

February 26, 1959
**Reception of the Government Delegation of the Iraqi
Republic by N.S. Khrushchev**

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Summary:

Khrushchev talks with the Iraqi delegation about the coalition of Arab states and cooperation between the Soviet Union and Iraq in agriculture and industry.

Credits:

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Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

To Cde. G.T. Shuisky

I am enclosing with this eight copies of the transcript of the conversation between Cde. N.S. Khrushchev and the government delegation of the Iraqi Republic on 26 February of this year.

/Signature/
(V. Semyonov)

28 February 1959

[Handwritten text: "Two copies were sent to Cde.O.A. Troyanovsky (Council of Ministers). /Signature/ 3 March 1959"]

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[Stamp] DECLASSIFIED

[Handwritten] Decision of MVK #143-rs as of 4 March 2003

Secret. Copy # 1__

Reception
of the government delegation of the Iraqi Republic
by N.S. Khrushchev
(official transcript of the conversation)

On 26 February, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR N.S. Khrushchev received the government delegation of the Iraqi Republic, which arrived in Moscow, consisting of the Minister of Economics, Dr. Ibrahim Kubba, and members of the delegation, the Minister of Construction and Reconstruction, Dr. Talaat Ash-Shaibani, the Minister of Health, Major General Dr. Mohamed Ash-Shawaf, and also the Ambassador of Iraq to the USSR, Abdul Wahab Mahmoud. From the Soviet side, the meeting was attended by: I.I. Kuzmin, S.A. Skachkov, V.S. Semyonov, and G.T. Zaitsev.

Cde. Khrushchev greets the Iraqi government delegation and asks how they settled in Moscow.

Kubba thanks the Soviet government for its attention to the Iraqi delegation. He further adds that the Iraqi revolution is a continuation of the Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917, which had a massive impact on the international revolutionary movement. Although the conditions that lead to a revolution are different in different countries, but we have many common issues that can be resolved through cooperation with progressive forces worldwide, and particularly with the Soviet Union. He also notes that the selfless assistance provided by the Soviet Union to the Iraqi Republic will help strengthen and expand the gains of the Iraqi Republic.

Cde. Khrushchev says that the USSR will support the Iraqi Republic in every possible way to solidify the achievements of the Iraqi people. Referring to Iraq's abundant rich natural resources, Khrushchev asks whether Iraq faces problems like shifting sands or droughts due to lack of moisture.

Kubba. Iraq is not facing an acute problem with quicksand, as it is only present in the western part of the country and does not currently pose any threat to the Iraqi agriculture.

Cde. Khrushchev notes that the lack of moisture can be resolved with modern technology through artificial irrigation, meaning that with Iraq's powerful rivers, large areas can be irrigated if properly developed.

Kubba. Iraq faces a significant challenge with irrigation. Despite the old regime using some of the oil funds for irrigation, the issue still remains unsolved. The measures implemented in the past were focused on benefiting a small group of feudal lords

rather than solving the problem as a whole.

Cde. Khrushchev says that it would be useful for the Iraqi delegation to visit Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan due to the similarity in climatic conditions with Iraq. These areas cultivate the same crops as Iraq, such as cotton, corn, grains, and others. Overall, Iraq has abundant mineral resources and has the potential to become a paradise if you put in the effort.

Kubba. Iraq indeed possesses significant mineral resources, however, prior to the revolution, the people of Iraq were unable to utilize these resources. Now, after the revolution, the Iraqi people have the opportunity to tap into these riches. We have come to Moscow to seek assistance from the Soviet Union in developing these resources. As we lack the expertise to make the correct decisions, we sincerely request consultation with the Soviet experts.

Cde. Khrushchev says that it is possible for the Soviet Union to aid Iraq in the developing of its natural resources, but the bigger concern at the moment is strengthening the republic, since imperialist powers are currently scheming against it in any way possible. According to the information we have, the imperialist powers and internal reactionary forces in Iraq are attempting to divide the Iraqi people and weaken the government's support among patriotic factions. At the same time, they are also preparing terrorist acts against political figures of the Iraqi Republic, especially against Prime Minister Abd al-Karim Qasim. Our understanding of the current situation comes from our own experience, as we have already gone through similar stages. Reactionary forces in our country made attempts to assassinate Lenin, while imperialist powers organized wars against the USSR. The enemy will not surrender on their own; it must be defeated.

