

# **“Meeting between Saddam Hussein and His Senior Advisors Following the Israeli Attack on Osirak”**



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**Key: UM = Unidentified Male Speaker.**

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

**Saddam Hussein:** The airstrike against the Tammuz reactor was not a surprise for us, or outside of our expectations. Nevertheless, when it happens, it hurts a lot. This is because the Tammuz reactor was fruit of the Revolution, for which we had toiled very hard, economically and otherwise, for a long time. One or two years before the war, we forecasted that after 1979, many major powers would feel the need to crush this country, to teach it a lesson, or to break it psychologically, or in real life. Not because we are troublemakers, as some major powers tend to portray our national ethnicity or work, but because we want to give Iraq a right to prosperity, invincibility, and progress, in real life, and not just by words.

Also within a real program, not in words: we want the Iraqi to live the same way the people of those powerful countries are living—in glory, with dignity and development, making strong cultural progress, and having economic affluence, as well as with serious sociological cohesion. We must implement the Revolution's general direction in practice so that we achieve its stated principles, not only in radio broadcasts or in published statements, as is the case with many national revolutionary movements in the Third World, which in general, most of the time, start out with huge ambitions and end up with nothing. Therefore, we evaluate the international situation, and we find that the major powers have ambitions in this region and they are angry at our programs, not our statements. We are aware of our own cultural, economic, sociological, educational, and political programs, and we know the course that they would choose for us and achieve it. Based on this I say that after 1979, we will become a heavy unbearable burden on the backs of many. We are becoming a burden to their mind and they cannot bear it; we are a burden to the policy that they want in this region. In the end, they want all the people of the region to be completely under their control, directed by the choices of these major powers.

On this basis, we said that there is no doubt that Israel would launch a strike against Iraq, beyond the usual strike against vital structures. It would target basic links that will result in stopping the development or the progress of Iraq in its scientific and economic programs that are essential elements of its strength. It is not a secret that we say, from this expectation, that at the end of 1979, ah, in early 1979 I believe, we contacted some friendly countries about a type of weapon which will make Israel hesitate in case it plans a strike of this type against Iraq [*Time Stamp: 05:02*]. We were very clear on this topic: We said that we expect Israel to cross over the Arab countries that border it directly, and strike us in Iraq with its air force. It would strike our major institutions and our oil. Thus, in order for the Arab countries which border Israel to avoid directly a political and a military embarrassment and so that we are not in the position of being incapable of responding to Israel, we had to have defensive means to ensure the type of defense, which is strong enough, so that it will make Israel hesitate, in case it plans a strike of this type against Iraq. This happened early in 1979.

Thus, we expected an Israeli strike against Iraq without any proclaimed war, before it occurred. We expected the creation of problems for Iraq, damage to the prestige of Iraq, and breaking the components of continuity in its progressive development, including the war. We expected all this before the war started. Iran attacked the borders on a large scale and struck our border patrols, but we did not respond. Yet we expected that when it did not get a reaction from us, it would

start other operations which would force us to respond in kind and strike back. It happened this way on 4 September 1980—we did not strike back when they hit our border patrols, so it started a war by striking the Iraqi cities of Khanaqin, Mandilin, Zarbatiyah, and Khana—the oil area.

Before that, on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, it bombarded Shat al-`Arab and Basra with artillery. All of this was not because they are afraid of the Iraqi atomic bomb, as the "head of the gang of Tel Aviv" says. It was because they are afraid of the balanced and coherent scientific cultural, economic, sociological, educational and political development, which is moving in a serious direction toward its goal, which as a priority, is the building of a strong Iraq. As you see, Begin is focusing on two issues. Unfortunately, the international media did not address them in a proper manner.

While he speaks about the "nuclear power" Iraq as a dangerous project to the security of Israel, he focuses on a minor issue; but he has the right to focus on it. However, humanely and socially it is something that he should focus on. The issue is about "dealing with children." In his statement, he said something that I am sure you noticed as the Iraqi media published it. Yet, the international media did not address it properly. He said, "How do you want us to trust a regime whose head asks the children, 'Who is your basic enemy?'" Then he corrects them by telling them, "Your basic enemy is Israel." Thus, the Zionist government and its allies are afraid of two basic elements in a whole unit of conditions: the human being in his new educational development and the human in his new scientific development. [*Time Stamp: 10:11*]

This is within a clear political framework and approach, which makes the Iraqi citizen proud of his national experience, boasts about it, defends it and develops it, and puts it into the service of the Arab nation as a whole. If Begin were truthful, this situation would prevent him from sleeping well for the last two years, as he stated. Did he not say two years? This is what bothers Begin, and not that Iraq is in the process of manufacturing atomic bombs, like the one dropped on Hiroshima.

