

This is a partial transcript of the Enhanced Interrogation of Salam al-Wahid, one-time personal translator, and bodyguard for former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. Interview conducted by the Mossad...04 December 2006 to 06 December 2007...Location Undisclosed. Recovered from the backup system for the Masada IDF and Knesset Bunker mainframe.

So, you are prepared to cooperate?

Yes.

Good...what is your name?

Salam al-Wahid, son of Yakoub al-Jarrah

What is your nationality?

I am an Iraqi.

What is your profession?

I am a professional soldier.

To what unit are you assigned?

I am a member of the Iraqi Special Security Service, attached to the Special Forces Brigade of the Presidential Palace.

Did you have a designation, or a code name?

My designated code name is 'golden boy'.

What are your specialties?

I speak the 20 top worldwide languages and am...was a member of the special weapons and tactics rapid deployment team.

What languages do you speak?

Many. You want me to list them? You are serious?

Yes.

Ok, Mandarin Chinese, English, Hindi, Spanish, Russian, Bengali, Portuguese, German, French, Japanese, Urdu, Korean, Wu Chinese, Javanese, Telugu, Tamil, Yue Chinese – also known as Cantonese, Marathi, Vietnamese and Turkish. Oh, and of course, Kurdish and Arabic.

How is it that you came to learn these languages?

Initially, I was gifted with a good ear for languages...in university; I specialized in the languages of our enemies, so that I could better serve my country. When I was accepted to the special weapons and tactics team and assigned to the President I was recognized for my language abilities. My duties were to act as the President's main and only translator in his private and public functions. I was also tasked as his front-line defense should an attempt be made on his life in my presence.

How long had you been with the President?

I started in 1985 when I replaced the former translator, who had been with the President since 1979.

Ok Salam, tell us about March 1, 1990.

As you say, it was March 1, 1990. We were in Al Hillah, Iraq, which is where the President's favorite estate was located. Hillah is about 60 miles west of Baghdad. As I entered the room, the President was sitting in his favorite purple plush-covered throne. Sticking his outstretched legs on the stool at his feet he was looking out the huge window in his private quarters. I think he was...quietly contemplating the future.

Did he speak directly to you?

Yes he said, "Salam...today is a great day! It will be MY future, and my people's – people's future." I could see that his knuckles were white from the very forceful grip he had on the armrests. I did not understand what he had said, but I did not interrupt him for an explanation. He was exhaling cigar smoke quietly and I noticed that his gaze was transfixed. He glared out the huge window as if to discern the shapes of Mecca more than 600 miles to the south. I could see his smile. He turned to me and said, "I am imagining none other than the Prophet Muhammad himself smiling back down on us today Salam." He rarely used my name, so I bowed a little and acknowledged his attention.

Why had Saddam summoned you that day? Was there something special, some event or something critical that he needed you for?

Yes, I had heard rumors among the Republican Guard Special Services Unit that the President was about to acquire the ultimate deterrent to his enemies, one that had eluded him for so long. So, I was expecting to be called to his private meeting room, and I was.

You say "eluded him for so long" ...what exactly do you mean by that?

It was common knowledge that the President had pushed his scientific services to the breaking point. We had eliminated many of them for displeasing him with their lack of scientific ability...they offered no advances that met his obsession with acquiring weapons of mass destruction. It was clear to everyone that they were either failing on purpose or were just incompetent.

*****The Subject stopped to take a drink of hot tea that had been offered*****

May I continue?

Thank you. Yes, please, continue.

He had endured numerous challenges, not the least of which was your bully friends, the United States, as well as the pesky United Nations. He routinely yelled about the UN and US sanctions. Throughout all these ordeals, he had been determined to be successful. "Salam," he said looking directly at me, and...he rarely addressed me by name. "Salam, today, we...I am that much closer," he said, rubbing the armrest with his slightly sweaty palm. He lifted his hands up and looked at them as he tried to rub the accumulating sweat from them. Saddam had very sweaty palms, and I knew what was coming next.

