

1980
**Meeting between Saddam Hussein and His Cabinet
Discussing a Plan to Develop Iraqi Cities**

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Summary:

Saddam and his ministers discuss housing and urban development in Baghdad and other Iraqi cities.

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Key: UM = Unidentified Male Speaker.

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

Taha Yassin Ramadan: Mr. President, the first phase will deal with putting into place landownership and housing rules and conditions in the city of Baghdad. In executing your order, Sir, and for the purpose of preserving the heritage of the city of Baghdad, we have decided to discuss the rules and conditions to grant citizens a landownership or housing from the state and to complete transactions of property transfer – [*Interrupted*]

Saddam: [*Inaudible*]. We have discussed the issue of Baghdad in this meeting, Baghdad along with other major Iraqi cities, which are becoming crowded without planning or rules, and its risks from the military side [*perspective*] or social or economic side, and whether this is due to the displacement of people from rural areas, or the nature of their varied accrued social traditions that are contradictory at times, or if this is a way of facing an atomic strike in the future by crowding in one location. [*Time Stamp: 5:05*]

All the capitals of the world, for example, if we take Moscow, everyone will pick up their belongings and go stay in Moscow. All people have something called social planning; thus, there are rules that govern the people when they move from one place to another, and when they live there. In our situation, everyone residing in rural areas picks up their belongings and head to Baghdad. Consequently, we have those who illegally build huts, tin dwellings, thus, the state is compelled to correct the inhomogeneous social situation and the economic situation, because we do not approve of having a palace next to a hut. This situation is not right. Based on this, for example, there are rules for the military, an officer, and a soldier is granted a piece of land in his birthplace; why can't this rule apply to everyone in the society? Why do we apply it to the military and not apply it to the entire society? On what basis, a person comes from the rural area to compete against another person native of Baghdad, whose uncles, mother, father, and ancestors are from Baghdad. The person brings his belongings and obtains a piece of land, while the other becomes homeless. Why is that? The facilities granted by the state, and add further, even in the private sector, we should assign a timeframe and proceed with schedule gradually to avoid the breakdown of the social situation, because the social situation in our country requires some sort of treatment.

I asked the Ministry of Higher Education to study ways of treating boarding schools and female students who come from Basra to Baghdad without the care of their parents. Without [*inaudible*], while feeling homesick and bored, along with strange and extraordinary stories that are told about this issue and the same takes place when a girl from al-Sulaymaniyah [*goes*] to Basra and when a girl from Mosul [*goes*] to al-Kufah. Why? Let's get the girl of Basra to study in Basra, the girl of al-Kufah to study in al-Kufah, and the girl of Mosul in Mosul. If we need to provide a climate for the men, the situation is a little bit easier than the situation for the girls. This is a situation analogous to that of a rural girl that comes from an enclosed society, whose eyes are closed, and when her face is unveiled, she starts going through hardship. So to avoid accusation of social backhandedness, she would believe that anything dictated on her by her colleagues, which practically [*means*] she is trying to avoid the traditions that we believe in; imagine that when she rejects them as if she were rejecting a civilized and civil state that is elevated; therefore, she considers herself backward, and she even feels ashamed to say whether this is

acceptable or not, rejected or not. This is the situation we have in the rural areas, but the cities you have something else. It is possible that you did not see, hear or feel this, but I heard about it and saw it, because I heard a lot of stories about it through meetings, [inaudible]. I propose as a general principle a distribution of lands to the Iraqis [inaudible] as a benefit from the state. For example, let's say the distribution of lands in the city of al-Mu'tasim [inaudible]. We should say that anyone who resided in Baghdad for more than 20 years will have the priority. This person's roots are severed, he abandoned his previous situation, came to Baghdad, and adapted to this life along with his children and family for last 20 years.

[Time Stamp: 10:07]

Taha Yassin Ramadan: The Department of Housing will build [inaudible].

Saddam: The Housing will build for the citizens. I, personally, if I want to sell a piece of land, I will carry the burden of [inaudible]. And if that is not the case, what do you think if we say [inaudible]?

Taha Yassin Ramadan: [Inaudible].

Saddam: Without these rules, the continuation of providing government services to build housing units and distribute land in Baghdad will practically lead Baghdad and Iraq entirely to a catastrophe. You will bring 5 or 7 million from Iraq, we place Iraq in Baghdad with people from those who work rural side, in the city, in the province etc. then the Israeli jet will fly over, or will fly over you. I say this [inaudible]. We have talked about this in the past, and a comrade comes and talks about it, then delve into social issues through intellectual and abstract explanations, meaning not intellectually enriching. And we will do, we will do, we will do until the situation of Baghdad becomes [inaudible]. I propose this issue about the city of Baghdad first for discussion.

Taha Yassin Ramadan: [Inaudible].

Saddam: The issue of people breaching the law and applying the law.

Taha Yassin Ramadan: Any city or province that is established will have to abide by the rules, before anyone starts digging, before living, [they] must abide by the law [inaudible].

