

“Saddam and His Advisers Discussing the Importance of Morale, Mobilizing Popular Support, and Targeting Iranian Cities”



Document Date: 6 March 1987

CRRC Record Number: SH-SHTP-A-001-023

Key: UM = Unidentified Male Speaker

Translator comments, clarifications, and additions are italicized in brackets

[Time Stamp 00:00:09]

UM: [*Speaker already talking*]...controls the current Iranian tactical, military, and economic situation as well as our situation and capabilities. Thank you, Sir.

Saddam Hussein: Comrade Abdul-Ghani.

Abdul-Ghani Abdul-Ghafur: Yes, Sir. I believe releasing the statement today or tomorrow is an important issue especially so that our people, Sir, also count 15 days. But issuing the statement and the time we strike will definitely be left to the discretion of Your Excellency and the General Command of the Armed Forces.

Sir, I support the opinion to strike cities because cities have residents and economic facilities. Striking cities has a psychological effect that frustrates the Persian enemy and reveals Khomeini's deception [*or reveals that Khomeini is a fraud*] and leads the Iranians themselves to hate him. It is true that [*striking the*] economic facilities slows down the Persian economy, but at the same time, striking the cities has economic and psychological effects that we need. The type of cities to strike must be, certainly, important cities with a deeper impact, if possible, but at the same time this is an issue to be left to the General Command and to Your Excellency. But I have an opinion, Sir, regarding March 21. On March 21, the situation escalates inside Iran on a large scale and I believe if there is a possibility to strike them at that time inside the cities, any city, it could have a psychological effect as far as defeating the Persian enemy, and a higher positive psychological effect for the Iraqis. Thank you, Sir.

Saddam Hussein: If it's this way then, Comrade Tariq, Comrade Sa'doun and Comrade Latif will check the statement that Comrade Tariq has.

Tariq Aziz: I wrote it. I just finished it.

Saddam Hussein: Alright. [*Laughs*]

Tariq Aziz: But I have the [*inaudible*].

Sa'doun Hammadi: I have a military question, Sir.

Saddam Hussein: Go ahead.

Sa'doun Hammadi: Is the chemical weapon as effective as we think? I mean the way we think of it as civilians?

Saddam Hussein: Yes, it's effective against those who do not use masks momentarily, just like the way we as civilians think of it.

Sa'doun Hammadi: You mean it exterminates by the thousands?

Saddam Hussein: Yes, it exterminates by the thousands. It exterminates by the thousands and makes them restrain from drinking or eating the available food and makes them leave the city for a period of time until it is fully decontaminated [*inaudible background comments*]. They can do nothing; they cannot sleep on a mattress, eat, drink or anything; they will leave [*inaudible*] naked.

Izzat al-Duri: I have a comment on this.

Saddam Hussein: Yes.

Izzat al-Duri: I agree on everything we agreed on. But as far as the chemical weapons or the chemical weapon, I believe we should conserve it as much as possible on the front line since it is possible that some strikes on the front line may not have the effective range of the weapon which we envision, as Dr. Sa'doun said, because of the soldiers' situation in the front line. First, most Iranians on the front line have started to use the masks. The front line is open and soldiers are spread out. An open brigade, an open division, and although the Khomeini Guards' formations are irregular, the only way we can affect them is when circumstances are favorable in technical terms and all other aspects. Such as when there are no masks, better concentrations with larger numbers, that is when the impact is greatest. What I mean by being conservative now... I don't know if we have a production capability that satisfies the strategic need specified according to the speech of Mr. President and then this would be another issue. We strike with whatever we have whenever we have the chance and the circumstances. But if the production is not enough to have a quantity for a strategic strike when needed, we should use this weapon conservatively until we have enough of what we need. I rely greatly on these strikes. I swear no one in the world will ask us why you struck.

Saddam Hussein: Anyway, Comrade Izzat. I am not sure whether you know or not, the chemical weapon is not to be used except by my order.

Izzat al-Duri: Yes, I know.

Saddam Hussein: So, I have the entire picture before my eyes. Of course the quantities, qualities, their impact, the situation, etc. will be present. Therefore, this aspect surely comes to mind.

Izzat al-Duri: Yes.

Saddam Hussein: I mean how much we save, how much we use, which type to save, which type to use, and how and when.

[*Time Stamp: 00:07:00*]

Izzat al-Duri: Another aspect to take down the Iranians is people, I mean we, the Party, particularly the Command which is at our meeting, and the Revolutionary Command Council. We have to utilize all the strength of our people, of our Party, our Party organization, and our

people with the Party to prepare the fighters. The fighters range from old women age 100 to six year-old children.

Saddam Hussein: All of them fight.

Izzat al-Duri: To support the front lines and the actual fighters, so they [*the fighters*] can fight the actual combat.

