Text of the interview with His Eminence Sayyid Al-Hakeem on Al-Sharqiya channel as part of the "Bil-Thalatha" Show:

Host: Last year on the same show, we asked you about your childhood, and you mentioned encountering health issues during that period. Let's talk about upbringing this year. The formative years shape one's political inclination. With 53 years in this field, what is your take on it?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem: In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. First of all, I welcome you and our dear viewers. It's truly ironic; personally, since childhood, I've avoided public appearances and similar situations. Even the photos from my childhood are scarce. While other children would eagerly pose for pictures, I'd run away unless I was specifically requested to stay. I would reluctantly join others for a particular photo. My hope and prayers to Allah were always to avoid entering the political arena. Instead, I focused on cultural and intellectual pursuits that resonated more with me. Given the challenging circumstances and complexities inherent in political work, especially during the time of my martyred uncle, Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed Baqir Al-Hakeem, and my father, Sayyid Abdul-Aziz Al-Hakeem, I hoped I wouldn't be compelled to enter politics. Politics naturally comes with expectations, observations, competitors, and adversaries. All means are used, including defamation, slander, and fabrications against political figures. I experienced these pressures since childhood, observing the nature of publications circulating at that time. Social media wasn't prevalent then, but within the prevailing contexts and the dynamics of rivalries, I perceived politics as a headache. Upon entering Iraq, tears welled up in my eyes, and I prayed to Allah to grant responsibility to those capableTop of Form and qualified to manage the work, and the responsibility fell on us, and we proceeded to engage in what we were previously involved in, focusing on religious studies, cultural and intellectual affairs, and so on. However, by the will of Allah, illness swiftly befell my father, and indeed from 2003 to 2009, I was fully immersed in cultural work. But during my father's illness in 2008, I was asked to take charge. It never crossed my mind to abandon the cultural work, which was my natural passion, and to immerse myself in politics involuntarily. However, this is fate. Since 2009, and today in 2024, 15 years of daily political work have deeply influenced me. Politics carries burdens, trials, and pains inherent in political practice; all means are used against a person, sometimes portraying an unrealistic image of them. However, the solace in this work is that one can help the oppressed, solve problems, present ideas, alleviate crises, reduce specific complications, and these impacts are significant and profound on the country. In general, lives could be taken, funds are stolen, and so forth. Therefore, a person's presence, if always mindful of the public interest, helps halt certain bleeding or achieve victory for a specific idea or cause that yields tangible results for people. Many of these things may not be visible to people, but it suffices us that Allah sees and knows all. Hopefully, this will be stored for our Hereafter, Allah willing, as He wills and decrees.

Host: When we talk about the upbringing of His Eminence Sayyid Ammar Al-Hakeem, specific stages related to the cultural, political, intellectual, and even social aspects come to mind. Which of these stages had a greater impact on Sayyid Ammar Al-Hakeem more than others?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem: Certainly, as you mentioned, my upbringing was dedicated to scholarly and cultural affairs, and then to the guidance and advocacy efforts I carried out for Iraqis abroad in various countries. I began traveling to different countries, but my true calling was in the scientific, intellectual, and cultural sphere. I felt great comfort in practicing and pursuing this work, both in terms of the people I met and interacted with in scientific discussions, and those with whom I engaged in delivering cultural and intellectual lectures, or the like. Regarding the nature of the questions posed by these people, the expectations from someone engaged in this task are cultural and intellectual. One is capable of giving and presenting, investing time and effort. I claim that I was deeply engrossed in the scientific aspect, and I spent long hours on it.

Host: Did politics divert you from this aspect?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem: Undoubtedly, extensive involvement in political work affects the scientific and intellectual aspect, as well as reading hours and the like, unless one is fully devoted to this task. However, I carve out time for myself and commit to reading and reviewing, sometimes obliging myself to give lectures just to ensure that I stick to reading and not drift away from books and the intellectual environment in which I was raised.

Host: Everyone knows that the family of Sayyid Ammar Al-Hakeem has a long history in religion and politics. How has this history reflected on the political performance of Al-Hikma Movement specifically?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem: As you know, part of political work involves social interventions, expressing positions and opinions on sensitive issues. In our societies, which have a religious inclination on one hand and a tribal, clan, and familial fabric on the other, it is natural for people to turn to religious scholars and intellectuals. The higher his status and the greater his prestige, the more attention is paid to his perspective on public issues. My grandfather, Imam Sayyid Mohsen Al-Hakeem, due to his general religious authority coupled with the exceptional circumstances Iraq and the region experienced, such as the Palestine issue, and

regarding dealings with Islamic movements that emerged in the sixties of the last century, he was questioned about these matters. He expressed fundamental viewpoints on these issues without delving into all the details.

Therefore, the authority of Imam Al-Hakeem emerged as a reference that was concerned with political affairs and public issues, in addition to its natural duties as an authority. This narrative continued with the martyr Al-Hakeem, who faced clearer political challenges in addition to his scientific aspects, due to his leadership of the opposition and his departure from Iraq at that time. Then, the family was targeted, and all members, from the youngest to the eldest, were arrested in one night and thrown into prison for eight years without trial due to the political stances of my uncle Martyr Sayyid Mohammed Baqir Al-Hakeem and my father Sayyid AbdulAzeez Al-Hakeem. This duality between the cultural-religious background and political challenges existed. Of course, not all members of Al-Hakeem family are involved in political affairs. There is a large segment of the family that is still interested in the scientific, cultural, and intellectual aspects, far from engaging in political positions. Therefore, in our family, some have political roles, and there are those who are far removed from such engagements. We are careful not to involve the family name in political affairs and do not label Al-Hakeem family as a political family. There are politicians, scholars, thinkers, and researchers who play their roles in the scholarly domain. Some may not see the necessity of political engagement or the usefulness of political work in any form.

Host: Speaking of history from your political perspective, let me ask, who influenced whom? Did politics affect Iraqi history, or did the problems in Iraqi history affect Iraq's current political situation?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem: Societies are the result of significant transformations, changes, and influences from factors that may reach millions of elements, such as the environment, climate, internal and external influences, mood, temperament, and culture. Challenges and crises all together form a certain political climate, a specific environment. Today, over a span of 20 years from 2003 until now, you can see how much the Iraqi mood has changed from one state to another. New generations come with different perspectives, with different understandings of reality. The internal and external pressures, the terrorism that ravaged Iraq, what are its effects on overall public behavior? The lack of regional and international understanding of the situation in Iraq, expressed through media discourse with a high tone of a certain political behavior, a special view towards Iraq, what are the effects it had on the overall internal situation in the country? Today, the security situation has improved, and stability has had significant effects that we are beginning to notice in the mood and political vision of the Iraqi citizen in general. The political stability we have today is not only the result of

understandings among political leaders, but also the result of this new atmosphere, these new circumstances that make the opportunity for understanding better and more abundant. The component-based conflicts we experienced in a previous stage have now turned into interaction, affection, communication, and integration. There is a big difference between conflict and interaction. Today, we find ourselves facing a meeting of integrated components among people. Componential, sectarian, national, religious sensitivities have largely diminished, and people have returned to coexist with each other comfortably. This has had a significant impact on the general situation.

