone tasked with a public service is not an employee. For instance, the mayor, he is tasked with a public service but he is not an employee. So -- [*Interrupted*]

**Saddam:** Not everyone tasked with a public service is an employee, but all employees -- [*Interrupted*]

**Latif:** Are tasked with a public service, yes.

**Saddam:** Therefore, we need to agree on calling it "Anyone is tasked with a public service."

[*Time Stamp: 15:03*]

**Latif:** If you want, we just wanted more clarification and this is the same text as in the Iraqi Penalty Law.

**Saddam:** It must say all people tasked with a public service.

**Latif:** Yes.

**Saddam:** Meaning the police officer, policeman, army associate, the employee, and the Ba'athist tasked with a public service.

**Latif:** Yes.

**Saddam:** They should all be included.

**Latif:** You mean removing the employee, because we took it from the Penalty Law. [*Inaudible*]

**UM1:** [*Inaudible*] the employee and make it as in general.

**Latif:** Or tasked... the same text as in the Penalty Law and we added, "Including the Ba'ath Party associates" -- *[Interrupted]*

**Saddam:** I wanted this point to be removed. Once we know what to call it we shall remove this point, because it will be badly interpreted by others, in the media.

**'Abd:** The Party members or Ba'athists.

**Saddam:** They have enacted a special law for assaulting the Ba'athists, while it is understood that with regard to those tasked with a public service, once one emphasizes the issue of assaulting them...

**Latif:** So, assaulting those tasked with a public service while carrying out their duties or because of their duties.

**Saddam:** No, because of their duties... or because of their duties, right.

**Latif:** Or, because of their duties.

**'Abd:** During their duties or because of their duties.

**Latif:** Or because of their duties.

**'Abd:** Mr. President, we can say if they have Party duties or official duties.

**Saddam:** No, no.

**Tariq Aziz:** Their duties that are related to the crimes.

**Saddam:** Crimes.

**Latif:** Or because of them.

**Saddam:** Yes.

**Latif:** And we should remove the rest that is related to the Ba'ath Party?

**Saddam:** Yes, yes.

**Latif:** Sixth, bribery. Seventh, rape. Eighth, homosexuality. Ninth, adultery. *[Latif does not mention the tenth.]* Eleventh, the Head of the Presidential Council may issue the required instructions to facilitate the implementation of the provisions of this decree. Twelfth, this decree shall take effect as of -- *[Interrupted]*

**Saddam:** Should we say "The Head of the Presidential Council may" or "shall?"

**Latif:** May, because he might not need to.

**Saddam:** This is going to be discretionary.

**Latif:** Yes, we may not need, the decree might be sufficient. I mean it is not necessary for him to issue instructions.

**Saddam:** It is in the law which states that the inferior party shall not be given the freedom to choose, whereas usually the deciding party has to be clear in the tasking method.

**Latif:** Yes, that is correct.

**Saddam:** So the law states “shall.”

**Latif:** “Shall.”

**Tariq Aziz:** Sir, if we add “shall” they will not implement until they receive instructions from the Head of the Presidential Council.

**Latif:** [*Inaudible*] we may or may not need.

**Saddam:** So, he would tell them, “Go ahead and execute; we have no instructions.” That is it, it is the same.

**Tariq Aziz:** He should say it directly that the decree is clear, we have no instructions but we can [*inaudible*].

**Latif:** Sir, to be fair [*to meet halfway*], we can say “the Head of the Presidential Council may issue the required instructions for... issue.”

**Tariq Aziz:** The Presidential Council issues...

**Latif:** It will have the tone of an order.

**Tariq Aziz:** Special instructions...

**Latif:** It implies the tone of an order; issues.

**Saddam:** Fine.

**Latif:** Issues.

**Tariq Aziz:** It does not mention embezzling the government money.

**Latif:** The Presidential Council issues... No, [*Inaudible; coughing in the background*] twelfth, this decree shall take effect as of its issuance date. [*Signed by*] Saddam Hussein, Head of the Revolutionary Command Council.

**Tariq Aziz:** Is it there “embezzling the government money,” [*inaudible*]?

**Latif:** It is there, the embezzlement and stealing of government money.

**Saddam:** Yes, Mr. [*inaudible, sounded like “Hakam”*].

**UM2:** Thank you, President Leader. Sir, with regard to paragraph 5 related to assaulting the employees, it was phrased as “or those tasked with a public service, including the associates of the Arab Ba’ath socialist Party, during the execution of their duties or because of their duties, as Your Excellency has mentioned, [*inaudible*] the Arab Ba’ath Socialist Party?”

**Saddam:** [*Inaudible*].

**UM2:** It can be used, Sir, for assaulting the employees or those tasked with a public service. It is not “and those tasked” but “or,” so that it can cover both sides.

**Saddam:** That is correct.

**UM2:** Thank you, Sir.

**Saddam:** If it stays within the same wording,

**Latif:** Yes, we keep “the employees” and remove “the associates.”

**UM2:** The Arab Ba’ath Socialist Party associates or those tasked.

[*Several participants answer “Or those tasked.”*]

**Latif:** However, we need to remove “including those [*inaudible*] during the execution of their duties or because of them.”