Saddam Hussein: Through words, through spiritual means, and with bread.

Izzat al-Duri: That's it. If we look back at the Arab strategy in old times, there were no chemical weapons and weapons were almost all the same.

Saddam Hussein: A sword, a shield, and an arrow.

Izzat al-Duri: A sword, a shield, and an arrow. Sayidna 'Umar [*Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab*] during the conquest of Persia said when he embarked on his expedition of Persia: "By God, I will beat the Kings of Persia with the Kings of Arabia," meaning, I will strike the Persians by the best Arabs – the best Arabs in combat, glory, and courage. So we have to prepare our citizen fighters so that they can become fighters, believers, and have principles.

Tariq Aziz: They did not disappoint us.

Izzat al-Duri: It is a must. This is the objective that I mean. This is a strategic objective.

Tariq Aziz: [*Inaudible*] and we still talk about the Iraqis, how they fought in the 80s. [*Laughs*]

[*Time Stamp: 00:08:28*]

Saddam Hussein: Despite that, Comrade Tariq, we still believe and we will continue to believe that we are always capable of doing better.

Izzat al-Duri: Yes.

Tariq Aziz: Yes, this has to continue.

Saddam Hussein: Including preparing and mobilizing our people.

Tariq Aziz: The theory that we will not be able to mimic such a previous outstanding performance is not true and will not be accepted by our people.

Saddam Hussein: Yes, never. To get better, we cannot rely only on our ambition. We can even take advantage of our current situation; we have resources and capabilities. Perhaps we are not taking full advantage of our resources and our potential to prepare the people in a better manner. We always see the people doubling up [*their potential*]. So many resources inside them, we still do not know how to properly invest them. They're not increasing by 5% or 10% or 20%, they're

doubling. Constantly we find someone fighting 100 [%] and someone fighting half [50%]. We find someone fighting 100 [%] and someone betraying [us]. So the capability required from us for mobilizing is the same as the difference between the person who is fighting 100 [%] and the person betraying [us]. We still have much more mobilization to do, during which we must approach matters analytically.

Our mobilization at the Party level does not rely completely on analysis. Rather it is mobilizing in terms of generalization, not changing peoples' beliefs and deepening them. Let me be more precise. Sometimes most of it [*mobilization*] is a process of generalization and emotional interaction more than a process of analysis and detailed discussion, to get inside the person's mind and chest [*heart*] to change the situation dramatically and drastically which is what we want. Thus, we are always capable of producing a better performance from this when we tackle it in a certain manner. I mean, there are people who tell their son to take a rifle and go fight or I'll shut the door in your face and not give you a bite of bread if you do not fight. That is what we want. We need to get the mother to this level, the wife, the sister, and the son.

Izzat al-Duri: There are a lot of such examples [*or instances*] in Iraq.

Saddam Hussein: Yes, there are examples [*or instances*] and there are also some people who rely on favoritism to ask you to bring their son from Basra to here in Baghdad. So we need to make those [*the latter*] like them [*the former*].

Izzat al-Duri: This is the difference you said earlier.

Saddam Hussein: I mean, there are still people hiding others here and there [*hiding from military service*] to avoid death. When you ask them: "Would you accept an occupied Baghdad?" They say "No!" but they forget that doing such things will allow Baghdad to be occupied or Basra or Khanaqin. Our reality dictates that we have to explain this to our people. There are some people who uncover their son's chest so they can see where he was shot [*if the individual was shot in the back it means the enemy shot him while he was running away, which is a disgrace for some Arabs*], and there are others who curse the person bringing their martyred son. You may ask me how many people are like that and I will tell you that such people exist. Therefore, there is still a difference in mobilization efforts as large as the difference in people who spit on their dead son when he's executed for retreating. We heard such stories with names. I mean, would someone spit on his executed son because he retreated? What kind of preparation and belief is needed to reach this level? There is such a level. Their son is dead and they spit on his face and the father turns his back on his dead son and says "I will not bury him." [*Time Stamp: 00:13:26*]

Then there are people who hide their son or know that he is hiding. They still give him food and tell him "Well done, let all of this killing end and then go join the military." So did we really raise the Iraqis minds and chests [*hearts*] to a level similar to the previous example? My answer is no, we haven't yet. Therefore, the Command members need to address this situation first. There are two contradictory situations and what is needed is an end to such contradictions and maintenance of gradualism. Gradualism is a humanistic condition as well as an intellectual one. I mean it is normal. When I say we have to end the contradiction, I am not saying that in romantic

terms away from reality and practicality. I know that even Muhammad's society contained contradictions. But I mean we have to reduce the number of dark situations. We have to reduce their numbers because we still have people- youths whose ages are 18, 20, and 25 years old committing treason with the foreigner. Therefore, there is still an environment within his home and society that makes such treason possible. If the youth sees his entire household loyal, so that when they hear the word "enemy" they feel like they just got bit by a scorpion, he will not commit treason. Do not believe those who say that they are loyal to the revolution and faithful to the Party and the Leader. I myself do not believe that a son would commit treason against Iraq nowadays after seven years unless his family is ill-motivated. [*Time Stamp: 00:15:30*]

