

“Saddam Discussing ‘Irangate’ (Iran-Contra) Revelations with His Inner Circle”



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Key: UM = Unidentified Male Speaker

Translator comments, clarifications, and additions are italicized in brackets

Saddam Hussein: *[Already speaking]* that is what I wanted to say. This is nothing new. It is new in regards to their depravity, in the level of moral decay of the Americans and specifically their president. It is close to what we expected, yet it has become more apparent based on the *[political]* weight set for Iran which may result in the U.S. leaning toward Iran at the expense of Iraq. I mean, when Iran is considered in the strategic balance. We know this. We came to this conclusion before but now they are saying it from the president himself, not from the media or from a subordinate. That's new. So don't make it a bigger deal! This is the truth. But if you want us to be more enthusiastic about it, and what you have is different. However, in the end, what we take out of our discussion is just this because there is nothing more than that. America has provided those *[Iranians]* with weapons before and they've loved and favored them just like Comrade Tariq stated. They like Iranians more than us, and most powerful nations also like them more than us. However, they do not like them because they are nicer than us or because they are better than we are. They only like them because they *[Iranians]* can be pulled from the street into a car easily, unlike us. *[Laughing]* *[Saddam might be comparing the Iranians to prostitutes who can be easily convinced to ride along in a random car from the street]* I mean the ability to obtain influence inside them *[Iranians]* is open, so why should they *[Americans]* favor us?! We welcomed them. Iraq has been friends with America for nearly two years, right? We've had relations with them for two years now?

Tariq Aziz: Yes, since 1984. It has been exactly two years.

Saddam Hussein: So what happened? I am trying to understand exactly what happened here? What changed about our position on Zimbabwe, or the Palestinian issue, or whatever? I mean what happened? What's the one illegal thing that the Americans got from us?

Tariq Aziz: Sir, we amended our position regarding Puerto Rico. *[Possibly joking]* Previously, we were the ones to go demand independence for Puerto Rico, but now we're voting for it and we are not the ones demanding it. *[Laughing]* Last time I was there, Sir, they asked me! They said why are you doing this?! This is an internal affair. How come you're voting for the independence of a section of the United States?! I said what are you taking about?! We never change our foreign policy and we don't jump from one place to another with it! If we want a new situation, we have to do it gradually and step by step. So I told him that we acted in a way that may hurt the United States, but it's within our foreign policy.

Saddam Hussein: So what's Puerto Rico?! I mean fine, whether we voted or we didn't vote, why would we do it? It is not related to the politics of Iraq or the Arab world directly. If we completely closed the Puerto Rico issue before taking a position on it, or if we raised it on a large scale, it doesn't have an impact on the core regional politics or Iraqi national politics. Rather, it is an issue of morality within our principles and within general humane principles. For Iran, their beneficial treatment can lead them to getting Americans, so it is normal for them *[Americans]* to care. Iran is also next to the Soviet Union. They share borders with the Soviets and they share borders with the oil-producing nations of the Gulf, while we share very small islands with the Gulf so this is the balance they have. We're not surprised by anything new. We'll send them a

memo and its amendments were given to Comrade Tariq. We will write a strong letter, since this position has become openly known and official at the highest level in the nation [*by President Regan*]. We must respond seriously, and our discussion with the Arabs, Europeans, and all those affected must be serious. We'll be serious with anyone who influences American public opinion, in accordance with what we are stating in the statement and in the letter. Go ahead.

[*Time Stamp 5:23*]

Tariq Aziz: Sir, I would just like to make a comment on a topic we previously talked about in Command meetings -- [*Interrupted*]

Saddam Hussein: I just want to remind you all that the Americans' position was very bad, but the Gulf countries were paying us aid money. So we should not think that when the Americans act tactically in a situation according to their own strategy, it will be automatically reflected in changes from the Gulf nations.

Taha Yassin: No, actually, it is the opposite. This will make them [*the Gulf nations*] nervous about the Americans.

Saddam Hussein: On the contrary, we should say, "See this [*to the Gulf nations*]?" Maybe this is—just like I said in the beginning of my talk—this may get them to give any one of your countries to Iran as a gift. It won't make a difference for them [*Americans*], as long as Iran wants it, whether Iran's size is as big as a notebook or if it doubles in size.

