

1990**Meeting between Saddam and Iraqi Military
Commanders to Discuss Preparations to Defend
against Attacks by Colation Forces after the Gulf
War****Citation:**

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Summary:

This file contains the record of a meeting between Saddam and his military commanders on efforts to defend Iraq from any coalition attacks following the Gulf War. They discuss the UN inspection regime, the diplomatic panorama, the prospects for Russian support, and other issues. They argue that Iraq was stronger after the Gulf War than before.

Original Language:

Arabic

Contents:

Transcript - Arabic

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This 01:07:37 minutes audio file states the minutes of a meeting held between Saddam and military commanders (Mahmud / Qays / Sultan / Ahmad / Muzahm and others).

Saddam headed this meeting, which discussed the preparations to defend and rebut any possible attacks of the coalition forces after the 1st Gulf War and Iraqi retreat from Kuwait. After the usual compliments of both sides the conversation goes on as follows:

Saddam : What is new about the corps?

Voice : Very well, sir.

Sure, over this period, you are following up the political status, and anticipate something; you should prepare your men and weapons and depend on Allah.

We used to hold such meetings to discuss your achievements, problems, listen to you and add to you, but this time we will consider what we have in hand and what is going to happen.

Sure, every commander thinks that he did his utmost, but we will consider what each of you had done, this is our subject today.

Saddam : As you know, we made a deal with the representative of the UN; this deal does not differ from our basic principles

We required that no one would have access to the Ministries except people from the third world and they (UN) amended this condition to "no one from the hostile enemy countries"

The second principle: no inspection of the ministers' offices or their under-secretaries'

The third principle: no inspection of the employees' files

The fourth principle: no perusal of the agricultural plan or grain storage

We required that the UN inspectors should include 2 Russian experts, in an attempt to revive the old role of that dead giant, notifying the Russians that we still estimate them though they are fruitless and useless

When we view all this, we see no intention for armed combat but our duty is to presume that the enemy may attack us in any time, so we must be ready instead of regretting that we did not take the necessary precautions when the combat would happen, claiming that we did not expect it. Our persistent principle is: prepare the army to defend our homeland.

You quite realize that there is nothing to hinder our enemy of attacking us. Only the question is whether he would succeed or not. From the technical point of view he would, but considering the financial issues and competition the enemy faces in the elections, these may constitute a barrier, and that is not because the enemy's people support Iraq or the right and humanity nor because they dislike injustice etc.

After their previous experience with us, which did not achieve its ends regardless of the withdrawal from Kuwait, they might wonder how much forces they need to deploy this time to achieve what they failed to do in the last time.

Some may think that the Iraqi army is now weaker than it was on the nights of 16 and 17, that is true but the Iraqi Army is stronger than what it was like on the days of February 28th. With all its weapons, I see it is stronger.

In consideration of the afore-mentioned, we see that

the enemy needs to deploy a great deal of forces, we wonder how could the enemy finance said deployment or the justifications the enemy would use this time; they justified the last war that Kuwait is an independent country with a royal government.

Through the last war the world countries realized a lot about America and what they discovered copes with our former analyses in February 1990. Long before Kuwait war, we expected America to stand alone in power in the world.

We expected America to behave unwisely when it seizes power and our expectations came true. This change astonished the people of the world that no one dared to stand against America, but Iraq this small country with all its circumstances as a third world country resisted America.

America early revealed its intentions towards war and every one who follows political issues can see that, it seeks domination over Oil to make its economy distinguished from others. We ourselves foresaw that a long time ago.

All these factors began to constitute doubts to many countries at the same time it began to encourage many countries to disagree with America regardless. We are ready to fight, if the enemy intended to attack. Iraq maintained its position and showed flexibility in some issues. The Indian representative did not attend and the Chinese apologized.

One of the audience

:

We did not discuss the issue with him, sir.

Another audience

:

Sir, we talked with him, but he did not come.

Saddam

:

Even the soviets protested against our suggestion that we required the existence of two of them to be included within UN inspectors accusing us of attempting to divide the UN; meanwhile we wished

the UN would reject that request.

In the light of the afore-mentioned, we are sure that war is inevitable; nothing would stop that save they realize that they would not accomplish their goals of waging this war.