Therefore, we have to take care of those ill families not because of the war but for the sake of peace and for the sake of normal life. It is our responsibility to change what is inside their minds and chests [*hearts*]. How are we going to change [*them*]? By persuasion. It is not like he will tell you, "Hey I'm a traitor so come and persuade me why you are right." No one will ever say that [*maybe*] only a few people. They are all afraid of you. But when they see a weak Ba'athist, they'll speak in front of him. I know everything in society, from society itself, not from the security or intelligence services. I am pointing to Comrade 'Ali [*Saddam is laughing jokingly with 'Ali Hassan Majid*]. Rest assured that I do not receive my feedback from the security or intelligence services. I receive such feedback directly from the citizens. They tell me things by themselves. I know particular stories about certain people. When I conduct my investigations, I discover that he has weak Ba'athist Party loyalty and others know that he has weak Ba'athist beliefs so they talk [*discuss treason*] in front of him. So some of the organized Ba'athists are not Party believers at the desired level. Therefore, you are required to make them Party believers at the level that we want. My discussion is along these lines: "So, why did you leave your position? Are you trained properly? Why are you screaming "the Persians are coming?" Why do you think we placed you there? We placed you there so that when the Persians come to you, you would kill them. Is there any clearer way for me to say that, in terms of the strategic context of any war that was fought by any Arab country? Is there any war that people have fought and has lasted longer than this period to test righteousness from wrongness? [*Time Stamp: 00:17:41*]

So embedding examples of righteousness into the mind and consciousness of the Iraqi is still lagging in terms of our performance, not our belief in it. Our belief is good, but our performance, models, and behavior have not reached the level where you can say everything possible has been done and the rest is up to God. No, the Command still needs to use conviction for mobilization at a higher level.

Izzat al-Duri: That is what we keep explaining, it exists.

Saddam Hussein: Through conviction, through analysis, through conviction, and the method of actions within our homes, within our families, within our friendship circles, within – I mean, just like that. They have to feel us. We are a torch of belief, the kind of belief that has details that would make the other non-believers be convinced and believe. I reiterate one more time – what is required is that you mobilize through analysis and not through sentiments. It is not shameful to ask "What is your comment on the existing situation?" If they want to talk about chemicals, then I would discuss chemicals. If they wish to speak about weapons, go ahead and discuss weapons. If they discuss politics, intellect, and social life – yes, we lost people and we could lose one

hundred times that number if we don't fight and beat the enemy. If we do not beat our enemy and if the enemy takes another foot of space, the enemy will become greedy and the war will continue for an additional six months. So the person who retreats from his position is contributing to an additional six months of war. He is contributing to the murder of Iraqis when he leaves his position. Not only is he handing over our territory, he is killing Iraqis as a result of leaving his position, moving back five hundred meters. He is killing Iraqis. He is responsible for the Iraqi blood wasted between the new defensive line and his old position that he left which became a step for the enemy's counterattacks. So how big is this person's sin, the one who retreats from his position? Through effective mobilization, are we making him feel responsible for the death of 30 Iraqis [*which are*] on his hands when he leaves his position? I believe that if our mobilization reached this level, no Iraqi would have left his defensive position. So we still have a wide margin of mobilization ahead of us and we can reach this level with it [*conviction*]. You should open up discussions. If anyone has any comments, if anyone has anything to say, listen to them, so they don't say it in secret. [*So*] they say it in front of you. This is my comment on what Comrade Izzat mentioned.

Izzat al-Duri: Are there any other comments regarding this matter?

[*Blank audio from 21:45-23:00*]

Saddam Hussein: There you go. I hope that you do not think that the 'humanistic' and 'emotional' approach to mobilization is wrong. Sometimes the human being starts with emotions and ends with reason. It is not always correct to begin with reason. Otherwise we won't have these rituals. Why do we keep standing up and sitting down? Why are we doing this? We could meet in our sleep.

Izzat al-Duri: Address the mind through emotions. We have to enter the mind through emotions.

