

# **Bittersweet Friendships**

**Relations between Hungary and the Middle East, 1953–1988**

**Selected Documents**

**CWIHP e-dossier No. 67**

Cold War International History Project, Woodrow Wilson International Center for  
Scholars, Washington D.C., November, 2015

**Edited by**

**Csaba Békés, László J. Nagy and Dániel Vékony**

## **INTRODUCTION**

In this working paper we are going to present a collection of documents that deal with the relationship between Hungary and countries of the Middle East. Using the term Middle East we refer to the states of the so-called greater Middle East, or what the World Bank refers to as the MENA region, meaning Middle East and North Africa<sup>1</sup>. We chose to include Sudan in this group since there were tangible relations between the two countries during the Cold War era. This chosen unit mainly covers Islamic countries with the obvious exception of Israel. However, in accordance with the World Bank grouping, we will not deal with those Muslim states that lie east from Iran.

---

<sup>1</sup> World Bank, Middle East and North Africa - Countries, Source:  
<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/MENAEXT/0,,menuPK:247619~pagePK:146748~piPK:146812~theSitePK:256299,00.html> - accessed: 5 February 2014

The history of the Hungarian connections with countries of the Islamic world and the Middle East can be traced back to several centuries. Even though there was no constant Islamic presence in Hungary the country got into touch from time to time with Muslim communities and states where Islam was the dominant religion even before the 20<sup>th</sup> century. After the breakup of the Austro-Hungarian empire in 1918, only a marginal Muslim presence remained in the country.

As Hungary became part of the Soviet Bloc after World War II, the country needed to give heed to the line that was directed from Moscow. Since the countries of the Middle East were not significant for Moscow under Stalin, this early period cannot be characterised by intensive relations between the Soviet Bloc-countries and those of the Middle East. It is worth mentioning the Zhdanov doctrine, dividing the World into two camps, under which it was difficult to deal with countries that were not part of either blocks, and those Middle Eastern countries that gained their independence by this time did not play a significant role in the new bipolar world. Besides, before 1953 a number of territories of the Middle East were still under direct or indirect control of the colonialist European powers. Moreover, at that time the focus of the Kremlin's attention in world politics was in Europe and Asia (Korea) which is another cause why the Middle East was not of high importance to the Soviet Union and her satellite states. Hungary was no exception to this trend, the country's relationship with Middle Eastern countries were marginal during this period. The only exception in the region was Czechoslovakia that took a significant role in supplying weapons to Israel during the 1948-1949 conflict. Significant connections between Hungary and the Middle East restarted only after the death of Stalin in 1953, but a few years were needed for closer and more tangible connections to be rebuilt after years of neglect.

The following parts of the introduction will present the documents in 5 thematic groups. Firstly, we deal with the subject of political relations between the Middle East, Hungary and the Soviet Bloc. Secondly, we will cover those documents that deal with economic relations. As we will demonstrate below, the region was a significant export-market for Hungary. Afterwards, we will focus on military cooperation. Export from Hungary to Middle Eastern countries played a major role in this spectrum as well. Fourthly, we discuss the relationship between Hungary and the communist parties of the region. Finally, we will present documents that deal with the

Iraq-Iran war that lasted for almost eight years between September 1980 and August 1988.

## **1. Political relations**

Before turning our attention to the archive documents that deal with political relations between the Middle Eastern countries and Hungary, let us see, in which countries of the region Hungary established diplomatic missions<sup>2</sup>. As one of the main partners in the region, Egypt was the first country Hungary came into contact with after World War II in 1947. However, diplomatic relations with Iraq were established as early as 1937. Nevertheless, establishing diplomatic relations is only the first step that is followed by their build up until the point of having a permanent representative or envoy in the given country. Egypt is also an exception, since the first and last minister of the Hungarian Republic, Viktor Csornoky arrived there in 1947 only to be called back and later executed by the Rákosi regime in 1948. Then, it was only in 1957 when a new Hungarian envoy was delegated to Cairo by the Hungarian Peoples's Republic, proclaimed in 1949. Israel was the second country, with which Hungary established diplomatic relations in 1948, however after the six-day war in 1967 these official links were cut-off, only to be restored just before the regime change in September, 1989. In 1951, the connections were taken up with Iran, but it was only in 1964 when the Foreign Ministry could open an Embassy in Tehran. Syria and Sudan are similar cases, with diplomatic relations established in 1954 and 1956, and Embassy openings in 1961 and 1966, respectively. With Tunisia and Morocco, the case was simpler. Embassies there opened in the year of the establishment of diplomatic relations, namely in 1956 for Tunisia and 1959 for Morocco. Yemen is another example for a country, where Hungary managed to set up links in 1959, but Embassies were only opened in 1963 in Sana'a and in 1968 in Aden respectively. Hungarian Embassies were open in Somalia in 1960, in Algeria in 1962, in Kuwait in 1963 and in Jordan in 1964. The last country of the region was Libya, where relations and an Embassy were set up only in 1967.

---

<sup>2</sup> For more information of these diplomatic missions, see Annex I and II

And now let us take a look at how some of the relationships between countries of the region and Hungary developed after 1953.

The death of the Soviet dictator did not bring a prompt and tangible policy change vis-vis the Middle East in Moscow, it was only in 1955 that the first deals regarding the selling of weapons to Egypt were agreed. Nevertheless, we can see an abandonment of the Zhdanov doctrine for a more global approach. With the stabilisation of the situation in the Europe from the early 1960s, the Soviet Union and the countries of the Eastern Bloc could turn their attention to other regions as well.

The policy of the Soviet Bloc in the post-Stalin era cannot be characterised by a monochrome red. One can rather see many shades of this colour when examining the foreign policy of the countries allied with Moscow. Conducting an effective diplomacy in this region proved to be a difficult task sometimes for the socialist countries, as they called themselves. The main problem was that although many countries were deemed as “friendly” with a “progressive” government, this did not mean that these states were socialist in a classical Soviet sense. It is true, one could see numerous leftist elements in the policies of these “friendly” Middle Eastern countries, such as land reform or nationalisation of key industries. However, often these very same governments spared little effort to marginalise their national communist parties in order to further their grip on power. This meant a considerable burden in bilateral relations, because Hungary as well as other socialist countries maintained strong connections with the communist parties of these Middle Eastern countries. In many cases the close links between the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party (HSWP) with the national communist parties, resulted in strained relations in regards to the governments of these states, such as Syria and Egypt<sup>3</sup>. For instance, the Hungarian diplomatic body refused to accept the idea that the Syrian government was building socialism. The Syrian government was pushing to have this recognised in joint statements issued after an ambassadorial bilateral meeting in 1973. However, the Hungarian delegation refused to recognise this, thus eventually the joint statement was not published. The case was different with the Czechoslovakian delegation that agreed to a similar Syrian initiative and thus a joint statement was produced. What we

---

<sup>3</sup> Magyar Országos Levéltár [Hungarian National Archives], henceforward MOL M-KS 288.f. 32/1972 1. ő.e., 125.o.

can see here is an interesting example of significant difference in the foreign policy approach by two loyal allies of the USSR. In this case the Hungarian delegation kept a closer line to the communist ideology, whereas the Czechoslovakian decision betrays more pragmatism.

Hungary's relationship with Egypt was one of the closest in the region. Nasser planned to visit Hungary as early as 1956. However, because of the unfolding Suez crises and because of his meeting with Tito and Nehru a couple of weeks earlier, he cancelled his Eastern-European trip during which he would have visited Hungary too<sup>4</sup>. This clearly indicates the tightrope act Nasser played in order to avoid confronting either of the super powers. He wanted to strengthen his image as a non-aligned leader, not leaning towards the Eastern Bloc amid the stifling atmosphere that preceded the Suez crises. That might be the reason why he needed to cancel his planned trip to the region.

Egypt was very understanding towards the Hungarian government as far as the so-called 'Hungarian question' was concerned in the UN after the 1956 Hungarian revolution.<sup>5</sup> The Egyptian president and his government supported the Hungarian government in the UN according to Document 1. This report suggests Nasser's opinion was that the Hungarian question was used only for propaganda purposes. Nasser drew a parallel between Hungary and Jordan in regards to the US role. He pointed out that the US and her allies did not raise the 'Jordanian question' of 1957, when the government, supporting Arab unity was ousted in a short conflict by the king and his troops.

The Bloc countries' diplomatic missions received regular foreign policy updates from the Soviet ambassadors in the capitals of the Middle East. A good example is Document 5 which gives insight on the main concerns of Soviet foreign policy in the 1960s. During the negotiations between Nasser and Prime Minister Kosigin in May, 1966, all the topical issues of World policy were discussed and the question of China

---

<sup>4</sup> The report of the Hungarian minister in Cairo 19 and 21 July 1956. - MOL Küm. XIX-J-1j, Egyiptom Tük, 8.d 0107/2 and 0107/3

<sup>5</sup> On the Hungarian Revolution see: *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution. A history in documents.* Csaba Békés, Malcolm Byrne, János M. Rainer [eds.] CEU Press, Budapest–New York, 2002.

came up as well. Kosigin rejected Nasser's comment on the crisis of the "progressive forces" allegedly caused by the Sino-Soviet split. Besides, he labelled China's policy as one of an adventurer's. As for the Middle East situation, Kosigin remarkably warned Nasser against a preventive war on Israel, hardly a year before the six day war in 1967, arguing that "real danger in the case of a possible war is not Israel". The Soviet Prime Minister also told Nasser that "Israel is not in a position to be able to make a nuclear bomb and launch a nuclear attack against the Arab countries. Therefore, it is not necessary for the UAR to begin nuclear tests...."

Another significant point is that the Soviet delegation could not give a positive answer for the Egyptian request for wheat imports. This clearly showed the limits of possible Soviet support for these countries. Moscow was able to give financial and military support for "friendly" governments in the Middle East, but as far as food aid was concerned, Moscow's hands were tied due to the inefficiency of the Soviet agricultural sector. As we will demonstrate below, the Eastern Bloc could offer industrial and military support for these countries. Moreover, during the 1960s, 70s and 80s, Hungary and other Bloc countries hosted a number of students in the tertiary education. These former students are still considered the backbone of the informal relations with the countries in the region until the present days as well. Besides, Hungary sent several industrial experts to these countries to help kick-start industrial projects. (Egypt dominated the scene in this case as well.)

The question of Palestine came to the fore again after the successful coup in Iraq in 1957. According to Hungarian diplomacy, both general Qasim and Nasser wanted to use the issue for political purposes<sup>6</sup>. Document 9 falls in line with the Soviet Bloc policy of the time. It points out that the ever-stronger Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Fatah<sup>7</sup> mean a challenge for the Arab governments who had used the Palestinian question for their own political purposes so far. The report is favourable to the PLO regarding it as an anti-imperialist force fighting Israel that is vilified in the report. The watershed regarding the Soviet-Palestinian relationship was the 1970 visit of Yasser Arafat in Moscow. Before this event, Hungary treated some

---

<sup>6</sup> MOL Küm XIX-J-1-j, Irak Tük, 1945-1964. 3. d. 25/1960.

<sup>7</sup> The Fatah Movement, founded by Yasser Arafat in 1965, quickly became the dominant force in the PLO

injured Palestinians and accepted a small number of Palestinian students, but after Arafat's trip, Moscow indicated that Hungary should deepen relations with the PLO. Not long after the international recognition of the PLO in 1974, the Office of the Palestine Liberation Organisation opened its doors in Budapest. As a result of Hungarian policy favouring the PLO and its dominant member organisation, Fatah, Yasser Arafat visited Hungary several times in the 1970s and 1980s. Hungary needed good relations with the PLO to maintain close contacts with other Arab states, in order to keep up the flow of goods and people between Hungary and the region. In this aspect, good relations with the PLO were the token of strong connections with the wider Middle East.

As Hungary cut diplomatic ties with Israel after the 6-day war in 1967, Hungarian diplomacy was forced to perform another balancing act. As the country had a tangible Jewish population, there were many connections between the two countries outside the political sphere. Besides, trade relations with Israel meant much needed western foreign currency for Hungary. Consequently, despite the fact that Hungary did not have official diplomatic relations with Israel after 1967, this did not mean zero relations between the two countries at all. Document 11 deals with the financial support given to the Israeli Communist Party (ICP) that was having financial difficulties. The report from 1971 states that 13,000 USD support had already been given to the ICP, and an additional 5,000 USD should be transferred to them. The furthering of relations between the ICP and Hungary is demonstrated in Document 16 according to which in 1981 the ICP requested the Hungarian government to ease the restriction of the travel of Israeli tourist to Hungary. As the ICP held a monopoly of organising such travels, it meant a reasonable income for the Party. The report points out that such enhanced travel arrangements had been already organised between the ICP and Bulgaria. This is another example of the relative autonomy of the foreign policy of the states allied with the Soviet Union. As we pointed out earlier this was a delicate balancing-act since the majority of Hungary's trade in the region was conducted with Arab states antagonistic to Israel.

Thanks to the briefings by Soviet ambassadors to top Hungarian politicians, the Hungarian political leadership was aware of the challenges the Soviet Union was facing during the Cold War. As Document 7 describes, Moscow was interested in détente as much as the USA. In relations to the 6-day war in 1967, the report states

that the Soviet leadership was interested in the warming of relations between the two superpowers since, besides the problems caused by China, the Soviet Union itself had major domestic challenges such as raising the living-standard and introducing reforms. The report suggests that down to the Vietnam conflict, the US was also interested in the amelioration of relations between the two blocks. The possible predictions in case of a radical change in the bipolar situation is also worth noting.

The Soviet Union had considerable leverage on the Egyptian government too at the end of the 1960s, and in the early 1970s. Having a look at the negotiations upon which Document 10 reports, we can see that the Soviet diplomats were able to convince their Egyptian counterparts about accepting the Rogers Plan, a US attempt in late 1969 and early 1970 to end the stand-off between Israel and Egypt. The Soviet Union also managed to moderate relations between Iran and Egypt, another good example of the Soviet influence on Egypt and in the region. Besides, in this case we can see a notable instance of realpolitik and détente in the converging interest of the Soviet Union and the USA in regard to the management of the Arab-Israeli relations.

Despite the fact that we emphasised the multi-shaded foreign policy of the countries of the Eastern Bloc, Document 12 is a case in point for the Kremlin's defining the future strategy of the states allied with the Soviet Union in relation to the Middle East. With the losing of Egypt in the 1970s, the strategy focused on other Arab states, such as Syria and Iraq.

The intensive connections between the countries of the Warsaw Pact and countries of the Middle East resulted in the former countries' thinking about initiating the establishment of official connections between the Warsaw Pact and the Arab League in 1987. As Document 31 shows, there were many obstacles in front of this endeavour. First of all, the institutional structure of the Warsaw Pact was not designed to maintain relations with other multilateral international organisations. For this to happen, deep institutional reform would have been needed. The question as why the Warsaw Pact and why not the COMECON should have been the organisation that would get into touch with the Arab League was brought up by the Czechoslovak delegation. As the initiative for closer connection between the two organisations came too late, nothing materialised from it. However, it shows how the leaders of the



socialist countries wanted to further open their export markets to the Middle-Eastern region during a time of ever increasing economic hardship.

## **2. Economic relations**

The region was a major market for Hungarian exports<sup>8</sup> from the 1960s. In fact, the Arab countries meant the biggest market for Hungary where it could trade in US Dollars, resulting in a positive trading balance in regards to the region<sup>9</sup>. Hungary exported machinery and other industrial goods, as well as weapons. In return, the country imported raw materials and agricultural goods such as cotton. Since Hungary faced a constant shortage of western currency down to a continuous trade deficit, trade with the countries of the Middle East did not only mean political influence but was also an economic necessity for the country. Commerce with the region was also a chance for Hungarian industry to balance the predominance of agriculture, which showed massive excess in the country's export mix.

However, commercial connections were marred by a number of problems. One of them was that before the 1973 oil crisis, trade was conducted through a clearing system. This, paired up with several barter agreements, meant that the country could not always get the much-needed hard currency out of these deals. Indeed, the pre-1973 commercial relationship with the "friendly" countries of the region was founded more on political than commercial grounds. During the 1960s as the socialist countries' economies were still growing relatively fast, governments of the Soviet Bloc usually gave loans to developing nations.

A Foreign Ministry memorandum in 1965 exposed this problem in the following way:

"The demand of better loan-conditions can be experienced in our relationship with Arab countries and with developing nations generally. The foreign currency conditions of these

---

<sup>8</sup> For this section we rely on the following document: Foreign Ministry report on the relations between Hungary and the Arab states in the mid 1960s - MOL Küm, XIX-J-1-j, Arab országok Tük, 1965 111 d. IV-14.

<sup>9</sup> For aggregate data from the first part of the 1960s see Annex I.

countries are further deteriorating, we will have to count with their increasing demand for loans.”<sup>10</sup>

Because of this problem and because the Hungarian industry’s inability to absorb large amounts of these imported raw materials such as cotton, some of these imports had to be re-exported. As a result, prices in the world market experienced a downward pressure that put the very countries, which wanted to benefit from these trade relations, in a difficult position. Besides, the reliability of these partnerships was not as good as those of Hungary had with westerns countries. The following excerpt is a good example of the numerous challenges of Hungary’s trade relations with the region.

“Our trade-relations are developing, but the biggest problem is that the majority of these countries cannot offer goods that are useful for our domestic economy and could offset the value of our exports, thus on the one hand we conduct re-export, a major cause of complain of the partner countries (in regards to the UAR, Morocco), or they regularly intervene since we do not buy from them (in case of Iraq, Lebanon and Jordan).”<sup>11</sup>

Thus the states of the region could be put into two groups: there were intensive trade-relations with the so-called “friendly” countries (Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Lybia and later Syria), but there was hardly any flow of goods in regards to those states that were closer to the western sphere of influence (Saudi-Arabia, Kuwait, etc.). There were some states that fell between these two groups, such as Lebanon, Tunisia, Morocco and Syria. In case of these countries close political relations as well as commercial connections could not be very intense either.

### **3. Military cooperation**

In a number of cases, commercial relations between the Soviet Bloc countries and “friendly” or “progressive” regimes in the region had a “special” dimension. “Special” was the codename for military in the Soviet Bloc official jargon, so “special” relations usually meant exporting military equipment to these countries.

---

<sup>10</sup> MOL Küm, XIXJ1-j, Arab országok Tük, 1965. 111. d. IV-14.

<sup>11</sup> MOL Küm, XIXJ1-j, Arab országok Tük, 1965. 111. d. IV-14.

The first attempts to import military hardware from Hungary were made by Egypt as early as 1947. Egyptian politicians contacted the Hungarian envoy inquiring about the possibility of such shipments<sup>12</sup>. No reaction was given to this request. A few years later, in 1951 Amransy, the deputy of the Egyptian envoy to Hungary contacted the Hungarian government, with the same intentions. When Andor Berei, the first deputy of the Ministry of Foreign affairs pointed out that Hungary does not produce the heavy weaponry Egypt was interested in. Amransy replied that Egypt was interested in any kind of available weaponry<sup>13</sup>. It seems, after the 1948 Israeli victory, Egypt was desperate to obtain any kind of armament. However, we do not have information about any deals that actually materialised before 1953. The first arms shipments from the Eastern Bloc were sent to Egypt in 1955, but this time, Hungary did not play an active role, the main players were Czechoslovakia and Poland. Czechoslovakia was the main exporter besides the Soviet Union. As János Kádár pointed out in July, 1967 in Document 6/B regarding a possible arms shipment to the region:

“Here, we need to “conspire” with the Soviet Union. We need to say that this is the situation, we have not responded yet, and they should say what they think. Or, if you will, we can expand the range of participants in the consultation, because the actual suppliers were two socialist countries.”

Thus, as Egypt and other countries gravitated towards the Soviet Union, from the mid-1950s, Hungary joined other Bloc countries and started to deliver weapons and other military hardware to Cairo and other “friendly” Arab governments (Documents 6/A, 6/B and Document 8).

Document 8 also gives an insight in the complexity of links between some “friendly” Arab states and the Eastern Bloc. In this Foreign Ministry report from 1969, the behaviour of the Egyptian politicians is very telling. It demonstrates that members of the Egyptian ruling elite had great leverage over the governments of the Bloc. If the Soviet Union and her allies wanted to keep these countries close, they needed to fulfil their demands. This report also shed light on signs of the upcoming rupture between the Soviet Bloc and Egypt. The pressure for shipping the demanded military equipment was so great that the Soviet and the Hungarian leadership decided to

---

<sup>12</sup> MOL Küm, XIX-J-1-j, Egyiptom Tük, 17. d. document no.:110. and 116.

<sup>13</sup> MOL Küm, XIX-J-1-j, Egyiptom Tük, 1. d. document no.: 87

develop certain manufacturing capacity for those systems that were not available in any of the Soviet Bloc countries. In this aspect, the arrogant behaviour of Egypt meant technology transfer and additional investment in the Hungarian defence industry. Besides, it is worth pointing out that although the Warsaw Pact conventional forces were superior in dimensions such as headcount and the number of tanks to NATO, even in the 1960s the Eastern Bloc countries had difficulty in supplying sophisticated military equipment such as locators (radars) to “friendly” countries in need.

During the 1973 Yom Kippur war Hungary was playing an active role in supporting the Arab states. János Kádár, the leader of the HSWP received a confidential report from Moscow about the imminent attack in the afternoon of 5 October, just one day before the start of the offensive<sup>14</sup>. On 9 October 1973, when the Israeli counter-offensive gathered momentum on the Golan-Heights, the Syrian leadership turned to the Soviet Bloc (except for Romania) for support, which they received. The Hungarian decision-makers decided the dispatching of 90 T-54 tanks, 12 Mig-21 planes and F-13 fighters with rockets, anti-tank weapons and ammunition to the Syrian army via the air-lift provided by the Soviet Union<sup>15</sup>. Cuba sent personnel of an armoured regiment and 10 well-trained pilots. North-Korea also sent a number of pilots, since Soviet advisers regarded Arab pilots unprepared for the flying missions<sup>16</sup>. Hungarian army personnel did not take part in the actual fighting, but a number of Soviet soldiers did, mainly as part of the anti-aircraft defence. Two Soviet “advisers” were decorated after the conflict with the merit of the Hero of the Soviet Union, since they were very successful in shooting down Israeli planes<sup>17</sup>. It seems Soviet support for the Arab states was much more significant than US support for Israel in this conflict.

---

<sup>14</sup> MOL M-KS 288 f. 32/1973 1. ő.e. - Report for the HSWP Central Committee regarding the events in the Middle East 8 October 1973

<sup>15</sup> MOL Küm, XIX-J-1-j, Közel-Kelet Tük, 1973 121. d. 00970/86.

<sup>16</sup> MOL Küm, XIX-J-1-j, Közel-Kelet Tük, 1973 122. d. 00970/331.

<sup>17</sup> MOL Küm, XIX-J-1-j, Közel-Kelet Tük, 1973 122. d. 00970/178.

#### 4. Relations with local Communist parties

The close connection between the HSWP and the communist parties of the region provide us with valuable insight concerning several domestic issues of the Middle Eastern politics of that time. During the Cold War era the Communist parties of “friendly” states enjoyed various degrees of freedom. As Document 3 shows, the Communists played a significant role in the 1958 coup d'état in Iraq. The detailed information provided by the Iraqi communists sheds new light on the dynamics of the coup. It reveals that general Qasim, in accordance with the Iraqi Communists, turned down the first possibility of a coup in 1957, since he and his Communist allies deemed the situation immature for a take-over. It is also interesting to note how the military led by general Qasim could play an independent and initiative role in the process of the coup. This demonstrates the total lack of control of the political parties over the military, which is characteristic of young weak states even today.

As mentioned earlier, the Eastern Bloc countries had very close links with the national Communist parties of any given foreign partner, sometimes closer than with the government of the country in question. These links did not break down even in a case when the activity of a given Communist party was considered incorrect or even damaging. Document 4, dealing with the domestic politics of Algeria after the coup of 1965 is a good example of how the Soviet Bloc states had to manoeuvre between realpolitik and foreign policy based on ideological solidarity from time to time. It is interesting to see that the Hungarian embassy in Algiers, receiving information mainly from the Algerian Communist Party (ACP) became very critical about the coup d'état. Meanwhile the Ministry of Foreign Affairs led a more objective line, thanks to the numerous channels of information, thus it disapproved that the ACP decided not to participate in the new government<sup>18</sup>. The memorandum is rather critical concerning the ACP's handling of the political process after the coup. It condemns the fact that the ACP is fractured and chose not to get involved in the new government, despite the fact that Boumedienne, the leader of the successful coup offered them ministerial posts. Even though the author of the report is worried about the possibility of the shift to the right in the Algerian government, this report demonstrates the dilemma of the Hungarian diplomatic body. By this time, the two

---

<sup>18</sup> MOL M-KS 288.f. 32/1965 3 .ő.e.

countries had several business contracts with each other. Thus, the condemnation of the coup could have meant the breaking of these links as well between the two countries, which would have had negative effects on Hungarian external trade. It is clear that the relationship between the Eastern Bloc countries and the “friendly” Middle Eastern states was not harmonious all the time. From time to time there was a crackdown on members of the Communist parties of the region, which strained the relationship between the countries. However, these periods of strained relations did not always reach the public sphere of the Socialist Bloc. As an example, we could mention Nasser’s turn on the Communist party in Egypt, which took off in 1958 with his speech in Port Said. Not long after, a report from 1959 produced by the Hungarian embassy in Cairo described the Egyptian regime as “resembling the Nazi regime in Germany as far as their methods are concerned”<sup>19</sup>. However, there was no public condemnation about the maltreatment of Egyptian Communists until Khrushchev’s speech in early 1959, but even this speech did not trigger any further action on the diplomatic front. It seems the interest of keeping Egypt close to the Eastern Bloc overrode ideological solidarity with the Egyptian Communists. This demonstrates that although the Communist connection was a very strong and deep one, its priority was not absolute, rather only an element of a complex foreign-policy equation.

### **5. The Soviet Bloc and the Iraq-Iran war**

The Hungarian documents on the Iraq-Iran war shed light on the challenges the country and the Eastern Bloc were facing in regards to that conflict. The revolution in Iran in 1979 meant that one of the major bastions of the American encirclement policy towards the Soviet Union turned against its former ally. At the same time, the fact that Iran did not start to reach out towards the Eastern Bloc was disillusioning and worrying for the Communist states. It was worrying, since as Document 15 indicates, at the early stages of the conflict, Iraq was slipping out from the Soviet field of influence. This report predicted that with the end of the war the American influence would become even more significant.

---

<sup>19</sup> Annual report of the Hungarian embassy from 1958. MOL Küm, XIX-J-1-j, Kairó Tük, 1945-1964 13.d. 139/1959

Document 14 seems to contradict the previous analysis of Hungarian diplomats. The report on the visit of the special envoy of Saddam Hussein to Hungary in October 1980 notes that the intention of the Iraqi leadership is to free the Gulf-region from any US influence. However, the Iraqi National Charter proclaimed in 1980 states that the aim is to keep distance from both superpowers and to keep them away from the region. This was a clear demonstration of the regional ambitions of the Iraqi leadership that eventually urged both superpowers to find a country to balance Iraq. In the case of the Soviet Union this country was Syria and later Iran.

Document 15 deals extensively with the causes behind the souring of relations between the Iraqi and the Soviet leadership. Among others, one can read about the deteriorating political environment of the Iraqi Communist Party and Iraq's overtures towards the Western Bloc.

Iraq's negative attitude towards the Soviet Union and the Iraqi Communists resulted in the halting of arms shipments to the country. This posed a major challenge to Hungary, since by the early 1980s, Iraq became the biggest trading partner of Hungary in the developing world (Document 20), and the halting of "special" exports could have led to deteriorating commercial relations in other sectors as well. Iraq's need for weapons and ammunition, however pushed the country to change her attitude towards the Eastern Bloc.

Document 17 gives a good example of the efforts Iraqi diplomacy made on a number of fronts regarding the Soviet sphere of influence in the early 1980s. In this document the Iraqi deputy prime minister visiting Hungary in May, 1981 states that his country would like to strengthen the relationship with the Socialist countries. Iraq badly needed the resumption of the weapons shipments at that time, therefore the delegation offered to open further economic sectors to the Communist countries, such as the petro-chemical sector. This new direction in Iraqi foreign policy eventually proved to be successful. According to Document 18, one year after the visit of the Iraqi delegation in Budapest, the Soviet leadership decided to lift the embargo regarding military hardware in 1981.

Document 23 is notable firstly, since it is another good example of strained relations due to the harassment of Communist activists in Iran. Secondly, this document from 1983 proves that Iran received Soviet military support as well. In this regard, Soviet

policy towards the two warring states is parallel to the foreign policy of the United States. It seems the Soviet Union had its very own policy of double-containment.

The fact that the Soviet ambassador asked for the help of Hungarian diplomacy in warming up the relations with Iran in 1981, shows us the significance of smaller states in the Soviet Empire. It seems the Soviet leadership used the services of its allies when its own foreign policy staff could not achieve the desired results. This sheds further light on the proactive role the allied states played in regard to external relations of the Eastern Bloc. One example for such a diplomatic activity is Document 32. This report covers the high-profile visit of a Hungarian government delegation led by prime minister Károly Grósz to Iran in 1988. This visit was made in return to a visit by Iranian politicians in Hungary two years earlier. Besides, since Hungary participated in the activity of the UN supervisory forces charged with overseeing the ceasefire between Iraq and Iran, the visit was even more important for Iran. The Iranian politicians understood that one road to Moscow leads via Budapest, so they went out of their way to emphasise the role of the Iranian revolution in breaking up the encirclement of the Soviet Union. During the negotiations the need for closer bilateral connections was raised, but because of the eventual fall of the Communist regime in Hungary, this never materialised.

One also has to point out that the Iraqi efforts to keep the superpowers outside the region backfired completely, since it only resulted further involvement of these states both in Iraq and in Iran.

Documents 24 and 25 give valuable insights in the internal issues of an Iraq that was tangled up in a conflict that would not finish. Indeed, the Iraqi regime wanted to end the war quickly, but that plan never materialised. These two documents describe the effects of the on-going military struggle and the deteriorating strategic situation. By 1984, in five years time, Iraq, a country of previously promising regional perspectives, was then struggling to keep the conflict under control. Thus, Saddam Hussein eventually failed to realize his goal of obtaining a regional power status and keeping the US away from the conflict and from the region as a whole.

Studying these documents one would suggest that the policy of double-containment during the 1980s was successful. The worsening military situation paired up with a war economy in a downward spiral questioned the future regional perspective of the



regime in the longer term. The dynamics of domestic politics reveal how the regime softened its line amid the growing difficulties of the population. The main goal was to kick-start the economy again by resuming the petroleum exports. However, an ever-deepening division between the ruling elite and the rest of the society and expansion of the informal economy clearly demonstrated the growing difficulties of ordinary Iraqis people.

Re-establishment of diplomatic relations between Iraq and the US in November 1984 did not concern the Hungarian diplomats in Baghdad, as Document 27 shows. The relatively passive American attitude towards Iraq ensured that the country would remain a stable market for weapons shipments from the Eastern Bloc. This report regards Iran as a strategic partner of the United States, a persisting point of view of the Hungarian diplomats residing in Baghdad. Besides, as Document 28 further suggests, as the war dragged on and as the relations between the Soviet Union and the United States started to reach a new phase, the conflict between Iraq and Iran became of secondary or even tertiary importance for the US. The need to somehow stabilise the conflict in order to enable the US to focus on other major global events can be read out from these documents.