Saddam: I will do the same. It will take two months. The city of al-Tabuq and provinces [inaudible] goes through the region of al-Khutut which is on the region of al-Tabuq and to see [inaudible]. To support what you are saying, when a say a situation -- [Interrupted]

Taha Yassin Ramadan: From the humanitarian point of view, what do we do? [Inaudible] many incidents take place on a daily basis.

Saddam: This is the idea. It has nothing to do with the civilization of Baghdad, but it is a social issue. We expand the provinces also and determine the capacity, the district must determine the

capacity along with the region, and in parallel with those facilitating measures should be taken concerning rural areas.

Taha Yassin Ramadan: Mr. President, if you allow me, to facilitate the discussion of the brothers this issue is a completion of what Your Excellency proposed 4 to 5 years ago. The issue that was discussed before two sessions of the Council of Ministers and the previous issue a few months ago that is being enacted upon seriously, and we hope that we will introduce something practical related to this. The issue of concern, the first subject regarding the agricultural complex [Time Stamp: 15:00], meaning, determining the areas of those complexes along with the role of the state in providing services, such as extending routes, electricity, water, and the distribution of parcels to the citizens, along with determining the minimum and the maximum and to cease services for areas that are not included in these complexes. Even though we have been working on this for a few months, we are making strides, as this work is not very easy. The work is in a new phase, but I am optimistic about the principles, the bases, and the ways of establishing the rural complexes and the type of services by the state; therefore, we will bring people from outside to build.

As for the Iraqis, they will be approved and go to the Mortgage Company to obtain a loan without interest and start building, in addition, we will provide him with a blueprint for free, according to your orders, Sir. During that meeting, you gave instructions about determining the expansion of Iraqi cities, specifically, Baghdad, Basra, Ninewah, and determining new provincial areas that go along with the population growth and where to put the people. Also, this Committee is made up of their Excellency the Ministers, a group from the Technical Committee, and according to the agreed upon principles based on your instructions, Sir. During the meeting it was proposed that two cities that feed from Baghdad at a distance of 30 to 50 kilometers along with formulas determine the expansion of Baghdad. This is as a background that is going away and will end. But one very important thing, indeed, will remain presently and even when the idea of determining the cities. Sir, you said these instructions must be implemented such as planning for the expansion of the industrial or agricultural and other areas. The operation of moving people from one city to another, from rural areas to Baghdad, the operation of land distribution or ownership, if it is not based on rules, it will create problems even in implementing the idea that we will be putting forward about determining the rural areas and the cities. [Inaudible]. We will see people in major congestion and a number of people within Baghdad [will be] unable to purchase and to rent, while there are outsiders who are comfortably situated. This is the situation that we will witness regarding expansion, especially in the case of determining the expansion; right now it is not identified, that is why there are those who come to crowd existing cities.

We have to put foundations into place, this in my opinion not just simply to take ideas that we discuss here, we should review the experiments of various countries that were able to preserve their central cities for a period of 30 years. Meaning, countries without problems, able to determine the percentage of growth of the capital cities in particular, that will not surpass 10 percent in any cases at all, according to principles and instructions on who gets out and who gets to work even with temporary wages. I am not saying we should apply the same experience that the citizen could find complicated, we must be aware of it; in addition, our reality [inaudible]. And this, Mr. President, must be linked to several factors, not only the first issue, but to the issue of land, work, buying a house, and to find ways to conduct ourselves, such as specific complaints

in the context of studying the legality of breaching the rules and who will carry the burden in the event of breaching the law, Mr. President -- *[Interrupted]*

Saddam: They do not abide by it.

Taha Yassin Ramadan: They do not abide by it, what do they do?

Saddam: Mr. Governor confiscated a piece of land and for 4 to 5 years it has been sitting there under the sun.

Taha Yassin Ramadan: Yes Sir. This law must apply to him, applied on the administrative employee who is executing *[the law]*.

Saddam: *[Inaudible]* we will make a decision on it, *[Time Stamp: 20:00]* and if we make mistakes 5 percent *[of the time]*, we will correct it later. Dwellings that are sitting there empty; whose house is this? This is the house of Dahwi. Whose house is this? This is the house of I don't know. Whose house is this? This is the house of the Pasitche, while a group of farmers are waiting; why do we have to accept such a situation? Let's confiscate them and distribute them among the poor people. He can come live in one area and harvest another area; we would be very pleased with that, but to sit there waiting 5 years, 7 years, and *[inaudible]* 20 years.

Taha Yassin Ramadan: On this occasion, Sir, we have enacted, if one enters into a contract, he cannot withdraw from it for a period of two years, and we say if one owns a garden during 5 years... property law *[inaudible]*, a two-year contract.

Saddam: All types of contracts, due to the lack of implementation, I do not know, by the Farmers Association, governors, regional directors *[inaudible]* so and so must *[inaudible]*; the brother wants to be good toward one, and does not know that he needs to be good toward 14 others *[inaudible]*.