Tariq Aziz: Sir, regarding last month's discussions at the Command, our peaceful position was pointed out. Sometimes, we feel like this position turns into a position of weakness and that some people think of us as reasonable and willing to accept anything. That is not true. We are the ones who decided to take the peaceful position. No one made it for us under pressure or temptation -- [*Interrupted*]

Saddam Hussein: Because we were not under any pressure, because it was our initial position from the beginning.

Tariq Aziz: It is a position that you announced on 28 September 1980 until now with the Command's support and deep conviction that this will be a position of confidence, not weakness, for Iraq. Isn't that right? If I ever felt such a decision weakened Iraq's position, I would have to say it so as not to regret someday that the peaceful position hurts Iraq. That's my first point -- [*Interrupted*]

Saddam Hussein: I think some comrades are talking about the way of acting based on the position.

Tariq Aziz: Alright, Sir, let's talk about the facts. We're -- [*Interrupted*]

UM1: They mean—sorry for the interruption—other parties are seeing this like we're the ones consistently putting forth this position, and this is true.

Taha Yassin: It is true.

UM1: I think our position is clear though.

Tariq Aziz: For us, we've been working politically and diplomatically since 20 September 1980. We had a proposal with no guarantees -- *[Interrupted]*

Saddam Hussein: Even before that.

Tariq Aziz: Yes, before the war.

Saddam Hussein: Yes, since the 21st or the 22nd when we realized that the Security Council was about to hold a session to possibly issue a resolution. Therefore, we rushed to issue our resolution before the Security Council did.

Tariq Aziz: On the 28th.

Saddam Hussein: My speech came from a position of peace, just as you said, before the Security Council convened and issued its decision.

Taha Yassin: By an hour.

Tariq Aziz: Yes, before the meeting. We attended the meeting, Sir -- *[Interrupted]*

Saddam Hussein: Yes, to express our desire for peace before the Security Council says stop the war and so forth.

Tariq Aziz: We delayed convening the meeting until you were done with your speech. When you were done with your speech, we called Comrade Ahmed al-E'smat and we said, "You can start it now."

Saddam Hussein: Correct.

Tariq Aziz: Remember that night? We were looking with the Popular Army to find a place for you to deliver the speech. As soon as Comrade Latif took the tapes of the speech, I went to my office and called Comrade Ahmed -- *[Interrupted]*

Taha Yassin: That was at 10, and at 12 the speech was broadcasted.

Tariq Aziz: I told him: "Comrade Ahmed, you can call New York now and tell them they can start" *[Interrupted]*

Saddam Hussein: They can go ahead and convene.

Taha Yassin: At 12.

Saddam Hussein: Right.

Tariq Aziz: I remember it because during these six years that Your Excellency has been President of the Republic, Comrade Sa'dun was the Minister of Foreign Affairs for three years during the war and I was a Minister of Media for three years during the war too. Did anyone bring us a proposal that we accepted without discussing it? Did anyone present us with an idea without us asking them about the points that may or may not be acceptable to Iraq? People, Sir, are talking to us because we must look like a civilized and flexible nation. This benefitted us and did not hurt us. So we shouldn't stay afraid of something that we consider a distinctive characteristic of the Iraqi experience in general, and our war experience specifically. If we want to be loud and chaotic like Iran, we can do it and we were close to it.

Saddam Hussien: It's easy, easy to do.

[Time Stamp 10:23]

Tariq Aziz: I mean the current Iranian situation is -- *[Interrupted]*

Saddam Hussein: Being chaotic is easier than being logical.

Tariq Aziz: Sir, you and I have lived through the experience of 1963 along with many comrades in advanced positions or low level positions. If we go back to the style of Rafsanjani *[Iranian Chairman of the Parliament]* and Khamenei *[President of Iran]*, do you consider their positions powerful?! -- *[Interrupted]*

Saddam Hussein: Speaking of 1963, I remember the Americans brought us a gift of pistols. I think they gave them to the police. They sent them a gift of pistols. Isn't that right, Comrade Tariq? I heard so.