In 1969, I met a non-Iraqi Party organization that was hurrying to instruct its members to gain membership from within the Armed Forces, and was not seeking the farmers, laborers, students, the intelligentsia, and the like. I told them at that time: "Paying attention to gain membership only within the Armed Forces will not allow you to achieve the image you are striving for." This way we will not be in front of a party that is capable of achieving progress in social life. Instead, we have to pay attention to farmers, laborers and students, though there is nothing wrong with your priority of wanting to gain membership from within the Armed Forces. This means that the action of the party must be coordinated and balanced not only to raise the level of a given cast of society but also to raise it as a whole. This applies to our movement in Iraqi society.

I am sure that, if the Israeli officials discover that Iraq has 20 atomic bombs, but that Iraq's political regime is deteriorating, its economy failing and going backwards, its people lacking self-confidence, not moving toward the future and not trusting their regime or dealing with it in a sound way, then Begin would not give any weight to these atomic bombs. However, what scares Begin is the scientific, cultural, humanitarian, political, economic, sociological, and educational development. It is our deep-rooted commitment, a genuine interest in science as the corner stone of building a new society, for development, invulnerability, either in dealing with dangers or in creating the happiness for the human being. That is what deprived Begin of his sleep.

Thus, brothers, on these bases your Armed Forces are fighting in the 10<sup>th</sup> month not because they are technically, in spite of the importance of this aspect, more developed and more modern than the Iranian Armed Forces, and not because our weapons are better or more in quantity than the

Iranian Armed Forces but because the new Iraqi citizen carries the worries of all the Iraqi people—worries of those who are not from this generation anymore, the residual worries of the current generation, the problems of the nation as well as other problems, if any, and the worries of the best development at stake. [*Time Stamp: 15:26*]

The new Iraqi carries the ambitions of the Iraqi people, as well as their actions to the future, and because they cherish Iraq, they are very proud to be part of a nation that must be in a human, national, cultural, ethnic position, which is different from the position the enemies want the nation to be in. I am sure that there are many soldiers, who when they come back from the battlefield, meet their Iraqi families and meet the Iraqi people in Iraqi cities and in Iraqi countryside, and they come back with higher morale than the morale they had when they left their families and went on leave. This is because the Iraqi citizen supports them from behind and provides them with support, in addition to all the battle requirements, such as the proper spirit and the expected results.

For a second time, Begin recognizes the practical link, not with temporary intent, but with projected results. He compares the war against the Persians and victory in this battle with his defeat and the defeat of his greed in Palestinian lands; he states "the Iraqis want to occupy 'Abadan so that they can occupy Jerusalem after that." There is no frontline link between occupying Jerusalem, and occupying 'Abadan. However, there is an historical link and a link of actual and psychological results that lie between the steadfastness of the Iraqi Armed Forces in the front and the Arab power that will face Begin, *God willing*. At the helm of those who will confront him are the Iraqis. We do not believe this, but Begin states that Iraq has animosity toward Israel. To prove this animosity, and to justify hitting the nuclear plant, he uses the pretense that when Saddam Hussein meets the children, he asks the children "Who is your major enemy?" Then he corrects them by telling them, "Your first enemy is Israel." How is it that Begin, and others, wants that we do not prepare our children, or prepare our grownups, to identify their enemy, and which one is their actual enemy. Was there ever a precedent where a state, a regime, or a government comes from behind other countries to bombard a country and its infrastructure and buildings, while it is not in a state of war with it? This has never happened in history, but it happened this time. Therefore, this is an enemy. If we do not have a clear way to constantly remind us that this is the enemy of the nation, of Iraq ... a major enemy ...; it is enough that the behavior of the Zionist government constantly reminds us that this is the bitter enemy of Iraq, and of the nation, a major enemy.

