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IRAQ

Tariq AZIZ
(Phonetic: ahZEEZ)

Deputy Prime Minister (since 1979); Member, Revolutionary Command Council (since 1977)

Addressed as: Mr. Minister

Tariq Aziz has historically been one of President Saddam Husayns most important counselors, particularly on international and political issues. He remains de facto Foreign Minister, a position he held during 1983-91. [Redacted] as a member of Iraqs minuscule Christian community, he could not take power in Muslim-dominated Iraq, even if he so aspired. Posing no threat to Saddam, he retains a position of trust in the Presidents cabinet.

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A Diplomats Diplomat

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

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Becoming More Hard-Line

Although he earlier had advocated cooperation with the UN Special Commission in getting the UN Security Council (UNSC) to lift sanctions against his country, Aziz recently spouted rhetoric that followed a decidedly harder line:

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Press reporting indicates he told UNSC Chairman Rolf Ekeus during an early August 1995 meeting that Iraq has fulfilled all of its obligations and that the UNSC should work to end the embargo by the end of the month. Aziz stated that a failure to do so will be viewed by the Iraqi people and leadership as a stand that can only be explained as being tendentious and hostile. Furthermore, if the August deadline is not met, Aziz implied that Iraq will no longer cooperate with UNSC monitoring.

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According to [Redacted] press reports, Saddams son and close adviser Uday Husayn favors a nonconciliatory approach to UN sanctions and has undermined Azizs position, publicly lambasting the Deputy Prime Minister in Udays newspaper, *Babil*, and blaming him for failing to lift the sanctions. [Redacted]

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Background

Aziz is generally considered one of Iraqs 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-1970swhile serving first as Minister of Information and then as a member of the Revolutionary Command Council and the partys Regional CommandAziz helped Saddam undermine then President Ahmad al-Bakr [Redacted] Saddam made Aziz Deputy Prime Minister after Bakrs ouster in 1979. [Redacted]

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Aziz was born in 1936. [Redacted]

[Redacted] Aziz speaks eloquent English [Redacted]

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

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Former Closet Moderate?

Before Iraqs 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 Iraqs attempt to improve its standing with the international community during 1988-90. Aziz consistently worked to mend relations with the United States before ties were officially reestablished in 1984. He was also a chief advocate of Egypts 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] We believe that, although he probably still tries occasionally to present moderate views to the President, Aziz never pushes them too far and will support whatever decision Saddam makes. [Redacted]

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LP 95-108578
18 August 1995

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