Taha Yassin Ramadan: Mr. President, all the principles that you proposed will be taken into utmost consideration for the background of the group of provinces, and determining the expansion of the cities, but if this is established without principles of determining the flow of citizens from rural areas to the city, and vice versa, and from one city to another, I believe that the implementation will be very difficult. This issue must be studied with precision in conjunction with the people who are... by examining similar experiments of this type. Mr. President, we are not applying experiments of this type in determining this drift, and I do not believe that the implementation will be only reached through prevention, there must be regulations and principles that the citizens must be aware of; therefore, the implementation process will be very easy.

UMI: In addition to the points that were introduced by the Vice President *[Taha Yassin Ramadan]*, we must introduce rules. I propose that it will entail a legal wording regarding a

dwelling system, landownership, and housing in the capital, as you proposed, Sir, as a first guiding step in the future in organizing housing and the transfer to other cities according to the regional situations of each city. And according to the instructions of Mr. Vice President, a special committee must be formed to study this situation, to study other experiments, and to prepare a Bill of Law. I propose that this Bill of Law be discussed before the National Council and must be given sufficient time to be reviewed by the members of the National Council; who are divided into sections from Baghdad, from provinces that are suffering from similar issues in order for the law to mature and becomes applicable -- *[Interrupted]*

Saddam: To make the law pass in the National Council, you need to say that whoever is not from Baghdad, *[inaudible]*.

Taha Yassin Ramadan: Sir, *[inaudible]*, the National Council is considered a member in a central institution, and the law does not apply to him like other citizens when he is elected by the people. The representation within the capital remains in the hand of a son from the capital. This is like the minister, the deputy minister, who is from Basra or Mosul, the 20 years law does not apply to him, because the state determines that because of the mission is of a central nature. Those represent 150; 200 to 300 within Iraq. They do not create a problem, and in principle, and they have priority over the majority of actual housing projects. Two-hundred or 300 persons do not create a problem; those who do are hundreds of thousands of people, the Iraqi citizens who migrated to the capital without any excuse, and without any measures taken.

[Time Stamp: 25:02]

Saddam: There is no one who comes to the capital without excuse. But you as an official must be in control of the situation. If he does not see that he will benefit from the capital, why would he come to the capital? -- *[Interrupted]*

Taha Yassin Ramadan: Without excuse, we can say, social and economic excuse.

Saddam: Central, central *[inaudible]*.

UM2: Mr. President, I have two remarks about the points that my colleague, Comrade Taha introduced, I hope that they will be beneficial, due to the lack of time, and in order to avoid an overlapping that will create problems regarding the completion of the mission of the group of farmers. In the two laws -- *[Interrupted]*

Saddam: Is the heat on? No... you know what to do? Turn off all *[inaudible]*.

UM2: That is what is causing the heat...

Saddam: Turn them off...

Taha Yassin Ramadan: The two Agricultural reform laws that took place after July, Law 30 and Law 117, they stipulate the determining of the distribution to allocate farm lands *[inaudible]*. The distributing of farm lands in Iraq stopped at the end of 1974, there is not a land that is not

distributed, except farms that are not owned by farmers; all the lands now are inhabited and have farmers, they are ready. The demarcating of the villages in those lands has been achieved, according to the determined rules based on several factors, and among which, the village must be [ready] and not distributed to anyone, not to the state, and not to the government. The issue is determined based on the following consideration: 1) It must be medium in size, according to the surface designated by the district or the district in charge of housing, in charge of agricultural housing, at a distance of 7 kilometers to 2 kilometers or one kilometers or the maximum allowed; meaning the surfaces must be relatively closer in size for the farmers who are going to reside in the village. It is not possible to have a village with mediocre agriculture.

Saddam: Meaning, general principles for a specific location.

Taha Yassin Ramadan: Meaning, general principles that stipulate [inaudible] to bring the area together [inaudible], what can we do?

Saddam: It shouldn't be this way, practically, it can't be.

Taha Yassin Ramadan: [Inaudible] for example, District A has 300 farmers with 1,000 dunams [a measurement of land equal to 1,000 sq. m], and with 20,000 dunams, the village is selected on the basis of an average of 20,000 dunams.

Saddam: Not enough, not enough.

Taha Yassin Ramadan: Mr. President, Mr. President -- [Interrupted]

Saddam: [Inaudible]. Take the project of al-Musayyaf -- [Interrupted]

Taha Yassin Ramadan: [Inaudible] ready and designated on the maps, if there is one of the villages, all the villages that were indicated in the agricultural reform. If there is one village distributed or used by the government, it must take place through a central decision, through a decision from the President of the Republic, meaning, through a legal decision.

Saddam: Its location is determined.

Taha Yassin Ramadan: Its location and its surface are determined on the map. And authenticated on the Maps of Distribution, and the Committee can go back to those maps in the Directorate of Distribution in the Administration of Agricultural Reforms to examine those locations.

[Time Stamp: 30:00]

Saddam: We are talking about organizing the villages, we are a group of farmers, from '58 [inaudible; laughing].

Taha Yassin Ramadan: This is not implemented; it is implemented in a very small number of villages that were reformed.

