

“Meeting between Saddam Hussein and Top Political Advisors Concerning Diplomacy with the United States and Russia”



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Key: UM = Unidentified Male Speaker.

Translator comments, clarifications, and additions are italicized in brackets.

[The audio begins after the meeting is already in progress]

Tariq Aziz: It was not bad indeed. He and his friend gathered the Christian clergy men and sent letters to Clinton and they are still working, Samir [*probably referring to Samir Vincent*] and the group that Zayd contacted. So when I went to Zayd, he showed me a paper and said, “I have received the following. The retired ambassador with whom I met delivered the following to Carter; he listened to a very strongly worded presentation from Tariq about the mistake of the U.S. policy in the region. However, Tariq did not offer any suggestion or an idea that Carter may work with and yet, President Carter is interested in working with the matter, and suggested having a meeting in Khartoum if the Iraqi side is ready. But if the Iraqi delegate cannot come to Khartoum, then maybe they can meet in New York during his next visit in April or May. If the Iraqi delegate will be bringing any ideas, this will lead to a faster participation of Carter in the dialogue or initiative.”

Saddam Hussein: This is the American style and the West in general in such case. They send unofficial delegates and they expect the government to provide something, while the U.S. officials stay out of the official picture of discussion. This style is... Let them say what they are after, just as you said.

Tariq Aziz: I told him and said what they -- [*Interrupted*]

Saddam: We will discuss what they are interested in.

Tariq Aziz: What is their *shopping list* [*said in English*]? What do they want? I said he went to Yugoslavia and his main objective seemed to be the cease-fire for four months. Milosevic granted his request, so let him tell me what does he want? What is the United States after? He is saying that the U.S. Administration is not willing to open any dialogue with Iraq or look into the Iraqi issue. Carter wants to put pressure on the Administration. Carter says, “Help me understand so I can make Clinton allow me to intervene.” This was their logic. They did not discuss the reconciliation issue, but Marshall was the one who asked me, “What is your role and what can you do regarding this issue?” So I provided him with my analysis and said, “Do not open this subject as it has nothing to do with our file. We are willing to talk with President Carter and the U.S. Administration about the so-called crisis of the gulf file and the resolutions issued by the Security Council. This is our ground.”

Saddam: And the bilateral relations.

Tariq Aziz: “And the bilateral relations. This is our ground and the other issue is not in our interest and not subject to discussion.” Sir, Oscar [*Oscar Wyatt*] wants to come next week. He said, “If you like, I can take you in my plane from Amman to Khartoum”—supposedly, after he meets with Your Excellency before the 27th—“so that if you cannot get to Khartoum I can give you a ride.”

Saddam: They like to show off on TV.

Tariq Aziz: Pardon me?

Saddam: They like to show off... Any follow-up inquiries, Comrade Tariq?

Tariq Aziz: Sir, did you listen to the discussion that Ekeus had with the non-aligned countries' ambassadors?

UM1: [*Inaudible*].

[*Time Stamp: 05:07*]

Tariq Aziz: We received today an important report, but it seems that it was not submitted to Your Excellency, yet. I saw it today, 'Amir sent it to me. We have printed it and we will send it to Your Excellency. When Ekeus finished his trip to Moscow, our ambassador met with the Russians and sent us a report, which I have seen. However, the Russian Ambassador in Baghdad brought in a specific report, more specific and much clearer that he handed over to 'Amir. The report is related to the outcome of Ekeus' discussions, but has not been submitted to Your Excellency yet. So it would be beneficial if Your Excellency would review it.

Saddam: What is it in summary?

Tariq Aziz: In summary, with regard to the four files that you described, he is willing to submit a positive report to the Security Council, and that he believes that Iraq has accomplished a lot of its obligations, and that the American position is not legally sound with regard to paragraph 22. He requested assistance and told them, "But I have a problem with the Iraqis with regard to the biological issue. If the Iraqis would just help me in this issue, I will not complicate matters for them. I am willing to push toward closing the file," Meaning, without any additional complications, he is asking the Russians to put pressure on the Americans.

Saddam: Ekeus will try in this period to break any pieces of steel left whole, and at the end, he will not submit a report with the same excellent description that you presented, [*inaudible*]. He is going to provide some kind of cover for the Americans to continue in their attempts. But this process will lead to something like a midway solution not a decisive one.

Tariq Aziz: Yes.

Saddam: This is my analysis.

Tariq Aziz: Yes, I mean his main short term goal is to have a midway solution for the current situation.

UM2: He will not lose the Americans.

Tariq Aziz: Ha [*what*]?

UM2: He does not want to lose the Americans so that the conspiracy actions of the [*our*] enemies will not be exposed. This is what he wants.

Tariq Aziz: Yes, this matter does not surprise me.

UM3: I think his discussions with the Russians are a maneuver. I mean he wants additional things from Iraq.

