

December 8, 1979
**Ministry for State Security, 'Clashes between Iraqi
students in Sofia'**

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Summary:

Report on violence between Baathist and Communist Iraqi students in Bulgaria.

Original Language:

German

Contents:

Translation - English

Main Department II

Head

Berlin, 8 December 1979

[handwritten: General Mittag - launch operative measures in the GDR according to instructions; Mielke, 11 December 1979]

For personal information

Clashes between Iraqi students in Sofia

Concerning incidents among Iraqi students in Bulgaria's capital Sofia, the following information was gathered through intelligence work as well as from the GDR Embassy there:

According to unconfirmed information, four Iraqi students in Sofia are dead as of 5 December 1979 as a result of clashes between communists and Baathists.

This escalation of conflicts, which were already ongoing for a while, between Arab and especially Iraqi students occurred on 1 December 1979 during an event organized by Arab students for the 12th Anniversary of the revolution in the People's Republic of Yemen. Starting from oppositional arguments over the Camp David agreements, Iraqi students who are members of the Arab Socialist Baath Party provoked a fight with fists and knives. In the course of this fighting, one student (member of the Baath Party) was stabbed to death and more than 20 people were injured. Bulgarian security organs had to arrive at the scene and to fire warning shots.

A further escalation of such kind of incidents occurred on 3 December 1979. In the Institute for Foreign Languages building [in Sofia] an Iraqi student was thrown out of the window from the 10th or 11th floor and died from his injuries. Another Iraqi was stabbed to death in a classroom. When trying to mediate, a Bulgarian teacher got severely injured.

On 4 December 1979 another Iraqi was deadly stabbed in a public bus in the area of the Dorvenica student village. It is unknown to which political group those three Iraqis belonged to.

Bulgarian intelligence organs think that those events were provoked by Baath Party members among the Iraqi student contingent in Sofia. There are indications that the Iraqi Embassy in Sofia had at least advanced knowledge of all this - if they were not even playing the role of instigating them.

The following evidence leads in this direction:

- On 1 December 1979 the Iraqi Ambassador did not participate in an official hunting trip for diplomats.
- The Iraqi Embassy was fully staffed on 1 December 1979.
- Baath Party members and supporters came to the 1 December 1979 event [Anniversary of Yemeni Revolution] armed with long knives and stones.
- Immediately before these events so-called instructors from the Iraqi Baath Party had arrived in Sofia.

There are rumors circulating among GDR students in Sofia that those clashes resulted in 5 to 7 casualties.

On 5 December 1979 all communist Iraqi students were moved out of Sofia under the pretext of a field trip. Members and supporters of the Arab Socialist Baath Party of Iraq are isolated in the student village and placed under observation. Supposedly the Bulgarians have begun to repatriate Iraqi students to Iraq.

Bulgarian intelligence organs admit that a grave mistake was made when Iraqi communists and supporters of the Baath Party were enrolled as students simultaneously. There had been frequent clashes between those two antagonistic groupings in the past.

The GDR Embassy in Baghdad informed about decisions by the Iraqi leadership made in consequence of these events. According to this information, it was decided

- to return all Iraqi students from the People's Republic of Bulgaria immediately,
- to recall the Iraqi Ambassador from Sofia,
- to freeze trade and economic relations with the People's Republic of Bulgaria,
- to no longer permit travel of Iraqi citizens to Bulgaria.

[Signed] Kratsch
Major General