Document 29 from 1986 gives us a rare insight into the dynamics of a dictatorship in crisis. This Hungarian embassy report sheds light on a number of survival tactics of the regime, such as how Saddam Hussein decided to stay in the background during the difficult times of the conflict and how ancient religious and folk myths were “rediscovered” by the government in order to forge unity among the population.

Document 19 covers the effects of the Israeli bombing of the Osirak nuclear site in Iraq in 1981. The report suggests that the Israeli operation would have devastating effects for Egyptian foreign policy. The author of the report emphasises the decreased international latitude of Egypt after the Camp David accords. According to the report, the bombing of Osirak came at the worst possible time, as Egypt was on the verge of retaking its place among the Arab countries. This military strike threatened to complicate Egypt’s position in the region. This sheds some light on the wider effects of the Israeli operation. This report proves that the bombing of Osirak should be examined in a wider regional perspective. Thus, according to the authors a stable Iraq could play a tangible role in resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Document 33 from 1987 describes the internal issues of Iraqi politics. As the situation deteriorated, the opposition in Iraq became ever more active. The report gives us some valuable information on the Kurdish and Shi'ite opposition and their role in the conflict. Even though the situation for the ruling party was very dim, there was no real alternative to the ruling regime, according to the report.

Document 21 deals with unfavourable military situation for Iraq and its possible political and economic consequences in 1982. Since Iraq was a key economic partner for Hungary, the weakening strategic position of Iraq could have meant a fall in Hungarian exports. Nevertheless, the report emphasised that Hungary's ordinary and "special"(military) trade relations, had grown in the previous years.

The increasingly difficult Iraqi situation in regard to Iran lead the country to seek early exit from the war in 1983. Document 22 covers the attempts of the Iraqi ambassador in Budapest to this effect. The ambassador suggested Hungary should play a bigger role in moderating between the two warring countries. The ambassador also emphasised that the Soviet Union should also play a more active role in the region, since according to him, the politics of the region were dominated by the US and the division between Arab countries.

Document 26 reports on the negotiations between the Hungarian deputy foreign minister and top Iraqi politicians in Baghdad in 1984. During these negotiations Tariq Aziz, first deputy Prime Minister and minister of foreign affairs betrayed the dire situation of Iraq. Besides trying to demonize the Iranian leadership, claiming that they were mentally insane, he voiced Iraq's concern about the shipment of arms from the Soviet Bloc to Iran. He suggested the Soviet Bloc was able to influence the Iranian position by introducing sanctions against the country.

Document 30 deals with the internal politics of Iraq in 1986. As the balance of military power shifted in favour of Iran, the Iraqi political system started to teeter. Riots by the Shi'ite community were more severe. Besides, cracks were visible within to the ruling regime itself. It is interesting to see how Saddam Hussein managed to eliminate all the potential threats coming from inside and outside the party. According to the report, he managed to marginalise all possible rivals within the Baath party. The mentioning of Egyptian guest workers returning to their homeland is also very telling about an increasingly deteriorating Iraqi economic situation.

While Document 30 covers the situation of the Iraqi society and economy, Document 32 focuses more on military issues. Although, both Iraq and Iran showed signs of fatigue, the situation was evidently in Iran's favour by 1987. As Iraq failed to convince the Arab states to regard the war against her neighbour as a defensive struggle, the country could not unite the Arab countries behind her. The report also mentions the deteriorating relationship between Iraq and the Gulf countries, the main financial supporters of the Iraqi military struggle. The difficult Iraqi situation forced the leadership to look for support wherever it was possible. This was the reason for an attempt for rapprochement with Syria.

By the end of the conflict in 1988, both warring countries became increasingly isolated. Iraq could never ensure the unified support of the Arab states, and Iran turning more assertive due to its military successes started to worry her neighbours and the great powers as well. Both Documents 30 and 34 deal with the above problem, while giving some insight into domestic issues on both sides as well. Iran's increasing confidence led to an extension of her influence in the Gulf and the straight of Hormuz. This was worrying not only for the countries in the region, but also for the Soviet Union, having a number of military and civilian ships in the region. The hostile attitude of the Soviet leadership can be felt from Document 32. This explains why the top Iranian politicians were at pains to ensure the goodwill of the country towards to the Eastern Bloc upon the high-profile visit of Hungarian politicians, mentioned above (Document 34). As for Iraq, the country that initiated the war, became increasingly isolated. Document 30 describes this isolation, both in a regional and in a wider global aspect.

### **Conclusion**

To sum up, we can state that the relationship between Hungary and the countries of the Middle East could be characterised by certain dichotomies.

As mentioned above, the states of the region in question could be put into two categories. "Friendly" states had closer connections with the Soviet Bloc, and naturally with Hungary as well. However, with those countries that were in the US sphere of influence connections were rather shallow.

Another dichotomy can be found in regards to relations with the “friendly” states of the region. On the surface, relations with these countries were cordial. However, the documents published here show another, more complex picture. Under the surface, both Hungary and the Middle Eastern countries tried to profit as much from these relations as possible. This intention of profit maximization on both sides led to strains in relations on a regular basis. Good examples for this are the difficulties that occurred between Egypt and Hungary in regard to the military support in 1969 (Document 8).

One might ask why these strains in relations did not come to the fore. The reason may be a certain degree of interdependence that characterised these relations. On the one hand, Hungary was in constant shortage of hard currency during the Cold War years. The fact that the currencies of the Soviet Bloc were not convertible and the unofficial social contract between the post-1956 HSWP and Hungarian society was based on constant amelioration of living standards, the Hungarian government was in constant need of Western convertible currency in order to import those goods the economies of the Eastern Bloc were unable to produce. Consequently, the Hungarian government needed good relations with the countries of the Middle East, since these were markets where Hungarian goods could be sold for US Dollars. As these countries were happy to purchase those Hungarian goods that were otherwise uncompetitive on western markets, economies of the Middle Eastern countries meant an opportunity for the Hungarian government to compensate for the otherwise negative trade-balance. Indeed, exporting manufactured goods to the Middle East also meant an attempt to rebalance the export mix of Hungary that was heavily dominated by agricultural products.

On the other hand, these “friendly” countries needed not only military hardware, but also industrial products and expertise to be able to decrease dependence from the western dominated global economy. In the post-colonialist, and highly nationalist atmosphere of the time, good relations with the countries of the Soviet Bloc were of high importance in order to have economic progress in these rather underdeveloped economies. The documents reveal that the pursuing of self-interest and the interdependence mentioned above, encouraged both sides to keep these sometimes fierce debates away from the spotlight, giving them greater room for manoeuvre behind closed doors. However, even these transfers of hard currency could not stop

Hungary's indebtedness to increase in the long term after the 1970s, which reached a critical level by the early 1980s. Indeed, Hungary's financial situation was so dire, it needed a loan of 100 million USD from China to be able to pay the financial contribution needed to join the IMF and the World Bank in 1982. The desperate financial situation may be a reason why the Hungarian government decided to deepen economic relations with Israel, even if this meant putting good connections with friendly Arab states at risk.

With these economic necessities in mind, it is fair to say that *realpolitik* gained the upper hand many times. Not denying the fact that the connections between the communist parties of the region and the ones of the Soviet Bloc and Hungary were rather close, these parties were let down if the interest of the Eastern Bloc demanded good relations with the government of a given country. However, in a number of cases, the amelioration of relations between Arab countries and the Soviet Bloc meant greater freedom for local Communists to operate as well. Thus the local Communist parties were sometimes used as bargaining chips in the complex bi- and multilateral relations between the Middle Eastern countries and the Eastern Bloc.

Finally, we would like to emphasise again Hungary's room for manoeuvre as far as foreign policy is concerned. Keeping in mind that the government needed to keep itself to the line defined by Moscow, within this framework following the policy of constructive loyalty, Hungarian diplomacy could pursue its own interests as well.<sup>20</sup> This supports the idea of a multi-layered foreign policy as far as the countries of the Soviet Bloc were concerned. Moscow could not and in reality did not want to have total control on the foreign policy of the allied countries. One instance, when this proved useful was when the Hungarian diplomatic service was used to pave the way for the thawing of relations between Moscow and Tehran in 1983 (Document 23).

---

<sup>20</sup> On Hungarian foreign policy in the Cold War era see: Csaba Békés: Hungarian foreign policy in the bipolar World, 1945–1991, *Foreign Policy Review* [Budapest], 2011. 65–97. (Available online: [www.coldwar.hu/Publications/Bekes](http://www.coldwar.hu/Publications/Bekes))

To conclude this short introduction we would like to emphasise again that relations between friendly Middle Eastern countries and Hungary were mainly built on mutual interests while common elements of ideology only played a secondary role.

## Annex I.

### The Establishment of diplomatic relations between Hungary and the countries of the Middle East during the Cold War in chronological order

Country & City	Date of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations	Current* Status of Representation
<b>Iraq</b> /Baghdad	1937	Embassy (since 08/03/1958)
<b>Egypt</b> /Cairo	1947	Embassy (since 06/15/1957)
<b>Israel</b> /Jerusalem	1948(-1967)	Legation (1948-1967) Embassy since 09/1989
<b>Iran</b> /Teheran	1951	Embassy (since 05/12/1964)
<b>Syria</b> / Damascus	1954	Embassy (since 10/12/1961)
<b>Sudan</b> / Khartoum	1956	Embassy (since 11/12/1966)
<b>Tunisia</b> / Tunis	1956	Embassy (since 08/30/1956)
<b>Morocco</b> / Rabat	1959	Embassy (since 10/23/1959)
<b>Yemen, People's Republic of</b> /Aden	1959	Embassy (since 02/02/1968)
<b>Yemen, Arabic Republic</b> /Sanaa	1959	Embassy (since 02/28/1963)
<b>Somalia</b> / Mogadishu	1960	Embassy (since 10/16/1960)
<b>Algeria</b> / Alger	1962	Embassy (since 04/07/1962)
<b>Kuwait</b> / Kuwait	1963	Accredited Embassy (since 05/1964-1975)
<b>Jordan</b> /Amman	1964	Embassy (since 07/01/1964)
<b>Libya</b> / Tripoli	1967	Embassy (since 07/01/1967)

Source: A szocializmus útján: A népi demokratikus átalakulás és a szocializmus építésének kronológiája, 1944. szeptember-1980. április. (On the Road of Socialism: The Popular Democratic Transition and the Chronology of the Build-up of Socialism, September 1944 –April 1980). 2nd ed. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1982. pp. 603-630. Available online at the web site of the Cold War History Research Center, Budapest: [www.coldwar.hu/Finding](http://www.coldwar.hu/Finding) aids.

\*In 1980

## Annex II.

### List of Middle Eastern countries with diplomatic representatives from Hungary

Country & City	Date of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations	Current* Status of Representation	Name & Position	Appointment by the Presidential Council (PC)	Presentation of credentials	Withdrawal by PC
Algeria/Alger	1962	Embassy (since 04/07/1962)	László MÁTYÁS Amb.	11/15/1962	12/15/1962	06/28/1968
			Elek TÓTH Amb.	06/28/1968	No handover	02/23/1970
			Lajos SZALAI Chargé d'affaires ad interim		(1968-1969)	
			Zoltán ZSIGMOND Amb.	02/23/1970	04/03/1970	08/04/1975
			Zoltán SZÉPHELYI Amb.	08/04/1975	10/24/1975	11/18/1980
Egypt/Cairo	1947	Embassy (since 06/15/1957)	Viktor CSORNOKY Min.	11/22/1947	12/28/1947	07/30/1948
			Péter NAGY Chargé d'affaires ad interim	08/01/1948	08/01/1948	09/ /1948
			György ZÁGOR Chargé d'affaires ad interim	11/ /1949	12/08/1949	10/25/1955
			György ZÁGOR Min.	10/22/1955	11/28/1955	08/30/1957
			Lajos SZIJÁRTÓ Amb.	08/30/1957	10/28/1957	08/27/1963
			Pál RÁCZ Amb.	09/27/1963	01/02/1964	08/22/1968
			Károly SZARKA Amb.	08/22/1968	10/19/1968	05/28/1970
			Dr. Jenő RANDÉ Amb.	05/28/1970	09/01/1970	08/09/1974
			Lajos S. NAGY Amb.	08/09/1974	10/29/1974	10/25/1978
Iraq/Baghdad	1937	Embassy (since 08/03/1958)	Vencel HÁZI Amb.	09/23/1958	10/29/1958	11/15/1961
			Károly RÁTH Amb.	11/10/1961	12/20/1961	05/08/1964
			Lajos S. NAGY Amb.	05/08/1964	07/09/1964	07/30/1969



			József FERRÓ Amb.	07/30/1969	11/15/1969	10/15/1970
			József HORVÁTH Amb.	02/03/1971	04/06/1971	07/06/1976
			Lajos GONDA Amb.	07/06/1976	10/16/1976	06/09/1981
<b>Iran/Teheran</b>	1951	Embassy (since 05/12/1964)	István MURAI Min.	11/06/1951	12/22/1951	02/21/1958
			Károly BONYHÁDI Chargé d'affaires ad interim	03/19/1959	03/21/1959	
			Károly BONYHÁDI Min.	09/09/1962	09/20/1962	04/16/1966
			Károly BONYHÁDI Amb.	07/16/1964	09/12/1964	12/29/1966
			László GYÁROS Amb.	02/25/1967	03/16/1967	10/28/1967
			József VÁRKONYI Amb.	02/29/1968	04/04/1968	06/02/1972
			Bálint GÁL Amb.	06/02/1972	09/17/1972	05/31/1976
			Dr. József MIKÓ Amb.	05/31/1976.	10/02/1976	04/18/1981
<b>Israel/Jerusalem</b>	1948-1967	Legation	István ROMHÁNYI Chargé d'affaires ad interim	03/09/1950	No handover	09/18/1954
<b>After 1967, Sweden represented Hungary in Israel</b>			István KÁLLÓ Min.	02/12/1957	03/19/1957	11/11/1959
			Gyula NYERKI Chargé d'affaires ad interim	11/11/1959	No handover	07/ /1965
			Kálmán CSÉCSEI Chargé d'affaires ad interim	08/ /1965	No handover	06/ /1967
<b>Jordan/Amman</b>	1964	Embassy (since 07/01/1964)	István MURAI Amb.	08/03/1964	10/01/1964	08/12/1968
			Pál MÁNYIK Amb.	09/18/1968	12/02/1968	11/16/1970
			János VERES Amb.	02/25/1971	05/10/1971	06/24/1975
			László SZIKRA Amb.	06/24/1975	02/02/1976	
<b>Kuwait / Kuwait</b>	1963	Accredited Embassy (since 05/1964-1975)	Lajos NAGY S. Amb.	10/12/1964	11/30/1964	11/12/1969
<b>Until 1975, the Ambassador in Baghdad was accredited</b>			József HORVÁTH Amb.	11/12/1969	01/14/1970	10/15/1970

			József FERRÓ Amb.	04/01/1971	05/17/1971	09/08/1975
			Károly SZIGETI Amb.	09/08/1975	11/04/1975	09/1980
<b>Libya/ Tripoli</b>	1967	Embassy (since 07/01/1967)	Pál RÁCZ  Amb.	10/06/1967	12/01/1967	08/22/1968
<b>Until 1975, Ambassa dor in Cairo was accredite d</b>			Károly SZARKA Amb.	10/23/1968	02/24/1969	01/14/1971
			Dr. Jenő RANDÉ Amb.	01/14/1971	03/23/1971	08/17/1974
			Dr. Gyula BOGNÁR  Chargé d'affaires ad interim		(1972-1974)	
			Lajos NAGY S. Amb.	08/17/1974		09/12/1975
			Pál SZÜTS Amb.	09/12/1975	11/06/1975	08/31/1978
<b>Mauritani a / Nouakcho tt</b>	1965	Accredited Embassy - Rabat (since 12/07/1965)	Győző KÁRÁSZ Amb.	02/03/1966	04/11/1966	11/30/1966
<b>Until 1972, the Ambassa dor in Conakry, since 1972 the Ambassa dor in Rabat is accredite d</b>			Gusztáv GOGOLYÁK  Amb.	11/30/1966	04/12/1967	11/18/1970
			Imre SZTANKOVICS Amb.	11/18/1970		01/12/1972
			László MOLNÁR Amb.	01/12/1972	10/03/1972	01/25/1977
			Dr. Frigyes LÉDERER Amb.	01/25/1977	07/30/1977	01/19/1980
<b>Morocco / Rabat</b>	1959	Embassy (since 10/23/1959)	László GYÁROS Amb.	04/30/1963	11/19/1963	09/12/1966
			Kálmán ÚJLAKI Chargé d'affaires ad interim	08/10/1966	Nem történt átadás	12/01/1968
			Raymond TÓTH Chargé d'affaires ad interim	11/22/1968	Nem történt átadás	10/14/1970
			László MOLNÁR Amb.	09/21/1970	01/15/1971	08/21/1975
			Dr. Frigyes LÉDERER  Amb.	08/21/1975	12/18/1975	12/19/1979
<b>Somalia / Mogadish</b>	1960	Embassy (since 10/16/1960)	Dr. Károly SZABÓ Amb.	01/24/1968	06/10/1968	03/02/1970

<b>u</b>						
<b>Ambassador in Dar-es Salaam is accredited</b>			Dr. Miklós BÁRD Amb.	03/02/1970	05/06/1970	10/08/1976
			Gyula BARANYI Amb.	10/08/1976	10/16/1976	02/17/1989
<b>Syria / Damascus</b>	1954	Embassy (since 10/12/1961)	Károly BONYHÁDI Chargé d'affaires ad interim	03/01/1954	05/13/1954	03/22/1957
<b>At the time of the union with Egypt, a General Consulate s worked here</b>			János RADVÁNYI Consul-general	03/23/1957.		08/01/1958
			Pál MÁNYIK Consul-general	08/01/1958		06/ /1962
			István MURAI  Amb.	03/10/1962	06/07/1962	08/12/1968
			Pál MÁNYIK  Amb.	08/12/1968	08/24/1968	11/16/1970
			János VERES  Amb.	01/06/1971	01/30/1971	05/15/1975
			László SZIKRA Amb.	05/15/1975	10/25/1975	09/27/1979
<b>Sudan / Khartoum</b>	1956	Embassy (since 11/12/1966)	György ZÁGOR Min.	02/18/1956	04/21/1956	11/28/957
<b>Until 1970, the Ambassador in Cairo was accredited, the Embassy in Khartoum is led by the Chargé d'affaires ad interim</b>			Lajos SZIJÁRTÓ Min.	11/28/1957	01/21/1958	09/27/1963
			Béla TÓTH	06/ /1960	No handover	07/ /1962

			Chargé d'affaires ad interim			
			Pál RÁCZ Min.	12/07/1963	04/17/1964	11/22/1966
			Pál RÁCZ Amb.	11/22/1966	02/05/1968	08/22/1968
			Károly SZARKA Amb.	08/22/1968	12/17/1968	07/02/1970
			Sándor PATAKI Chargé d'affaires ad interim		(1968-1974)	
			Lajos BENCZEKOVITS Amb.	07/02/1970	07/27/1970	08/12/1974
			István FODOR Chargé d'affaires ad interim		1974-	
<b>Tunisia / Tunis</b>	1956	Embassy (since 08/30/1956)	László MÁTYÁS Amb.	09/01/1965	09/30/1965	06/28/1968
			Elek TÓTH Amb.	06/28/1968	No handover	02/02/1970
			Lajos SZALAI Chargé d'affaires ad interim		(1968-1969)	
			Zoltán ZSIGMOND Amb.	04/23/1970	05/ /1970	08/04/1975
			Zoltán SZÉPHELYI Amb.	08/04/1975	11/13/1975	11/13/1975
<b>Turkey / Ankara</b>	1947	Embassy (since 08/08/1967)	Béla ANDAHÁZY-KASNYA Min.	12/13/1946		07/03/1947
			György GULÁCSY Min.	08/27/1947	10/13/1947	04/30/1949
			János GYETVAI Min.	03/17/1949	04/05/1949	06/30/1950
			József GÁBOR Min.	06/30/1950	08/23/1950	10/28/1954
			István MURAI Min.	11/21/1954	01/31/1955	02/21/1958
			Dénes FELKAI Min.	09/05/1958	10/16/1958	09/14/1962
			Imre KUTAS Min.	09/14/1962	10/25/1962	10/24/1967
			Imre KUTAS	10/24/1967	12/20/1967	06/27/1969

			Amb.			
			György ZÁGOR Amb.	06/27/1969	10/27/1969	07/23/1973
			Károly KAPCSOS Amb.	07/23/1973	10/10/1973	06/29/1977
			Dr. László ROSTA Amb.	06/29/1977	10/20/1977	10/20/1977
<b>Yemen, People's Republic of /Aden</b>	1959	Embassy (since 02/02/1968)	Károly SZARKA Amb.	08/25/1968	05/20/1969	12/18/1970
			Dr. Jenő RANDÉ Amb.	12/18/1970	01/20/1971	08/17/1974
			Lajos S NAGY Amb.	08/17/1974.	11/27/1974	12/29/1977
			Lajos BENCZEKOVITS Amb.	12/29/1977	03/29/1978	09/83
<b>Yemen, Arabic Republic/ Sanaa</b>	1959	Embassy (since 02/28/1963)	Lajos SZIJÁRTÓ Min.	03/25/1959	04/19/1959	02/28/1963
<b>Ambassador in Cairo is accredited</b>			Lajos SZIJÁRTÓ Amb.	02/28/1963	04/18/1963	09/27/1963
			Pál RÁCZ Amb.	12/07/1963	05/02/1964	08/22/1968
			Károly SZARKA Amb.	08/22/1968	05/20/1969	12/18/1970
			Dr. Jenő RANDÉ Amb.	12/18/1970	01/20/1971	10/16/1974
			Lajos S NAGY Amb.	10/16/1974	01/15/1976	12/29/1977

Source: A szocializmus útján: A népi demokratikus átalakulás és a szocializmus építésének kronológiája, 1944. szeptember-1980. április. (On the Road of Socialism: The Popular Democratic Transition and the Chronology of the Build-up of Socialism, September 1944 –April 1980). 2nd ed. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1982. pp. 603-630. Available online at the web site of the Cold War History Research Center, Budapest: [www.coldwar.hu/Finding\\_aids](http://www.coldwar.hu/Finding_aids).

\*In 1980

### Annex III.

#### Trade between Hungary and her five main Arab partners 1960-64

Export (Billion HUF)	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964 I-IX.
UAR	79.3	103.9	185	144.8	53.4
Algeria	0.17	0.05	0.1	0.9	5.5
Iraq	52.1	25	40.8	31.5	25.4
Syria	14.2	12.4	19.5	26.5	29.9
Morocco	9.3	8	34.8	46.1	16.3
<b>Total Export:</b>	155.07	149.35	280.2	249.8	130.5

Import (Billion HUF)	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964 I-IX.
UAR	90	104.6	67	149.3	128.8
Algeria	0	0	0	0	0.1
Iraq	1.4	0	5.9	3.9	0.3
Syria	7.6	10.4	9.5	30.9	27.1
Morocco	2.2	3.1	29	39.7	14.8
<b>Total Import:</b>	101.2	118.1	111.4	223.8	171.1

Source: MOL, Küm, XIX J-1-j, Arab országok Tük, 1965. 111. d. IV-14.

# **Documents**

## **Document 1**

### **Foreign Ministry report on the Hungarian government delegation's trip in Egypt in 1957**

**(Excerpts)**

**(26 September 1957)**

Strictly confidential!

[...]

Foreign Minister Fawzi said the following during the conversation:

The Egyptian government ordered its UN representative to object to putting the so-called Hungarian problem on the agenda. So, the position of the Egyptian government on this issue is clear. He wants to stress the same by saying that he himself is not going to attend the session of the extraordinary General Assembly, he will only take over the leadership of the Egyptian UN delegation at the opening of the 12th General Assembly.

For extremely selfish reasons, the standpoint of Egypt on this problem is the same as the position of Hungary. Egypt is a small country which is unable to prevent the armed attack of the superpowers. Therefore, they should stick with at least one principle, the principle of non-intervention. And since Egypt would not like to see its internal affairs discussed at an international forum either, they naturally support the Hungarian position.

[...]

On 29 August President Nasser received the Hungarian government delegation at his apartment. After our arrival he suggested we should allow the press to take photos, and we agreed to it. After five minutes of talking about general matters Deputy Minister Szarka began to talk and explained the Hungarian government's position on the so-called "Hungarian problem", and then he handed over the memorandum and the confidential documents to the president. He was noticeably strongly impressed by the fact that he was given documents that had not been made public before.

President Nasser said the following: ...He did not think it was possible to prevent "the Hungarian problem" from being put on the agenda in the UN. He hoped that now that the Hungarian delegation was also participating in the debate, they would explain and defend their position in detail and make their arguments widely public, since in a case like this the western propaganda often hushes the truth up.

He said they had already given the proper instructions to their UN delegation and they were on our side regarding this issue. He was convinced that the western powers would use the Hungarian problem for propaganda in the UN, especially against the Soviet Union. Why don't they talk about Jordan, he asked, where the national government was ousted, the nationalists were being prosecuted and the people are being oppressed under martial law? And he immediately made a parallel between the American intervention in Hungary and in the Middle East. He stated that they rely on the support of the enemies of the system, the feudalists and the representatives of religious minorities in Syria as well.

Then he asked which other countries the Hungarian delegation was going to visit. He said we could surely rely on the support of Egypt and Syria. We should try to convince the rest of the Arab countries but the situation with these countries is not that simple. He regards Yemen as a country with an independent Arab policy and maybe they would also support us. As for Libya, he was not sure, since a small country like that did not have any significant influence. Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq and Saudi Arabia are under American, Sudan under British influence.

[...]

Translated by András Bocz



Source: Magyar Országos Levéltár [Hungarian National Archives], henceforward MOL Küm, XIX-J-1-j, Egyiptom Tük, 1957. 5.d. 5/b–004399/1. Visit of a Hungarian government delegation to Egypt. Cairo, 26 September 1957. Report by the ambassador (excerpts). The visit took place between 5 and 28 September, 1957.

Published in Hungarian in: J Nagy László, *Magyarország és az arab térség – Kapcsolatok, vélemények, állásponos 1947-1975* [Hungary and the Arab World – Connections, opinions, standpoints 1947-1975], JATE Press, Szeged, Hungary, 2006.

## **Document 2**

### **Report of the Hungarian Ambassador in Cairo on the establishment of the United Arab Republic and the Syrian public opinion in 1958**

**(Excerpts)**

**(31 January 1958)**

Strictly confidential!

Reactions to and the aftermath of the events

The events took the Syrian public totally unprepared. In the first few days the crowd, heated by nationalism, was cheering the idea of the union enthusiastically. However, it lasted only for a few days. Many of the people began to look at the likely political events from the point of view of their own personal fate. I tried to meet as many people I could and listen to many different views during these days. Low- and middle-ranking foreign affairs officials were extremely embittered, saying that that they would be the first to be dismissed. For example, the deputy head of the protocol department said that he would resign if he were to be transferred to Cairo.

Wholesale traders and businessmen are worried about the strict Egyptian economy and transfer the mobilizable part of their assets to Lebanon first and then to Swiss banks. it is characteristic that the exchange rate of dollar increased by 15

percent in a week. At the same time, they don't know, for example, how the currency problems and numerous other economic issues will be resolved. It must be noted that, in order to satisfy traders, the government said the economic issues would be settled only after several months and in a gradual way taking each of the particular problems one by one.

Manufacturers are worried about Egyptian competitors and the effects of cheap Egyptian labour. Landowners with huge areas of land and a lot of villages are concerned by Nasser's land reform.

People living on wages and salaries think their situation is totally insecure because they don't know how the difference between standard of living in the two countries will be dealt with, since at the moment it is much higher in Syria than in Egypt.

In addition to the issues listed above, obviously several other political and sociological problems are being raised too. People are constantly concerned with the difference between the Syrian political system which is based on a wide range of democratic rights and the essentially dictatorial Egyptian system.

I have heard people saying that the Syrians kindly warned their Egyptian friends that Nasser should not introduce a political system that is based on a non-party united national front because the Syrian people would definitely regard anything like that as a dictatorial system and Nasser would lose the great reputation he currently has in Syria.

It can be seen now that many of Nasser's pictures are being removed from shop windows and while his pictures were received with a round of applause in movie theatre before, now people refrain from any expression of approval.

A few words must also be devoted to the position of the Syrian army regarding the union. However, I have to begin by saying that in this respect I have radically different, opposing information. According to one source, the entire staff supports the plan of the union. In view of the political situation in Syria – and the allegedly subversive activity of the socialist and populist party – they did not see any other way but to fully unite with Egypt.

According to another source, General Bizri got into a conflict with General Nfuri and Colonel Sarage, the followers of the federation who don't want the Syrian army to come under the command of Egyptian officers.

However, it is easy to see that the Syrian people do not support the plan of the union but would have endorsed a federation or confederation instead.

### Situation of the Syrian Communist Party

In this report I have already dealt with the statement that reflects the official position of the Party. In this statement the Party makes it clear that the union of the Arab countries is a positive step. In this case the Syrian-Egyptian Union is built on sound bases ensuring the already existing democratic rights and definitely strengthening the anti-imperialist front.

Then Comrade Bakdash, the secretary-general of the Party said in his statement issued on 28 January: "There has never been a Communist party in the world which has dissolved itself. The Syrian-Lebanese Communist Party will not take this course either. We hope that the emerging union of Syrian and Egypt will preserve these already existing democratic rights." Comrade Bakdash's statement generated huge reaction. The statement published in Al Nour, the Party's official paper, was presented in every paper regardless of their party allegiance and the people were talking about it all over the city. Ambassador Riad officially warned the government that the statement jeopardized the plan of the Egyptian-Syrian Union. However, the government did not take any administrative action against the Party.

When Foreign Minister Bitar presented the results of his talks regarding the Union and the decision of the government at the meeting of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Parliament on 30 January, Comrade Bakdash stressed in his speech that Syria should preserve its democratic achievements within the Union too and should not be ungrateful to the Soviet Union for the huge support that they had provided that far.

To my knowledge the members of the Party were centrally ordered to begin a comprehensive propaganda campaign in order to explain to the people the dangers

that the steps to dissolve political parties would mean. At the same time the Central Leadership took steps to ensure that the Party would not be taken unprepared if they were to be forced to go underground.

Translated by András Bocz

Source: MOL-M-KS 288 f.32/1958. 8.ő.e. Copy from the report of the Hungarian Embassy on 31 January 1958

Published in Hungarian in: J Nagy László, *Magyarország és az arab térség – Kapcsolatok, vélemények, álláspontok 1947-1975* [Hungary and the Arab World – Connections, opinions, standpoints 1947-1975], JATE Press, Szeged, Hungary, 2006.

### **Document 3**

#### **Report of the Hungarian Ambassador in Baghdad on the preparations for the Iraqi revolution in 1958**

**(18 December 1958)**

Strictly confidential!

We have received the following information from Comrade Amer, member of the central leadership of the Party here:

After the unity of the Iraqi Communist Party had been restored in the second half of 1956 and especially as a result of the crackdown on the street demonstrations and protests organized during the aggression against Egypt it became clear to the Party that there was only one way out of Nuri As-Said's oppression and the Baghdad Pact; the kingdom and the ruling regime had to be overthrown by armed force.