UM3: Meaning, that are not legally exploited. [Voiceover]

Taha Yassin Ramadan: Those encroached upon and not exploited legally, it is legally designated by the government, but not used legally. Mr. President, [inaudible] the committee in charge of [inaudible] in Baghdad, the cities [inaudible] in Baghdad, the present situation of Baghdad today. The expansion of population density and the directions of the population density in rural fronts and each rural front is limited to four fronts, and each front has its own conditions, meaning, each region has its own particular condition. The conditions of the eastern region are known. For example, al-Ratibiyah area, [Inaudible] region, al-Ratibiyah's available land [inaudible], the region of Ibn-Sa'd passing through the city of Baghdad by the old highway. And we take the area of Abu-Ghrayb, the western region, the northern region also [inaudible]. We must take into consideration, when building these cities, the population concentration in that part of Baghdad, and we must treat the front, for example, facing the city of al-Thawrah where one million people live, differently than the front adjacent to the city of al-Kazimiyah which is originally considered a neighborhood further from the original Baghdad. The issue of the south, south of Baghdad, which is al-Karrasin, a part of the Tal'-Muhammad, bordered by the camp Diyala, and other cities are different from the area of Abu-Ghrayb. The purpose of building a city is to reduce the population density in Baghdad, to give breathing space for Baghdad. It must be built in a location that takes into consideration the population density. We shouldn't build it in Abu-Ghrayb or in the region of Abu-Ghrayb and have people move there from al-Thawrah, or we decrease migration to al-Thawrah. It must be built in al-Thawrah District to ease the population density on al-Thawrah, and to be able to sustain the migration to al-Thawrah. In terms of using this breathing space based on the present conditions, for example, the process of movement of people from Baghdad in the event there is an atomic attack against the city. We want 2 million in Baghdad, and those escape areas to sustain a part of those people fleeing, in addition to existing villages, farmers housing and [inaudible].

[Time Stamp: 35:00]

Saddam: The Minister of the Local Government. Focus on the first point.

The Minister of Local Government: Yes, Sir. Mr. President, in the beginning of my speech, I propose a principle in coordination with the principle that you proposed, meaning as the basis of the idea. The first proposal is that the principle that you introduced must be applied on houses that are sold in the auction, so it will only be sold to the people of Baghdad. This is the principle that you introduced, because these houses will be sold to all citizens without any condition, except one condition, which is to pay it off truly, Mr. President, this has become a business field, the people with money buy a number of these units under assumable names, and cheat in order to make business out of it. The purpose of selling these houses is to make them available to the citizens who do not have dwellings; this is the basis of the idea, and not for economic benefit. But, Sir, the only condition is that a citizen must pay the house off upon purchasing it.

Saddam: There is no condition that the person and his wife own the dwelling.

UM3: There is no condition, Sir. The Minister of Finance could give us an idea about the housing in [inaudible]. Is there any condition?

The Minister of Finance: No, Sir. There is no condition [inaudible] to buy one house.

UM3: Mr. President, we should at least apply this principle on the houses that are sold, this is based on your principle, Sir, that anyone who wants to buy these houses must -- [Interrupted]

Saddam: What is the number of these houses?

UM3: A lot, Sir. It is not a question of number, but any person who buys must not do it for a business purpose. The price that they charge is much higher than the one charged by auctioneers. Those who presently own land have stopped selling them and decided to sell in the auction rather than the previous way. There are parcels of land in [Inaudible] in the region of 'Ali Bin-Sha'b that were sold for 125 dinars, meaning higher than the land in al-Karradah.

Saddam: Where?

Minister of Finance: In the neighborhood of Shuma behind [Inaudible] eastern, meaning al-Sh'ab neighborhood, it sold for 125. The people of the region tend -- [Interrupted]

Saddam: What do you mean people of the region? They are entrepreneurs. He buys for 125 -- [Interrupted]

Minister of Finance: He cannot sell it.

Saddam: He will buy it and sell it.

Minister of Finance: Because he will have to pay 75% in taxes on the value. And no one can buy it and sell it, because the taxes are 75% of the value, and this is the highest tax percentage that exists.

UM3: What the Minister of Finance said could be accurate, meaning that the sale takes place between two days and ten days. I would like to stress that despite the existing regulations, 80% of the houses sold are becoming a business one way or another. We are not concerned about whether it is sold or not.

Saddam: The black market, the human brain failed to fight it with the exception of abundance. This one will come and will not sell it and [inaudible].

[At 39:44, the audio changes into a different discussion that is not directly related to the above subject matter]

UM4: To admit about 3,500 students, including the plan of admission from the Establishment of Technical Institute. It could be based on the new orientation; we will take them to either al-Fallujah or al-Kut or Wasit -- *[Interrupted]*

Saddam: Meaning, to send them the neighboring areas *[Time Stamp: 40:00]*, another district with job availability. To an area where they see people dressed up nicely, and can be influenced.

UM5: Do you mean the Establishment of Technical Institute?