“How is it that my staff cannot keep it cool in here? I must have better air conditioning; Do I need to kill every technician I ask to fix the air conditioning?” he raged rhetorically to the empty throne room. I knew he would soon have the heating and air conditioning crew killed and replaced. He did this many times.

Don’t get sidetracked, he was a killer, we know...get to the central point...how did you know?

Yes, yes...as it became clearer and clearer that our WMD and nuclear weapons programs would never yield the results he’d hoped and anticipated, the President began looking for assistance or a sympathetic ear from countries with nuclear ambitions or programs closely aligned with his. I acted as translator for every conversation he had so I was aware of action he took with regards to his weapons of mass destruction programs.

And?

And...so as the breakup of the Soviet Union occurred, we began secretly paying huge sums of bribery money to high-ranking officials from the former Soviet Nuclear Forces, attempting to coax those holding the nuclear weapons into trading hard weapons for hard currency. Curiously, he was unsuccessful, which made him very angry. The Russian generals were so anxious to take his money but equally anxious to hold on to their nuclear weapons, for use at a later time against their sworn life-long enemy, “the Chinese,” was their constant reply. He knew that they were never going to give him what he wanted. Depressed, he moped around for months afterward, afraid to raise his profile too much in anticipation of the United States...those Kingdom of Saud lackeys we hated so much...interfering with his plans. Even watching his enemies die in normally entertaining and unusual ways couldn’t boost his spirits. War was a good salve for Saddam, so he decided to start one. Just as he began planning our bold invasion to annex the oil fields in Kuwait he had a clandestine visitor to the Al Hillah palace.

Who came to visit him?

It’s curious, I am unsure how the Chinese contacted him as it wasn’t something I was involved in...the visitor was Chin Li Yang, known in China and apparently to Saddam as a Princeling, the high-ranking first-born son of the Chinese Minister of the Institute of Nuclear Energy Research. Yang and his father were both members of the communist Chinese inner circle, the People’s Liberation Army and were highly regarded within their respective areas of government. As I translated, he was slowly laying out a plan that would lead him to his ultimate goal, a nuclear Iraq. Though Yang had intimated that this transaction was officially an act of “state treason” nothing happened within China that was not actually sanctioned.

I understood that Yang had been assured through his contacts within the Peoples Liberation Army and Chinese Second Artillery Corps that the two CNF-235 nuclear artillery warheads he was selling today would not be missed. The President asked, “What do we have to discuss, I was under the impression that your government was unable to assist the people of Iraq with this acquisition.”

“Excellency, I have been directed to re-open this dialogue with you.”

“What is the reason for the change of heart?”

“Sir, we speak today because the weapons you seek may now be available.

Yang said the weapons were suddenly available when the Chinese had previously said they were not?

Yes. Yang went into some very detailed reasoning about how they had in their possession some weapons of great strength that were officially off-the-books...that is, they did not acknowledge they were actually manufactured. As Yang continued to speak, I could see that the President's mind wandered. He had a habit of tapping his fingernails absentmindedly on the table and he was doing this as Yang detailed the People's Republic of China's issues with the United States government. It was clear to me that the President was already contemplating how best to use these new weapons he as-of-yet did not possess. Saddam interrupted Yang, saying, "I am so angry to be made to sit idly by and watch as the oil-rich Saudi's slowly cede control of oil and gas leases in the Middle East and Arabian Sea to the Americans."

"Yes Excellency, it is a shame to watch the House of Saud become lapdogs for the Americans," Yang replied.

"So, what exactly are you offering and why?"

"Sir, the Chinese government sees this problem as perhaps you see it, a direct threat to your own national sovereignty and security."

Sitting back in his chair, Saddam said very quietly, "How do I trust that these weapons were not stolen, and will perhaps put my head in the crosshairs of your General Secretary and it's formidable military?"

Yang responded quickly, "Mr. President, when my government agreed to numerous treaties and agreements related to its nuclear forces, these types of weapons were never even part of the negotiations because, officially, they do not exist. I have been assured that they will never be accounted for, and they have not been in the past, thus, they are invisible to the world."

Did Yang give any other reasons for the change of heart?