Saddam Hussein: However, we have to maintain our balance in mobilization. There has to be a balance between the two: the logical and the emotional humanistic approach. We also have to have stability between these two states. This is not to be interpreted as me criticizing our current situation. I am only criticizing it in the context that we need to find ways that are better and better and better. When we reach the point that we aspire to achieve, it is from that point that we have to search for ways to become better. Otherwise – I mean you're all Command members and the accomplishments that you achieved, no other nation on earth can achieve the same, not only in the Arab world. I want you to regard matters as they are. There are still some people who place nails in aircraft engines with the intent of damaging the aircraft so it won't be able to attack Iran, while there are people who die holding their rifle and fighting until the last bullet.

Therefore, when I mention these flagrant contradictions it does not mean that I forgot the flagrant backgrounds. We must not shy away from it. Some of our people envision Iran will take care of them better than Mosul, isn't that so? These are facts, these are facts. And there are people in Kurdistan now who are talking about Iraq. Because when Jalal Talabani releases his announcements, publications, speeches, or Iranian meetings, he refers to us as Iraqis like he has forgotten that he is an Iraqi too. It means that he knows there are people in Kurdistan who have also forgotten their nationality. There are also people who have forgotten their Iraqi nationality

in al-Najaf and in Salah-al-Din. To this level, would anyone forget their nationality? When we went abroad, we met Iraqis who would say “we’re Iraqis” to the last breath. It is from examples like these that we are able to achieve outstanding advancements. Our people are only a quarter of the size of the enemy and have been fighting for the last seven years. So if a house in Iran has a casualty, Iraq has four casualties - that is, if we account for ratios and proportions. I am mentioning these examples to stress your motivation in moving forward with improving our mobilization efforts. This is a black and white issue. The extremes in this contradiction are like night and day. I am surprised that there is this level of contradiction in our society now. We must improve this. We must put more effort into mobilizing the masses. Let our imaginations roam so that we can enhance our mobilization efforts. We should let our effort run until it reaches its desired destination. In this way, we shall always keep improving. We are leaders of mobilization. By this I mean that we are the men who are tasked with reforming society. This is how mobilization should be understood by the leadership. We have to reform society. This is how mobilization should be understood by the leadership. We should keep part of our thinking devoted to how we can improve our mobilization efforts.

Some of these matters crossed my mind today and last night, after I ordered to announce the names of the commanders of brigades and units – they just announce the names of the leadership only. So it crossed my mind that the brigade and unit commanders might be saying to themselves, “This is not fair, we are fighting just like the leadership command and our names are not mentioned or recognized.” So I said, “Hurry up and immediately broadcast the names of the brigade commanders, and if you cannot do it today then do it tomorrow and also announce the names of the unit commanders.” I did that so we can achieve a balance. [*Time Stamp: 00:28:43*]

Then I thought about those who give up their positions. We should announce their names and say we lost the following position from the following division that is commanded by the following person. No punishment or anything, just mentioning their names and what they did. If we do this four times-- [*Interrupted*]

Izzat al-Duri: Their reputation will be stained.

Saddam Hussein: If we do this four times, you will not see any instances of retreat. Whoever retreats, the commanding officer will shoot him in the head rather than sully his own reputation throughout Iraq.

In this long war, comrades, continuity will not yield any results. Continuity in one standard, except on a strategic level, will lead to boredom. We have to vary our alternative approaches to avoid boredom; every time through a different color and a different form. Perhaps one time you can approach the citizen with a dance, another time with a traditional folklore dance. One time you can visit him, visit a home, chat with a child, chat with an elder person, chat with an old man, chat with fighters – and all of these chats relate to one subject but you approach each case and every age in a different way. We will avoid boredom through this method. This war is seven years, not seven days, and that boredom has started to sink in. Oh believe me; [*if*] the Iraqis keep seeing us in military uniforms then they themselves will get bored of it. Seven years on the same subject. Even at the meeting level it is sometimes boring, as we constantly deal with the same subject, the same talk, the same people. [*Time Stamp: 00:30:39*] It is all about determination. I

will not say that this will be an easy period, but it is all about determination and afterwards it all becomes old stories [*after winning the war*].

Izzat al-Duri: It will become easier.

Saddam Hussein: It will be old stories. Yes, Comrade Sa'dun al-Hamadi.

Sa'dun al-Hammadi: Mr. President, I have two comments. [*Time Stamp: 00:31:25*] In those seven years at the front line and in various-- [*Interrupted*]

Saddam Hussein: Pardon me, if you noticed in this recent period there have been only two big announcements broadcasted since last month for only two attacks. But we are attacking them [*the Iranians*] every day and they are attacking us daily too. Why is that [*only two announcements*]?

Izzat al-Duri: So the people don't get bored.

Saddam Hussein: So they don't get bored. I mean, the elders will say "Oh, the enemy is back again! They attack us every single day. We're really tired." But we give it some time and then the news broadcasts that they attacked us and we killed them, so people will have a different perspective than saying that they're attacking our land every day and we broadcast it. Rather, we add them all together and announce that we've been fighting since that time until now through the day and night. [*Pause*] Yes, go ahead.

