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Report on the Visit of Saddam Hussein to the USSR

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Summary:

During the visit of Saddam Hussein to the Soviet Union, the delegation discussed with Soviet leaders the need for strengthening Iraqi-Soviet relations to give positive guidance on the situation in the Middle East. The Iraqi delegation also promoted their intention to develop relations with other Arab states in order to decrease the effects of imperialism. Topics of discussion also included Iraqi oil policy and domestic conflict.

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The main results of the visit to the USSR by the Iraqi party-government delegation headed by Saddam Hussein (10-17 February of this year) are reflected in the joint communiqué.

The delegation's visit took place on the initiative of the Iraqi side, which wanted to discuss the further development of Soviet-Iraqi cooperation in various areas and exchange opinions regarding the situation in the Middle East and the question of strengthening the internal political situation in Iraq through the establishment of a national front that would unite the country's progressive forces.

During the course of the talks and discussions, attention was primarily focused on the following questions.

I. S. Hussein stated that the Iraqi leadership has come to the conclusion that it is necessary to take Soviet-Iraqi political relations to a higher level: in his words, by entering into a "strategic union," on the basis of which we could successfully develop cooperation in all other areas. In the opinion of the Iraqi side, such a step-up in the level of relations between the USSR and Iraq would have a positive influence on the situation in the Middle East as a whole, since it would counteract the increasing subversive activities of the reactionary forces in the region and the growing tendencies by certain Arab countries toward rapprochement with the Western powers. The Iraqi side stated that, in addition to the further development of relations with us, they intend to do everything possible in order to normalize and strengthen relations with other Arab countries, particularly Egypt, Syria and Algeria. In this, we see a positive change from the previous position of Iraq, whose leaders had earlier taken a negative stance toward the current regimes in Syria and Egypt.

The Iraqis were told that the Soviet Union is also in favor of further development of relations and cooperation with Iraq and other Arab countries. It was noted that, when strengthening relations with any one Arab country, we strive not only to maintain our own relations with the other countries of that region, but to assist developing closer relations between those countries themselves. We further emphasized that, at the present time, reaching the stage of united action between Arab countries, particularly those with progressive regimes, is especially necessary in order to erase the effects of Israeli aggression.

We also explained to the Iraqis that the Soviet Union continues to maintain its uncompromising position that a settlement of the Middle East conflict can only be realized on the basis of Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories and the simultaneous strengthening of the Arab states' defensive capabilities. In connection with this, our side gave a high mark to the results of Egyptian president A. Sadat's recent visit to Moscow, during the course of which there was a noted full mutual understanding on all questions pertaining to the effort to erase the effects of Israeli aggression.

With respect to the Iraqi proposal for a formalized agreement to govern our relations, the Iraqis were told that we view such a move in a positive light. Such a document would have great political importance and would play a significant role in the further strengthening of Iraqi relations with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries.

It was agreed that both sides should examine the possible practical steps that should be taken in this direction in the near future, taking into consideration the ideas expressed during our exchange of opinions.

2. The Iraqi side explained their policy on oil, the goal of which is to broaden the national sector in oil production and undermine the domination of oil-mining monopolies. In particular, the Iraqis stated that at the present time they are examining several concrete measures in this area. The Iraqis expressed interest whether the Soviet Union and the socialist member countries of the SEV [Council on Mutual Economic Assistance] would purchase Iraqi oil in significant quantities, if the measures undertaken by the Iraqi government result in increased production and export capacity of the oil resources under the disposition of the Iraqi government.

On our part, we stated that the ideas expressed by the Iraqi side deserve attention and should be examined from every angle. We agreed that we will continue our cooperation in developing a national oil industry in Iraq, as well as in other areas.

3. The Iraqi delegation informed us of measures directed at strengthening the internal-political situation, in particular the publication of the draft Charter for National Action, which would provide for the establishment of a national front of the country's progressive forces, which would in the first order include the Ba'ath, the Communist party and the Democratic party of Kurdistan. They also briefed us on the progress in the implementation of the 11 March 1970 announcement on the peaceful and democratic resolution of the Kurdish problem in Iraq.

On our part, we emphasized the importance of successive efforts to unite all progressive forces in the country, including the Communist party of Iraq, since that is the only way to counteract the intrigues of domestic reactionary and imperialist forces and insure the preservation and further building of social and economic accomplishments of the Iraqi people. We also expressed the hope that the Iraqi government will, in cooperation with the leadership of the Kurdish movement, employ all necessary efforts in order to carry out all provisions of the 11 March 1970 announcement.

Saddam Hussein stated that the unification of the national anti-imperialist forces is the fundamental line of the Ba'ath party and was ratified during its congresses, and that the leadership is implementing this line. He said that, at the present time, the Ba'ath party supports working cooperation with the Communist party of Iraq, the Democratic party of Kurdistan, and with other patriotic forces in the deliberations over the draft Charter for National Action. He expressed the hope that on this basis all the country's progressive and democratic forces will join behind the leadership of the Ba'ath party and unite in the struggle against imperialism and reactionism.

4. Noting the continuation of Israeli aggression and imperialist schemes against the frontline Arab countries, the Iraqi side raised the question of the importance of further strengthening of the armed forces of Arab countries, and Iraq in particular. The Iraqis emphasized that, in questions of strengthening its defensive capabilities, they are primarily counting on the help of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. In this connection, they raised the question of additional arms shipments.

The Iraqi side was given the response that we intend to cooperate further with Iraq and other Arab countries in the area of increasing their defensive capabilities. With regard to the Iraqi request, they were given agreement for additional shipments of some quantity of weapons, taking into account the capabilities of our industry and our responsibilities toward other countries.

5. During the course of the talks in Moscow, there was also a discussion of further development of contacts between the CPSU and the Ba'ath party of Iraq, and there was a mutual conviction that the strengthening of our inter-party ties will aid in the joint USSR and Iraqi struggle for peace, social progress and against imperialism, Zionism and reactionism.

The negotiations and discussions with the Iraqi party-government delegation in Moscow testify to the desire of the Iraqi government and the Ba'ath party leadership to expand relations with the USSR and other social countries. The Iraqi leaders probably came to the understanding that, in order to assure the successful implementation of their intended internal-political measures, they must secure support from both internal anti-imperialist forces and from progressive Arab regimes and countries in the socialist community.

We believe that the strengthening and further development of relations with Iraq on the principled basis of the struggle against imperialism and its agents is in the political and economic interests of socialist countries, as well as in the overall interests of peace in the region.