He did say that by offering for sale the ultimate weapon, Yang felt in his gut a supreme level of confidence that he would be enriching himself, his family, his friends as well as his country through this sale.

He gave the impression that the sale would mean money for his family?

No, though he and his family would see no compensation from this transaction, he certainly intimated through his body language and his tonal inflection that the prestige they would enjoy from the successful negotiations would be almost immeasurable.

Hmm. So, you were allowed to "think" as you put it?

Yes, in my translations, it was critical to read the emotions of the individual. I have skills and abilities along these lines. In this case I was thinking, *"I wonder if the reason Yang says the approvals for this sale came from the highest levels of Chinese government was so that one day they would be able to hold possession of them over the President's head and blackmail him*

somehow” and then the President, who was himself a very good judge of people, asked that exact question!

So you thought that blackmail was also a possibility? Did Yang give any indication this was possible?

Yes, I thought it possible. But Yang shrugged his shoulders somewhat and said, “Mr. President, I do not think you are in danger in your dealings with us.... whatever advances the General Secretary’s vision of the world is what must happen.” Sensing a lull in the conversation, he then said, “All the Americans and Saudi’s care about is oil and money and we will one day teach them both they should have cared about so much more. With all due respect Excellency, you will pay for the privilege of holding and deploying these wonders of the Chinese people, or I can take my leave and perhaps find another buyer.”

I paused, waiting for a response to translate from the President. When none came quickly, I risked a sideways glance at him and closed my eyes for a moment, expecting to hear a quick pistol shot to the forehead of this scrawny man he did not like.

Pistol Shot?

The President had a habit of killing people who irritated him...or he’d have one of his sons do it in a very public and messy fashion. But, when none came, I thought, *“I cannot believe this little speck of a man still stands, he must truly hold the keys to the things the President requires, so death comes not for this infidel, yet.”* Instead of dying in front of me, Yang continued speaking quickly and when no bullet hole creased the skin between his eyes, I continued his translation... “So, Excellency, my government has come to now believe you must be prepared fully meet and to repel the capitalists and their armies when they come for you.”

What was your President’s reaction?

He nodded quietly, looked Yang deeply in the eyes and said, “yes, I agree, but, so far I have been unsuccessful in properly motivating my scientists to complete the task and you have not offered anything more than words.” I knew firsthand that the motivation he spoke of was brutal and public killing as every member of his scientific directorate if necessary. Answering quickly, as if to avoid the soon-to-be-fired kill shot, Yang said, “that, your excellency, is a difficulty we can overcome. We believe that supporting you directly through scientific research, personnel and materials, our mutual goal of a successful and self-sufficient nuclear program for your people can be reached through monetary means. Perhaps you can purchase what you need and avoid the messy details of development.”

Saddam said, “yes, our ‘mutual goals’ ...so, tell me my friend, to purchase these items and avoid the messy details of development...how much might you require from the people of Iraq?

Before you answer, let me be very clear in my understanding; are you selling me a weapon that is finished and ready to use, or are you just offering something in trade for future access to my oil?”

Yang signed deeply and sank into the chair behind him, as if thinking through his answer, which, indeed he was, as I guess he had been instructed. “The Chinese people are very interested in helping His Excellency protect his people and his homeland from all aggressors. And, while the

Peoples Republic of China is currently not a member of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty being pushed so forcefully by the Americans, in theory we fully support keeping nuclear weapons out of the hands of terrorists and rogue nations. However, we continue to take our own counsel as to, uh, helping, our brother and sister countries as they struggle against their capitalistic and colonizing enemies. We look on it as our obligation to maintain what our political and military leadership describe as the ‘minimum deterrent posture’ in providing materials and manpower to nations we believe are being targeted for colonization by the capitalist nations for what they call ‘nation building.’”

The President put his hands together, then reached for a glass of water, took a slow sip and then said, “In this instance, you are providing both, yes? And, for how much?”