**Saddam:** Yes. The entire wording is fine, except for “including,” which we must remove, this parenthetical clause.

**Taha Yassin Ramadan:** Because of specification.

**UM1:** We should remove it based on the instructions.

**Taha Yassin Ramadan:** Remove it?

**UM1:** The Presidential Council.

**Saddam:** Yes, he should mention in the instructions that this means “all those permanently or temporarily tasked with a public service, including, I mean, the Party organizations and Party members who are tasked with duties.”

**Latif:** In fact, Sir, if Your Excellency signs it today, we will start forming a committee as of now, in coordination with the Minister of Labor, to start drafting instructions and submit it to Your Excellency.

[*Time Stamp: 20:08*]

**Saddam:** Yes, as quickly as possible because the sooner a law is implemented the better its impact will be.

**Taha Yassin Ramadan:** The residents and juveniles and [*inaudible*].

**Saddam:** All these details.

**Taha Yassin Ramadan:** [*Inaudible*].

**Saddam:** Yes, all of it.

**UM2:** [*Inaudible*] that it will be published on the 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Saddam:** What is today's date?

**Latif:** Today is the 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**UM2:** Today is the 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**Saddam:** That is a long time.

**Latif:** A long time.

**Saddam:** There is plenty of time [*inaudible*] to be published.

[*Several participants answer and provide different comments about the date*]

**Saddam:** Yes, [*inaudible*] because we discussed it with the Council of Ministers [*inaudible comments in the background*] or based on the speech, people [*inaudible*].

[*Inaudible comments in the background*]

**Saddam:** We did not stop the death sentence.

[*Inaudible comments in the background*]

**Saddam:** These people are very lucky.

*[Inaudible comments in the background]*

**UM1:** Sir, we sent a telegram yesterday, *[inaudible]* Your Excellency...

**Latif:** But the one related to those who deserted the military service...

**Saddam:** The death sentence for illegal dealings, are they also included in the reduced sentencing? I mean spying, adultery...

*[Inaudible comments in the background]*

**UM1:** As for the juveniles, we are going to release them except for homosexuals and *[inaudible]*.

**UM2:** You mean all that was mentioned before, except for...

**UM1:** Except for...

**Saddam:** Except for convicted people, yes, meaning reduced sentences. Yes, the Director of Public Security *[go ahead]*.

**The Director of Public Security:** Thank you, Mr. President. Sir, no one objects to benevolent act, as it is a good deed. However, I was having a discussion with Mr. Munthir and we talked on the phone on Thursday. At the meeting of the Council of Ministers, Your Excellency talked about spies and said they are included. Neither those sentenced to death, as Your Excellency just explained, nor those who received the death sentence in previous years are included. They will not be included in the pardon. We have several cases that are, in the end, spying. But the spying concept does not cover one who communicates with a foreign country. It is rather an agent for a foreign country, which are the agents of Iran, Saudi Arabia, the Kurds, and many more cases that *[inaudible]* Hezbollah, al-Da'wa Party, the Persian Labor Organization, the Wahabi *[movement]*, and such and such. There are many. According to legal terms, and after discussing them with Mr. Munthir, these are not spying. Therefore, the pardon, and they are subject to article 156 that gives the death sentence, is going to reduce the sentence from death to life in prison. The same applies to others from these hostile organizations that are agents of foreigners and the so-called National conference for an Independent and Unified Iraq. Many *[inaudible]* have become clear to us. So, all of those are going to be included. I had a point of view but it is the word of Your Excellency. Let us look at those related to the security of the state; the crimes related to the state's security, they should be more comprehensive than just the word spying.

**Saddam:** It can be more comprehensive but we do not want it to be that way.

**The Director of Public Security:** Sir, those sentenced to death -- *[Interrupted]*

**Saddam:** We do not want the wording to be strict, but the *[inaudible]* wording.

**The Director of Public Security:** I understand and that is why I said no one objects to a benevolent act.

**Saddam:** And that is why, and although there is a law, we said that there are crimes of the type that are not supposed to be included, even though the general concept of law may give the chance for discretion to include them. Therefore, we have to name them to *[inaudible]* our decree, *[inaudible]* or by instructions. Either way will work. The same applies to those related to the state security. There are cases that we want to take off their shoulders, and there are serious cases, I mean the type that requires us to be strict. We can refer to the lawsuit number and deal with them.

**The Director of Public Security:** Thank you, Mr. President.

**Saddam:** But the key point is to give a *[inaudible]*.

**The Director of Public Security:** I understand, Sir, and I thank you, Sir.

*[Time Stamp: 25:02]*

**Tariq Aziz:** Are the gang cases going to be included in...

**Taha Yassin Ramadan:** In murder and stealing.

**Tariq Aziz:** Murder, stealing associated with murder.

**Taha Yassin Ramadan:** Because *[inaudible]* stealing and murder, yet the instructions are useful.

**UM2:** *[Inaudible]* made a statement that no verdict was issued regarding them, Sir. The instructions must be better.

**Saddam:** If no verdict was issued, it means they are not included... Not included! I need to bring it to your attention, the two or three that you showed on television for people to watch. Someone said, "Let me have my brother and I will execute the death sentence on him myself, because what he has done is shameful and cannot be washed unless he is executed."

