

“Meeting between Saddam Hussein and Top Political Advisors about a United Nations Air Survey Request”



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[Time Stamp: 00:01-00:51; the sound of people walking in and preparing for the meeting]

Saddam Hussein: Go ahead Dr. Sa'doun, the aerial surveillance planes.

Dr. Sa'doun Hammadi: Mr. President, complying with your orders, the Cabinet held a meeting attended by the comrade, the commander of the air force, and we have discussed this issue. Our permanent representative [to the UN] first sent a message and then, based on a meeting with the U.S. representative at the UN and after that the alternate ambassador, sent a written memorandum to our representative with the points mentioned on the second to last page. These points say that they [the U.S.] have received a request from Mr. Ekeus, head of the inspection committee on nuclear weapons, asking them to provide him with an aircraft so he [Ekeus] can do the aerial survey of Iraqi lands. The U.S. has approved the request, and they are intending to provide him with an American aircraft with the United Nations logo on it. It will be identified as a UN aircraft. The Americans want Iraq to allow this plane to enter [Iraqi airspace] at specific times, and they will notify us 72 hours in advance of the entry and departure points. This aircraft will perform aerial surveys of the Iraqi airspace as it pleases.

In addition, the Americans say, "If you accept it [the aerial survey] it's fine, but if you do not accept it, we will send this aircraft anyway and it will be accompanied by military aircraft to protect it." Basically they are saying, "We will do it anyway and your acceptance is not important. Also, if the airplane encounters any type of danger, you will be held responsible."

The threatening attitude is obvious here. We talked. He said, "If there is any threat against the aircraft, including being subjected to harmful radar waves, this will result in severe consequences." So, we discussed all aspects of the issue and came to the following conclusion. It seems that the Americans presented this issue in a written memorandum, and it looks like they are going to implement it [the aerial survey] whether we accept it or not. In case we refuse the request, this aircraft will enter, as we presumed, the Iraqi airspace along with armed military aviation, which might result in security risks such as an accident or something where they will strike the radars. I mean, it might turn into a security and aerial military action. So, we came up with the following suggestions. [Time Stamp: 4:45]

First, as you mentioned, Your Excellency, we shall draft a memorandum opposing [this decision] and send it to Saudi Arabia and the Arab League. This memorandum must be circulated, exposing the aggressive action of Saudi Arabia [against Iraq]. This issue has nothing to do with Kuwait, and that this action places Saudi Arabia and its airports in the service of an aggressive act against Iraq with regard to an issue that is not related to Kuwait. Additionally, we will send the memorandum to the Arab League and circulate it. We wanted this first thing to be done, and we asked the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to prepare these memorandums and implement them in any case.

Second, we must send a written reply to the Americans in which we explain the hostile motives and refute the excuses mentioned in it. We should have a strong position in refuting, explaining, and exposing the hostile intentions and purposes behind this action. However, at the end, we will say that this issue [regarding] violation they imposed on us, and we have nothing to do with it at

the present time, which means we will approve their request. The conclusion of the discussion with the committee is that the action is going to take place if we refuse, but even if we refuse, the aircraft will enter along with armed aircraft, which may result in security dangers. The commander of the air force agrees.

The other thing I want to mention is that there is a new Security Council resolution presented by the French. It is France's second proposal and it will support the Security Council resolution and give it a better chance of success. In case we do not accept [*aerial surveillance*] they are going to use it against us by claiming that "Iraq is not cooperating with the inspection committee and is hindering its mission. The committee wants to perform an aerial survey, but Iraq will not accept, which means Iraq is still hiding something, etcetera." Thus, this will give [*them*] an excuse to postpone lifting the sanctions against Iraq and extending the duration of sanctions. Mr. President, these are the facts that we found and used in our suggestions to handle this issue within this framework.

Saddam: Discussion.

Taha Yassin: I have a question, Mr. President. As we all know, the helicopters have limited range, but do they have a certain time to fly -- [*Interrupted*]

Dr. Sa'doun Hammadi: No, they will not use helicopters; they will use fixed-wing airplanes [*more than two people agree in the background*], flying at high altitudes.

Taha Yassin: Will they be landing at any airport?

Saddam: No, no, no.

Tariq Aziz: This is an air survey aircraft.

Saddam: Reconnaissance.

Taha Yassin: They will land in Saudi airports.

Dr. Sa'doun Hammadi: They will take off from Saudi airports.

Taha Yassin: And land in Saudi airports.

Saddam: Is that the Security Council's request?

Dr. Sa'doun Hammadi: No, Sir. It is from the U.S. representative who said that the president of the Survey Committee who came was the one who asked the United States government to provide the Committee with an aircraft for this purpose, and they [*the U.S.*] approved his request. The aircraft will carry the logo and identity of the United Nations.

Tariq Aziz: Sir, the president of the Special Committee on Inspecting the Military Facilities and Materials is the one who wrote this request, and he is authorized by the Security Council to do so.

Saddam: But this is related to flying the aircraft of one country over another country, which affects the latter country's sovereignty. How can it be that easy?

Tariq Aziz: Their excuse is that the UN has made the required legislation for it.

