

(U) Iraqi Commander Memoirs on Missiles (3)

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(U) Chapter 111: Call Day (1)

(U) 2 August 1990

(U) In my diary, Call Day corresponded to 11 Muharram 1411 Hegira. It was the day the armed forces declared a state of alert. This included our units, which did not experience a state of alert before, but were still ready. Missile Brigade 224 was in the western region, and Missile Brigade 225 in the southern region.

(U) 4 August 1990

(U) We formed an anti-aircraft battalion and seconded it to Missile Brigade 224 to protect it from enemy air attack. The battalion included guns and a battery of Stella Missiles.

(U) 5 August 1990

(U) I issued an integrated working plan for missiles with chemical warheads. I had issued initial plans since 28 April in oordination with al-Muthanna Enterprise.

(U) 7 August 1990

(U) I received the president's order to get ready to reply immediately to the Zionist entity with long-range missiles. This came in his comment on an analysis by the Military Intelligence Directorate on

the Zionist position on 3 August 1990.

(U) I alerted the units belonging to Brigades 223 and 224 and the first maintenance unit. We also took steps to reduce preparation time for the military strike to a quarter of the time. And to guarantee immediate action, I made the following requests:

- (U) Insuring communication between the Missile Corps Headquarters and the quarter which will be recommended by the higher authority for contact in an emergency.
- (U) Assigning a helicopter, which will be on alert at al-Rashid Air Base, for controlling the units.

(U) I obtained the president's approval of my requests through his secretary on 11 August 1990. We also requested the Military Intelligence Directorate to inform us as soon as the enemy directs a treacherous strike at Iraq and to also provide us with the results of such strikes.

(U) 8 August 1990

(U) Al-Husayn Missiles are ready for launching today. I issued an order the previous evening to fuel 10 of them in Brigade 224 sites. Thus, the missile strike needed only four hours from the time the order is given to the time of launching.

(U) On the same day, we prepared replacement crews for the ones manning the chemical warheads. We trained them on our action plans and prepared all the necessary inventive means for them.

(U) 9 August 1990

(U) I asked the support unit at the Air Force and Air Defense Command to guarantee protection for the deployment areas, shelters, and launching sites through the Second Air Defense sector and provided it with a sketch of our launching means. I also told the unit that we would inform the Air Defense Operations Center as soon as our units began to move. Moreover, I gave it the numbers of our direct telephones. At the same time, I requested it for any information it might have on any Zionist attack as soon as it took place.

(U) 10 August 1990

(U) I received a directive from President Saddam Husayn which was communicated by his secretary about our plan to conceal strategic storages. The directive said that the plan should give priority to concealment over any other action.

(U) This early move by the president proved to be a very important step in protecting our storages from enemy bombing throughout the war. This, of course, was in addition to our trust in God to protect us from enemy air reconnaissance and monitoring. That was a blessing from God Almighty and we thanked Him for it.

(U) I gave orders to the units responsible for protection and turned my attention to the information I received on potential enemy targets.

(U) 11 August 1990

(U) We began carrying out the president's directive on the concealment of strategic storages. I allowed one whole week for this task, but it took 10 days. Because the storages had to be scattered in 15 different areas from the north to the south of the country. We followed this course of action:

- (U) First priority will be given to dispersing and storing al-Husayn Missiles.
- (U) Second priority will be given to other storages.

- (U) Missiles will be stored in different places from those for chemical warheads. Other storages, will be kept in different places.
- (U) Not more than 25 to 30 missiles will be stored in any one place.
- (U) Storages will be made integrated groups made up of conventional warheads, fuel, missile bodies, and parts. Special attention will be to isolate them so they will not affect each other.
- (U) Ten missiles will be deployed in a southern direction and considered a third line for Brigade 224. Another 10 missiles will be placed on middle readiness. Thus the brigade will have 30 missiles. But, the first maintenance unit will actually prepare 50 missiles.
- (U) The area under the responsibility of the first maintenance unit will be divided into 3 to 4 sectors in the north, the center, and the south. Control will be carried out by telephone through the commanders of the sectors to insure immediate contact. This is in addition to the work of liaison officers.
- (U) Adequate protection will be insured for the storage areas by three infantry companies. 9. Good camouflage will be provided for the sites under trees and behind other natural barriers.
- (U) Special attention will be given to security and the assignment of reliable elements for this task.
- (U) Transportation vehicles, such as those provided for al-Husayn Missile system, will be provided to transport the protection units which will accompany the transportation of missiles.
- (U) An engineering unit will be provided and means will be guaranteed for transporting the storages which will be dispersed.
- (U) Special attention will be given to fire-fighting by providing machines and simple lightening rods.
- (U) There will be regular checking of storages.

