

PRESIDENT SADDAM HUSSEIN
INTERVIEW WITH U.S. CONGRESSMAN STEPHEN SOLARZ

President, Saddam Hussein said he believed in the existence of an independent Palestinian state accepted by the Palestinians and it is also necessary to have a state of security for the Israelis.

President Hussein was talking to Mr. Stephen Solarz, member of the U.S. Congress Foreign Relations Committee during a meeting held in Bagdad on last August 25, the text of which was released in Bagdad on 2nd of January, 1983.

He told Mr. Solarz no single Arab official includes in his policy now the so-called destruction of Israel or wiping it out of existence, but there is not one Arab who believes in co-existence with an aggressive and expansionist entity.

President Hussein warned the U.S. not to ask the Palestinians to recognize Israel before Israel recognizes the Palestinian rights and their defined state if the U.S. really wants to justly solve the Middle East crisis.

The President termed Camp David Accord as a hateful name when he was asked by the Congressman on the possibility of expanding the accords scope to solve the Palestinian issue. He said all Arab countries, except Egypt, rejected it so why do you cling to a hateful name and incomplete content . . . The U.S. is able to make Camp David Accord succeed, but it will commit a grave mistake if it forced the Arabs to recognize Israel in the prevailing circumstances, when the Arabs are weak, and if it wanted to solve the question comprehensively, the U.S. has to seek a solution which does not make the Arabs feel the solution being imposed on them.

Answering a question whether it was practical if the U.S. insisted on establishing constitutional political relations

between Jordan and the West Bank within a solution to the problem, President Hussein said this will not solve the question, but it creates problems between the Jordanian and the Palestinians and will develop into a more dangerous situation.

On Iraqs normalizing relations with Israel-if agreement was reached and Syria and the PLO established diplomatic and normal relations with Israel, President Hussein said we must not jump to conclusions, let this come first and then ask us and in politics there are no static or ultimate stands or laws in as far as serving principles and strategies.

President Hussein, on relations with Egypt, said Egypt without the Arabs becomes a communist (country) because you (the Americans) cannot feed the Egyptians and your companies, anyhow, seek profit . . . You cannot feed the poor but, the Arabs can make use of Egypt as an Arab Egypt and at the same time Egypt can benefit from the Arab economic and commercial depth.

On Iraq-U.S. relations, President Hussein told the American Congressman you have to re-study the approaches which led you think, until the past three or four years, that we are part of the Soviet strategy . . . You say that the regime in Iraq has changed, but I am part of this regime since 15 years and did not change from a Soviet person to an Iraqi one.

He pointed out that until now, we hate U.S. policy in the region and feel unsafe towards it, but at the same time we find it in our interest to have an American presence if another foreign big power exists in the region.

President Hussein accused the U.S. of adopting imbalance and an unjust attitude in favour of Israel yet, President Hussein informed Congressman that he discussed with Iraqi leadership the restoration of relations with the U.S. before

the war with Iran broke out because it is incorrect that the non-aligned and independent Iraq keeps its relations severed with one of the two big powers in the world and the idea was frozen because we did not want our people think that we have restored the relations because we needed the U.S.

On the Iraq-Iran war, President Hussein accused several U.S. allies of supplying Iran with weapons besides Israel without naming them, but he said some of them are members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), who extend to Iran weapons, equipment and experience . . . They neither like Iran nor they are against the Arabs, but our analysis is that they have got the green light from or on orders of the U.S. so that America keeps its relations with Iran open on Iraqs account.

President Hussein asked what does the West want? and answered, the legitimate thing which we don't oppose, or maybe it is for our interest to stress upon, is the expansion of trade relations and economic cooperation between the West and the regions countries, it is legitimate also that the regions countries don't fall in the opposite strategy or to be satellites.

During the 1950's, President Hussein said, the U.S. did not have the ugly face, it was England and France because of their imperialist presence in the region, now--as you see we have excellent relations with France. When Arab countries talk about their relations with France, they talk proudly while even your dear friends, when they talk about their relations with the U.S. they talk in a low voice.

President Hussein told the U.S. Congressman you have to know the regions characteristics. You belittle even your friends when you asked them to be satellites without will or unable to make decisions, and in this case they will be even

unable to have any effect inside their countries, yet during the past three years you tried to change this behavior with your friends, but the change was in shape only.

On U.S.-Israel relations, President Hussein said the Arabs don't aspire, and they even must not aspire, to see the U.S. sides with them in the Arab-Israeli conflict, but they have the right to demand the Americans to have a balanced attitude. All the Arabs on one hand and Israel on the other hand.

President Hussein told the Congressman is it possible that Israel does all what it did in Lebanon and by what law they did so? Is it acceptable that the Arabs realize that the U.S. which created Israel and continued to supply it with all means of military and non-military might is unable to prevent Israel from hurting the region without any justification. If the Arabs believed in this it would not be in the interest of the U.S., if they believed the U.S. is an accomplice, it would also not be in the interest of the U.S.

Therefore, President Hussein pointed out, your friends have done much harm to the U.S. because they didn't tell you the truth even it was a bitter truth lest that you commit other mistakes.

President Hussein gave the U.S. Congressman an example of Iraq's true friendship and said in 1970 I visited the Soviet Union and at that time Iraq's financial situation was bad and we owed the Soviet Union some 34 million Iraqi dinars. I asked them to postpone the payment until a further year, but they refused. At that time we have had our conflict as young members of the Arab Baath Socialist Party with the Communist Party of Iraq and still were believing that the Soviet Union acts in a different way with the poor countries. I was unable to

persuade the Soviets to post-pone the debt.

President Hussein added that he told the Soviets when I return to Iraq I will even sell the coat which I am wearing to pay your debt immediately and we paid the debt, but five years later, the Soviet Ambassador to Iraq came to me asking for additional oil supplies which amounted to some 250 million U.S. dollars to be paid a year later. I agreed and asked the Ambassador to tell his government the way we look to friendship.

On the Soviet and U.S. attitudes towards the Iraq-Iran war, President Hussein said both countries say they did not want the continuation of the war and asked is it possible that two oil countries in the Gulf, the main centre of the West's interests, continue warring for two years and the U.S. and the Soviet Union want it to end? The U.S. and the Soviet Union are able to act seriously and have real effect on the side which does not want to stop fighting, otherwise how does the war go on for two years and 90 per cent of Iran's weapons is Western?

President Hussein refused to answer a question on the current evaluation of Iraqi-Soviet relations within the framework of the Iraqi-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation and told the U.S. Congressman this is something else. We discuss it with the Soviets.

President Hussein reiterated Iraq's attitude towards the Palestinians and all other Arabs saying that Iraq's ideology is that any Arab individual without an identity could make Iraq as his haven. The President pointed out that Iraq is against international terrorism, but if a Palestinian or any other Arab person living in Iraq committed an act of terrorism, Iraq would not be responsible for this.

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President Hussein expected that terrorism will be increased by the Palestinians after leaving Beirut, particularly if they feel desperate in finding a solution to their problem. They are now spread all over the world after Beiruts events and Israeli crime there.

The American Congressman asked President Hussein on the relations with Syria and the reasons behind the tense relations. President Hussein said it was a complicated issue and we rather prefer to discuss Arab matters among ourselves and not with the foreigners. Anyhow, when there is an Arab interest or human interest, we will be generous in discussing our relations with any other Arab country.

On oil production, President Hussein said Iraq now is exporting his oil through the Turkish pipeline only, but when the war comes to an end both Iraq and Iran need to produce more and this will naturally affect the market.