Saddam: So a technician guy can simply decide on behalf of the UN and Security Council?!

[*Time Stamp: 09:40*]

Tariq Aziz: Well, their excuse is that the airplane will have the UN logo. Regarding the second French resolution proposal, they explained Ekeus' request in the draft of the French resolution as a binding-article.

[*Voices are inaudible from 10:12-10:31 due to the noise of moving papers and tea cups*]

Saddam: Other opinions? Comrade Ali [*Ali Hassan al-Majid*]... What happened today [*Saddam addressing his servant with a noticeably angry tone*]? There are some flies in the hall [*conference room*].

Ali Hassan: After the presentation of Dr. Sa'doun, it seems to me that we do not have many options in this case. This issue and other issues are just excuses that work in two directions: first, continuing the conspiracy against the regime and conspiring against the person who is the symbol of Iraq [*Saddam Hussein*]. Mr. President, let's be realistic. The survey has already occurred and still happens.

Saddam: Did you all read my comments regarding this issue?

Dr. Sa'doun Hammadi: [*Addressing Saddam*] Yes, you mentioned that they have scanned every corner of Iraq.

Saddam: They did not leave anything alone. They scanned everywhere in Iraq.

Latif: Exactly, Sir. Everywhere -- [*Interrupted*]

[*A couple of participants agree in the background*]

Ali Hassan: Therefore, increasing the survey and so on. First, I think they want to see the Iraqi reaction, the reaction of the Iraqi regime. They come up with excuses, and they hope we will refuse [*the request*] so they can bring the survey aircraft and other aircraft in to do technical work, with the idea of changing the regime on their mind.

Saddam: [*Skeptical*] What can they do?

Ali Hassan: Pardon me, Sir?

Saddam: Let's assume the surveying airplane came accompanied by ten [*military*] aircraft, how will they be capable of using them?

Ali Hassan: They would be able to know the locations and our movements. In addition, it will be very easy for them to claim that their aircraft was hit and they struck one of the Iraqi President's bodyguards accidentally. We fired a missile at one of the airplanes and they responded to the source of the fire [*Ali was hinting that the United States will try to assassinate Saddam using these fighter jets*]. That's what I call a technical excuse. [*Sound of someone sipping tea*]

We should do our best to protect the president of Iraq and the Iraqi regime. That's why, Mr. President, I would like to say that I do agree with Dr. Sa'doun. We should present this memorandum and, at the same time, offer an Iraqi airplane, mentioning that "we do not feel comfortable with this request; however, we cannot say no in the present period." We must confirm this position and keep silent; we will neither accept nor reject.

However, Sir, I am leaning more toward flexibility in dealing during these weeks, in particular, and with every passing day, inside ourselves, we will feel more active, more powerful and have more belief in our leadership. Thank you.

Saddam: Comrade Tariq. After him we will hear from Comrade Mohammed.

Tariq Aziz: Sir, when we studied it, like Dr. Sa'doun mentioned, and as we evaluated the public and private opinion, if we had the option to reject without facing harm, we would not hesitate to take it. But as the comrades mentioned, there are attempts to trap us, attempts to come up with excuses to harm us, and we must act in a way to prevent them from coming up with excuses to inflict more harm upon Iraq. The goal that comrade Ali mentioned is truly [*inaudible*]. [*Time Stamp: 15:12*]

Also, I want to point out a technical issue. This airplane might use thermal imaging. I am following up on the [*work of the*] committee. We have made a lot of arrangements, and thermal imaging can discover some of these arrangements. So, it is possible that this aircraft uses the thermal imaging method, and when we checked on this matter, it appears that the air force commander is prepared for this.

Saddam: Oh, by the way, the Giant Gun [*Project Babylon*], why did you hand it over? That was not the ballistic type or...

Tariq Aziz: Well, it was not me; it was handed over at 3:30 in the morning by order of Comrade Husayn. I heard about it the following day. I heard that they handed it over.

Saddam: What is happening? That was not part of the requested items! So why did this happen? Why did you hand it over?

Tariq Aziz: Your Excellency, what happened was -- *[Interrupted]*

Saddam: What is this? Is this the story of the shepherd? Are all of you like a herd that moves aimlessly without guidance?

Tariq Aziz: I will tell you the story of how this happened. They have told me the story with diligence. What happened was that they were informed of a delegation -- *[Interrupted]*

Saddam: Oh, these things will create problems for us.

Tariq Aziz: Yes, I will explain to you how this happened.

Saddam: Every day we have something like this?

Tariq Aziz: They received a surprise notification about a missile inspection delegation that would arrive [*someone is coughing*] at 3:30 [*inaudible; sound of glasses and dishes*]. So General Amir and his men brainstormed about the issue and decided that there was a possibility that there would be a raid on the Giant Gun. They presented the matter to General Husayn, who told them to hand it over, I mean, make a memorandum for handing it over. All this took place at night and they did not inform me about it. They made a memorandum about the Giant Gun at night, and when the team arrived at 3:30 or 4:00, they handed it over to them before starting their duties. It turned out that this team did not come for the purpose of inspecting the Giant Gun, they photographed -- *[Interrupted]*

Saddam: The Security Council resolutions did not include it [*the Giant Gun*].

