



**THE FULL TEXT OF THE
ISLAMIC SUPREME COUNCIL OF IRAQ'S
PRESIDENT SAYED AMMAR AL-HAKEM'S
SPEECH AT ORSAM ON 11 OCTOBER 2010**

Ankara - TURKEY

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Dr. Serhat Erkmen: Our distinguished guest is Sayed Ammar Al-Hakem. He is from Iraq and he is part of a very important family of Iraq. He is also the leader of the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq. As you all know the al-Hakim family has very important position in terms of religious leadership and also they have played a very important historical role. When we have a look at this point from that perspective we know that the identity of their party is very important. Especially since the change of the system in Iraq, they are one of the most important political parties. Within this terms, today the subject of our meeting is the process of government formation in Iraq. You know there has been an election in Iraq and unfortunately the new government has not been formed yet. Of course the most important reason for that is the results of the election were very close to each other. Unfortunately, the political leaders could not have come to a consensus. There were also some tensions and some bargaining, which also prevented the government formation. Today, Sayed Ammar al-Hakem will share his experiences and ideas with us. We almost have an hour now, after Sayed Ammar al-Hakem finalized his speech we are going to have a question and answer sessions. I would like to thank all of you who have participated in this meeting. I would like to give the floor to Sayed Ammar al-Hakem.

Sayed Ammar al-Hakem: Thank you very much. May the god provide peace for you. This is a great pleasure for me to be with this very important group of people. Today I am in Turkey and the reason behind this is I am trying to develop economic and strategic relations between Turkey and Iraq. We know that Turkey has great strength, and Turkey could become a very important bridge between the Arab/Islamic world and the Western world. For that reason Turkey has a great importance for all of us. We know that in terms of economic and political reasons we have very important roles and it is very important for the negotiations of the interests and we have very important opportunities to strengthen our positions. We know that historical depth is very important. Turkey has a very important role within the Arabic world and Islamic world. Apart from that in terms of international platforms Turkey has good relations with the Western world. Turkey increases its power day by day. Turkey has expertise, the democratic experience and everything we need. Especially in the Middle East Turkey is a very important strategic partner for us and we could create very important partnerships with them. We know Turkey's perspective in terms of Iraq. We always appreciate

Turkey's position for the political development in Iraq. We know that Turkey is trying to help the people of Iraq. We expect this to continue. We also expect that Turkey supports Iraq. We know that Turkey has very good intentions and feelings for the people in Iraq. We are encountering difficulties in Iraq, unfortunately we could not form the government. Government formation is delayed and this is a bad development. We expect to form the government as soon as possible. Of course there may be a lot of reasons for the delay of government formation. One of them is the result of the elections. We could not have a consensus in the end. It is very important to have a balance. We have to create the balance. There were parties who have been successful as the result of the elections, but unfortunately, we still couldn't provide the harmonization and undoubtedly we know that Iraq encounters a lot of difficulties in terms of social and political aspects. After 2003, you know we have faced really big difficulties. We need some time to solve all those problems. Of course we have some international assistance and as a result we know that today there are some people who have gained some profit. There will be some new sides in the end. There may be some national formations. I would like to reiterate the delay of the government formation has caused a lot of troubles for us. The world is following the developments in Iraq. We are trying to find a solution to the government formation problem in Iraq. We have to attach great importance to opportunities in Iraq, and how they may have an effect on the future of Iraq. Of course there will be a lot of reasons for the delay of government formation. They are to be solved in Iraq. We have to have frameworks for this. We have to have big spectrum solution. The real partnership for the Iraqi groups is very important. We have to create the balance. I would like to underline the real partnership, not only participation to the government. We have to have the best balance. Only after that we can have the government. Of course we can create a base which would satisfy the Iraqi people. All of those months, we have been focused on two points. One is the formation of the government. We always try to take advantage of the opportunities. If we are going to have a sound government as a result of the majority in the parliament. Within the constitutional framework we will respect the formation of the government. But we have really good successful opportunities for it. The political majority or the opposition parties will not give us success. All the lists are presenting some groups in Iraq. As a result we have a list, we have a social segment and maybe it will cause the eradication of the social segments. In terms of political strategies, we know that without a partnership, the government will not be successful. Only after we participate to the government, success will be possible. We have to have the harmonization. Harmonization and balance will be the basis of the government. We should have a real understanding, real partnership between the parties. We have some criteria and some qualification for the presidential position. There will be sharing of the roles and responsibilities and

we should have an understanding of the perspective which would convince all around the country. Unfortunately we only focused on the names. We are not focusing on the programs. But we are supposed to focus on names rather than programs. We always just gather around the round table and see the lists which are successful in the elections. They are going to present their qualifications, they are going to present their expectations and maybe their programs. within the light of these programs, we are going to select the government. Within the government every group will be represented. Only after we could be successful. Only after the holistic governing of the country could be realized. I can feel this power within the team. We want to have a strong government and in order to have a strong government it must be strong in all its pillars.

