ESC TV on a comprehensive dialogue with Sayeed Amar al-Hakeem in Cairo

On Tuesday 20th of October 2011, Sayeed Amar al-Hakeem, head of the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq said: We are patriots and we are Iraqis and we take our attitudes mainly from the national interests of Iraq, If these attitudes correspond to the estimates of decent Arab or Islamic states in the region, then it is a good thing, but if it’s crossed, then no doubt that the national interest of Iraq is presented as we are committed with the national interest.

This event took place in a television interview by with the Egyptian Satellite Channel on His Eminence's visit to Cairo.

The interview also addressed several topics in the Iraqi space and issues related to the Iraqi updates.

The following is the text of the interview...

Reporter / your one hour may be one and half meeting today with President Mubarak, what did you present and what have you heard?

Sayeed Amar al-Hakeem, / It was long and important meeting as we dealt with the evaluation of the overall political situation in Iraq and the region and the joint Egyptian-Iraqi relations and I heard the view of the Egyptian leadership on the unity and stability of Iraq and its Arab identity despite of the attention of all precious nationalities in this country, the urge interests for good relations between the two generous countries, no doubt that the relationship between Iraq and Egypt is complementary because Iraq is a pivotal country has a lot of opportunities as a result of exceptional circumstances experienced in the last three decades, and Egypt, which symbolizes the Arab Identity is an important station in the Arab world. The roles can be integrated between Egypt and Iraq due to the nature of the big interests between the two countries, particularly the experience of construction and reconstruction and the revolution of development in Egypt, and today we are in Iraq at the beginning of the start of the reconstruction while Egypt could be act as a fundamental key to develop Iraq. We also talked about the forming the government, the current crisis and our perceptions and solutions to the issues that we have dealt with the President, and we found close understanding of the situation and actively pursuing the details of the Iraqi scene and an urgent desire for the decision to be an Iraqi from home and within the measures of national interest, President Mubarak believes that the regional countries must help Iraq without interference and we appreciated this vision.

Reporter / Have you felt any desire of giving priority to a bloc or party over the other ones?

Amar al-Hakeem / it was clear from the President and the officials we met that there is a desire to help without interfering, or express an opinion or being by side of any of the

parties, they believe that the Iraqi government is an internal concern must be treated by the Iraqis, and what we believe in inside Iraq is that we must consult with Arab and Muslim countries in the region and listen to their opinions and hear them, but the decision remains Iraqi, first and foremost.

Reporter / Do you still think that the decision to form a government is an Iraqi decision, or is it already turned to be a regional call unless if not international?

Amar al-Hakeem / We understand that Iraq is not an island in an ocean, Iraq is part of the regional and international system, and there are many interests among the regional countries are linked to each other so the stability of Iraq have a positive impact on the stability of the region so the right start of Iraq can add more stability and power to the Arab and Islamic nation, in turn, the weakness of Iraq is weak at the Arab and Muslim nation, as a result for all of these considerations we can understand the big concerns seen in the region towards Iraqi reality and the desire to run things in some way that guarantees the interests of Iraq and the region, some these countries look at the k interest in its own way, but we believe that the unity and solidarity of Iraqis and their agreement on a balanced view will ensure their interests as it’s the right entrance to guarantee that regional interests also within the right framework.

Reporter / Do you think that the regional countries, stood at the interests and concerns borders to the issue in Iraq, or things had gone beyond borders, too much?

Sayeed Amar al-Hakeem, / There is no doubt a perception Prevails; there are many regional countries considered the matters beyond recognized relations between the neighboring countries, these countries benefited from the fragile political situation and the differing views among the Iraqis and we always look at this issue from our own point and say that the solution starts from the Iraqis themselves before we blamed the others for their actions or dealings with the Iraqi reality in a special way, we must look to this issue as Iraqis, then we will encourage others to respect the decision of Iraq and Iraqi national sovereignty.

Reporter / the Iraqi government formation entered the Guinness Book of Records as 7 months passed after the elections, what are the features to get Iraq out of this impasse?

Sayeed Amar al-Hakeem / of course we were hoping that Iraq is entering Guinness Book in the speed of achievements, provide services to the citizens and the advancement of the Iraqi reality and not in the disruption of government formation, in fact we believe that the size of the shifts in Iraq, the nature of the circumstances and complexity of the Iraqi scene, and the scene of regional and international, perhaps justifies the part of this delay. We regretted and embarrassed. But the deliberations that took place among Iraqi political parties in the past brought the views, ideas and opinions of all known parties together. Personally I feel that we are in the beginning to approach the end of the path and to have access to the

formation of the government and as we have called all for the round table months ago so we still believe that this table is the entrance for the solution in the four big alliances meeting and the other winners in one table that sets standards and specifications required for the senior positions in the state management as well as plans and programs that can represent the general look and the framework that regulates the government's performance in the next four years. There, we will find ourselves faced with a common vision, specific priorities and criteria by which to trust someone or not, or that will not be based on personal impressions, we feel that the government of a national partnership with a broad representation which is shared by four poles, is the entrance to achieve the political stability for Iraq that can reassure the Iraqi parties and regional countries.

