

October 8, 1969

**Proposal for the Reception of the Minister of Interior
of the Republic of Iraq by Comrade Colonel General
Mielke**

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Summary:

Report on a meeting with Iraqi Minister of the Interior Saleh Mahdi el Ammash. Ammash requested assistance for the Iraqi intelligence agency, including training of Iraqi officers in Germany, surveillance technology, and instructional material. Colonel General Mielke provides options for a reserved response. Also included in an appendix is a biography of General Ammash and information about Iraq's current domestic policy.

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P r o p o s a l

for the Reception of the Minister of Interior of the Republic of Iraq
by Comrade Colonel General Mielke

Participants:

Colonel General Mielke
Lieutenant General Beater
Colonel Wagner (Jänicke)
Colonel Damm
Second Lieutenant Kühn (Interpreter)
Minister of Interior of the Republic of Iraq, Ammash

During the meeting with Iraqi Minister of Interior Ammash it can be expected that the request to the GDR to assist the Iraqi security organs will be reiterated. At a meeting on 15 September 1969 between Colonel Wagner (Jänicke) and General Director for Security al-Ani the following issues were raised:

□□□ The Revolutionary Command Council and the Iraqi Ministry of Interior have decided to ask the GDR for assistance. They have the intention to address the USSR as well in case the GDR is not capable of fulfilling the Iraqi requests.

. The security organs are in need of assistance and support in the following areas:

□□

- a) training of officers in the fields of observations, personal protection and operative means of communication (codes, secret ink, bugging devices)
- b) deliveries of operative technology
- c) providing instruction films, textbooks and course material in order to conduct training courses in their own country.

Based on the fact of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Republic of Iraq and the GDR [on 10 May 1969], as well as on the development of closer relations in all areas, we propose to give a positive response to the Minister of Interior of the Republic of Iraq. The response has to make evident the willingness and readiness of the GDR to provide assistance within the limits of its actual capacities.

A general rejection of the Iraqi government's request might be viewed by the latter as a political move. It would not contribute towards broadly solidifying and deepening relations with this state, as it is stipulated by a decision of the GDR Council of Ministers. In making this assessment, we also assume the party and government leadership of Iraq is aware in general of GDR assistance to other Arab states.

For all these reasons we suggest making a general promise of support by the GDR security organs to the Minister of Interior of the Republic of Iraq. As for details, the following offers are an option:

□□□ The Stasi declares its willingness to train 5 to 8 officers from the Iraqi security organs in the GDR. Duration of the course will be between 6 and 8 weeks. Training may be offered in fields like offensive counterintelligence, basic issues of

counterintelligence, personal protection and operative technology (coding, secret ink, photography, taping technology). We could offer March 1970 as a date for such a course.

□□

□□ Requests from the Minister of Interior of the Republic of Iraq to deliver secret operative-technological equipment (surveillance, signal and phone technology) should be met with reservations. Reference is to be made to our lack of production capacities. Also, we would have to know concrete situations, objectives and methods where they plan to apply such technology. If they ask for deliveries of commercial technology, we can promise our assistance in obtaining such.

□□

□□ If they wish to have mutual exchanges of information, we suggest asking the Minister of Interior to explain his vision in detail. We recommend for the Stasi to limit any potential exchanges to information about activities of hostile intelligence services and actions by imperialist states. The Stasi can declare its willingness to maintain contacts with the Minister of Interior of the Republic of Iraq via the GDR ambassador [in Baghdad].

□□

□□ If necessary, and in order to get clarifications on details, we can send a small Stasi expert delegation to the Republic of Iraq to get familiar with concrete conditions within the Iraqi security organs. Further decisions might be made based on those assessments.

□□

Before all these respective promises are made, it might make sense to consult with the KGB in advance.

[Signed] Jänicke
Colonel

[...] [left out: transcript of meeting, 13 pages]

Appendixes

Information about General Saleh Mahdi el Ammash,
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior of the Republic of Iraq

General Ammash was born in Baghdad in 1924 where he also attended elementary and middle school. In 1944 he attended the military college and graduated in 1947 as a student of the artillery class. He served his military draft in Palestine from the beginning of the war in May 1948 until the end of 1949. Ammash is part of a group of rightist and conservative officers who joined in 1953 a Baath Party then dominated by intellectuals and rapidly moved up the party ranks into top positions. He played a leading role in the July Revolution of 1958 when the Iraqi monarchy was overthrown and General Qasim brought to power. In 1959 Qasim had Ammash arrested for his participation in the nationalist Mossul uprising. He was forced to retire. During the Qasim period, Ammash also served for a while as a military attache in the Iraqi embassy in Washington. On 8 February 1963 he was one of the protagonists in the overthrow of Qasim. As Minister for Defense, he became the second man in the back then reactionary Baath regime. In this capacity Ammash was a co-organizer of the Baathist National Guard. Thus he was an accomplice to the massacres and pogroms committed by this organization in killing thousands of Iraqi communists and democrats under the banner of "Death to Communism". During the period between February and November 1963 (Arif regime) about 180,000 communists and other

progressive forces in Iraq were arrested by the National Guard.