Tariq Aziz: With regard to ballistic missiles, this one is not considered a ballistic missile. I mean, this is a contentious issue.

Saddam: Oh yes, [*it is debatable*].

Tariq Aziz: There is a debate about this issue. By God, they did not consult with me, Your Excellency. Had they brought it up... this point, we -- *[Interrupted]*

Saddam: It is hot in here, guys. Don't you have anything to make this [*room*] cooler?

UM1: Your Excellency [*Inaudible*].

Saddam: We are sweltering here.

UM2: Your Excellency, we turned it off before your arrival, as it was cold in here.

Saddam: Try that one.

Tariq Aziz: Comrade ‘Abd attended the session with me. These are the meetings that I chair, and when certain options or possibilities are brought up we usually study them from all aspects, I mean, the technical aspect and comparing them and whether the Council’s resolutions apply to them or not. But this matter just came like that [*too quickly*]. It took place in the evening without... with diligence, I mean, by comrade Husayn and his deputies.

Saddam: I see the technicians hanging out at the roundabout, walking. I mean... [*Saddam is implying that they are not serious about their job*]

Tariq ‘Aziz: Oh no, by God, by God, just to be fair to them, they work -- [*Interrupted*]

Saddam: Are they any good?

Tariq ‘Aziz: By God, they work hard, Your Excellency. They are very efficient, really. I mean sometimes they come to us and work continuously for forty-eight, seventy-two hours. They work so hard, and some of them work meticulously, I mean really.

Saddam: Good job.

Tariq Aziz: I was not aware of this.

Saddam: This was my reading of the matter. I said to myself that the technicians were in a psychological state that made them rush in this matter. It looks like they were really in such a psychological state that they rushed this matter.

Tariq Aziz: The technicians, Your Excellency, the technicians do not have the political picture. In this committee that your Excellency ordered to be formed, we established a very good balance between political and technical issues. They explain to us the issues that we are not familiar with, and we put them in the picture of the issues that we know. So until now, the matters were going fine. This incident took place at night. They got scared; they thought it was a raid; and they were afraid to come near this [*laughing*]. They had made up their minds. Perhaps if they told me, it is possible that I would have agreed with what they requested and imagined.

[*Time Stamp: 19:47*]

Saddam: In the past, we had some stories of the past. We have some ignorance, and it is still rampant, but in the past, ignorance was really widespread. They told us a story about the mountain sheep, but it was not until a few years ago that I made the connection. A hunter would ask the sheep, “[*Do*] I see you” and the sheep replies, “You do not”—he would apparently be talking to the mountain sheep. The hunter keeps repeating the question and the answer remains the same until the hunter gets close [*enough*] to the sheep and shoots it. So it looks like for some folks that when the Americans shout, “I see you,” and they answer, “You do not” [*attendees are*

laughing; Saddam is telling a story from Iraqi folklore that highlights ignorance and lack of proper thinking in decision-making.].

Tariq Aziz: No, we went. Pardon me, Your Excellency.

Saddam: It looks like this colloquial “[*Do*] I see you” is from the area “of the person who saw.”

Tariq Aziz: Yes.

Saddam: I believe it is at the border area. This is a desolate area with rough terrain. No humans go here. They call it “the cape of the person who saw.” It seems the story started there.

Tariq Aziz: They were afraid of a surprise raid. Because we know the inspection team’s schedule, we prepare for these teams. We sit down; we analyze all the possibilities, etcetera; and we present them with the political picture as we read it. I myself told them this at an early stage, and Comrade ‘Abd was attending these meetings. I said, “Please do not tell me about a military attack. Leave this aside. Do not include it in your calculations.”

You are not to deduce. We only have our own conclusions. You provide us with your work. Let us understand, and we will tell you what you should be doing. So despite our listening to their comments, the matter of -- [*Interrupted*]

Saddam: We did not keep them busy.

Tariq Aziz: Politics is our specialty. One time we were at the operations room, and Abu Nadia [*Izzat al-Duri*] recalls this, we sent for the experts on the economy in order to assess the economic state. They told us to go and get them a loan from Saudi Arabia so that they can solve this. We told them, “We know that. Give us other solutions. [*Tariq Aziz is laughing*] Give us something else. We are politicians.” Anyways, Your Excellency, we will follow up on this matter. I will follow up with the committee. There are other aspects about this [*surveillance*] aircraft. There are political and security considerations to look at, etcetera, just as the comrades stated, and I agree with them. But from the technical perspective, it is possible that this aircraft will utilize thermal photography. I mean, they already photographed the sites, but they did not photograph the bottom. They say they want to photograph some areas, areas in which they believe there is something, so we have to prepare for that.

[*Audio is blank from 22:32 to 22:56*]

Saddam: Yes, Comrade Muhammad.

Comrade Muhammad: Your Excellency, in reality, it is evident based on the course of events.

Saddam: Did they specify a time frame for such a survey?

Dr. Sa’doun: No. No, Sir.

Mohamed Al-Sahaf: But they have specified in the beginning.