The decisive factor is Iraq, without referring to the Arabic role, we know the potentials of the Arab countries and we cannot ask for more. We as leaders for Gehad (Fighting) cannot ask for help but we should proceed on training and morale preparation, as you know everything within Iraqi border is a main factor for victory but what outside Iraq are only secondary factors, we have previous experience in that.

Now I want every commander to tell me how far he went in preparations, for example maintenance of the five planes, 4 artilleries and the air defense of a certain area. you can start Mahmud.

- Mahmud** : Mr. President, the first corps ...
- Saddam** : (Noise) (TC: tea making noise)
- Mahmud** ; Sir, the first corps took the defense position within Kirkuk intersection, also I have other independent divisions I keep them as a reserve and training. I think we achieved 90 % of our goals.
- Saddam** : Then we were right when we said that we should prepare ourselves as if we were fighting the American enemy in these places, it had positive result.
- Mahmud** : Yes, sir
- Saddam** : In addition, this is a better remedy for any confusion as we expect the enemy to attack us from any direction.
- Mahmud** : The other independent divisions completed their training and completed their firing training, the training lasted for 5 days and ended on the 3rd of the month at the attendance of the chief commander a weak ago.

The mechanical division is still in training. I can say that the requirements (arming and supplies) of all the divisions are completed, but we suffer from the absence issue, through my regular meetings with the staff and commanders, I try to raise the spirituals of the soldiers to a higher level.

There are two things may affect the punctuality of the soldiers, transfer and leaves. When a soldier goes on a leave, he is supposed to travel from his unit to his city and that costs him a lot of money he cannot afford. The soldier needs 100 to 150 Iraqi Dinars as a fare to travel from Kirkuk to Al-Basrah and the same sum for return, and this affects the soldier life and we tried vainly every solution to such a problem.

The second point is the lack of vehicles (buses) for transporting soldiers as it were damaged in the previous war.

- Saddam : Then, we can say that the mean problem we face is attendance.
- Mahmud : Yes, sir and it affects the combat ability of the soldier
- Saddam : What is the absence percentage do you face, Mahmud?
- Mahmud : 30 to 35 %, sir
- Saddam : Did that rate of absence increased after the climax in situation?
- Mahmud : No, sir it is the same rate
- Saddam : OK this is a good sign. I think you said that the soldier needs about 100 Dinars
From 100 to 120 Dinars to travel from Kirkuk to Al-Basrah 45 Dinars for traveling from Kirkuk to Baghdad and not less than 50 to 60 Dinars for traveling from Baghdad to Al-Basrah, I tried with the railways...
- Saddam : According to the leave I think they have a return way a month.

- Mahmud** : I tried every means with the railways and they formed a committee headed by the chief of the railways...
- Saddam** : Let us stop here, Mahmud to go on later, after I check with the others. Muzahm, what is the absence percentage do you face?
- Muzahm** : Very low, sir it does not exceed 5%, but it is high in the western area.
- Saddam** : What about the navy?
- Navy Commander** : It does not exceed 55 as most of the soldiers are from the habitants of the area (Al-Nasryah and Al-'Amar)
- Saddam** : What about the 4th Corp?
- 4th Corp commander** : We have an absence percentage of 20% and after we armed forces made a campaign to follow the absentees about 2800 one in the whole army returned.
- Saddam** : What about the second Corp?
- Second Corp commander** : We suffer from the same problem of the first Corp, sir
About 90% of my soldiers is from Al-Basrah and... when I investigate one of the infantry unites I found 175 absentees. When I asked why, they told me that the soldier had no money to return. Now I have 5100 absentees out of the total Corp number.
- Saddam** : In which section do you have this percentage volunteer or conscripts?
- Second Corp commander** : In infantry conscripts, sir
- Saddam** : Then the reason is the same
- Voice** : Sir, when I checked the mechanical brigade I found most of the absentees are from al-Ramadi district, the strange thing that the absence rate rise lately as if it wear mania
- Saddam** : If we assign you travel allowance, would that solve the problem?
- Navy commander** : I think assigning a number of cars for the army would solve a big problem. In addition to the transport, there is another issue: since 1st Gulf war

there is no demobilization of the forces
Saddam : No demobilization!
Navy Commander : Yes, sir there is no demobilization for a year now.
Voice : We sent a message to the Presidency Office...