Host: Sayyid, Your Eminence mentioned political stability many times. Can I know from you, to what extent can we say that Iraq is politically stable?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem: How do we interpret political stability? If we want to set a standard for stability, that everyone should think in the same way and clap for the same direction, then surely we will not witness stability in this sense. With all this diversity in Iraqi spectra, Iraq is a country rich in ideas, schools of thought, perspectives, and opinions. It is impossible for everyone to agree on one opinion and one direction. It is not a flaw to have differing political views; the flaw is in our inability to manage differences among us. If we establish regulations, paths, and accept their outcomes, and agree on these principles, the results will be sound. Today, the Federal Court is one of the institutions in the Iraqi state and expresses opinions more than we used to observe in previous circumstances, and most of these opinions are controversial. One party is satisfied with them, while another is angered by them. However, everyone resorts to the court's decisions and abides by them while expressing comments, reservations, or concerns.

As for the presence of the State Running Coalition today, which involves the most important political powers from various components, yes, the Sadrists are absent from it, and we regret this absence. However, the other major parties are mostly present clearly in this coalition. They sit, exchange ideas, discuss sensitive issues, and reach conclusions. What cannot be resolved immediately within the coalition does not lead to confusion; they discuss it again and again until they find approaches to resolve it among themselves. This is what we call political stability. When you ask a specific person knowledgeable in politics and tell them that in a certain country, its government is formed from a parliamentary base representing 4/5 of the parliament in that country, what do you call it? They would immediately say, "This is a government formed from a broad political base, indicating that the government is stable." Therefore, political stability is achieved when we manage our affairs and resolve our crises

without the need for external interventions or relying on external elements. We can understand each other, sit face to face, and solve our problems in various ways. These are indicators of political stability.

Host: In the history of successful experiences, the focus is usually on intellectual and mental enlightenment before the establishment of political parties. Do Iraqi parties operate according to these principles? And consequently, do competent figures emerge to manage state institutions, whether in Al-Hikma or in other parties?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem: There are two issues to distinguish between here. There is the issue of intellectual production; a nation that does not produce new ideas regresses. In light of great competition among peoples, nations, and states, I believe Iraq, overall, is a productive nation. Politically, during the past 20 years, we have managed to find approaches to overcome crises. When faced with political deadlock on several occasions, we managed to discover ways to resolve it and keep things logical. This, in itself, is an important development in intellectual aspects. Today, there is a significant intellectual movement seen in the volume of publications, seminars, Iraqi intellectual contributions domestically and in foreign clubs, forums, and conferences. The Iraqi voice is always prominent and opinionated in various issues. This intellectual movement is a good thing and could be even greater. The more stability we have, the deeper, more developed, and expanded the intellectual movement becomes, and this is very fundamental and important. On the other hand, political forces are concerned with building their cadres, developing leadership personalities, and exporting capable, experienced, trained figures for public service, rather than unqualified individuals thrust into positions of political influence and unable to fulfill their roles. I feel not all political powers have the same level of enthusiasm and interest. Not all prioritize this matter. Some entities are still in a state of adolescence, not properly established, with their stances being more reactive than proactive. But an established political entity organizes itself, plans for its future, where it will be in the next five or ten years, and opens up to new generations, raising and developing generations within that entity, preparing them for leadership positions. They can serve politically within the entity first, then test them, and then release them into public service. Some entities have worked in the opposite way. They put a competent person within the entity, so their affairs progress and succeed in elections and details. The less competent individuals are said to be released from their internal expectations within that political entity, and they are sent into public service. Personally, I believe it should be the other way around. Political entities should offer their best leadership elements for public service and raise new generations to manage their internal affairs, as political currents and entities. I claim that Al-Hikma National Movement is one of the institutional currents that build

generations and are very concerned with building leadership cadres. Its work contexts also enable political empowerment within this entity. Hundreds of young leaders, both men and women, are given opportunities, roles to try, test, develop their capabilities, hone their skills, and some are then released into public service.

Host: How do you evaluate the experience after seven years of the new project you launched represented by Al-Hikma National Movement?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem: If we assess based on outcomes, after seven years, we have presented young models for leadership positions, which has become common among most political factions. This indicates that they found success in our experiment, embraced it, and even some began nominating candidates for positions. It's evident when some propose candidates who are younger than the legal age for candidacy. This signifies the empowerment of youth within the broad space we see today. Just take a look at the winners in provincial councils, and you'll notice a significant proportion of youth across all factions. This used to be criticized as us pushing inexperienced youth into major leadership roles. Criticizing that we are empowering youth that are impulsive and lacking experience, having a youth movement comprised of youth in their twenties and thirties. They wrote that this is disrespectful to the political situation, as you've all read. However, today, all political powers are following suit in presenting youth to the frontier, demonstrating that they've found our experiment successful and are embracing this role. Personally, I have no regrets about any steps we've taken. Each step was timely and appropriate. Without our actions in 2017, we wouldn't have reached where we are in 2024, with hundreds of qualified, experienced, and trained young leaders.

Our current crisis revolves around an excess of leaders. They seek to appoint a governor who embodies the high standards set by 8 to 10 governors in one province. Thus, every position and opportunity that arises requires Al-Hikma to set these standards and evaluate the most competent candidate to advance them. A large number of young leaders possessing these qualifications are competing. This is evidence that, by the grace of Allah, we have achieved significant success.

Host: Do you believe you're heading in the right direction?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem: I believe we are moving in the right direction, adhering to our plans without complacency or arrogance. There's a large number of ambitious youths working earnestly to achieve better results and get closer to our people, understanding their characteristics,

needs, and expectations from political powers. I take pride in our internal councils and forums when we listen to the propositions of these young leaders and compare them to what we heard from them six, seven, or ten years ago. There's a significant political maturity and ongoing development, which is enough evidence for our Iraqi youth. Give them the opportunity, give them the role, and you'll witness their remarkable achievements.