The statement of the Iraqi official spokesman mentioned that, unfortunately, some governments feel that they have an international positive responsibility for peace and security. Therefore, they try one way or another to reduce the international responses against this action, or they try to give, one way or another, justification for such a behavior, just as statements of some U.S. officials have mentioned. [*Time Stamp: 20:17*]

Regardless of the intentions of Iraq, and its capabilities, now or in the future, I believe that anyone and any country in the world which really wants peace or security, or truly respects people and does not want any people to be persecuted or terrorized by any external foreign power, must help the Arabs, in one way or another, to get the atomic bomb so that they can face the atomic bombs of Israel—which are real. This is not for victory for the Arabs, or to feed war,

but rather to preserve peace, and to achieve the peace. Regardless of the intentions of the Arabs, and their capabilities, even if the Arabs were not confident, able, or capable. I believe that any government in the world that has a positive international responsibility toward humanity and peace must tell the Arabs: “We give you this weapon, so that you can face the Zionist threat of the atomic bombs; so that you prevent the Zionist government from using the atomic bomb against the Arabs.” That way, they will prevent the world from meeting the perils that result from the use of the atomic bomb—in wars.

This is the same logic that the USSR uses to deal with the U.S. and the U.S. uses to deal with the USSR, as well as others among themselves. I do not believe that now the USSR wants to use the atomic bomb against America. Moreover, after all this development in humanity, its mind, and conscience, including the public opinion in America and in the USSR, and in all the areas of the world, I do not believe that any of the Americans or the Soviets would use the atomic bomb against each other. However, they both, and others like them, try always to better develop their weapons, so that they can prevent war. This logic is not a justification for the Arabs to acquire nuclear technology for military purposes. However, this is a discussion, which is open to the international human mind. It is not a case of giving propriety to the Arabs, because the Arabs do not have the nuclear technology; instead, it is a case to deal with a situation that already exists in Israel right now. With the admission by all of the experts and officials responsible for atomic bomb matters and those who deal with Middle East affairs, as they call them, they all admit that Israel owns a number of atomic bombs right now. What would happen if it dictates some conditions to the Arabs, and if they do not meet those conditions, will it use the atomic bomb against them? What would happen to the Arabs? Rather, what would happen to the human race, in light of such extortion, and in light of this dangerous situation?

I believe that, regardless of the losses which we suffered as a result of the operation that Israel carried out—that rabid, raping, occupying, dirty, Zionist government—which is rejected historically and by the nation, by humanity and by the nation, because it is a focus of aggression ... that the Zionist government, is not any more ... uh ... in reality, like the one it used to be. It is just groups of Jewish people, who were exposed to the Nazi oppression, and are looking for a safe land away from rubbing shoulders with the Nazi mentality, or falling back under its oppression like what happened before [*Time Stamp: 25:20*]. Now, the Zionist entity is actually, as it was and was intended to be, a pit of aggression and a pit of expansionism. Many entities are working to enable this pit so as to force the Arab nation to accept the reality of this entity and not be in a state of peace as these entities tried to make us believe before 1967. I believe that the human race that is liberated from hidden interests realizes that the Zionist entity is not a case of a poor or a weak entity seeking peace. Rather, they planted in the Middle East an aggressive entity whose main objective is to prevent the Arab nation from achieving any development or progress and to prevent the Arab nation from living on a human level that it deserves. This requires us to explain this and to keep explaining it on as wide a scale as we can. The Zionist entity might explain or justify its previous aggression in many ways but I believe that it will not be convincing for the human race. We have to convert this aggression into very deep lessons as far as their results allow from the state of loss of an important state of development and progress....

All the Arabs must become aware that, even if they all recognize that which is called Israel within the safe borders in completely occupied Arab territories, and if they respect this situation,

and abide by it, or let us say they become submissive to it, the Zionist government will not settle for this situation. The Zionist government will not only in terms of continuing to expand its lands at the expense of Arab sovereignty, it will also interfere in, let's say, a road in Saudi Arabia, and ask that its course be changed because it is a threat to the Zionist entity or it may be a military condition or a situation that Israel does not accept. Moreover, they will impose on the Arabs to drop parts of the educational curricula in universities and high schools, such as teaching chemistry, physics, and astronomy, because these are the types of sciences that might build in the military field a human know-how which might be dangerous to Israel's security. The interference of Israel will extend to other demands, e.g., to change, directly or indirectly, emirs and to replace them with others, or change kings and replace them with others, or change presidents and replace them with others, or change political ministers and replace them with others. Moreover, Israel's demands might spill over to demand changing an elementary school director because he is giving the students a national education and an ethnic education. They will get to the point where they will ask the Arabs to amend their history and re-write it with a new slant or orientation, including the history of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) and his struggle with Bani-Qaynuqa' and Bani al-Nadhir in Medina. This is a true reality. We knew about this reality; and we logically and actually acted by this reality. Unfortunately, however, not all Arabs were aware of these realities with the same depth and comprehensiveness with which we are talking now. [Time Stamp: 30:20]