Taha Yassin: *[Laughing]*

Tariq Aziz: I do not know. It is possible, Sir.

Saddam Hussein: I just heard a rumor that they sent pistols to the police in 1963.

Tariq Aziz: Why would they do that? What kind of proposal or suggestion that we accepted -- *[Interrupted]*

Taha Yassin: Looks like this is their favorite gift *[Laughing]*.

Saddam Hussein: Yes, it was a rumor. It is also within their position at the time. *[Laughing]*

Tariq Aziz: The Japanese came with proposals and we responded to them in a polite, nice, and civilized manner appropriate for the position of our nation. I mean, when an envoy comes to talk to me, should I yell and curse at him?! Is that something we should be proud of?! We should talk

to them clearly and understandably so they can comprehend what we have. The other thing we're talking about is the letter. Your Excellency suggested—there is not enough time for us to discuss this today—why should you write at a higher level? I mean what are the reasons for Your Excellency to write a letter to President Reagan?

Saddam Hussein: No, I will not write a letter. I am thinking that you will write it to the Department of State.

Tariq Aziz: Yes, that is another level.

Saddam Hussein: Yes, I mean a memorandum from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, not even a letter from you. It will be a memorandum from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a completion to the statement, with all its details.

Tariq Aziz: We can -- *[Interrupted]*

Taha Yassin: It would be different.

Saddam Hussein: I have a clear understanding of this idea. It should be a memorandum from our Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the U.S. Department of State.

Tariq Aziz: I thought you'll be writing a letter to -- *[Interrupted]*

Saddam Hussein: No, I am not writing a letter. It is not correct.

Taha Yassin: I was going to ask about the same thing.

Saddam Hussein: It is clear for me. It should be a detailed memorandum saying something like, "The Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs sends its best regards to the U.S. Department of State, and so forth."

Tariq Aziz: And if you like, Sir, if I may, it should not appear like this is a central decision.

Saddam Hussein: Well no, it's not just about the decision, but it also gives the Americans an idea about the power of our leadership as an additional reinforcement for what we are saying in the statement.

Tariq Aziz: Yes.

Saddam Hussein: At the same time, send a copy of it to our ambassador there with respect to the diplomatic manners so he can -- *[Interrupted]*

Tariq Aziz: The ambassador is the one to deliver it, Sir.

Saddam Hussein: Yes, he should also read it.

UM1: Why don't we withdraw him?

Saddam Hussein: Huh?

UM1: The ambassador, Sir.

Saddam Hussein: Withdraw him? We'll see about the timing for it.

UM1: *[Inaudible]*

Saddam Hussein: We'll see.

UM1: I want to ask about what Comrade Tariq said. Where did he get the sense of doing something like that?

Saddam Hussein: Because Comrade Tariq, everyone should be concerned about their sector. For Comrade Hassan, when we talk about the garbage in the market, he is the one concerned about it as the Minister of Trade. *[Laughter]* When we talk about the economic sector, Comrade Taha becomes more enthusiastic than any other comrade because he is the one concerned with this matter. The comrade with the least enthusiastic look on his face when we talk about his sector is Comrade Adnan *[Khairallah, Minister of Defense]*. *[Laughing]* This is a true evaluation that I am saying in front of the Command. I noticed him, not just here but at a meeting of the General Command *[of the Armed Forces]* too. *[Laughing]* So Comrade Tariq wants to know if there's a conflict regarding this policy because he is the one taking care of it. He is concerned with the position of peace and how we should not be talking about peace all the time, but who is talking peace? It's not just the Ministry of Media only. It starts with diplomacy first and then all other means.

Tariq Aziz: It's just an issue that worries me.

[Time Stamp 15:35]

UM1: Definitely not, Comrade Tariq. I thought -- *[Interrupted]*

Saddam Hussein: He wants us to keep considering it.

UM1: I thought you are talking about how, from the outside, it looks like a weak position. That's it.

Tariq Aziz: No, we've been dealing with them for six years. They respect us and that is always a good thing. They see Iraq as a rational and responsible actor. For that reason they will discuss ideas that they won't tell Iran about because they will see Iranians are like animals, but Iraqis are talking openly with acceptance and rejection. This is our civilized and responsible way around the world.

