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Report on the First Baghdad International Exhibition of Military Technology

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Summary:

An East German report on the 1st Baghdad International Exhibition from 28 April to 2 May 1989. The exhibition is an event organized by the committee of the Ministry for Industry and Military Production of the Republic of Iraq. 200 companies from 29 countries in an area of about 31,000 square meters participated in the event in Baghdad. Meanwhile, the GDR hopes to build up its trade relations with Iraq because these relations have severely declined since the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq War.

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Ministry for Foreign Trade
Department Special Foreign Trade
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Confirmed:
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[Signed]
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Colonel

Report
about the business visit to Baghdad between 29 April and 7 May 1989

Tasks commissioned according to the directive from 26 April 1989 were fulfilled:

- Visit to the 1st Baghdad International Exhibition for military products and assessment of the state of their development
- Conducting talks with the Iraqi side on high levels to explore opportunities to stabilize and expand GDR special exports
- Influencing commercial negotiations between the GDR delegation and Iraqi procurement organs to arrive at agreements and achieve the launch of new business deals

1. Assessment of the exhibition's political and military-economic relevance

1..1 Relevance and objective of the exhibition

1.1.1. The 1st Baghdad International Exhibition took place between 28 April and 2 May 1989 in the fairgrounds and had the motto "Defense Equipment for Peace and Blossoming". The exhibition was organized by the committee of the Ministry for Industry and Military Production of the Republic of Iraq and got opened by Vice President Taha Marouf in the presence of the Minister for Industry and Military Production. Participating in the exhibition were about 200 companies from 29 countries in an area of about 31,000 square meters, among them as the largest exhibitors

Iraq, no number of companies provided
France, 33 companies
Egypt, 18 companies
Great Britain, 17 companies
Italy, 16 companies

From the socialist states participated: USSR, China, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia.

After pressure from the Iraqi side, the Soviet Union agreed to participate only right before the exhibition's opening. It only displayed [Soviet] military technology already in Iraqi possession on an area of 600 square meters.

The United States with Gulfstream and General Motors and the FRG [West Germany] with Steiner Optik and Kavon were very reserved.

During the exhibition there also occurred an international airshow on 29 April 1989. Among others, a MIG-29 (Iraqi pilot) and a Mirage-2000 (one Iraqi and French pilot each) participated.

1.1.2. The Iraqi leadership had the following objectives with this exhibition, now supposed to run every three years:

- Presenting Iraq as a state which intends to secure and enforce peace in the region through strong military potential
- Reducing political reservations held against Iraq
- Developing a broad military-economic collaboration with capitalist and socialist states
- Demonstrating a strong military potential in order to increase optimism in the Iraqi population regarding the correctness of the current course

The general assessment is that Iraq succeeded to fulfill these goals through winning many exhibitors and with offensive public relations work. 24 official foreign delegations were present, some of them on the level of ministers and chiefs of the general staff (among others Czechoslovakia and France).

The non-participation by the GDR at the exhibition was attentively noted by the Iraqi side and viewed as passivity by the GDR before the event. In our talks with the Iraqi side during the exhibition no remarks were made regarding the GDR's non-participation in the exhibition.

1.2. About the exhibited Iraqi military technology

The exhibits presented by Iraq were for most part developed on Soviet basis, respectively with Soviet license technology. The product range comprised of the ballistic missiles Al-Hussein (650 kilometers) and Al-Abbas (900 km), tanks (basic vehicles T-54, 55, and 72), artillery, grenade launchers and assault machine guns 7.62 and 5.56 (5.45 model production was said to exist but not on exhibit), as well as of ammunition of various calibers.

In the area of optics Iraq has reached a basic standard (apparently based on targeted cooperation with China). They exhibited the first Iraqi night vision equipment with an amplifier of the second generation. [...]

1.3 Further Tendencies in Military Production

[...]

2. High-level Talks and Commercial Negotiations

2.1. The following high-level talks were held with the Iraqi side:

- Lieutenant General Amir Al-Sadi, Senior Under Secretary in the Ministry for Industry and Military Production (1st Deputy of the Minister)

- Lieutenant General Amir Mohamed Al-Raschid, Under Secretary for Research and Development in the Ministry for Industry and Military Production

- Brigadier General Izziddieen, Deputy of the Chief of Iraq's Air Forces

- Brigadier General Faruk Hussein Salman, Director for Procurement of military equipments for land forces and the navy in the Ministry for Industry and Military Production

In all these talks the Iraqi side stated consistently:

- Exports by the GDR so far, as well as deliveries of special technology and equipment, are considered as an important contribution to support the Republic of Iraq, in particular during the period of the war.

- Based on the technological level and high quality work of the GDR there exists general interest in continuous good cooperation in the fields of repair and export of specialized technology.

However, due to the level reached by Iraq's military production, we have to realize that options to export final products from the GDR's specialized production are extremely limited. Therefore the main focus of collaboration will consist in continuing the traditional repair of aircraft technology and, with regressive tendency, signal measurement technology.

[...]

3. Conclusions

3.1. The sending of a delegation from Special Foreign Trade and the industry of the GDR to Baghdad in the context of the International Exhibition turned out as expedient because

- it documented the general interest of the GDR to continue cooperation with Iraq in the area of special exports,

- it explored the options and areas for developing cooperations in production,

- it allowed for concrete insights, pertaining to countries and their products present at the exhibition, for future work in the GDR, as well as for insights into the already existing and developing [international] competition

Based on experiences from this exhibition visit, we have to make respective separate decisions about a future participation or involvement of the GDR (the next exhibition will be in 1992).

[...]