Host: Al-Hikma Movement has achieved significant results in council elections, both at the local and provincial levels. Do you consider these results a breakthrough, or was it the election law, as some claim, that favored you? Or was it something else?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem: As is well known, part of the problem in 2021 was the suspicions surrounding the electoral process, partly due to the nature of the law and its requirements. Undoubtedly, the amended law addressed many of these issues, supporting and encouraging medium and large powers while pushing smaller ones to merge with others. What happened and what we noticed from the results, but the problem that Al-Hikma Movement faced as a broad and influential stream in the country when the results came out with only four seats, what were the reasons for this? This differs from a small fledgling entity that does not achieve what it aspired to and gets only a few seats, like a small boat, for example, when it capsizes in the river or the sea, its owner can retrieve it or get back on it and continue. But if a ship hits something, it could collapse. Large Movements, when facing a huge problem in an electoral process, sometimes collapse. These results placed Al-Hikma before a serious and significant challenge regardless of its causes: forgery, manipulation, external affairs, or anything that caused Al-Hikma to get 400,000 votes, meaning approximately 400,000 votes resulting in four seats. However, it made Al-Hikma face a significant problem in organizing its internal house to overcome this crisis on the one hand and in people's impressions of Al-Hikma on the other hand. Consequently, when people go to vote, they vote for the strong. If there is an impression that a party is significantly declining, people won't vote for it. Therefore, from 21 to 23, Al-Hikma made a great effort and exerted extensive work, which a person may not expect when looking at things from the outside, to address these issues, both in internal construction and in correcting the image for the Iraqi voter.

To reach the moment we've arrived at, we acknowledge that these results, no matter how significant and substantial, Al-Hikma Movement is almost a singular entity, aligning with other noble powers with limited presence, unlike other alliances involving diverse and well-funded political factions. Despite lacking a governor or minister, meaning all government influence tools were absent, Al-Hikma Movement still managed to secure 24 seats. However, we recognize that this isn't the extent of our potential; there could be a broader space for us, and we hope that cumulative efforts will address issues in the future.

Host: Ever since the new governor of Najaf was elected, there have been protests against him, and even attempts to breach Al-Hikma Movement's headquarters. I won't sugarcoat it, but your responses have been calm and wise. Are there political adversaries targeting Al-Hikma Movement personally? Any attempts to undermine its political standing? Or are you against arms, unintimidating? Or what is it specifically?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem: There are indeed multiple reasons, as you pointed out. Part of what targets Al-Hikma Movement feels secure. We refrain from vindictive reactions, be it from criticism in words or actions. We prioritize people's safety, even those attacking our headquarters. I always instruct our youth to evacuate, some would prefer to stay and defend; defending a place isn't worth risking lives, whether theirs or others'. Regardless of their views on our situation, vacating the premises saves lives. Headquarters are replaceable, lives aren’t. this will ease the process of interacting negatively with politicians, some might face issues when mentioning parties’ names. Yet, Al-Hikma has no reactions or consequences. Some might find it easier to target Al-Hikma Movement for these reasons, which is a democratic outlet and a valid expression. We remain committed to peaceful contexts in democratic work. Personally, I refrain from resorting to legal complaints or lawsuits even at this level unless absolutely necessary.

We must bear it; those serving the public must bear it. Some may object and complain endlessly, but it's part of the job. On another note, Al-Hikma Movement is vibrant. Young people are active, introducing new ideas, steps, and projects. When you're present on multiple fronts, it provokes reactions. So, it's natural to encounter some friction. Our movement doesn't aim to break anyone. We strive to make every move positively impactful, but when you're a significant presence across multiple domains, you should expect to be targeted by media machines.

Host: These attempts must affect you personally. Or are you detached? Let me put it, are you the victorious spectator?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem: Naturally, I'm human too, like everyone else, with flesh, blood, and emotions. Harsh words, and annoying situations, especially from individuals you respect, protect, and defend, leave some impact on the psyche. However, in such cases, I try to recall historical norms; these are natural issues. Since we're dealing with public service, we should anticipate such reactions in the arena. This perspective serves as solace in such circumstances.

Host: Despite the differences in results and circumstances between the 2021 and 2023 elections, the Victory Coalition was an ally in both instances. Can it be said that Prime Minister Abadi's coalition has transformed into a strategic partner for Al-Hikma Movement?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem: Undoubtedly, what aligns us with Dr. Abadi is significant. He's a man with a vision for state-building, peaceful behavior, and approach to matters. We don't face difficulty when aligning our visions for our electoral program and state management steps. Our rhetoric aligns in many aspects without being coordinated. I recall on the day of announcing the coalition, there were speeches from both him and me, and we weren't coordinated. Yet, they perfectly matched, as if they were written with one mindset. This intellectual harmony, and converging visions, greatly facilitated and sustained such alignment from 2021 to 2023.

Host: Why haven't other political powers aligned themselves similarly to the alignment between Al-Hikma and Al-Nasr?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem: Part of it is related to their political experience. Some of these honorable powers lack extensive political experience, and some prefer to postpone sensitive issues until alliances are built. The formation of these alliances occurs at a critical moment, at the end of the legal deadline, and sometimes there's a request for postponement and extension for a day or two, so alliances are formed at the last moment, without correct work fundamental and framework, this naturally leads to crises within such alliances.

Host: What's the reality behind recent discussions about intentions or tendencies to amend the election law?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem: Certainly, some MPs are engaging in such activities. Personally, after 20 years, for the first time, we've succeeded in establishing a single law for provincial councils and the parliament. This came as a culmination of multiple experiences. Since 2005, every election has seen amendments to the law. Political powers experiment with the new law, some succeed, and some fail. This isn't a healthy trend; in democratic countries, there's a clear and consistent law. Accumulating experience through it provides lessons for all political powers. Elections aren't a gamble or chess, and winning isn’t everything; everyone should understand the election law and its contexts. Today, all the youthful powers that participated in the elections, whether they succeeded or failed, now know how to deal with the electoral

process and their strengths and weaknesses. If the same law remains, they'll enter subsequent elections more prepared and improve their performance and come out with better results.

If in each stage we introduce a new law and people enter without knowing what to do or how to deal with it (whether to escalate, forget, or break), that's why we support keeping this law, as it has been studied for months and circulated, and the results have shown that it has achieved balanced outcomes in all fields, providing everyone with a logical and fair opportunity to be represented in the provincial councils.