In addition to propaganda work among the people aimed at informing and making people aware of the situation (of which I have given a detailed account in the report referenced), the Communist Party focused on the following aspects:

- 1./ Arming the people.
- 2./ Tightening cooperation with the officers of the army (with Qasim, in particular) who were ready to support the revolution.
- 3./ Winning the support for and participation of the leaders of the other political parties in the revolution which rallied in the people's front.

1. The arming of the people began in October 1956 and continued until the day the revolution broke out. It was not an easy task. The clash with the police and the army at the end of 1956 had produced some results already. However, the amount of arms received from abroad was a lot more significant. And finally, they were definitely able to rely on the comrades that infiltrated the army on the one hand, and on Qasim and his troops that were actively taking part in the preparation of the revolution.

The arms were given out only to the most trustworthy communists, and most of the arms were carefully hidden away. The arms were fully distributed only on 13 and 14 July 1958. By that time the squads set up in advance had been put on high alert. This is how on 14 July, while the division headed by Qasim occupied key points in the capital and eliminated the royal family along with its guards and Nuri As-Said, the Party and, to some extent, the armed squads of the people's front along with the people from the streets methodically surrounded military garrisons and barracks and, partly by way of persuasion and partly by armed force, convinced most of the military units to join the revolution.

These armed squads form the basis of the present voluntary national guard whose effective force is gradually growing, recruiting its members from civilians, mostly workers and students.

2. The leaders of the Communist Party got into personal contact with Brigadier General Qasim and some other high-ranking officers in the second half of 1955. Although they did not talk about taking prompt armed action together, they began

joined organization work at that time. The Party's work in the army can be grouped in accordance with the following:

- a./ Theoretical debates and planning with Qasim and his officers
- b./ Establishing a revolutionary officer group in Baghdad
- c./ Winning the support of subordinate officers in Baghdad and in garrisons in the country
- d./ Setting up the Association of Soldiers and Officers to support the revolution

Only a few leading members of the Communist Party maintained contact with Qasim and some of his officers. When it became clear that Qasim himself, as one of the highest military leaders, liked the progressive movement and was ready to act any time for his own principles against Nuri As-Said's rule, these Party leaders gradually began to raise the idea of ousting the ruling system to him more openly. Qasim seemed willing to act but only on condition that the people's front was ready to overthrow the system in a united way and the Party was able to ensure that the people were properly prepared to support the revolution.

In the fall of 1956 – during the aggression against Egypt – the top leadership of the Iraqi army organized military maneuvers which were commanded, among others, by Qasim himself. It was suggested that this opportunity might be used for overthrowing the system. However, in view of the fact that at that time the National Democratic Party totally refused to join the revolution, the leaders of the Communist Party, in agreement with Qasim, did not find the opportunity suitable. Instead they made efforts to develop preparations further. The various military groups and organization described above were not yet connected to one another; they had direct contact only with the leaders of the Party. However, at that time, when the detailed plans for the revolution and the setup of the government that should follow were developed the leaders of the party informed Qasim of the available forces. It should be noted that at first hearing Qasim was distrustful of the various military groups and therefore he demanded that all the officers and soldiers in these groups should make an oath of allegiance.

At the beginning of 1957 Nuri As-Said commanded Qasim to serve in Jordan with the 2nd brigade. At that time Qasim's deputy was Colonel Arif. During his service in Jordan the Party continued the preparations for the revolution. In addition to military organizations they established a civil organization, "Freedom of Fatherland" which comprised thousands of patriots under the leadership of the communist. This organization was to ensure reserves for the armed squads during the revolution. The leaders of the Party informed Qasim of the preparation every week by a messenger.

During Qasim's stay in Jordan the Iraqi king and Nuri AS-Said planned a joint visit to Jordan to inspect the Iraqi armed forces stationed there. Qasim sent a message by the messenger proposing that if the People's Front was willing to take power in Baghdad he saw this visit as a good opportunity to eliminate the king and Nuri As-Said. Eventually this proposal was dismissed in Baghdad, partly because Nuri As-Said missed the inspection and partly because Qasim and his troops were away in Jordan and the party did not find the armed forces available in Baghdad sufficient. So the revolution once again had to be postponed. The people under the influence of the Party as well as the leaders of the political parties that rallied under the People's Front were all on high alert. Time was passing by and the case of the revolution was dragging on up until 11 July 1958.

Qasim as the commander of the 19th Brigade and the 20th Brigade (at that time commanded by Colonel Arif) were ordered to move to Lebanon on 11 July 1958. Making up a division, the two brigades were given their task under Qasim's command.

When informed by Qasim, the leaders of the Party decided that the time had come for the revolution and taking power by armed force. This time Qasim again stipulated that he was only willing to support the revolution with his armed force if the entire people's Front participated in it; moreover, they should be in the government to be formed after the victory revolution. Arif negotiated with the leaders of the Baath Party and Qasim himself with those of the Independence Party and the National Democratic Party on this issue. The leaders of the Baath Party and the Independence Party (Shanshall) seemed willing to agree but the leader of the

National Democratic Party (Chaderchi) did not agree to participate either in the revolution or in the government to be formed after its victory.

During further negotiations the participants managed to convince even Chaderchi to listen to reason at least to some extent, who was still unwilling to participate in person but finally agreed that his party would take part in the revolution and represent itself in the newly formed government. At the same time he also promised that he would not betray the revolution although he would stay passive during the events. So, Qasim also accepted 14 July as the day of the revolution. On 11 July the units of his division were still being stationed in camps 50–80 km north and south of the capital. He officially and formally prepared his troops to execute the order given by the general headquarters to move to Lebanon. Before departure, however, he commissioned the officers as commanders who had already been involved in the preparations for the revolution.

In accordance with the plans carefully designed in advance, the Qasim division, the Communist Party and the people mobilized and armed by the People's Front overthrew the kingdom in Iraq and proclaimed the republic. The proclamation of the republic was read personally by Aref in the Baghdad radio, which was a clear source of his subsequent popularity. Five hours after the first shots had gone off Qasim, as the commander-in-chief of the revolution, was already in the Ministry of Defence giving orders to his subordinates.

Translated by András Bocz

Source: MOL M-KS 288.f.32/1958 7.ő.e. Copy of the report of the embassy in Baghdad composed on 18 December 1958

Published in Hungarian in: J Nagy László, *Magyarország és az arab térség – Kapcsolatok, vélemények, álláspontok 1947-1975* [Hungary and the Arab World – Connections, opinions, standpoints 1947-1975], JATE Press, Szeged, Hungary, 2006.



## **Document 4**

### **Foreign Ministry memorandum on Algeria's political background after the coup in 1965**

**(Excerpts)**

**(22 November 1965)**

Strictly Confidential!

Following the independence the government of Algeria and the National Liberation Front (FLN) – with the leadership of Ben Bella- named future functional duties that lied ahead substantially well, considering the Algerian realities and according to the program above.

The realization of the program, however could not be realised without a hitch. Despite Ben Bella's positive personality and good will he made several grave mistakes especially considering the realization of domestic affairs. The following elements made the successful coup of 29 June possible: poorly chosen tactics for a good strategy; not recognizing future challenges; the lack of execution of already existing resolutions that would have strengthened his position such as the agrarian reform; in many cases the replacement of these reforms with sheer command words; neglecting the leading party and lack of organizing economic life and most especially the defects in his manner of leading.

On 19 June 1965 intrinsically an unconstitutional military coup d'état took place in Algeria, during which Ben Bella was arrested who was elected president by the public and who was also elected as Secretary of Party by the congress of FLN.

The coup caused major confusion and shock amongst the working class, the peasantry, progressive intellectuals and their mass organizations, harmed the revolutionary upsurge experienced in Algeria and its international respect. Besides, the timing was especially unfavorable for the general anti-imperialist struggle.

Boumedién in order to succeed with the coup leaned on those who were on the right from Ben Bella, from those a few who were members of the last Ben Bella government and a few who had left it in the past few years.

The consistence of the new government and the Revolutionary Council, which was formed after the coup remains heterogeneous, amongst its members are well-known anti-communists and western-oriented negative individuals who do not behave in a friendly manner towards socialist countries (Bouteflika, Medeghri, Kait Ahmed, Cherif Belkacem). Those leftists who chose the legal struggle after the coup are also part of the government. According to our experience and knowledge so far and to his recent declarations we do not assume that Boumedién seeks to step up against the achievements of the revolution and we do not believe he seeks to establish an anti-communist, bourgeois system in Algeria. In his declarations, speeches he stood up for continuing the revolution, developing Algeria by socialist measures, preserving accomplishments of the revolution and carrying out the agrarian reform with certain austerity measures along with the development of self-administration. The following fact is also noteworthy: he isolated the individuals who openly claimed civil development, those who reported immediately after the coup and claimed they want to exclude socialism from the program.

Thus it can be stated that in Algeria after the coup – compared to the previous situation – an orientation to the right took place and currently the danger of further orientation exists, though the democratic and progressive attitude of the public, previous strong influence of progressive powers and the strongly organized army that represents potential power due to its social stratification will not make a quick orientation to the right possible.

[...]

According to the indications, it seems Boumedién is currently exposed to crossfire. As for the rightists, they consider him to be too much of a leftist, the left wing, however demonstrates an open or passive stand against him. It can be assumed that there will be a clash between the two parties sooner or later, when the well-chosen activity of the leftist powers will be of utter importance.

As it is known, there was no realistic chance for organizing leftist actions or resistance after the coup of 19 June, now there is even less chance for that. After the coup, the Algerian communist party immediately chose to go underground, the left wing of the FLN split into two parts: one started an illegal fight, the other chose legal means and takes part even in the work of the government. According to our credible sources, Boumediene asked to meet with leftist leaders of the ACP and the FLN after the coup and offered them a chance to co-operate and even expressed his wish to work together with them in the newly evolved situation. The leftists declined this offer. It is a fact that the leadership actually did not take any steps directly after these events that we could see as giving up the path declared under Ben Bella, actual breaking with previous foreign and domestic politics and though with certain corrections, he fundamentally made a promise to continue on the same political path. This brings up the issue whether the fact that the ACP and the divided FLN led by Zahoane chose to go into illegality, the formation of an illegal opposition and taking similar steps was truly the only solution at the time. It can be assumed that there could have been other methods for expressing the views of the political left that concentrates more on the balance of power and possibilities – a form that would not have given a legal ground for a counter-attack. This illegal activity that left the actual balance of power out of consideration, and in some cases the mobilizing activities against socialist and anti-imperialist countries (eg.: encouraging the sabotage of the II: Afro-Asian Conference), granted possibility, a legal ground and reference point for stepping up against leftist individuals and contributed to the division of the leftist powers. The leaders of the new system emphasize that arresting communists does not mean they are anti-communists since these people were arrested for behaving as anarchic individuals.

Considering Algerian domestic affairs the viewpoint of the army and the officer corps is also a deciding factor. This army and its officer corps are not classical military groups brought up in barracks, since its members are primarily recruited from the peasantry and the working class and essentially they grew up and became officers during the struggles to end colonialism and fights for Algeria's independence. The social base and standing up for preserving the accomplishments of the revolution, the army and officers could be of utter importance considering the prevention of further orientation to the right.

Translated by Sabine Topolansky

Source: MOL Küm, XIX-J-1-j, Algéria Tük, 1965, 12.d. 00888/6/1965. - analysis made by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (excerpts)

Published in Hungarian in: J Nagy László, *Magyarország és az arab térség – Kapcsolatok, vélemények, álláspontok 1947-1975* [Hungary and the Arab World – Connections, opinions, standpoints 1947-1975], JATE Press, Szeged, Hungary, 2006.

## Document 5

### Report from the Hungarian Embassy in Cario on Kosigin's visit in the UAR 26 May 1966

(26 May 1966)

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

EMBASSY OF THE HUNGARIAN  
PEOPLES'S REPUBLIC  
TO COMRADE FOREIGN MINISTER  
BUDAPEST

Cairo, 26 May 1966  
27, RUE MAZHAR PACHA,  
ZAMALEK, LE CAIRE

112/Sz.T./1966

Subject : Comrade  
Kosigin's visit to

the

Made in : 5 copies

United Arab Republic

Center: 4 copies

Embassy: 1 copy

Presenter: L. Benczekovits

Invited by President Nasser, Comrade Kosigin made an official visit to the UAR between 10 and 18 May. Comrade Kosigin was accompanied by foreign minister Gromiko, energy minister Neporozhny, chairman of foreign economic relations council Skarchev, deputy defense minister Groshev and several experts.

It was two years ago that a similarly high-level Soviet delegation visited the UAR, lead by the then prime minister. Since then friendship between the Soviet Union and the UAR has strengthened, economic relations have expanded and development has been steady.

The importance of this visit is underscored by several factors.

- The UAR is making good progress on the way to becoming a non capitalist country. Its domestic policy is showing more and more democratic features and the country is determined to activate its social life. The role and importance of the Arab Socialist Union have become considerably stronger. They took steps against imperialist attempts that aimed at intervening into the internal affairs of the Arab world and the African and Asian countries. All in all, these steps have created favorable conditions for the visit of the Soviet prime minister.
- Since it was his first visit outside the socialist camp, Comrade Kosigin's visit has increased the UAR's reputation and importance in the Arab world and, equally importantly, among the third world countries.

The official bodies did their best to make the Soviet prime minister's visit a success and it can be established that the organization of the event went far beyond what is common over there. All the important representatives of the government participated in the various receptions, led by the vice presidents and Nasser. Comrade Kosigin was greeted by huge crowds upon his arrival and departure in Cairo as well as during his official visits the other parts of the country. These crowds included many workers and young people who belonged to the youth organizations of the Arab Socialist Union. In Asswan four special trains and several trucks were provided to bring the people of the neighboring villages to the assembly to meet the Soviet delegation.

What went far beyond common practice was that the crowds in the street were truly enthusiastic in meeting the delegation and sheering the Soviet-UAR friendship. This shows that even less educated and knowledgeable people know the Soviet Union, its policy and activities.

The press, the radio and the television had presented several reports before the visit as well as during and after the visit, addressing in detail issues related to the Soviet Union, its role, the relations between the two countries and the economic support the Soviet Union provided for the UAR. The papers published a detailed biography of Comrade Kosigin and his previous positions. Various factories and foreign trade companies published Kosigin's and Nasser's pictures in their own papers to greet the Soviet prime minister. Several political article were also published which compared the Soviet Union especially with America, evaluating the Soviet Union positively and condemning the other party's activities, especially in that the Soviet Union does not use its economic assistance to intervene into the internal affairs of the country. The articles highlighted several parts of Comrade Kosigin's speeches delivered at various places which were related to the achievements of the past period and the relations between the two countries. In addition, they published several other parts of these speeches in full which addressed the activities of the imperialist countries, enabling a wide range of people to make a parallel between the Soviet Union and the imperialist countries. It must be noted that the press sharply criticized America and its policy on several occasions during the time of the visit.

The two delegations conducted official talks on three occasions during the visit. In addition, Comrade Kosigin had private talks with President Nasser on several occasions in the presence of his interpreter. These talks were also attended by Marshal Amer too. We do not know what topics were discussed during these private negotiations.

The following two key topics were discussed during the negotiations:

- a./ International issues, including the Arab world, Africa, Asia, European security, etc.
- b./ The relations between the two countries (political and economic cooperation)

The speeches delivered and the joint communiqué details the position of the two parties on the most important issues. As far as the speeches are concerned, it must be noted that Comrade Kosigin made several references in them to the development that the UAR had achieved and stressed the role the Soviet Union had played in the development and the achievements of the country. He made a comparison between the economic assistance provided by the Soviet Union and the economic aid provided by the capitalist countries. In his speech he attached political importance to the conditions under which the western countries would have built the big dam, comparing them to the conditions that the Soviet Union had undertaken. When greeting the Soviet experts working in the country he made it clear that their presence and work in the country were extremely important in the life of the UAR. He stated that the big dam was not only the best school for training specialized workers but, more importantly, the best school for training and educating a “new type” of man. He pointed out that it was a difficult task to train Egyptian experts during the building process who can work efficiently but it was an even more important achievement to create a new type of man who can help the development of the country and preserve its independence by keeping their national identity and by their special qualification.

In his speeches delivered at various places President Nasser expressed his appreciation and gave prominence to the fact that both the relations of the two countries and the current talks were characterized by mutual understanding, equality and mutual benefits. He highly appreciated the support given by the Soviet Union during the revolution and afterwards too. In addition, in one of his public speeches he asked the Soviet Union to continue to support the UAR in the future as well. Comrade Kosigin answered this request in his speech delivered in Alexandria, saying that “the Soviet Union will stand by the UAR in the future too and will take part in the development of the country and in solving its problems, just like in the past.” During the negotiations and in their speeches both parties expressed that they were pleased with the results achieved so far and the relations that they had built.

The issues discussed during the negotiations which were not made public included the following:

a./ The Vietnamese issue

Comrade Kosigin made it clear that everybody should take a straightforward and clear position on the Vietnamese issue. The Soviet Union is acting on the basis of the resolution adopted by the 23<sup>rd</sup> Congress in regard to this issue. He stated that the relations between the Soviet Union and America had deteriorated because of Vietnam but it would not prevent the Soviet Union from continuing to provide all the support it can for Vietnam. Their position has not changed in this respect and they continue to demand that the Americans should leave Vietnam. He asked the UAR to take a firmer stand on this issue.

### The conflict between the Soviet Union and China

Comrade Kosigin explained that the Soviet Union would do its best to improve its relations with China but so far all of their proposals had been rejected. The Soviet Union does not want to conduct an open debate and deepen the conflict. In his view the Chinese will not change their position regarding the Soviet Union because that is the only way in which they can mislead their people and conceal the failure of the Chinese policy. He said that China's influence had increased in Indonesia in the past three years and what had happened there recently was a clear sign of the failure of Chinese policy. He characterized China's policy as adventurist policy.

According to President Nasser recent events suggested that the imperialist aggression had intensified and in his view it was due to the Soviet-Chinese conflict. He stated that progressive forces were in a crisis. He supported this claim by saying that Vietnam, a socialist country had been fighting a war for years and essentially nothing was happening to prevent it. He attributed the crisis of progressive forces to the events in Indonesia, the present situation of the Organization of African Unity and the attack on the African progressive forces. He compared the current situation with the 1956 period when the unity of progressive forces was able to stop the imperialist aggression.

Comrade Kosigin stated that these facts were true but the starting point was not right. We should not be saying that the progressive forces are in crisis



because it is not true. In addition, such a statement would weaken the movement of the progressive forces. True, the Vietnamese people have been suffering from a war but it cannot be said that the Vietnamese freedom fight is in crisis since a nation with a much smaller population and much less developed economy has been fighting American imperialism for years. What should be talked about is the real situation of the freedom fight, its current stage. Such a fight is generally characterized by an offensive stage, a stage of gathering strength and sometimes a stage of retreat too. This is the stage that the African progressive forces are in at present but by no means does it suggest that the progressive forces are in crisis. He asked Nasser that if he is talking about a crisis he should also identify who are responsible for it, especially if he believes this crisis is the result of the Soviet-Chinese conflict. President Nasser did not take a stand on this issue publicly and did not condemn the Chinese position but in private talks he said he shared the Soviet position.

c./ The Arab world

1. The Islam alliance. President Nasser said that the conflicts between the Arab countries had intensified and internal reactionary forces were beginning to cooperate with international reactionary forces against progressive forces. The Islam Pact is a clear sign of this development. The hostile forces are launching their attack in a very delicate area, in the field of religion. He asked the Soviet Union not to criticize the Islam Pact openly because it would only help the reactionary forces if an atheist state took steps against a religious alliance, which they would immediately use for their own purposes. He asked the Soviet Union to use its influence on Turkey and Pakistan to persuade them not to join the Islam Alliance. The Soviet Comrades made a promise to do so.

2. The Kurdish issue. Both parties agreed that the Kurdish issue should be resolved peacefully. Comrade Kosigin asked President Nasser to use his influence to end the fighting and resolve the differences of opinion by peaceful means. /Since then President Nasser has summoned the Iraqi ambassador./

3. Syria. Comrade Kosigin outlined why they support and provided an economic loan for Syria. He said it was in the interest of the Soviet Union to maintain good relations with Syria and in his view the current Syrian government was conducting a progressive policy. He also believed it was necessary to create a progressive front in the Arab countries including the UAR, Syrian, Iraq and Algeria so that these countries could take steps against the reactionary countries in unity. In his view the most important task was to find a form of cooperation in which the UAR and Syrian could work together. President Nasser largely agreed with this but he had reservations regarding a few points. He raised some problems regarding the old confederation as well as the activity of the Baath Party, the difficulties in working together with it, the weaknesses of the current Syrian system as factors that hamper the development of relations between the two countries. /One sign of some progress in the relations between the two countries is the fact that President Nasser had received the permanent Representative of Syria in the Arab League. Currently a Syrian economic delegation is visiting the UAR./

4. Yemen. The UAR again requested military assistance to help Yemen. The Soviet Union made a plea to continue to provide assistance for Yemen. At the same time, the Soviet comrades asked President Nasser not to launch any attack on Saudi Arabia before having consultations on this issue since any such step could have an impact on the entire region. The UAR agreed with this proposal.

d./ Israel

The Soviet comrades told President Nasser that Israel is not in a position to be able to make a nuclear bomb and launch a nuclear attack against the Arab countries. Therefore, it is not necessary for the UAR to begin nuclear tests or launch a preventive war on Israel. The real danger in the case of a possible war is not Israel.

Economic issues

1. The UAR did not request any new loan during the negotiations. They requested postponing the payment of the outstanding installment. The Soviet

Union accepted it and agreed to extend the repayment of the military loans and reduce the amount too. /This reduction will be about 50%./

2. An agreement was made on the exchange rate between the ruble and the Egyptian pound, which was necessary because of the depreciation of the Egyptian pound.
3. The UAR requested the Soviet Union to supply wheat for the country. The Soviet comrades apologized and said that it was not possible since the Soviet Union was having difficulties in this area. The UAR acknowledged this statement.

The issued communiqué took a stand on all the important international issues. With its principled statements and concrete formulation it surpasses all the communiqués issued before. The following points should be mentioned.

1. As far as the imperialist policy in the Middle Eastern region is concerned, the Soviet party expressed its intention to support the fight of the Arab nations against the imperialist policy in every possible respect.
2. The Soviet Union fully supports the legitimate demands and fight of the Palestinian Arab people. /This fact was highlighted in the press./
3. It was emphasized that the Soviet Union highly appreciates the non-aligned policy of the UAR and the fight it is conducting for the liberation of the African countries.
4. A separate part of the communiqué is devoted to the aggression on Vietnam and both parties state that they profoundly condemn it.
5. The UAR expressed its appreciation regarding the Soviet peace policy and especially its fight against imperialist, colonialist countries.
6. They both attached great importance to general and full disarmament, which can only be ensured by international supervision. To my knowledge, the joint

communiqué was submitted by the UAR which the Soviet delegation accepted with some modifications.

Comrade Kosigin's visit to the UAR was a highly significant political event which further strengthened the friendship between the Soviet Union and the UAR. The Soviet Union made another victory and found friends not only among the top leaders but also among the men in the street. In addition, it encouraged the leadership to continue with the course of action they had begun and act more firmly against any forces that hinder progress both inside and outside the country. Both parties are satisfied with the results of the negotiations and discussions, and the favorable atmosphere is also supported by the fact that it was the first occasion that the president and the vice presidents participated in nearly all the events. As time went by, participation in the various events was raised to a higher political level. Originally President Nasser was scheduled to go to Asswan only but plans were changed in the meantime and personally President Nasser accompanies Comrade Kosigin to all the places he visited. This is an important fact. /It was not the case when Comrade Khrushchev visited the country./

The issues presented in this report which were not made public are based on the information received from the Soviet ambassador.

Lajos Benczekovits

chargé d'affaires ad interim

Translated by András Bocz

Source: MOL XIX-J-1j SZU/IV-10/003348/1966 104.d.

**Document 6/A**

**Report of the Inter-ministerial Expert Committee for the HSWP PC on military support for “friendly” Arab countries in 1967**

**(11 July 1967)**

INTERMINISTERIAL EXPERT COMMITTEE

STRICTLY

CONFIDENTIAL!

ON THE PREPARATION OF THE SUPPLY OF  
AID FOR ARAB COUNTRIES AND VIETNAM

Made in: 30 copies

1 copy is made of 7 pages

Copy No. 2.

Sfsz: 1030

117

S u b m i s s i o n

for the Politburo of HSWP

Following the Israeli aggression on 5 July this year, the governments of the Arab countries submitted the following requests to the government of the Government of the Hungarian People's Republic (through their embassies):

United Arab Republic: vehicles, medical equipment and devices, machinery, basic materials, consumer goods, and telecommunications and military equipment (submitted on a list) totaling an amount of 7 million Egyptian Pounds (982 million HUF).

Syrian Arab Republic: weaponry (anti-tank and anti-aircraft), wireless telecommunications devices, tanks, aircraft, armored vehicles, gas masks and 100 pieces of UM-2 amplifiers. No value was specified.

After studying the possibilities of fulfilling the submitted requests for aid the expert committee set up by Government Decree No. 3212/1967 proposes the following:

#### 1./ United Arab Republic

We propose to offer the military equipment listed in Appendix 1 as non-refundable aid in the amount of 2.5 million rubles (100 mln) along with HUF 20 mln for packaging, transportation, etc costs.

In addition, the Government of the HPR has already offered – as emergency aid – HUF 2 mln, and the National Organization of Trade Unions HUF 100 thousand, primarily in medication.

On the basis of the list submitted by the Government of the UAR we propose to offer the following items from our foreign trade commodity reserves as loan (for a period of 5–7 years) under the 15 million Egyptian Pound (clearing value) credit line agreement made between the governments of the HPR and the UAR in February 1966 on economic cooperation.

10 X-ray machines	clearing EGP 120 thousand
4 200-bed field hospitals	clearing EGP 146 thousand
50 field first aid centers	clearing EGP 92 thousand
Total:	clearing EGP 358 thousand = (ca. HUF 50 mln)

Note: the UAR's credit portfolio is currently HUF 240 mln, of which about HUF 50 mln is outstanding this year.

#### 2./ Syrian Arab Republic

We propose to offer RUB 1.6 mln (HUF 65 mln) in military equipment and war supplies listed in Appendix 2 in order to satisfy their request as non-refundable aid along with HUF 15 mln for maintenance, packaging and transportation costs.

In addition, the Government has offered HUF 1 mln and the National Organization of Trade Unions HUF 100 thousand in medication as emergency aid.

We note here that we have recently concluded an USD 492 thousand (HUF 30 mln) credit line agreement for 5 years with the Syrian Arab republic for the supply of various military goods.

The Technological Foreign Trade Company has made an offer to provide war supplies worth USD 1 million and 65 thousand (HUF 65 mln).

### 3./ Iraq

A general request was submitted for any kind of economic and financial aid. We do not propose to fulfill a request like this.

### 4./ Jordan

HUF 500 thousand in tents, conserved food and medication has already been offered by our Government as aid. We have not received a direct request yet. We do not propose to provide any further aid at this point.

In sum:

For the Arab countries	
Aid provided so far:	HUF 4 mln
proposal for additional aid	
on the basis of this memorandum	HUF 200 mln
aid	HUF 204 mln
government loan (for the UAR)	HUF 50 mln
Total:	HUF 254 mln

HUF 32 mln of this in ammunition must be returned to the Defense Ministry by the military industry and the budget of the Defense Ministry must be amended to include the Hungarian forint amount of the above over the plan.

The transportation, maintenance and packaging costs (ca. HUF 35 mln) must be covered by the state budget.

If the proposal is accepted, we believe the Foreign Ministry should communicate the position of our Government to the United Arab Republic and the Syrian Arab Republic. Concurrently with this communication it should ask for their opinion on the

place and time of the negotiations on the details. The negotiations would be conducted on behalf of the Hungarian People's Republic by a delegation consisting of representatives of the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs headed by the Deputy Minister of Trade.

The negotiating delegation should be authorized to conduct talks on the following issues, which have not been raised so far in any concrete way:

1./ Providing equipment for getting production going or increasing production under the above mentioned clearing EGP 15 mln government-provided credit line

(These opportunities include, e.g.: prompt delivery of vehicles, aggregators, compressors, machine-tools, etc. )

2./ Aid for training various skilled-workers and technicians for 100–150 people and for one year.

3./ 2–3 year moratorium on the loan recovery (roughly HUF 50 mln per year) or some part of it which is due under the 1967 credit line agreement.

4./ Providing HUF 3 mln in food supplies as aid (canned food, cheese, butter, etc.)

Budapest, 11 July 1967.

Appendices:

(Dr Ervin Jávör)

No. 1.

No. 2.

No. 3.

#### Appendix 1

#### MILITARY EQUIPMENT TO BE OFFERED TO THE UNITED ARAB REPUBLIC



No.	Item	Unit	Qty
1.	7.62 mm rifle	pieces	10,000
2.	7.62 mm rifle ammunition	thousand pieces	5,000
3.	7.62 mm DP light machine gun	pieces	900
4.	7.62 mm ammunition for the DP light machine guns	thousand pieces	3,600
5.	82 mm trench mortar with 10 cases	pieces	50
6.	82 mm ammunition with 10 cases	pieces	60,000
7.	82 mm trench mortar unit kit	pieces	50
8.	82 mm trench mortar company unit kit	pieces	3
9.	Offensive hand grenade	thousand pieces	100
10.	Anti-tank mortar bombs (TMD-B, TM-41)	thousand pieces	100
11.	BO-76 mine detector	pieces	100
12.	Field oven	pieces	50
13.	Individual field dressing	pieces	100,000
14.	Stretcher	pieces	200
15.	Food supply kit	thousand pieces	750

Total of all these items: HUF 99,269,000, that is, RUB 2,481,000.

Appendix 2

MILITARY EQUIPMENT TO BE OFFERED TO THE SYRIAN ARAB  
REPUBLIC

No.	Item	Unit	Qty
1.	76 mm anti-tank gun	pieces	36
2.	76 mm anti-tank gun ammunition 8 cases	pieces	35,000
3.	76 mm gun unit kit	pieces	36
4.	76 mm gun battery unit kit	pieces	6
5.	76 mm gun regiment unit kit	pieces	1
6.	Offensive hand grenade	thousand pieces	100
7.	7.62 mm DP light machine gun	pieces	100
8.	7.62 mm ammunition for the DP light machine guns	thousand pieces	400

Total of all these items: HUF 64,868,000, that is, RUB 1,621,000.

Appendix 3

INFORMATION

on the aid to be provided for the UAR by the socialist countries

(based on the report of the Embassy in Cairo)

Country	Amount in own currency	Item	Amount in thousand HUF	Delivery type
German Democratic Republic	DEM 4.5 mln German Marks	Food	650	Aid

Polish People's Republic	PLN 190 mln	Food	1,900	Aid  Negotiations on payment terms to be conducted later	
	PLN 300 mln	War supplies	3,000		
Czechoslovakian Socialist Republic		War supplies	200	Gift	
Bulgarian People's Republic		5,000 t food	?	Aid  Negotiations on payment terms to be conducted later	
		100-bed hospital (with 25-member staff)			
		War supplies			2,000
		15,000 t wheat			
		5,000 t corn			
		80,000 t cheese			
		5,000 t zinc			
		5,000 t lead			
Romanian People's Republic		wheat and corn	5,000		

**Document 6/B**

**János Kádár's speech at a HSWP Political Committee meeting on military  
support for "friendly" Arab countries in 1967**

**(18 July 1967)**

Comrade JÁNOS KÁDÁR:

I support Comrade Fock's proposal but I would also like to make a few comments.