Iraq has great opportunities and resources, especially in terms of oil. There are agreements and conventions we have signed. We know that there will be a great increase in terms of oil companies in Iraq. We are supposed to have some occupational groups. I'm sure we have to spend our money for the solidarity and wealth of the Iraqi people. After that we will have open relations with the countries of the region and the rest of the world. In our opinion, the biggest victory in Iraq is that. Each and every one of the people living in Iraq will be happy and they will be having prosperity and solidarity. This is our wish and hope for our people. Afterwards we could have a holistic victory and profit. We will share it. We will share our victory and we have to share the way which brought the victory. We shouldn't gain some advantages to the disadvantage of our people or the other partners. We have to create a real partnership. For this reason we have to do our best. We encounter many difficulties but still we advocated this program. Especially within the political environment in the country we have supported. If you ask me, I think only after we have thorough representation of all groups within the government, we will be successful. Now I would like to give you time for your questions and I would like to thank you all for your attention.

Dr. Serhat Erkmén: Thank you very much, Sayed Ammar Al-Hakem. He has expressed his position very clearly and I would like to give a summary of his speech. In the beginning, he has underlined the importance of Turkey. He has also highlighted the importance of the strategic partnership between Iraq and Turkey. He has also stated that Turkey is a democratic country and Turkey could be a very important bridge to transfer its power to Iraq. Another point is that Turkey has an equal distance to all groups in Iraq. They think that Turkey is a very important country for them. In terms of government formation in Iraq, he has informed us about the results of the elections. There is a distribution of balance as a result of the elections. This is one of the factors, which prevented the

government formation in Iraq. Another important point is that the government should have a broad spectrum and they need a real partnership. The parties who participate in the government should also actively participate in terms of decision making within the government. He stated that he government, which will only represent the majority will not be successful. They need the representation of all the groups. They are generally focusing on the names, not focusing on the programs. The correct way is focusing on the programs. With the oil investments made in Iraq, there will be an income increase in Iraq. With an income increase we know that Iraq will have a regular and programmed administration and governing. This will of course pose a great role for building the future of Iraq. The phase of success could not be owned by only one group. Every group has an intention to be successful within some specific principles. In the end, they are supposed to form the government, which will be successful. Again I would like to thank him for his speech and contributions. Now if you have any questions, I would like to give the floor to you. Thank you.

Question: My name is Armağan Kuloğlu, I'm the chief advisor for ORSAM. First of all I would like to welcome you to Turkey. I have two questions. One of them is about the political environment. The second one is about security. As you have underlined, for the last seven months government has not been formed in Iraq. Of course the delay of the government formation is not a good thing for Iraq, it is a disadvantage for Iraq. We have to solve this problems as soon as possible. While we are solving this problem, of course, the parties will be based on their respective power. So it will create political stability. But still, it is a fact that the government formation is not realized. So what are your thoughts and projections for the future of Iraq? I would like to ask my second question. Even if you could form the government, what do you think about the security and the political stability of this government? Do you think that you have the needed environment to have a sound, stable and well-managed government? You know that the U.S. forces are leaving Iraq and at the end of 2011, all the U.S. forces will have left Iraq. Do you have any concerns in terms of security? Thank you very much.

Sayed Ammar al-Hakem: Thank you very much. In fact, yes, we could not realize the government formation. As you have mentioned there are a lot of conflicts going on. It is important to realize the government formation and of course the most important point is the success of the government. If the government will not be successful, what is the point then? If we cannot be successful, it will create more violence in our country and we don't want it. For that reason, we attached great importance to create successful opportunities. We have been given great opportunities, but we were not open to these kind of offers. We declined them. We know that we have to gather opinions of all

parties. Only after we could have a successful government formation. Seven months have passed and we still continue with negotiations, conversations, dialogues. After seven months we know what we need. We have mature talks about our real situation. We believe that we could create a partnership government. We want to have a government which would represent opinions of all segments of our country. This is our expectation. This is our hope. We know that it has a political dimension. If we succeed in government formation, we can satisfy the parties in Iraq. I'm sure, then, it will have a positive effect on security. You know that the Iraqi army and the Iraqi security forces are in a good position right now. They are expected to have a great strength. There have been great opportunities for the training of this army. Iraq is rehabilitating its army. This is actually a technical subject, we need army experts on it. Those experts are evaluating every segment of this position. They are all positive evaluations. We are always open to this kind of evaluations and discussions. We know that we could never accept a threat to the security of our people. The lack of security is a very important problem. We really need to have a perfect political and security environment for our people. We know that there are great opportunities for investment in Iraq. If this is so, we face a development revolution for the following years. Of course they increase the income of the government. Only after we could realized big projects. There are a lot of projects which needs investment. People are supposed to invest in our country and we are supposed to provide a secure and stable environment. The delay of government formation is a big problem for all of us. It is really disturbing us. We don't want to have conflicts and instability.