(U) On the same day, 11 August 1990, which was an eventful day, I continued to coordinate with the competent authorities on the next phase and the information on effective targets. I was particularly concerned with the question of camouflaging and protecting our units. I took the necessary measures by forming protection groups to accompany Brigade 224 in the western desert from a distance or on actual locations. I called these groups "first special task groups." I based them in the region of al-Warrar, al-Anbar Governorate, to benefit from transport vehicles and al-Ra'd (Luna) launchers, which were among the reserve. We also trained them on missiles.

(U) On the same day, I issued a special directive to carry out initial surveys of the southern region in order to prepare sites for the missiles which would deal with enemy concentrations in the Arabian Peninsula. The sites were located in the governorates of Maysan, Dhi Qar, and al-Basrah.

(U) 12 August 1990

(U) It was midnight. My wife, who was on the telephone, bade me "good night," and hung up. I picked up a pen and turned to the report I was writing for the president. When I finished, I heard the call for morning prayer from a nearby mosque. I quickly got up, performed ablution, and prayed. I prayed to God to help us triumph over our enemies. For He hears us and responds to our prayers.

(U) After prayer, I went back to my desk. In addition to the report before me, there were the initial results of the reconnaissance which was carried out by the first and second groups. They selected sites in al-Qurnah Qal'at Salih, al-'Aziz, Julaybah, and al-Batha', according to the instructions I gave them on 11 August 1990.

(U) I kept the information readily available for study by the commanders of the units which will be assigned tasks in the south when the need arises in the future.

(U) There was also a letter from the presidential office alerting us to the need to take adequate

measures for camouflage, concealment, and protection for trucks carrying long-range missiles on the highway to the western border. Our reply to the letter explained the reasons for the confusion on this subject. For the first phase of the camouflage and deception plan was already in place.

(U) Actually, the reasons for the confusion were as follows:

- (U) The trucks mentioned were actually carrying the protection unit which would accompany the launchers and special transport vehicles; in other words, the first special task group.
- (U) A road accident occurred, delaying the movement of the trucks.
- (U) The highway was not open from al-Ramadi.
- (U) We did not move any vehicles carrying such groups west of al-Ramadi for technical reasons.
- (U) We did not transport real strategic launchers during the day time. The launchers themselves were already deployed in the western region at the time.
- (U) A MIO project was in progress in the western region, and it was possible that the organization had to use a missile sometimes for the purposes of testing fixed bases.

(U) Still, we double-checked all the security aspects, including those pertaining to camouflage with covers and nets.

(U) The first rays of sunblight penetrated my room. Lieutenant Dr. Ma'an 'Abd-al-Rahman, the resident doctor at the Missile Directorate, came in. And the moment he glanced at my face, he said: You are tired, sir. You must have some sleep.

(U) I laid down in my military uniform in an adjoining room and was soon sound asleep and dreaming. I dreamed I was taking part in a concealment and protection operation with other fighters in the western region.

(U) 13 August 1990

(U) I sent a report on missile deployment and target analysis to the president. It contained an analysis of strategic enemy targets and a comparison between our viewpoint and that of other experts. I took into consideration the quality of our weapons, the possibility of scoring direct hits, and our capabilities and conditions at the time. I referred to what I believed was the most suitable target and proposed directing a collective strike by 10 missiles on this target. But, I also said there was another less important target which must not be overlooked. So, I proposed directing a collective strike at both targets simultaneously.

(U) I explained the units under my control, including the missile batteries. We had a commando brigade, two anti-aircraft battalions, and an engineering company. They were all in the western region. All the launchers also were in the same region and aimed in the direction of the Zionist entity. I also explained the missile reserve and the places of their dispersion and concealment. My report included the most suitable launching sites, but also referred to the need for more updated maps.