The first thing I would like to take into account regarding this aid is that in such a situation the problem, the trouble for the country involved is that actually they cannot assess what they precisely need in terms of military technology and in other areas. This is why we have this request, which is quite like a "circular" which includes a few headwords addressed to different countries, asking everybody for money without knowing the situation. There is no way to know how this can lead to any effective assistance. I raised the following at the meeting: first of all we need to provide assistance for them to assess their actual needs, and if they are unable to do that, perhaps the Soviet Union could help them since they know exactly what these countries really need.

The next issue concerns our negotiating methodology and the document we submit. I would like to propose that if we decide to submit a document to the Politburo and the Council of Ministers we should help them comprehend the situation by not including anything in this document that does not belong there. This appendix will mean nothing whatsoever to the Council of Ministers. This is not the business of the Politburo or the Council of Ministers. It's the business of military officials. The best negotiating method is to say: here is the amount we propose as non-refundable military aid, or this is the amount we propose as long-term loan ... etc. And if they want to give some kind of additional information they can include the kinds of military equipment they need, and that's it. And we used to discuss these issues confidentially, and if they are not the business of the Politburo or the Council of Ministers, then these bodies simply should not be burdened with these issues.

My other comment: we should use the method suggested by Comrade Fock, that is, we should separate military, technological aid and other types of economic assistance. I would also set up two groups. One of them would include prompt assistance (supply of medication and food), while the other would include long-term assistance for recovering production, etc.

Another comment: I always propose – on the basis of certain experience – that we should not fully exhaust all our resources. First of all, as far as the parties in question are concerned, we are always likely to get into a situation in which they come up with a new list when they have assessed and have a better idea of their needs. Therefore, we need to set aside some of the equipment and money we have. And if there is a fight against the imperialists somewhere else, we should be able to help over there too. So we need to assess our available resources, that is, what we really can afford without endangering the financial situation of our country and the normal operation of our administration, but we should not fully exhaust all these resources. It is always better to give less than expected now than having to say later: we agree with your request but we are unable to fulfill it.

I also want to refer to the resolution adopted by the seven socialist countries at their conference held last week. First of all, we are concerned directly with the three Arab countries that fell victim to the aggression, and Jordan can be excluded here on two counts: one of them is a military issue, the other one is related to material, economic aid. Jordan must be excluded because they have western relations and they want to ask the western countries for military and economic aid. So, Jordan should be reckoned with only in terms of medical aid in connection with red cross issues. As for Iraq, for which, incidentally, the resolution is right, we can also forget about providing aid for now. To our knowledge, Iraq was not directly involved in the aggression and didn't participate in the fights either, so we should primarily focus our work on Syria and Egypt.

I have the following comment on implementation: I wonder how strongly we are urged to respond now. I would say that if they put pressure on us regarding this topic we should issue a communication but we should wait in connection with issues that are not so urgent. I would definitely put off the military aid. Here, we need to “conspire” with the Soviet Union. We need to say that this is the situation, we have

not responded yet, and they should say what they think. Or, if you will, we can expand the range of participants in the consultation, because the actual suppliers were two socialist countries. So the military specialist should look for an opportunity to sit down and review the question as to what should be provided for Syrian and Egypt.

The most pressing issue is the supply of medical aid and it would also be good if we could give them some food too. As for the other types of economic aid, we should not delay the Belgrade conference any longer. We should urge for organizing it as soon as possible.

So, the Council of Minister should be authorized to give the Arabs some kind of a preliminary answer on the basis of what we discussed here by designating some blanket sum and the type of aid. Going forward I would propose consultations and more organized action.

[...]

Translated by András Bocz

Source: MOL M-KS 288. f. 5/430. ő. e. (1967.07.18.)

## **Document 7**

### **Report from the Hungarian Embassy in Moscow on Soviet foreign policy on the crisis in the Middle East in 1967**

**(2 November 1967)**

**STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

**EMBASSY OF THE HUNGARIAN PEOPLES'S REPUBLIC**

Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs,

B u d a p e s t

Moscow, 2 November 1967

Sz.T./1967

crisis and

Union

Embassy

Subject : The Middle Eastern

the policy of the Soviet

Made in : 3 copies

2 copies: for the Center

1 copy: for the

Presenters: József Oláh  
András Köves

Since the June war our embassy devoted a lot of attention to the Middle Eastern situation in its foreign affairs and information work. Using our contacts in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party we prepared a series of reports on the different aspects of the Middle Eastern policy of the Soviet Union and on how the Soviet Union evaluated the entire Middle Eastern situation and the foreign and domestic policy of each country. So, recently we addressed – among other things – the internal and international situation of the United Arab Republic, King Hussein's visit, the Soviet evaluation of the Iraqi and the Algerian situation, the developments in Yemen, etc. The present report is not intended to repeat the data and facts that were contained in our earlier reports.

Also, we believe it is not our task to attempt to give a deep historical analysis of the present Middle Eastern crisis in any way because in our view this does not belong to the duties of our embassy. However, we would like to address some of the

current tasks involved in the foreign policy of the Soviet Union and the European socialist countries regarding the Middle East and explore, on this basis, some of the problems that are involved in the further possible developments of the Middle Eastern crisis from the point of view of the entire international situation.

[...]

... as far as the second danger is concerned, the United States– ultimately – would probably agree with the Soviet Union that breaking out a new war conflict with the danger of resulting in a world war is against its national interests.

By the nature of the issue, however, “ultimately agree” means that the two superpowers will only regard the renewal of warlike actions in the region as dangerous if both of them see roughly the same risk in a newly sparked conflict not remaining a local war. And as it is obvious that the danger of any new aggressive action may come from Israel, the United States must make sure that another attack on the Arab countries does not stay within the framework of the June war because the Soviet Union will not be able or will not want to keep such an event within this framework. This issue, however, does not emerge independently from place and time. As far as the place is concerned, because of its geographical proximity to Europe and the Soviet Union, the Middle East is obviously strategically an important region for the security of the Soviet Union. For this reason, The Soviet Union should or would take the explosion of any warlike conflict in this region than for instance in Vietnam or Cuba. As far as time is concerned: can the United States be sure that the Soviet Union will not test what military, economic and political burdens the United States can cope with in addition to Vietnam?

For various reasons, the Soviet Union – as has often been stressed to our colleagues in the negotiations with the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs – is interested in keeping the international situation relatively relaxed and avoiding, if possible, any new sources of tension or the intensification of existing military conflicts. These reasons include /without going into a detailed analysis/: the China problem, the primary importance of raising the standard of living in domestic policy and economic reforms /not only in regard to the Soviet Union/



The Soviet comrades have the impression that even if, in view of the war in Vietnam, it cannot be claimed that the United States is also striving for international détente, it can be safely said that today the US is unlikely to intend to intensify tension in the international situation beyond certain limits. It is precisely because of Vietnam that it wants to avoid the intensification of tension because it does not want to multiply the military, economic domestic and foreign political difficulties that the war in Vietnam alone entails. The American government is obviously trying to increase cooperation and improve relations with the Soviet Union, or at least declares to do so, and to take steps in the international scene which demonstrate their intention to ease tension (the Outer Space Treaty, the Non-Proliferation Treaty, etc.).

As for the Middle Eastern conflict, if the crisis continues and turns into another warlike conflict, it would jeopardize the current relations between the Soviet Union and the United States. Even if direct military conflict between the two superpowers is envisaged as a last resort, the problem that the leaders of the United States should address is whether it is in the interest of the United States to put the Soviet Union into a situation in which – despite its obvious intentions – it has to modify its tactical approach which is used to accomplish the general strategic goal of peaceful coexistence.

What would such a modification involve?

1./ Obviously, under certain circumstances the Soviet Union might revise its current position regarding the support of national liberation movements. So far it has rejected the idea of demanding “two, three or even more Vietnams” but despite all the dangers involved in such a demand, will the Soviet Union not believe that such a change in its policy – let’s say today – would be more dangerous and detrimental to the United States than to the Soviet Union?

2./ It is possible that the Soviet Union will change its aid provided for Vietnam, more precisely, its policy of providing aid for Vietnam, turning it into more effective military aid.

3./ It is also quite possible that the Soviet Union decides to establish an alliance with some con-aligned countries, for example with some countries in the Middle East. This would mean that the Soviet Union might attempt to change the slow progress that is beneficial to the socialist countries today in terms of international status quo by means of a more comprehensive attack on the status quo that prevails in the world today.

In order to avoid any misunderstanding we would like to repeat that today it is obvious that the Soviet Union has no intention to modify its tactical policy in this way because it sees such a change way too risky and believes that the right thing to do is to ensure the security of the Soviet Union on more sound bases and its progress in communist development. However: the United States must take into account that under certain circumstances the Soviet leaders may feel that this basic tactical standpoint should be changed and therefore, when they make a decision on their position regarding the developments in the Middle East, the American politicians must take into consideration that the Soviet Union might be forced to draw such general conclusions if the USA boycotts progress that is being made towards an acceptable political resolution of the conflict.

In sum: the general intensification of tension in the international situation, due to the prolongation or intensification of the Middle Eastern crisis – or to any other reason – is not in the interest of the socialist countries. However, since it is roughly equally not in the interest of the West either, there is a theoretical possibility for making progress towards the resolution of this crisis. However, it is the United States that has to take steps in this direction because they can decide whether they are willing to engage in a policy laden with the intensification of tension or not, since they have the means to influence the aggressor and prevent Israel from breaking out a general warlike conflict.

Obviously, the above considerations can hardly lead to any swift, radical solution in the Middle East, even if the American leaders are willing to consider these circumstance even as early as the next few days when Johnson has to reply Kosigin's message. There are various reasons for this but one of the most important ones is that the United States and Israel still believe there is a possibility to overthrow the progressive Arab regimes, or at least some of them, without [...]

Translated by András Bocz

Source: MOL XIX-J-1-j-SzU-1-001684/1/1967 (89.d)

**Document 8**

**Report for the HSWP Politburo on weapons exports to the UAR and Syria by  
Minister of Defense Lajos Czinege**

**(21 October 1969)**

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

Made in : 2 copies

1 copy consists of 3 pages

Copy No. [illegible]

Sfsz: T/214

No.: 00546/1969

Seen by: Comrade Béla Biszku

R E P O R T

For the Politburo

In April this year the defense minister of the United Arab Republic requested us to provide for them as soon as possible the following military technology equipment worth about USD 60 million:

- 400 57 mm anti-aircraft guns /together with radars, directors and telemeters/
- 200 57 mm double barrel
- 100 armored reconnaissance trucks

- 680,000 57 mm ammunition.

After consulting with the competent ministries we worked out the following position which we reported to the Defense Committee and I also informed the UAR's defense minister about it in June.

- Since Hungary has never manufactured 57 mm self-propelling anti-aircraft guns, we cannot provide these items for them;
- We agreed to provide some of the other requested equipment (10% of the requested amount) with delivery beginning in 1971 – since we do not have any reserves – except for the radars, for we do not manufacture such equipment and we do not have any reserves either.
- At the same time I offered to provide the other military items which were requested by their foreign trade organization.

I have not received a written answer to my letter but Fawzi and other state leaders of the UAR made exasperated and negative comments to our ambassador to Cairo claiming that we fail to understand and take their situation seriously and therefore they no longer see our willingness to assist them. The attitude towards us was growing cold and the Arab leaders also suggested that our position regarding their request might have a negative influence on political relations too.

Next, their foreign minister talked about this issue with Comrade Péter and the delegation of the Arab Socialist Union intervened in it when visiting Hungary at a meeting first with Comrade Lajos Fehér and later with Comrade János Kádár.

Taking all this into consideration – and based on my authorization – I sent a letter to Fawzi in September in which I suggested that there was a possibility to meet their need for military equipment, so it would be practical to send their military-economic experts to Hungary for negotiations. Their reaction was positive and their delegation of four members came to Hungary in September with Fawzi's message in which he said it was vital for them to get the 57 mm guns and that they knew that only we could provide these guns for them. After we had outlined our problems concerning manufacturing and delivery and made another offer to them the delegation continued to stick with the original demand and

definitely asked us to provide at least 4 complete batteries in 1969 and begin continuous supply in 1970 on the basis of domestic production.

We re-evaluated the situation and asked the Soviet Union for help regarding the radars, to which we received a positive answer on 18 October. As a temporary solution, they will give us 22 overhauled radars in 1970/71. They will provide us with the documentation of the new, modernized RPK-1 radar in order to launch its manufacturing in the Hungarian People's Republic with the purpose of meeting the needs of both the member states of the Warsaw Treaty Organization and the developing countries.

In view of the above our position negotiated with the Ministry of Transport and Economy, for which I request the approval of the Politburo, is the following:

1. We should provide 4 complete batteries /24 guns with 1000 pcs of ammunition for each/ from the supply of the people's army – to be returned later.
2. The Hungarian industry should begin to manufacture 73 batteries /a total of 414 guns with 1000 pcs of ammunition for each/ – with gradual increase in quantity – in 1970 so that the requested quantity can be delivered by 1974 /if the UAR can agree with the schedule/.
3. The Hungarian and the UAR's economic and foreign trade organizations should carry out the necessary negotiations and sign the agreements for the equipment to be delivered in the amount of about 35-40 million US dollars.
4. The Hungarian foreign trade organizations should make an agreement with the Soviet bodies on the radars and other items to be imported from the Soviet Union.

After the Politburo has given its consent

- I will inform the defense minister of the UAR on our position in a letter sent to our embassy in Cairo;
- in collaboration with the affected state, economic and foreign trade bodies we will complete the exploration of the situation and submit a proposal for making the necessary state resolution.

Budapest, 20 October 1969.

Lajos Czinege

Translated by András Bocz

Source: MOL M-KS 288. F. 5/501 ő. E (1969.10.21.)

## **Document 9**

### **Foreign Ministry memorandum on the Palestine Liberation Movement in 1970**

**(Excerpts)**

**(10 August 1970)**

The strengthening of the Palestine Movement is closely related to Israel's politics, which is based on acquiring territory, racial differentiation and persecuting the Arabs. The process in which Israel became the main area of oppressing liberation movements, progressive systems and advancing imperialist ambitions is also connected to the Palestine Liberation Movement. The Movement's main objectives are the following: fighting for autonomy for the Palestinian Arab people and the foundation of an independent state where Palestinian Arabs and Jews may live together with equal rights, hence the fighting for the destruction of Israel that was founded on the basis of race and religion.

[...]

The Palestine Movement is invariably still extremely fragmented and despite the efforts for a centralized leadership lead by organizations and partisan groups there is still an estimate of 100 movements.

[...]

During the past 20 years of the liberation of the Palestinian people the movement went through great developments. In the beginning, it meant the issue of refugees that the UN and the Security Council tried to tackle. The SC resolutions declared that those seeking to go home should be granted the possibility to return to their homelands and granting compensation by Israel for those who did not wish to return. The implementations of these resolutions were rejected by Israel.

[...]

The upsurge and strengthening of the Palestine Movement as well as appearing as a political and military actor introduced a new and difficult situation for the majority of the Arab countries, especially for Jordan and Lebanon. The influence of the Arab governments weakened towards the movement. Ten organizations that were included in the PLO, FATAH and the Central Committee together with the partisan groups are becoming more and more independent. They achieved authority in the Arab world thus most Arab governments are clearly inclined to support the Palestine Movement both financially and morally (part of the Arab countries founded their own Palestinian movements in hope of control – Syria founded the SAIKA and Iraq founded the Arab Liberation Front).

The PLO and the FATAH is more and more recognized internationally. One proof of this is their participation at the consultations of the non-aligned countries and first and foremost their successful ambition to seek contact with the socialist countries. This spring the delegation of the PLO lead by Yasser Arafat visited the Soviet Union, China and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. The delegation of the PLO was welcomed by the Solidarity Committee while in China and in the DRV the delegations of the PLO and the FATAH were received on a governmental level.

The socialist countries – with the exception of China – dealt carefully with the Palestine Movement however they are granting moral support in some cases even financial support for their cause.

Through the Hungarian Solidarity Committee our nation also met different Palestinian organizations. Until now the injured were seen to and skilled workers were offered training. Only the PLO was granted financial support. This year, for the first time, the scholars of the PLO were seen. Considering our future relations we recommend to consider the following points:

**1,** The Palestine Liberation Movement – along with all its current contradictions – is a manifestation of the anti-imperialist fight for the independence of the Palestinian people, the struggle for autonomy, recovering national rights and the getting back territories taken by Israel.

The movement's most powerful element is the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) which is the closest to the politics, strategy and tactics of the EAK that plays the vital role in tackling the Middle-East crisis. Because of this, we should focus on our relations towards the PLO. Besides, we are in close relations with the ANSAR (Partisan Forces) that is a communist Palestine Liberation movement.

**2,** Considering the affiliations and advancements(in case it is required) in our relations, political and financial possibilities the partner of PLO should be the Hungarian Solidarity Committee and as for ANSAR, MSZMP should be responsible. For this, government bodies and social organizations should offer their help.

**3,** We should continue to distance ourselves from certain radical terrorist attacks committed by Palestinian groups, from declarations of propaganda concerning the ultimate destruction of Israel and the anti-communist statements.

**4,** Our press and informative bodies should stand up more bravely and determinedly for the just cause of the Palestinian people, furthermore they should also



shed some light on and explain the nature and challenges of the Palestinian movement and they should highlight the positive developments within the movement.

Translated by Sabine Topolansky

Source: MOL Küm, XIX-J-1-j, Palesztina Tük 1971. 72.d. 001302/8. The state of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (excerpts) Budapest 10 August 1970. Foreign Ministry analysis.

Published in Hungarian in: J Nagy László, *Magyarország és az arab térség – Kapcsolatok, vélemények, álláspontok 1947-1975* [Hungary and the Arab World – Connections, opinions, standpoints 1947-1975], JATE Press, Szeged, Hungary, 2006

## **Document 10**

### **Foreign Ministry memorandum on Soviet Ambassador Titov's briefing on Soviet foreign policy**

**(26 June 1970)**

Frigyes Puja

Strictly confidential!

Made in: 8 copies

Comrade Dr P. Várkonyi

1. Comrade Péter
2. Comrade Szilágyi
3. Comrade Gyenes
4. Comrade Holla–Comrade Bartha
5. Moscow

6. Paris
7. Comrade Csatorday
8. Own copy

Subject: Soviet Ambassador Titov's visit

### M e m o r a n d u m

At your request I received Comrade Titov, the ambassador of the Soviet Union on 25 June. Comrade Titov informed us about Gromiko's visit to France and U Thant's visit to the Soviet Union. He gave us the following information:

“A. A. Gromiko, the foreign minister of the Soviet Union paid an official visit to France between 1 and 5 June. During this visit he met with President Pompidou, Prime Minister Chaban-Delmas, Foreign Minister Schumann and Minister of Economy and Finance Giscard d'Estain. The results of these negotiations are shown in the joint Soviet-French communiqué.

The most important result of the visit was that the French party confirmed its intention to pursue an independent foreign policy and to develop its relations with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, which had originally begun by De Gaulle. The French statesmen, including President Pompidou himself, all firmly stated – among other things – that no country or a group of countries should be able to damage the steadily improving relations with the Soviet Union. The French hosts created an atmosphere of friendship and good will which clearly reflected the attitude of the French government.

During the talks it was confirmed that the French were somewhat concerned that a possible agreement with the German Federal Republic on abandoning the use of force might reduce the interest of the Soviet Union in maintaining its good relations with France.

[...]

It was also suggested that the Soviet party should nominate one of the secretaries of the Central Committee as chairman of the intergovernmental cultural committees. However, this would extremely overburden the affected CC secretary.

4./ Comrade Vinogradov touched upon the Middle Eastern situation several times. In his evaluation the new situation resulting from the acceptance of the Rogers plan by the UAR is very positive, creating an opportunity to resolve the deadlock regarding the resolution of the crisis. He described the policy of the UAR leaders as mature although he also noted that emotional elements were still characteristic of their reactions. For example, after consulting the UAR the Soviets presented a draft to the United States in the spring which outlined what would be concretely needed to create a status of peace in the Middle East. According to this draft a status of peace would mean that the countries in the region would not only abandon the use of force or threaten with the use of force but would also commit themselves to the following: they will not allow private individuals or groups to launch any hostile action against another country. This draft proposal had been leaked out and was published in the Israeli press. Some of the UAR leaders concluded from it that it was a wrong decision to present the draft to the Americans. However, the Soviets convinced the Egyptians that leaking out the draft was good for them, strengthening the Arab positions and helping the isolation of Israel.

Similarly, the UAR first wanted to reject the Rogers plan. The Soviets persistently worked on convincing the UAR leaders that they should accept the plan precisely because it did not contain anything new and the Americans wanted to capitalize, in a political sense, on the fact that the UAR would likely reject it. This step can be used to force the United States to take action that would lead to the resolution of the conflict.

Further progress depends on whether the United States will exert the required pressure on Israel. It would be in Israel's interest to make an agreement on the settlement of the issue now – with the Egyptian leadership headed by Nasser – because later they may have to come to an agreement with the Palestine movement and rather than with Nasser. The political nature of this movement is very complex – including Maoists as well as CIA agents and many others – and it is doubtful whether

they will be willing to negotiate any time in the future on the basis of the recognition of the state of Israel.

Comrade Vinogradov was extremely skeptical about the idea of establishing a Palestinian state. He stressed that there was no country that would be willing make its territory available for this new state.

As far as the perspectives of the Palestinian movement are concerned, the Soviet comrades view the situation somewhat differently from Nasser. Nasser is sure that if Israel withdraws from the territories occupied in 1967 and is ready to implement the UN resolutions on the refugee issue, the Palestinian movement will essentially cease to exist. The Soviet party is rather skeptical in this respect.

5./ There was some progress towards the resolution of the relations between Iran and the UAR with the help of the Soviet contribution. The shah was extremely flexible in that he gave up the original demand to require Nasser to apologize to him and the only thing he insisted on was that the normalization of diplomatic relations should be based on a direct Egyptian initiative. The immediately agreed that the two countries would send diplomats to each other's countries who will, for the time being, work within another embassy. /Formally it is like the American "department" working within the Spanish embassy in Cairo./

Translated by András Bocz

Source: MOL XIX-J-1-j-SzU-146-00358/17/1970

## **Document 11**

### **HSWP CC Foreign Affairs Department Proposal on the financial support for the Israeli Communist Party**

**(23 August 1971)**

Hungarian Socialist Worker's Party

STRICTLY

CONFIDENTIAL!

Central Committee

Made in: 2 copies

Foreign Affairs Department

Budapest, 23 August

1971

114/5

PROPOSAL

submitted to the Secretariat

At the invitation of the Hungarian Socialist Worker's Party the delegation of the Central Committee of the Israeli Communist Party, headed by David Khenin, member of the Politburo and secretary of the Central Committee, paid a goodwill visit to Hungary between 5 and 18 this month.

During the negotiations the leader of the delegation requested the Central Committee of HSWP to grant financial support to the Central Committee of the sister party which was struggling with financial difficulties.

In the past few years we have provided the Israeli sister party with support in the amount of USD 13,000 including both in kind and financial aid.

We propose to satisfy the Israeli request and award them a one-off in cash in the amount of USD 5000. This amount should be sent by the Foreign Affairs Department of the CC.

The Department of Party Economy and Management has approved of this proposal.

Translated by András Bocz

Source: MOL M-KS 288. f. 5/563. ő. E (1971.09.07.) 47R/79

## **Document 12**

### **Foreign Ministry report on current foreign affairs**

**(Excerpt)**

**(23 February 1974)**

[...]

#### 4./ The Middle Eastern conflict

They want to pursue the same political course in order to find a solution. They try to ensure that more comprehensive series of negotiations are conducted which do not end by the separation of troops and the talks in Geneva continue. If the resolution of the issues is stuck with the separation of troops, it would result in the conservation of the conflict and the increase in American influence and possibilities.

They will increase the number of meetings in the future with the Arab countries that are directly affected. Comrade Gromiko will travel to Cairo, the deputy secretary of the Iraqi Baath Party will soon visit Moscow and they will prepare President Assad's visit to Moscow.

Comrade Katusev stressed that in the future the socialist countries should pay more attention to the most progressive Arab countries surrounding Egypt, especially to Syria and Iraq as well as Algeria, despite its weakness, and to strengthening relations

between these states and the socialist countries. In doing so, we will, together with Somalia and South Yemen, two other progressive countries, strengthen progressive movements and the influence of the socialist countries and the Soviet Union in the Middle Eastern region. This will have beneficial effects on Egypt both in terms of the American influence and in terms of reducing room for maneuvering in Egypt. They are also considering how the Soviet Union's and the socialist countries' efforts could be appropriately coordinated in regards to these countries.

#### 5./ Indochina

The Soviet comrades are definitely less concerned about the possibility of one or the other party sparking another war. They believe that the current "neither war nor peace" situation will be maintained in the next period too [...]

Translated by András Bocz

Source: MOL XIX-J-1-j-SzU-144-00-1577-3/1974 (106d)

### **Document 13**

**Saddam Hussein's political portrait - compiled for foreign minister Frigyes Puja  
prior to the Iraqi leader's visit to Hungary in May 1975**

**(26 March 1975)**

Saddam Hussein:

- deputy secretary-general of the Regional Directorate of the Baath party

- vice-president of the Revolutionary Commanding Council

He was born in 1937. He went to elementary school in his hometown Tikriti and attended middle school in Baghdad.

Six months before completing his education, Saddam was charged with the assassination of Abdul Karim Qasim and was arrested. He first fled to Syria then to the EAK, where he finished middle school in 1962.

He returned to Iraq at the time of the 1963 Ramadan Revolution (8 February) during the first time the Baath took over authority. In the 1962-1963 school year Saddam studied law however he did not pass exams in his second year party due to health issues (he had an appendectomy) and partly because his participation in organizing the partisan movements.

In 1964 he was taken into custody during the arresting campaigns of the regime in power. He remained in prison until 1966 (where he escaped from with his friend: Abdul Karim al-Sheikly – former minister of Foreign Affairs). Until his case was closed he lived on illegality.

After the 17 July 1968 revolution he continued his studies in Law and completed his education in 1972.

He is married and has four children.

He does not speak any foreign language.

He has led an official government and party delegation in the Soviet Union on 4 August 1970 as a guest of the CPSU and the Soviet government. Since then he has paid three official visits to the Soviet Union (the last in February 1974).

Vice-president of the Revolutionary Commanding Council and on the 8<sup>th</sup> Regional Congress of the Baath party Saddam Hussein was re-elected in January 1974 as deputy secretary general of the Regional Directorate.

During the past six months paid official visits to: India, Yugoslavia, Spain, Tunisia and Algeria. His planned visit to the Soviet Union did not occur just yet. He attended the



Arab Summit in Rabat and the OPEC discussions in Algeria. During visits paid by the Yugoslav, Bangladeshi, East German, French prime ministers and the Indian prime minister, Saddam Hussein has led the discussions as prime minister.

*His political portrait:*

He is a progressive, nationalist patriot. In the past decade his political views improved significantly: from a conspirator Baath party member he came to be a mature politician who is aware of the importance of the alliances with progressive forces, thus cooperates with socialist countries and the Soviet Union in order to fight imperialists. He reads a lot, educating himself and broadening his political range of vision. There is still some nationalistic aspects concerning his political views, however he cannot be viewed as a narrow-minded nationalist.

In the past four years his influence in the party significantly increased. Today he is more than just the 'second person'. He confined his political opponents. His relationship and cooperation with president al-Bakr is balanced. Saddam does not fight with the president only the president's men. His authority increased in the past few months not only in Iraq but in the Arab community as well. According to several Arab diplomats: Boumediene and Saddam Hussein are the two major leaders in the Arab world, since they hold the highest authority and they are both strong handed, forward leading personalities.

His relations with the Iraqi communists is not bad, they are objective.

Concerning the Kurdish issue Saddam has a firm opinion. He believes in hard military actions combined with political actions. In the present situation he truly seeks a just solution for the Arab nationalists and seeks to resolve the Kurd problem for good.

Saddam pays great attention to Domestic Security and National Defense.

Concerning the economy his main goal was to incorporate the oil economy into the progressive domestic development: resulting the formation of an ideal Arab state. He emphasizes that the alliances with socialist countries is indispensable which also has to be an example that has to be followed. In order to achieve these goals he still seeks to find

Iraq's own economic program, though his views are still somewhat immature. In this, the economic advisors who surround him do not really help him, since concerning economic development they propose entirely different, sometimes contradicting theories.

Saddam is a talented, well to do politician who is far the most eligible leader amongst other Iraqi leaders. He holds absolute authority around him, his relation with his colleagues is hard.

*As a negotiation partner:*

In the past few years he paid visits to the Soviet Union four times. Three times comrade Kosigin was his discussion partner (During Saddam's first visit c. Kosigin was not in Moscow). Comrade Brezhnev saw Saddam at all times.

He has won the sympathy and respect of Soviet leaders with his personality. They believe him to be a talented politician and he is called 'comrade'. During negotiations he acts reserved, but friendly. He raises questions openly and answers them honestly in a comrade-like fashion. He is a good discussion partner, since anything he means to say is logical, right to the point and spoken with excellent language. Because of this, a well-prepared, fluent translator is vital.

His nationalist views are primarily concerning the Arab-Israeli issues. In the near future, during discussions the issue of Hafez Assad will most likely be raised.

Concerning bilateral relations, economic co-operations and possible problems – unlike other Iraqi leaders – Saddam's attitude is not narrow-minded. He emphasizes the fact that strengthening relations is essential. He shows special interest in long-term planning.

He is not fond of busy programs. During his four visits to the Soviet Union he only went to Leningrad besides Moscow. He declined offers to visit the countryside (Siberia, Caucasus) and he emphasized the fact that the aim of his visits is to meet Soviet leaders and talk as much as possible.

Since he is not entirely healthy (lumbar inter-vertebral disk syndrome) he gets tired

easily and spends his evenings with rest, reading rather than going out. Thus he did not participate in the evening programs. The Soviet comrades organized film screenings for him: he mostly enjoyed documentaries on advanced military technology, field-exercises and war movies. During his visits he was taken to visit military units, witness smaller maneuvers and he always enjoyed these programs.

He is not a gourmand. He seldom drinks. He enjoys hunting, which is why Soviet leaders always give him presents related to hunting or presents for his wife. His favorite sport is tennis.

Concerning protocol, formalities he is quite sensible, he expects proper reception.

Translated by Sabine Topolansky

MOL M-KS 288.f. 32/1975. 9.ő.e. - Frigyes Puja ordered the compilation of information on Saddam Hussein two months before his visit to Hungary

Published in Hungarian in: J Nagy László, *Magyarország és az arab térség – Kapcsolatok, vélemények, álláspontok 1947-1975* [Hungary and the Arab World – Connections, opinions, standpoints 1947-1975], JATE Press, Szeged, Hungary, 2006

## **Document 14**

### **Report to the HSWP Political Committee on the visit of the special envoy of Saddam Hussein in Hungary**

**(13 October 1980)**

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Top Secret!

Prepared in 7 copies

Copy

number: 1.

Attachment: rough

translation of

written message

## **REPORT**

for the Political Committee

on Naem Hamid Haddad, Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister, Saddam Hussein's special envoy's visit to Budapest.