Saddam: Huh?

Mohammed Al-Sahaf: The beginning -- *[Interrupted]*

UMI: The middle of this month.

Mohammed Al-Sahaf: They specified the beginning but not the duration *[of the month]*.

Tariq Aziz: *[Inaudible]*.

Mohammed Al-Sahaf: Based on the course of events, and following-up on them, and observing the behavior and actions of the American president and his announcements, their main objective they are after now is *[to target]* Mr. President *[Saddam]* in person. In fact, all that the comrades have stated, with regard to the manner in which they *[Americans]* are acting, I believe that all of this is like they are looking for excuses, and they want to execute a certain counter action by any means. Bush's announcements are indicative of that. So, Your Excellency, I want us to be patient, courageous, and flexible in this phase to bypass the current circumstances, because almost the whole world has become unusually greedy, not to mention that there is information provided by Arab and non-Arab parties about you in person and the regime in general. But their main goal is to target Mr. President *[Saddam]* in person. Your Excellency, I support what Dr. Sa'doun has stated, and, in reality, for the purpose of not giving them any excuse, we should cooperate so that we can bypass the phase that we are going through right now for the sake of the future.

For the sake of the future, we have to be really flexible and in the future, God willing, everything will be fine. One time, a man at one of the conventions in Mosul stated, "Oh Comrade, many things can happen in politics. We should not remain as if we are still in the fifties or sixties. We should view matters as they are *[currently]*." This phase requires flexibility on our part, and it requires flexibility so that we can bypass this critical period. The future, God willing, is ahead of us. I mean, I, for example, by God, even if our grand children are able to forget the Saudis and forget the Kuwaitis, I don't think this is possible. According to me at least, it is not possible. I do not think so. This period requires us to be careful and to view matters with absolute wisdom. Your wisdom is undoubtedly very high, there is no doubt about it, and you view matters accurately. Sir, we have to bypass this period and overcome this stage. But I would like to reiterate, please, please, take good care of yourself as you are being targeted. Please reevaluate your personal security measures, because you are being targeted; even Bush himself has announced that. He said, "I am not against the Ba'ath Party to rule the country, but I am against Saddam Hussein." *[Coughing]* I mean, he has said that clearly. "I am not against," but see, he announced that. This issue, we have to -- *[Interrupted]*

Tariq Aziz: We have to expose this. It is true that what he said is accurate, but I do not buy the premise, and we have to expose it. Bush has no problem with the Ba'ath Party and that it could

rule, and his problem is with Saddam Hussein. I do not buy that. Bush wants Iraq to be like an American colony.

Mohammed Al-Sahaf: Yes.

[Time stamp 27:26]

Tariq Aziz: If the Ba'ath Party accepts that Iraq will become an American property, then we are not the Ba'ath Party. Perhaps it is a constitutional federation party; this is not the Ba'ath [Party] [laughing].

Mohammed Al-Sahaf: There are dimensions to this matter. He [Bush] has announced that there are dimensions to what he has stated. I mean, this is a critical state. [Inaudible; several attendees speak simultaneously]

Dr. Sa'doun: [Sarcastic] It is the National Socialist Party.

With regard to us, it is possible that we have had many general discussions with the comrades, but we have to handle this matter accurately. When I say daily, "Please reevaluate your personal security measures," it is very important, and I believe that now Bush thinks that the whole problem is the person of Your Excellency, focusing on this issue day and night, and perhaps Mr. President is causing him a nightmare. It is true. What is all this hysteria?

Saddam: Comrade Tariq has watched him, [reference to President Bush] and the Iraqi citizen has watched him and how he talks about Iraq and the command.

Tariq 'Aziz: I see him every day on CNN.

Saddam: But I heard from Khayr al-Din Hasib that he is [an honorable] man. From the outside, he told stories that I consider much better than the stories narrated by Comrade Tariq. He said that he [President Bush] is shivering; [several attendees agree] his facial color turns yellow and green; and he shivers, etcetera, when he talks about Iraq. So how are we going to deal with this? [Saddam is laughing]

Mohammed Al-Sahaf: Your Excellency, he comes in on CNN, and he does not look presidential.

Saddam: This matter has affected him.

Tariq 'Aziz: When he talks about the sanctions in South Africa, he is logical and his demeanor is calm. They asked him about the appointment of a member of the Supreme Court, [coughing], and he got nervous because [inaudible], and that is normal. But when they asked him about Iraq, all of sudden he instantly changed. I have made a statement about this issue that they will see on TV.

Mohammed Al-Sahaf: So, Your Excellency, in my opinion, this is a main point. Just as Comrade Dr. Sa'doun and the committee stated, we should be flexible toward the other issues so that we can bypass this period. Your Excellency, our situation is getting better day after day. As you can see, our people now are uniting. Frankly, our situation is good. We have improvement day after day, and everything will be fine. God is kind.

[Time Stamp: 30:30]

Taha Yassin: Mr. President, why do we bother ourselves with these painful facts? If no one has a real objection on this suggestion, let's end the meeting.

Saddam: [Inaudible] Comrade Mizban [Mizban Khithour Hadi] and after him we'll hear from Comrade Abd-al-Ghani.

