

March 26, 1975

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

Citation:

"Saddam Hussein's political portrait - compiled for Foreign Minister Frigyes Puja prior to the Iraqi leader's visit to Hungary in May 1975", March 26, 1975, Wilson Center Digital Archive, MOL M-KS 288.f. 32/1975. 9.ő.e. Translated by Sabine Topolansky.
<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/122524>

Summary:

This report on Saddam Hussein as vice president of the Revolutionary Commanding Council describes Hussein's personal background, political views, and negotiating persona. Frigyes Puja ordered the compilation of information on Saddam Hussein two months before his visit to Hungary.

Original Language:

Hungarian

Contents:

Translation - English

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 Tikrit 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 8th 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 Kosygin was his discussion partner (During Saddam's first visit c. Kosygin 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 cooperations 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.