The Iraqi party requested on 7 October 1980 that Naem Hamid Haddad carrying Saddam Hussein's message to Comrade Pál Losonczi [Chairman of the Presidential Council] be received. (Our embassy reported that the Iraqi president sent special envoys to 27 countries. Naem Hamis Haddad, Deputy Prime Minister, the President of the Iraqi National Assembly was sent to the European Socialist countries /Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia, Poland).

Comrade Pál Losonczi met the Iraqi special envoy on 10 October, who delivered President Saddam Hussein's written message. Based on the wording of the message it is likely that that the same message was sent to each country.

The message stresses that their aim is to consult with and exchange opinion with the friendly countries over the conflict with Iran, and stresses that the Iraqi leadership intends to enhance the cooperation with the countries friendly to Iraq in the future. It reviews the events preceding to armed conflict and stresses Iraq's readiness for a negotiated settlement.

Naem Hamid added the following to the message.

President Saddam Hussein received him before the departure and informed him that he would meet with friends in Hungary who would understand him. Saddam Hussein sends his kind regards to Comrades János Kádár and Pál Losonczi.

[...]

The Iraqi leadership thoroughly considered the impacts of the war, primarily the dangers of the involvement of the United States. The Iraqi leadership is convinced that the Americans' involvement was coordinated with the Iranian leadership. The aim of holding back the American hostages in Iran is that the Fleet of the United States is already in the area with the aim to "defend friends". It is characteristic of the American behavior that when Hammadi, Iraqi Foreign Minister's made a remark on the delivery of US war material to Iran, Secretary of State Muskie responded that the United States sold weapons and parts to Iran worth of only

50 Million \$. There are American military advisors still staying in Iran.

Iraq is determined to prevent the United States from being involved in the region's affairs; the security of the Arab Gulf and Indian Ocean is the concern of the peoples living there.

Iraq accepted the mediation attempts not from the position of weakness, but from the position of power and even more, it was ready to order an unilateral cease-fire. She accepted the Security Council's call, too.

[...]

Iran's real aims concerning the continuation of the conflict are not known [to Iraq]. The Iraqi leadership can imagine that the Iranian religious leaders' aim is the complete weakening of both the Iraqi and Iranian Armies so that, having achieved this, the "Islamic Army" come on stage in order to spread the Islamic Revolution.

In order to prevent the aims of the United States, they consult with their friends, the Socialist countries in the first place. The Iraqi leadership thinks that more pressure needs to be put on the Iranian regime in order to enforce a negotiated settlement on them.

They expect help from their Hungarian friends as well. They ask that we speed up the delivery of military and economic goods necessary for war. They especially ask that we make the Iranian party participate in the peaceful settlement. Iraq is ready to accept the multinational organizations' resolutions calling for a cease-fire and talks and is ready to listen to and review its friends' views and advice.

Comrade Losonczi explained that our friends in Iraq might be right in many issues pertaining to the preceding events, but now what is important is not to consider it, but to do everything possible so that the international tension do not increase, prevent the imperialist circles from [executing] their intentions aimed at intervention.

[...]

Our main concern is the danger of the continuation and the escalation of the conflict, thus providing potential for an open intervention by the imperialist forces. Consequently our common aim is the settlement of the conflict and the prevention of the involvement of the imperialist circles. We have to work on it jointly.

[...]

Comrade Losonczi stressed that according to friendly relations between our countries, we want to meet all our contractual obligations. Due to the war, the execution of our undertakings is not untroubled. The relevant economic and trade organs are working on meeting our previous undertakings, both in the delivery of the special items and the food and other items. We try to speed up certain deliveries, such as meat, canned food, bus parts and machines. We are reviewing the additional request by the Iraqi party.

Those specialists, who are forced to discontinue their activity, are ready to return as soon as the conditions enable them to do so. We are ready to participate in the restoration of war damages. We wish not to have any problems in our friendly cooperation due to the events.

We have friendly relations with Iraq, also based on the basic principle that we have common aims in the fight against imperialism. We have respected Iraq's anti-imperialist policy, its positive role in the non-aligned movement's anti-imperialist wing and the results of development of the Iraqi economy.

XXX

A member of Naem Haddad's attendance had separate negotiations with Technika Foreign Trade Company [the Hungarian Foreign Trade company for military materials].

Budapest, 13 October 1980

Translated by: Levente Gajdócsi

Source: MOL, 288.f. 32/1980/62. ő.e.

**Document 15**

**Report of the Hungarian Embassy in Iraq on the developments of  
Soviet-Iraqi relations  
(2 March 1981)**

00/448/1

No. 41/TS/81.

Rapporteur: Dr. Gy. Tatár

Written in four copies

in Soviet- Copies to: three copies to Centre  
one copy to Embassy

Typed by: Kurucsai

TOP SECRET!

Baghdad, 2 March 1981

Subject: Developments  
Iraqi relations

To Comrade FRIGYES PUJA

Foreign Minister

Budapest

Since the beginning of 1978, several events have taken place contributing to the deterioration of the Iraqi-Soviet political relations.

a/ In the spring of 1978, the Iraqi leadership stood up against the Iraqi Communist Party openly, they started persecuting communists legally, which



meant that the Iraqi Progressive and National Front became formal and progressive elements were definitely excluded from power in perspective.

b/ At the beginning of 1980, in connection with the events in Afghanistan, Iraq started heated campaigns against the Soviet Union, during which she compared the Soviet Union to fascist Germany among others.

c/ In February 1980, Iraq proclaimed the National Charter, which called all the states of the region to "keep superpowers away from the region" and to "keep equal distance from the two superpowers". Practically, this programme can be considered a major step in the Iraqi estrangement from the Soviet Union.

d/ From the beginning of the Iraqi-Iranian conflict, based on her neutral position taken in the war, the Soviet Union froze her weapon consignments to Iraq. After the Soviet Union had rejected the Iraqi leadership's repeated initiative to restart transportation, in the Iraqi press and news releases there appeared more and more - anonymous - reports and implied hints characterising the Soviet Union as "an unfaithful ally". At the same time, they gave conspicuously great publicity to Mirage planes, the first group of which arrived in Iraq at last after several postponements.

In the past three years, parallel with the above events, economic and, especially in

1980, also political relations strengthened between Iraq and the developed capitalist countries. A careful opening characterised military relations as well.

Iraq's relations with the progressive countries of the region kindled sometimes /see Syria/, but they remained basically cold and, here and there, even hostile.

At the same time an unambiguous process of rapprochement started in the direction of Arab reactionary regimes. This above tendency became more emphatic as a result of the fact that the pace of development of economic relations between the Soviet Union and Iraq slowed down, and the decline in the total volume could be prevented only by increasing the export of special [a code name for: military] Soviet products. By 1980, it had become obvious that the Iraqi leadership called the Soviet Union her "strategic ally" because of the arms consignments, and that they did not sharpen the latent political conflicts because it could be retorted by a decrease in the arms consignments, which served as a basic

precondition of Iraq's success and her endeavour to become a superpower in the region.

Recently, in spite of the express and implied Iraqi attacks, the Soviet Union has continued her efforts to expand and deepen bilateral political and economic relations by moving her own interests to the foreground more emphatically - with little success. Seemingly, she tried to maintain normal relations between the two countries.

From the point of view of the future development of bilateral relations, the Iraqi- Iranian war may be considered a negative milestone: with the freezing of Soviet arms supplies, the strongest link between the two countries has been torn.

The Soviet Union's behaviour during the war up to now has given several leaders – being anti- Soviet anyhow -- a trump-card, which they cannot play yet for three reasons:

1/ They hope that eventually the Soviet Union will restore her consignments, without which the promised victory can hardly be imagined.

2/ They are afraid that in case they poison relations, the numerous Soviet experts remaining in Iraq during the war will not continue their work, which would mean that several economic projects of key importance would become paralyzed in the country.

3/ They are aware that an open break-off with the Soviet Union in the present straits would render the country completely defenseless against the intentions of the developed capitalist countries and the USA.

At the same time, it may be taken for granted that the camp of those demanding the break-off of relations with the Soviet Union will play the "trump-card" sooner or later.

The so far implied anti-Soviet nature of the top leadership and their becoming even more pragmatic during the war than before - they take only the arms suppliers into account in the competition taking place in other fields of the economy as well - have encouraged the middle level economic leadership mainly oriented toward the West anyway, and, making use of the favourable opportunity, they try to oust the Soviet companies completely out of the market. Their activities during the war will set back the level of economic relations for the next

one or two years. / Soviet economic experts said, "Before the war in quite a few cases it was sure that the Soviet company would win the tender. However, as a result of the "punitive" actions all tenders have been won by other countries."/

In the Soviet Union's Middle-Eastern strategic position a crucial change was caused by her signing an Agreement of Friendship and Co-operation with Syria in the Fall of 1980. This way she achieved that the possible loss of the Iraqi ally, becoming more and more problematical in the region,- the termination of the Agreement of Friendship signed in 1972 - would not result in the complete weakening of her positions. This way, it has become possible to pursue a more self-confident policy concerning Iraq.

In the future it may be hardly expected that the Soviet Union will restore her consignments to Iraq as it could result in the USA's direct arms transportation to Iran, which would contradict the interests of the Soviet Union and the socialist camp. Moreover, the renewal of consignments would effect only temporary positive changes in the Iraqi leadership's relations with the Soviet Union.

Based on the above, we may make the following statements:

1/ Political relations between the Soviet Union and Iraq have continuously been deteriorating since 1978, that is the beginning of the consolidation of the position of the pro- Western, anti-Communist Iraqi leaders represented by Saddam Hussein. The sharpness of the forms of manifestation have depended on the importance of momentary Iraqi interests.

2/ In 1975 Iraq was economically open toward the developed capitalist countries, which, by 1980, has resulted in the Soviet Union and the socialist camp being pushed into the background from an economic point of view.

3/ The termination of Soviet arms consignments constituting the most important link between the Soviet Union and Iraq on the one hand, the consolidation of existing economic and political relations between Iraq and the developed capitalist countries and the tightening of co-operation between Iraq and the reactionary Arab regimes on the other hand, have openly directed Iraq toward the West.

4/ At the end of the war, the present implied hints concerning the Soviet

Union are likely to turn into an open attack, the extent and forms of which may be assessed only with difficulty at present.

5/ In the near future it may be expected that Iraq will press the Soviet Union through the socialist camp to restore her indirect arms consignments at least and that Iraq will try to obtain supplies from the other members of the socialist camp.

6/ Tendencies in recent years suggest that the process of fermentation started in the relations between the Soviet Union and Iraq may take a favourable turn only in case of a new, more progressive Iraqi political leadership coming to power.

Lajos Gonda

Ambassador

Translated by: Zsófia Zelnik

Source: MOL, 288.f. 32/1981/60. ő.e.

## **Document 16**

### **HSWP CC Foreign Affairs Department proposal on the development of tourism between Israel and Hungary**

**(24 March 1981)**

Hungarian Socialist Worker's Party

Central Committee

Foreign Affairs Department

STRICTLY

CONFIDENTIAL!

Made in: 2 copies

Budapest, 24 March 1981

PROPOSAL

submitted to the Politburo

Dr József Németh

The leaders of the Israeli Communist Party submitted a request to the Central Committee of HSWP to ensure that the Hungarian authorities ease the restrictions on the entry of Israeli citizens into Hungary.

According to the ICP a more flexible visa policy would receive a favorable political response in progressive Israeli circles and could also mitigate the effects of anti-socialist propaganda in Israel.

The ICP also has financial interests in the visits of Israeli citizens to Hungary. Israeli tourism with a Bulgarian destination has been generating significant earnings for the foreign trade company of the party for years now. The company would like to expand its business activity in tourism in Hungary too.

The earnings of the party-owned company are used to support various activities of ICP.

We propose to grant the ICP's request on condition that this year the entry of 2000 Israeli citizens will be permitted and that the quotas for the next years will be determined on the basis of the political experiences gained this year.

We have consulted the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Department of Economic Policy and Public Administration of the Central Committee on this proposal.

*/János Berecz/*

Translated by András Bocz

Source: MOL M-KS 288. F. 5/823. ő. e (1981.03.28.) 1R/67

## **Document 17**

### **Foreign Ministry report on the visit of the Iraqi deputy prime minister in Hungary between 18-20 March 1981 (30 March 1981)**

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Top Secret!

003/13

Briefing

On the official visit of Taha Jassin Ramadhan, First Deputy Prime Minister to  
Hungary

*/Based on [Foreign Minister] Comrade*

## Puja's report/

Taha Jassin Ramadhan, member of the Revolutionary Council of the Republic of Iraq, First Deputy Prime Minister, at the invitation of György Lázár, President of the Council of Ministers paid an official visit to the People's Republic of Hungary between 18 and 20 March, 1981. Taha Jasin Ramadhan was received by Comrades János Kádár and Pál Losonczi. The Iraqi First Deputy Prime Minister had discussions with Comrade György Lázár. Taha Jassin Ramdhan invited Comrade György Lázár for an official visit to Iraq. An official communiqué was issued, at Iraq's initiation. Simultaneously with T.J. Ramadhan's visit, the 7th session of the Hungarian-Iraqi Economic Cooperation Permanent Joint Committee was held. The Minutes of the session was signed by the Co-Chairmen of Joint Committee, József Marjai, Deputy Prime Minister and Hassan Ali, Iraqi Minister of Commerce.

[. . .]

[T.J. Ramadhan reported on the internal situation and economic development in Iraq] Parliamentary elections were held on democratic basis in 1980. The internal situation in Iraq is stable. People support the government even in the midst of war. The aim of the Baath Party is to build up a socialist society, free from exploitation, in Iraq and in the Arabic world. Comrade János Kádár said, that we welcomed the revolution in Iraq from the beginning, as we saw them to become the owner of their own faith and natural resources, and that they themselves want to lead the direction of the country's development. We welcomed the revolution wanting Socialism and its anti-imperialist nature.

III.

Comrade György Lázár gave an overall picture of our aims and of our views on the most important international issues. He empathetically talked about the new offensive launched by imperialism against international peace and security, against détente and disarmament and he declared that the World's progressive forces should take a strong line against that. He outlined our position on solving the crisis in the

Middle East, the peace and security of the Persian Gulf. He deplored the conflict between Iraq and Iran, pointing out its dangers and urging the restoration of peace.

[. . .]

[T.J. Ramadhan declared that]

In Iraq's foreign policy, strengthening of the ties with the Socialist countries is an important element

[. . .]

During the talks, T.J. Ramdhan put the issue of the war between Iraq and Iran in the center. He emphasized that the dispute between the two countries over the borders were centuries old. Iran had always exploited Iraq's relative weakness to grasp further and further territories. In 1975, due to internal problems, Iraq was forced to give in. After the revolution in Iran, Iraq tried all possible ways to enforce its rights put forth in different treaties. Iranians did not answer to Iraqi petitions, and even threatened occupying further Iraqi territories, called the Shiite population in Iraq for a revolt and then started to shell and bombard Iraqi cities starting on 4 September 1980. Between 4 and 22 September Iraq tried to warn Iran several times with no effect, thus she was forced to deal the Iranian troops a blow with a military action launched on 22 September 1980.

The Iraqi Army reached its goal in a week. Following this, the Iraqi leadership expressed its intention for a cease-fire. Iran was proposed to admit Iraq's claims and hold discussions on disputed questions. Iraq does not want to acquire Iranian territories, and, maintaining its claims, is ready to withdraw its troops to a line accepted by both parties. Iraq wants peace from a power position and would like to maintain good neighborhood relationships with Iran. Iraq demonstrated its good will by responding positively to the calls for a cease-fire from the UN Security Council already at the beginning of the war, supporting mediation by non-aligned, Islamic countries and the UN.



Iraq wants peace but is prepared for a long war, too. The Iraqi Army is well prepared; its moral status is good. The relationship between the leadership and the people is perfect. The work ethic is good in the hinterland.

[. . .]

Comrade János Kádár said that the war between Iraq and Iran took us by surprise. We are concerned, as we know that imperialism takes advantage of all situations like this. We did not welcome Iraq's step but we did not condemn it either. We stressed, that the war causes damages. We welcome the Iraqi intentions for talks and consider them important.

On the Iranian revolution, Comrade János Kádár said that we welcomed the outbreak of the revolution, as it was a blow on imperialism. The Iranian world of ideas is far from us; currently the nature of this revolution is not fully clear to us.

We appreciate the non-aligned movement and Iraq's role within it. The non-aligned movement is known to involve different elements and this underlines Iraq's role in this movement at a greater extent. We wish Iraq successes for its activity in this movement.

Comrade Pál Losonczi [Chairman of the Presidential Council], speaking of the Iraq-Iran war, welcomed the efforts of the Iraqi leadership for a peaceful settlement. We wish the peaceful settlement of all disputed questions in every case. We are concerned about the protraction of the conflict, thus providing a pretext for the imperialists to strengthen their position in the area.

We welcome the Iranian revolution, however, we condemn the export of the revolution. In our opinion, there is a perplexing situation in Iran, many would like to restore the old regime.

#### IV.

Speaking about the bilateral relationship, Comrade György Lázár expressed, that we are interested in their comprehensive development on the ground of mutual benefits.

Taha Jassin Ramadhan emphasized that his visit took place based on a special decision. The aim of his visit was to raise our relationship on a higher level. Iraq has its determined aim to raise our cooperation to a special level. The relations are developing well between the two countries, even if we had conflicts, we could settle them with mutual understanding. We have done a lot for developing the relations, however, there are still plenty unexplored opportunities. We have common aims, we are building a new society, pursue anti-imperialist course of policy, we are small countries. We need to apply new methods on new fields. However, we need to open every door for a widening cooperation. Closed door hinder the relations. The development of the relations can be developed fast if we are mutually ready to examine the other party's claims. In the period to come we need greater coordination to achieve our goals and to prevent the activities of those not interested in widening the Hungarian-Iraqi cooperation.

Iraq wishes sincerely that Hungary participate in accomplishing the development plans in Iraq at a greater extent. We must search new areas of cooperation. Iraq is firmly determined to urge the cooperation in all areas.

#### V.

Simultaneously with the talks were held the meeting of the Joint Committee, and other trade meetings.

During the Joint Committee talks, the Iraqi party talked with appreciation of the Hungarian experts' firmness and good work in Iraq.

The two parties recorded that since the meeting of the Joint Committee in August 1980, the economic cooperation between the two countries have accelerated and have become undisturbed. They agreed to maintain this tendency and speed up the decision-making process mutually.

During the talks, new opportunities of cooperation were revealed, including the participation in oil and gas mining and storing, electrification, vehicle construction and delivery on the road, planning and construction of the underground in Baghdad and development of the Iraqi agriculture. These were recorded in the minutes of the Joint Committee.

The technical-scientific cooperation work schedule for the years 1981-1982 was signed. However, this will only be effective when the Iraqi party positively returns to the settlement of financial/payments problems.

Dr. Taha Ibrahim Al-Abdullah, Minister of Planning had talks with Comrade dr. Lajos Faluvégi on the possibilities for cooperation in planning.

During the talks in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs the Iraqi party recommended the development of the cooperation and working relations between the two foreign ministries. The Hungarian party raised those issues that hinder the work of our foreign representations and citizens in Iraq.

The representatives of the Ministry of Transportation and Post held discussions with their Iraqi partners. During the talks the Iraqi party submitted the proposals of the treaty for road delivery and company transportation.

Budapest, 30 March 1981.

Translated by: Levente Gajdócsi

Source: MOL, 288.f. 32/1981/60. ő. e.

### **Document 18**

**Announcement by Prime Minister György Lázár on the new Soviet position  
concerning the shipment of arms to Iraq and Iran at the HSWP Political  
Committee meeting on 14 April 1981  
(14 April 1981)**

[...]

**György Lázár:** I would like to inform the Political Committee that I have received a piece of information from [Soviet Ambassador in Budapest] Comrade Pavlov. Earlier I also informed the Political Committee about the preceding events. According to the latest information, they have taken everything into account, that is mainly the fact that, based on the experiences, there is a strong demand on the Iraqi and Iranian side for the acquisition of some technical equipment from the Western countries, and these demands are usually satisfied by them. The Soviet Union has reviewed her earlier position concerning the introduction of full embargo on transportation. This full embargo will be lifted to a limited extent further on, both in connection with Iraq and Iran. I have considered it important to inform the Political Committee about this. Comrade Pavlov requested us to

treat this information confidentially.

**János Kádár:** Confidentially. And we are going to carry on with our practices accordingly. Clear.

**György Lázár:** Yes, yes, just like earlier, on the authorization of the Political Committee.

Translated by: Zsófia Zelnik

Source: MOL, 288.f. 5/829.ő.e.

## **Document 19**

### **Report of the Hungarian Embassy in Egypt on the evaluation of the Israeli terrorist action against Iraq in 1981 (15 June 1981)**

TOP SECRET!

004140/

73/81.

**Cairo, 15 June 1981**

Written: in 4 copies  
the Israeli Centre: 3 copies  
against Iraq Private copy:1

Subject: The evaluation of  
terrorist action

Frigyes Puja

Comrade Foreign Minister

Budapest

Political and diplomatic circles are unanimous in their opinion, according to which the Israeli attack against the Iraqi nuclear plant did not only shock the Egyptian leadership but also caused such embarrassment for which there had not been an example for a long time. Although nobody considers it seriously that, at the summit held in Sharm el Sheikh three days before, the Israeli Prime Minister could have informed Sadat about the action or could have made the slightest hint at it, both Cairo and Tel Aviv refuted this most categorically and almost at the same time.

The confusion of Egyptian diplomacy is proved by the fact that for only one day after the Israeli action the foreign officials appearing at the receptions made statements full of anxiety and they answered all the questions openly. Later on they gave evasive answers, then they were wrapped in silence. At the receptions held a week after the terrorist attack they did not even appear.

The political leadership preparing the action carefully also became pressed for time and they could not act harmoniously. A series of official declarations were published/Presidium, People's Assembly, Consultative Council/, which were phrased in a style unusual since Camp David. At the extraordinary session of the People's Assembly on the 9<sup>th</sup> , where the Vice-Premier, Foreign Minister Kamal Hasan Aly described the government's position, in the following debate the speaking representatives - both the supporters of the government /NDP/ and of the opposition - gave voice to such demands almost without a difference in tone that were unacceptable for Sadat staking everything on the single card of Camp David.

Although none of the numerous articles released in the press exclude the possibility that the Israeli Prime Minister made this step to increase the chances of his re-election, they see the real causes in the following /at the same time expressing the anxiety felt by Egypt/:

- Begin wanted to provoke Sadat to make such a step which could be an appropriate pretext for Israel to withdraw from the "peace process", to go back on her obligations undertaken in Camp David, to suspend the complete withdrawal from Sinai for an indefinite period of time. They think Begin considers he could bear the consequences of this in case of his re-election if Egypt provided a pretext;

- By this terrorist action, Begin wants to block the way for other Arab states who would like to join the peace process, because this is the only way he can achieve that he would not have to withdraw from other Arab territories /West Coast/, thus he can maintain Egypt's isolation, postpone the settlement of the Palestine question and maintain the present division of the Arab world;

- he wanted to deal a blow on the forces of the Israeli society wishing peace by dramatically intensifying the atmosphere of endangerment, and he wanted to strengthen demonstratively the notion of the often voiced military superiority. According to another view, the Israeli public opinion does not have to be won over for aggressive politics, as it has supported this kind of politics from the beginning by nature, and the peace process up to now has been a mere bluff; - he wants to raise doubts in the Arab oil-producing states of the Gulf concerning the United States whether she is capable at all of reaching a long-lasting and just settlement in the region;

- he wants to prove that in fighting off the so-called Soviet danger, the United States has only one ally she can count on in the region, namely Israel - not Egypt - if she gets large quantities of modern weapons and economic help further on as well;

- he warned Western Europe opening up to the Palestinians and experimenting with independent initiatives that the settlement of the problems in the region would be possible only together with Israel and not against her even if their oil interests dictated the opposite.

Our Egyptian talking partners do not exclude these motives at all,

moreover they add that in case of his re-election, Begin will surely endeavour to realise if not all but some of these goals.

Egyptian foreign officials phrased their opinion in a less speculative way. They emphasised that Egypt had already paid such a price at Camp David that they did not have any other opportunity but to follow the prescribed forced course. They had to hold on until April of 1982, then a lot of things would change. The Baghdad action came at the worst possible time for them, because, as a result of Egypt's diplomatic efforts, in the coming weeks they would have had the opportunity to partially break through their isolation. After the third military supplies agreement signed with Iraq about two weeks before, the settlement of the relations between the two countries had seemed closer. Moreover, they add, they had hopes that more than half of the Arab countries would settle their relations with Egypt.

At the same time, they are not certain about how Israel really thinks. They would like to believe that Israel will fulfil her obligations laid down in the separate peace treaty and will evacuate the part of Sinai still under occupation.

Begin's political environment pollution action [sic!] is extremely unpleasant for them. It turned out that the USA, which was forced to show her true colours before time, had not changed her commitments toward Israel to the benefit of Egypt or the Arabs, and the "impartial partner" was rather partial as a matter of fact.

They are afraid that American politics striving for strategic consensus by exaggerating the Soviet danger will be a failure in the Gulf-region as Israel herself has proved by her action that the real danger comes from the Israelis.

In case of the USA's silence, Begin will achieve the creation of such a precedent that could have unforeseen consequences in the region.

According to my evaluation, the crisis resulting from the Israeli action has put more serious obstacles in the way of the realisation of the separate agreement reached at Camp David than ever /the sabotage of the talks on Palestinian autonomy, the annexation of Jerusalem, the Lebanese rocket crisis/. At the same time, it may lead to the realisation that the settlement of the Near-Eastern situation can be achieved only by international co-operation, within the



framework of a Geneva-type conference.

István Fodor

charges d'affaires ad interim

Translated by: Zsófia Zelnik

Source: MOL, M-KS-288 f. 32./ 60. ő. e. - 1981

**Document 20**

**HSWP CC Department for Foreign Affairs Memorandum on Hungarian-Iraqi  
relations  
(July 1981)**

HSWP Central  
Committee

Department for  
Foreign Affairs

## Memorandum

### on the Hungarian-Iraqi relations

Diplomatic relations were established with the Republic of Iraq on 30 August 1958. Following the takeover by the Baath Party in 1968, our relations rapidly developed, currently Iraq being one of our most important partners in the developing world.

The difference in opinions concerning certain foreign policy issues (e.g. the methods of settlement of the crisis in the Middle East, the Afghanistan issue, the implementation of security in the Persian Gulf, the issue of Eritrea, etc.) have not caused problems in our relations yet. However, our disapproving views on the Baath Party's policy concerning IKP [the Communist Party of Iraq], our support to IKP, certain articles published in the Hungarian press, TV-programs, the student clashes in 1979, etc. resulted in the negative conduct of the authorities in Iraq, and from time to time, have troubled our political relations. All the problems have been solved calmly, without any break or regression.

In the previous years, mutual high level visits have taken place on a regular basis. Saddam Hussein, the current President of the Revolutionary Commanding Council of Iraq, paid a visit to our country in May 1975. In October 1977, Comrade György Lázár paid a visit to Iraq, then Taha Ma'aruf, Vice President visited Budapest. There have been exchanges of messages between the highest rank leaders of the two countries. Our party and government delegation participated in the celebrations of the Baathist Revolution in Iraq in 1978 and 1980.

At the HSWP's initiative, direct party links were established with the Baath

Party. An agreement on cooperation was signed in Budapest in 1973 and two-year working plans regulated the development of relations. In spite of fostering it by the Baath Party, we did not renew the working plan that expired at the end of 1979, but during talks between the representatives of the HSWP and the Baath Party in July 1980 a verbal agreement was reached on the methods of maintaining the party relations. IKP does not object the close cooperation between HSWP and Baath Party. There is a close cooperation between the HSWP and IKP. Recently, the Baath Party seems to recognize this tacitly.

The trade unions, the cooperative movements and the women's associations have their own relations, too. Comrade Aladár Földvári participated on the 6<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Iraqi General Union of Trade Unions in 1980; we hosted the (Baathist) Chairman of the Iraqi National Students Union, the Chairmen of the Union of General Cooperatives and Iraqi Farmers' Union. An agreement on the cooperation between the women's unions valid for 3 years was signed in January 1981 and in March, the Chairwoman of the General Women's Union paid a visit to Hungary. Out of the mass organizations, only youth organizations lag behind of the general trend.

Since the Iraq-Iran war, the Iraqi party has devoted much attention to the Hungarian relations. In October 1980, Naem Hamid Haddad, the President of the National Assembly, member of the Revolutionary Commanding Council member of the National and Regional Directorate of the Baath Party, General Secretary of the Progressive and National Front, Deputy Prime Minister, acting as a personal representative of Saddam Hussein visited our country and conveyed his president's written message to Comrade Pál Losonczi. Then in November, the message by Taha Jassin Ramadan to Comrade György Lázár was delivered by

the Iraqi Foreign Ministry's chief of protocol. In February 1981, the Minister of Industry and Minerals, the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research and the General Director of the Iraqi TV and Radio was hosted. The cultural working plan and the agreement on the cooperation of Radio, TV and sports were signed. The talks aimed at the confirmation of the agreement on a consular

convention – signed in 1978 -- proved to be unsuccessful with the consular delegation visiting Budapest.

Iraq is our biggest trading partner among the developing countries. The exchange of goods has been dynamically improving since 1972; private contracts for investment goods and special products worth of 400 Million \$ are valid for cash payment, occasionally with 10-30% advance ratio starting in 1974. The exchange of goods was 239 Million \$ in 1980, that lags behind the peak level of 291 Million \$ in 1979. Our country has met its contractual obligations even in times of war.

The composition and price level of our export is favorable. Machine products form 50 % in recent years. New ways of cooperation have been established: Chemokomplex-OKGT has been doing commission oil-well drills, a bus assembly plant has been operating in Iraq since 1974. Currently, approximately 350 workers are working on these tasks in total.

Practically speaking, we only buy oil. The Iraqi party urges the receipt of other raw materials and industrial products.

There are extensive financial relations between the two countries, too. Iraq has large deposits at MNB [Hungarian National Bank] for years. As of 11 March 1981, the deposit was 350 Million \$. (Before the war, the Iraqi deposit was around 500 Million \$, it is our interest to halt the decline.)

A joint committee was set up to enhance the cooperation between the two countries in 1973. This committee did not work in the last two years, because the Iraqi party always diverges from our proposals to hold a meeting. Agreements on Veterinary hygiene and Fishery were 500 Iraqi specialist received training in Hungarian agricultural institutions.

Cooperation in water conservancy matters started with the creation of a Joint Committee based on the Agreement on Technical- Scientific Cooperation in 1971.

Our cooperation on the field of technical-scientific issues are governed by the two-year working plans based on the agreement signed in 1971. Within the framework of the agreement, 35-40 specialist work in Iraq and more than 100 Iraqi specialist receive a secondary-level agricultural training yearly. The Agreement on Healthcare was signed in 1977.

The Agreement on Cultural issues was signed in 1959 and working plans have governed our cultural ties since 1960. The working plan for the years of 1981-83 was signed in Budapest on 2 March 1981. The educational relations are especially important. So far, more than 60 Iraqi citizens received degrees at a university or a college in our country and currently 55 scholarship-holders study at a higher educational institute. We have been receiving candidates to a scientific degree since 1975. So far 12 Iraqi have received higher scientific degrees and currently 56 persons receive such training (out of which 23 paying full cost). The new cultural working plan estimates that we provide training at a higher educational training for 10 Iraqi citizens at our cost on a yearly basis, for additional 14 persons at the Iraqi party's cost. Out of candidates, 8 persons can start their studies at Hungarian cost, 10 persons can start their studies at Iraqi cost yearly.