Mizban: Sir, I agree with this suggestion and I agree with comrade Ali, but we need broader political-media activity in all fields, [in order] to, at all times, reveal the intentions of the enemy, so that we do not stop at the Arab, international, and national levels. We need something every day to expose the goals of the enemy, the intentions of the enemy...

[Audio is blank from 31:27-31:40]

Mizban: ...So here I see that we don't have—I don't know maybe we do have—activities outside the country, but we need more. Meeting with delegates to expose the enemy and his goals, we need to work precisely and continuously on a daily basis, because the goal of the enemy is well known and I don't want to comment further. The goal of the enemy is that he wants Iraq and his people and leader. So we need to move. If we don't want to stand like a spectator, we need to move in a wider range to expose the enemy's goals. We need to move in small and large directions [ways], small directions like unions and big directions like political talks with the Arab countries, the international community, and the regional powers, because if we keep quiet, they will become fiercer against us. Truly, day after day they bring up new staff, so we need to work on a strategy to answer. Thank you, Sir.

Saddam: Comrade Abd al-Ghani.

Abd-al-Ghani: Yes Sir. In fact, I am not in immediate agreement with the many requests that include humiliation from the Americans and others. Even if we agree, I think we should give our true opinion in this manner. I also believe, Sir, that the situation we are going to experience requires us to be flexible without forgetting our future power. Our people in Iraq and our Arab people know that we don't have options, so we can't just surrender immediately and agree. It is possible to ask for clarifications or have inquiries about further explanatory memoranda, because I truly believe, Sir, that we are going to experience continuous pressure from now until the surrender of the Palestinian settlement is complete and because they all know in Iraq that the President, may God protect him, is the only hindrance [preventing] Palestine being given to the Zionists. So I think there will be pressure on us from that direction until the settlement, the surrender process, is complete. So until then, Sir, we have to be flexible. Our people know that

flexibility is based on the future power and know once this black dust goes away, we will recover our full energy with your efforts, Sir. About the Arab movement that Your Excellency mentioned in the margin of the memorandum, I think it's really important to circulate in the Arab League and even circulate detailed copies to all Arab countries. I suggest that our ambassadors in the Arab world meet with the highest ranking officials to explain the existing situation and, consequently, explain why we are agreeing because we don't have any other option at this point. And I don't think there is any loss for us in it, Sir. The Security Council's resolution, despite all the injustice in it, I believe with us agreeing with it, or accepting it, sorry Sir, we broke a strong element of direct conspiracy against our revolution and you personally Sir. Now, thank God our people are not only on their way to consolidate, but we can feel they are already consolidated in the direction that we want to see. Therefore, Sir, I'm [*for*] declaring our agreement with the emphasis that we don't have any other options within the framework of asking clarifying questions, because the request came on the first, so it was possible that we ask for clarifying questions or anything and after that we agree. For example let's not just say yes; let's disagree with them first for one, two, or three days, and then we agree. It's needed psychologically for our people as well as Arab people. Thank you, Sir.

[*Time Stamp: 36:35*]

Saddam: Fine, the text should be as follows. In addition to what we have discussed here, we should say: "In addition to this," or...

Dr. Sa'doun: You mean in the memorandum.

Saddam: In the memorandum, "And with the purpose of defeating those who have wicked intentions"... "For the purpose of defeating the intentions of those who have wicked motives" or "treacherous motives," whichever word is stronger, so "if the order is the order of the United Nations, therefore, we" – despite our disapproval due to the reasons that we have mentioned or if the order is adopted by the United Nations or if the order is the order of the United Nations – "despite our disapproval due to the reasons that we have stated [*sneezing*] our conviction with our correct current position, we will not object militarily to the required aerial survey," or "we will not object militarily to aviation like this."

Tariq Aziz: Remove "militarily", Your Excellency. Just say, "We will not object."

Saddam: I mean, "We will not object to that. We will not intercept; we will not subject it to"... what do we call it?

Tariq Aziz: "We will not object."

UM4: "We will not object."

Saddam: I meant to say that.

Tariq Aziz: Yes.

Saddam: ...“Because we have objected politically. However, militarily, we will not object, meaning we will not hinder [*them*]... I mean, we will not obstruct [*them*]. We have objected as a position, but we will not hinder.”

Tariq Aziz: But also, I think we should remove “militarily”.

Saddam: Say that we will not hinder [*them*].

Tariq Aziz: Yes.

Saddam: [*Continuation of his dictation of the text*] “But you – despite all of that – did not determine the duration that this work entails. But you – despite that – did not specify the time frame that such work requires.” This is required. This is required so that everything will be known and understood. In this text I have avoided... I mean, this is not all the things that Dr. Sa’doun has stated. We have adopted a text that will address the United Nations resolutions in a certain period, but right now, we are at a different stage. We have to adopt other texts.

Dr. Sa’doun Hammadi: No, Sir, I do not mean the same text.

Saddam Hussein: No, when we formulate the text, the [*Ministry of*] Foreign Affairs will clarify it [*the text*].

