

“Transcript of a Speech Given by Saddam Hussein on ‘The Role of the Iraqi Armed Forces in the Arab- Zionist Conflict’ at Al-Bakr University”



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The speech of Comrade Saddam Hussein
at the University of Al-Bakr in regards to discussing the thesis
of Staff Brigadier General Hamid Mohammad Jassem
on "The Role of the Iraqi Armed Forces in
the Arab-Zionist Conflict"
Dated: 3 June 1978

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This method is a new approach to the army and it is associated with the existence of this university. This is a new method in our military and political action. I hope that you will train yourselves on it, in addition to the students who enroll in this university. This should be a tradition. Each student should present research that consists of something new, even if it is wrong according to them, as they are going to learn from the experience.

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It is definite that the study, which depends on several useful resources, should urge the student to study and expand his knowledge capacity. On the other hand, creativity always remains the main issue in our curriculum. Creativity in economy and the path of economy is associated with our creative ideology and that is not a western ideology, which means it is not a capitalistic ideology built on the theory of a free economy, such as knowing or believing in the free economy. It is not a communist ideology either, and when it becomes like that this means it should have its own new methods that are proper for the novelty of this ideology. Therefore, our curriculum will not be right by military or economic adaptation in any other field.

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As a result, the subject of concentrating on creativity as an urgent case emerges, not only from the practical aspect but also in regard to the initial aspect, because completing our ideology while striving at all levels for improvement is an issue that requires the participation of every Ba'athist and citizen in their specialty field, as well as in the central political field.

I have not read the research where Mr. Hamid is going to clarify some of the aspects that I am going to go through. He started his speech by criticizing the negative aspects of the factors that caused the defeat of the Arabs in 1948. So he focused on the military multileadership and indicated that forming an integrated military command is the solution for this issue.

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If the solution were according to this method, and if we were to apply that on the current Arab situation by uniting the command of Arab armies in Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, and Iraq, would we be in possession of the magic stick [*solution*] that would defeat the enemy? I would say "no" and you would also say "no," because the presence of an integrated military command will not solve the problem. So where is the main danger?

We have a special regime, new in its principles, methods, and ideology. We say that the absence of a unified military command was not the reason for the 1948 defeat, but the main point there was that the regimes that fought in 1948 were regimes associated with colonialism and their structures were based on that theory.

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At this point, we would leave the Arabs to go back to the Zionist entity. When the Zionist entity was created at that time, it was not consistent with the colonial interests, but rather created as a necessity to support the interests of colonialism.

If the Arab regimes that fought the Zionist enemy in 1948 were loyal to colonialism, even in their political structure, as well as the creation of colonialism, along with the Zionist entity, which was also created by colonialism, how would you have a serious battle between bodies that were all created by colonialism? The battle was nominal in this case. It aimed at absorbing the resentment and the reaction of the public and at leaking it out according to a plan that is going to make the mission of colonialism, as well as that of its newer entity, to make its psychological position easier, just like it occupied its actual position on the Arab territories in order to tear up the nation.

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I believe the political factor in Mr. Hamid's study is getting weak, and perhaps in other studies in this college.

Also, when he points out in the conclusion of his thesis the inability of Iraq to participate in the war of 1967 or after that, until our party came to power, he was attributing the reasons for that to the preoccupation of the army in the North. He considered that to be the main reason without touching on the more important and major political factor, which is the nature of the structure of the regime that was built on the rubbles of the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party regime. Finding the safe route for our journey is not the purpose of this document and other documents, --

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-- but rather examining the fundamentals of the safe route needed to be found. We have to study the fundamentals that are going to show us accurately what the solution is, and what the safe route is. Some people who did not even witness the events of the 18th of Tishreen [*this is either October or November; the part of the word that indicates exactly which month it is was omitted*], nor the circumstances that followed ten years later, had looked at things in a historical order that are not really scientifically accurate. Supposedly, we should say that the reason Iraq did not participate in the war of 1967 is because the army was busy confronting the agent pocket north of the country. There were also reasons related to the nature of the regime that applied, after the 18th of Tishreen, to the policy of being afraid of the army and working on weakening the presence of the patriotic elements inside the army, in addition to the national liberal elements with our party first.