In the last period many exchange of exhibitions and art ensembles could take place. The musical cooperation has started as well, currently 16 Hungarian musicians and music teachers work in Iraq.

The agreement on cooperation between MTA [Hungarian Academy of Sciences] and the Iraqi Scientific Research Foundation signed in 1979 forms the basis of the scientific cooperation. There is only little advance on the area.

The Agreement on Information was signed in October 1961, however, the signing of a working plan has not taken place since 1973. The agreement on cooperation between MTI [Hungarian News Agency] and the Iraqi press agency functions well. Following years of negotiation, the agreement on cooperation between the radio and TV companies was signed in March 1981. The relations between the journalist associations stagnate. The visit of the Iraqi Minister of Information and Cultural Affairs has been postponed for years.

An agreement on cooperation in the field of sports was signed in 1975 but the execution of the agreement has not taken place. Considering realistic opportunities for cooperation, a Protocol on a 2-year cooperation was signed in March 1981.

An agreement on Tourism was signed in 1970, governing the cooperation between tourism bodies. 20 thousand Iraqi visit our country yearly. The development of tourism and the expanding number of students and specialits justified the signing of an agreement on legal assistance in 1977.

At Comrade György Lázár's invitation, Taka Jassin Ramadan First Deputy Prime Minister paid an official visit to Hungary between 18 and 20 March 1981.

József Vince, Vice President of OVH [cc. National Office for Water Conservancy Matters] and Ottó Herkner, Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade visited Iraq.

Karim Mahmoud Hussein, Iraqi Minister of Youth and Sport Affairs was hosted in April 1981.

Budapest, July 1981.

Translated by: Levente Gajdócsi

Source: MOL, 288.f. 32/1981/60. ő. e.

**Document 21**

**Foreign Ministry evaluation of the situation report of the Hungarian  
Ambassador in Iraq in 1982  
(8 July 1982)**

9<sup>th</sup> Territorial Department

Béla László

003854/1982.

TOP SECRET!

Written. in 6 copies

Copies to: Comrade Garai

Comrade

T.Varga/HSWP

CC/ Comrade

Menyhárt /KKM

Comrade Rigó

Comrade Pereszlényi

Private copy

## MEMORANDUM

Subject: Comments on the report  
of our Ambassador to Baghdad

The report analyses Iraq's internal situation and her foreign policy in detail, it gives a brief overview of the main areas of our bilateral relations. /On the experiences of our economic and commercial activities and on the press and propaganda activity of our Embassy separate reports have been prepared/.

We agree with the evaluation of the political situation of the report, and we do not consider any changes necessary despite the events having taken place since the report was made.

In the period described in the report the events of the war against Iran played a decisive role. The developments in the conflict had a direct influence on the foreign policy of Iraq and the internal situation in the country.

There has been a turning-point in the course of the war, and the balance of power has changed in favour of Iran. It has become clear that Iraq could not realise her endeavours toward hegemony and her territorial demands by military force. The political actions of the Iraqi leadership have become centred on the earliest possible ending of the war. But the initiatives, experiments of mediation directed toward peaceful settlement could not be crowned by success, as the Iranian position had become stiffer as a result of military success. For the time being, Iran would be ready for talks only in case of the removal of Saddam Hussein and an internal change in her favour.

In the present situation the primary intention of the Iraqi leadership is not to be forced to admit defeat, to prevent the intensification of internal tensions and the activation of opposition forces. To this end, she demonstrates her intention to restore peace even through unilateral steps – cease-fire, the withdrawal of Iraqi troops, letting Iranian forces pass through [sic!] – and she tries to exploit the situation that has evolved after the Israeli attack against Lebanon maximally.

The events of the Lebanese crisis play an important role in



the further development of the Iraqi-Iranian war. It is the common interest of the countries of the region - including Iran as well - to stand up against Israeli aggression, and this will probably moderate conflicts between them. Although Iran does not consider satisfactory the withdrawal of Iraqi troops from her territory and she has committed herself to continuing the war, there are several signs indicating that there are increasing chances of the settlement of the conflict through negotiation.

As a consequence of the repeated defeats and the deteriorating economic situation, the internal tension has increased. Saddam Hussein's positions have weakened, however, for the time being he enjoys the support of the USA and her allies in the region. It is for the possibility of his removal that it is his person that more and more obstructs the ending of the war. At the same time, it is a fact that Saddam Hussein has faced the consequences of the unilateral withdrawal of troops, which practically means admitting the failure of the war, it proves that the president still has enough power to preserve his position. At present, apart from the Baath party, there is no alternative force that has sufficient mass influence and organisation to take over power. However, we do not have any information about the centres of power within the leadership. There is little possibility of a Shiite turn similar to the one in Iran, nevertheless, Iran's political and military steps are directed mainly toward this. Neither the external, nor the internal conditions are given for this.

Iraq's economic problems have become aggravated with the prolongation of the war. Oil production has decreased remarkably and, through it, so has the income from oil export. The increasing deficit and liquidity problems necessitated the taking up of loans of greater volume. The leadership was forced to change their economic-political conceptions and to introduce war economy. All this greatly influenced Iraq's foreign economic relations as well. The suspension, re-phasing of investments, the measures constricting import had an unfavourable influence mainly on socialist countries, and this could hardly be counter-balanced by the development and intensification of political relations. Based on the previous experiences, the Iraqi leadership will try to link civil business with military transportation. In practice, though, the special supplies [military materials] of socialist countries are not rewarded by special favours, and we have not seen any example, either, for favouring socialist countries for

political reasons when given the same conditions. At the same time, the proportion of developed capitalist countries has further increased in Iraqi import. Some people in the Iraqi leadership and a substantial majority of the middle-level economic leaders strive to strengthen economic co-operation with the capitalist states. This tendency is expected to be further intensified by the financial support received from Saudi Arabia and the countries of the Gulf and the increase in the importance of Iraqi private capital. We consider it necessary to assess the expected effects of the major personal changes in the economic leadership as soon as possible.

Our bilateral relations developed favourably during the period described in the report. The regular political contacts and high-level visits had a favourable influence on the expansion of our co-operation. We usually welcomed the political initiatives of the Iraqi side, we expanded our relations to new areas. All this provided a good basis for the development of our economic co-operation. Our export increased remarkably, the composition of products, their price-level and quality were favourable. Our military-economic ties have become an important political factor and they serve as the basis for our economic co-operation. There are realistic opportunities to further develop our economic relations, but we have to count on the intensification of Iraq's internal difficulties and economic problems. Considering the still remarkable reserves of the country and the external financial support, radical regress is not likely. We have to endeavour consequently to harmonise our supplies and our import. It is time to get prepared for the period following the end of the war, for joining the reconstruction plans. For this reason, besides the transportation of goods, there is a need for developing new, long-term forms of co-operation.

Our competent organs and leaders evaluate the work of the Embassy in the development of economic relations as successful and high-level.

In the described period there was an increase in events disturbing the development of our bilateral relations and leading to temporary tensions. Such problems were caused mainly by the cases of the so called shamefully behaving Iraqi citizens. The Iraqi side pressed the Hungarian authorities to stand up more firmly against their citizens pursuing anti-Iraq activities and committing crimes, however, they tried to use this real problem - through the active

participation of their mission in Budapest - to take action against the [Iraqi] Communist refugees staying in Hungary. We managed to solve the contested issues, affairs prudently, by diplomatic means. As a result of the harmonised measures of the competent Hungarian authorities, there has been a remarkable decrease in the events disturbing our relations.

In the coming period, our main task will be to further consolidate economic co-operation and to fill the existing conventional frames with content better corresponding to our interests and serving our economic goals. We must take special care to build personal relations with the new leaders of economic offices as soon as possible. Our ministers are encouraged to initiate the establishment of relations with the new Iraqi partners.

[...]

Budapest, 8 July 1982

Translated by: Zsófia Zelnik

Source: MOL, M-KS-288 f. 32./ 54. ő. e. – 1982

## **Document 22**

**Foreign Ministry memorandum of conversation with the Iraqi Ambassador  
in Budapest in 1983  
(2 March 1983)**

9<sup>th</sup> Territorial Department

Written: in 8 copies

Károly Szigeti

Copies to:

Comrade Puja

2011-2/1983 Comrade J.

Nagy Comrade Garai

Comrade Házi Comrade

Kázmér Comrade Szűcsné

Baghdad

Private copy

Subject: The visit of the Iraqi  
Ambassador

Today I have received Ismail Hammoudi Hussein, the Ambassador of the Iraqi Republic in Budapest, with whom - according to our agreement last week - I have had a conversation about the problems in the region.

The Ambassador emphasised that our points of view were identical concerning the war. The prolongation of the conflict would cause serious damage to both nations and would endanger the peace and security of the whole region. They agree that the present situation is favourable only for the United States and her allies.

Concerning the latest mediation efforts, he said that, from the beginning, Iraq had supported those efforts which were directed at the solution of the conflict by political means, but Iran rejected all constructive suggestions and wanted to force a military solution. It seemed that, as a result of the talks with the Algerian Foreign Minister, the positions had come closer. However, the Iraqi side is concerned that, for political reasons, Iran had only made an oral gesture toward Algeria. Therefore, there is little hope for reconciliation.

Hussein expounded his private opinion, according to which the Soviet

Union and the socialist countries should make steps more actively to finish the war, this way consolidating their positions in the region, that had weakened after the Lebanese crisis. He stressed that Hungary, for example, could play an important role, considering that she had good relations with both parties, her policies were recognised at the international level [sic!] and considered skilful.

I interjected that we saw little opportunity for mediation as Iran rejected even the initiatives coming from Islamic countries.

The Ambassador agreed and declared that Iran would surely reject the mediation of the Soviet Union or Hungary, just like the similar actions of Islamic countries or of the organisation of non-aligned countries. However, in his opinion, there are other opportunities as well. He mentioned as an example that Hungary had good relations with those Arab countries - Libya and Syria - which provide substantial support to Iran, and whose opinion is considered by the Iranian leadership.

Hussein said that sometimes such indirect steps could have decisive importance. For instance, when relations between the Soviet Union and Iran improved through Syrian mediation, it became possible for ten divisions of the Iranian army to be directed from the Soviet border to the front and this decided the battle of Khoramshari, which meant a turning-point in the war. He underlined that he did not consider a direct interference necessary from the side of the Soviet Union but rather a similar demonstration to the demonstration of force made recently by the USA on the side of Sudan.

According to the Ambassador's opinion, the Lebanese events also confirmed that there was a need for resolute Soviet steps, more active policy and diplomacy. The consolidation of imperialist positions had already influenced the Palestinian liberation movement as well. The latest Algerian conference suggested that there was a shift to the right going on within the leadership of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation and they were in favour of the American plan of settlement. He stressed that he did not want to censure the Soviet Union or diminish the responsibility of the Arab countries for the evolved situation.

In my reply, I pointed out that I did not agree with the Ambassador's opinion concerning several issues. I emphasised that the Soviet Union could not fight the war against Israel instead of the Arab countries. The Soviet Union most resolutely stands up against the American-Israeli aggressive endeavours and her policy is directed at the creation of the unity of action of the Arab countries, without which they cannot count on success. It is a pity that the Arab countries observed Israel's aggression against Lebanon impotently and they look on the Palestinian question moving their own interests into the foreground. It was not in the Arab countries but in Israel that the bloodshed of Beirut caused the biggest demonstration and protest. The internal Arab conflict and division undermine the effectiveness of the policies of both the Soviet Union and the socialist countries.

The Ambassador analysed Syria's policy in more detail. He stated that one of the main obstructers of the creation of the Arab unity was Syria, who had regional superpower endeavours and she approached the Near-Eastern crisis, the Palestinian question and the Iraqi- Iranian war proceeding from this. The Syrian leadership wants to mislead the Soviet Union by proclaiming leftist slogans and an anti-imperialist policy. At the same time, they co-operate with Saudi-Arabia and, through her, with the USA, and in their internal politics, they set limits for the Syrian Communist Party. Their real goal is to get the most modern weapons, which they did not deploy in Lebanon peculiarly. Syria's main aim is to abduct Saddam Hussein and to raise such a Baathist system to power that will subject itself to Assad and will open up the country's economic resources for the Syrian ambitions for power.

Hussein denied that Saddam Hussein had met Assad in Fez or Khaddam in Riyadh. He stated that the Iraqi side was prepared any time for an exchange of ideas at high level, but Syria rejected this, although the situation after Camp David had proved that the minimal Arab unity might only be created with the co-operation of Iraq and Syria.

At the meeting lasting about one and a half hours participated Béla László, desk officer for Iraq, as well as an interpreter of the Iraqi Embassy.

Budapest, 2 March 1983

Translated by: Zsófia Zelnik

Source: MOL, M-KS-288 f. 32./ 45. ő. e. - 1983

## **Document 23**

### **Information by the Soviet Ambassador in Budapest on the situation in Iran (4 July 1983)**

HUNGARIAN SOCIALIST WORKERS' PARTY

CENTRAL COMMITTEE

TOP SECRET!

Inf/1076/983.

#### BULLETIN

for the members of the Political  
Committee

On 4 July 1983, Comrade János Kádár received Soviet Ambassador Comrade Vladimir Bazovsky at his request, who made the following oral statement on behalf of the Central Committee of the CPSU:

"Studying the situation in Iran, we consider it necessary to share with you some of our ideas concerning this matter.

It is well known to our Hungarian friends that in Iran harsh sanctions are instituted against the Tudeh Party. An intensive anti-Communist and anti-Soviet

campaign has started to unfold, in which official personalities participate too. On the whole, the shift to the right of the Iranian regime is obvious. Some of the right-wing religious and political circles, the influential pro-Western elements of the state apparatus and the army, the undisguised agents of the USA want to bring Iran back to the side of the West, to restore military, commercial and economic relations with her. They have set as their goal to undermine the relations between Iran and the socialist countries, although they are going to do this selectively at first. One cannot but notice that all this mainly serves the interests of the USA, which endeavours to aggravate the situation in the region by all means, so that she may use it to her advantage.

Still, it seems to us that in Iran - including the influential Iranian leaders as well - there is readiness to maintain relatively normal relations with the socialist countries, including the Soviet Union. Objectively, this course is strengthened by a number of factors which are related to Iran's present internal and international situation.

Our theoretical point of view concerning Iran is well-known and unchanged. The Soviet side has stated several times that they stand up for the development of normal, good neighbourly relations with Iran, which are based on the principles of equality, non-interference in internal affairs and mutually advantageous co-operation.

Although in the past period the Iranian side has taken a series of hostile measures, we are pursuing a careful but, at the same time, determined policy, we endeavour to prevent the further deterioration of Soviet-Iranian relations.

Through our contacts maintained with the Iranians, we expound the idea that their unfriendly policy toward the Soviet Union causes harm to Iran, to the cause of the Iranian revolution in the first place. It is doubtful whether a setback in existing commercial and economic relations with the Soviet Union would be in the interests of the Iranian people, especially if we consider the importance, from the point of view of Iran, of the transit consignments passing through Soviet areas and the traditionally evolved economic relations between our country and the Northern Iranian territories. The Iranians should also



comprehend that their hostility toward the Soviet Union, in some way, influences our practical relations with the parties participating in the Iranian-Iraqi war.

Of course, we cannot ignore the anti-Communist and anti-Soviet campaign stirred up in Iran, and we have to draw the appropriate conclusions. Among others, we consider it necessary to terminate special consignments [military materials] to Iran completely, including agreements signed earlier, let alone the signature of new ones.

It goes without saying, in case the Iranian side puts an end to their hostile activity toward the Soviet Union and they make steps to normalise relations, the Soviet side will be ready to develop co-operation in the various fields.

We think that Hungary, having good relations with Iran, could exercise some influence on the Iranian leadership, using her political connections and economic opportunities, in order to defend her own interests to some extent. It is possible that our Hungarian friends would consider it reasonable to use their Foreign Minister's planned trip to Tehran to this end.

We would be grateful if our friends informed us about their views concerning the issues outlined above.”

Budapest, 4 July 1983

Translated by: Zsófia Zelnik

Source: MOL, M-KS-288 f. 11./4415.ő.e.

## **Document 24**

### **Report of the Hungarian Embassy in Iraq: on the emergence of an internal crisis in the top Iraqi leadership**

(15 December 1983)

006477

105/ strictly conf. 1983

Made in:

4 copies Center:

3 copies Embassy:

1 copy

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL!

Baghdad, 15 December 1983. Subject: inner crisis ripening

within the highest Iraqi leadership

Recently it has been suggested by several signs that there are significant differences of opinion within the highest Iraqi leadership as to the issue of “how to proceed” now that the third year of the war between Iraq and Iran has passed. The opinions converge on two possible positions:

- one position acknowledges the failure of several initiations aimed at a peaceful resolution of the conflict, accepts the existing balance of forces and takes it as a fact that the war will be a lengthy one with a lot of bloodshed and intends to take comprehensive measures to prepare for further casualties;
- the other position is afraid that a protracted war might result in the fall of the regime and urges further military actions in order to force the resolution of the

conflict at any cost, even accepting further severe casualties.

Both positions derive from Iraqi reality, both are represented by followers of the Baath party system and both give priority to saving the existing regime. However, the latter position, or the methods that it advocates, may easily result in the elimination of the regime despite of its contrary intention, or at best in its significant weakening and modification. Advocates of this position propose a double system of arguments to defend their views:

- Iraq has already withdrawn its troops from Iranian territories and accepted every peaceful initiation or mediation for peace.
- Iran is free to use its waterways in the Persian Gulf to export its oil and import arms, while Iraq has been deprived of the same possibility. In the long run this would upset the existing economic and military balance of forces.

On the basis of both arguments Iraq may feel entitled herself to deal Iranian economic facilities a heavy blow by using all its available military force and prevent Iran from using the Persian Gulf for trading. They are fully aware that if such a step is taken, the Strait of Hormuz will most likely be shut down, and as a result the great powers of the world will intervene, thereby putting an end to the war.

Adherents of this position also believe that Iraq is likely to make significant concessions in order to create the necessary conditions for peace (and, above all, in order to preserve the regime and her own position), even going as far as removing the present president. There are some who maintain that it is the president himself that is the main obstacle to making an agreement with the Iranian regime.

It has to be noted here that such a position would have been totally impossible two years ago. However, the conditions that make such a position possible today are not merely the direct result of the war, and for this very reason it is all the more dangerous from the point of view of Saddam Hussein's personal power.

This phenomenon derives from the fact that in the past three years it was exactly the president who initiated far-reaching changes in the power structure of the regime both in its organization and in its staff. Representing the interests of the civil wing of the Baath Party the president radically replaced supporters of party president Bakr, removed the old military officers who constituted the backbone of the party and filled these posts in public administration and the commandship of the army by young, militant party cadres brought up by the Baath Party. However, the dragging war and the worsening situation made them realize that propaganda was used to conceal the facts, and some of them even recognized that the president and the regime were not the same thing, the regime is viable even without the president and Saddam Hussein would have to make a sacrifice, even by resigning, if the existence of the regime were to depend on it.

This view could not surface under the present circumstances of severe, even cruel control and supervision, and most likely it was only some members of the presidential family who had the courage to suggest that the president should, at least temporarily, stand aside for the sake of the regime and his own security. Several sources say that this idea – the preservation of power within the family – was already brought up for the first time last year, and proponents of this view include, among others, the then minister of health care and several other members of the government. As is well known, the minister of health care was quickly liquidated, while others disappeared without a trace. Thus there seems to be quite a lot of support for the rumor spreading in Baghdad that the president's three half-brothers who had previously held high positions were “written off” for their similar views (more on this issue in our report on domestic policy).

True, the president has thus far been able to withstand these rather hasty attempts, and as in many other critical periods he has managed to turn the events to his own benefit with an exceptional gift. He takes propagandistic measures to prove that Iraq is a democratic country, while cleansing is underway in the secret service and the state administration. He takes a tight rein on party organizations and by

making various concessions and promises he rallies all the former Baath Party officials on his side who were transferred back to civil life from the military. In the spirit of this tactics his official policy is a complex mixture of conciliatory gestures, wait-and-see and military threat, in precise daily doses, as required by the current situation.

For the time being it is not justified to draw far-reaching conclusions on the basis of these disputes and differences of opinion. However, it is already obvious that thawing has already started at the “tip of the iceberg”, and the dissenting attitude of his brothers and their subsequent shelving involve a serious warning for the absolutistic president, even if the concrete measures were not taken by him. It also demonstrates that the forces that might attempt to overthrow the president, if it ever comes to take place, may not come from among the Kurdish or Shi’ite opposition, but rather from among his own people who are so committed to the regime that they will be able to bypass him for the sake of saving the regime at any cost, if the need arises. Most likely Saddam Hussein has properly understood this message, as reflected in his various statements that include a far more realistic evaluation of the current internal and external situation as well as in several of his most recent measures and the obvious signs of settling down for a lengthy war. However, it remains to be seen which position will win the battle. It largely depends on whether it will be possible for the regime to create the necessary conditions for holding out in the war for a long time before the country reaches a level that it can no longer tolerate.

Zoltán Pereszlényi  
ambassador

Translated by: András Bocz

Source: MOL, M-KS-288 f. 32. 45. ő.e. - 1983

**Document 25**

**Report of the Hungarian Embassy in Iraq on the changing of the  
internal power structure in Iraq and its consequences in 1984  
(21 February 1984)**

To comrade Dr. Péter  
Várkonyi Minister of  
Foreign Affairs  
Budapest

001609

12/ strictly conf. 1984

Made in:

4 copies Center:

3 copies Embassy:

1 copy

**STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL!**

Baghdad, 21 February 1984. Subject: changes in the Iraqi power

Leaning on the support of the civil wing of the Iraqi Baath Party president Saddam Hussein had built a well-organized power system and despite the turn that took place in the war in the summer of 1982, up to the fall of last year he had managed to maintain firm control over the country both in foreign policy and in domestic affairs.

One important pillar of presidential power is the party itself; another one is the army, including security forces as well as regular and civil defense forces. These two main forces enjoyed a relatively stable support from the majority of the Iraqi people. Internal supervision was secured by the followers of the president who come from his family or from the region where he was born.

The stable power structure outlined above started showing some cracks last fall and the balance of power seems to be breaking down. The changes are partly due to the protracting war and partly to the internal transformation of the system:

1./ The protracting and bloody war has shattered the economic foundations of the system and as a result the revenues that are necessary for the steady supply of the population and the army and for operating the Iraqi economy that is dependent on imports and foreign labor force to a great extent have diminished to a level that is hardly tolerable any longer. These developments urged the Iraqi government to solve two problems: on the one hand consumption should be reduced to a level that is allowed by the present circumstances, and on the other new ways should be found to export Iraqi oil. The Iraqi leadership has managed to solve these two problems only in part so far and it remains to be seen whether they can implement real and effective measures in this respect. The chances for rapid changes and improvement are practically nil until the beginning of 1985.

- The deterioration of the economic and financial situation and the measures taken under pressure have caused distortions in production and in the forces of production. For example, there is a serious imbalance in industrial production to the advantage of military industry, while due to the shortage of raw materials and labor force the newly built factories cannot work properly, including the iron and steel factories; agricultural labor force was absorbed by the military, the war and the cities.

- Corruption is running wild, the black market has become an important factor in the economy, and irritating differences have developed between the working classes and the “privileged” in terms of supply of basic goods and financial conditions. Though overall consumption has been reduced, it is still well over the level that the country can maintain, and many inconsistent measures have evoked further tension both in the economy and in the mood of the people.

- Several plans have been made to increase oil exports – none of them is viable before 1985. The most recent new possibility is a pipeline to be built with American assistance through Jordan. We have given an account of this plan in our economic report. Even if it can be built, extra revenues will only be realized from the beginning or the middle of 1985.

In brief: the Iraqi leadership cannot reckon with more revenues coming from its own resources than in 1983. However, state expenditures will further increase, mainly due to the costs of the war.

2./ In the 4<sup>th</sup> year of the war the population seems to be increasingly worn out both financially and morally. The propaganda of the system can no longer counterbalance the shortages that people experience; the president, the leadership and the war itself have lost much of their popularity among the people and the number of firm followers of the regime has diminished considerably. The failure to put an end to the war and the hopeless prospects for the future have mobilized some forces within the Iraqi leadership that demand rapid and radical decisions and a prompt conclusion of the war. These people mostly come from young cadres of the Baath Party.



Mention must be made here of the fact that Saddam Hussein's deliberate efforts to decide the rivalry between the civil and the military wing of the Baath party for the benefit of the latter has met with only a partial success so far. Although he has managed to discard the military officials of the "old style" from the leadership, the new, young cadres of the party have created a platform of their own and tend to oppose many of the president's aspirations, though on the same ideological basis. The new leadership of the military, trained in hard battles, is therefore likely to act at a higher level that is more dangerous to the power of the president in order to win a more important role in political decisions.

This process coincides with a serious weakening of the family base of the president, the "Tikrit Clan" that has always been the most important support for Saddam Hussein. Differences of opinion within the clan, partly due to efforts to redistribute leading positions and partly to secure the future of the family, lead to a division in the clan last fall.

In actual practice this was manifested in the replacement of the presidential brothers and the quick "disappearance" of several individuals that had been quite close to the president. There appears now to be a gap at the leading posts of the pillars of the system mentioned above, the party and the armed forces. These posts are to be filled still by the president, but the influence of the new group forming in the army (let us call them "young Baathists") is beginning to assert itself.

Another center of power is beginning to take shape around the figure of first deputy Prime Minister Ramadan, commander of the People's Militia. The replacement of one of the brothers of the president, the powerful head of the Intelligence Service, Barzan Al-Tikrit was partly due to the hostile relationship with Ramadan.

The "young Baathists" today do not yet constitute an organized force, and

their opposition is restricted to certain areas only. What is already obvious of their political aspirations however is that they do not support the unsuccessful peace negotiations with Iran, and they are convinced that the dragging war with Iran will undermine the system and eventually lead to its fall. Naturally, today nobody yet dares to speak of such ideas publicly in Iraq.

Presumably this group, becoming more and more influential within the leadership of the army, has no strong position on what should happen after the war, but they have a very strong view that Iran can only be made to end the war by military force. Their position has been gradually gaining ground in the Iraqi leadership since the end of last year and is reflected in several official statements made by Iraq. One concrete result of this process was that on 2 February Iraq announced that it would resume attacks on Iranian settlements.

Although it is premature to draw far-reaching conclusions at this point, it is clear that the Iraqi leadership has deliberately increased tension in the past few weeks, thereby speeding up certain developments that are not in its favor at all. Today we can see two possible explanations for this: according to one the Iraqi leadership intended to deter a large scale Iranian offensive by its threats. The other explanation might be that it got caught in the same trap of overconfidence that we saw in 1980 and Iraq really wants to provoke a final battle that will settle the war for once and for all. We believe that the latter explanation is closer to reality, and the new, young leaders of the army have played and continue to play a decisive role in this line of policy. What do they expect in view of the current balance of forces? Maybe they believe that a battle more serious than any other clash before and the elimination of a large number of civilians on both sides will force the great powers to act or intervene more radically. This is a slim chance though. Reality is that the war continues and new tensions are emerging.

While in the middle of 1983 we could firmly state that Saddam Hussein's personal power and the system he maintained were strong and unshakable, now, at the beginning of 1984 we can see several signs that there are some forces that clearly strive to curb the president's personal cult and

dictatorship. They obviously act in defense of the system maintained by the Baath Party, but they also intend to reorganize the internal relations of power. This could result in a power crisis whether or not the war will eventually come to an end.

Zoltán Pereszlényi

Ambassador

Translated by: András Bocz

Source: MOL, M-KS-288 f. 32. 42. ő. e. - 1984

**Document 26**

**Report on the negotiations of Deputy Foreign Minister Róbert Garai in  
Iraq between 11 and 13 December 1984  
(22 December 1984)**

Made in: 12 copies Sent to:

Comrade

Várkonyi Comrade Roska

Comrade Esztergályos Comrade

Nagy Comrade Nagy G.

Comrade Kővári

Department of District IX (2

copies) Department of District X  
(2 copies) Comrade Mrs. Szücs  
private copy

TOP SECRET!

## **REPORT**

on Iraqi consultations

I conducted consultative discussions in Baghdad between 11 and 13 December 1984. My negotiating partner was deputy minister Taha Yassim Al Ali. The negotiations were attended by competent senior officials of the Iraqi ministry of foreign affairs and H. Ali Al-Anbari, head of the department of the ministry of commerce. I was received for a longer negotiation by first deputy Prime Minister and minister of foreign affairs Tariq Aziz, member of the Iraqi Revolutionary Commanding Council. The meeting was also attended by Zoltán Pereszlényi, our ambassador to Iraq.

Tariq Aziz stressed the following: Iraq and Hungary are connected by close and friendly ties in various areas of party, state, trade union and other types of cooperation. President Saddam Hussein greatly appreciates the achievements of Hungary and is proud of his friendship with Comrade János Kádár. He regards

Comrade Kádár as an outstanding leader of high reputation.

They think it is important to conduct open and honest negotiations with friendly nations of the world. They devote a lot of attention to negotiations between the two foreign ministries. They especially appreciate the fact that the negotiations will take place at a proper time at the initiation of the Hungarian side.

The Iraqi negotiating partners including T. Aziz, have also emphasized the following:

In the present situation Iraq is mostly concerned with the war with Iran. The issue of the war requires a lot of time and energy. The great efforts on the part of Iraq are not only justified by the fact that the war is fought with a neighboring country but also by the fact that the conflict has an impact on the whole region. At the same time, the ongoing war may have unforeseeable consequences and become the source of real dangers. Therefore, the Iraqi side devotes special attention to providing information on the developments both in international organizations and in the course of negotiations with friendly states. A clear understanding of the situation may play a fundamental role in the future developments of the war. Everybody should see that the war between Iraq and Iran is not a war between two isolated countries. If it were, the conflict would long have been resolved, for one participant in it, Iraq has no territorial claims over the other and would be ready to accept a peaceful solution.

Iran was a true capitalist country, part of the capitalist world with a huge territory, lots of resources and a large population. At the same time it suffered from several different “diseases”: The leaders of the country, personally the shah openly aspired to win hegemony in the region while doing nothing in order to eliminate the backwardness of the country. There is no developed industry and infrastructure in Iran. Even the huge revenues deriving from the production of 6 million barrels of oil

per day were not enough to develop the country properly, for the leaders spent most of the incomes on armament rather than on development. In the meantime it turned out that they were mistaken to believe that they can maintain modern armed forces with up-to-date technology when 80 percent of the population is illiterate. Problems were continuously accumulating on the ground of severe backwardness, and internal tension was increasing.

Therefore “we socialists” – said Tariq Aziz – evaluated it from the beginning that has occurred in Iran in 1979 was not a revolution but an “explosion” that resulted in the coming to power of even more reactionary forces than the Sah’s regime had been, headed by Khomeini.

[...]

He [Khomeini] insists that life lost in a fight with the enemy shortens earthly sufferings and brings with it the happiness of heavens. At the same time a shorter life allows for fewer mistakes and thus heavenly existence can be even more happy and forgivable.)

Tariq Aziz referred to Khomeini’s speech delivered on 11 December in which he proclaimed a war not only in the region but against the whole world. He disregards international norms and depreciates the achievements and the role of other nations. For example he states that in Asia there are only two powers, Iran and Japan, and since Japan is not a military power, the door is open for Iran to assume a leading role in the region. They also want to bring their internal problems out to the frontline across the borders.