Taha Yassin: Sir, there may come a day, if you will please allow me, Mr. President. This aspect deserves discussion from time to time, considering our commitment to peace because frankly Iran, despite its badness and disrespect for other people, is benefiting from this position. That's also something to consider. They're benefitting from this one way or the other.

Saddam Hussein: You mean, they are losing much and making gains every once in a while by being stubborn? Yet until now, they have not gained anything from their stubbornness. Until now, it's all losses, and their stubbornness is keeping us from sitting down and negotiating.

Taha Yassin: Sir, their stubbornness and their politics reflect their strategy. They do not want peace in the first place. It is their actions.

Tariq Aziz: Sir, usually the two parties in the conflict -- *[Interrupted]*

Saddam Hussein: Yes, when the time comes for peace, everything will be easy, God willing, but we still have time for it.

Tariq Aziz: Sir, when two parties are in a long, complex conflict and one of them is strategically losing, that doesn't mean it will not gain anything all the time. I mean, regarding Germany: until the invasion of the Allied forces and the Red Army before they got to Hitler after a few weeks, the Germans were still attacking the other parties, yet strategically they had lost. Iran is a big country and has some smart people. I mean the Mullahs are not all stupid and they have people who advise them -- *[Interrupted]*

Saddam Hussein: May God damn their intelligence! They attacked us during celebrations of the Prophet's *[Muhammad's]* birth. *[Laughing]* Is there any smart person who would do such a thing?

Taha Yassin: *[Laughing]*

Saddam Hussein: I mean vengeance is not a characteristic of intelligence. It is a characteristic of cruelty. Smart people do not get vengeful or get nervous quickly. Yet, we should not underestimate them *[Iranians]*. This does not mean we should underestimate them.

Tariq Aziz: It is possible within this situation -- *[Interrupted]*

Saddam Hussein: One of the points which we were discussing yesterday, Comrade Tariq has suggested we say to the Iranian public that this is the last time Iraq will not respond to an attack on Baghdad. I will let Comrade Tariq present his idea and then I will comment.

Tariq Aziz: We have previously discussed targeting cities and we decided that we will not respond by striking them in Iran for the reasons that we explained and agreed on. During this period, the Iranians continued to strike Iraqi cities, including Baghdad. For us, our position was clearly explained to the international community and we gave evidence. The Iranians would say every time, "We are going to strike the Ministry of Defense" or "We are going to strike the General Security Directorate or wherever." So we go to the international community and say,

“See where they struck?” So it became known to most countries, to the United Nations, to all concerned parties that the Iranian strikes randomly target civilians.

For this matter, since I am the one responsible for it, I am not worried that people will misinterpret us [*when Iraq strikes cities*]. I am not worried that if we wanted to strike back as a response to Iranian strikes, people would say Iraq is being violent. No, I think it is a clear issue. We did all that we have to do. So now we can strike back as a response for their strikes on Baghdad. Yesterday when Mr. President called, he asked about my opinion and I said, “Well, Sir.” It was his opinion too, and we share it together. Now is the time to strike back because they just got the Reagan speech and it is possible that they want to mix things together in this period. However, we should say in a statement that this is the last time we are not responding to strikes on the capital, and if you strike our capital one more time we will strike your capital and every other city.

[Time Stamp 21:00]

UM1: We already issued a statement.

Tariq Aziz: Huh?

UM1: We already issued a statement.

Taha Yassin: No, not yet. We will decide the time for it.

Tariq Aziz: No, we will issue a specific statement. Mr. President said that it is time for it. I am convinced indeed because they went too far with striking our capital. What they wanted from mixing things together, we faced with wisely planned policies. So why can't we strike back from now on? As for deciding how big the strike will be and if it will be 'one for one' or just launching a smashing campaign against their cities, it is something to be decided by Mr. President. But we should at least strike back 'one for one'. If they strike Baghdad, we will strike a city and tell them to stop striking Baghdad. If they strike Basra with artillery, we'll strike a city and tell them this is in return for striking Basra. This is the minimum, a 'one for one' strike, but if there is anything more than that, it is something that I have no opinion about. I would have preferred, if it weren't for what happened and the consequences of it, that we would have struck Tehran.