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For these reasons in that condition it was impossible for the army to have a national role beyond the Iraqi borders. More or less, the regime wanted to transform it into an internal force to guard its own interests.

Once more, Hamid disregards the political factor in another quotation when discussing the issue for enlightenment purposes. This is not only for those present and listening, but also for future generations.

So, when we focus more on the positive aspect of deployment than the technological military aspect, we will be disregarding the political factor.

If we were to picture the Iraqi Army having the same abilities at the time of the 7th Tishreen 1973, but without the political command, --

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-- meaning under a political command similar to the leadership of Abd-al-Rahman Aref, and the same general staff that was in the Ministry of Defense and the same division commanders and the same patriotism, would it be possible to complete the mobilization according to the method that made the enemy incapable of expecting this mobilization in the established time?

So, we have to mention here the political factor from two perspectives. The first one is the excitement of the officers because their behavior was in harmony with what the Higher Command wanted. What the Supreme Command wants and what it is required from them is a true expression of the revolution curriculum, just like it is a true expression for each one of them. They imagine that each initiative will be approved by shortening the time for any method of movement and mobilization. The second one is the excitement of the command and placing all efforts of the country at the service of quick mobilization.

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When I go through these quotations, I do not mean the study of Hamid only, but I also say to all of those listening not to forget the political factor in their quotations, especially for what is consistent and related to the nature of our thinking as Iraqis seeking refuge in a regime that has a known ideology and direction. Mobilization and quick mobilization is not just a traditional military capability, but mainly it is about the special political spirit that we call the Revolutionary Spirit, drawn from the spirit of the regime led by the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party.

In regard to the lessons concluded from the War of 1973, which were mentioned in the conclusion of Mr. Hamid, he did not focus on the political aspect at the time when the party gave a clear focus on this aspect, during the study of the 8th Regional Conference on the war of Tishreen [*October*], and the following collapse is attributed to political reasons.

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Rushing forward is the result of the political factor's power, while moving backward is also the result of the increase of size of the political factor's negative influences.

As a result of that, we have to say that the unclear strategic goal was the main reason for the military situation being where it is at this point right now, and its setback later on. This goal was not a part of a general strategy, as it can be accepted when it is like that because any partial goal that faces a comprehensive strategy, without being based on moving forward, must fall back in the next phase. Just like any partial social, military or political goal, that will fall back if it was not a part of a comprehensive plan where its main and central goals are to move forward.

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Crossing the canal at a depth of 15-20 kilometers would be acceptable if it were within certain calculations and a part of a comprehensive plan for the purposes of advancing forward in another phase, which would be created by the will that had specified the partial goal within the general strategy. But when the goal consists entirely of crossing the canal at the depth of 20 kilometers, in return for a comprehensive strategy for the enemy to continuously defeat the nation, the partial goal would be a burden on the army that had reached this partial goal in a surprising operation.

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We have to focus on these reasons in a study of this type so that so we can keep in touch with the partial quotations for a certain specialty, and not to make from that specialty an isolated picture for the general specialty that represents the most comprehensive ideology concept for the society's movement and to coordinate the roles of its main branches, in terms of the armed forces, economy, politics, and so on.

From here, we have to wonder where the power of the enemy is. When we ask this question, we will be presenting a comprehensive political questioning, and not just a pure military and technical one. According to that, we have to summarize the power of the enemy in the following points:

The Zionist entity is one body and when we speak of one body, we know that from this entity, --

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-- concepts of the nature of its strategic plans stem out, even its tactical plans. It is an experience drawn from World War I and II, and it is gathered from different countries that were involved in both wars.