Thus Khomeini is ill, surrounded by similarly ill people. Iraq believes that the world should not cultivate any relationship with them. For the moment the assault is launched at Iraq, and Iraq is ready to stop it. But if Iraq falls, order will be upset in the whole region.

Anyway, Iran is simply incapable of organizing its international relations on a healthy basis. Its views in the guise of religion derive from a dark age whose essence is opposition to anything that is foreign. This is the reason why Iran is anti-

Soviet and anti-American at the same time. However, in the present situation it badly needs foreign relations, for it has to sell its oil for money and arms.

When I remarked that that foreign minister Velayati represented a position in certain international issues that was quite close to Hungarian views at his last visit to Budapest Tariq Aziz made the following comment: he personally feels sorry for Velayati for he is in an impossible situation. He has to represent an outdated age in a way that the everyday interests of his country should also be enforced. Therefore he speaks very differently from what the official position of the Iranian leaders is when he is abroad. As a result his words lack any real value, because they do not reflect the position of the regime. He called upon Velayati at the General Assembly of UN to publish the speech he had just delivered in Iranian newspapers, and if he could do that, his words could be given much more credit.

According to Tariq Aziz Iraq is not sensitive at all as to who maintains a relationship with Iran. Its only intention is to call the attention of collaborators to Iran's "illness." Control over this sick power is in the interest of the East and West alike. In Iraq they know it well that the essence of the turn in Iran was evaluated in many different ways all over the world. He conducted private discussions on this issue with comrade Ponomaryev in the Soviet Union, with minister Malmierca in Cuba and with other politicians.

So Iran is ill, and people – regardless of their political affiliation and conviction – should fight against Iran purely on humanitarian grounds. This was the case with Nazism too. Hitler was a sick man. He felt entitled to rule the whole world and advocated the superiority of the German nation. And he was not alone in this. Millions and millions of "ill" people followed him who viewed ordinary crimes as honorable acts. At that time Germany was much

more developed both economically and socially than Iran is now. Iran has totally alienated herself from the rest of the world.

Tariq Aziz and the other Iraqi negotiating partners emphasized that maintaining relations with Iran increases the dangers of the Iranian policy. Even today Iran is already a hindrance to a rapprochement between the East and the West, and the war in the Gulf may easily lead to the Third World War. Therefore much more care should be devoted to the analysis of the Iranian “phenomenon” and the relationship with Iran should not be evaluated purely on the basis of bilateral relations. They pointed out that Iran can continue with the war only if it can raise more money and buy more arms and other goods. The war makes economic growth impossible, and as a result tensions increase and Iran is pressed to continue the war. All this might lead to an internal explosion in Iran. If that happens, international tension will also increase significantly, for neither the Soviet Union nor the USA can just sit back and do nothing.

According to Tariq Aziz there is no good solution for the Iranian “phenomenon” – what is going on in Iran today can only be changed either through a socialist revolution or a liberal takeover of power.

The Iraqi partners also said that they did their best to explain the situation and clearly expressed their views to leaders of the Soviet Union too. Otherwise they maintain very good relations with the Soviet Union and the Soviets support their fight among other things by the supply of arms . Iraq deems it necessary to maintain good relations with other socialist countries as well and never fails to acknowledge their interests. They are quite satisfied with the development of their international relations. As the most recent development in their foreign policy, they mentioned the fact that Iraq had renewed diplomatic relations with the United States after clarifying their respective positions openly and precisely. In their view it is important to recognize that the attitude of Iran is more dangerous than the fight between the Arab countries and the Zionist state, for it is possible to predict the potential developments of the latter. But who can talk sensibly with Khomeini or exert an influence him? There is hardly any force in the world now that could bring Iran under control. Iraq is now fighting Iran with the force of arms, and others should do at least as much as not to provide food supplies for them. Tariq Aziz also



said that on his part he has a hard time understanding how Hungary can work together with Iran and how Hungary can plan its relations with Iran in advance for the next ten years. At the same time the Iraqi partners stressed: they believe the Hungarian leaders view the Iraqi position in the right way, as is reflected by well-developed relations between the two countries. However, they wanted to know whether any concrete measure were taken besides diplomatic efforts in the issues raised by Iraq at the last visit of the Arab League in July 1984, such as tightening up economic relations, refrainment from supplying arms and buying Iranian oil.

T. Aziz underlined that Europe had a key role in the peaceful resolution of the war between Iraq and Iran. This role is related to Europe's historical role in defending civilization. It is primarily a moral obligation not only in the case of the Iraqi-Iranian war but in many other regions of international crises. Europe is morally obliged to take a position in the issue of the war and handle the problem in accordance with its real significance. Iraq feels responsible for world peace and security and has therefore accepted every initiative and resolution for peace. Thus, European countries, regardless of their social system, have to put pressure on Iran politically, economically and in any other possible way. Iraq fully understands and appreciates European interests, but pressure can be put on Iran without violating these interests. Potential economic losses can be compensated for in the long run. The potential dangers of escalating the conflict and its international impact must be taken into consideration. They are convinced that their Hungarian friends can understand and appreciate the Iraqi position.

As for the situation of the Palestine Liberation Front the Iraqi partners said the convening of the conference in Amman was necessary purely in the interest of ensuring the operation of Palestinian institutions. The idea was to convene all members of the Council but as a result of external intervention it became impossible. Arafat had no choice but to convene the conference in Amman with a partial but majority participation. Several Palestinian organizations that did not attend the conference have so far refrained from making hostile statements, so there is still a possibility for dialog. When the groups under total Syrian influence are considered, the situation is different and the distance between positions is greater.

Citing Palestinian views they said that besides Israel's aggression in Lebanon Syria's action in Tripoli also played a determinant role in the political liquidation of the PLO. Iraq's view is that the Palestinian organization should not be broken into parts and there is no need for an alternative PLO. Apparently that is what Syria intends to achieve.

As for the Gulf Cooperation Council they said that they view it as one of the aspirations of Arab countries for unity. The activities of the organization are aimed at planning a common future for Arab countries. Iraq has its own views and opinion about the organization but they do not wish to express them at this point. Military coordination is also part of these aspirations for unity, aimed at preventing intervention in their domestic affairs and defending their respective countries jointly from the danger that Iran means in the region. This is much better than requesting foreign intervention. In the case of member states of the Gulf Council it has to be considered that historical and traditional reasons may make the establishment of relations with socialist countries difficult, but steady efforts will surely bring success. Iraq supports the efforts of socialist countries in this matter.

As far as bilateral relations are concerned, my Iraqi partners used praising words. T. Aziz stressed that they are ready to develop cooperation with the People's Republic of Hungary on the basis of friendship and confidence and are willing to sign an agreement even for the duration of ten years. [...]

Budapest, 22 December 1984

Translated by: András Bocz

Source: MOL, M-KS-288 f. 32. 42. ő. e. - 1984

**Document 27**

**Report of the Hungarian Embassy in Iraq on the development of Iraqi-US  
relations since the restoration of diplomatic relations in 1985  
(12 February 1985)**

To comrade Dr. Péter  
Várkonyi Minister of  
Foreign Affairs  
Budapest

001345

25/ Top Secret/ 1985

Made in:

4 copies Center:

3 copies Embassy:

1 copy Referent:

István Kovács  
TOP SECRET!  
Baghdad, 12 February 1985.

Subject: the development of Iraqi-American relations

since the restoration of diplomatic relations

For a long time the Iraqi leadership had taken great pains to prepare for the restoration of diplomatic relations with the United States on 26 November 1984.

The timing of the renewal of relations coincided with the reelection of President Reagan that according to some views will ensure some continuity in the foreign policy of the United States. Naturally, this policy also includes the Middle Eastern policy of the USA that had ended in repeated failures during the first term of Reagan's presidency in Lebanon and brought the Camp David process to a deadlock.

Therefore the republican government of the United States had to "freeze" its political activities in the Middle East in the year of the election so that it could erase the past of several blunders committed by the Reagan administration in the region. However, from the beginning of 1984 it became clear even in this "state of rest" that American foreign policy showed more "understanding" towards the Iraqi position both officially and through the press. This process eventually led to the restoration of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

The Iraqi leadership was quite content to see that as a result of thorough preliminary arrangements and good timing the renewal of diplomatic relations was received as a "natural course of events" all over the world (with the exception of Iran), including the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. The reactions inside Iraq were also quite moderate and found sympathy in influential economic and political circles.

One thing the Iraqi leadership was hoping for by the restoration of diplomatic relations was that it would promote the resolution of the war conflict with Iran that had been dragging on for almost five years, or at least it would bring political and economic support for Iraq until the war was finished (a wider market for Iraqi oil, loans, investments, etc.). However, they did not consider the possibility that as a result of the "thawing" that had already started in Soviet-American relations and due to some other, burning international issues that had been put on the agenda, issues of the Middle East and the problem of the Iraqi-Iranian war would become peripheral in international policy. True, at the beginning of December the Iraqi leadership ordered to resume air raids on Iranian tankers and

trading vessels bound for Iranian ports, thereby ensuring some international propaganda for Iraq, so that the world should not forget about the unresolved conflict.

According to an American diplomat the growing importance of Soviet-American negotiations has pushed the Middle Eastern policy of the USA into the background, whose conditions are not mature at present anyway. In his view this rules out in advance the possibility that the United States should get involved in the resolution of the conflict in the near future in a way that is expected by Iraq. He does not think that an economic and military embargo demanded by Iraq against Iran is feasible (especially in the case of the allies), all the more so because Iran continues to be one of the most important strategic partners for the USA by her geopolitical location.

In this light the USA strives to maintain normal relations with Iraq “free from supplies of arms”, taking into consideration global American interests in the region. The American diplomat did not mention it, but it can be presumed that in the long run Iraq may prove to be a valuable link in establishing an axis friendly to the USA (United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, the Gulf countries) in the interest of ensuring the American interests in the region.

Due to the rather rigid position of Iran in the issue of the war none of the international mediatory negotiations is expected to bring significant results, and the USA does not wish to take sides with Iraq in an issue that is hopeless in advance and contrary to her interests. However, they are ready to revive bilateral relations with Iraq on a wide scale, as demonstrated by the following events and visits since the restoration of diplomatic relations:

- In December, 1984 a delegation of American journalists visited Iraq (New York

Times, UPI, etc.);

- On 20 December 1984 President Saddam Hussein received Christine Moss Helms, a researcher of science policy of the Brooking Institute;

- In December, 1984 an exhibition of historic Iraqi costumes toured in the United

States for several weeks;

- On 10-11 January 1985 Joseph Sisco, former deputy secretary of state visited Iraq, presumably to probe into the region before the scheduled visit of foreign secretary Schultz to the Middle East. During his brief stay in Iraq Sisco was received by Tariq Aziz, deputy Prime Minister and minister of foreign affairs, member of the Revolutionary Commanding Council, Hassan Ali, member of the Revolutionary Commanding Council, minister of commerce, Quassim Ahmed Taqi, minister of oil production and Subat Yassin, minister of industry and mineral materials;

- On 15 January, a delegation of experts went to Iraq headed by Richard Smith, adviser of the American ministry of agriculture to discuss how agricultural cooperation could be extended. In addition to the Iraqi partner minister he was also received by Hassan Ali, member of the Revolutionary Commanding Council, minister of commerce. During the visit the two parties signed an agreement for a complementary agricultural loan of 12 million USD;

- On 16 January, Judith Kippers, an American researcher of science policy was received by Dr. Saad Quassim Hammoudi, leader of the Foreign Office of the Baath Party;

- At the end of January the Iraqi airline company (Iraqi Airways) opened several ticket and cargo offices in American cities (New York, Los Angeles, Detroit). This shows that Iraq expects a significant increase in the turnover of goods that can be profitably exported via air (such as electronic goods).

The various bilateral negotiations also make it possible for Iraq to raise her economic and financial claims and for the USA to conduct valuable political consultations (the situation in the Gulf, the issue of the PLO). In the field of

economy the expected pace of development is restricted by Iraq's solvency and financing capacity problems at least until the pipeline leading through Saudi Arabia is completed by the end of this year and another pipeline through Turkey to be completed in 1986 or 1987 is put into service. For the time being American banks show little willingness to take a risk in granting a loan and investing in Iraq, and no change can be expected in this respect until Iraq can pay off her outstanding debts deriving from other relations that have already been deferred once and are due by the summer of 1985. In any case, if the financial situation improves in Iraq, both the political-economic leadership and the increasingly influential Iraqi private sector will be ready to act in order to rapidly develop economic collaboration between Iraq and the United States. However, due to the previously mentioned financial and economic difficulties it cannot be expected that the trade volume between the two countries will exceed USD 1 billion in 1985.

For the Iraqi leadership the resolution of the Iraqi-Iranian conflict as soon as possible is even more important than economic cooperation with the USA. Therefore they use every occasion to keep the issue of the war on the international agenda. As a minimal goal they want to make sure that the issue is put on the agenda of Soviet-American negotiations and that the USA should assist Iraq in keeping it on the agenda in the UN Security Council and at other international forums. In return it is quite possible that Iraq will become more moderate in statements concerning other major issues of world politics (such as Nicaragua, Afghanistan, the PLO, support for Craxi's plan to resolve the situation in the Middle East, etc.).

However, the expectations concerning the renewal of diplomatic relations have not been fulfilled so far. The patience of the Iraqi leadership is tested, among other things, by the fact that the USA still has not appointed its ambassador to Iraq, referring to some procedural reasons of approval, when Iraq was ready to commission Ismat Kittani, a former UN envoy, to head the Iraqi embassy in Washington as early as December last year. The failure to fulfill the Iraqi expectations (American promises) may easily evoke distrust towards the American

relations and the true nature of American intentions (this was already echoed in the Iraqi press at the beginning of February) that can in some sense result in a more contradictory relationship between the two countries than before the restoration of diplomatic relations.

In the opinion of the American diplomat the USA is content with the present state of Iraqi-American relations but they are not interested in rushing their development. The American presence in Iraq ensures that in case a political change occurs (a basic precondition of ending the war set by Iran), they will have a chance to “support” pro-American forces within the Baath Party. The resolution of the conflict with American assistance however is not seen as a viable option by the USA under the present circumstances, although they are ready to keep the issue on the agenda when other issues of the Middle East are discussed. According to the American position “time is working for them” and the Reagan administration has plenty of time to deal with the delicate Middle Eastern issue, especially now that the government has just approved of a military and economic aid package to Israel that is greater than ever.

The main goal of the scheduled visit of King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, King Hussein of Jordan and Egyptian President Mubarak is to convince the USA that they should abandon the policy of wait-and-see in the Middle East. Most likely the Reagan administration will consider their arguments and call to do so and will be ready to resume the diplomatic shuttle service at an “Arab request” even this year, if proper “guarantees” can be secured. In this case Iraq would also be involved in the negotiations under the pretext of examining the ways of resolving the Iraqi-Iranian conflict.

Zoltán Pereszlényi  
ambassador



Translated by: András Bocz

Source: MOL, M-KS-288 f. 32. - 31. ő. e. - 1985

**Document 28**

**Report of the Hungarian Embassy in Iraq on the development of the Iraqi-  
American relationship in 1985  
(17 April 1985)**

To comrade [Foreign Minister]Dr. Péter Várkonyi

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Budapest

001345/1

25/1/1985/ Top Secret

Made in:

4 copies Center:

3 copies Embassy:

1 copy referent:

István Kovács

Baghdad, 17 April 1985. Subject: American and Iraqi views  
on the Iraqi-American relations

The restoration of diplomatic relations between Iraq and the United States in November 1984 has brought about much smaller changes in the relations of the two countries than what was expected. Even some Western diplomats have expressed their surprise at how cautious the United States is when it comes to the development of relations with Iraq. So far we have not seen any significant rapprochement between the two countries that was predicted by many at the end of 1984. It has to be added that it is mainly due to the rather passive attitude of the American side, for Iraq is ready to broaden her relations both in a political and an economic sense.

According to an American diplomat the relations between the two countries develop at a normal pace. The American party is content with the present situation and does not wish to establish a closer relationship with Iraq. For the time being Iraq does not play a prominent role in the Middle Eastern policy of the United States. It is still Egypt, Jordan and Syria that enjoy a key role in the region. The main reason for this is that the US continues to be interested in a protracted conflict between Iraq and Iran within the existing framework. Although the developments of the war that occurred in March may be a warning, the American position is that the conflict is more unlikely to spread over to other countries today than it was at the beginning of 1984 when Iraq subjected the region of the Iranian Kharg Island to an air blockade.

The USA pursues a policy of wait-and-see in the issue of the war and it is obvious that they can keep a close tab on any actions and preparations of the two parties by means of their AVACS system operating in Saudi Arabia. In this respect the American view is quite similar to the Soviet position according to which neither of the two parties is in the position to be able to put an end to the war by military means.

Another part of this wait-and-see policy is that USA has not appointed its ambassador to Iraq since the restoration of diplomatic relations in 1984. According to an American diplomat the reason for this delay is only formal (a lengthy process of approval, etc.). He also added that there were many other places more significant than Iraq where the post of the ambassador was yet to be filled.

In the present situation the USA does not wish to commit herself to Iraq more than necessary. The postponement of appointing the ambassador demonstrates that although Iraq, not long ago qualified as a “supporter of terrorism”, is regarded as more moderate now by the USA, the president of the country, Saddam Hussein is not likely to receive much support.

This is even more likely in a situation when the USA can see that the internal Iraqi opposition has become active (they are responsible for some of the explosions), and the renewal of the war and its protraction may jeopardize the fate of Saddam Hussein. From another aspect Iran will continue to be a more important relation for the USA, and if circumstances develop in the desired way, the USA will be ready to normalize its relations with Iran and regain its influence on her.

As a response to delaying the appointment of the American ambassador Iraq finally appointed a former chargé d'affaires, Nazar Hamdoun ambassador to the USA instead of Ismat Kittani (deputy minister of foreign affairs). (He

presented his credential to President Reagan on 6 March.) It has to be added that Kittani was ready to head the Iraqi embassy as early as December.

Iraq has made rather neutral statements on the Iraqi-American relations. However, it is obvious that they are quite dissatisfied with the passive attitude of the USA, as a result of which Iraq has not received the requested loan and the negotiations on favorable trade relations have not proved successful either. The already rather moderate American political support for Iraq has further diminished in the past few weeks, and Iraq was especially hard hit by the American position expressed at the meeting between Tariq Aziz and foreign secretary Schultz on 25 March when the USA raised the issue of condemning the use of chemical weapons in general. It is worth noting here that the Iraqi press sharply criticizes the American foreign policy in general as well as in relation to the war, while it speaks very highly of Soviet-Iraqi relations. This is demonstrated by celebrating the 13<sup>th</sup> anniversary of signing the Soviet-Iraqi agreement of friendship and cooperation. A meeting organized by the Iraqi- Soviet Friendship Society was attended by two Iraqi ministers, and it was the first time that Iraq spoke publicly about a Soviet-Iraqi military cooperation.

Zoltán Pereszlényi ambassador

Translated by: András Bocz

Source: MOL, M-KS-288 f. 32. - 31. ő. e. -1985

## **Document 29**

### **Report of the Hungarian Embassy in Iraq on the negative impact of the war on the Iraqi domestic situation in 1986**

**(24 April 1986)**

To comrade Dr. Péter  
Várkonyi Minister of  
Foreign Affairs  
Budapest

001345

54/ top secret/ 1986

Made in:

4 copies Center:

3 copies Embassy:

1 copy

TOP SECRET!

Baghdad, 24 April 1986.

Subject: the negative impact of the war on

the Iraqi domestic situation

The Iraqi leadership and the majority of the population had high hopes for the year of 1986 and expected that things would change for the better in the country. These hopes were apparently based on hard work done in the previous period of time, the relative stabilization of the economic situation, significant improvements in oil exports and a temporary standstill at the frontline. The belief in better economic

results is reflected in economic plans and several euphoric popular festivities.

However, the events at the beginning of the first three months of the new year proved all these high hopes wrong in every respect:

- The Iranian offensive that had been postponed several times was finally launched on 9 February and the Iranian troops crossed the middle section of Shatt-al-Arab, a move that had been considered impossible thus far. They took the city of Al-Fao and now many troops are stationed in Iraqi territory;
  
- The steep decline of oil prices crushed any hopes for increasing state revenues and any significant returns for the costs and work invested in building new oil pipelines;
  
- The decline of the exchange rate of the US dollar further decreased the solvency of Iraq;
  
- Iraq had not received the requested political and financial support from the broad international community in her fight against the aggression of Iran.

The negative impact of these developments strengthened one another and created rather depressive conditions in Iraq's domestic situation. They made the latently present tensions even more acute and started erosion in the political elite and the society that may have severe consequences even in the short term.

1. The most important consequence is that unity between the three major forces of power, the Baath Party, the army and other armed forces and the president was broken. The army is unwilling to assume responsibility for the failures at Al-

Fao, and there are many voices now openly mentioning the role of the president and his immediate environment in this failure. Military leaders eager to fight demand that they should be given a free hand in eliminating the consequences of this failure that had destroyed their prestige, and insist that they should be given everything necessary to drive the Iranian troops out of Iraqi land.

However, the president – as shown by his statements – clearly sees that the liberation of Al-Fao would require severe human and material sacrifices that Iraq cannot take now, or if it did, the country would become an easy prey to another Iranian assault. Incidentally, Iran has already prepared for such a grand offensive and deployed some 550-600 thousand troops in the region of Ahvaz.

Thus, the president is forced to resolve two problems, since he cannot take the risk of openly opposing the military leadership: on the one hand he has to sell the present situation to the military and civil public and on the other he has to do that in a way that he can get out of this situation stronger than ever and consolidate his system internally.

As in many other critical situations before, the president tries to push the party into the foreground and enforce his own ideas through party resolutions. He sets the party as an entity above any state institution against the military and the disillusioned people and cleverly avoids any direct clashes with those that he will need to rely on in the future. In the spirit of this tactics Saddam Hussein has withdrawn into the background in the past few weeks and hardly ever appears in public. This was especially striking when the key role on the anniversary of the Baath Party held in April was given to Michel Aflak, the old founding father of the party.

Many Iraqis and members of the DT [diplomatic corps in Baghdad?] explain the withdrawal of the president by saying that the presidential authority has been undermined and some elements are forcing their way forward under the aegis of the party that are even ready to remove the president in the interest of saving the system. No doubt there are such forces present in Iraq now and they may as well have their chance if the situation further deteriorates.

However, the reality of the balance of forces suggests that this is still a slim chance, and what is taking place now is nothing but the enforcement of the president's will, only in an indirect form. This view is justified by news that the military leaders responsible for the events in the south have been relieved, transferred to some other posts or even executed and rumor has it that even the chief of the Security Service has been removed. First deputy Prime Minister T. Y. Ramadan, who has been mentioned as a real alternative to Saddam Hussein, is gradually "relieved" all of his functions, and more recently his powers in economic matters and management have also been placed under presidential control.

Discipline has been severely tightened in the state and party apparatus and the armed forces, and for security reasons measures have been introduced to restrict free movement of the civilian population. In the Shi'ite capital, Kerbala there was a minor uprising a few days ago, and several signs appeared that criticized the president. The security forces did not hesitate for a moment to crack down on and disperse the demonstrators by brutal force and the use of fire-arms.

Some hitherto unprecedented events similar to what happened in Kerbala demonstrate that the activity of anti-war forces that blame the regime has increased considerably under the surface. Thus, some rumors have been spread that that the president and his family has made significant illegal profits from revenues deriving from mandatory delivery of gold, horse- racing and lottery tickets. The direct dangers of these phenomena should not be overestimated, but they still can have an unfavorable impact on the mood of the population simply by the fact that they are



raised openly.

The complexity of social reality in Iraq is also shown by some legends being revived among extremist Shi'ites, one of which is a story that the last Shi'ite imam who disappeared several hundred years ago will so return and restore the power of the Muslim church by expelling the ungodly Baathists. What is important in such rumors is not their content but the mere fact that they can surface in the country with a definite sharp tone against Saddam Hussein and his system.

2. The mood of the people was further deteriorated by the economic and financial measures that were taken in the 18 March meeting of the government (see a special report on this meeting) and which severely affect supplies for the population for the first time during the five and a half years of the war against Iran. The import of luxury goods will be stopped, the selection of goods will be severely reduced, savings of the population will be curtailed and social investments will be stopped.

The amount of foreign currency that foreign guest workers can transfer abroad has been reduced to a minimum and those who do not have a permanent work contract are forced to leave the country. According to the Egyptian chargé d'affaires some 180-200 thousand Egyptian workers left the country in a few weeks. As a result several bakeries, stores and small plants were closed that severely affect supplies for the population and the shortage of labor force paralyzes the private sector and state construction. If Egyptian citizens keeping the agriculture of Iraq alive also start leaving the country, vegetables that are so important for the Iraqi people will also disappear from the markets.

Thus, the limitations on imports and the shortage of labor force in domestic production may lead to the deterioration of supplies for the people to an extent that may well exceed the tolerance level of the population, the fundamental base of support for the regime. We have some information now that there are some

problems in supplying the army as well.

The negative influence of the restrictions that have been introduced partly under pressure and partly as a result of cautious foresight is by now obvious to the political leadership. In order to liven up the mood of the people some reserves are being put on the market, but a temporary improvement has also brought about a buying fever. People are rightly afraid that once the reserves are used up, shortages will continue unless imports are resumed.

For the time being the masses believe that the problems have deepened because of the war enforced on them by Iran, and there are very few who can see the mistakes committed by their leaders. Thus, despite growing fatigue and apathy the system with its propaganda can still maintain a national union against Iran and the appearance of unity.

3. The political leadership intends to heal the wounds inflicted upon the self-esteem and the feeling of security of the nation after the seizure of Al-Fao by overstating the successes of the political and military leaders in other fronts, saying that Al-Fao will become “the cemetery of the Iranian aggressors and the graveyards will be left open by the Iraqi army until Iranians march into them themselves.” These words appear to be mere flowers of rhetoric, but it would be a mistake to let temporary Iranian successes in the south distort the real balance of forces between the two sides. Iran has clearly won a battle, but the war continues and the balance of power has not changed. Although the seizure of Al-Fao has brought about a qualitative change in one section of the frontline, its importance is of a political rather than a military nature in that political fight in this phase of the war becomes critical on the Iraqi side. This is quite close to what Iran has been trying to achieve by protracting the war as much as possible.

With some of our friendly ambassadors we believe that Iraq’s defensive capabilities are still quite good, and the multiple-stage defensive system at

important sections of the frontline, the high quality technology of the army, Iraq's advantage over Iran in air forces and heavy arms and the almost unlimited military supplies all ensure that the country can properly defend herself. Most of the attention now should be devoted to keeping up the morale and discipline of the people, and the policy conducted in the hinterland may have a strong influence on these endeavors.

The Iraqi leadership and Saddam Hussein first have to win a domestic battle, while making sure that the present situation at the fronts, which can by no means be called bad, should not worsen significantly.

One of the components of the internal fight, we believe, is stirring the nationalist emotions of the masses and organizing demonstrations of taking sides with the president. March was the month of celebrating the anniversary of the Baath Party, while April passed in the spirit of events and ceremonies preparing for the birthday of the president. At the same time the "material-battle", the increase of production and the decrease of consumption, continues to be fought in the country. It is premature to draw conclusions on the basis of a relatively short period of time, but the first results seem to suggest that Saddam Hussein will again manage to overcome the difficulties and consolidate his power behind the bastion of the party. However, the most he can achieve in the long run is to delay the tendencies that are bound to jeopardize his presidency and regime. The time factor is gaining more and more importance and events can be accelerated inside Iraq too if Iran launches a successful offensive in the middle and southern sections of the frontline. Presumably the offensive will take place on or soon after 28 April the birthday of Saddam Hussein. It is Iran that can take the initiative now.

Zoltán Pereszlényi

Ambassador

Translated by: András Bocz

Source: MOL, M-KS-288 f. 32. 27. ő. e. - 1986

**Document 30**

**Report of the Hungarian Ambassador in Iraq on the developments of  
the military conflict between Iraq and Iran in 1986  
(5 July 1986)**

00217/42

32/2/Top Secret/1986

Comrade dr. Péter Várkonyi

Minister of Foreign Affairs

**Budapest**

Top Secret!

Baghdad,

5 July 1986.

Subject: The Situation of the  
Military Conflict between Iraq and  
Iran, expected developments

At the end of 1986 and at the beginning 1987, the burdens of the war that turned to its 7<sup>th</sup> year has further worsened the economic life in the Republic of Iraq and the occupation of Fao in February this year led to both military and internal political convulsions. Ending the war early and reducing the negative effects were invariably in the focus of Iraq's foreign and internal political efforts.

1./ Over the last year, a relative balance remained in the military power relations of Iraq and Iran, that on Iraq's part was based on the technical supremacy of its land and air forces and bigger fire-power, while on the Iranian side, the supremacy was based on the existing surplus of human power, fighting spirit and the opportunity for initiation.

There have been remarkable changes in some elements of the military situation recently:

- a./ - Both parties' economic potential has further weakened, especially in the case of Iraq, it has happened at a faster speed, directly influencing some military directives;
  - Iran's military power is growing faster as compared to Iraq, while Iraq's technical superiority is gradually reducing;
  - the strategic initiation is still in the hands of Iran and it uses the opportunities increasingly better.
- b./ The Iranian troops broke through Shat-el-Arab on 9 February, having occupied and holding el-Fadt, one of Iraq's strategically important naval exit up to this date.

The Iranian success indicates the beginning of qualitative changes, both in military and political terms. The war on land has reached to the immediate neighborhood of the Gulf- countries, shaking the faith in the firmness of Iraq's defense, damaging the reputation of the Iraqi army and may cause internal political convulsion. /See my top secret report No. 34/86 / It has brought forward the potential and the danger that Iran would create the core of an Islamic Republic of Iraq based on emigrant and internal opposition forces, thereby tearing off the country's southern, vital area. The loss of Fao partly supports the presumption articulated already last year, that in case the war would drag on, Iran would be capable of deciding the outcome of the conflict even by military means.

-Iraq's attempts to liberate the Fao-triangle have failed. To counterbalance it, a series of minor attacks have been launched on the full line of the front, and the city of Mehran has been occupied. The tactic of "active defense" has been announced, increasing the air-strikes against the Iranian hinterland. However, these steps could not counter-balance the loss of Fao, neither politically, nor militarily.

-The military tension has stabilized on a level higher than previously, with better Iranian conditions, that can mean a point of departure for a new series of Iranian military successes.

c./ Characteristics of the current situation:

-Both parties endeavour to keep the military positions reached earlier and show activity on the full front line, but neither of them risks carrying out doubtful, bigger attacks.

-Both parties have been searching for the options of delaying an economic-financial collapse, in the form of grants, credits, respite, political bargain, etc.

-Active Iraqi offensives basically serve internal political interests, in connection with the Fao- failure. Earlier Iraq did not have the economic and military potentials and means for

launching a decisive strike, either. Due to the drop in oil prices and the increase in economic problems, the current campaign also will run out of steam soon.

-This way, while Iran continues the preparation for another large-scale attack, Iraq's main task is to make the counter measures: redeployment of forces in the expected main direction of attack, accelerated conscription and training, replacement of weaponry and increasing the productivity of domestic war industry.