Dr. Sa’doun Hammadi: Your Excellency, Mr. President, what is meant here is not the text but the main structure. We object and list our reasons and so on, but at the end, this is what -- [*Interrupted*]

Saddam: At the end, we will reach a text of this type.

Dr. Sa’doun Hammadi: This is what we should reach to a text of this type. No, I do not mean the text by itself. No, that could not be. It is not the same text.

Saddam: This is what I want. First, our objection should remain firm. I mean, our disapproval should remain firm, and we have to present it in a way that is against our will, and at the same time, because what they can execute today, they will not be able to carry out on another day because every state has its own timing according to its general capability. Even their military presence in the region, and our nature, and the nature of our neighbors, all these elements will be considered at the moment. There is a difference between our approval and our disapproval. This is the first point. The second point is that we should force them to specify a time frame. And third, we should involve the United Nations in discussing this matter from the nature of the memorandum. It is possible that the Americans are checking our response. If they see him crossing, then there will be no need to present this issue, and to instigate a problem with others. It is possible that those others, and in light of our memorandum and our excuses, will develop a logic to object to the matter, I mean, utilize other texts. The other aspect is that we should force them to specify the time frame. If they do not determine the time frame, it is possible that this

game will continue for ten years. They will go and tell if they are happy after every trip, which means no secret will stay in our country, and the security threat will remain.

Mohammed Al-Sahaf: Of course.

[Time Stamp: 42:19]

Saddam: Because when they started their aggression, they had little information about us.

Mohammed Al-Sahaf: Yes.

Saddam: And I have proof, I mean, this is not just a casual talk. There are certain matters that I know, that their information about us is very little. But now, their information about us has increased, that is, in the security aspect. One person escapes from the special sites. They ask him for example, "Who comes to the site? Who sleeps here and who does not sleep here?" I mean, this is new information; they base their assessment on such information and compare it with other sites. Who sleeps here, and who does not sleep here? And consequently, they base their assessment on such information. They take it for granted. They want to photograph the areas that differ from their expectations. Perhaps their satellites have not paid sufficient attention to these sites. Therefore, this state of affairs will continue, and it will continue to be a dangerous state unless our memorandum is clear in requesting a time frame for this survey.

Tariq 'Aziz: But the duration of its presence in Iraqi airspace will be known to us and we must constantly notify you about it.

Saddam: Regardless of that, I mean, we know about their presence, but we need to know the time it will take to complete its mission, from the beginning of the first day until the last day.

Tariq 'Aziz: Yes.

Saddam: We have to know that.

Tariq 'Aziz: Yes.

[Time Stamp: 43:53]

Saddam: It will not be an indefinite process, an open ended [*process*].

Mohammed Al-Sahaf: Correct.

Saddam: This is one aspect. It might be more suitable to say, why does it have to be an American aircraft? Why can't we use a Soviet aircraft? For example, the five countries [*permanent members of UN Security Council*] should agree on the manner of operation and the type of equipment used in the aircraft. I mean, we should instigate, instigate problems. We should give others excuses. The others are on the sidelines. I mean, they are saying, "Why should

we involve ourselves in this matter? We will not get anything out of it.” I mean, why does Iraq have to feed them bread? Iraq should not be at their mercy asking whether they will approve or disapprove. Approve or disapprove, Iraq does not have readily available texts to use in its maneuvers with the concerned parties.

Mohammed Al-Sahaf: True.

Saddam: I mean, in general, I see our policies are leaning toward the direction of blindness. I want to bring in other parties to the problem. What we are saying here is that it is the country that led the aggression against us. We want to know the type of equipment that the United Nations truly needs. First, there are the five countries; they have to study the needs and requirements of the United Nations. Do they need this type of equipment? Do they need this type of aircraft? Does this operation have to be supervised by this entity? For example, isn't India part of the Security Council? It is. Let us involve others. Well, ok, perhaps they do not have to hear that, but at least we have instigated some issues.

[Time Stamp: 45:34]

Mohammed Al-Sahaf: Yes.

Saddam: The text is important. We should say, anyway, despite our conviction with our position, and the correctness of our position, etcetera, we will not hinder aircraft of this type if it is forced upon us. We should emphasize the words “if it is forced upon us”. This way it will not be considered approval. We should say, “If it is forced upon us and adopted by the United Nations”. Let them respond to this and say, “Yes, the United Nations has adopted this, and this is required and is needed, and we do not buy your suggestions, neither the participation of the Soviets nor India, nor the participation of a monitoring entity over the type of equipment that is really needed for the monitoring purpose.” At least we would have preempted and weakened the conspiratorial part of this matter [*by doing that*]. If the conspiratorial aspect is weakened or removed, then we could say that we have achieved something. I mean, a single person is not the same as three. I mean, when three technicians see the aircraft flying, inspect the type of equipment used, etcetera, let them. We should not go to war because of this, because we are not at a stage to enter a war, but at least let us harass our enemy. Why, why are we... we should neither harass it with our refusal, nor harass it with our acceptance, but we should always place lines for it to cross, lines between refusal and acceptance. I mean, we should involve others, involve them in a manner such that different opinions will emerge. Perhaps other opinions could emerge. Why are we always imagining things to the extent of the minute details as one block? If all these little details were one block, Bush would have wanted to fight again, because it seems this is his situation. I mean, he believes the [*inaudible*] did not produce the desired results for him.