When we speak of this experience, we realize that a strategic concept emanates from it, as well as tactical plans. And when we envision that one of the main power issues of the Zionist entity lies in its resulting plans that it gathered from two world wars, in addition to a separation between the last war and its experience, we realize that this stream is going to be either cut or weakened because those who joined the enemy again are not going to bring him the experience of a World War III. If we were to comprehend this concept, our morale would go up and our hopes to achieve victory would rise --

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-- in light of the weak influences of this central stream that aims at defeating the Arabs. Considering that the current Arab military and political commands did not get involved in two World Wars, they would have this experience that can possibly face the collective experience of the enemy.

When both parties are cut from world experiences in wide-ranging wars, they will fight using their experiences from the field through their direct conflict. At this point, this factor and its influences are going to become weak for the enemy in regards to his strategic concept and his field plans as well.

When we consider this issue to be a power element, we must start a political action on how we can prevent the immigration to Israel--

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-- for those individuals who gain a new experience in wars. For example, had we seen that the American Vietnam war formed a power element, we should have started acting politically through our international influences, foreign ministries, and media. If we diagnose the power of the enemy, we should be able to set a plan to weaken every power point the enemy has, and face these points with our power points. They may not be the same points of power, but they would be considered points of power, in general, that would lead to weakening the points of power of the enemy.

The other power points are that the main joints in their society and in their country are considered to be a part of the advanced Western community in administrating the state and in setting up the entire state for war purposes. So, where did this come from?

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It came through the people who had come from France and from the Soviet Union when World War II broke out. They had duties on how to employ the entire nation in the service of the war. But when it comes to us, our countries do not have people like those who had come from abroad and who had participated in world wars. Those people are scientifically advanced, considering they are a part of West society.

When we endorse these issues to be points of power, we must recognize the points of power that we need to provide and know how to weaken the point of power of the enemy through our political influences in our relationships with France, Western Germany, and the Soviet Union.

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As a result, we must understand that the scientific advancement of the human being, whether it is within the armed forces or outside of it, is one of the points that weaken the power factor of the enemy, and it also shrinks the gap until it eliminates it.

There is another quotation in the study of Hamid, where he shows the weakness in introducing the political factor. That was when he thought that the future battle requires stacking ammunition and rations, as well as paying attention to the administrative aspects and providing a long communication line that can reach the front to Syria or Jordan.

If we were to introduce the political factor, we would swap it with another process that dictates us to have different relationships with Syria or Jordan, instead of stacking [*ammunition*] and instead of regarding the Iraqi command without military experience in the land of the enemy.

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We should be content with the military experience of the Syrian or the Jordanian commands. This way we will gain experience, even if it is partial, through them. For example, we would invite them to start joint [*training*] exercises. If this political factor were to exist, we would consider our army to have the experience and the ability of the Syrian military command, and then we would not have the need to stack the ammunition, since we would be fighting on the Syrian front using one integrated weapon. The Syrian side should provide the ammunition and rations. Therefore, the absence of the political aspect would make us go into the minor issues that could weaken our combat capability in facing an enemy with an integrated will and directly using his capabilities without any separation.

As for the significance of the political factor, it prepares you --

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-- psychologically and ideologically as an officer and a human being to consider any victory achieved in Syria—after the ideology of the party spreads out there—a part of the liberation of Palestine.

When we introduce this factor, the duty and the goal of strife for which we have to work will emerge. That is the ruling regime in Syria must be different than the current regime.

In his letter, Hamid stated that the goal of Egypt is to challenge the theory of Israeli security. If this goal were a part of a comprehensive theory, it would have been acceptable. And when you prepare the Arab soldier psychologically, wherever he is, that we can achieve victory over the Zionist enemy if we were to prepare the necessities of victory, we would settle for five kilometers into the canal, and then we would consider ourselves victorious in regard to this goal.

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However, the Egyptian goal did not aim at challenging the theory of Israeli security; rather, it was a calculated move to stimulate the issue toward a peaceful solution, toward which Anwar Al-Sadat moved later on.