Host: As time progresses and electoral law requirements persist with one law, you at Al-Hikma advocate for having one clear law applied in both local and parliamentary elections. Is that correct?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem: This is what we believe. Yes, we believe that the law doesn't break the medium powers nor does it monopolize matters for the larger powers. It provides a continuous opportunity for fresh blood. However, it doesn't provide opportunities for individuals to win. We don't have in a parliamentary system something called independents and individuals. A respectable person chooses any of the existing political currents that they see as closest to their situation, joins it, takes their place, and plays their role. We are not against the participation of individuals, but we oppose a process where the outcomes are many numbers that are all small despite being formed by large numbers, and then they negotiate among themselves to form a government, which becomes difficult. Each of them wants a ministry, each of them wants a role, and thus the process of forming a government takes nine months, eight months, a year, or more. We must overcome this in democratic countries. The government forms within 48 hours. The clearer the law encouraging small powers to come together, align with each other, and move towards harmony, and the more we rid ourselves of large powers that are close to each other and capable of understanding each other, the quicker a government can be formed that later harmonizes with each other. This is the most suitable for the political circumstances in the country.

Host: (In countries worldwide, a government is formed within 48 hours, in your political view, is it possible for our government to be formed within a week to ten days or within 48 hours?)

Sayyid Al-Hakeem: I believe that as we progress, our democratic experience accumulates, bringing us closer to such timetables for simple matters, such as elections and election results.

Citizens used to wait a month or two for preliminary results, then endure 4 to 5 months of appeals until final results were announced. Now, the Commission has acted swiftly. Within the

first 72 hours, they provided preliminary results very close to reality, and within a short period, they completed the entire task in less than a month. This is a significant development we've noticed. As sectarian sensitivities diminish, powers from various backgrounds and components find themselves closer in understanding and vision post-elections.

What happens after elections in terms of understanding is that before the elections, we feared entering into alliances with partners from other backgrounds, and our constituents were sensitive. Shiites would say this, Sunnis would say that, and political leaders told us that. We offered alliances to them before the elections.

They would say, "By Allah, we wish for it, but I fear that the public doesn't understand this, and it affects us. Hopefully, we can understand each other after the results are announced.

The more these powers fear these sensitivities diminish, the more alliances between forces from various backgrounds become acceptable and feasible. This can bring us back to what we proposed in 2016: long-term alliances. Representing all Iraqi components, transcending them, attending in alliances. On the other hand, something of this kind also competes. Therefore, two alliances compete to gain the majority, representing Shiites, Sunnis, Kurds, Turkmen, Christians present here and there. Whoever gets the majority represents all components and can go and form a government, while the other party watches, monitors, opposes, and prepares to challenge in the next stage. In each cycle, as we move forward, we become closer to achieving and embracing this diversity, and this is alignment.

Host: Returning to our discussion earlier about Al-Hikma Movement's lack of conviction regarding amending the electoral law, especially since the conversation is leaning towards returning to multi-districts and similar measures, does this lack of conviction stem solely from Al-Hikma disapproval or the Shiite coordination framework?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem: It's difficult to say that the entire coordination framework is opposed to this idea. However, this issue has been discussed and raised within the framework, and significant and diverse powers within the framework have shared the view that we need to accumulate positivity and return to something new. Now, when they propose districts, they don't mean districts with individual nominations as in 2021 but districts with lists. So, what would the result be? How would it be composed? What are its effects and numerical calculations? In any case, so far, it seems to me that this project has not been embraced by important and major forces. There are independent parliamentary figures with their own perspectives. All opinions are respected and open to discussion, but within our framework, the major powers have not shown enthusiasm towards such amendments.

Host: Your Eminence, in a direct question, some say that some of the political forces you mentioned have not explicitly declared their support for returning to multi-districts, especially since they previously rejected this law and went in another direction. Is the aim of returning to this law to deprive a certain political party of winning or leading in the election results?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem: in any case, any political entity considering a specific law to settle a retaliatory situation to break a certain party, in reality, is not correct. Election laws are subject to a philosophy, and this philosophy must be based on the principle of balance, providing different spectra and various trends with fair and logical opportunities. Therefore, this balance is what achieves stability and political stability. It brings us security and development. Development and reconstruction, along with services, bring popular satisfaction. These interconnected links, manipulating these settings and disrupting the balance affect stability, security, development, and popular satisfaction with the political system in general.

Host: what if these powers resort to imposing their will regarding amending the election law?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem: It seems to me that the major and important fundamental powers with votes in the parliament can come to an understanding with each other. These powers encourage that meddling with the political process and impulsiveness in this manner, attempting to impose a certain situation or disrupt the balances in the country, is not beneficial to anyone; no one gains from it.

Host: Are there attempts to tamper with these political settings?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem: How?

Host: You mentioned attempts to tamper with the political settings?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem: No, I said it's a result of an unbalanced law that leads to an imbalance,

which in turn leads to manipulation of the settings, and this is not correct. We must be vigilant in maintaining and protecting the balance because it achieves stability. Stability brings us security and development, and development brings popular satisfaction. These circles integrate with links, complement each other, and form a successful Iraqi experience that can accumulate and move forward.

Host: Your Eminence, discussing parliamentary elections seems to invariably raise concerns, especially after the 2021 elections. At this stage, are there any guarantees or quasi-agreements to prevent the political deadlock we witnessed a few years ago?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem: These aren't mere dreams or slogans we raise. If we want to avoid political deadlock, we must maintain balance consistently. Balance prevents deadlock, ensures stability, and keeps things moving forward. The problem we faced in 2021 was a disruption in these balances. Thus, today we advocate for the election law we tested in the provincial councils, where everyone had a fair chance to align with their votes. The idea that bringing a few votes should result in many seats while others with many votes get fewer seats creates unfairness. Isn't the essential to hear every voice and respect the people's will? A law that proportionally allocates seats based on votes ensures a realistic representation, you receive 10% votes and you shall take 10% of the available seats. You have a clear popular representation; this balance helps prevent deadlock and similar issues. This requires political agreements to prevent it. It is enough to go forth with laws where the outcome of these elections are balanced, further preventing deadlock.

Host: Each phase seems to offer a lesson, an experience, or even success. These experiences shape the outcomes of future elections. Do intensive dialogues help prevent political deadlock?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem: Certainly, if the law helps achieve balance, then discussions on forming electoral lists become crucial. Will the same alliances formed in the provincial councils resurface, or is it that the nature of its federal mission and the formation of a government that follows could mean that some of these lists in the provincial councils, that have formed, can integrate and form larger alliances? In truth, this matter is left to alliances and understandings, as I mentioned.