After the establishment of a military union between Syria and Iraq on 8 October 1963 Ammash became the commander of the joint Arab army.

In November 1963 the Arif government was overthrown. Ammash was forced into exile to Cairo on 20 November 1963 and stayed there until August 1966. In a leading capacity he participated in planning and implementing the revolution on 17 July 1968. With Al Bakr's successful coup against the Arif government Ammash returned into government. On 17 July 1968 he was appointed Minister of Interior and on 31 July 1968 Deputy Prime Minister. On 3 December 1968 Ammash was elected as Deputy General Secretary of the regional leadership of the Iraqi Baath Party. Currently General Ammash figures without doubt as the second man after State President Bakr. There are signs for grooming him as a potential successor to Bakr. According to existing information, Bakr's health is currently very poor. There exist plans to build a provisional Presidential Council of which Ammash is supposed to be a member. In addition, he is then also supposed to be appointed Prime Minister. Ammash is very popular with the mass of the Baath membership. He directs special military courses for young Baathists lasting for some months. Then those trainees are immediately appointed to high positions in units of army, police, and security forces. In political terms Ammash belongs to the conservative forces. He still harbors strong anti-communist sentiments. Apparently he only supports progressive policies of the Baath Party for tactical-political considerations. Ammash's role in the current government has not yet become fully clear. In some of our information, he is characterized as a representative of this wing of government which longs for a reactionary policy by restoring activities of the National Guard. On the other hand he is said to be a proponent for the diplomatic recognition of the GDR. After the revolution in Libya, he headed an Iraqi government delegation to the Libyan revolutionary council where he advocated a rapid recognition of the GDR by Libya. According to representatives of the Baath party's progressive wing, there is safe evidence for a collaboration by Ammash with the CIA. Those hints were made in particular in the context of measures against spy organizations in Iraq and which were also connected to a stay by Ammash in the U.S.

Iraq

Domestic Policy

The current Iraqi government under State and Minister President General al-Bakr came into power on 17 July 1968 through a military coup against then State President Arif. A "Revolutionary Command Council" was built which serves currently as the highest institution of power in Iraq. A constitutional assembly was supposed to be established through general elections. Yet the latter have been postponed indefinitely. A so-called National Council serves like a parliament, consisting of the Revolutionary Command, the government, other high-ranking army and police officers, and "distinguished citizens".

The current most important representatives of the Iraqi government like President Bakr (1963 Prime Minister), Minister of Interior Ammash (1963 Minister of Defense) and Defense Minister Takriti (1963 Interior Minister) all played essential roles in the overthrow of Qasim on 8 February 1964 and the subsequent massacres of communists and terror against the Iraqi progressive forces. Those three Baathists mentioned were all neutralized in 1964 by President Arif.

In the first year after its return to power in Iraq the Baath Party has implemented a couple of measures to alleviate the mistrust of wide segments of the population against the Baath Party's policy. It also wants to move other political parties and groups toward collaboration. Through prisoner releases, rehabilitation for most

political prisoners and implementation of certain land reform measures, the Baath Party wants to win over larger parts of the population, especially the peasants.

Still, the domestic situation in Iraq continues to be unstable. According to political Iraqi circles, there currently exists a certain balance in the competition between progressive and conservative forces in Iraq. The advance of progressive forces, however, is still impeded. Announced progressive measures like further nationalizations and lowering of prices and rents are delayed and postponed. Continuing price hikes in particular increase unrest among the population.

Reactionary forces in opposition to the Bakr government, among others Brigadier General Rawi, attempt to exploit the unstable domestic situation and differences of opinions within the Baath Party for their own purposes. These forces have established illegal links to reactionary groups, like e.g. the "independent" led by the chief of the Republican Guard, Colonel Hadi, the "Muslim Brothers" and many other reactionary Muhammadan clandestine organizations. These circles also have connection with intelligence services from imperialist states and Iran who are said to have organized active measures to prepare for a conspiracy against the Bakr government. The Iranian intelligence service is said to fund various reactionary Iraqi organizations. It wants to unite the Iraqi reactionary groups so they can launch a coup in Iraq. According to this Iranian scenario, forces are supposed to come to power who no longer stand in the way of Iranian claims for Bahrain and other areas of the Arab Gulf states, as well as of Iranian demands concerning the Shatt al-Arab question.