There is another issue that worries me continuously, which I had mentioned several times to a number of military and political comrades. It is comparing percentage to percentage, road to road, and weapon to a similar weapon. I mean traditional percentage calculated based on the conventional calculations. So we say for attack purposes, there should be two for each one, for the anti-tank (x) purposes, (y) should resist it, and this naval piece should face that naval piece.

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If we were to follow this path, a lot of victory factors would be in the hands of a force that is outside of Iraq and outside of the Arab nation, because the Arab nation has not yet manufactured the main weapon.

When we approach the conventional calculations with numbers, I mean a tank for a tank with specific features, and a cannon for a cannon with specific features, we must look for another method to face the cannon with a different mean—to face the tank with a different method that is related to the nature of our situation, the nature of our independent policy, and the nature of our concept of the arming headquarters and their supplies to us, as well as introducing the anti-political factors when they exceed the allowed limits. So how do we act? All of these issues require creativity in military action.

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We must start from this center and the other centers by using methods of creativity, otherwise when can we be creative? And who is going to be creative unless we are the ones inventing for ourselves?

Therefore, the military focus on the technical percentages of numbers will strip the case continuously of its political factors. This will affect every step that we will take, whether it is a general political one, or a technical step related to the economy, army, and everywhere else. So when the political factor presence becomes weak, the correct concept on how we should face the enemy will never cross our minds.

So how do we face the enemy? At this point, the political, economic, and military factors are going to interfere with each other, and will truly be connected to our initial national concepts.

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[The pages in Arabic are not in sequence; i.e. page 37 of the PDF comes after page 25 of the PDF]

When we talk about the power points of the enemy, we have to say how we should be working against the enemy. The first point that must be mentioned in this regard is that we have to shake the enemy's confidence in his theory. The first key point to shake the confidence of the enemy, meaning the confidence of the enemy's public in the authenticity of his theory, is to cut the power streams from him by stopping immigration from the world's countries. When our main goal is to shake the confidence of the enemy in his theory in terms of its ideological basics, this would need the availability of long-term requirements in regard to the continuous Fedayeen [*martyrdom*] action and the nature of this action and how it should be presented. It should not be a general Fedayeen action, but rather a special Fedayeen action that has specific goals associated with this subject.

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We must emphasize stripping the enemy from the power streams that we had indicated. This issue has many plans in the economics field, in the international affairs field, and in the general political field, and so forth.

When we had indicated the main points, which had caused us to be defeated in 1948, and we said that the basic issue in it was political because of the association between the nature of entities at that time and the nature of the Zionist entity that had been created by the same side, which is colonialism, weakening the role and the influence of colonialism in the region should be our main goal. As a result, the Iraqi country will have an enormous and important role in achieving this strategic goal, in order to weaken the influences of colonialism and their support for the Zionist entity through the political circumstances and the interests in the region.

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This has also many requirements on the level of our international relationships and with the Western states, in particular, and the level of our relationships with the states in the region and the nature of our strife. So, when the study of Hamid expressed the importance that the Arabs should have the initiative to start the attack, this also has political requirements and not only military ones. Therefore, the case should stay alive first so that you will have the international political justification, which will provide you with that cover. So when you speak of international politics, how would you attack someone that you had signed an agreement with while you did not have the initiative? Because once you start the first concentration, you will be giving the enemy the excuse to attack you. However, keeping the case alive along with the presence of armies in the front line to secure the initiative for you, --

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-- the political factor will be present wherever you go. For that reason, it should be present in all of our concepts.

In regard to this study, for example, or any other study, I had hoped that it would include the manner of how we can decrease the gap between one officer and another, between a non-commissioned officer and another one, so that we can say, for example, that the Zionist non-commissioned officer and the Zionist soldier are scientifically superior. Therefore, the Arabs should rely on the type of weapon they are using in the battle, for example. The morale has a direct effect on doubling its efficiency. The missile that requires you to push a button to launch and it hits a target that is 40 kilometers away, which you will not hear or see its results. Science is more involved in this than morale. Out there, there is a Zionist militant that works, --

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-- but when the tank crosses with another tank, the morale will be a major condition to end the battle in this case.

