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Report on the Visit of Saddam Hussein to Moscow

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Summary:

In a meeting initiated by Saddam Hussein with Leonid Brezhnev, Alexei Kosygin, Andrei Gromyko, and Boris Ponomarev, the Iraqi leader discussed relations with the Soviet state, United States involvement in the Middle East, border conflict, and the development of the Iraqi economy.

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Confidential

Assistant General Secretary of the regional leadership of the Party of Arab Socialist Revival and Assistant Chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council of the Republic of Iraq, Saddam Hussein, made a visit to Moscow on 25-27 February of this year by invitation of the CC CPSU and the Soviet government. S. Hussein's visit to the USSR was made on the initiative of the Iraqi side.

During his visit to Moscow, S. Hussein was received by L. I. Brezhnev, and had discussions with A. N. Kosygin, A. A. Gromyko, and B. N. Ponomarev.

The main results of Saddam Hussein's visit to Moscow are reflected in the announcements in the press. In addition to this, we would like to convey in a confidential manner the following information.

S. Hussein reaffirmed the Iraqi leadership's determination to comprehensively develop Soviet-Iraqi relations on the basis of the Agreement on Friendship and Cooperation. In this regard, he emphasized the importance of making the Iraqi-USSR relationship an example for other Arab countries. The Iraqi side stated that this is dictated by the increasingly difficult situation in the Middle East and the current requirement for a closer coordination of actions between the Soviet Union and the Republic of Iraq, with the aim of counteracting the growing activity of the USA and the reactionary forces in this region, as well as the increase of negative tendencies in the policies of leaders of several Arab countries.

S. Hussein was told that the Soviet leadership gives great importance to its relations with Iraq. In this area, Moscow's views stem from the fact that there are vital reasons for building Soviet-Iraqi relations on a sturdy and long-term basis. The Soviet side will do everything possible to further broaden and deepen multi-faceted cooperation with the Republic of Iraq in the interests of the people of both countries and in the interests of the joint struggle against imperialism.

During the course of the meetings, there was an exchange of opinions regarding the state and prospects of Soviet-Iraqi cooperation in trade and economic development. Steps were outlined for further improvements in the forms and methods of such cooperation. In particular, the Iraqis proposed an idea for the creation of a special enterprise on the basis of the SEV [Council on Mutual Economic Assistance] that would carry out work in such developing countries as, for example, Iraq, taking into consideration the most recent technological developments in the world.

As a result of examining questions regarding military cooperation, an agreement was reached for concrete measures designed to strengthen Iraq's defensive capabilities.

Evaluating the situation in the Middle East, S. Hussein sharply criticized the actions of President Sadat during October of last year and in the succeeding period, characterizing them as Egypt's flirtation with the USA and with reactionary regimes in the Arab world. He qualified the agreement to disengage the Egyptian and Israeli forces as a military-political defeat of Egypt, which essentially clears the way for a "partial" settlement of the Middle East crisis. S. Hussein expressed the conviction that the establishment of peace in the Middle East on American terms would bring about a broad economic expansion of the USA in this region, with all the resulting negative consequences for the Arab independence movement and for social progress in the Arab world.

On our side, we set forth the principled position of the Soviet Union on the Middle East problem. The Soviet leaders stated that the Egyptian-Israeli agreement on disengagement could have a positive effect only in the instance that it is followed by concrete measures directed at insuring the withdrawal of Israeli forces from all occupied Arab territories and the satisfaction of the legal rights of the Arab people of Palestine. One cannot allow for this agreement to disengage Egyptian and Israeli forces to cause an indefinite deferral of the resolution of the fundamental problems for the establishment of peace in the Middle East.

The Iraqis were told that, given the situation that has developed in the region, it is important to resume the work of the Geneva Peace Conference, which, with the appropriate implementation of policy and the participation of the Soviet Union, would open certain possibilities for exerting pressure on Israel and its protectors in line with the interests of Arab countries.

At the same time, our side emphasized the exceptional significance that in the current situation is being acquired by the question of strengthening the unity of actions of progressive Arab countries and strengthening their cooperation with countries in the socialist community.

Having praised the position of the USSR and its support of the Arab people, S. Hussein stated that the Iraqi leadership views the Soviet-Arab friendship as an important factor in the Arab struggle for insuring their legal rights and national interests.

In reaffirming the desire of the Republic of Iraq to improve relations with Syria, S. Hussein stated that the Iraqi leadership believes that it is very important not to allow Assad to take a path similar to the one chosen by Sadat. With this in mind, the Iraqi leadership adopted a decision on the eve of Kissinger's visit to Damascus to grant Syria 50 mln. dollars in unconditional aid.

During the talks in Moscow, the Iraqi side touched on the question of Iraqi-Iranian relations, particularly with respect to the recent border conflict between Iraq and Iran, accusing Teheran of provoking armed clashes on the Iraqi-Iranian border and of occupying a portion of Iraqi territory.

S. Hussein was given a reaffirmation of the principled position of the USSR, directed toward the peaceful resolution of disputes between countries, by way of negotiations. At the same time, he was told that the Soviet side will try to come up with suitable methods for exerting appropriate influence on the Shah of Iran.

During the course of the meeting, questions of party ties between the CPSU and the Ba'ath party of Iraq were also examined. Our side expressed satisfaction with the fact that our party ties in recent years have experienced further developments and continue to be built according to planned targets.

We expressed readiness to continue to extend to the leaders and activists of the Ba'ath party the ability to familiarize themselves with CPSU's experience in building socialism, particularly in the area of economic and cultural development, the resolution of the national question within the USSR, and so on. We welcomed the agreement between the Ba'ath party and the Communist party of Iraq to form a National Patriotic Front of Progressive Forces.

S. Hussein came out in favor of further development and deepening of our party relations, emphasizing the desire of the Ba'ath party leadership in strengthening the cooperation between the progressive forces in Iraq, within the framework of the National Front and in conjunction with the Communist party.

The Iraqi side informed the Soviet leaders of the prospects for resolving the Kurdish problem in Iraq. S. Hussein stated that negotiations with Mustafa Barzani on this question are running into sizeable difficulties, as a result of the maximalist demands put forth by the Kurdish leadership, which, in essence, insists on the formation of a federated union as opposed to autonomy within a single country. S. Hussein announced that the Iraqi leadership has prepared a draft for Kurdish autonomy and is fully prepared to publicize it no later than 11 March of this year, which is within the timetable set by the March 1970 agreement.

Moscow believes that the exchange of opinions with Hussein was useful. It was used by our side to strengthen the positions of socialist countries and progressive forces in Iraq.