Reporter / some sources say that Mr. al-Al-Maliki the Iraqi Prime Minister become close of formation the government as he guaranteed 200 seats in the parliament and other sources say that there is a new bloc is been forming between the Supreme Council and al-Iraqi List, what are the most accurate information about this topic?

Sayeed Amar al-Hakeem, / As I said, we believe that the national partnership government includes the four large alliances and the other blocs are the right approach to achieve stability so we are working with other parties to push things in this direction, but at the same time, we said that we will not stand by blocking the process of government formation, there for if any Party was able to form a majority government and have MPs according to the contexts of the constitutional, then we will respect this government, but we share a government that realizes the chances of success, there is no success without a real partnership and no success without a clear vision and program for the next period. We will respect who is going to form the government using the constitutional contexts. Our share chance in the formation of the government here in the Supreme Council depends on the success opportunities.

Reporter / can we say that the Supreme Council is close to form a bloc with al-Iraqia List, or not?

Amar al-Hakeem / we continue our serious dialogues with the al-Iraqia, Kurdistan, state of law and the Sadrists blocs and alliances as we encourage all parties to reach a national partnership government. We have welcomed with the initiative of Mr. Barzani, which came in line with this vision and the call to a round table and I think that the presence of the main alliances to the Barzani table can produce a broad partnership project can product of the ambitions and aspirations carried by all the Iraqi parties.

Reporter / Do you still part of the National Alliance, or not anymore?

Amar al-Hakeem / We did not announce our withdrawal from the National Alliance and we believe that maintaining coalitions is an important matter itself as there were attempts to dismantle the existing Iraqi List but we stood against this, same thing for other lists. The stability

and unity of the coalitions means the stability for the country and as I said that our attitude is not to disrupt the process, but we want to have a role in the convergence of views among the Iraqi parties, we are happy that the Supreme Council have good relations and extend bridges of trust with all political parties in the current scene and become able to bridge the relations among the parties even if there is some sensitivity.

Reporter / Are you in the Supreme Council agree with a government headed by Al-Maliki or by Eyad Allawi, or someone else?

Amar al-Hakeem / we will join a government headed by someone can get national admissibility and be able to convince the principal parties in the Iraqi space to move, and if this opportunity can be achieved which it is possible then we will be participants and supporters but if things go according the constitutional context with a majority government then we will be in harmony but may not share only if we find the chances of success are achieved in the national partnership.

Reporter / one the charges to the Supreme Council by some Iraqi parties is that the Supreme Council may caused an impact on the unity of the Shia side when the Supreme Council decided no to support the presence of Al-Maliki as a prime minister in the first phase, do you think that makes sense?

Sayeed Amar al-Hakeem, / The rights issue is a complete unit and cannot be divided as we can't look to the right of the Shiite without looking at the rights of other citizens, cannot look to the right of Arabs without a look to the right of the Kurds and Turkmen in Iraq and cannot look at the rights of Muslims without to look at the rights of Christians and others, the rights process linked to the concept of citizenship and the right of citizens to be well-living in any country so I do not see the logical deconstruction of these rights as we must look to the right of Iraqis in all their nationalities, religions and political orientations, and this right cannot be Kept unless the is a national partnership government.

Reporter / how do you explain the compatibility and preference shown by Syria, Iran and the United States on Al-Maliki's nomination for prime ministry position?

Amar al-Hakeem / What we heard from their representatives and delegations through their visits to Iraq that in fact there is a bloc of 89 people headed by a person who is the prime minister, he is already capable to mobilize other sounds, then it is clear we are facing some ready project while the other options are not ready yet, not even close to be ready. The considerations that this option may be easier than the other options to resolve the issue, I know that there is an urgent desire by many international and regional parties forward quicker government formation because this situation could expose Iraq to lots of risks and this concern is an Iraqi concern, so I think that the formation of government is necessary and important, but more important is the successful government because the element of success if it lost then

and suddenly the whole project might falls and Iraq will be facing surprises and circumstances after much efforts by the people and political parties, we belong to the present and the future, we do not want to go back to the past, we may stand at the past but for the benefit in building of the future, Iraq cannot be ruled but through the national partnership, when everyone gets some of their aspirations and give up other benefits to their partners, this is a great victory as I believe, therefore to form a government even if it is not real partnership one, will solve some problems and leave some others on the longer term, we are keen to form a government, but must be a successful one.

Reporter / Your current position against al-Maliki foe prime ministry nomination might be against the Iranian will that support al-Maliki, how far that this situation is disturbing you as it's different from the Iranian position?

Amar al-Hakeem / We are patriots and Iraqis and we take our attitudes mainly from the national interests of Iraq, If these attitudes correspond to the estimates of decent Arab or Islamic states in the region, then it is a good thing, but if it's crossed, then no doubt that the national interest of Iraq is presented as we are committed with the national interest.