**Latif:** The fugitives...

**Saddam:** Does this pardon include those who call themselves the politicians outside Iraq?

**Latif:** If they are not sentenced... they are neither fugitives nor defaulters nor absentees, there must be sentences issued against them.

**Saddam:** Yes, Comrade 'Ali.

**'Ali:** Thank you, Mr. President. I had several points *[to bring up]* including the ones that Comrade Tariq mentioned regarding murder associated with stealing, which includes the gangs

that are not mentioned in the law, as well as pardoning politicians. As long as the [inaudible] is the general goal, we should not focus only on convicts or those turned over to courts. I suggest including a paragraph to pardon all politicians who come. We should specify a one-month timeframe for those in Iraq, yes for those inside the country, and two-months for those outside the country. It will still be general amnesty. The other aspect that was mentioned in the decree's text is related to arrest and confinement, most of it is going to be related to arrest and confinement.

**UM1:** [Inaudible] Mr. President needs to hear it.

'Ali: Yes.

**UM1:** Sometimes they move from arrest to confinement, [inaudible]. [Inaudible] may be interpreted as he needs to finish the two years of confinement. In many cases, [inaudible].

'Ali: In fact, I have one last question to raise for clarification as I may not have understood this point. The amnesty applies to he who finished two years or three years, but [to] the one who served one year of his sentence, it will be 15 years. Is this case going to be included?

**Saddam:** No, it will not.

'Ali: It will not be included.

**Saddam:** If it is 10 years or under it will be included [inaudible] one year.

'Ali: [Inaudible] two years, Sir.

[Inaudible, several attendees respond in the background]

**Latif:** Five [years] or under...

**Saddam:** [Inaudible].

'Ali: So, if he spent less than one year he will not be included... if he finished less than one year of his sentence term, is he going to be included?

**Saddam:** No.

'Ali: In any case, he must finish one year.

**Saddam:** He will be included later on. Once he finishes two years he shall be released, once he finishes three years he shall be released, or once he finishes one year he shall be released.

'Ali: So, that way!

[Inaudible, several attendees respond in the background]

**‘Ali:** Thank you, now it is clear.

**Saddam:** The *[inaudible]* and those sentenced are included.

**‘Ali:** Yes, those sentenced -- *[Interrupted]*

**Saddam:** I mean he who finished, and he who did not finish must finish and then he shall be released.

**‘Ali:** Yes, *[inaudible]* in the instructions. Last time, we had a bunch of inquiries about this issue and *[inaudible]*, Sir.

*[Inaudible, several attendees respond in the background]*

**‘Ali:** So this issue *[inaudible]*.

**Saddam:** Comrade Mohammad.

**Mohammad:** Sir, this is a blessed step *[initiative]* and may God grant you long life. As a matter of fact, this is a great noble deed, something that is going to happen in Iraq and have a great impact on all families. I support what Comrade ‘Ali mentioned and also suggest *[inaudible]* emphasis with regard to politicians or fugitives outside Iraq. The same inclusion inside Iraq must be applied to *[individuals]* outside Iraq, including politicians and we *[should]* give *[them]* a chance. We *[should]* give those outside Iraq the chance to register at our embassy or our representative office in any country where he is, stating that he will come back to Iraq on such and such a date, he shall be considered from the time his name was verified at the embassy or Iraqi office that he surrendered. Whenever he *[inaudible]*, whenever he makes arrangements for his family or whenever he wants to come back to Iraq he can come back as normal within a certain period. This noble deed I believe is going to include a lot of people who misunderstood *[the issue]*. At a certain time, many people did not communicate and got different impressions and *[inaudible]*. So let us give this amnesty to all people as a noble deed; let it include everyone, Sir, I mean inside and outside Iraq. Thank you, Sir.

*[Time Stamp: 30:40]*

**Saddam:** Yes, Dr. Munthir.

**Dr. Munthir:** I heard that if Your Excellency implemented the amnesty on the so-called politicians *[the audio is cut off from 30:49 to 31:08]*

*[Inaudible, attendees responding in the background]*

**Saddam:** No, no, it is all about how Iraq will fulfill its commitments.

**UM1:** *[Inaudible]*.

**Saddam:** There is nothing related to the sanctions. I mean it is the same American talk. I mean the same American words prior to this phase.

**Taha Yassin Ramadan:** Mr. President, look at the game, look at [*inaudible*]. All those who carried out Mubarak's operation did not come from Sudan and they are not Sudanese, but Egyptians who came from Yemen with Yemeni passports. They did not mention Yemen. After that [*inaudible*] visit [*inaudible*]. They were satisfied and issued a statement against Iraq.