Dr. Serhat Erkmen: Before continuing with questions, I would like to underline some points that we document our meeting and we publish them afterwards. So please introduce yourselves before you ask your question.

Question: My name is Bahadır Koç from the Institute of 21th Century. Your party used to be the biggest party now it is not. What could be reasons for it and my second question is you are supporting soft federation with Kurdish people. Generally is it thought that the position of Prime Minister will get weaken; do you think this is a good thing to be desired or do you think is it weak point or something bad?

Sayed Ammar al-Hakem: Thank you very much. The Supreme Council of Islam has lost two symbolic leaders for the last 6-7 years. We should never forget it: Mohammed Bakir Hakim, he has passed away in 2003 after only four months, reduction of Saddam regime. And Abdulaziz Hakim is passed

away last year, so we could always keep this on our mind, they were the symbolic leaders and of course, it will have an effect on the public. Personally, The Supreme Council has not actually lost much we have made a lot of preparations, we have encountered with very bad surprises sometimes, we have gained most of the votes in the elections. Our votes are higher than our national ally. Our partner has gained less votes but more chairs in the parliament like 40. So unfortunately, these chairs are not representing the potential of votes. The distribution of the votes is reflected on a list and there are very big difficulties. I don't want to talk about in detail. As you all know there are some parties which gains just 7 chairs a hundred and ten thousand votes but there may be some different figures and different correlations. So, the role of the Supreme Council and supportive Supreme Council is not reflected with only 20 chairs, we have a great potential, we want to develop the election and the law of election, we want to have a better representation in the parliament. And the Supreme Council will have its best days and will become a pick again in one day, we will have new reforms and in our political discourses we always reflecting all these subjects and our council has played an historical role once, and I am sure with in a coming couple of months, we will regain our position. We had to state the constitution to our public. We had to make them understood the constitution. We think that this is a constitutional right, unfortunately, we have to solve this problem, the subject has been understood very well, this subject is up to Iraqi people. They could formulate a region or they could delay it or they don't do it at all. We will take our sides next to Iraqi people and I don't think that they will not need to shed lie upon to this constitutional fact. For your question in terms of the position of the prime minister and the lessening of the authorities of the prime minister, this is a parliamentary system. Then we write our constitution, we attach great importance. We have analyzed the constitutions of aiding countries. We have formulated some boards; we have invited some international experts. They have helped us. We had some negotiations with these experts. Actually, if you ask me the problem is not the constitutional authority, it is because of the wrong applications and implementations. Since we are keeping the last four years of studies ourselves, we may have some problems of course. This is because we are not abiding by the constitutional authority. If you can do it, if you could manage it, I am sure it will be very successful. From the beginning, the Iraqi constitution is not talking about prime minister, there is no such word as prime minister in the constitution of the beginning. It is just said the chair, the head of the board of ministers so the board of ministers will have a decision, will make a decision and with constitutional authorities, we have to differentiate with the wrong applications and constitutional authorities and we should have perfect and correct definitions for all of them. Thank you.

Question: My name is Oytun Orhan, Orsam. I would like to ask a question to Mr. Al-Hakem in terms of their opinions about Turkey's position in terms of the creation and formulation of the government.

Sayed Ammar al-Hakem: Actually, I have mentioned them in the beginning of my speech, if you ask me Turkey has played balanced in positive role in terms of its relationships with the political authorities in Iraq. And Turkey has encouraged Iraq to have national common policy and government. So, we appreciate Turkey's position and we expect all regional countries, all the surrounding countries play an active role as Turkey has played such an active, positive role. Of course, the internal subjects are to be given to Iraqi people; there should be no intervention to our internal subjects. But, also we appreciate Turkey's encouragement for us to have a balanced government. Only after that we could create stability in Iraq and only after that the region will have stability, the region will experience stability. And afterwards we will have strong and unified Iraq. Of course it is very important for us. In Iraq, we want to take us one part and Iraq has nobody else other than Iraqi people. We have Muslim neighborhood countries, Arab neighborhood countries and we all need their support and we want to have good relationships with all the surrounding countries, all the neighborhood countries. And we don't want to have bad relationships other surrounding countries. Of course, we also take great importance to do interests of Iraq.