Host: Some view the same nominations as favoritism. How do you perceive this? Does it stray

from balance into favoritism or the opposite?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem: In a parliamentary system, there's no single political party dominance. Each must negotiate to form a local or federal government. This means there's room for multiple parties to win seats, and people vote expecting these representatives to serve them. This could be termed role distribution rather than favoritism. Favoritism now carries a negative connotation, suggesting a certain political entity or coalition gets opportunities and empowers its people, regardless of their competence. As for choosing competent individuals while considering this diversity, this is the popular will. Ten lists won, one has 30 seats, another has 20 seats, and another has 50 seats, for example. Each of these received votes from Iraqis, and those people who voted for them expect them to assist, serve, solve their problems, care for them, and implement their program. They want to see them represent them in the upcoming government. Thus, one list gets a ministry, and another with a larger share gets two ministries. We can call this integration of roles, distributing participatory roles in state administration from the powers that have gained the trust of the people. It's a respect for the will of the people.

Host: We were discussing some people's desire to amend the electoral law, with both supporters and opponents. It seems that Al-Hikma Movement is more proactive in discussing elections. Will we witness an initiative from Al-Hikma Movement that obliges all parties to abide by election results to prevent a repeat of the political deadlock seen in the recent parliamentary elections?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem: We will continue with our partners in the political process and the esteemed forces. We still have a relatively long time until the parliamentary elections. However, if we encounter any specific crisis in this regard, we will exert our utmost effort to rectify the matter and reach a consensus-based solution. Electoral law is always something that requires a degree of consensus. Thus, you want to go into an electoral process where everyone accepts its outcomes.

The law must be acceptable to everyone, not imposed. We shouldn't pass a formula in the law that would lead to domination. That's why in the actual law, we spent months of extensive discussions, considering all opinions, so that the law is accepted to some extent by everyone, including the majority of the major parties.

Host: Most established democracies prioritize political stability. However, it seems that some

in Iraq overlook the consequences of political stability and focus on seats and executive positions, whether in ministries or provinces. They try to create a confusing scene for the government, hindering its progress. In any case, do you think there's a regression in the concept of democracy in Iraq due to these behaviors?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem: I believe Mr. Al-Sudani is doing well, achieving positive results, and enjoying support from most political powers in achieving this accomplishment. This achievement is credited to all participating and supporting political powers. People see this diverse team leading today, the State Administration Coalition being a partner in these achievements, and the progress and development initiatives being undertaken.

On the other hand, we have always felt a kind of embarrassment that in a political process spanning 20 years, many achievements have been made, but projects have struggled to materialize. Citizens see this firsthand and believe that there are tangible and realistic developmental steps forward. Since the tenure of Mr. Al-Sudani’s government. These matters are becoming clearer, and people, even ordinary citizens, are discussing them. They leave their homes, go to work, and witness projects on the ground, such as bridges being built and projects being completed. This atmosphere has led to an increase in the popularity of the Prime Minister and the political powers. According to recent foreign opinion polls, there's a growing understanding and acceptance of political powers, Mr. Prime Minister, and the government in unprecedented survey indicators. We must stick to this path and give momentum after overcoming social crises, political crises, and conflicts we've experienced. We focus on the service and developmental aspects. Provincial councils have just been formed and are expected to undertake significant work, the Federal Government Council is on top of the fundementals. I believe any real achievements during this year and the remaining half until the elections will encourage more people to participate in the upcoming parliamentary elections.

Host: Is there a political power concerned about the rising popularity of Mr. Al-Sudani, even if it's only at the media level?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem: In any case, I believe we should have strong resolve. If we witness a success story and people's appreciation for it, we shouldn't worry but rather strive to create additional success stories. We should deepen this feeling among the people and bring them joy. They rely on and trust all powers to serve them and make progress. Any success should be supported, whether it's political or otherwise. As long as Mr. Al-Sudani continues to achieve such successes and satisfy the public, we should all be proud to support and endorse him on this path.

Host: So far, there don't seem to be any signs or initiatives, at least not publicly, to reach out to Mr. Sadr and persuade him to return to the political scene. How does His Eminence Sayyid Ammar Al-Hakeem interpret this aspect?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem: You know, such matters aren't handled through media initiatives. We discuss within a leadership framework political power, and the like. I believe the coordinating framework, along with other partners in the national arena, always aims to reassure and welcome our brothers in the Sadr movement. They are essential partners, whether they participate in the government or not. They attend parliamentary sessions or withdraw. The political process is broader, and they are essential partners. We hope they realize the importance of returning to activity and engaging in the usual care to help and collaborate with their other partners in serving our people, which is our common goal.

Host: Some suggest that in the absence of the Sadrist movement, the Coordination Framework dominates and seizes ministries due to the absence of a significant part of the political process, namely the Sadrist movement. What is Sayyid Al-Hakeem’s response to this statement?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem: I do not perceive a tendency towards acquisition in this manner from most framework forces, and we know that the brothers in the Sadrist movement have executive officials; they were part of the state apparatus. They continue to perform their roles well, even in the interview committees for general managers, some were excluded, including Sadrist and non-Sadrist individuals, and some from the Sadrist movement were retained based on competence and capability. I don't find any bias within the framework in our continuous meetings, excluding or pressuring someone out because they belong to the Sadrist movement or to seize a position. The Sadrist movement occupies one of them; on the contrary, the Sadrist movement is a key partner, present and still naturally present within the state apparatus.

Host: Who within the coordinating framework provokes the Sadrist side in any way, deliberately or unintentionally, politically?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem: Most, if not all, framework powers clearly understand that I, or let's say we, currently have no intention of creating a problem or crisis with the Sadrist movement. The framework is keen on having positive and amicable interactions, and we all hope that the

Sadrist movement also appreciates the mutual interest and decides to return to cooperative dealings with other partners to serve our country together.

Host: Your Eminence, is there anyone within the coordinating framework who vetoed dialogue with Mr. Muqtada Al-Sadr? Can we consider what is happening today as a silent exclusion of Mr. Muqtada Al-Sadr from being influential in the upcoming political phase, at least regarding the pulse of the movement, or Mr. Muqtada Al-Sadr regarding the next electoral phase?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem: I haven't sensed anything of this sort from within the framework, and all respect, affection, and appreciation to His Eminence Sayyid Al-Sadr and the brothers in the Sadrist movement. This issue is always addressed with respect and appreciation. As you know, no request has been made from the framework in our current situation; it is a decision from the Sadrist movement to step back for internal housekeeping reasons. They are aware of our appreciation, and we understand their circumstances, but we hope they will make their customary and clear contributions in partnership with their other partners.

Host: Is there any initiative to request Mr. Muqtada Al-Sadr's return to political action within the framework?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem: You know, when a political party openly states that it currently doesn't see the benefit in engaging, you want to propose an initiative as if you're preparing for rejection. Initiatives are always proposed at a moment when a person feels there is a chance for such an appeal to be accepted or something similar. As mentioned, on a personal level, bilateral discussions haven't ceased, but for an initiative to come from the framework at such a moment, when the framework believes there is an opportunity to respond to its initiative, it might consider proposing such an initiative.