UM4: Yes, the Establishment of Technical Institute.

Saddam: You study it, in Baghdad there are enough Institutes.

UM4: Mr. President. And from the same logic, any new school faculty must not be in Baghdad, but at other university branches outside the provinces in Salah-al-Din, Mosul, and Basra, and any new school faculty must be established in the neighboring areas, but nothing should be built in Baghdad. Thank you, Mr. President.

Saddam: Comrade Samir. A point comes to mind that we did not think about. Baghdad; we all love Iraq, one atom of it is equivalent to one atom of enriched uranium, but also Baghdad has a special stature, not only historically, all the capitals of the world look at their glory, civilization, and it reflects upon the entire country. When we say Baghdad, we mean the entire Iraq, but also when we say Baghdad, I do not want the Arabs to get upset, we mean the entire Arab nation, and when we say the people of Iraq, we mean the people of the nation through the image that is depicted.

UM5: Not all capitals are of historic significance.

Saddam: This is one of the reasons that used to be posed during a period of time, which is the possibility of transferring the capital similar to what took place in Washington; the people of Washington do not have something similar to Baghdad that now has a name *[reputation]*; unlike before when they *[people of that era]*, now there is communication. So, the interest in Baghdad by all the comrade Ministers, the leaders of the party must try to show an interest in Baghdad; anyone with an idea about the beauty, the prominence of Baghdad must not neglect this area. And truly, the majority of the comrade Ministers discussed the affairs of Baghdad during the symposium that was convened. Regarding the high-rise buildings, whenever there is an empty space, we erect a building; the system of these building is something new, we must put into place something that will preserve its special feature. For example, let's take an aerial image of Baghdad, and we will say let's put these buildings in this corner, in that corner and that corner, thereby having spaces between the corners, meaning it should add beauty to Baghdad but generally not something that disturbs the glamour that the city of Baghdad is based on. I did not pay attention to this fact, but it came to mind this week. Since it is new, why don't we build something beautiful instead of something affecting the main glamour of the city of Baghdad, and we should open a symposium about this *[inaudible]* after a month.

There are things that are taking place now, first the forthcoming generations are going to be as

strong as us, we need to make decisions [*Time Stamp: 45:00*] about this, and we don't want someone from the Parliament making a mess by not following the idea. Then, we are on a new ground, if we put an unpleasant situation on the shoulder of the forthcoming generations a sad case that they will blame us for it forever. From now on, we must work on these new issues, meaning that we organize studies, take aerial images, and integrate these buildings as something that adds beauty to and not affect the glamour of the city of Baghdad, and in terms of designs that are well developed for the city. But I want this to be applied in general, not only in the case of the capital, but also those built by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, and the citizen as well. Then we must say these buildings must not exceed a certain number of floors, these areas cannot have such a facade only with the approval of such and such -- [*Interrupted*]

UM3: Excuse me, Sir. Regarding the issue of -- [*Interrupted*]

Saddam: [*Inaudible*] Samir, when he was talking about Baghdad; this is the situation that will make Iraq rise up as a country. And when a person speaks about the country, he should recall all that is [*Inaudible*]. He can devote himself, he can work, his innovations become unusual. And his soul will live on top of earth.

UM3: Regarding Baghdad and the transfer of housing outside of the city was a proposed issue, which compelled officials in the government whether they should keep Baghdad as the capital or they should transfer it. This is in addition to a natural ignorance of the role of Baghdad in terms of the history of the nation and the history of the world, which must awaken anew, and the new construction, during your existence and that of the party, must be high, strong and challenging to the time, suffice to see our monuments standing up with this type of [*inaudible*]. Regarding the height of -- [*Interrupted*]

Saddam: So, why do you have the second paper up there?

UM3: Sir, regarding the measurements of the heights of the buildings in Baghdad, it is really specified in the main blueprint of the city. If we are satisfied with the blueprint, the issue will be; how are we going to implement it beginning with the state and ending with the citizen? We should see who is going to initiate first this process of law that legislate and decides from the highest level authority in the government and the government itself. If we were take al-Khulafa' Boulevard, Sir, al-Khulafa' Boulevard has been open and it is in the way that we are witnessing. We must take this issue and study area by area in the Baghdad region that way we have a unified measurement for the street or the region. We have in fact hired one of the most prominent consulting firms in the world, and based on your instructions, I remember your visit to al-Khulafa' Boulverad, where you stopped in front of the Mosque.

Saddam: That was a plan that was revised, I remember it, but that as an idea, was the subject of this account?

UM3: Yes Mr.... Sir. We have seen in reality a scenario on the same grounds regarding the those who act illegally; and as you mentioned, Sir, at the beginning of the discussion, there are issues that... compelling issues [*Time Stamp: 50:00*] that we must find a solution to it. When we have a group of people living illegally in a region, we must find a legal solution to improve their

new situation. So we came to the case of al-Khulafa' Boulverad, which used to be al-Jumhuriyah Boulevard, [*inaudible*] and now al-Khulafa' Boulevard that will extend, meaning it will be as great as the Arab Caliphs during their governance and prosperity. Therefore, Sir, we hired a consulting firm and Your Excellency, you reviewed the blueprint of the Boulevard, the heights, the style of the facades of the buildings, and from this idea, we headed to another area of Baghdad, in the same way we will determine the height, the nature of buildings, and others. Naturally, this is not secluded from the blueprint of the city of Baghdad that you, Sir, have ordered and it is being implemented.