**Saddam:** Against Sudan.

‘**Abd:** No, against Iraq. The statement -- [*Interrupted*]

**Saddam:** Oh, yes.

‘**Abd:** But the way [*inaudible*] on how to receive those, but ‘Ali ‘Abdallah al-Saleh told him, “I will hand it to you on condition that you hand to me those millions of fugitives, who escaped the breakaway [*inaudible*].”

**Saddam:** Hmm. He announced it.

**Taha Yassin Ramadan:** However...

**Saddam:** ‘Ali announced it.

**Taha Yassin Ramadan:** Yes. Therefore, Mr. President, the Sudan campaign... the first time they said they were Sudanese, but then they said they were trained in Sudan, and after that they left [*inaudible*] with Arabic Yemeni passports. It was agreed on. ‘Ali Abdallah al-Saleh pretended to [*inaudible*] with Saudi Arabia and his meeting with Fahd.

**UM1:** [*Inaudible*].

**Taha Yassin Ramadan:** [*Inaudible*].

**Saddam:** Bring us the cigar.

**UM1:** Yes, Sir.

**Saddam:** So that we can smoke and relax.

**Tariq Aziz:** Was Saudi Arabia talking seriously?

[*Inaudible, attendees responding in the background*]

**Taha Yassin Ramadan:** It was all in agreement with Saudi Arabia.

**Tariq Aziz:** Yes.

**Taha Yassin Ramadan:** He talked with the Minister of Justice to *[inaudible]* this.

**UM2:** *[Inaudible]*.

**Taha Yassin Ramadan:** *[Inaudible]* in Iraq?

**Saddam:** What can Iraq do?

*[Inaudible, attendees responding in the background]*

**Saddam:** *[Inaudible]*.

**Taha Yassin Ramadan:** Here is a touching message from the Party *[inaudible]*.

**Saddam:** There will be peace. *[Inaudible]* I do not know, but my general impression about him is that he is serious.

**Taha Yassin Ramadan:** Yes.

**Tariq Aziz:** Yes, serious. Look at him, he did some work, had meetings and *[inaudible]*; his words are balanced and also decisive.

**Taha Yassin Ramadan:** *[Inaudible]*.

**‘Abd:** No, no he does not ignore responsibility; he is very important.

**Taha Yassin Ramadan:** He ruined the elections and *[inaudible]*.

**Saddam:** *[Aside to an unidentified individual]* By God, check for me *[inaudible]*?

**Taha Yassin Ramadan:** He just called... but we are preparing, Mr. President, I mean it is necessary in this phase to continue -- *[Interrupted]*

**Saddam:** *[Inaudible]*.

**Tariq Aziz:** We shall continue -- *[Interrupted]*

**Saddam:** *[Inaudible]* our parties.

**Taha Yassin Ramadan:** But in my opinion, how long *[inaudible]*?

**Saddam:** *[Inaudible]*?

**Tariq Aziz:** In a month, *[inaudible]*.

**Saddam:** *[Inaudible]*.

**Taha Yassin Ramadan:** *[Inaudible]* following the political visit period.

**Tariq Aziz:** *[Inaudible]*.

**Taha Yassin Ramadan:** *[Inaudible]*?

**Tariq Aziz:** *[Inaudible]*.

**Saddam:** I noticed that the Americans are not showing strong reactions regarding our statements.

*[Time Stamp: 35:26]*

**Tariq Aziz:** No, Albright responded to the statements of our Minister of Foreign Affairs who specified a date.

**Saddam:** Yes, it is good that he did that. *[Inaudible]*.

*[Inaudible comments in the background]*

**Saddam:** The man is going to implement it, the decision.

*[Inaudible comments in the background]*

**Tariq Aziz:** Albright responded to him and said that this is not *[inaudible]*; she rejects it. Even the French made comments and issued a statement.

**Saddam:** Hmm, let them all issue statements!

**Tariq Aziz:** In brief, the French statement is positive. They say Iraq should continue cooperating. *[Inaudible]* quickly, in fact, on our part. But this biological file must be settled quickly and Iraq must quickly provide information and -- *[Interrupted]*

**Saddam:** And others must settle it, I mean it is balanced.

**Taha Yassin Ramadan:** Well, *[inaudible]* official statements twice; one with an Arab hostile country and another with a non-hostile Arab country for the same state. He could have issued a better statement in Yemen and Qatar for *[inaudible]*. He was clear, Sir. It should have provided an explanation about this and that and why, I mean why should we remain quiet? In Egypt, *[inaudible]*.

**Saddam:** They need to study it in the operation room.

*[Inaudible comments in the background]*

**Taha Yassin Ramadan:** We consider this to be an adversary statement, the enemy's statement! We do not want a delegate to be sent, but we can send for their ambassador -- *[Interrupted]*

**Saddam:** No, it will be confirmed in history, at least. Why should we keep quiet?

**UM2:** By God, Mr. President -- *[Interrupted]*

**Saddam:** Not only from a historic perspective, but our conduct will be known in the right *[wing]* circle.

**Tariq Aziz:** Yes, of course.

**Saddam:** It will be known, and it is important that the right *[wing]* circle knows about moody people based on this behavior, as they are not expecting or hoping...