Kubba. The imperialist powers are currently engaged in extensive hostile activities against the Iraqi Republic. These activities are aimed at creating divisions between Arab countries and the Soviet Union, as well as other countries in the socialist camp that are our reliable friends. To achieve their goals, they use various methods, including the manipulation of the slogans of Arab unity and positive neutrality, which they interpret for their own hostile purposes.

Cde. Khrushchev says that the issue of Arab unity should be approached taking into account all the current situations in the Near and Middle East. It cannot be solved in the manner that some bourgeois nationalists suggest. As you may already know, the Soviet Union has three Slavic nationalities: Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians, and there are also several other Slavic nationalities in Eastern Europe. At one time, bourgeois nationalists preached the idea of Slavophilism, but Marxists never supported these ideas.

Kubba. The Soviet Union's historical experience provides valuable examples, which we carefully study.

Cde. Khrushchev says that Arab nationalism can only be considered progressive if its spearhead is directed against colonialism and imperialism. However, it is not capable of resolving social issues, which is also a key objective of the people of the Arab East, in addition to getting rid of colonialism.

Kubba. The imperialist powers are exploiting the call for Arab unity to further their own agenda. Their goal is to instigate conflicts among Arab nations and isolate them from the Soviet Union. However, the Arab people are convinced of the importance of unity and the eventual formation of a single Arab nation. This is a progressive development. The issue at hand is not whether we believe in it or not, but rather in the essence of the Arab unity slogan. This is the main reason behind the differences between Iraq and the UAR. The concept of Arab unity is interpreted differently in Iraq and the UAR. This difference in interpretation arises from the unique characteristics of the revolutions in Iraq and the UAR, and the distinct domestic and foreign policies adopted by their respective governments. Cde. Khrushchev. During Nasser's visit to Moscow, I pointed out to him that he didn't fully understand the issue of Arab unity and that he acted incorrectly by uniting Egypt and Syria without considering the unique characteristics of each country. We told him that this could lead to an escalation of conflict between them. As you know, the Syrian Republic was a democratic state with a higher standard of living than Egypt. However, Nasser's unification of the two countries led to a decline in the standard of living and to the

decimation of political parties and democratic freedoms in Syria. This caused dissatisfaction among Syrian politicians who previously supported Arab unity. Thus, Bizri, an influential politician who played a significant role in the unification of Syria and Egypt, fled the country. Former President Quwatli and the leader of the Socialist Party, Hawrani, also express their discontent with Nasser. Nasser, in turn, doesn't trust them. This mechanical solution to the issue of unification did not strengthen unity or improve relations between the people of these countries. Instead, it intensified the struggle between them and weakened Arab unity, which the enemies of the Arab people took advantage of.

Khrushchev further emphasizes the importance of approaching the issue of Arab unification in a rational manner and finding the most suitable form that takes into account all the necessary factors. It may be more advantageous to create a federation or confederation where individual Arab states can maintain their independence. This would promote Arab unity. This idea would not only appeal to republican Arab countries but also to countries with a monarchical system. It is hard to imagine that all Arab countries would show willingness to submit to one person, one leader like Nasser. Let's wait and see who will be the leader of the Arab peoples and whether they will require a single leader. Claiming leadership and being guided by ambitious aspirations is unreasonable and will not lead to a positive solution.

In my report at the 21st Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, I made some criticisms of Nasser. However, these criticisms were not meant to worsen our relations with the UAR. The USSR has aided and will continue to aid the UAR in their efforts against imperialism. However, we cannot fully identify with the UAR's internal reactionary policies, although we do not interfere in their internal affairs. I had already informed Nasser about this during our meeting, and if the opportunity presents itself, I will reiterate my stance on this matter.

