

[Redacted]

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**IRAQ**

**Tariq AZIZ**

(Phonetic: ahZEEZ)

*Deputy Prime Minister (since 1979)*

*Member, Revolutionary Command Council (since 1977)*

Tariq Aziz is one of President Saddam Husayn's most important counselors, particularly on international and political issues. He remains de facto Foreign Minister (he held the job during 1983-91). [Redacted]

[Redacted] as a member of Iraq's miniscule Christian community, he could not take power in Muslim-dominated Iraq if he wanted to. Posing no threat to Saddam, he retains a position of trust in the President's cabinet. [Redacted]

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**A Diplomat's Diplomat**

[Redacted]

[Redacted] Aziz's mastery of English and cosmopolitan demeanor should not be construed as pro-Western sentiment.

[Redacted] he is as committed to Saddam's policies as the rest of his colleagues in the government. [Redacted]

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**Game Strategist**

Aziz is one of the architects of Baghdad's recent diplomatic offensive that takes a cooperative approach to getting the UN Security Council (UNSC) to lift sanctions.

[Redacted] he has advocated cooperation with the UN Special Commission, and over the past year he has been especially active on the sanctions issue:

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--He has promised to pass UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's suggestion that Saddam accept long-term monitoring by the UN and release of Western prisoners [Redacted]

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--He began negotiations that led to French cooperation in getting sanctions lifted in return for Iraq's signing on with French oil companies for the development of Iraqi oil fields [Redacted]

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--Aziz has reportedly won Russian support for removal of sanctions in return for cash payments and future purchases of all weapons from Russia [Redacted]

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**Background**

Aziz is considered to be one of Iraq's most ardent Baath Party ideologues, and his party credentials are impeccable. He participated in the 1968 coup that brought the Baathists to power. During the mid-to late-1970s, while serving as Minister of Information and then as a member of the Revolutionary Command Council and the party's Regional Command. Aziz helped Saddam undermine then President Ahmad al-Bakr [redacted] [redacted] Saddam made Aziz Deputy Prime Minister after Bakr's ouster in 1979.

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Aziz was born in 1936. [redacted] He speaks eloquent English [redacted]

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[redacted] Aziz and his wife, Violette, have at least two children. [redacted]

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**Closet Moderate?**

Before Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, [redacted] viewed Aziz as having generally advocated a moderate foreign policy. For example, he was the official most closely associated with Iraq's attempt to improve its standing with the international community during 1988-90. Aziz consistently worked to improve relations with the United States before ties were officially reestablished in 1984. He was also a chief advocate of Egypt's reintegration into the Arab fold in the late 1980s. During that time, he supported a negotiated settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict and urged the PLO to adopt moderate positions. [redacted] While we believe Aziz probably still tries occasionally to present moderate views to the President, he never pushes them too far and will support whatever decision Saddam makes [redacted]

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