Host: If we want to talk about political alliances, what is the accurate description of the coordinating framework at the moment? If it's not an alliance, then what is it?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem: It's a coordinating framework, as the name suggests. Why did we choose this name? powers coordinate with each other but do not have a clear commitment towards each other; it's neither a coalition nor an alliance. It's a coordinating framework where we coordinate

with each other, and the truth is, experiences from the past 20 years indicate that when we raise the bar of expectations, saying "coalition" or wanting more, saying "alliance." Then some parties have a different perspective; they withdraw from the alliance, and it becomes a big story in front of people, or they express their opinion and declare a disagreement with the alliance's opinion.

People say, "How do you form alliances when such-and-such party is part of you, but they have a different opinion now?" However, when we lower our expectations and say "we're a coordinating framework," we sit together, talk, and consult. What we agree upon, we proceed with, without any obligation to each other. At least, each of us listens to the justifications of the other. The idea of conspiracy and such (and that there's something fishy behind it, like so-and-so won't accept) – each of us has a certain perspective. When we lower the bar, the interpersonal relationship within the framework becomes more cohesive than it was when we were in alliances or coalitions.

Therefore, the parties within the framework welcomed this concept. We set the bar lower, and because it's a non-binding feeling, it's like a person observing recommended fasting in Rajab or Sha'ban, knowing they have a way out if hunger strikes, they can drink water to break their fast, feeling mentally relieved. Similar to this person in Ramadan, where they are obliged to complete the fast until the end, they might feel more anxious, eat more, and drink more before suhoor, for example.

So, when you say "alliance" with us, it implies commitment and voting, and if the majority votes, it binds everyone.

The institutional aspect comes in, such as institutional details, different from what a framework article presents. Every time there's a disagreement among the brothers, if we don't sit and discuss, we agree to proceed without any obligation, and no one blames the other.

This has led the framework to agree on many issues and proceed together more than what happened under coalition or alliance circumstances. Some other components have begun to consider a coordinating framework among themselves, and it's welcoming that all should proceed with such coordinating frameworks. What matters is that dialogue and discussion always remain ongoing between the parties moving in the same arena or the national arena in general.

Host: Your Eminence talked about an important issue, namely the Speaker of the Parliament. How do you see a parliament without a speaker? Yes, there's an alternative, namely the first deputy, but politically speaking, the Sunni side especially has concerns. Do you think this will affect the political balance if the absence of the speaker continues?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem: There's no doubt that diversity was observed in the three presidencies to provide reassurance to the social components. The Prime Minister is from the largest component, the President of the Republic is from the generous Kurdish component, and the Speaker of Parliament is from the generous Sunni component. Our people feel represented at the decision-making summit. Therefore, any vacancy in any of these three positions is abnormal and must be addressed promptly.

When the circumstances led Mr. Al-Halbousi to step aside from the Speaker of Parliament position, we were among those supporting the swift election of a new Speaker of Parliament. An alternative was proposed by some parties within the same generous arena, suggesting it's preferable to postpone this matter until after the elections so that the process of electing a Speaker of Parliament does not affect the electoral process.

In line with this direction, we postponed the election of the Speaker of Parliament until after the elections. The problem that occurred within the generous component, there were several aspiring parties eager to compete, seeing their candidates as qualified to lead this position.

Some believe that the Speaker of Parliament is part of the points and entitlements of Taqadum, while others believe that the points were not observed in the presidencies, but rather in the ministries and the like; they are a component entitlement, and therefore the component can compete for this position. We made great efforts to bridge the viewpoints between the dear candidates and the generous powers and said if we adopt a principle, let it be that the candidate proposes himself for this position, as long as it is a component entitlement, and must possess the support of the component majority, the deputies of the component, one plus half of the deputies of the component, so that it becomes clear that this honorable person has the support of the component, representing their entitlement.

Other opinions were from the national powers regarding who is qualified to lead the Council. Good qualifications may receive support as long as they are from the component, it is not a prerequisite to have the support of the majority of the component, and we entered the first round and got what happened.

The Federal Court has postponed the decision on this matter on more than one occasion. Does it cancel the session or not? Personally, I interpret this delay as a message to the political powers. Choosing the Speaker of Parliament is a political task, not a legal one, throwing the matter to the Federal Court, if it cancels the session and reopens the nominations, a new competition will begin among all aspiring parties again.

And if it approves the session and doesn't cancel it, it means a return to competition among the same candidates. So, it wants to say to the political forces, sit down and understand each other, choose the Speaker of Parliament, and don't involve the court. That's how I understand the message of the postponement. I don't know if there are technical reasons for the delay or

not, but I read it in this way and proposed a suggestion to the dear component leaderships, if the honorable Sunni MPs sit together and propose the suggested candidates and discuss them if they agree on a name and find him qualified, they all adopt him, and this becomes the component's candidate, I think neither the coordinating framework nor the brothers, the Kurdish Alliance or the generous Kurdish powers, will hesitate to support whoever is a candidate for the component.

And if that's not possible, and there's insistence from the parties, we can resort to internal voting within the honorable Sunni MPs. They vote on the candidates, and whoever gets the highest votes, everyone accepts, adopts, and supports. They unite around him and vote, whoever comes with the highest votes, everyone supports him, and he becomes the component's candidate. In truth, the delay and division are not within the framework, and the Kurdish brothers are inherently ambitious, desirous, and have multiple efforts within the generous component.

Everyone moves within the framework parties and the Kurdish brothers and these generous powers may find interest in this or that, which has led to division in those arenas as well, and the resolution of this matter has been postponed. I believe the issue has taken a long time, and it's in the interest to expedite and find the easiest, closest, and best solution, which is for the component to agree on a candidate, this is true, it's difficult, but the same problem we face in forming alliances within the coordinating framework when we want to sit and agree on a prime minister. Also, it takes time to differ, we agree this one has an opinion, that one has an opinion, but we establish mechanisms to settle it, and produce a single candidate. We presented a specific candidate, Mr. Al-Sudani, at this stage, and similar candidates in previous stages, even after months of negotiations.

Now, the brothers have taken their time, and negotiations have been going on for months. We hope that before the month of Ramadan, they will hold such a meeting and make their choice, and we will support the candidate agreed upon by the generous component.