Question: Harun Özkaynak coming from Orsam. While you are expressing the criteria for the government formation in Iraq, you have mentioned that the economic development of Iraq and to have economic prosperity and stability, there should be a reform and we may have some strategies. Ok, now I would like to ask you specifically about what kind of economic development plans you have and what kind of developments you are fictioning in your mind. It is going to be private sector oriented or public sector oriented? So, this is a question from me, thank you for answering.

Sayed Ammar al-Hakem: We know that we should provide opportunities for the private sector. Of course public sector is very important but we should also create some opportunities for the private sector only after we could create this development. Public sector sometimes could not be very successful in the management and administration of some projects. So we need to support private sector too. For the last thirteen years we have experienced great difficulties and the companies have experienced great difficulties. There are some in habiting laws for both public sector and private sector and they are not harmonized with our projections for the future. So we are supposed to be public oriented. Within our privates, of course, we have to make the competition going on between

public institutions common all around the country. So we are going to utilize the opportunities and we could make some investments for the Iraqi citizens and we could also provide some opportunities for the foreign investors. So, we could have a fast and qualified development in the end. We could provide these opportunities. Of course the interior structure services are responsibilities of the public sector but the other subjects could be given to the private sector.

Question: Bilgay Duman, Orsam. I am an expert on Middle East and I have two questions. First of all, after 2003, when we have looked at the political situations in Iraq, we know that the Kerkük (?) subject is very important. Even in the parliamentary elections or on the law of oil or some other subjects or some conflicting areas, the Kerkük is very important. Even in the senses of population, generally the key point focused on is Kerkük issue. Nearing this in mind, we know (35:53) has been delayed in Iraq. What do you think the contributions or the disadvantages of the population can see in Iraq and I would like to take your opinions in terms of Kerkük. Thank you very much.

Sayed Ammar al-Hakem: There is no doubt that just like other countries, Iraq also has some hot agendas, some hot files. And these agendas could cause some clashes, some conflicts. Maybe the coming years, it could still create conflicting issue. But we could overcome these issues with a national compromise. If all parties gathered together and make some decisions to this end, we could solve this problem. There may be some agreements to be signed but it could not solve it. Only a contract could not solve it. So we should have a positioning to this subject which will include some regional dimensions, some other dimensions, some national dimensions. There was a suggestion to freezing of this files but it is not applicable or these files could be had separately and every subject could be taken into account separately but we support one and single solution. If you make a separation of the problems, sometimes some parties could think that they are in an advantages position and other parties could think that they are in a disadvantages position. If we put all the problems in one basket, everybody will feel they are having some advantages or disadvantages. And there will be some confessions to be made. So, we always recommend national solutions, only one and single solutions and by literal ones could not be very successful in terms of Kerkük issue. We know Kerkük is from Kerkük. So Kerkük represents all of the assets. Kerkük represents the inhabitants of these lands. We could never deny this fact. We could not provide a characteristic which would not be accepted by the Kerkük people. Kerkük is from Kerkük, Basra is from Basra and they are the regions of Iraq and we want this mentality all parties will be taken into account. So we should have a common solution which will satisfy all parties.

Question: Ogün Duru from Orsam. In terms of population census, I would like to ask a question. As you all know the suggestion is discussed and there is no question in terms of ethnical backgrounds. Maybe the results of the census could be easier to understand. So what do you think about it? Could you share your ideas with us?

Sayed Ammar al-Hakem: When it comes to the population census we may have some agreements but unfortunately, since the suitable environment is not created for the population census, we have made a delay on it. This decision has been taken by the Iraqi government. But when it comes to the details, of course the nationality is strongly focused on but you know that it is very difficult. We are not supporting the phrasing the nationality or ethnicity or the religions of the people. It is not important. But general was to write the nationality too. So Arab, Kurdish, Turkmen we will also learn how the number of the population in terms of Kurdish people or Arab people. For instance, there were some networks in Musul and in Shabeks. So, if you ask me some formations of ethnicity backgrounds, it is not supposed to be written there but we know that the general idea is to write the nationality of the people.

Question: If you let me, I want to ask you a question. You always underline a point. Yesterday, the Turkish party has highlighted the importance of the subject. So, what is your position? Are you optimistic? Do you think there will be a strong government formation in Iraq which will cover all the segments of Iraq?