Sa'dun al-Hammadi: Mr. President, the first point is that a human being tends to lean towards virtue and good things. Perhaps it is within him that he has such tendencies. However, when he sees that virtue and good things are manifested in situations in front of him, he will be encouraged to join the group that carries out these good deeds. Therefore, Your Excellency Mr. President, I see that these heroic incidents, the excellent actions, and the sacrifices are broadcasted in a very limited manner. Your Excellency has mentioned the example of martyrs, the first soldier Qusay, and most of these stories are narrated by Your Excellency Mr. President. So in my opinion and in the opinion of some comrades I spoke with in Basra- all of these examples are being documented- Mr. President, why don't we have a daily program in which we broadcast to all our people all of these cases? Not only the exceptionally heroic actions, but all good actions: the nurse, the physician, the officer, the soldier, the driver – all those who performed good work, excellent work in terms of military effort. This should be broadcasted to our people so that the individual can see the whole world is heading in this direction and will want to join such a trend.

It is possible that people are now skeptical. We retreated in Al-Fao a bit and perhaps some people believe that we have had as many setbacks as achievements. We have to show our people the real flow of heroic incidents. We are not fabricating stories. But we are not broadcasting these stories. Why is that? Why can't we have a daily program? There is a physician in Basra, the comrades told me, who was treating people when he received a phone call telling him that his brother had been martyred in Kirkuk. He told them: "So what? My patients are my brothers too and they are more important." He neither went for his brother nor paid attention. He kept

working and treating people. Only after four to five days, did he go to see his brother. I was told that there are many cases like that in Basra...so many. So why can't we have a daily program to broadcast them? It seems that we only focus on ultra-- *[Interrupted]*

Saddam Hussein: Exceptional cases.

Sa'dun al-Hammadi: Exceptional cases, yes. We have to broadcast all heroic cases.

Saddam Hussein: We have to cover all unique cases, unique cases – the above normal actions.

Sa'dun al-Hammadi: And we should have a commentary about them. There is room to excel in that regard, as millions listen to such programs and every day we can feature different stories. There will be no boredom there. It will reveal to our people this competition to reach the virtuous state, to become more patriotic. It will become a general phenomenon and it will also highlight that the unpatriotic actions are few and anomalous. And, Your Excellency Mr. President, human beings do not like to be with the rejectionists. Human beings like to be with the mainstream. In the Western world, Your Excellency Mr. President, if anyone performs marginally well they talk about him and people hear a lot about him. Why are they doing this, pasting leaflets on the walls and building a statue to his honor? They acknowledge a person so that all people can learn a moral lesson from him. If we do this, the masses will learn that courage and good work and patriotism are being appreciated and rewarded. Therefore, the average person on the street who is not a hero can have the chance to be one and won't want to be among the rejectionists. So, Your Excellency Mr. President, I see that we have such examples of good people, why can't we broadcast them? *[Time Stamp: 00:36:54]*

Saddam Hussein: This is a very good suggestion Doctor, but we should pay attention to one particular point in implementing it and how we will approach it. The tendency for self-improvement does not apply to every human being. The tendency for self improvement along with distinction, you can find it [at all levels], starting with women and children, and ending with men. When we have suits from the same tailor and with the same color, their value drops if there are many suits of the same kind. Human beings like to vary the tailoring if the color and textile material is the same. Human beings want a different color if the tailoring and the material are the same or he may want the color and textile material but the tailoring to be different. So we have to explain to our people and show them that the odd ones are the ones who are weak and engage in treason but we certainly have an abundance of the other kinds of people. Within this abundance, we have to have levels of excellence. So we should not present an example of someone who donated something and equate that with someone who fought a heroic fight. We have to be very careful in how we implement such a broadcasting program. Otherwise, one example will foil the other. We have to establish standards.

Sa'dun al-Hammadi: Exactly, Sir. I mean-- *[Interrupted]*

Saddam Hussein: Is the implication here that we need to mention all these examples on television?

Sa'dun al-Hammadi: Your Excellency, Mr. President, let me-- *[Interrupted]*

Saddam Hussein: Please, Doctor. Or are we broadcasting them on the radio? Do we publish them in the newspaper? Do we establish levels of appreciation? For example, only some stories will be featured on television, others on the radio, and some in the newspapers. The Medal of Courage is sometimes only appreciated when those being awarded are on television, and sometimes they are not appreciated unless they stand in front of Saddam Hussein. The more they appear in front of Saddam Hussein and on television, the more it will weaken the concept of the Medal of Courage. We have to pay attention to these matters. I have lived through these circumstances. When a thousand appear in front of Saddam Hussein, even if their names are mentioned, is not like when only five appear. That is why I say that we need to establish criteria for highlighting certain people. Those who have appeared on television appreciated by the Commander in Chief and corps commanders let them always appear on television. The others will be appreciated by the Deputy Commander in Chief, and maybe let them also appear on television. But we have to have levels of appreciation even in such situations. So the idea that you have presented is correct, as a concept. However, we have to pay attention to the manner of its implementation. But it is an outstanding idea and we have many examples in that regard, and indeed *al-Qadisiyyah* newspaper is dealing with this issue, if you read it.