Iran is expected not to stop the actions, similar to the one in Fao, executed at a properly selected time and location, the success of which can be directly measured by the influence it has on Iraq's internal political and economic situation and which bring Iran to its final aim, to making the Iraqi regime shatter and possibly causing the collapse of it. Iraq continues the bombing of Iranian oil, industrial and military objects, concentration districts and supply lines.

The military tension increases from time to time, and influenced by internal problems, Iraqi steps of provocative nature can be expected, which might be followed by Iranian counter strikes. Tendencies refer to potential bigger fights in the Fall.

These presuppositions are justified in recent developments. Iranian troops launched an offensive to liberate the border town of Mehran, occupied by Iraqi troops on 17 May. Iraq was forced to announce in a military announcement Nr. 2278 on 2 July, that after a 2-day long, heavy fight, the Iraqi troops were withdrawn from the town of Mehran to the state border.

However, the Iranian announcement dated 4 July reports that the Iranian troops

continued to penetrate 15 km deep into Iraqi territories in the area of Mehran.

Before the battle of Mehran, Iran launched a missile attack on the area of Kirkuk – that were residential areas according to Iraqi information, -- that in reality proved to be oil and gas processing objects 25 km south of the town. The Iraqi Foreign Minister immediately turned to the UN General Secretary with a letter calling attention to the danger of the renewal of a “war against towns” following the Iranian action. He asked for the UN’s intervention to stop the “Iranian aggressor”.

In the meantime, the Iranian Army has launched small attacks with the purpose of reconnaissance on the southern part of the front, too. The situation is still tense in the area of Fao. The combat actions are supposed to be part of the preparation for a larger scale offensive. The situation can be especially dangerous in the Mehran area, being closer to Baghdad, in case the Iranians press further advance.

2./ The Iraqi foreign policy steps to stop the war early, to have a political settlement have basically remained unsuccessful, achieving only some partial result. The expected support from the UN, from the great powers, and the non-aligned countries lagged behind Iraqi demands, hardly going beyond a call for both parties to settle the conflict peacefully. The resolutions apply to both parties; they do not take up positions expressly on either Iraq’s, or Iran’s side.

Iraq failed to achieve the declaration of the war as an Arab national defensive war. Although some material, economic and other assistance has been received especially from the Gulf nations, but Iraq is not satisfied with the political support. Syria and Libya are clearly backing Iran. Thus not even the Arab background is united and this effects the bilateral relations of Iraq with certain Arab countries, and similarly, it creates an obstacle for the convening of the long-awaited Arab Summit.



Due to all this , Iraq's relations with the above-mentioned international organizations have significantly deteriorated and the Iraqi propaganda regularly criticizes the role and impotence of the UN and the non-aligned movement . In the latter case the criticism reaches the Indian president acting as the chairman of the movement.

Although Iraq is awkwardly careful to portray the relationship with its main financial supporters, the Gulf countries undisturbed, during private talks, the Iraqi officials do not deny their suspicion about the improving contacts between the Arab Gulf countries and Iran.

-Iraqi diplomacy, as well as the Iraqi Army, have gradually lost their opportunities for initiation and it is doubtful if they can apply any new element in their activity, or whether they will be capable of changing their methods. The activity on behalf of Iraq will hardly be capable of achieving more either in the international organizations or in the bilateral relations. The other method applied by Iraq, conveying different international conferences in Baghdad, hardly brought any tangible results and this kind of "people's or mass-diplomacy" will be more likely used for propaganda purposes only.

-In spite of the above-mentioned, the Iraqi leadership, in their external communications, stick to their optimism claiming that the war can be ended within a reasonable period of time. They consider the demolishing of the Iranian hinterland and creating internal political tension as the biggest means to achieve this aim. An element of this policy is the harboring of Mudshahidin Khalk's leaders and the support provided for them and for other Iranian leaders in opposition. However, the Iraqi leadership do not give up the alternatives of diplomacy. In the current phase, trying to increasing Iran's isolation, they concentrate on persuading the countries friendly to Iran to cut down their connections and on trying to distance her allies from Iran. The talks with Syria have raised some hopes, but according to our sources, the rapprochement has come to a deadlock during the initial phase.

Zoltán Pereszlényi

Ambassador

Translated by: Levente Gajdócsi

Source: MOL, 288.f. 32/ 27. ő.e.-1986

**Document 31**

**Foreign Ministry report on the consultation regarding the establishment of a working relationship between the Warsaw Treaty Organization and the Arab League in Prague 27-28 April 1987**

**(30 April 1987)**

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

STRICTLY

CONFIDENTIAL!

001857/1887

Made in: 9 copies

For information:

9. Comrade Dr P. Várkonyi
10. Comrade Dr Gyula Horn
11. Comrade Dr G. Nagy
12. Comrade M Barity

13. Foreign Dept. of the CC of the  
WSWP

14. Department II

15. Department III

For taking action:

16. Department IX

17. SZEFO

### Report

on the consultation regarding the establishment of a working relationship between the  
Warsaw Treaty Organization and the Arab League

(Prague, 27–28 April 1987)

On the basis of the minutes (point 13) of the session held by the Foreign Ministers' Committee of the WTO on 25 March 1987 the heads of departments of the foreign ministries of the member states competent in Middle Eastern matters held a workshop in Prague on establishing permanent dialog between the WTO and the Arab League and on its form and content.

Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Poland, Romania and Hungary sent head of departments, while the Soviet Union and the GDR sent deputy heads of departments to the meeting. The host country – which treated the meeting as a consultation forum for experts – did not initiate the elaboration of a document or a communiqué.

[....]

This is unprecedented in the practice of the WTO. If we do this in connection with the Arab League, it can easily extend to other regions as well in the future. He did not

agree with the Czechoslovakian proposal according to which the dialog would lead to creating new bodies within the WTO. He also said that the planned dialog with the Arab League would hurt other national interests of Romania and, for example, its relations with the Israeli State.

### III.

The workshop held in Prague suggested that it would be effective to make the Middle Eastern consultations a regular exchange of ideas which would facilitate the coordination of the foreign policy of the member states. The host party summarized the results of the workshop as follows:

- The proposals submitted during the meeting should be further studied.
- We should continue exchanging documents between the Arab League and the WTO. We should stress the need for mutual agreement on this.
- We should initiate consultations between the European socialist countries and the member states of the Arab League prior to the UN sessions.
- The issue related to the authority of the WTO should be treated separately by experts. The topic could be readdressed at the Prague session of the Committee of Foreign Ministers.
- The Czechoslovakian foreign minister intends to present a Czechoslovakian opinion to the Secretary-General of the Arab League upon his upcoming visit to Czechoslovakia claiming that multilateral relations as well as bilateral relations should be improved with the Arab League.

### IV.

During the unofficial talks the heads of the delegations informed one another of the timely issues related to the Middle East, the most important events that were to take place in bilateral relations and high-level visits. Almost all the speakers made mention of the increasing difficulties in economic cooperation with the Middle Eastern countries and the decline in trade. The Czechoslovakian party suggested that

the solutions should be sought after within the Comecon in order to counterbalance the difficulties.

V.

Because of the Romanian attitude it was not possible to create a unified approach to the permanent dialog with the Arab League at the workshop. The Czechoslovakian idea to create permanent bodies for the dialog also proved unrealistic.

The participants of the meeting emphasized the importance of the bilateral and multilateral approach and their complementary nature.

The exchange of ideas on issues that affect the Middle East also proved to be useful. The Bulgarian party proposed that the next meeting of experts should be held in the fall of this year in the Bulgarian People's Republic.

The Hungarian party explained the previously approved position (attached here). When summarizing the experiences, the Czechoslovakian party attached particular importance to the following comments that we made:

- Until direct contact is established with the Arab League, the WTO member States should broaden cooperation with the specialized (economic and cultural organizations, agencies responsible for providing information, etc.) of the Arab League.
- The organizational and other issues regarding the relations between the WTO and the Arab League should not burden the Committee of the Foreign Ministers; these issues should be addressed by experts for the time being.
- Continuous dialog and the institutions required for it will incur extra costs. We need to prepare for it with due care because the Hungarian party cannot take extra burdens.

Comment: The Czechoslovakian Ministry of Foreign Affairs will inform the WTO member states separately about on the discussion between the Czechoslovakian foreign minister and the Arab League. This information will also deal with how Secretary-General Klibi responded to Comrade Chnoupek's initiative. Next, the 9<sup>th</sup>

Regional Department will submit a proposal on our approach in the future and the things we need to do.

Budapest, 30 April 30 1987.

[illegible signature]

Translated by András Bocz

Source: MOL M-KS 288. F. 5/996. ő. e.

## **Document 32**

### **Report of the Hungarian Ambassador in Iran on recent developments of the Iraq-Iran war in 1987**

**(22 May 1987)**

Embassy of the Hungarian People's Republic

Top Secret! Tehran

Tehran, 22 May 1987

6/2/1987/Szt

Subject: Recent developments of the Iraq-Iran war

Comrade dr. Péter Várkonyi

Minister of Foreign Affairs

### **Budapest**

Recent developments of the war suggest that Iran's superiority and military pressure on Iraq have grown. The weapons of the Iranian troops have improved and extended, due to the military equipment delivered during the American rapprochement-trial linked to McFarlane.

Due to the Iranian troops' gaining ground, Basra, Iraq's second largest town seems to be in the front line, whose defense holds significant Iraqi forces with heavy casualties. Currently the offensive coded "Kerbala 10" is going on the northern part of the front, in the area of Suleimania. Here the Iranian troops have occupied not large but strategically important positions. By all means, the Iranian casualties, not disclosed, are bigger than Iraqi casualties, but the Iranian military leaders can replace them easier, even if the current ratio of compulsory mobilization reaches 10% at the government institutions and mass organizations.

Iran acts with increasing confidence and aggressiveness in the Persian Gulf as well. The limits of her naval "defense area" have been extended to 500 km. The naval traffic across the Straits of Hormuz is frequently checked by her navy. Iran stresses her doctrine of the Straits on "security being either everyone's or no one's" with her missiles allegedly constructed with Chinese cooperation, deployed in the area of the Straits and disturbing the naval traffic of the Arab countries along the Gulf /air strikes against trading vessels/. In other words, if Iraqi planes are

attacking the Iranian oil transportation lines, then Iran claims the right to launch a strike on the shipping of the countries in the Gulf supporting Iraq.

Iran continues to supply and send new units to the front line. Today the units called pazardar, that is the Islamic Revolutionary Guard, play the main role. /Volunteers, that are independent from the army, committed to ideals of the Islamic Revolution, supplied with highly developed technical equipment /. In May, the reorganization of the army and the promotion of many field officers to generals were announced.

In Tehran diplomatic circles there exists an opinion, claiming that with the full mobilization of its resources, although at the price of high casualties, Iran would be capable of occupying Basra, or even the whole territory of Iraq troubled with internal problems. However, in the question of the decisive attack, it plays an important role that other Arab countries, even Libya and supposedly Syria as well, would object such a maneuver, namely the occupation of an Arab country, apart from the international repercussions following such a move and from the reactions of the great powers with interests in the area. Consequently Iran is waiting for such a situation to come, when in the climate of discontent, due to protracted war, the internal forces opposing Saddam – following the increased pressure by Iran – would overthrow the Iraqi president and its regime. Thereby creating the potential for forming a government friendly towards Iran. Consequently, the Iranian army would only give the events a push and with its strike, it would speed up the dissolution of the Iraqi army, Saddam's main support.

In Iranian judgments, the development of such a situation is simply a matter of time and it seems to be imminent. In the meantime, Iran tries to wear out Iraq's military power and the tolerance of the Iraqi people tired of war by ever renewing tactical but heavy attacks. In this war an increasing support is provided to Iran by the sabotage and guerilla actions of the Iraqi groups in opposition, primarily the Kurds.



In the issue of war, similar to every other issue in Iran's foreign and domestic policy, difference of opinion among the theoreticians and members of the executive branch of the Iranian Islamic revolution and a conflict within groups of the leadership is evident. There exists a view that the revolution's best cadres should not be sacrificed in the Iraqi war and that the countries reserves should not be exhausted as these are and will be necessary to build up the country and to extend the revolution in the Islamic world in perspective.

In my view the polarization of the Iranian society in the issue of war has deepened. The increasing open activity of the "opposition" – the group of Bazargan – seems to be a controversial phenomenon of the social reality in Iran resulting in several – of course, small scale -- recent anti-war marches in Tehran. These demonstrations – unlike the previous ones – were not broken up by the authorities, but were protected by the Islamic Guards and the internal security forces. The authorities seem not only to tolerate but to use these moderate demonstrations to test reception of slogans, such as Saddam Hussein should be pardoned. Within the top leadership a new endeavor seems to reveal itself increasingly, namely when Iran's military superiority is becoming evident, in spite of the still existing internal problems, a negotiated settlement based on the best conditions should be arranged with Iraq. /This was the reason why such views could be articulated that Koran makes forgiveness possible./ The persons and groups advocating such views think that only the imam can give such a forgiveness and his words are accepted by the masses. If the imam dies without giving the forgivingness, then the war has to be carried on, according to the last will of the highest ranking religious leader. This group is aware that war was an important element for cohesion and fostered the internal consolidation following the revolution. However, the problems caused by the war going on for 7 years are now producing counter effects, weakening the power of the leadership to influence the masses. The mass base of the regime is not influenced by the war yet, but the increasing discontent and disappointment is inevitable. /This was visible during the air bombing -- of towns in January-February./ Nevertheless, certain conflicts of interest cannot be disclosed either concerning economic and cadre issues on the basis of which groups makes how much money or how its influence will develop in case of peace or a continuing war.

Out of the other, and in my opinion the decisive part of the leadership, imam Homeini, chief judge Ardebili, President Hamenei are supporters of the war with the realization of the well known conditions: until the “punishment” of the Saddam Hussein and the Baathist regime.

This situation was closed –in my view –by chief judge Ardebili’s speech of 15 May on a Friday prayer in Tehran stating that the main goal cannot be a matter of negotiation according to the interest of individuals or groups.

The military situation is still unpredictable. Latest information /in accordance with the information from Baghdad/ suggest that Iran is preparing another grand scale offensive. The level of troop concentration is high, dozens of new battalions sent to the front line. It is uncertain, how Iraq can react to the new Iranian offensive following the increasing pressure of the internal problems – according to local information these have been an unsuccessful conspiracy against Saddam Hussein and the Kurdish rebellion. The most recent Iraqi air strikes against Isfahan and Tabriz project the potential of the renewal of the Iraqi air strikes against towns as the most efficient means of retaliation so far.

The struggle continues over the issue of chemical weapons both on the front lines and in the international organizations. In this respect there is no new development, although the Iranian party wanted to portray the UN Security Council’s resolution as an obvious, exclusive condemnation of Iraq.

Currently the Iranian position, being firm in the issue of war is intended to be based on that the two superpowers object to the continuation of the war and want to put a pressure on Iran. Consequently, the continuation of the war would mean an expression of the opposition to the superpowers and by this, the Islamic revolution would grow to be a decisive factor in world politics, along with the two leading powers. The Iranian leaders have condemned Murphy’s talks in the Middle East in

the same spirit. Petrovski, Soviet deputy foreign minister's talks in the Middle East and the Soviet Union's initiatives for an earliest ending of the war have also been condemned. The Iranian party wants to give the impression that the Soviet Union, with the renewal of the agreement of friendship and with her initiatives has fallen in the trap of American policy and got on the same platform with them. This Iranian behavior has resulted in a significant and sudden cooling down and increasing tensions in the Soviet-Iranian relationship. The strong protest on behalf of the Soviet Embassy in Tehran against the attack against the Soviet tanker is part of the same problem. The Iranian party is known to objecting the Soviet lease of tankers to Kuwait and to the appearance of Soviet warships in the Gulf.

The essence of the Iranian behavior can be summarized as it tries to undermine the Gulf- states' anti-war attitude and looks for the right occasion to launch the necessary – political, economic, or even military- strike on them. With reference to the Soviet Union, a view, officially not publicized yet, exists about that Iran could get into pincers with significant Soviet troops stationing on the northern borders, and Soviet warships appearing in the Gulf.

I will report on the further development of the war as necessary.

(dr. Zsigmond Kázmér)

Ambassador

Translated by: Levente Gajdócsi

Source: MOL, 288.f. 32/1987

**Document 33**

**Report of the Hungarian Embassy in Iraq on the characteristics of the  
activity of the opposition forces in Iraq and the reaction of the Iraqi  
leadership**

**(4 October 1987)**

To comrade [Foreign Minister] Dr. Péter Várkonyi

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Budapest

002698/1

77/ strictly conf. 1987

Made in:

4 copies Center:

3 copies Embassy:

1 copy Referent:

Károly Peimli

**STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL!**

Baghdad, 4 October 1987. Subject: On the  
continuing activity of the Iraqi opposition forces  
and the reaction of the Iraqi leadership

The permanently oppressed social and political tensions, worsened by a protracting war, gradually radicalize those groups and layers of society that are interested in bringing problems to the surface and resolving them, reflected especially by the activities of some significant opposition forces.

The process of radicalization is not rapid, and various different, often opposing interests are involved. Opposition forces identified before continue to play a dominant role, but as compared to the previous period of time there are clear differences.

After conciliatory negotiations held in December, 1986 in Tehran the activity of highly organized regular forces has come into the limelight in the Kurdish opposition movement. The regular forces of the Kurdish Democratic Party, estimated at around 15 thousand troops, continuously participate in Iranian offensives, thereby causing a lot of difficulties to the Iraqi leadership.

They participated in three significant offensives between July and September in the area of Suleimania, and according to unconfirmed news they destroyed 5 Iraqi battle- helicopters and captured some 600 Iraqi soldiers.

The primary reason for the regular Kurdish forces becoming more active in the war is that after the failure of earlier negotiations the Iraqi leadership decided to pursue a policy of strong hand in order to settle the Kurdish issue in the hinterland in this way.

The reintroduction of the policy of strong hand is closely related to the

appointment of Hussein Madjid who replaced Izzat Ibrahim this spring in the position of Baath party secretary responsible for the Kurdish Autonomous Territories. According to the spokesman of the Kurdish Democratic Party Iraqi troops destroyed some 900 Kurdish villages during the period in question after having deported app. 70 thousand people to provinces to the south. The campaign claimed at least 110 thousand lives; most of them were Kurdish peasants.

As a consequence it is quite understandable that the relatively high number of Kurds fleeing from death and deportation made it possible to bring regular Kurdish forces up to the strength mentioned above.

These changes, however, did not mean that smaller commando units stopped raiding individuals and smaller Iraqi facilities. We have been informed recently that small commando units assaulted primarily representatives of the central government and party functionaries in the Erbil, Suleimania and Dohuk regions, or more recently even in Mosul. With one exception, when they raided and plundered a Yugoslavian camp, all the assaults were of a political character.

Another similar raid took place in the middle of August at the main road leading out of Mosul to the south, claiming the life of four Iraqi university professors. The professors had visited their students in a training camp and were on their way back to Baghdad when they got killed in the raid.

We think it is important to note here that despite recurrent rumors the terrorist actions committed in the capital should not be attributed to Kurdish opposition forces. Since the Kurdish movement is quite divided, there may well be some exceptions, but sources friendly to the Kurds also confirm that such actions are against the political objectives of determinant forces of the Kurdish movement.

In the view of many observers the main obstacle to a more active and marked presence of the Shi'ite opposition is that the majority of Arab Shi'ites in

Iraq do not follow the line represented by the name of Khomeini, and therefore they will first have to fight it out with their own religious leaders. Under the leadership of Saddam Hussein the Iraqi government has made serious efforts to convince the Shi'ites in the country that the goal of Khomeini's Iran is to break the Arab Shi'ites, undermine their independence and annex Iraq, relegating it to a mere province of Khomeini's "Persian Empire."

As a consequence of the rivalry for power between Nadjaf and Kum, smartly exploited by the Iraqi leadership to its own advantage, Shi'ite tribal leaders can now be found in secular posts all over the Iraqi system, ranging from the Baath Party to public administration (mostly in their own tribal territories) and the army.

Nevertheless, the name of the traditional illegal organization of the Shi'ite opposition movement, Dawa, which has weakened considerably in the past few years, keeps coming up in Iraqi circles. They have recently been mentioned as instigators of terrorist attacks committed at night in Baghdad and raids on leaders of the Baath Party around Nadjaf, Kerbala, Samava and Nassiria. The regions where the actions were committed (outskirts of Baghdad, e.g. Saddam City) and the selected targets (leaders of the Baath Party, regional party offices, and military buses) all suggest that the perpetrators were members of the radical wing of the Shi'ite opposition. In addition, the name of Dawa also appears on leaflets distributed by university students that make fun of the Baath leadership and especially the president. Their name was last mentioned in connection with the terrorist raid at the Kadissia meeting in Nakuba. The incident claimed 16 lives and several dozens of people were injured.

The situation is made even more complex by the fact that the regime has to reckon with the latent strengthening of Iranian influence on the following two bases:

- On the one hand it is well-known that at present the number of Iraqi prisoners of war held in Iran is estimated at around 65-80 thousand.

- On the other hand, since the July of this year we have received information on several occasions that large numbers of deserted soldiers concentrated in the regions of Samawa, Divania, Nadjaf and Karbala, and unlike earlier, when they wandered around as lonely wolves, they now form groups of several hundred to try to survive and are not above occasional raids and robbery either. In the last three months we have learned about 8-10 such incidents in which these groups raided and robbed buses, cars and worker's camps.

In July and August the army launched several offensives to try to eliminate these groups but because of the character of the ground in the region in question (swamp) and partly because many people of the population in the region support these groups, they apparently achieved only limited results, since these incidents still continue to occur.

We cannot exclude the possibility that by resettling retrained and brainwashed Iraqi prisoners of war and winning the support of the deserters who live a hopeless and miserable life, the Shi'ite opposition will become stronger in the future, and such a development may have an influence on the future prospects of the Shi'ite movement against the present Iraqi leadership. Apparently the Iraqi leaders also reckon with this possibility, as demonstrated even to laymen by the various security measures that have been introduced recently.

The presence of security forces is growing stronger in the central districts of Baghdad every day. Rules regulating the security of government offices and institutions become stricter as far as entry or the guarding of these institutions is concerned. The reconstruction of buildings for security purposes and new security installations mushroom in the city by bridges and flyovers.



In August we received information from several different sources that a large number of police forces were drafted in the army and deployed to the front. We have learned in connection with this measure that a riot broke out among the police forces in Samava that could only be crushed by a sizeable military and security force. Discipline and the increase of severity can be seen even among traffic policemen. There are roads in Baghdad where we can see very resolute and self-confident police officers equipped with a walkie-talkie at every 20 or 30 meters. Unlike before, they are mostly of a higher rank and they check the identity of soldiers too.

It is characteristic of the situation how efficiently and thoroughly the authorities had planned the supervision of members of artistic and scientific delegations attending the propagandistic "Babilon Festival." They created a situation in which the guests were simply unable to take a single step without their designated Iraqi guides in Baghdad and especially when visiting the country. This obviously restricted the foreign guests to mix with the local people without the control of the authorities. Among the various security measures there is a decision that might turn out to be very important. According to an official statement a "national census" will be held on 17 October that will include foreign citizens too. We have submitted a separate report on this issue, so this time we only want to call attention to the new security measures that may affect the internal opposition, since the national census will also entail a curfew.

As a brief summary, we can establish the following in connection with the events in which opposition forces may have played a role between July and September, 1987 and the measures that were implemented or planned by the regime to counter these developments:

- There is still no sign of any real attempt to form a unity between the main opposition forces

(Kurdish and Shi'ite) against the regime.

- Kurdish opposition forces continue to be successful in their commando tactics, but there are clear signs of a more organized use of regular forces especially by the Kurdish Democratic Party in accord with Iranian offensives. It cannot be established with certainty yet how lasting the recent aspirations of different trends of the movement are going to be when it comes to political unity and joint action.
- There are a growing number of Shi'ite opposition actions against the regime, but most of them are not very well-organized, and as a result they do not qualify as dangerous to the regime.
- The Iraqi leadership has to focus mostly on the resolution of military issues arising from the activity of the Kurdish opposition, but at the same time they cannot ignore the dangers deriving from the growing number of deserters and Iraqi prisoners of war who serve as a natural base for the Shi'ite opposition movement.

Finally, we think it is important to note that we continue to evaluate the situation from the point of view of the security of the Hungarian colony and our facilities. We utilize all the information and experience that we gather in this respect in our daily work and in the reports sent to the Center.

Zoltán Pereszlényi  
ambassador

Translated by: András Bocz

Source: MOL, M-KS-288 f. 32. - 31. ő. e. - 1987

## **Document 34**

### **Report on Prime Minister Károly Grósz's official visit to Iran between 25 and 27 October 1988 (31 October 1988)**

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Top Secret

### **Information**

On Comrade Károly Grósz's official visit to the Iranian Islamic Republic

At the invitation of Prime Minister Mir Hossein Musavi Comrade Károly Grósz, in his position of Prime Minister, paid an official visit to the Iranian Islamic Republic between 25 and 27 October 1988. His visit was made in return to his Iranian partner's visit to Budapest in 1986.

Comrade Grósz was accompanied by Minister of Industry, Frigyes Berecz, the co-chairman of the Hungarian-Iranian Joint Economic Committee, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Gábor Nagy, Deputy Minister of Commerce, Tibor Melega, co-chairman of the Industrial Sub-Committee of the Joint Committee, Government Spokesman, György Marosán, Jr., Imre Székács, General Director of TESCO, and Zsigmond Kázmér, our ambassador accredited to Tehran. Comrade Grósz was accompanied by many directors of interested Hungarian companies.

Comrade Károly Grósz was received by President of the Republic Seied Ali Hamenei and the

President of the Legislative Body (Medzhlis), Hasemi Rafsandzhani.

Comrade Grósz had talks with the Iranian prime minister in the frame of a plenary session, private talks and a closing session.

He received the heads of such ministries that have an interest in bilateral relations: Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ali Akbar Velajati, Defense Minister Mohammed Dsalali, Minister of Agriculture and Regional Development, Issa Kalantari, the Iranian co-chairman of the Economic Joint Committee and Minister of Industry, Golamreza Safei.

Members of the entourage, the experts and company directors conducted comprehensive talks on concrete issues concerning bilateral cooperation with their Iranian counterparts.

[Károly Grósz talked about Hungary's position concerning international politics.]

In order to guarantee the cease-fire, we participate in the activity of the UN

supervisory forces. He informed his counterparts of our country's position concerning the Persian Gulf, the conflict in the Middle East and Afghanistan.

Mir Hossein Mussavi thanked our country for our attitude towards Iran during the years of war and for our position supporting Security Council Resolution No. 598 and for our condemnation of the use of chemical weapons. He declared the Middle East a sensitive clashing point for the great powers, where, besides the acute crisis situations in Lebanon and Israel, there have been further long-term problems, such as the Pakistani-Indian crisis and Afghanistan. The position of the Turkish government is ambiguous, as it tries to represent the interest of its people while it works simultaneously as an arm of NATO.

This was the environment for the Iranian Revolution that was declared being against her interests by the United States, due to the West's dependency on oil. The roots of the Iraq-Iran war go back to there. The importance of the Persian Gulf is reflected in the fact, that -- apart from the Soviet Union --, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Iran have the largest oil reserves, and after 1990, the West's dependency on the region's oil will further increase. Mussavi noted

that they did not have much expectation about the Middle East Peace Conference, as the Palestine people had been able to achieve any results by force only so far and the Israeli regime's aggression was still going on.

Foreign Minister Velajati informed Comrade Grósz that Iran was ready to continue the talks with Iraq at the request of the members of the Security Council to execute Resolution No. 598 in full extent, however, she refuses every Iraqi attempts that would result in the revision of the Agreement of Algiers in 1975 declaring the border between Iran and Iraq in writing.

All three Iranian leaders, Rafsandjani being the most precise, explained the Iranian position in connection with Soviet-Iranian relations. They stressed that following

the victory of the Islamic revolution huge opportunities opened up for the rapprochement and cooperation between the countries of the Eastern Bloc and Iran, in spite of ideological differences. Iran decided to improve the relations with them, launched an anti-imperialist policy and removed the American tapping stations [sic!] set along the 2500 km-long Soviet-Iranian border. Due to this act, the USA did not ratify SALT-II Treaty as being unable to check the motion of Soviet missiles. Thus, due to the Islamic revolution an important loop in the imperialist chain encircling the Eastern Bloc was broken.

However, Iran's expectations with the countries of the Eastern Bloc – except for Hungary -- were not met. The Soviet leadership did not appreciate Iran's anti-imperialist policy and efforts to improve relations, instead they gave Iraq large scale support during the war, including the most sophisticated weapon systems.

The Soviets' decision on Afghanistan had an unfavorable effect on the bilateral relations as well. At the beginning of the Afghan crisis, Iran recommended finding a joint solution, but the Soviet Union did not show readiness for talks. Even today Iran is seriously affected by the existence of the problems caused by the 800 km-long border and the 2 Million Afghan refugees staying on its territories. These can result in Iran's involvement in the Afghan crisis, against its will. They could agree with the existence of a neutral and non-aligned Afghanistan,

but they are pessimistic, because this goal, proposed originally cannot be fulfilled now, due to Afghan tribal and internal war.

The relationship became worse by the Soviet Union's mistrust towards Iran. The Soviet leaders did not support Iran's proposals for improving Soviet-Iranian political-economic relations, there was no continuity of the positive statements in everyday life.

The war and the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan is coming to an end and leaders of the Iranian Islamic Republic would like positive changes to take place in Soviet-Iranian relations simultaneously with the positive developments originating in Gorbachev's policy. The Soviet Union and the countries of the Eastern Bloc should appreciate Iran's anti-imperialist policy, her rejection of the Western proposals and her conduct of an independent policy, seriously influencing the geopolitical relations in the Persian Gulf. The Iranian leadership is prepared for a general settlement of the relations, for forming friendly and equal relations with the Soviet Union. The creation of mutual trust is the key to a long-term Soviet-Iranian relationship and currently it is in the hands of the Soviet Union.

Comrade Grósz thanked for the Iranian leaders for their trust. He stressed that for him it seems that the Soviet-Iranian dialogue had not been developed that could have cleared the misunderstandings in their relationship. The answer can be found at the currently ongoing restructuring in the Soviet Union that have forced the most pressing questions be reviewed, arresting the Soviet leaders' time and energy. The Soviet Union, similarly to other socialist countries, is in the state of seeking a way out and those who treat this situation with patience, will proceed properly.

V.

Comrade Grósz's visit happened at a time, --although not on purpose -- when Iran has become more active towards the outside world, endeavors to strengthen her positions and has started to work out her plans for reconstruction and development. The capitalist and socialist countries' attention towards Iran has become lively, too. All these factors justified the Prime

Minister's visit and have created good political and economic conditions for it.

The visit was effective and useful. It has strengthened our positions in the Iranian

Islamic Republic under conditions of increasing competition and has increased the Iranian interest in building long-term and many-sided- especially economic- relations. Politically, the visit provided an occasion for getting to know each other better for both parties, what was useful as presently neither of us have sufficient and reliable knowledge of the other side. The visit has strengthened the Iranian leaders' motivation for cooperation. Especially after the meeting with Haemi Rafsandjani, the most influential Iranian leader, the Iranian party's more favorable attitude towards the strengthening of our relations became more perceptible.

[...]

Budapest, 31 October 1988

Translated by: Levente Gajdócsi

Source: MOL, 288. f. 32. /31 ő. e. -1988