(TC: Minutes from 00:33:14 to 00:33:41 is blank)

Saddam : We should not stop the demobilization process as there is no use to trap people even in wars, we can do it if we are obliged to. Now it is better that every soldier accomplishes his service should be demobilized, this would encourage others to enroll
Voice : Sir, the demobilization of the entire soldiers altogether would affect us but the regular demobilization and mobilization would create a kind of balance.
Saddam : From now up you make an announcement that specific births would be Mobilized in a specific date, that would motivate people to enroll hoping to be demobilized
Voice : We face a problem after we demobilized 8 birth stages altogether, the staff became very few Now you should do this in accordance with a timetable e.g. we would demobilize the births of ...
Saddam : unless they are absent. we should make some distinctions otherwise this would affect the attendances to say there is no difference between those who attend and the others who are absent
Voice : Yes, sir last time when we demobilized some births regardless who was absent and who attended, that encouraged people not to attend
Saddam : You are right, but this time, we would demobilize the attendees only but the absentees we would demobilize them in accordance with the applicable law. Once again as for the absence issue, if we assign a temporary travel allowance, would that help in solving the problem?
Voice : It would help much in solving it, sir
Saddam : What do you think commander of the Navy?

commander of the Navy : My own point of view, sir is to use the previous system of the railways would be better

Saddam : This with the other

Voice : Does that mean we would add the travel allowance to the soldier salary?

Saddam : No, as it would be temporary for the current circumstances

Ahmad : I see we should not add the allowance travel to the soldier's salary as they will spend it on his personal needs and we would face the same problem of transport once again, but we can give the travel allowance to the command to assign an officer to take over the transportation of the soldiers

Saddam ; Do you mean they contract with a transport company?

Ahmad : Yes, sir we inform them of the departure and return time in that way the soldier would not spend the travel allowance on other aspects.

Saddam : Then study the issue with each other to find the appropriate solution whether to assign money to help them or the corps make a deal with a transport company

Voice : Sir, you said the corps does that mean.....

Saddam : I mean the corps first not the military command or ministry of defense...yes Qays

Qays : Sir, I have a proposal: if we assign a sum of money I would like to connect it with punctuality, namely that the soldier who gets absent should not take the travel allowances.

Saddam : These allowances would not be added to the salary and it must be noted that these allowances are temporary until further notice due to the current transport issue. Yes Sultan

Sultan : I support Lt. General Ahmad's opinion. The policy we used in Jordan with the travel agencies should be used that the leave paper should include an undertaking concerning transport.

Saddam : I do not think the state would be able to bear all the transport expenses as it would cost millions, I believe we would participate by a certain share. Yes

- Voice** : Sir, concerning the attendance issue, it became common phenomena. The lowest absence rate became 5% and more. One of the reasons of this absence is transport in general, I think to handle this issue we need to develop means of transport all over the country, even the common citizen ...
- Saddam** : How, I agree with you but we do not have the financial resources to do so
The second point Sir is related to allocations and assignment of vehicle, I think it is appropriate and we would study it.
- Voice** : The third point: The pursue of saboteurs, we asked the corps command to pursue the saboteurs who are in their respective areas. We have some governorates that do not enjoy discipline; we suggested developing the military discipline authority to include attendance in all the Iraqi governorates.
- Saddam** : Duties should be assigned to every corps within its respective intersections and governorates.
Consequently, corpses should be organized administratively to follow up the undisciplined.
- Voice:** : We asked them to pursue the saboteurs but their resources are poor.
- Saddam** : So, let's enrich their resources, which is financially and practically better
- Voice** : I support the idea of the 2nd corps command concerning establishing a Transport Department at Al-Anbar, which would ensure discipline
- Voice** : Yes, Sir, we operated this department 15 days ago ...
We will increase their resources to help them
- Saddam** : support them bear their responsibilities and have more duties, yields would good.
- Voice** : Sir, Discipline Detachments were distributed 15 days ago on the governors, but they are movable.
- Saddam** : Yes, they should be deployed as ambushes.
- Voice** : I sent movable ambushes to Biji.
- Saddam** : The new task requires us to reconsider the requirements and resources.

