

Saddam Hussein the Fighter, the Thinker and the Man

Part II

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The political use of energy

CHAPTER 16

But what is the significance of using oil politically to benefit the Arab causes in general, and above all the Palestinian cause, not to mention the national causes of Iraq and its development? Can the Arabs really influence the international policy decisions of the great powers in today's world?

Before going into detail about Saddam Hussein's strategic viewpoint on this vitally important matter of the future of the Arab world and the direction its development takes, it must be said that Iraq's control over its oil wealth, which should serve as an inspired example to the other Arab oil countries, has allowed it to fully liberate itself from all external pressures. This is true, no matter what the source of pressure, as regards its own choice over the methods of developing its economy and society, in accordance with the objective circumstances, and the demands of its strategic socio-political view, without hindrance from the technological centres of polarization in our contemporary world. This fact has a practical dimension in terms of a successful and intelligent application, and a theoretical dimension, which is no less important and should not be ignored. This is that the economic strength afforded by the rise in oil prices, brought in by a revolutionary leadership taking society towards socialism under the supervision of a people's party with a progressive nationalist ideology, put an end to the widespread belief in socialist and progressive circles that there should be an organic tie with the international socialist block wherever industrialization and development generally are concerned. The reasoning behind this belief is that the dangers of dependency on the imperialist states and a return to the new colonialism would be avoided. Furthermore, the advanced Western capitalist states, faced with sharp international competition, and under pressure from their domestic economic crises, would be unable to have a monopoly, or to completely conceal their technological achievements from the developing countries generally. The direct ability to pay for this equipment without pressures, conditions, or problems, does not only diminish dependency and give greater opportunity to choose the best methods of development, but also allows these choices to become a factor in deepening the rifts between the capitalist states themselves, and puts pressure on them to lend support to the Arab causes. This is perhaps not clearly expressed in the position of the EEC countries in general, particularly France, which has a better understanding of these Arab causes. It is also reflected in the flexible attitudes sometimes adopted by the United States towards certain of these causes.

Saddam Hussein asks the essential question on this issue: "Has the West in general, including Europe, America and Japan, never really understood the Arab question before when they do now? The reply to this is in the negative, as their understanding before was no different from now. However, the Arabs now have new means of putting pressure on them in a way which obliges them to acknowledge an understanding, something they had previously refused to do. So, when the Arabs are able to exert yet more pressure, will they not then have an even better understanding? Certainly. They will understand, and this will have its influence, and put Arab interests in a new and favorable context (1)."

This brings us to the real significance of using our energy sources in order to win our causes. Firstly, we must point out the error of two ideas, which prevailed, and perhaps still do, amongst the main Arab centres of decision outside Iraq. The first mistaken idea is that the success or failure of the national issue is dependent on international trends, "as if it were a fated cause, denying us the will to shape and influence international trends, and the ability to move (2)". The other erroneous idea is that international trends and the balance of international forces carry no weight, and are given no importance in any calculations. "Those adhering to this concept believe that, with our national will, we can resolve everything, and have no need to understand international trends and their Influences (3)."

What is the most correct understanding? The answer is that which takes into constant consideration the dialectic between the particular and the general, and the national and the international. When a large nation like the USA has the complete alliance of Asia, Africa, Latin America, Europe, Australia and Japan, then its international policy gives little weight, and even runs counter to the Arab cause. This is particularly so when the Arabs are incapable of effectively influencing international politics, and unable to make intelligent use of their potential.

When these countries adopt a stand different to that of America, however, the latter is obliged to modify its policy in accordance with the new international perspective.

"Thus begins a part of the discussion on the Arab-Zionist conflict. The Soviets, Americans and French are all foreigners, however different their positions, and whatever their ties with each other or others are, whether friendly or allied. None has our understanding of our case, and even in the best of circumstances, expresses it in terms of a so-called meeting of strategies and interests.

Thus, when the Soviets find that the Arabs are defiant, and able to continue the war, they will lend their support and supply them with arms. However, when they see that the Arabs always fall at the first blow, we must not imagine that they will do anything counter to their interests for the sake of the Arabs. Whoever is destroyed by a mere gust of wind must not delude himself that a foreigner will appear to save him only to cause himself irreparable loss (4)."

Saddam Hussein uses this understanding as the basis upon which the issue of international agreement must be properly established in terms of its relationship with the Arab issue. The definition he gave of this agreement as being "a political case of modifying the aspirations and strategies expressed by the parties interested in meeting (5)", does not mean an end to the Soviet-American conflict, but rather a particular understanding of the factors of strength and influence. The strategic area occupied by either of the two superpowers has an increasing counter-influence on others whenever they gain new friends. "In other words, gaining new friends is an influencing factor in having superior strength or consolidating reserves for use in limited or overall emergency situations (6)." Both believe that gaining new ground in the interests of others is an opening for putting them under their influence. "That is, when the Soviets bear pressure anywhere in the Middle East, and seize a part of land, thus putting it outside American control and influence, it does not belong to Russia;

Instead, they only consider it as a gain in the sense that they have taken it outside the political influence of the United States. The Americans view such a result as but the first stage of political action. The second stage is that the Soviets will attempt to make this

territory fall under their power of influence. There is no other way. So what happens when the Soviets come to the Middle East, a sensitive area known for its strategic values in American eyes (7)?" We must mention here Saddam Hussein's view of the American concept of the Middle East and its estimate of the region's strategic significance. This is not only because the area is a sensitive one in strategic military calculations, nor because it includes oil countries, but because of another fundamental factor more important still than the previous two. This is that "whoever has serious influence in the Middle East will also influence Europe and Japan (8)".

On the basis of this simultaneously scientific, realistic and practical understanding of the nature of the international conflict over our area, and the meaning of the international agreement between the two superpowers, Saddam Hussein's Iraq does not only deal with some as friends with a conformity of strategies and interests, and with others as adversaries or enemies with different political strategies and interests. He also brings into question the matter of the Arabs using their potential to influence the course of international politics. "We believe there are specific factors which are not being used as they should to strengthen the Arab nation's ability to counter the adversary, increase its weight in the international balance, and contribute from a stronger position towards changing the directions of international trends, be they American, Soviet, European, or any other (9)."

Notes

- 1) Saddam Hussein, Nidaluna Was-Siyasa ad-Dawliya, p. 63.
- 2) Ibid. p. 60.
- 3) Ibid.
- 4) Ibid. pp. 62-63.
- 5) Ibid. p. 64.
- 6) Ibid. p. 65.
- 7) Ibid. pp. 65-66.
- 8) Ibid. p. 66.
- 9) Ibid. p. 70.