We have to study the psychological factor for the Israeli individual and we have to get to know him very well. After that, we should study the Arab psychological factor. Psychology is considered to be a factor out of many spiritual and material factors. So how do we make these factors available so that the Iraqi can use the anti-armor gun, R.P.G., from a distance of 150 meters, where he can hit the Israeli tank? We will introduce something new through this method. But when it comes to the conventional studies and the set research, most of them, from a Western point of view, do not have a context for Arab people and their psychological social structure.

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Materialism will not accomplish any victory. On the contrary, the numbers that are presented in front of the Arabs are disappointing because of the superiority they show in favor of the Zionist enemy. Therefore, we have to go back to the main factors that made the enemy superior for reasons that are not related to the Zionist enemy himself, but rather related to other reasons. As a result, we can say that these reasons have other reasons in return, and when we get to this conclusion, we will be able to defeat the enemy and make his defeat inevitable. However, this will happen when we have the strife requirements, in a way that will strengthen the Arab will and the Arab self.

As for how to picture the next battle, I do not believe there has been any study that has given a conclusive answer on the expectations of the next battle and its new interferences that are going to be involved— --

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-- interferences with enough science and technology and the method to face them.

When one of the brothers from the evaluation panel asked a question about Israel's nuclear usage, Hamid's answer was very good by virtue of the current procedures of the studies. We do not want this. We need him to tell us who is going to take the first hit if the war brakes out two years from now. I believe the first strike is going to be directed at Baghdad, because the international official cover had given to Syria, Jordan, and Egypt, the right to initiate an attack, considering that their regional territories are occupied. But when it comes to Iraq, Iraq does not have any occupied regional territories. So the international cover had been given to Israel to hit an army that is coming from behind to harm it [*Israel*]. Iraq was exposed to this possibility, even before the red line that I had indicated.

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So what is the situation in case of Israel having possession of atoms, whether it is now or three or four years later? What if Israel had the ability to use it through a borrowed, imported, manufactured, or modified weapon? Israel is capable of doing that through its high expertise and its support all over the world. In its current situation, Israel considers itself standing on the red line before the Arabs even get there. And when the Arabs start the mobilization, Israel is going to tell them, "We will hit you with the atomic bomb." So should the Arabs stop or not? If they did not have the atom, they will stop. For that reason they should have the atom. If we were to have the atom, we would make the conventional armies fight without using the atom. If the international conditions were not prepared--

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-- and they told us, "We will hit you with the atom," we will say, "We will hit you with the atom too." The Arab atom will finish them off, but the Israeli atom will not finish the Arabs. But when the atom does not have a match on the other side, it would end the battle. And by Israel having an atomic bomb, there will be no battle and no Iraqi soldier will stay on the front line, because each one of them is going to come to Iraq to see what happened to his family. The defeat by the atom is going to be overwhelming.

The Arab nation should consider the issue of possessing the atom, as a goal related to its civilization's fate. It is not enough to say that the Zionist enemy possesses the atom and then walk away. We have to say what we are going to do in such a case, and we should have a clear conception of the battle. At that point, we will adapt the politics according to these conclusions.

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We will also adapt the economy and the army because they are not adapted based on this. From here, we will recognize our true scientific underdevelopment and the fact that our military and economic concepts, and even a part of our political concepts as Arabs and not Iraqis, are still perceived as concepts that are related to the latest books that we received on World War II and not on how the future war will be between us and an enemy who is a part of the advanced developed circles in the world. That is because he takes every new thing from these circles, whether it is from France, America, or the Soviet Union. Through all of this, we should generate the unusual capabilities of the Arab nation, including the capability to have a bomb, and that is no longer a monopolized science. The atom is a widespread and thorough science, and any country can produce the atomic bomb --

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-- if it finds the central technical base for it. We do not have to be as advanced as France, for example, to use it. It is enough for us to be like India in order to have the atom and to have the ability to use it. This, of course, has international policy, economic policy, and military policy.