**Taha Yassin Ramadan:** But it has been repeated twice, Mr. President.

**UM1:** *[Inaudible]*.

**Saddam:** But at least reproach him, or someone offers him tea.

**Taha Yassin Ramadan:** *[Inaudible]*.

**Tariq Aziz:** It looks like he started heading in a conservative direction continuously. Following the disunion event, separatists had a bad position, but gave conservatism *[narrow-mindedness]* the chance to gradually come back and control Yemen and 'Ali Abdallah al-Saleh has no objection to *[inaudible]* American.

**Saddam:** Anything.

**Taha Yassin Ramadan:** Anything.

**Tariq Aziz:** I mean he is prepared -- *[Interrupted]*

**Saddam:** To be in power, 'Ali Abdallah al-Saleh is ready for anything!

**Taha Yassin Ramadan:** Anything can happen; they just need to *[inaudible]*. By God, Mr. President, I do not know how *[inaudible]*, but I believe that, as a country, there are connections and visits, and although they do not visit us we visit them. It has been three years. *[Inaudible]*, we can at least call for their ambassador and tell him *[inaudible]*.

**Saddam:** That is right.

**Tariq Aziz:** I received an answer.

**Taha Yassin Ramadan:** What?

**Tariq Aziz:** I received an answer to the letter. The first one is a written letter [*inaudible*].

**Saddam:** A signed, written one.

**Taha Yassin Ramadan:** We sent them a letter today, but their statements...

**Tariq Aziz:** [*Inaudible*] the answer.

'**Ali:** [*Inaudible*] the letter.

**Tariq Aziz:** The point he brought us was, "You are asking us to express our opinion on your efforts, but you did not give us a good chance to -- [*Interrupted*]"

**Saddam:** I left the next day.

**Tariq Aziz:** [*Inaudible*].

**Saddam:** [*Aside to UM3*] Get the letter please.

**UM3:** Yes, Sir.

**Tariq Aziz:** "We were surprised and we did not expect this from you; you took an approach to force Iraq to implement the resolution as if Iraq did not implement, at the time when many friends and fair brothers --" [*Interrupted*]"

**Saddam:** We should say that recognizing Kuwait is a step in the right direction. That is it.

**Taha Yassin Ramadan:** And this is the same [*inaudible*]?

**Saddam:** The same.

**Taha Yassin Ramadan:** [*Inaudible*].

**Saddam:** The same [*as the*] American words.

[*Inaudible, attendees responding in the background*]

**Saddam:** Comrade Tariq is slow when it comes to...

**UM2:** [*Inaudible*], we are missing chances, Sir, may God protect you.

[*Time Stamp: 40:28*]

**Saddam:** He handles political affairs, [*inaudible*].

**Taha Yassin Ramadan:** But we should not say in this statement, Sir, that this is [*inaudible*].

**Tariq Aziz:** Mr. President, there is something that I have not told you. Yes, I handle the political affairs, but I do not have the same capabilities as others; they are less. Sometimes, I receive the news four hours after the Minister of Foreign Affairs or the Minister of Information had received it. And sometimes the next day. I do not have an office or anything; I have an office manager and a secretary. So by the time the Ministry of Information receives the news and while waiting for them to convey it to me at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the minister calls me to say whether there is something important or not. That is when I know about it. But if they do not send it to me I would have to wait until I receive it in the mail. There will be a reaction at the time it is received.

**Saddam:** Read it to the comrades.

**Tariq Aziz:** Richardson, [*reference to the former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations during the Clinton Administration*] through one of his deputies, has informed us today about his letter to Congress. This was the second letter, which purported that he is coming to New York within the next week to meet with me. Anyway, he met with President Clinton last night—I mean on the 18<sup>th</sup>—as soon as he arrived in Washington and the meeting lasted for an hour. Additionally, he has met with the President’s assistants. He presented a report about his visit and particularly about his meeting with Mr. President, the Commander [*Saddam*]. Clinton’s reaction was confirmation of the possibility of meeting with the Iraqis and dealing with them, there were hundreds of questions from President Clinton about the [*inaudible, possibly intention*] of Mr. President Leader [*Saddam*], and this indicates President Clinton’s interest. Mr. Richardson wants to reiterate his statement to [*the Iraqi*] Mr. Vice President by telling him, “Stay cool,” I mean, to calm down. I will phone him [*Richardson*] tomorrow, and I will remind him that their side did not abide by the agreement which required confirmation from the White House that a member of the Congress carries a letter from President Clinton and to express gratitude for the Iraqi position.

**Saddam:** This made me doubt his intention. Perhaps next time he will want to discuss certain issues. Perhaps next time I will not be able to meet with him, because it is not necessary that I see him, the thing that he came for did not work out. As for us, all that we told him, we executed completely, but as for him, all the matters that he talked about, none of them materialized. I mean nothing. Fine, how am I supposed to ensure his credibility? [*Ensure*] that he is coming to negotiate on behalf of the American Government as dispatched by his President or on the advice of his President, there is nothing here.