Saddam Hussein: Yesterday if it weren't for the American statement which I was afraid might change public opinion against us I would have ordered a retaliatory strike because there are no more reasons for why we can't strike back. But I thought about it myself and I was thinking why should we change the Iranian and the Iraqi public opinion about this? Let's not retaliate until the suitable time. Otherwise, if they keep striking Basra while we are not striking back, and they keep striking Baghdad without striking back, we will not remain quiet.

Tariq Aziz: Today, Sir, they announced a threat. Comrade Latif was talking this morning before we came here. Iran threatened to strike all over Iraq.

Taha Yassin: Let them strike! *[Saddam and all attendees laughing]* Wherever they want!

UM1: *[Laughing]* Very true!

Tariq Aziz: They issued a statement saying, “We will strike all of Iraq within 48 hours except for” --*[Interrupted]*

Saddam Hussein: Why are they angry? What are they angry about, yesterday’s strikes or the day before it?

Latif Jasim: The strikes on Sansan.

Saddam Hussein: The strikes from yesterday and the day before—that’s three days—bothered them.

Tariq Aziz: They’re mixing things together.

Saddam Hussein: They just want to bring attention back on Iran, but we will never do that as long as the Americans are involved too. We will make the Iranians eat *[destroy]* each other. Let them strike all over Iraq, and we won’t strike back. We will only tell them that we will save this for later. They want to change the public opinion according to the American way. We will publicly announce that we will strike them so hard that even their turbans will be falling down. They announced that they want to strike all over Iraq?

Taha Yassin: *[Laughing]*

Latif Jasim: Sir, I wanted to talk about this, and it’s a good thing that you are asking about it after Abu Ziad *[Tariq Aziz]* mentioned it.

Saddam Hussein: *[Inaudible]*

Latif Jasim: They announced it yesterday around 12 o'clock and they repeated it today before 6 o'clock. They said in a statement that in response to the strikes and so forth, they will strike all over Iraq except for the four cities: Samarra, Najaf, Karbala -- *[Interrupted]*

Saddam Hussein: Why not Baghdad?

Latif Jasim: And al-Kadhimiya. *[The four cities have holy Shi'ite shrines]*

Saddam Hussein: What do the Afghans call Baghdad? Baghdad Shareef *[meaning holy Baghdad, Saddam is indicating that Baghdad is also a holy city]*, that’s what the Afghans and Pakistanis call Baghdad.

Latif Jasim: They strike Baghdad. Baghdad is included.

Saddam Hussein: Baghdad has al-Kadhim! *[A Shiite imam and the grandson of Muhammad]*

Latif Jasim: Yes, Baghdad is included except for al-Kadhimiya.

Saddam Hussein: Yes, I mean for all other cities they can do the same. They can strike areas around the city except for the shrines. *[Laughing]* Yet they strike Baghdad even though it has al-Kadhim!

[Time Stamp 25:37]

Tariq Aziz: *[Inaudible]*

Latif Jasim: Sir, in fact, it is not just the power of our strikes that made them issue this statement and repeat it again, but what you also said. Currently, no one knows what this situation will bring. We don't know what America will do, or what Iran will do! Here *[in Iran]*, Khamenei is shouting while Rafsanjani is also shouting. I mean, yesterday it got my attention in the briefing that -- *[Interrupted]*

Saddam Hussein: That's why we shouldn't be shouting too.

Latif Jasim: Yes, we should be patient about this. Practically, Sir, we are striking more. I mean when we are striking these places -- *[Interrupted]*

Saddam Hussein: I explained to you last time. I told you that when we strike an oil field, we do it before 2 o'clock. *[Intentionally before 2 o'clock so that workers are still inside]*

Sa'dun Hummadi: This is still our right, Sir. They are striking residential areas!