Science is needed, and if we were to drop the scientific factor out of our evaluations of the situation or undermine it, all of our plans are not going to be solid. Therefore, you need to highlight two main points in your research. First, is to follow-up on the scientific influence of the plans of the enemy and their requirements in order to reinforce our plans. The second is the presence of the political factor continuously in all details and historic quotations for the purposes of moving forward.

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Do not be afraid of the atom, as the Arabs are capable of having it; it requires, however, a patriotic will. From here, we can say—not from a national point of view, but from a point of view on behalf of all Arabs as people and strugglers—that the hope to build the civilization of the Arab nation starts here. In addition to that, the victory in the future is going to start here too. This does not mean that all of the material and moral requirements of victory are going to come from here, but its pillar comes from the radiation emanating from the concepts led by the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party, which is an Arab Ba'ath Party and not an Iraqi Party, because it started from here and if it had started from Egypt, we would have said, "It should be there." But since it started from here, we would say, "Here is the main pillar to build the civilization of the Arab nation and its humane role."

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It is also the pillar to liberate the Arab nation entirely, including kicking out the Zionist enemy. This conclusion puts on your shoulders endless missions of strife. These are the same missions of the Arabs at the beginning of the Islamic mission from the Arabian Peninsula. History had repeated the same mission and the same role in a new method. It was through a new method that is related to the humane and civil development, which had happened in the world. This is the mission, its summary, and its central procedures. Those central procedures, which are force, sword, faith, and doctrine, are all connected to the ability of faith to find the key means to use these procedures for one goal, which is establishing the doctrine.

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When faith is the main stream and force becomes the branch, at that point, many practical issues are going to result. So, we should not think that the capability is going to be created by the mind of a 60-year-old man, but perhaps by a 25-year-old man. The commanding capability is not based on the rank, but on an actual capability. That is why Osama was the leader of 5,000 Companions [*of the Prophet*], including Omar Bin Al-Khattab [*Omar was one of the four orthodox Caliphs*]. Osama was 18-years-old at that time [*talking about Osama Bin Zaid from Mohammad's time*]. From here, we realize that the main step to being a leader is having faith. The more that you believe, the more you will advance. And the more you weaken your belief, the farther you will be left behind because believing is a key issue when it comes to creativity. Whoever is not a believer cannot be creative, and that is the theory of life.

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From here, it is required from everybody that the striving Ba'athist should not depend only on his past, and the militant should not depend only on his rank. The striving Ba'athist of the past is a [*part of our*] heritage and the military rank is only a tent that has no basis to make it withstand the wind. As we urge the veteran striving Ba'athists to improve themselves so that they can keep up with the science, its developments and its requirements, in order to stay in command, we also urge the Ba'athist and non-Ba'athist militants not to depend on the rank. The higher their ranks get, the bigger the feeling of the importance of reading and gaining knowledge grows, and that they should be more aware because the eyes that look up to the major general are different than those eyes that look up to the major, because the responsibility of the major is less and his excuse of not having plenty of knowledge is stronger than the excuse of the major general. The same applies to the brigadier general when his knowledge is equal to the knowledge of the major or the lieutenant colonel.

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Thus, brothers, the role of the brave Iraqi army becomes clear as an army for the Arab nation and not for Iraq. We are obligated to call it Iraqi, and if we were allowed to call it the Arab Army in the formal dealing, we would have called it so because that is what it truly is. And when it is joined by another army, it would be called the Arab Army for the Two States. The army that is lead by the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party is practically an army that favors the entire Arab nation, and not in favor of the added country. When your mission becomes like your ancestors' missions at the beginning of the Islamic mission in spreading the message, you would have to picture the efforts, sacrifices, and the high level of readiness required of you.

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This comes through pursuing science in all of our struggles and stances. We have unlimited trust in you as noble and brave sons, who respond to the conscious of the Arab nation when it comes to its ancient history and its human role needed now.