UM1: We put in an order for it, Sir.

Saddam Hussein: It is dealing with this matter in terms of the armed forces. However, with regard to the people...

UM1: We do have a television program "The Iraq of Qadissyat Saddam." Perhaps the Doctor does not see such shows? *[All attendees laughing]*

Sa'dun al-Hammadi: On the contrary, I watch television more than anyone else.

[Time Stamp: 00:41:01]

Saddam Hussein: We need... We need a bigger broadcasting operation than the ones I am aware of. What the Doctor is saying is that we need to engage in a larger scale operation to mobilize people, and that is correct. We have to have patience when people suggest new ideas. As long as we are searching for new ways to mobilize the Iraqi people, we have to be patient with our comrades.

Sa'dun al-Hammadi: Let me continue, Your Excellency Mr. President.

Saddam Hussein: Yes, go ahead.

Sa'dun al-Hammadi: Your Excellency Mr. President, I don't mean that we should have a boring daily program where a reporter would come up and say this happened to so and so, no. Instead we would highlight a physician who is being appreciated by the hospital that he works at because he has exhibited exemplary performance. We have to present those situations in a gradual and varying manner. We have to keep switching things up. I agree that the implementation has to be unique and varied. It should give a good impression just like Your

Excellency has stated. The second comment that I have, Your Excellency Mr. President, is that rituals play a pivotal role in the process of emotional mobilization. It seems to me, in my opinion, that we do not fully implement the practice of rituals as a way for mobilization. You see, Your Excellency Mr. President.

Saddam Hussein: True, the Iranians are making good use of rituals. They are much stronger than us in utilizing rituals for the sake of mobilization.

[Time Stamp: 00:43:01]

Sa'dun al-Hammadi: Yes. See, Your Excellency Mr. President, when we launch a demonstration -- *[Speaker stops, it seems that Saddam was interrupted by a messenger]*

Saddam Hussein: Kamil.

Saddam Kamil: Yes, Sir.

Saddam Hussein: Tell Arshad to come to me.

Saddam Kamil: Yes, Sir.

Saddam Hussein: This way I understand from him directly.

Saddam Kamil: Roger that, Sir.

Saddam Hussein: Look, for example, within the scope of this matter. I would like to contribute to this discussion. *[Perhaps reading from a military report]* At 20:00 *[military time]*, we regained all lost positions and the Director of Political Guidance called to create a news release about the matter. Yesterday, we released a big announcement. I myself did not ask them about their movements, whether they have a unit here or a battalion there, etc. I took the bottom line that the objective was accomplished. The announcement they released *[yesterday]* was produced four days ago. Now when we release this announcement, what will we say? Are you following me here? It's like, I mean, should we say that we have regained all lost positions? But yesterday's announcement was all about this. I mean if we have two regiments or a company or etc. that we did not regain yesterday, we ourselves would not be aware of it and did not ask about it. So what's this?

UM2: Your Excellency, Major General Muhammad Fatehi just called me.

Saddam Hussein: Yes?

UM2: He said that they have regained all lost positions – 1st Battalion, Brigade 117 for today, Sir. So he said call the director of -- *[Interrupted]*

[Time Stamp: 00:44:54]

Saddam Hussein: For today?

UM2: Yes, Sir. We only had left the positions that we lost today, Sir, everything else was regained.

UM3: These were under attack today, Sir.

‘Izzat al-Duri: So announce that they were attacked -- *[Interrupted]*

Saddam Hussein: Say that we were attacked, but they *[Iranians]* were repelled. Not now though, leave the people for tonight. We will do it tomorrow.

‘Ali Hassan Majid: A statement tomorrow?

Saddam Hussein: Yes, tomorrow. Have him give you the details. Let him give you all the battle details, its size and everything, so with that information we will be able to assess our action. We are fighting battles every day. If we are going to release an announcement for each one of them, then people will not give much credence to the surplus of announcements. People will lose interest and will not see them on television.

‘Ali Hassan Majid: But they know its size.

Saddam Hussein: Huh? *[Someone, apparently Saddam, is sipping tea]*

‘Ali Hassan Majid: They know its size, the size of the battle, Sir.

Tariq Aziz: From the statement.