[*Inaudible comments in the background*]

‘**Abd:** Sir, [*inaudible*] he presented it. [*Inaudible*] on Television, Mr. President [*inaudible*]. [*Ali Hasan al-Majid is laughing in the background*] I do not know what that is.

**Saddam:** [*Inaudible*] a group of slaves, American slaves.

**Tariq Aziz:** They regard this as a traditional saying, just as if someone is invited to a setting and he brings food with him, then he would start eating that food that he brought. [*Ali Hassan al-Majid is speaking in the background*].

**Ali Hasan al-Majid:** [*Inaudible*] that is in the event that it amounts to something.

**Saddam:** They give an antidote.

[*Inaudible comments in the background*]

**Taha Yassin Ramadan:** Mr. President, even these questions reveal that he has not been authorized to negotiate.

**Saddam:** No, No, they needed to come, so that they can release the [*hostages*].

[*Time Stamp: 45:26*]

**Taha Yassin Ramadan:** Yes, but targeting the parties, this statement was released in accordance with his agreement. The correspondents went to ask him about the statement, they asked, "Did the Iraqis do this," he said, "No." They asked, "Did the Iraqis do that?" He said, "No." Fine, [*inaudible*].

**Saddam:** "Stay cool," is that what he said, or what? "Stay cool," just like what they say.

**Taha Yassin Ramadan:** As for the understanding -- [*Interrupted*]

**Saddam:** Don't be upset about those people, this is how they deal. As for us, we already agreed. In the future let them deal with the ambassador over there. Now you see who does not have credibility, you or us?

**Tariq Aziz:** He said you.

**UM1:** Mr. President, I expect some kind of relief, this is the first time an American would come, despite all these announcements.

**Saddam:** They needed that, and they were willing to take other steps if we wanted it [*several attendees speak simultaneously*]. The visit was positive, no... no, positive, once they go to America, despite all this animosity, and to appear on TV and talk about torturing people, then there will not be [*any*] credibility to what they say anymore, at least about the torture and terrorism. They went to ask him, did you see Saddam Hussein, is he like normal people, does he speak nicely like normal people, does he sip tea, did you see him, what is this? Oh brother, this is the first time we saw something like that! He is a cordial man, he converses, but we see him as a normal person, and this imbecile, their Secretary of State, when asked, are they going to release them, did Saddam Hussein release them, do they mean that Saddam Hussein is a difficult person to deal with. They did not say that verbatim, but that was what they meant. He said that he was tired of figuring out the difficult mind of Saddam Hussein, what tired? Is this a chemical

equation? Don't you know that Saddam Hussein's mind is like any person's mind? How easily we are dealing with this, I mean.

**Taha Yassin Ramadan:** They described President Saddam Hussein differently in their media and [*inaudible*].

**Tariq Aziz:** The perception that Richardson has explained about his visit with Your Excellency was positive, I mean in terms of a statement.

**UM1:** Even in Amman [*inaudible*].

**Taha Yassin Ramadan:** [*Inaudible*].

**Saddam:** We accept it the way it is.

**Taha Yassin Ramadan:** That is it. [*Inaudible*].

**Saddam:** We came late...

**Taha Yassin Ramadan:** Even imperialist countries -- [*Interrupted*]

**Saddam:** We came late... we came a quarter of a century late.

**Taha Yassin Ramadan:** [*Inaudible*].

**Saddam:** Isn't that so? We came a quarter of a century late to Iraq.

**'Abd:** [*Inaudible*].

**Saddam:** A quarter of a century is 1958?

[*Inaudible, participants responding in the background*]

**Taha Yassin Ramadan:** In the fifties and [*inaudible*] in the sixties.

**'Abd:** 1958.

**Saddam:** 1958, when 'Abd-al-Nasser [*the late Egyptian president Gamal abd-al-Nasser*] used to be on one side and we used to be on the other side. The Russians [*inaudible*] both sides. Now what did 'Abd-al-Karim Qasim do? By God, [*inaudible*] the Iraqis by 'Abd-al-Karim Qasim let them [*inaudible*].

[*Time Stamp: 50:23*]

**Taha Yassin Ramadan:** Yes.

**Saddam:** Do you know why? Because Karim Qasim is truly the revolution leader; truly. He was a great commander who led many revolutions against the royal regime and rescued the Iraqis from the allies, rescued them from dependency and the Pound Sterling [*referring to British colonialism*], rescued them from many other things, and suddenly, when he came up acclaiming people shouted the name of ‘Abd-al-Nasser. Now we started to know the meaning of certain things that we did not know before. How can this happen, someone stands on the balcony to greet you after all that he did and you shout the name of ‘Abd-al-Nasser! Aren’t you ashamed of yourselves? It is true that ‘Abd-al-Nasser was nationalist, and even though he was nationalist, what he did [*inaudible*] ‘Abd-al-Karim Qasim. [*Inaudible comment in the background*] Just a second, what was it that he did more than ‘Abd-al-Karim Qasim? The first thing ‘Abd-al-Karim Qasim did was oust a regime and rescue us as Iraqis from an [*inaudible*] phase. Well, let us wait to see the next steps and then compare him with ‘Abd-al-Nasser in order to judge which one is better. In terms of revolution, they both led one, but as far as the revolution in Iraq, it was more complicated than Egypt.