I think that in the nature of relations between Iraq and the regional countries, that this matter totally understandable, and we appreciate the Brothers in Iran, Turkey and the Arab countries, but they supposed to understand as we do, that we disagree with things and agree with others, but the national interest of Iraq first, as well as other countries have the right to think their interests before considering the interests of other countries, this is an understood matter, so we do not feel embarrassed as we appreciate interests and but committee to the interests that apply with the national interest.

Reporter / The Syrian attitude towards your candidate, Dr. Adel Abdul Mahdi has been changed, for Mr. al-Maliki, what is the reason? Have you discussed this matter with President al-Assad?

Amar al-Hakeem / in fact we do not mention names and candidates during our meetings with Arab and regional leaders, as I said these Iraqi affairs details should be discussed in Iraq and among Iraqi political parties, the government can't be formed in other countries, we are discussing the bilateral relations and the countries opinion to the Iraqi political scene, we present to these leaders our view towards the situation in the country and we want to give ongoing messages that Iraq does not want to be away from its Arab and Islamic world.

Reporter / when you put this vision to President al-Assad, have you heard an understandable response from him?

Amar al-Hakeem / what I heard from the Syrian leadership that they have no objection upon any of the candidates; however the prime ministry in Iraq is an internal affair?

Reporter / Regarding the Sadrists changed attitude from al-Maliki's nomination, Is there any Iranian deal or pressure?

Amar al-Hakeem / every political party is the one who explains his positions, but I think the nature of the crisis, the circumstances and problems that have occurred in the Iraqi street to get out of this crisis and the speed of formation of the government, makes the parties declined their options and double check their attitudes to make their decision and we appreciate the attitudes and respect All estimates of the political parties.

Reporter / it is clear that the Kurds represent a critical factor in the form of the next Iraqi composition, what is your perception regards the Kurdish situation in the next political composition?

Sayeed Amar al-Hakeem, / There is no doubt that the Kurds brothers represent a quality power as an important component in Iraq since we're talking about a true partnership, we cannot form a government without the Kurds, fortunately, we see the Kurdish leaders are very keen to achieve broad partnership, we see this through the Kurdish statements, consultations and meetings we are make with the Kurdish leaders, they are keen to see a wide representation government to consistent with the Kurdish vision with what we look forward and what we perceive in the successful government.

Reporter / in the former government, the Prime Ministry was for the Shiites and the republic residency was for the Kurds and the Parliament for the Sunnies, and so on, do you expected any changes in the next government formation?

Sayeed Amar al-Hakeem, / I think that the development of relations between the political powers, their entry into alliances and go to wider lists, could put a specific political map to Iraq over the long period of time. This distribution is the result of fact of the voters to vote for certain alliances, so who receives larger votes, largest bloc, largest seats, he will be at the front positions, and the others come after, I believe that national standards are the basis, and the more we can melt problems among the parties, the more we close from a national project that preserve the unity of the country.

Reporter / Do you have a direct and continuous contact with the rest of the Parties at the other blocks?

Amar al-Hakeem / The Supreme Council certainly characterized in relations with all parties without exception, therefore we did not cut off our communications with any of the political parties as we are seeking to employ these good relationship and mutual trust with everyone in bridging the relationship and convergence of opinions.

Reporter / the current political deadlock in Iraq, certainly affects the services provided for the Iraqi people that caused a frustration among the citizens, do not you think that the length

of the deadlock period may lead for more violence and demonstrations?

Amar al-Hakeem / frustration, anxiety, discontent of such a process and prolong the formation of the government case cannot be denied by any one, so we feel embarrassed and express regret on an ongoing basis and we are working hard with the rest of the parties to resolve this problem, but also our people have an own understanding to the conditions and the complexities, they are keen to explain to them the details at once, that these issues belongs to the politicians only and the right to know what's going on in the country, what are the perceptions, actions and steps, why the government have not formed yet, and how it should be our responsibility to form it and accelerate the government formation.

Reporter / The U.S. troops' withdrawal from Iraq, will it cause the stability of Iraq or it would be a cause a lack of stability in the country?

Amar al-Hakeem / It is not an honor for any citizen all over the world to be foreign troops on his countries' soil. So the restoration of full sovereignty and the return of these troops to their countries is the right access for more confidence among Iraqis and taking responsibility by the Iraqi security establishments which is taking important steps to achieve the readiness, training, rehabilitation of troops, the proper arming and the development of appropriate plans.

Several months ago, the U.S. forces left the cities, then the country and the security situation is not worse than it was before, but perhaps some of the indicators shows that we live in a vacuum government so we need the government because the Iraqis certainly are able to achieve security for themselves, their country and to achieve stability, we do not like the military color in Iraq's relationship with any country in the region and the world.

Reporter / the formation of the Iraqi government, is it very close or just close?

Sayeed Amar al-Hakeem, / I think it would be close and everyone feels that things gone away from normal and everyone expressed his opinion and aspirations, today we got to the moment of truth and the hour of decision, we must take courage steps to form the government.