Saddam Hussein: Yes, they know its size. Yes, Comrade Sa’dun.

Sa’dun al-Hammadi: So, Your Excellency Mr. President, I believe that our methods of mobilization that we inherited from the days of the secret struggle *[before the 1968 Ba’ath revolution]* have not developed during the war in variety and so forth. Still, Your Excellency Mr. President, on February 8th *[celebrations of the 1963 Ba’ath revolution]* we hang cloth banners in the streets. Meanwhile the West has developed in that regard. They have developed the demonstration process, Your Excellency Mr. President. The West introduced theatrics during protests: burning flags. In order to make our ideas and opinions reach the masses, we have to make our activities interesting and vary them. We haven’t varied our means of mobilization. We only have meetings and speeches. I mean 90% or more of our mobilization is like that, just meetings and speeches, and a large cloth banner. While -- *[Interrupted]*

Saddam Hussein: No, no *[all attendees are speaking at the same time]* dancing and singing and belly dancing on television, did you not see it?

Sa’dun al-Hammadi: No, I do not mean on the television, Your Excellency Mr. President.

Saddam Hussein: No, the television is the most public. I mean dancing and belly dancing, in the middle of the street.

Sa'dun al-Hammadi: I still think that [*Saddam is laughing*] there is more than one option to combat this problem of mobilization. The measures that I am speaking of, attempt to assemble the largest possible number of people to entice them to attend events and to listen to us. These are all important means for our variation.

Saddam Hussein: Variation is always a good thing. But this idea that you have mentioned is already taking place. They're varying it. Also, Doctor, if the mobilization process is all just celebrations, people will not attend. We have to make the people who don't attend feel ashamed that they did not go. They should feel ashamed. They should be accused of being unpatriotic, accused for their negativity. But if it is full of too many celebrations there will be a large number of people who will not attend because these events will be full of dancing and such, and some people are conservative and don't like dancing; like old men and women, they do not like such an atmosphere. When this female dancer comes in with her clothes and dances, then someone else comes reciting poetry, and then someone else with folklore art. This is a variation within a variation. [*Time Stamp: 00:49:20*] Yes, Comrade Muzban.

Muzban Hadi: Sir, about recognizing the creative people: indeed, there are so many creative people that we are unable to thank them enough for what they do and their value. We are writing to Your Excellency to recognize them and the Comrade Deputy recognized them as well.

Saddam Hussein: They will be seen clearly and I do not mean clearly on the screen of the TV. But have them recognized by the public as they will be clearly recognized. This is a good idea.

Muzban Hadi: Yes, Sir. We interview them, and deliver your regards and your recognition to them. But in fact, this is limited and, as Comrade Doctor said, it will be nice to expand to a certain extent in this area. There are many inventors and people who are taking the initiative in providing patriotic work and effort such as donating blood, joining the fight, and all other fields. We are putting together all documentation and reporting it to Your Excellency so you can see it and decide. Some of it, we send to Comrade Latif, to make it part of the *al-Qadisyya* documentary [*a daily TV show*]. On the other hand, about getting creative in varieties, there are many varieties that make you amazed regarding mobilizing the masses.

Saddam Hussein: Variety in mobilization, except for Party meetings, I am comfortable with it in general. As an impression, I am comfortable with mobilization varieties in general.

Muzban Hadi: Sir, you can review the documentation of Party meetings so you can see what is going on.

Saddam Hussein: Yes, I do not have direct knowledge about these meetings.

Muzban Hadi: There is really good work [*taking place*] in them, especially about the mobilization efforts and fighting. It is hard to express everything we have done in five or ten minutes. Your Excellency recognized the Madayif [*guesthouses*] in al-Hay. And this is an

example: when we lost Mahmara city- Your Excellency has a famous saying about the year 82: “If only you knew...”

Saddam Hussein: If only you knew what happened in 82 [1982].

Muzban Hadi: Yes, in regard to the attack on Fao.

Saddam Hussein: The year of ‘80, I mean ‘82, was the cliff in two edges.

Muzban Hadi: Yes, Sir. So we-- [Interrupted]

Saddam Hussein: I mean, it was either this way or that way [*it was either victory or defeat*].

Muzban Hadi: In regard to Fao in 82, we did not lose anything from our land or our country. Yes, it’s true that it is an Arab land, but it does not belong to Iraq. We were in a situation that we are all aware of and Your Excellency talked about this. But we lost many in Fao. However, the defeat was turned into a victory and the entire world was speaking about the victory of the Iraqi people and the role of the Iraqi leader in getting his people to victory, mobilizing them, and every other field. We turned the defeat into a victory indeed. This is one of the many examples, and I have documented your role and your leadership of our great nation and people in it.