Host: After Mr. Al-Halbousi stepped down from the Speaker of Parliament position, who was the first to praise him on Twitter? What's the truth about Al-Hikma Movement supporting exclusively the replacement of Al-Halbousi?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem: In truth, we have said it clearly and made it clear to everyone that the component's candidate must have the support of the component majority. Therefore, the candidate who has 1/2 + 1 of the component's deputies is deemed suitable to be supported for this matter, with our high and great appreciation for the other candidates, some of whom are personally qualified and capable of being Speaker of the parliament. But it becomes a competition between parties, so we set a criterion. What is the criterion for choosing the Speaker of Parliament?

Our estimation and still is, is that if a person has the support of the component majority, it is the logical and correct path for the election process. We went in the first round and supported whoever represented the majority, meaning the one supported by the majority of the generous component, and didn't get a chance in the first round, but we hope to end this debate by having the component itself sit and agree on a unified candidate.

Host: Aren't the Shia political powers afraid that playing with the arrangements of the political process might one day lead to someone challenging them for the position of Prime Minister?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem: Firstly, it's difficult to interpret what's happening as manipulation of the settings. Secondly, no one proposes a candidate from outside the component. The talk about a Sunni head for the parliament comes from Sunni MPs and the three main Sunni powers present in the arena. The talk, do we adopt a candidate? The majority, like us, adopt this. Or is there a suitable and qualified person to undertake this task, and be responsible even if he doesn't have the support of the majority? This is the difference between the parties within the framework, in supporting the Speaker of Parliament, and we have noticed it.

Host: Some obstructed this session from within the Shia political powers, and they tarnished the image of those supporting the majority candidate. I believe Al-Hikma Movement faced a major attack from Shia political powers or MPs because you endorsed this choice, supporting the majority candidate within the Sunni component.

Sayyid Al-Hakeem: In politics, as you mentioned, sometimes you believe in one person and want to support them, while others are inclined to support someone else for different reasons. Some methods are used to apply pressure and manipulate public opinion, and we've become accustomed to these tactics on several occasions. However, what's important is that things move forward, and we witness a Speaker of Parliament who earns the trust of the generous component, the confidence of the council members, and reassures the social component. We are in urgent need and feel the necessity to expedite this matter so that our people, partners, and dear Sunni brethren in the country feel represented and assured that their representative is leading the Parliament.

Host: How do you think Iraq's relationship with the United States should be from your personal

perspective first?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem: Personally, I believe that the United States is a large, important, and influential country in the international arena, and thus we may differ and agree on many details regarding US policy. However, it is an important and influential country in the interest of Iraq. Opening up to these countries, and the United States in particular is essential as it is one of the fundamental countries with which we have an interest in building a relationship. However, this relationship must be framed within the framework of Iraqi national interests and should be far from the contentious contexts that are controversial today, such as ending the missions of the international coalition and transitioning to a transparent and clear bilateral relationship within the path of supporting the interest of both countries. This should be within a path that ensures the interests of both countries, which I believe is the correct path that will place this relationship in its proper context.

Personally, I don't even believe that those who object to military or American presence, etc., have any reservations about the relationship with the United States. We have noticed in previous times, when some American oil companies were exposed to security risks, that those who object to the military aspect, some of them, rushed to provide assistance and to provide full security for these companies to carry out their work. So, I don't think in Iraq there is a party that does not want a relationship with the United States in its healthy, positive dimensions, which are based on mutual interests between the two countries. Instead, there is confusion and known talk regarding the military role and that these forces came to confront ISIS and have now undertaken other tasks. This has led to reactions and contexts. We are trying to contain these issues and feel optimistic about the wise decision made by Iraqi factions to stop the campaigns and give the government a chance to succeed in the dialogue process that leads to ending the missions of the international coalition and transitioning to a clear bilateral relationship with natural interests for Iraq.

Host: Could you please explain to me how this equation works? Sayyid, the decision or the push towards ending the international coalition's mission is described as an emotional reaction, stepping out of the same framework amid a series of developments that you're experiencing within the coordinating framework. You review all opinions and then agree on them, and the emotional control at some point regarding the international coalition, and the sensitivity of the international coalition's presence?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem: I believe that the decision of the framework, which represents a collection of the orientations of the framework forces, is this serious, constructive, friendly dialogue, but within specific and clear boundaries that lead to ending the international coalition's

mission and also transitioning to a bilateral relationship within the framework of Iraqi national interests and the mutual interests between the two countries. This is the direction the framework has decided to take. The United States has taken steps that targeted leaders of factions inside Baghdad in broad daylight, some of them within government facilities, leading to condemnations and reactions, some of which were expressed through official statements. These reactions were to specific behaviors and positions, but the strategic stance of the Iraqi government towards the United States is within the framework I mentioned earlier.

Host: Strange headlines, sometimes Americans are labeled as occupiers, and sometimes they are labeled as liberators of Iraq. Sometimes they are called foes, and sometimes they are called friends. My political question here is: does political mood play a role in these headlines? Or has the Iraqi political system failed to establish the foundations for the form of relationship between Iraq and the United States?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem: As you know, these descriptions in general do not come from the Iraqi government, which is the official party to deal with the United States and other countries. It emerges from political forces, popular forces, factional forces, and resistance, among others, and this falls within the framework of the freedoms we experience in our country. Today, in many neighboring countries, multiple opinions are being expressed by political powers or popular forces. They may support oppose or view positively or negatively the relationship with this or that country. But all of this is considered an official Iraqi will. Always, countries deal with governments. Even in the political situation, I believe that today the predominant environment is the coordinating framework. The positions of this framework can express political decisions and stances, and this framework may even have more flexibility than the government. The government's stance is the official stance that reflects Iraq's opinion, and there is no such literary expression even in the official framework stance. We haven't witnessed such expressions earlier, but popular forces exert pressure. Factional forces have differing viewpoints, and agreements, saying that everywhere there are protests in South Korea, protests in Japan, protests against US military presence in those places. They have military bases at the request of their governments and they come with their justifications, and they coexist with such objections and issues. Popular forces have an opinion, and governments make their decisions. Iraq is not an exception to this environment. As long as we talk about democracy and freedom, we must always accept that there are multiple opinions towards countries. There is controversy about the relationship with them within the Iraqi community.

Host: Do you envision that the exchange of bombings between the United States and armed

factions would embarrass Mr. Al-Sudani and lead to talks about exchanging fire?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem: Certainly, the factions, in their statement when they ceased operations, announced a cessation of operations. They mentioned not to embarrass the government, meaning they also concluded that this operation would embarrass the government in its dialogue to end the missions of the international coalition and also in its bilateral relationship, among other things. Iraq has been exposed to some risks and problems, and they have appreciated this. Certainly, the use of missiles and the like within the country without permission of the government without a decision by the government. It's embarrassing for any government in the world, I mean, and Iraq is no exception to this.