(U) I concluded my report by assessing our position as far as preparation time was concerned. I said that we need 18 hours at the minimum. But, if we hit the Zionist entity and then return to the south, we will need 30 hours. On the other hand, we need two days if we use night hours only, and that there will be an interval of 10 hours between one strike and another.

(U) The president remarked on the report as follows: "The director of the Missile Corps should be given all he needs to improve his position." The president also instructed that the two targets I selected be added to the ones previously selected in the Zionist entity, provided good preparations were made. As for implementation, he said, this will take place under a subsequent order, depending on the developments of the situation. We must not try to maneuver with the launchers

presently, as this will affect our ability when preparing them to respond to Israel, the president concluded.

(U) 14 August 1990

(U) Another great gesture by the president was his directive to the defense minister and the director of military intelligence to provide me with whatever I needed to improve my position. In the meantime, I continued my coordination with the Air Force and Air Defense Command to obtain air photos of certain targets. I also requested information about any Zionist attack or that the enemy had discovered our launching sites so we could keep them safe and sound. I also communicated with the second and third air defense sectors in the western and southern sectors.

(U) At the same time, we continued to coordinate tasks with the Military Intelligence Directorate in the areas where our units were deployed. We asked the directorate for more air photos, information, and tourist maps so we could benefit from them in updating the maps with the Military Survey Directorate. The shape of the target, and not just its size, is important in determining the accuracy of the strike. So, I needed tourist maps for this purpose.

(U) In implementation of an order by the president, the Operations Department inquired about our needs. I said that our needs are as follows:

- (U) updating maps of the lands that are important to us.
- (U) Replacing the anti-aircraft Battalion 588, which was seconded to us, by a more integrated one.
- (U) Providing several drilling machines (shovels) and cranes.
- (U) Insuring telephone lines in certain areas in southern Iraq.

(U) We were in a hurry, while the Military Survey Directorate was slow. I also noticed that the Military Intelligence Directorate was just as slow in providing us with the information we wanted.

(U) On this day also, I issued specific working plans for the special (chemical) warheads in coordination with al-Muthanna Enterprise. I said that storage and preparation will be the responsibility of the first maintenance unit. I had to give clear and precise instructions, but also in great secrecy, and defer other topics to a later stage.

(U) It was another eventful day as 11 August 1990. Some of the things we accomplished on this day were moving the second missile battalion, a battery from Tariq (Astras) Battalion of Brigade 226, and a mixed group for storage and transportation from Mashru' al-Musayyib Sub-District to Kuwait.

(U) I obtained the results of the reconnaissance which was carried out by the third group. It chose sites in al-Jabayish, Suq al-Shuyukh, al'Aziz, and Qal'at Salih according to my recommendations on 13 August 1990.

(U) I was busy for a while with the people from al-Muthanna Enterprise and MIO. I then held a long conference to streamline and specify more requests from the Military Intelligence Directorate, the Air Force and Air Defense Command, and the Operations Department.

(U) 15 August 1990

(U) I summoned Colonel Ghanim Ahmad, director of the chief of staff office, who sat down and wrote the orders to be given to Brigades 223 and 224, the Missile Maintenance Command, and the security section in the Missile Directorate on the concealment and protection of missile units. The orders said that the units must be protected by changing shelters and assembly points to avoid their discovery by space photos. They must also be covered, and movement must be by night only.

(U) The army chief of staff and his assistant for operations often emphasized these matters. So, we prepared everything that would help maintain the camouflage, such as cloth materials, old tents, and other creative means of concealment.

(U) 16 August 1990

(U) I set up a missile control branch for operational purposes in Kuwait composed mainly of personnel from Brigade 225 headquarters and support units and a representative from our own headquarters. This branch was first linked to the Republican Guard command and I called it Operational Missile Control Center-Republican Guard. Later, it became Missile Control Center for all operational missile units in the southern sectors of the Second, Third, Fourth, Sixth, and Seventh Army Corps. This step was subsequently followed by a coordination center for fire support which was set up on 10 September 1990.