- Voice** : We coordinated with the governors of Al-Ta'mim and Salah al-Din and we collected the tribes' chiefs and commanded them to submit the deserters. There is a memo to the party to follow up the deserters.
- Voice** : Sir, you have already agreed on transport by trains, we contacted the officials, they said that more than 50% of the railways are damaged and their resources are underdeveloped.
- Saddam** : We would form a committee of the MIC to study the problems of the railways and improve their facilities.
- Voice** : They claimed that they have problems with the train engines. Now, we need only 50% of their facilities.
- Saddam** : We will focus on that later. Now you can go on
- Mahmud** : **Mahmud**
Sir, as for the vehicles, three parties joined together to destroy the vehicles, these three parties are the coalition troops, the mobs and Abu Khalil himself. Repair campaigns are undergoing but not in the capacity that would enable us to move a brigade from a palace to another. For example, if we have an artillery corps maneuver, we can not deploy but only one battalion only, however everything else is OK. Every problem has indirect means of solutions. For example, if the corps has a problem in maneuver with medium and heavy weapons and men transport from place to another is limited due to transport condition, the solution is to fight in our locations and we should prepare our soldiers for this option. The alternate option is to activate field intelligence to explore the attitudes of the enemy. Consequently, enforcement would anticipate the enemy actions, go on Mahmud.
- Saddam** : Reserve need to be near the locations. As for the other issue such as training, they are good. For example, the corps conducted division training with a good level, thank you, Sir.
- Mahmud** : **Mahmud**
- Saddam** : Yes, ...
- Voice** : Sir, as for training, there is a problem, when we conduct a division or brigade training, some commanders try to adjourn it for some reason,

- claiming that resources are poor. You know, Sir, that training is important.
- Saddam** : Do not respond to them
- Voice** : Yes, Sir. We would not
- Saddam** : Training would restore land, the untrained loses his land. We agreed upon that since the Iraqi-Iranian war.
- Voice** : As for us, within 10-15 days we will finish the training of a division and start the training for another.
- Saddam** : Very good, this would allow some time to relax.
- Voice** : Commanders take training issues seriously, which is a positive sign.
- Saddam** : Those engaged in many wars, realize how important training is, yes Lt. General Iyad.
- Iyad** : 1st corps commander viewed the problem of vehicles repair & Maintenance, in fact the process is in progress in accordance with the potentials, however, there are many vehicles idle or damaged a result of the raids and this is a big problem. We face another big dilemma in relation to supplying and securing tires, when we contracted for tires the previous price was 3000 Dinars, it went up to 6000 Dinars and a weak ago it went up to 13000 Dinars.
- Saddam** : Sure whenever its price goes up you lose it quickly, no one can see 1300 Dinars and
- Voice** : Sir, we ask the Ministers of Commerce and that of Industry to ...
- Saddam** : We will give these things due care within the next 20 days
- Voice** : Yes, sir and Lt. General Hussein Kamil declared the same in a press conference; he said that one or more millions would be available in markets ...
- Saddam:** : Then things would be all right. Yes Qays
- Qays** : Sir, as for the commanders under our responsibility, we have two divisions; one located by the Iranian borders from Al-Shihabi to Khanaqin, we control that division only from border units in accordance with the agreement with the UN, but we face the problem of the increasing sneakers from July until

now. The second division from Khanaqin and to the north, which is an active area for the saboteurs. Our troops there are the 34th infantry Division with an armor brigade from the third force, in addition to the third division with 3 infantry brigades. We took our precautions in the light of what is new, you ordered us to stand in our poison, and therefore we deployed our troops in accordance with that.

After we knew that, the 1991 rebellion may re-occur and it is possible that the Iranian would use the axes of Al-Munzryah and Zayn Al-Qus to threaten Khanaqin. We took our precautions and moved some of our armor battalion reserve to the north of Khanaqin. We also positioned tank battalion on Helwan Bridge and excavated defense trenches so when they seize Khanaqin, it would not affect us and we can liberate it easily afterwards.

We excavated some defense positions to put an end to sneaking attempts and put an end to our soldiers fleeing away. We dug a position for regiment besides Drawshka opening as it is the only way for anybody to take, and saboteurs in the pervious events used it. We moved tank battalion to Miandly where there is some danger. I asked the RG commander in Al-Kut to send radio and liaison officer to be close to our troops in case of something happened.