Saddam Hussein: So we are also killing Iranians, and we act like we don't know about it! *[Saddam and attendees are laughing]* That's what we tell them sometimes. After checking, it turns out that Imam Hussein *[Grandson of Muhammad]* did not get any Iranian fighters *[during the Battle of Karbala in 680 A.D. also known as al-Taf]*.

Latif Jasim: I told the comrades about that.

Saddam Hussein: I mean they *[Iranians]* talk about al-Taf all the time and it turns out that all their fighters withdrew from the battle.

Latif Jasim: Yes, none of them stayed.

Saddam Hussein: Otherwise, I sometimes get doubtful about some of our ancestors. *[Laughing]* *[Saddam may be hinting that he sometimes gets doubtful about people of Iranian descent]* *[Attendees laughing]*

Latif Jasim: Sir, if you will please allow me, I noticed yesterday in the briefing about Khamenei's Friday preaching session. He stated something of the utmost importance and of the highest cruelty about Rafsanjani.

Saddam Hussein: I have it, and I circled it.

Latif Jasim: I thought it was excluded through re-editing. We take the briefing and wait for --
[*Interrupted*]

Saddam Hussein: It is still here!

Latif Jasim: No, this is not it. There's a bigger thing, not "my dear brother," and so forth.

Saddam Hussein: No, there's something besides his "dear brother." [*Attendees laughing*] There's something that he said in a quick, cruel way and moved on.

Latif Jasim: Yes, Sir.

Saddam Hussein: He was saying that Rafsanjani is the one who started this time!

Latif Jasim: Yes, this is it! He said, "What is being said about reviving the relations with America by the Chairman of the Parliament?" and moved on in his speech. So he [*Khamenei*] put him [*Rafsanjani*] in the middle as the one responsible for this! I circled this sentence and waited for the exact transcript, which got to me at 8 o'clock without this sentence. I called the translators asking them to find this sentence and they said the Iranians did not broadcast it, which means they edited the preaching session after he [*Rafsanjani*] called him [*Khamenei*] and asked why he is mentioned there!

Sa'dun Hummadi: They deserve it!

Taha Yassin: [*Laughing*]

Latif Jasim: This by itself indicates -- [*Interrupted*]

Saddam Hussein: Even with the rest of the speech, it is clear that he [*Khamenei*] is not supporting this issue [*of restoring relations with America*]. He said that they need relations with the developed Muslim countries that won't get them [*Iranians*] to America. Meaning he is sweet-talking Syria while being different from Rafsanjani.

Latif Jasim: Afterward, Sir, Rafsanjani met a group of soldiers and talked as much as Khamenei about this great action that led people to come to Iran and consider it a powerful nation and so forth. What I want to say is that we should wait and see the results. I mean, they're like Your Excellency said, a bunch of people with scorpions on their clothes, so they're in a dilemma and can't touch the scorpions to throw them away, nor take off their clothes and walk naked.
[*Laughing*]

Saddam Hussein: [*Laughing*]

Latif Jasim: We'll keep watching them and see what comes of it. If we do something dramatic tomorrow, like striking them and they strike right back and so forth, we'll take the international attention off the *[Iranian political]* crisis.

[Time Stamp 30:00]

Latif Jasim: Sir, I also have some simple comments too. I think that the Americans... Thinking comes from conclusions and sensing, then we thank God when it becomes true. Just as Your Excellency said, it's like a nightmare coming true. Everything Reagan said, we already said it about him too. Everything the Iranians said, we already said about them too. We read it between the lines. The Americans, it seems, promised Iran more than just weapons. They promised things related to Iraq. We should keep watching this until we get to the reality of what they agreed on or disagreed on. The proof is something Rafsanjani once said, and I will send you a copy of the transcript when I go back. He said, "We don't mind it if the Americans change the regime in Iraq, and then the new government will give us our rights." This is documented and recorded for Rafsanjani. So who hinted this for Rafsanjani?! How will America change the regime in Iraq? We must go back to this.

Taha Yassin: This came out recently.