UM2: They will blame him.

Saddam: So these are the points that I want the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to pay attention to, and our comrades in the operation room must also pay attention to them. For example, send a

memorandum to the Saudis, and tell them, “You Saudis, last time you used Kuwait as an excuse. What is your problem this time?” I mean, this should be a historically confirmed point. Also, these operations would expose the other parties. I mean, the more you give excuses and proofs and present factors and elements, the more you will strengthen your argument that is in conflict with your opponents. This way, you will expose the intentions of your opponents, and will strengthen your initial position.

Mohammed Al-Sahaf: Yes, yes, correct.

Saddam: I mean, when you expose [*your opponents*] intentions, that Saudi Arabia is using Kuwait as a reason to inspect our land, this reveals the extent of their involvement in this conspiracy. I mean, at least we should remove this historic allegation of Saudi Arabia, saying that Iraq has seized a small weak Arab country. And being unable to do anything, they used their money and brought in the foreigner to expel Iraq from Kuwait.

[*The audio from 48:57-01:29:13 is a duplicate of the audio from 11:45-48:57*]

[*Time Stamp: 01:29:14*]

Saddam: These questions are historically recorded about their rulers and [*inaudible*]. People are observing, and they want to listen to these facts.

The other issue is our media and its weakness. Let’s go back again to the media concept. If you think that our media is Hamed Hammadi, he will not be able to make anything good out of the media in 20 years, and neither can Latif Nussayyif [*the Iraqi Minister of Information*]. The media is all of us. The political position and our presence in facing the daily political updates and our well-studied reactions toward these international political updates, we give that to the public. Now what do our statements look like? Look at our statement regarding the French. We said, “The French draft resolution... the French draft resolution”... didn’t we say the 17th of July Great Revolution and the 30th of July Revolution? We first start with a guest, but we do not tell him what it [*the revolution*] is. What is the revolution? Like us, he knows how the former regime was, why we revolted, what happened, and what we have done. The French draft resolution is a vicious conspiracy against Iraq. Fine, but where is the French draft resolution? How can we exploit the media? My point is, we should explain in details the true facts of the plans against us so our people know, because our media’s priority is our people, and by explaining everything we will be destroying these plans that aim to harm Iraq, meaning we will be revealing their goals and their foundations. I mean, they cannot be justified; the other side has no reason to work against us. And we will always try to reveal our enemies’ intentions to our people and satisfy their inquiry whether a conspiracy would have taken place against us if Kuwait did not exist. And when we succeed to show our people that our enemies’ bad intentions are beyond the Iraq-Kuwait case, we’ll be answering the question that our people always ask “Is all of this because of the Kuwait case?”

The second priority is the [*Arab*] Nation. Our nation people will not read *al-Thawrah* newspaper [*Thawrah in Arabic means Revolution. Thawrah was one of the government’s official*]

newspapers] and neither will they listen to an article broadcast over the radio. As far as the radio program, we are still closed on ourselves when it comes to the practical thinking, not the strategic thinking, I mean, at the practical thinking and the general mobilization level. The lack of information and limited analysis does not give the full picture of our situation. Yet, it's not reasonable if Taha Yassin Ramadan or Taha Ma'rouf or Sa'doun Hummadi or Tariq Aziz or comrade Hussein al-'Ameri made a statement and it did not reach a newspaper in Algeria for example, because at least they will mention two lines of a ten line statement, saying that an Iraqi Minister said the following two lines out of ten. And this is media. [*Someone whispers, "That is right."*]

And you remember, a long time ago, I warned you and said that we are a small country. If we want [*other*] countries to listen to us, we must start with the one with the highest rank among us to give the statement, and here is when you tell me "Saddam, give your statement" so the X newspapers might adopt the statement [*some staff members agree with Saddam*], and radio Y might comment on it. But people need to know first what the 17th of July Revolution is, and we need to explain to them what the French draft resolution is. We need to hold a symposium on TV to educate people about our decisions.

Taha Ma'rouf: Yesterday they held a TV conference -- [*Interrupted*]

Saddam: [*Angrily*] They did not do it until Saddam Hussein told them to do it, comrade Taha Ma'rouf.

Taha Ma'rouf: Yes, but they did.

Saddam: Who did? Not them. At least, they can bring someone from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to explain what the 17th of July Revolution is, and professors from the university to comment and engage citizens in a discussion. Don't you want the people to share your concerns? People have become ignorant because of the lack of information. How do you expect the Iraqi citizen to support you if they don't know what your opinions are and what are the logic and reasons behind your acts? The people have to realize the fact that they are the target of our enemies, and we are saving no efforts to avoid the fight, and when humans realize that they're a target and they can do nothing to avoid the fight, they will fight back, but when enemies tell our people that you're not our target but you suffer because we want to punish your leadership, our people will sacrifice us, seeking a better living. This thing [*media*] you're not doing, I can't keep talking for 24 hours a day ordering you to do this and that.