Saddam: [*Inaudible*] al-Kazimiyah.

UM3: Excuse me, Sir.

Saddam: You are going...

UM3: Yes, Sir. It is part of the enterprise, which is al-Sardad, it is round like a plate, and forms a transparent path that is not used by cars but by pedestrians only, which adds some sort of relaxation, beauty, sanctity, and reverence to the...to the place. Also, there will be, Sir, other establishments such as markets, stores, and service establishments, along with the ideas that you mentioned, which is to have some educational establishments next to religious centers in al-Kazimiyah region. In addition to that, we will conduct a study of the entire region, because the region that is closer to [*Inaudible*] region that is near al-Kazimiyah and it is also a land that belonged to the Ministry of Endowment, which was distributed to different owners [*inaudible*]. Sir, we have another study in other areas, also in al-Karkh that we are undertaking [*inaudible*], and in Bab al-Shaykh also. We also have the new main blueprint of the city, Sir, that will entail new considerations and not the previous consideration that were on the previous main blueprint, which is the new cultural, civilized, and political role of the city of Baghdad. Second, what is the shape of the city?

[*Inaudible*] when you, Sir, gave instructions to involve Japanese in the planning, considering their expertise, but in fact, we did not let the Japanese team work by itself, we tried to incorporate other foreign ideas to that, so that the planning will not be affected by the Japanese mind and the Japanese thinking. We combined them with consultants from various countries, but the leader of the entire team is Japanese. God willing, Sir, with your instructions and support we can regain Baghdad. Also, Sir, we plan to hold a symposium about the blueprint when it is ready, because this is the blueprint of a city, and everyone must discuss it. Then, we will hold a symposium, Sir, we are heading in the direction that you ordered, and we look forward to having more symposiums about all vital projects that will greatly transform the city in a specific way. Consultants and experts will be brought in to discuss the project and give us their suggestions; therefore, the idea will become more mature than the one we propose. Thank you, Sir.

Saddam: Yes. [*Inaudible*].

UM6: Mr. President, regarding the rules of landownership, houses, [*Time Stamp: 55:00*] apartments by citizens in Baghdad, we will issue guidance and instructions to the Housing Cooperative Union to adopt as of now. But if we get situations, inquiries or could be discoveries,

we will discuss them with Mr. Vice President.

Saddam: Muhammad. This is a big issue; we will study it, introduce its principles, and discuss it. It is not of our norm, we propose an idea, and then we renege on it. This period has ended; it is no longer part of my life. Now, we will exert our effort until we confirm the idea and execute it with firmness without having to renege on it.

Muhammad: Mr. President, I believe that the rules regarding the Housing Cooperative Association, and property ownership regarding the apartments that we build for the citizens, we have proposed it to Mr. Vice President, and we will let you know as soon as we can adopt it.

Saddam: It should not take that long. We will appoint a committee to conduct a study of the principles and to provide us with the outcome [inaudible] properties owned by a citizen, construction, and other issues.

Muhammad: Mr. President, regarding what His Excellency, the Minister of the Local Government, proposed. The refraining of expansion of construction and habitation in Baghdad or the refraining from its continuation, I believe that the confirmed case in Baghdad regarding the housing unit is they represent a big number presently, and in all the provinces, meaning, the lowest statistics show that there is a need for housing in every existing province. For example, in Baghdad, there is a request for 100,000 housing units to cover the shortage, and to eliminate the minimum health requirement concerning the dwelling of a citizen. Regarding the activity and movement in Baghdad, it must continue, and we will need this situation for a longtime. Regarding, the main planning, Mr. President, there are Iraqis who are inclined to have a certain number of units per hectare, others tend to prefer vertical buildings, and the second trend tend to prefer low construction but in small surfaces. I, personally, in a previous meeting, said that I tend to go with building, in many areas, small units in small parcels and to obtain the same population density in one hectare from al-Di'ab to the high-rise, especially in Baghdad there is a restricted area in terms of height and restriction also from the Ministry of Petroleum regarding land exploitation. If... Comrade Samir, we take this tendency along with the new planning, it would be suitable for the dwelling of the Iraqi family, and even for preserving the character of Baghdad, and the fact it does not have high-rises everywhere. Thank you.

UM7: Sir, regarding heights, in fact, I recall you gave me guidance, and with the Council of Ministers there was a discussion about social ramifications that are the result of tall buildings [inaudible] as Iraqis. In fact, we reviewed the experiences of others and others countries beginning from America and the experiences that took place in the Arab region. Regarding the new planning, there was not an opportunity for you, Sir, to take a look at it. When you size up the building, it seems too the eye as a tall building, [Time Stamp: 1:00:00] but it is some sort of narrow street housing that creates a type of independence for the citizen, and it is not a building, but a new house [inaudible] unlike the previous one. This one has an amphitheater, and it has his private room that grants him his independence and preserves the nature of the city.