“We look on this as an agreement between two, like-minded nations, between...two friends if you like, for this action, and for your agreement that in possessing these items you will never reveal our involvement, we will make available to you the materials, personnel, and finished product, two of our tested and reliable People’s Republic Warheads, by nomenclature they are known as the CNF-235 weapon. Each, on detonation will have a 300-kiloton yield, which, as you know, is approximately one third of a megaton of explosive force. These weapons are capable of long-range deployment, say by your SCUD missile system, or for short-range tactical use, in a properly prepared truck, car, or van. We offer them with minimal support personnel to train your operators and necessary machinery, as well as two vehicles in which they may be transported, for the sum of \$20 million per item.”

They wanted \$20 Million dollars apiece for the weapons? No negotiation? Just like that, give me \$20 million?

I can only assume that since they were prepared to sell, they knew what the open market value of the items actually was at the moment...

What did Saddam do then?

The President pressed his back firmly against his chair. I had on occasion sat in that very chair, well, it was really more like a throne... mostly to make sure there wasn’t a pressure sensitive assassination device attached to it...but as he sat back, I could remember the feeling of the pressure of the high-backed stiff gold-encrusted metal as a reassurance. It was like putting the body into a more upright posture that conveyed ultimate power. You see, I knew he was ready, I knew that he had more than \$40 million in American dollars, to pay for the devices, already assembled in two 400-pound shipping containers, just beyond the ornate door to his left.

*****The Subject stopped once again to take a drink*****

Please, do continue. You say he had the money ready even though he’d not been assured of reaching a deal??

Having the money ready wasn’t an issue, it never was...the President regularly kept upwards of \$100 million in each palace. Who knows what happened to it when you people killed my country. And I am fairly certain that he was prepared to keep Mr. Yang for as long as it took, even if he had to ship him back home to China in small pieces, one at a time, to get what he wanted out of the Chinese.

So, once the dollar amount was agreed upon, what was Saddam's next step?

My President was a sly devil...I think he liked testing people, so, he tested this Chinese man by very quickly responding, "Of course, you will require this as a wire transfer, yes?" You should have seen the response in Yang's body language even before it flew across the face.

"No" was the gasp that escaped from Yang's lips. As I translated, I could see the devil in the President's eyes...he was one step ahead the entire time. "No Mr. President, we must insist that NO trail exists that could trace back and identify the Chinese government as your "nuclear benefactor." He was breathing deeply, I believe he knew just how close to becoming very dead in the desert he was...he smiled and said in his most non-threatening voice, "and, honorable sir, we must also insist that payment be immediate, and in cash, preferably American dollars, or diamonds, or in a precious metal, say, Palladium, Gold or Silver."

Yang wanted diamonds or precious metals instead of cash?

He did...but the American dollar was the only thing my President had to trade for the weapons. Personally, as his official translator, I had never seen the President make a deal of any kind that involved anything but dollars...no diamonds, gold or silver ever.

What was Yang's reaction to the cash only offer?

Mr. Yang was very clear and said, "Mr. President, if this agreement meets your needs, then I shall make arrangements for your payment to be delivered via diplomatic pouch that will not be inspected as it crosses our respective national borders, we can work out the details of the transfer of goods at your convenience."

"Then let it be so," said the President of Iraq, as he stood and shook Yang's hand vigorously. I was very happy to see my President so happy and ready to celebrate.

What did Saddam usually do to celebrate a victory like the one you just described?

As was his custom, the President held onto Yang's hand as he led him out onto the beautifully ornate porch.

Alone?

No, I went as well, and there were also many beautiful women, barely covered by linen wraps that looked like they were a solitary piece of material. The President sat down as one of the women poured each man a glass of tea. He sat Yang down in the chair next to him and said, "now, we must celebrate our friendship, come, sit with me as we watch the sun set on what was once a vast desert of Bedouin traders, and we shall enjoy the fruits of the evening and the morning to come. Tomorrow, we shall watch the sun rise on a new, more powerful Iraq."

That ended the conversation. They stayed the night on the porch. The next day, I watched as the transaction was completed and Yang and the money departed Iraq in a large airplane.

Did you ever see Yang again?

No, I never saw or heard of him again.

At this point, the audio and video become too damaged to recover data.