Latif Jasim: It came out two months ago. So where did he get it from? Thank God though, such talk doesn't scare us or anything like that, but we have to look into it and the intentions of others. We must investigate the motives of others and on what basis did the Iranians announce such a statement?! I mean, if the Iranians take over an area, then the Americans will tell them they can take it, even if it is the Majnoon oil field. If we stop the war tomorrow, I mean stopped the fighting, they *[Iranians]* will say it's fine to do a deal but we'll be the ones refusing it because the deal will be based on us giving them Majnoon. How can we give Majnoon and on what basis?!

So there are a bunch of promises and delusions made by the Iranians and the Americans. We should wait for all this to clear up and see the truth. I told you, Sir -- *[Interrupted]*

Saddam Hussein: Let me be clear for you it is not just a delusion, my comrades. Iraqi warplanes fly to strike the Iranian warplanes. Iranian warplanes fly to strike the al-Doura oil refinery, then they strike the milk factory, then they strike the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and God forbid they destroy it then. *[Tape is blank from 33:03 to 33:28]*

Saddam Hussein: *[Already talking]* negotiate, as much as I have pride in my sovereignty and principles because these are structures. We either have to stop the war—anyone who is logical would say, "Why am I giving something while the other side is not giving anything in return?" Yet if we talk about the Iranian ideology, the mess that they have been living in—I mean their infrastructure took tens of years to build and is now destroyed. We're destroying it with our warplanes. So of course they go tell the Americans, "Let's talk about this!" It is a real situation on the ground, not something made up. Their need—the Iranians need for the Americans—is not something made up, and the American need for the Iranians is not something made up either. There are clear and subjective facts. It is not necessarily the Iranian delusions that are making them get closer to the Americans, nor is it Zionism necessarily that is making Americans get

closer to the Iranians. Rather, there are facts that are additionally being pushed by other factors. The Iranians, as long as they see the war continuing, they will come closer to the Americans and the Soviets and pay a price for it.

Taha Yassin: This is good for us [*in a whispering voice*].

[*Time Stamp 35:15*]

Saddam Hussein: The Soviet situation is different due to many obvious reasons, including the Iranian fear that the Soviet borders are closer to them than the Americans. This makes the Americans the best candidates for the Iranians to get closer to, more than the Soviets. Yesterday, did they strike anywhere else besides Baghdad? How many warplanes did we have striking their airport in Isfahan? It was Isfahan, right, Comrade Adnan?

Taha Yassin: Kermanshah.

Saddam Hussein: Kermanshah. How many warplanes?

Adnan Khairallah: Ten.

Saddam Hussein: I'm sure it's ten or more. Each one is fully loaded, meaning four or more tons. They [*Iranians*] just stare at the warplanes which went back and forth normally. They can't do anything about it. They can't intercept our warplanes because they fly with air protection. If ten were to strike, we would send 16 for the extra six to intercept any hostile warplanes. So they can't send the planes to intercept because they do not they have missiles capable of shooting down our planes. Yet, he [*Khamenei*] wants the war to continue! What else can he do?! Will he just sit and watch his country get destroyed? I am not downplaying your fears about the Americans, but it's my duty to tell you all the facts in addition to the analysis.

Taha Yassin: But, Mr. President, regarding issuing a statement about if they strike again in cities: in my opinion we should not do it. God willing, if they strike again -- [*Interrupted*]

Latif Jasim: The statement has been issued.

Taha Yassin: No, the statement does not say if they strike again. It says it's time for it and it's almost done and so forth. I think that Iraqis understand we're responding in a better and more honorable way. I mean yesterday they struck a family sleeping at night in their home. It's just a missile that they [*Iranians*] launched with a click of a button from miles away, while our pilots responded by getting into their airplanes, striking in the heart of Iran, and coming back safely. So we responded this way, and I am sure that the warplanes killed more than the seven people [*who were killed in Iraq by the Iranian missile*] and injured more than the 60 people, in addition to the economic factor.

Saddam Hussein: The Sansan [*strike*] by itself killed about 120 [*Iranians*].

Latif Jasim: 250 killed and injured.

Taha Yassin: Mr. President, if we want to keep this issue as it is—Iraq not striking cities or directly saying we hit cities—it is beneficial in Europe and elsewhere. Currently with this situation [*Iran striking Iraqi cities*], we should let it work for us in American and Europe. We should not strike back and then they strike again. The two of us striking cities will lead to losing this opportunity. Our goal is -- [*Interrupted*]

Saddam Hussein: We all agreed that it's not time for it [*striking Iranian cities*].