Tariq Aziz: But something good happened, Sir. The Minister of Commerce held a press conference and brought the media and gave them a good explanation about the issue of the French draft resolution.

Saddam: God bless him, he's a good man. I didn't order him to do so but he acted and did such a nice thing.

Tariq Aziz: This was in coordination with the Minister of Foreign Affairs—in fact, an initiative of his own.

Saddam: So, this happened right. I directed the Ministry of Information and Foreign Affairs to do so. I told some people in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to call the media. One of my attendants, who is a major in the Iraqi Army, notified me of this issue. He said “Sir, they keep talking about the French draft resolution, but we, as citizens, have no idea what it is.”

[Time Stamp: 01:35:06]

Tariq Aziz: [Inaudible].

Saddam: What?

Tariq Aziz: [Jokingly] People in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs get headaches because [inaudible] every two hours [laughing].

Saddam: No, no, no, Abu-Ziyad [Tariq Aziz], I don't mean to... do you know what my attendants do? They come to me every five minutes carrying papers they want me to read and make decisions about what these papers imply. I get so tired of this, and I told them not to bring me any more papers. Take the papers to the Operation [Department] to sign them for you. What do they think, that we are not in a hospital? We are technicians! I mean, we need some time to think. They bring me binders of papers marked as urgent, urgent everywhere. Abed [Lieutenant General Abed Hammoud; Saddam's chief guard and top aide] wrote on each single paper “Urgent.” So I have to check them all immediately.

Ali Hassan al-Majid: [Laughs] It's not his option. They send him urgent telegrams, and he forwards them to you.

Saddam: My point is anything has to be either black or white by principle. As for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of information, they want to reach the white but they might go through grey in order to reach the white. So they need to practice this in phrasing. Now, I can rephrase the same statement again in another way without changing its essence. So quit using the same phrasing every time, because using it over and over will make it lose its spirit and depth, and it will become ineffective.

The Arab world watches our media. Today, someone who has nothing to do with politics or media told me, “The Arabs that I saw in such and such a place are very angry.” I asked why and he said, “They are saying, ‘What is this? The Iraqis are scrambling in this chaos and praising God saying God is Great, but when we tune in to the Iraqi radio, we hear instead a symphony, etcetera!’” This was sometime during the aggression. Our philosophy behind broadcasting symphonies during war time was for people to relax and to make them less tense, while our audience does not want [to hear a] symphony, but [would] rather hear screams in war time, because every stage has its own needs. Have you noticed the mood of the people? Every case is different depending on the location, circumstances, and situation. [Time Stamp: 01:37:55]

Every time we face trouble, we should quickly analyze it and gather the media team and tell them what the components and dangers are. We should hold a press conference and give a statement about such a draft resolution and explain every paragraph of it. We should do that on television without being afraid of anything. They are going to talk. They have not submitted anything about any draft resolution, leaving a lot of gaps. They are stealing our wealth on the plea of human causes, and God knows who will be handling these human causes. They impose restrictions on the Iraqi people to be hungry forever. They want our people to be hungry for a year and be patient about it while they drag them into labyrinths with one thing in mind, and that is stealing from us. So it is better for our people to bear the situation for one year rather than keep being hungry for the next twenty years. Our enemies will keep giving us trouble.

There is an issue that we learned from a man who is not a Ba'athist, who left Iraq a long time ago, and who reminds us with specific stuff that we can consider to be truthful. He said whatever is left for these people, 15 years, 10 years, five years, or 20 years, he told me to keep fighting them until they leave, and the ones who come after will be better *[laughing]*. This is true, because when we discussed the Kuwait issue you said we must fight them hard because we will not have the strength after five years, and they know that *[laughing]*. They are going to keep doing -- *[Interrupted]*

Tariq Aziz: *[Inaudible]*.

Saddam: So we do not want to be overcome, but we should all enjoy the good moments. When it comes to stress, we should not let one paper affect all of us; let it pass from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and go at the farthest to the operation room, and if a decision is needed, *[inaudible]* Saddam Hussein. We will add a line or a sentence to it or whatever and it is done.

[Inaudible discussion in the background]

Saddam: However, our meetings on important matters give us clarity; it is mandatory and we have to meet. As for the security issues, rest assured, God will take care of that. We interact with our brothers. *[Inaudible]* We work with them.

Dr. Sa'doun: But, you know, Sir, with the Arab journalists we know that, at least, *[inaudible]*. I see a lot of Arab journalists *[inaudible]*.

Saddam: Journalists are not as good. I mean, they are like bombs for everyone *[possibly meaning they cover a vast area and are imprecise]*. There are bombs, and there are particularities. I mean a journalist may drop a bomb in such and such a newspaper. This is useful. But the well-studied statements, I mean, with essence -- *[Interrupted]*

Dr. Sa'doun: Written.

Saddam: Where we can say such and such a thing, this is what they mean by a draft resolution. This way we make people open their eyes and see things. This French draft resolution...

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[Blank audio from 01:42:12 to 01:42:34]

[The audio from 01:42:35-01:47:57 is a duplicate of the audio from 01:39:15-01:42:11]

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