

[Redacted]

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(b)(3)

IRAQ

Tariq AZIZ

(Phonetic: ahZEEZ)

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

Addressed as: Mr. Minister

[Redacted]

(b)(3)

Tariq Aziz is one of President Saddam Husayn's most important [Redacted] deputies, particularly on international and political issues. Aziz is one of the few Iraqi officials with access to Saddam who has a relatively cosmopolitan outlook. Following an April 2001 cabinet reshuffle, Saddam appointed the reliable Aziz Acting Foreign Minister--a position he formally held from 1983 to 1991--until a suitable candidate could be selected. [Redacted]

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[Redacted] as a Christian, he lacks widespread support and poses no threat to Saddam, which earns him a position of trust in the President's cabinet. Aziz gravitates to the role of statesman and diplomat [Redacted]

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(b)(3)

Demonstrating Diplomatic Elan

[Redacted]

(b)(3)

Aziz dominates Iraq's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and the country's diplomacy. [Redacted]

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

An Erstwhile Moderate

[Redacted]

(b)(3)

Before Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, [Redacted] viewed Aziz as generally advocating a moderate foreign policy. 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 mend 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]

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[Redacted] From 1992 to 1994, Aziz advocated cooperating with the UN Special Commission to lift sanctions against Iraq. [Redacted]

Faithful Adherent to Hardline Policies

[Redacted]

(b)(3)

Although Aziz may occasionally present more moderate views to the President, he does not push them. He supports whatever decision Saddam makes and deals faithfully with the consequences of Saddam's actions. For most of the last decade, Aziz has hewed closely to Saddam's hardline policies. He spearheaded Iraq's rejection of successive UN Resolutions, has repeatedly articulated Baghdad's belligerent stance toward sanctions and against allowing inspectors back into Iraq, has denied the regime's brutalization of Iraqi Kurds and Shias, and rejected the sovereignty of Kuwait. In numerous press

interviews, Aziz has claimed that Iraq has fulfilled all of its UN-authorized requirements and that the lifting of the embargo has been long overdue, denying Baghdad's culpability for the Iraqi economic difficulties and placing all the blame on the United States. [redacted]

(b)(3)

Background [redacted]

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Aziz is generally considered one of Iraq's most ardent Ba'th Party ideologues, and his party credentials are impeccable. He participated in the 1968 coup that brought the Ba'thists to power. During the 1970s, while serving first as Minister of Information and then as a member of the Revolutionary Command Council and the party's regional command, Aziz helped Saddam undermine former President Ahmad al-Bakr and succeed him in 1979. [redacted] Saddam made Aziz Deputy Prime Minister. [redacted]

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Aziz was born in 1936. [redacted]

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[redacted] He speaks excellent English [redacted] Aziz and his wife, Violette, have two sons, Ziad and Saddam, and a daughter, Zaneb. [redacted]

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