Host: Iraq is experiencing a situation of neither peace nor war, instability, or chaos in its relationship with Americans. Is this scenario planned by political forces? Or have anti-American forces imposed this reality on the opposing powers in today's Iraqi political scene?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem: As I said, there is no opposition stance to the origin of the relationship between Iraq and the United States based on mutual interests. All there is are reservations from Iraqi forces towards the behavior of the United States. It's framed as outside the agreed-upon mission, and these forces are present at the request of the Iraqi government, and they are forces of an international coalition to combat ISIS. So, their activity in areas where there is no ISIS and the flying of drones in residential areas where there is no ISIS in Baghdad, and the south, for example, these objections say this is an effort and activity not within the agreed framework under which these forces were requested to be present. These forces exceed their authority and play another role in this process. Of course, we as politicians in our dialogues speak about this matter, the government speaks, and the United States indicates that it too must protect its men and affiliates, among other things, and when there are potential dangers they face, they find an obligation to monitor, scrutinize, and follow up for protection, for example. It intervenes in all these activities within the principle of protecting its forces or its affiliates and advisers, among other things. In any case, the matter is quite confusing, it's clear that Gaza's situation, the significant development that has occurred, the genocide suffered by the Palestinian people in Gaza, the Israeli aggression in this manner, and the clear official bias towards the United States in supporting Israel in this operation, providing all necessary cover, has led to intense reactions and responses in the Islamic world and Iraq. As Iraqis, historically, over the past 75 years, we have had advanced positions in supporting the Palestinian cause, so the inflamed sentiments of Iraqis see the United States as fully biased in providing cover for Israel in this operation,

resulting in reactions. Thank Allah, there is now some containment of these operations in the hope that the government will succeed in its serious negotiations to end the missions of the international coalition, God willing.

Host: We started the dialogue by talking about history. We conclude the remaining minutes of this interview with a look into the future. Sayyid Ammar Al-Hakeem, how do you see the future of Iraq in the near term, and specifically what remains of the tenure of Mr. Al-Sudani's government?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem: I believe that Iraq, after overcoming existential, security, social, and political challenges, is beginning to organize its domestic affairs and internal equations.

The size of opportunities, the size of Iraqi intellectual potential, and the available resources, are at a level that makes the wheel of Iraqi progress and development move confidently. The longer we take in this positive accumulation, the harder it becomes to stop the wheel, and the more difficult it becomes to hinder the process. Personally, I am very optimistic about the future, and I believe that the 20 years of lean years that Iraq has experienced for known reasons, we are now starting to overcome them. Even in our meetings with regional leaders, we can feel the interest and appreciation for Iraqi achievements and the steps that have been taken in Iraq, in the words of these leaders, who are leaders of countries with security and intelligence institutions, and they receive accurate data about the analysis and evaluation of situations. Everyone today feels that Iraq is recovering, Iraq is getting out of the bottleneck, Iraq is standing on its feet, and we internally see the ordinary citizen now sees this positive momentum.

However, the deeper we delve, the more we find that things are moving confidently towards the better, Allah willing.

Host: Unlike other political powers, as you mentioned regarding regional powers, what makes Sayyid Al-Hakeem occasionally visit Saudi Arabia and if memory serves me right, Kuwait, Jordan, and recently Egypt to talk to politicians, not foreign ministers. What are the reasons that drive Sayyid Al-Hakeem to these visits?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem: As you know, we have friendly relations with regional leaders on various levels. On the other hand, the role we play in the political process, the importance of Iraq to these leaders and these countries, they are interested in hearing and getting to know what is

happening, to discuss matters in an informal way. You know, when a government official goes, they are bound by an agenda and context, and they don't have the freedom to discuss in official sessions about many issues, but we, in our political position, have this freedom and comfort. These meetings are not official, they are meetings where there is friendship, love, and ease of exchange. Of course, we coordinate with the Iraqi government, with all governments, we coordinate these visits, to come and serve the country's interest, within the framework of the general policies adopted by the state. We have no personal interest or personal or political issue concerning Al-Hikma Movement with these countries. These countries deal with Iraq, and when we go, we talk about Iraq and mutual interests and situational analysis. I believe that this unofficial diplomacy is practiced in all countries and is not a novelty. Political figures have their personal relations that they invest with leaders of countries for the benefit of their country's interests and within the country's general policy. Within this framework, such visits occur.

Host: In the long run, do you believe that political consensus will continue to govern the state in Iraq, or can the electoral political majority someday rule Iraq?

Sayyid Al-Hakeem: If you notice the scene today, you will find serious differences to the extent that they are sometimes interpreted as conflicts more than political differences. Sunni-Sunni, Shiite-Shiite, Kurdish-Kurdish, this means we have moved on from the idea that all components are united on one opinion in front of another component, as we experienced this in previous stages. There was a unified Iraqi coalition, a consensus front, a Kurdish alliance, all Kurds, all Sunnis, all Shiites together, and if one party got upset, all its deputies would leave, for example. Now, the issue has started to shift from a componential issue to a political issue, to be a Shiite-Shiite, Sunni-Sunni, Kurdish-Kurdish, or differences in opinion.

The political origin of this means that it is not componential, and this is the nature of things. It is natural for there to be differences in political background, so when things are like this, it becomes a political dispute. Sometimes your political stance makes you closer to a partner from another component than to a partner within your component. The other component, with its political opinion, may find a partner from the other component closer to it on this issue. Gradually, this leads to a broader political spectrum. What matters to us are two things: firstly, that all components are present in these alignments, so that if any of these alliances or coalitions come to manage the country, no social component feels absent. Secondly, in this representational context, the sizes of the social components must also be taken into

account, not one component becoming smaller or larger. This requires a much longer time until we reach complete assimilation, and in most democratic countries, these issues are not absent. We indeed have Shiites and Sunnis here, but in other countries, it's not about Shiites and Sunnis, Kurds, and Arabs, sometimes they all belong to one nationality, but there are differences in sects, and denominations. Here, the majority is Catholic, and the president does not come from outside this larger component. Each country has its contexts, but in social components here, I am not talking about sectarian issues, I am talking about social components, with these descriptions. If there is any alliance, all components must be present first, and secondly, the sizes of the components within this alliance are preserved. At that time, any of these alliances can progress and manage the country, and this is what things will eventually lead to. As long as we help in setting up these equations and proceed on a political background, the closer we get to the deadline, the more we deviate, but it's fate that things must be organized later on.