An extremely complicated domestic problem of Iraq is represented by the Kurdish question. According to our information, the Bakr government has recognized the importance of solving this problem. From this Kurdish problem, which so far was unsolvable to any Iraqi government, the reputation and credibility of the Baath Party is suffering.

Following an initiative by the Iraqi communists, Kurdish leader Barzani, the Kurdish Democratic Party and the Baath Party are said to have declared their general willingness to hold a joint congress. It is supposed to figure as a venue for consultations about measures to calm down the situation in the North of Iraq, through larger autonomous rights for the Kurds and the normalization of relations between the Baath Party and the Barzani Kurds. There is no firm date set for this congress since the mutual mistrust between political forces involved is not yet overcome. The Baath leadership thinks that Barzani and some of his leadership circle have links with imperialist powers and institutions (Iran, CENTO, CIA) - in spite of the Kurdish movement having a sincere national core, and large parts of the Iraqi population being in favor of a peaceful solution of the problem in the interest of both Kurds and Arabs. In the Baath leadership's opinion those foreign forces exploit the Kurdish problem to exert pressure on the Baath regime and prevent internal stabilization in Iraq.

The still continuing military actions by government forces against the Barzani Kurds, and the efforts of the Baathists to isolate and divide the Kurdish national movement, result in continuing and increasing tensions regarding the situation in Iraqi Kurdistan. People around Kurdish leader Barzani think that the Bakr government is promising a peaceful solution of the Kurdish problem in words only, but in reality they hatch plans for the military defeat of the Kurds.

Progressive circles in Iraq are of the opinion a just solution of the Kurdish problem would contribute towards solidifying the unity between Arabs and Kurds. I would allow to focus attention on other and vital tasks for Iraq. According to our information, currently 30 to 50 percent of the Iraqi army and air force are constantly occupied through the struggles with the Barzani Kurds. Those fights are going on for many years now and require extremely high resources. The oil fields in the Kirkuk area in

Iraqi Kurdistan, the most important Iraqi source for revenues in hard currency, are constantly endangered. Most Arab countries, like for example the United Arab Republic and Algeria, demand from the Iraqi government to provide for a rapid and peaceful solution of the Kurdish problem and thus contribute towards strengthening the Arab Eastern front for the fight against Israel.

A significant change has occurred in the relationship between the ICP (Central Committee Group) and the Baath Party. Though the ICP is officially banned like all the other parties except for the Baath, the former can currently work under semi-legal conditions. Progressive Iraqi circles think there is one main reason for the changed attitude of the Baath Party towards the ICP: The Baath Party enjoys only a narrow base in the population and is mostly met with mistrust. By all means, it is in need of allies to solidify and expand its power. The Baath Party is interested to expand its influence through the establishment of a National Front under inclusion of the communists and to uphold the leadership claim of the Baath. In general, the communists are in favor of creating a broad National Front. They are especially positive about progressive measures implemented by the Baath Party in the area of foreign policy.

The communists demand from the Baath Party serious steps towards a solution of the Kurdish question with peaceful means on the basis of Kurdish administrative autonomy. They also demand the return of communists and other progressive forces to their previous positions, mostly in the Army, from which there were dismissed for political reasons. So far the Baathists have rejected this since they want to remain in exclusive control of the armed forces.

All the political forces in Iraq do emphasize that the Baath Party ultimately does not want to share powers with anybody. Furthermore, there still exist strong rightist forces in the Baath leadership like Defense Minister Takriti and Interior Minister Ammash who reject cooperation with the communists and seize on any opportunity to prevent further rapprochement between Baath Party and communists. There exists a widespread opinion in progressive Iraqi circles that influential forces in the Baath Party are not interested at all in establishing a National Front, but undertake all steps in this direction just for propagandistic reasons.

In summary, we can assess on the domestic political situation in Iraq that the Baath Party has succeeded so far to prevent activities by oppositional forces despite evident reservations held by wide parts of the population towards this regime. If the differences in the Baath leadership continue to grow and escalate, if the activities by domestic reactionaries will increase and the pressure from imperialist states will persist - there will be serious problems for the Baath regime mostly because it lacks a broad mass base.