Taha Yassin: We don't need to say it again. It is possible -- [*Interrupted*]

Saddam Hussein: You should all keep in mind that we will strike them back one day.

Taha Yassin: Of course.

Saddam Hussein: So don't expect the Iranians to know that the Iraqis are not responding with similar strikes. The Iranians don't know that. Therefore, we should issue some type of a reminder for the Iranians that when we strike back someday, we already warned and cautioned you about this in the following statement on this date. We are required to do that because our purpose is not killing as many Iranians as possible, but rather how to isolate the Iranian regime from its people. How to isolate the regime from its power source, which is the mass mobilization. Thus, being silent may not always serve us.

Taha Yassin: Isn't what we issued yesterday enough? In my opinion, it was a clear hint. Otherwise, having a separate statement -- [*Interrupted*]

Tariq Aziz: [*Inaudible*]

Saddam Hussein: I can't hear you.

Taha Yassin: Issuing a statement warning them about striking them if they strike again, will make them strike again in an unsuitable time for us to respond.

Tariq Aziz: [*Inaudible*]

Saddam Hussein: My opinion is that we should issue a statement saying something like the Iranians are trying to pull us into responding against them so they can divert the attention of the Iranian public away from the stinky issues inside their country, which will scandalize everyone involved in contacting the Americans and the Zionists, not only the Americans. We will respond in a time that cannot be used by the Iranian officials to escape accountability in front of their people. We will respond in this way. We will unveil the reason that the Iranians are striking cities now so that our people know why we're not responding back. We're also telling the Iranian people about it. So we should do something within this framework.

[*Time Stamp 40:58*]

Taha Yassin: Maybe -- *[interrupted]*

Saddam Hussein: We will publish it *[the statement]* locally and abroad.

Taha Yassin: May be Your Excellency will decide to strike back after their next strike, or maybe after four strikes.

Saddam Hussein: The Minister of Media will say it, not necessarily in a government statement.

Taha Yassin: Correct.

Saddam Hussein: Right?

Taha Yassin and others: Right.

Saddam Hussein: Thank you all.

Taha Yassin: Yesterday's news was great!

Saddam Hussein: I actually wanted to stop some of yesterday's strikes because I know our people are ready once they hear Baghdad got struck. I called the Air Force commander and I said, "I am sure you have some work for today but they *[Iranians]* may be prepared for us and they will shoot down an airplane, or something like that, so change your calculations a bit." He said, "Sir, we are ready and excited to shoot those damn people while we have the excuse for it." I just told him to be cautious about areas where their weapons may be capable of shooting down our planes.

Tariq Aziz: They said they shot down an Iraqi warplane.

Saddam Hussein: I don't think we have any warplanes down.

Taha Yassin: Our strike was good. If the news we heard from the media about Sansan is correct, it will be worth -- *[Interrupted]*

Saddam Hussein: Sansan was destroyed by our people. It was destroyed because our Arab brothers *[in Iran]* said that we hit their fields so we said, "We don't know about that!" We told them to check their fields and check the Sansan fields *[in other words, give us the coordinates of both]* so we can see how did we hit your fields and strike theirs. So our people went back and struck it correctly. They corrected it very well. *[Laughing]*

Taha Yassin: *[Laughing][Sounds of people leaving their chairs and chatting quietly]*
[Inaudible]

Saddam Hussein: Send my best regards to all of them. I want you to specially congratulate King Hussein for his birthday. Comrades, just like we said in our previous meeting, we're doing some talking with a lot of the Arabs. They *[an Iraqi delegation]* will go to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait,

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Yemen, Egypt, and Jordan about this situation and this period. If we need anything more, we'll do it.

[Time Stamp 45:00]

The ones not corrected yet, we will put them here, the drafts for the foreign affairs memorandum.

[Guests chatting with each other in whispers]

SADDAM HUSSEIN: Guys, call for the comrades' vehicles. *[End of recording]*