Kubba says that Nasser's policy on Arab unity primarily benefits the bourgeoisie. It became clear at the last economic conference of the Arab League in Cairo. The UAR delegation proposed the creation of a single market in Arab countries. This proposal was aimed at providing Egypt, the most developed country among the Arab states, with a profitable market for Egyptian goods. UAR delegation suggested eliminating customs barriers for goods from Arab countries and establishing a central bank of Arab countries with the participation of foreign capital. Certainly, this proposal did not gain support from Iraq as it was seen as a way for the Egyptian bourgeoisie to subjugate other Arab countries. Instead, the Iraqi delegation proposed a boycott of goods transported to Arab countries from France and West Germany due to France's war against Algerian people and West Germany's cooperation with Israel. UAR Minister Kaisuni stated that the Iraqis wanted to rely only on the Soviet Union. We replied that we seek relations with all states, with the caveat of boycotting those who pursue policies contrary to our economic interests. Nasser's policy on Arab unity reflects the class structure of Egyptian society and the views of the Egyptian big bourgeoisie.

Cde. Khrushchev. When Nasser visited Moscow, he told me that Soviet communists were good people and that any issues could be easily resolved with them, but there were bad communists in the UAR. When he was told that communists are the same in all countries, Nasser expressed his disinterest in having political parties in the UAR. There is one party in the Soviet Union and the UAR must have one party. I explained to Nasser that in the Soviet Union, there were no antagonistic classes, and the entire society consisted of workers, collective farm peasantry, and intelligentsia, who were working people. Therefore, in the USSR the Communist Party is the only party that best expresses the interests of all workers. Nasser, in return, expressed his intention to create a single party that would reflect the interests of the entire Arab people. I pointed out that in Egypt and Syria, there were various antagonistic classes - capitalists wanted the workers to work more and receive less, whereas the workers wanted the opposite, although both were Arabs. Then I asked Nasser which group of Arabs he supported - workers, peasants, capitalists, or landowners. How do you plan to unite workers and bourgeoisie, peasants and landowners into one party? Nothing will come of this party. The class struggle cannot be eliminated in this way; it will continue developing as long as antagonistic classes exist.

Russian Tsar also wanted to eliminate the communists, he imprisoned them,

sentenced them to labor camps, but to no avail. Tsarism was swept away by the people under the leadership of the Communist Party and its leader V.I. Lenin. Then, for three years, a civil war continued in the Soviet Union. Russians fought against Russians. On one side stood the Russians, who shared the interests of the bourgeoisie, and they were called the Whites, on the other side there were also Russians, who shared the interests of the working masses, and they were called the Reds. It was a class struggle.

Nasser doesn't understand this. As an officer, he thinks - he gave the order and everyone will stand at attention on his command. But you cannot treat people like that.

It is essential to unite all people's forces in the fight against colonialism and imperialism so as to attain independence by expelling the colonialists. However, we must not forget that this is not everything, and that this struggle's primary focus is to safeguard class interests. Nasser obviously does not understand this, but time will teach him.

A progressive state is now emerging in Iraq. This does not mean that we solely recognize progressive states. We also believe that forcing events prematurely can lead to the downfall of a revolution. Nevertheless, it is impossible to detach oneself from the main forces, which consist of the masses of people. Our goal is for the Iraqi Republic to shine like a diamond among Arab countries in a short time. The Iraqi Republic already has the necessary conditions for this. To see what is possible, visit Tashkent and Baku and observe the progress that the Soviet Union has made in these Muslim countries. These countries are adjacent to Iran. By comparing the progress of Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Azerbaijan with Iran you will see that the Soviet Central Asian and Transcaucasian republics are far ahead in their development compared to Iran, Turkey, and other countries in the Near and Middle East. This demonstrates what people can achieve when they take fate into their own hands.

We are trying to help Muslim Albania become a prosperous country. It used to be very backward, and we would like to see it become an advanced country.

We welcome your visit to the Soviet Union. We hope that your meetings and discussions with our people will be helpful. I can tell you that the Soviet Union has no intention of taking advantage of you. We are building a friendly relationship with Iraq based on cooperation. When we charge a slight interest on our loans, it's to ensure that you use the money wisely and carefully. It is known that when people pay for something, they are more likely to value and use it responsibly, but when something is given for free, then the attitude towards it is not serious enough.