Tariq Aziz: No, Sir. With regard to Ekeus position, it is possible that Ekeus will not remain on this mission. The Special Committee, practically, there are two entities that are tasked to follow-up with regard to the Iraqi armament matter. The International Atomic Energy Agency existed. It was an established agency that was tasked to oversee the nuclear file. The Special Committee was formed specifically to deal with the Iraqi matter and implement section "C" of resolution 687, and also implement resolution 715. If section "C" is accomplished, I mean if 'Adil submitted a report on April 10 and said he has finished, meaning paragraphs nine, ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen, then the Special Committee will become a small *unit* [*said in English*] in New York to follow-up the monitoring. There are not many complications with the monitoring body; I mean there are stable action procedures. Now those inspectors who are coming and going, they will be dismissed from their duties, many of the Special Committee experts who have been permanent for the last four years, they will also have no work to do, and so they will be dismissed. So, it is possible that the position of the Special Committee Director that was very important during the past four years for the Americans and the superpowers, will become a routine job. So he will start looking for another job. As far as searching for another position, he is not going to work in America, I mean he will not become a member of the Congress, or work as the director of an American company; he is European.

[*Time Stamp: 10:01*]

Saddam: No, he wants to take the position of that Egyptian guy [*Saddam may mean that Ekeus wants the position of Boutros Boutros Ghali, the former Secretary General of the United Nations*].

Tariq Aziz: Yes, but Your Excellency, he will not be able to [*do this*] directly after, even if he wants to be the Secretary General of the United Nations -- [*Interrupted*]

Saddam: He will continue to extend his term until he merges with the Secretary General of the United Nations.

Tariq Aziz: Yes, Your Excellency, but he will not be able to become the Secretary General, as there are two superpowers that are permanent members and suspect his intent.

Saddam: That is why he is cajoling the Russians and the French after the Russians, and they

both exhibited their detailed specific interests.

Tariq Aziz: Yes, yes he has no other choice but to cajole them, because if there is one veto against him, he will lose that opportunity, and if he wants to look for a job, European of course, the French will have a role. So he can no longer play the American game with all its ramifications; he has to observe and adopt a middle ground approach between the American position and the opposing one. That is why the assessment of His Excellency, Mr. President, is correct that Ekeus will work toward a midway solution, or that he will present elements that support a middle ground solution, or what may contribute to a break-through. But, Sir, he has nothing of importance from the other four files that he can present and will be used in any way; he only has the biological issue.

UM2: Why don't these specific biological matters give an excuse to America and weaken the other side, the Soviets? [*Inaudible; coughing in the background*] that there is a specific line in which the Americans are interested, and this is the excuse that will make them continue their process.

Saddam: I say this file from the [*year*] 1993...

UM2: Reopen it again.

Saddam: Reopen it.

UM2: It will give an excuse to the American campaign and American hostility. I mean, I recommend that you consider this position from this angle. Is that truly a middle ground solution, or is it an excuse to weaken the other side that is enthusiastic for lifting the sanctions.

Taha Yassin Ramadan: The middle ground solution outside of paragraph 22 is very similar to [*Resolution*] 706, which means [*inaudible; mumbling*].

Saddam: In this period, Ekeus is also interested in sending messages that would reassure us of their intentions, because when he speaks with non-aligned nations, he knows that we will hear about such discussions.

Tariq Aziz: Yes, absolutely right.

Saddam: When he speaks with the Russians, he knows that we will hear about such discussions one way or another.

Tariq Aziz: Yes.

Saddam: He is afraid that April will come and Iraq has not received anything yet. At that time, Iraq will stand up and say, "Look we have accomplished all these achievements, but we did not receive anything in return, we do not have anything. Then we will review all of our previous positions." This means, of course, a major failure of [*inaudible*].

[*Inaudible comments in the background*]

Tariq Aziz: He takes this into consideration, as well as the Russian and French positions, and the American's [*position*], of course [*speaker is laughing sarcastically*]. Otherwise, how will he get out of this gridlock?

UM3: With regard to the Americans, do not pressure him more than that, [*inaudible*].

Tariq Aziz: He is in New York, Sir, and as you know, New York is... the United Nations is a small village, I mean New York is a big city, but this circle, according to what I have heard from more than one party, upon his [*Ekeus*] return from Iraq from Moscow, it seems that he met with the Americans and also met with Albright, illegally met with Albright in the presence of his American and British assistants. He told me, "Albright called for me and told me, "Don't waste your energies, I have ten votes in my pocket." So he said, "I told her I do not think this is the case. I think I differ with you on that issue." This is what he told me, but according to what we heard from more than one party, he is bad-mouthing the Americans. I mean, the Americans are pressuring him more than he can stand. He was nagging; however, this reflects a reality, a tangible reality, which is that at least 80% of the work has been achieved, at least. As for the biological issue, it is possible to take advantage of a delay, but I would say this has its pros and cons. If members of the Council ask specific questions, he will be forced to give specific answers. I mean, until now, they do not have accusations addressed toward Iraq that Iraq has produced biological weapons in quantities or has carried out evasive measures and so on. They cannot say either that Iraq can produce in the presence of this monitoring system. I mean this is the limitation of the points that he might put forth, but this will pave the way for commotion and delay.

Saddam: Okay.

[*Time Stamp: 16:12*]

End of Recording