[*Inaudible comments in the background, such as “it was a dream”*]

**Saddam:** I mean, for many reasons. Well, we should have waited to see the next step and put ‘Abd-al-Nasser on one side and ‘Abd-al-Karim Qasim on the other side. But we did not give him a chance and gave him a hard time. We even made things worse after that when we appointed ‘Abd-al-Salam ‘Arif to replace ‘Abd-al-Karim Qasim who is a subordinate to ‘Abd-al-Salam ‘Arif. I mean, ‘Abd-al-Karim Qasim would [*inaudible*] to ‘Abd-al-Salam ‘Arif, the left would be right. I had not seen the man until we opened fire at the man, Hatem, me and our folks, that is when I saw his face at that moment. But he did not see me before except on television. Things were not ripening, they were not, and when things are that way, people call for justice, and patience becomes less.

**Tariq Aziz:** In fact, the Party was [*inaudible*] to be called the least. In 1958, the Party I mean no one... Dr. Sa’doun Hammadi, Faysal Habib, and a few more than 30...

**Taha Yassin Ramadan:** [*Inaudible*].

**Tariq Aziz:** [*Inaudible*] about 20 or 22.

**Saddam:** The way the new phase started even ‘Abd-al-Nasser was not fair to ‘Abd-al-Karim Qasim.

**Tariq Aziz:** Yes.

**Saddam:** He was not fair. He should not have pushed him this way; he should have rather dealt with him as a friend, colleague, or a brother and go from there!

**Tariq Aziz:** Sir, ‘Abd-al-Nasser had many positive attributes as a leader, but ‘Abd-al-Nasser was selfish and spiteful.

**Taha Yassin Ramadan:** [*Inaudible*].

**Tariq Aziz:** I mean, as a person he is selfish and bears a grudge against -- *[Interrupted]*

**UM2:** Please allow me, Sir.

**Saddam:** Go ahead.

**UM2:** He bears grudges against whom?

**Saddam:** *[Inaudible]* why did you rush? *[Inaudible]* did you not see how it is?

**UM2:** Yes, Sir.

**Saddam:** It started surfacing above the ground.

*[Inaudible talk in the background]*

**Saddam:** *[Laughing]* You can see it stuck together. I mean, as something, for us people now at this age and such situation we *[inaudible]* this phase and we are not going to *[inaudible]* this phase after 1400 years. A phase that we lived.

**Tariq Aziz:** We lived it.

**Saddam:** We lived it and worked against it. I mean, we worked against the man to the extent we opened fire at him, but we did not *[inaudible]* a grudge against him. I mean, we do not have a personal grudge against him.

**Tariq Aziz:** Especially you the *[inaudible]*, you formed a party and carried out *[inaudible]* -- *[Interrupted]*

*[Inaudible talk in the background]*

**Tariq Aziz:** *[Inaudible]* The cadre of the *[inaudible]* and a number of the Command members who handed power to him at any price really.

**Saddam:** I would not say the operation was wrong. *[Inaudible]*, because the phase reached a point where this had to happen.

**Tariq Aziz:** It reached the point of being pushed to it -- *[Interrupted]*

**Saddam:** But the way it happened...

**Tariq Aziz:** It was a youth [*young men*] type revolution. When he executed the officers, this created blood between the people and him.

**Taha Yassin Ramadan:** *[Inaudible]*.

[Inaudible talk in the background about Communism]

**Taha Yassin Ramadan:** The statement that was broadcasted [inaudible] three days before.

[Time Stamp: 55:25]

**Saddam:** Communists behaved improperly, ‘Abd-al-Nasser’s behavior [action] was not balanced and implied some kind of arrogance and haste, and the behavior of nationalists was immature, in general. This is in brief. Now I want to [inaudible] this phase and remove one part of it, I mean describing the situation this way.

**Tariq Aziz:** Sir, it was clear from the beginning. I was not a member of the Command, but I was working at *al-Joumhouriyya* [the Republic] newspaper that used to publish a little about the Command. I mean I used to hear from the newspaper people whenever they met with the Command members. From the beginning, the Party and the nationalists, except for Saddiq Shanshal... except for Saddiq Shanshal who did not give ‘Abd-al-Karim Qasim a chance...

[Inaudible talk in the background]

**Tariq Aziz:** To consult with him. ‘Abd-al-Salam chose him. Of the two persons ‘Abd-al-Salam chose him.

**Saddam:** [Inaudible]?

**Tariq Aziz:** It was clear because we, Sir -- [Interrupted]

**Saddam:** [Inaudible].

**Tariq Aziz:** In the evening, Fouad, ‘Ali, and Faysal, would come to me at the newspaper. Dr. Sa’doun was the editor in chief and a Command member back then; this was obvious about him, but us, [inaudible] ‘Abd-al-Salam. Even [inaudible], ‘Abd-al-Salam ‘Arif become the newspaper owner. I mean the proprietor [concessionary] became ‘Abd-al-Salam Mohammad ‘Arif.