Kubba. The long-term relationships with imperialist monopolies have had a significant impact on the Iraqi economy. Our goal now is to eliminate the dominance of these monopolies, which have brought the Iraqi people to complete poverty. Favorable conditions now exist for the elimination of these monopolies and for the improvement of the material and cultural standards of living for the population, however, foreign companies, feudal lords, and banks still exist and profit from our poverty. After the revolution, the Iraqi people want to see results from the new government. Some sections of the population may not fully understand the difficulties we face, but it is our task to provide material benefits and rebuild social life in the country to improve living standards. We aim to set an example for other Arab countries and contribute to the development of the liberation movement in the region.

Cde. Khrushchev. We are ready to assist you in developing domestic industry, agriculture, and irrigation and send our experts over.

Kubba says that the Iraqi Republic has to address the following key issues: a) execution of land reform and improvement of agriculture; b) development of domestic industry; c) organization of economic planning; and d) liberation from dependence on foreign monopolies.

Cde. Khrushchev. With respect to agriculture, it is better to witness our accomplishments in Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan firsthand. We can provide you with the appropriate equipment to enhance your agricultural processes and offer guidance on technical matters. However, with respect to how the agrarian reform should be conducted, one has to understand the country's situation, and it is

difficult for us to provide advice without knowing the conditions for carrying out certain activities in this area. You are better positioned to know what is best for you.

Kubba. Everything you said is true. Our country has already adopted a law on agrarian reform that provides all necessary provisions. However, to better organize agriculture, we need to focus on acquiring technology and technical personnel.

Cde. Khrushchev. We will send both people and equipment to the Iraqi Republic, as this is something we can easily do. We are prepared to assist you with anything you may need in this regard. We can also provide assistance in the area of planning. However, when it comes to getting rid of colonial concessionaires, it is up to you to make this decision. You know the situation on the ground better than anyone else.

Kubba. We currently rely on a British chemical corporation in Iraq to supply about £2 million worth of chemical goods. However, we want to sever ties with this company on the premise that they are collaborating with the Zionists. The problem is that we still need these chemical goods, so we are wondering whether the Soviet Union can meet our needs instead.

Cde. Khrushchev. We can sell these products to you. All this seems to me not so difficult to do. We will try to assist you with your needs. The development of the chemical industry in Iraq looks promising. We are now producing rubber, mineral fertilizers, alcohol, and fats for soap, shoes, and clothes, utilizing gas as the main resource, and we can help the Iraqi Republic in this regard.

Kubba. Your specialists could tell us what we need.

Cde. Khrushchev. It is crucial to conduct a geological survey to understand your natural resources.

Kubba. This is especially important.

Cde. Khrushchev. Our experts recently discovered oil in India, although American experts have argued for many years that India has no oil.

Kubba. The Iraqi government considers it necessary to carry out geological exploration work, and we would ask the Soviet government to assist us in this regard.

Cde. Khrushchev agrees and says that we are not your competitors. Our experts will be happy to assist you in developing your resources. You have all necessary conditions for the development of national industry, and the people will willingly follow and support you in this matter. The fact of the matter is that the people will follow whoever provides a better quality of life. Based on this principle, the people determine their leaders. I wish you success in your work and in the negotiations on the issues that you are facing.

Kubba. Before leaving for the Soviet Union, we visited Prime Minister Abd al-Karim Qasim. He requested that I conveyed his gratitude to the Soviet government and to you personally for the fraternal and selfless assistance that the Soviet Union provides to the Iraqi Republic.

Cde. Khrushchev. Please convey to the Prime Minister my gratitude and best wishes for the success of the Iraqi people. We will be happy to assist in any way possible so that the Arabs know they have reliable and selfless friends. We would like for your people to live well.

Kubba. The Iraqi people are fully aware and convinced that the USSR is their most reliable and selfless friend.

The conversation was recorded by V.S. Semyonov and G.T. Zaitsev.

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28 February 1959