However, I believe that persons who are connected to their nation are different from those connected to the foreigner. Those connected to the foreigner end up damaged in their mind and conscience. Now, all members of the nation—government officials and citizens—understand, realize, and believe that the future of the struggle of the Arab nation against the Zionist entity is not limited to a few months or a few years. They know that its objective is not [*just*] the expansion, at the expense of the nation, in feet or in kilometers, but is rather a clash of civilizations between the nation and its enemies, which are headed by Israel. Moreover, this struggle is going to last a long period, and the duty of the Arabs is to get prepared for it: scientifically, technically, politically, economically, sociologically, educationally, and culturally.

The losses we incurred because of the airstrike against the Tammuz reactor will be temporary and partial, as compared to the deeper lesson, which came out of these lessons. The most important of these lessons is that technocrats, not just politicians, become aware of the technical requirements necessary for the vital links in building up the State of Iraq specifically, and the Arab states in general, as well as the provision of specific defenses, in addition to overall defense techniques. It is going to become our collective duty in the Arab world to design our dams in such a way as to prevent the Zionist enemy from creating a flood by hitting the dams. In addition, we must design our economic facilities in such a way that will prevent them from becoming an easy mouthful for the Zionist enemy. We must design our people in such a way that they will be able to withstand any challenge, at this level, bear the requirements of the struggle, and manage them, within this vision. Thus, those lessons, which came out as a result of the strike, will be much more important than the losses incurred as a result of the strike, and a base upon which we will work in Iraq, in addition to what we used to understand and be aware of about the nature of the struggle.

We believe that Begin scared the Israeli people by focusing on this issue much more than

necessary for peace and security. If this fact does not show up now, it will show up in the coming years. Also, Begin, as well as others besides Begin, must realize that the strikes that are called "preventive," which prevent the Arab world from progress, development, and change and [cause] a loss of innovative science, are not methods that will prevent the nation from progressing toward its goals. Moreover, this method will not provide the protection that he is talking about for the Jews, whether they are within the land of Palestine, or outside the land of Palestine. But what will provide the protection for them is that they accept the reality which they have to deal with, as a definitively existing reality which is that, sooner or later, the Arab nation will have the right to live in peace and security and to possess complete sovereignty, as well as freedom, in the decision-making process concerning progress, development, and building up a future. [*Time Stamp: 35:07*]

Without this, there is no power on Earth, that would be able to provide protection for this aggression by such aggression. In fact, no power will be able to provide protection for aggression by such aggression at the expense of the Arab nation in the future. The Jews all over the world who are supportive of the Zionist entity will discuss, as will the Zionist Jews themselves, even those within the Zionist entity, the following: If it is as Begin is stating "that Iraq is about to possess atomic bombs" then what will prevent Iraq from doing so? Begin dealt a strike to these facilities to protect the Zionist entity; so what will prevent Iraq, or any other country, from taking full advantage of this strike and its results? Making sure that Israel cannot destroy facilities of this type in the future—what will prevent Iraq, or the Arabs, from experiencing this?

Thus, Begin has placed the Zionist entity in an additional quagmire: psychologically, physically, and politically. He did not provide any solution or way out. He offered no solution to the relations of the Jews within Palestine with the Arab nation now or in future. Moreover, what they destroy today we can build tomorrow, and what they destroy tomorrow we can rebuild after tomorrow. They will be unable to destroy our new civilized urban building, our new scientific journey, and they will not be able to destroy the new progressive human being, his mind and his conscience in the directions we mentioned already. I believe, and I am convinced about this belief, because I constantly deal with it. Those who think they can cause the Iraqis to become uneasy about a regime, who want [to take] their glory and a happy life from them, will fail. Because I have conviction and belief that loyal Iraqis, for 800 years, have been waiting for a time like this. A time when someone will rise from among them—their children and others among their ranks—to help them to get glory, to prosper, to take control of their decision making by themselves, and help them to acquire their full sovereignty, and to run their affairs as free people not linked to any entity, or subject to any other entity. So according to my vision, not an imagined vision, but rather a concrete vision from realities, this is how it is: every time the evil powers become rabid against Iraq, the Iraqis hold even more to their resolve, their great Revolution, and to their independent and great course.