Truly Sir, the issue is how to divide these regions, the use of land requires a perpendicular shape [inaudible], but in general we should try to create a residential unit independent and interconnected at the same time. How nice it would be if we could review the planning and the

ideas that take place, as these are in fact new issues that we are entering into as Iraqis, whether from the quality points of view, psychologically, or philosophically, or ideologically. Meaning, not putting together a beautiful block of concrete simply, but this has to entail intelligent, philosophical depth, linked to our past and linked to the nature of this land. I mean, this is a new thing, this is why. Perhaps Sir, you reviewed some of the blueprints and you liked *[them]*. Hopefully there is another exhibit in which we will expose our blueprints, God Willing, they will have...the observation of Comrade Muhammad indeed is introduced, but proposed in a manner, in fact we must not build a place of 60 meters in lieu of 120 meters, we must create a residential unit that fits into the modern the world.

Muhammad: Mr. President, I did not mean the buildings that the municipality in the capital will build or the one that we will build. In general, as a general plan, when erecting a building for a specific density of residents, it is required to keep a green buffer zone for those people or more, along with other required facilities. In general, if we take a three-floor building, it will turn out to be the same thing if we distribute them to people or build the residential units on a land of 300 meters or 250 meters, which at the same time gives us, as a whole, a big surface with a density of the number of units in one hectare—closer or perhaps a little more—similar to a three-floor building. I do not only mean the projects by the municipality of the capital or the one by our municipality, but as a main plan in general. And there are areas in which we have to adopt a vertical layout to reach 10 or even more than 10 up to 20 floors if this entails building offices, but as a residential design, it is preferred internationally, not to exceed 10 floors. But in general, I am talking about the areas that can be exploited in two ways. Thank you.

UM8: Mr. President, the discussion about the city of Baghdad, in my opinion, we must distinguish between two cities within the modern Baghdad. There is the old city of Baghdad with a heritage that historically goes back to the Abbasid era until the present time, and its borders are known through books and historic documents, along with evidences that still exist. Construction standards, unlike those modern areas that were established in the city of Baghdad, must be applied to the old city. If I were to preserve the beauty and the heritage of the city of Baghdad, I would adhere to a Baghdad [*Time Stamp: 1:05:00*] that is part of al-Karkh and a part of al-Rasafah. But that does not prevent the area of Tat-Muhammad [*from being*] transformed into a modern city completely and adopting new residential requirements in which we have a building of 5 or 10 floors. Or the city of al-Thawrah that is not linked to the old and historic Baghdad. Mixing the two together could put a burden on us, or could let us equate two different situations within the historic city. Therefore, we will have a three-story building inside Baghdad and also a three-story building outside of Baghdad, subsequently; the historic origin of Baghdad will lose its traditional characteristics and the modern surrounding, as it exists in any modern city, which carries artificial characteristics. I believe, in my opinion, there is no need to erect a building in the surroundings of Baghdad with a heritage nature, but it must be built according the requirements of the modern era, our era in which we are living, its requirements. However, it does not hurt to borrow some local characteristics, such as climate characteristics, residential, people's way of thinking, and their social traditions. But the precise adherence must focus on old Baghdad.

And with all my respect and appreciation not only to the municipality of the capital, but to all government institutions that use foreign expertise, I am dismayed and feel scared when foreign

institutions are consulted or they are asked to put into action planning of this nature, and the reason is not the inability of these institutions to deal with this issue, but it is due to the corruption and the superficial way of how the heritage was treated by the countries of the region. The Saudis will ask the Americans to build an airport for them resembling a tent, and here you have American engineers trying to imagine a situation; they are not living in the desert, [*they do not*] know the nature of the desert or the nature of the development of the Saudi society, but they imagine a situation and present it to them. One of the Saudis wearing a Keffiyeh, a partner in the business with them, will concur with them, and will build the project, thereby creating a model in circles of international expertise that deals with the countries of the region. I recall some of the projects that were proposed to us in the framework of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Information, they will tell you this has a historic flavor, but indeed it has nothing to do with the heritage.

UM9: [*Inaudible*] Soviets.