**Saddam:** [Inaudible]!

**Tariq Aziz:** Yes, indeed; he gave the newspaper to the Party.

**Saddam:** And the [inaudible] ‘Abd-al-Salam.

**Tariq Aziz:** Yes, he gave the newspaper to the Party. Sir, we were the first newspaper published three or four days after July 14<sup>th</sup>. Three or four days after we published a newspaper called *al-Joumhouriyya* without concession [inaudible]. Newspapers like *al-Zaman*, *al-Bilad*, *al-Hourriya*, [inaudible] were [inaudible] newspapers. We published a newspaper; we seized *al-Shaab* newspaper of Yahya Qasim and we stayed there [at the publishing place], [inaudible] it, [we] stayed in it and published the newspaper. And when the communists got upset for giving the

newspaper to Ba'athists, and complained because Ba'athists had one newspaper while they did not have any, 'Abd-al-Salam told Fouad, "Go put my name on the newspaper." And so the newspaper was published. Fouad came to us and said, "Put the proprietor is 'Abd-al-Salam Mohammad 'Arif." There was no decision or approval. We put his name. But then this created problems for people like the Prime Minister or the Minister of the Interior because of 'Abd-al-Salam 'Arif's name, and the solution was they wanted 'Abd-al-Wahab al-Ghraiiri to be the proprietor. First they said 'Abd-al-Wahab al-Ghraiiri and so on, but after that, they brought someone, he died, may God have mercy on his soul, [inaudible] he was a friend of Haj Khayrallah.

**Saddam:** Was his name [inaudible]?

**Tariq Aziz:** Maybe.

**Saddam:** Yes, was he the uncle of 'Abd-al-Ghani 'Abd-al-Ghafour?

**Tariq Aziz:** I am not sure, maybe his cousin.

**Saddam:** Yes.

**Tariq Aziz:** One of the 1941 rebels.

**Saddam:** Yes, yes.

**Tariq Aziz:** They brought him and put his name on the newspaper.

**Saddam:** Yes, [inaudible].

**Tariq Aziz:** [Inaudible].

[Inaudible talk in the background]

**Saddam:** [Inaudible].

**Tariq Aziz:** I mean they put his name as the proprietor.

**Saddam:** [Inaudible] at the time Haji Mulazim was the...

**Tariq Aziz:** Yes, from the 1941 rebels [inaudible].

**Saddam:** [Inaudible].

**Tariq Aziz:** [Inaudible] his name on the newspaper, but we managing the newspaper. 'Abd-al-Salam [inaudible] the newspaper. I meant I used to hear from them that we [inaudible] 'Abd-al-Salam and they used to tell us to focus on 'Abd-al-Salam's speeches when we write and publish

photos, from the beginning. I mean like what Your Excellency mentioned, [inaudible] did not give ‘Abd-al-Karim a chance, and insisted on instant union.

**Saddam:** By God, he did not get a chance, not even two weeks.

**Tariq Aziz:** Yes.

**Saddam:** He did not even get two weeks.

**Tariq Aziz:** And indeed -- [Interrupted]

**Saddam:** [Inaudible] two months, for sure.

**Tariq Aziz:** No, no, immediate union, one week after the opening. Immediately, the union must be declared.

**UM1:** Union and federation.

**Tariq Aziz:** They discussed the federation a little bit, but we wanted the union immediately, I mean it has to be immediate.

**Saddam:** Communists raised the idea of federation in order to [inaudible] the union slogan and absorb it.

**Tariq Aziz:** Yes.

**Saddam:** And not because [inaudible], beside, the union wants to liberate the country.

**Tariq Aziz:** Also, the Party’s demonstrations and the entire [inaudible] power go out shouting “union, union” repeatedly. It was not clear he was against us, because he was attacked by us.

**Saddam:** And he wanted to defend himself. He did not mention the wise man or the experienced politician, because it was clear the man was in the army, a brigade commander with the rank of Brigadier General who became the country’s leader.

**Tariq Aziz:** Sir, in my opinion -- [Interrupted]

**Saddam:** And yet, he acted in a smart way. He brought in Najib al-Ruba’i [*the first president of Iraq from 14 July 1958 to 8 February 1963*] who had the rank of a General and appointed him as the Chairman of Sovereignty Council, and formed a Sovereignty Council that had Kurds, Shiites, and Sunnis,

**Tariq Aziz:** Yes.

**Saddam:** I believe it had Christians too.

**Tariq Aziz:** No, *[inaudible]*.

*[Inaudible talk in the background]*

**Tariq Aziz:** And Khalid al-Naqshbandi. Hamad Mahdi Kubbah *[an Iraqi nationalist and politician]* was a Shiite.

**Saddam:** There are Shiites and nationalists in the south. But the problem *[inaudible]* is he who does not know how to read and write. *[The audio gets cut off at 01:02:03]*

**End of Recording**