(U) 17 August 1990

(U) The defense minister received me in his office and I gave him a full briefing on the accomplishments of the Missile Corps on the past few days.

(U) I asked for maps of the Arab states which massed hostile forces against Iraq and any information on targets, even tourist maps. I was surprised to learn that the Military Intelligence Directorate did not keep maps or any useful information on the Arab states concerned. This is because they are Arab states and therefore the Military Intelligence Director has no military interest in them. It did not expect any military conflict with them as is happening now following the stationing of hostile forces on their territories to threaten Iraq's security and safety.

(U) We were greatly relieved, however, when the Military Intelligence Directorate informed us on 19 August 1990 that it has its own means to alert us in good time about any strike by the Zionist entity so we can retaliate. I asked the air force and other intelligence agencies to inform us immediately about any aggression. They, in turn, asked secret service sources to provide us with the results of missile strikes by the Zionist enemy, just as they did when we attacked targets in Iran. But, the little information we had on the south was not sufficient for full planning.

(U) I expressed my gratitude to the Military Intelligence Directorate for its concern about our requests. I said I was relieved that there was someone to alert us. My whole concern was to gain time and find someone who could give us information to help us rectify our strikes when the time came.

(U) 24 August 1990

(U) Work has proved invigorating. Here I am on a helicopter heading for Kuwait. I only had one hour sleep. But, I must now inspect the sites of our missile units there and tackle their problems.

(U) Iraqi villages looked beautifully green from above. And when the scene below turned suddenly barren, I knew we were flying over the Kuwaiti desert.

(U) 26 August 1990

(U) While in Kuwait, I visited all the missile units under the command of the Operational Missile Control Center, which was then no longer linked to the Republican Guard.

(U) Our units there consisted of two Ra'd (Luna) Missile battalions, one Tariq (Astras) battery, two meteorological batteries, a technical repair workshop, a mixed group for technical and transportation tasks which the second and third operational missile maintenance units sent to the headquarters of Brigade 225, and the second special task group for camouflage. For a second camouflage group was formed in the southern region on 25 August 1990 similar to the one in the western region. The question of protection was always in my mind. So, I did not overlook the need

to provide camouflage for our missile units in Kuwait also.

(U) I spent this day updating the coordinates and improving plans for missile strikes by checking the accuracy of information. I explained all that in a plan which clearly points out the targets for further knowledge and full preparation.

(U) 28 August 1990

(U) When I discovered that our units in the Kuwaiti sectors also needed anti-aircraft support and that this was not available from the army, I immediately obtained two anti-aircraft batteries from Battalion 1039 belonging to Brigade 224 and seconded them to the Operational Missile Control Center.

(U) 30 August 1990

(U) We fueled 10 missiles on 8 August 1990. In the meantime, Zionist threats intensified. But, since the validity of the fuel expired on 6 September, we had to empty the missiles.

(U) Naturally, we had to inform the commander in chief of the armed forces about the situation. His directive, which was communicated to us by his secretary, was that we must not fill them until a military attack has actually taken place against Iraq.

(U) Brigade 224 graciously fulfilled this difficult assignment and we referred the empty missiles to MIO for repair.

(U) I thought: How powerful these men are when they work in unison for the well-being of their country and the defense of their honor and principles?!

(U) 31 August 1990

(U) We set off in a car, and it was fascinating to watch the machine swallow up the road as we sped through in the direction of the western desert. For I decided that day to also inspect our missile units there and reassure myself about their condition.

(U) I switched off the air-conditioning and rolled down the window to see how it felt outside. The hot desert air hit my face like a blaze of fire, and I was really concerned about the effect it might have on the morale of our soldiers in this desolate place.

(U) But, the morale was high as I expected it. I felt after only a few hours that I was among joyous friends. The sight of the cloth material they used for camouflage was colorful and looked rather funny. But the men were in great harmony and that made me feel comfortable. A senior NCO said: Sir, we are ready to fight the Zionist enemy face to face as you wished us when you were a lieutenant. The man turned out to be one of my students when I was teacher at the artillery school. He was close to my age, which was why duty brought us together once again after a long separation.

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