Saddam Hussein: The people give deep meaning to the outcome of defeat and victory. The real meaning is what we talk about at the Command level. People recognized the difference between the will to stand firm [*victory*] and surrender [*defeat*]. They saw in Iraqis determination to stand firm and fight. Although we lost Fao, our insistence on fighting was always there. The strategic plan of the enemy, on the other hand, is destroying the firm fighting spirit. That is why you can see now that, in spite of all the badness of the Western media, others did not forget to mention that Iraqis surprised the entire world with the way they fought in these battles despite all the sacrifices, despite the fact that the Iranians gained slightly more land, but they faced a firm fighting spirit and endless devotion to defend Basra. And they all presumed no surprises.

Muzban Hadi: The other side, Sir, you are aware of as you came and visited us when we begged you not to go out [*because of the attack*] but you insisted on going out. In spite of the hardships and the heavy attacks of the enemy against our people in Basra, you saw the strong spirit of the fight and the defense. Even when some withdrew to the back but you still saw the men and even the kids were standing firm. I was telling the Comrade Deputy that I even saw-- [Interrupted]

Saddam Hussein: Before I forget, the family that I visited and was shown on TV, the ones who came up in the song about Basra, please take them out of Basra.

Muzban Hadi: They left Sir.

Saddam Hussein: Good, because it might be hard for them to leave but we have to take them out because their area is the hardest one attacked.

Muzban Hadi: Sir, I told the Comrade Deputy in the last meeting that even the children... I was visiting during the attacks and there was a father taking his kids to another place. When the kids saw me behind them they started to wave to me and sang the song “We love you Saddam we swear we do.” Then, I told him I swear I’ll evacuate them to a safe place. Such a thing, Sir, is not coming from out of nowhere but because of your great role among us.

Saddam Hussein: Comrade Muzban, we agreed that we always have capability to develop and be creative. So Dr. Sa’dun, in this regard, if we don’t develop our people how would Iraq fight for seven years?

Muzban Hadi: This is our mission. Thank you, Sir.

Saddam Hussein: Comrade Abdul-Ghani.

Abdul-Ghani Abdul-Ghafur: Sir, in regard to the issue of recognizing the distinguished people: as a matter of fact, the Party organizations are doing such a task. The workers, farmers, Women’s Union, the National Union [*youth union*], and other public organizations are recognizing the distinguished people as well. Also, there are some cases that we report to you about; then Your Excellency orders it to be documented on *al-Qadisyya* [TV Show]. Our comrades in the media made this show [*al-Qadisyya*] very popular and famous. The provinces wait for their turn, like today it’s about Qadisyya province or about al- Ta’ mim province or Basra province. The level of recognition, if I may comment Sir, is not just about good implementation. It is essential to tell the provinces and the capital that someone wounded at the front is different from someone already in the hospital. If someone has two or three martyrs they are put on the honor list in public organizations. Mobilization, just like Your Excellency mentioned, is always important and the Party is doing its part. We continually ask for more and better work because our potential is endless. The distinguished cases are countless, Sir, and we can’t document each one in a memorandum or in a record. But we are reporting highly distinguished ones, such as someone who shoots his son for running away from the military and someone who has three martyrs but every time he verifies where the bullet was shot before burying his sons and letting his family see them. [Time Stamp: 01:00:15] And we have reported such cases to the Party and recognized them, Sir, so I just wanted to tell you that.

Saddam Hussein: Alright comrades, let us move to another issue which is the well known snake story; the relation between Iraq and Syria. In the previous meeting our Comrades Muzban, Muhammad, and who else did not attend it, Comrade Abd al-Ghani attended too.

UM3: I did not attend that meeting, Sir.

Saddam Hussein: Comrade Sa’dun too. The Command discussed in a series of meetings what King Hussein offered after visiting us following the Islamic Conference [*Annual conference of the Organization of the Islamic Conference*] in Kuwait. He said that Hafiz Assad is willing to start in a new place and a new situation regarding Iraq and fixing the situation. I said: in any case, let me clarify our position. Concerning the war, I do not need Hafiz Assad. First of all, he doesn’t fight with us—cannot fight—and is unwilling to fight. Even if he wants to fight, he cannot because only Iraq can stand in this war. So for this war we do not need him, but for the

description you were saying, which is also something I said about the Arab situation, that it is hard to only keep remembering the bad situation. Because if there is a chance to move on and forget the bad situation, we should not let it pass us by. Personally, I do not wish to see the day that I shake hands with Hafiz Assad because of the Iraqi blood on his hands. However, I recognize that I am not only an Iraqi citizen but an Iraqi official too, and because of that, I have to remember my duties and responsibility. Then I go back to the political principle, which is what we believe too, that we should not just keep remembering the bad things but we have to...
[End of recording] [Time Stamp: 01:03:39]