Sayed Ammar al-Hakem: Yes, I am optimistic. The third could only be realized by the truths. The train could not go if it is not on the railways. So we have parallel dimensions, parallel opinions. There are diversities of nationality, ethnicity and political diversities in Iraq. If this is so, now we have encountered to a more open vision when we compare our position to the position we had a couple of months ago. There are some action campaigns and some parties have advocated the political majority but we always underline the importance of a broad spectrum government. And I always like to underline the importance of it. And, today I don't think anybody who would not support the broad factum government formation of Iraq. If support it and we could what it is needed to be turned to this end, I am sure we will be successful and If Allah lets us, we are going to have a strong government formation in Iraq.

Question: If you don't have any more questions, I would like to ask a last question. My last question is as you all know, before the elections, there were different lists and you were in the National Alliance List with some other parties. As the results of the election, do you have gathered together? As a result of a long procedure and process, there is not new candidate for the Prime Minister who is Nuri Maliki. But, as we could follow, there are also some parties who are not supporting the Prime Minister candidateship of Nuri Maliki. So, what do you think about it? What is your opinion about it?

Sayed Ammar al-Hakem: First of all, I would like to thank to chair person. He is a democrat. He lets you ask your questions first, afterword, he asked his question so he is very kind. In term of National Alliance, there are some powers to show Maliki as Prime Minister Candidate. Our position is that we are not going to reject or deny or oppose. We know that we need to have successful opportunities and only after the realization of successful, we are going to be successful. There are some Iraqi lists, if we could create a broad factum government only after than we are going to utilized the successful opportunities and after we are going to see and decide or whether agree upon this or not. And if we could do that Mr. Maliki will take the more of the half of the votes and than he is going to be Prime Minister but there will be some legal regulations on it. Because he is not presenting the all parties, all segments of Iraq. As so he is not going to be so successful. So our position is that we are not supporting but also we are not intervening. We have a position and thoughts which from not conflict with our opinions, of course we always attach great importance of the truths of Iraq.

Dr. Serhat Erkmen: If you have no more questions, I would like to give turn to Mr. Bahadır once more.

Question: Bahadır Koç from The Institute of 21th Century. Everybody is talking about broad spectrum government in Iraq. Of course, the reasons could be understood very well but, still it could also be regarded as there is no normalization in Iraq. The basis of democracy is not ruling party, it is the fact of opposition party. So if everybody is going to be a part of government, you have good regular position. And opposition parties should have a very distinguish and significant position which is going to be stated out ruling parties. So what is your opinion about it?

Sayed Ammar al-Hakem: Normally, the opposition parties are the basis of the democratic system. And democratic situation could only be realized only after there is a ruling and opposition party. Thisi is the normal sense. But unfortunately, we are experiencing extra ordinary situation. We still could

not solve security and safety issues, but within political parties, we still could not break obstacles as nationality, ethnicity and religion. But we know that there is some lists in one lists and one explanation in another list. So there is some national positioning which is not a bight by the democratic situations. Maybe in four years of time, we are going to created. But now, some segments of the country could feel like they are out of political decision making process. So hopefully, we are going to have a list that sustains real representation. All the social segments of the Iraq will be represented in an open way with this. Only after then, we are going to have a strong government and strong opposition party. And as Supreme Council of Islam, we always state that the success opportunities are more important. For instance, there will be a government which has some success opportunities; we are going to agree upon it. If there is no success opportunity, of course, we are not going to support it.

Dr. Serhat Erkmen: If you don't have any more questions, I would like to ask last one question and then end the meeting. As you all know that there were some studies carried out for population census. However, the census is delayed to December. As we could understand that the most important reason is we don't have political atmosphere in which we could establish, carry out the census. However, there are two basic problems. One is as you have underlined, there is not a clear settlement in Iraq to understand this population census. Second reason is that last the seven months, Iraq could not have a government formation. For instance, for the next five months, what if you don't have government formation. Then what you are going to do? Are you going to delay population census or what is your position on that?

Sayed Ammar al-Hakem: Personally, I think the population census is a technical subject, and we need to have suitable planning. This is a technical point, and every country has to have this population census. Iraq is not an exception. This is important and what in the framework of Iraq. We should always attach great importance to the real aim of the subjects. So, then some different parties an we expect that the government will be formed, until then there won't be any problems. If this is so, I think again the parties could get together, if we could not form the government until the December census. They are going to discuss what could be the results of the census an d carry out of it. And I am sure that they will find another decision at the end.

Serhat Erkmen : I would like to thank Sayed Ammar Al-Hakem for participating and contributing to our meeting. And also, I would like to thank our participants for participating.