Moreover, a few days ago, or the day before yesterday, I said in a meeting of party officials, and I repeat it now—that every aspect of the Revolution deserves to become, by itself, a religious dogma, even if it were isolated from the whole ideology. Each principle deserves to become a full-fledged religious dogma, which the Iraqis must love to defend, to build and to die for as martyrs in its defense. Take the removal of social injustice: how do we provide all Iraqis with a steady income from the government, including widows, orphans, the handicapped, and those who

cannot work? This by itself, making a society of this type, while recognizing the link between each principle and the wholesome ideology, deserves to become metaphorically a religious dogma, something which Iraqis must defend up to martyrdom. [*Time Stamp: 40:09*]

The policy that states that Iraqis must live in freedom; they will respect the people of the world, and demand respect from the peoples of the world and their governments. Also, that the Iraqi is allowed to set up an independent national political regime with complete freedom, is by itself, while keeping in mind how it relates to other parts of the ideology, this deserves to be a wholesome conviction worthy of defending, up to martyrdom. There is much more than these.

Consequently, those who believe that they can break the power of Iraq, with these follies, with these plots, and with these conspiracies, have great delusions. The Iraqi citizen is our true asset—he is the foundation of our completely very high "building" and our victories, the foundation of our steadfastness, and of our glory. The Iraqi is aware of these facts with his sound mind and his conscience and even before dealing with them in his mind, all its vocabulary, requirements, and circumstances. That is why I hope that you do not despair that we have lost a very important scientific link, in spite of the pain of losing it. I can say this about Iraq: that the nation will benefit immensely ... About Iraq I can say: there is no power that can prevent us from dealing with this subject matter or from possessing the forefront of the scientific and technical field in a sound and correct way that serves our national objectives. Moreover, I say about Iraq—that the lessons we have learned so far we have converted into programs. Let Begin hear this: we convert every lesson into a program; we do not say it just as words. Instead, we convert into a program. Even now, the lessons we learned from this subject, we used to make some decisions, and have started working accordingly; they [*the lessons*] constitute more wealth than the results of the airstrike. We will continue to extract lessons, then convert the lessons into work programs, which will add new glory and make up for the glory that Iraqis lost in such a way that will place Iraq at the service of the Arab nation, *God willing*. I have failed to comment on something, which is the response statement from the Israeli officials, including Begin. Their first airstrike, which happened at the beginning of the war against the Persians, as mentioned by the Iraqi media and in official statements, failed. They witnessed the failures of airstrikes by the Persian Air Force against our nuclear reactors, and reached a conviction that the Persian Air Force was strained and lost much of its equipment. Therefore, they decided that their pilots would train for a long time before executing this mission. Moreover, they decided to make them train for several months; some of them said six months.

**UM1:** Eighteen [*inaudible*].

**Saddam:** No, they said six months.

**UM1:** A second time [*inaudible*].

**Saddam:** If they want to put exceptions to this subject, it is for some objectives that I will mention later. What do they know, what is it about them? I think they were planning not to disclose the airstrike. At the beginning of their training, they were planning to place this airstrike under the guise of war. However, some factors led them to know that we knew that the airstrike came from Israel. The experience of the first airstrike was also one of the lessons. Other entities

also knew about the airstrike, whether before it happened or while it was happening, and that this matter was going to be uncovered. That is why they had to, for an additional element that was due to the coming elections for Begin, make this airstrike public. [*Time Stamp: 45:10*]

Thus, they knew that the war would continue for at least six months, and so they would use this cover to launch the airstrike. The one who is training for six months and enters under the wing of war to hide the airstrike is absolutely sure that the war will continue for an additional six months. This could not have happened in the absence of credible intelligence from the Mossad. There must also be another international entity cooperating with them, not only on the airstrike and intelligence but also in providing them with information about how long the war between Iraq and Iran will continue. We do not have this international entity. Let us set aside all the justifications, because the airstrike is against us. Therefore, it must be present in the Iranian entity. In addition to the other factors, through this, you know why the war was waged, not only to launch an airstrike against the Iraqi nuclear reactor, but also to stop the development of Iraq. And you know why the war is still going on. Thank you! [*Noises of the staff leaving*] May God be with you.

[*The audio file is blank from 46:43 to 52:46*]

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