UM8: The Soviets introduced a proposal to us for a cultural palace in 1975, which is in the form of [*rooms*] from Azerbaijan, I told them, "This is not acceptable." They said, "This is from Islamic heritage." I said, "Of course, it is from Islamic heritage, but not Arab." It must be from Arab-Islamic heritage, and not a heritage that is adopted in Asian countries, India, and Mongolia; Andalusia is Arab and Islamic. Yes, the buildings in India by the Mongols, who are Muslims and embraced Islam, have nothing to do with the heritage on which Baghdad was built in the old Iraq, which Babylon and [*inaudible*]. Expediting this issue, I believe will lead to failure. I told Comrade Samir I would like to attend the discussions about Abu-Nuwas Boulevard, but [*could not*] due to my travel plans, the symposium took place during my trip. The decisions that were enacted on Abu-Nuwas Boulevard, in my opinion, are a catastrophe. I say this without courtesy, the proposals that were introduced to develop the boulevard of Abu-Nuwas are a catastrophe regarding the nature of this boulevard. The Americans come and say Iraq has the means and is an oil country that is willing to spend the money, so let me to do this work for you. Abu-Nuwas Boulevard is considered an area linked to the old Baghdad and a recreation ground, its originality must be preserved. [*Time Stamp: 1:10:00*] This Boulevard must not be developed by installing big establishments or artificial complexes that have nothing to do with the history of this boulevard, its heritage, and its modern use. I hope that this issue will be given further care, and will include not only engineers, who work for the municipality of the capital or the Ministry of Housing, but also -- [*Interrupted*]

Saddam: Historians.

UM8: And people in charge of the heritage.

Saddam: People in charge of the heritage, religious scholars, everyone must participate in this. Iraqis [*inaudible*].

UM8: They exist [*inaudible*].

Saddam: I mean, it is difficult for someone to bring [*inaudible*] all Iraqi engineers.

UM8: Not all of the engineers, are Iraqi engineers; there a few thousands engineers who are not Iraqis.

Saddam: [*Inaudible*], the Iraqi engineers, their syndicate decides about the size of the discussion. These issues are foreign, and the proposal is foreign, but the Iraqi is present and is discussing, but in the end result we should have put the foreigner in our environment, not to have him put us in his environment. First, the foreigner must understand that we are not Saudis nor [*Inaudible*], second he must understand the concept of housing in relation to the heritage, third he must understand that we are knowledgeable people whether at the political level or at the technical level. Because the Iraqis conducted beautiful discussions; thus, the poet spoke, the religious scholar spoke, and the historian spoke. It was an excellent symposium; I wish all of the comrades could have attended. As a result, we benefit from foreign expertise, but the foreign expertise must not lead us, as there is a difference between using it and allowing it to plan for our country and it using [*us*]. We...the foreign expertise, we want to use it; meaning that we do not want it to lead. These issues, God Willing, will follow the right path.

As a result, the share for the Iraqis is big; meaning that regarding Abu-Nuwas, I believe we can divide it into... for each two houses, an engineer will make, have an artistic touch. An Iraqi engineer should adopt the way he sees appropriate, we do not want to see him adopting an Abbasid model of al-Mutawakkil or so and so, we want it to be in accordance with the heritage in a manner that triggers the spirit of heritage and to show distinguished phase that would represent the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party until the period of collapse [*inaudible*]. We should not be concerned about this issue, because every existing entity will die, including the entity of the Party; because of the evidence that all the theories in this universe are one theory or not? The theory will expand its call, then it starts subsiding as a result of human beings, because human beings do not develop and they become weak; therefore, the situation worsens. [*Inaudible*] to be known as the Arab Ba'ath Party period in history, but this period is not cut off, but continuous and extended. So enough discussion about [*this*], the idea has become clear, the general directions of the idea. Now we must convert it to a plan, and we will introduce it again and discuss it a second time, and we will see the directions that it will go.

The comrades, the Minister of Housing and Development, and the Minister of Local Government from the capital [*Time Stamp: 01:15:00*]. You will benefit from it, as a Minister, from all the other cities during discussions, design, depth, and retirement, it will benefit you meaning in other cities. The ministerial committee will be led by Comrade Taha by selecting the appropriate technicians that [*inaudible*], but they must make the idea more mature as a ministerial committee prior to introducing it to the Council of Ministers and the Justice Minister or the Tourism—perhaps he should enjoy the weather and take a tour with other issues [*inaudible; laughter*]. [*The Ministry*] of Tourism is like the municipality of the capital in the past, during Muhammad Isma'il [*Inaudible*]. The municipality of the capital was hated by me at first, the leadership, the advanced cadre, the citizen and by the entire party. We used to see it [*inaudible*] and look at the capital now. Tourism is not supposed to be functioning in a traditional way, as it is imagined, but its national objective is not that, I had previously spoken about this issue in 1974 or 1975. Nationalism is not a philosophical state only, I mean, principally it is a vital state, so the human being feels very proud when he sees that his life is moving forward in the right direction with social guarantees, and when he sees people leading with willingness, when he sees a paved

street, when he sees a tree in the street that he uses as a cover against the sun, and when he sees the drainage system of the capital intact and which will be appropriately used when the rain falls. Therefore, the existing [*inaudible*] requires pride and from the horizon is joined. Thus, tourism plays a role as such, it is for the Iraqis mainly, before, we did not think, not before, about establishing a tourism organization in order to receive the American, or the Soviet, or the citizen in the Arabian Gulf, or the citizen in Egypt. We must generate more work from Iraq with nationalism based on a pleasant life; he [*the Iraqi*] works eight hours then he goes to his family relaxes for two hours and...[*audio cuts off*].

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