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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

81 MAR 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs
The Secretary of State
The Secretary of Defense

- SUBJECT:
1. Kurdish Views on Increasing Soviet-Iraqi Cooperation, Soviet and Iraqi Pressure for the Formation of a Ba'th-Communist-Kurdish Coalition in Baghdad, and Kurdish Reservations on Negotiations with the Ba'th.
 2. Kurdish Speculation on Possible Brezhnev or Kosygin Visit to Baghdad in April 1972.

1. According to [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Kurdish leaders believe the visit of Saddam Husayn al-Tikriti, Assistant Secretary-General of the Ba'th Party of Iraq (BPI) and Vice-President of the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), to Moscow in mid-February 1972 opened a new phase of cooperation between the Soviet Union and the Ba'th Party Government in Baghdad. Kurdish representatives in Baghdad reported the favorable comments of senior Iraqi officers on the military assistance agreement signed in Moscow during Saddam Husayn's visit, which involved the further supply of sea mines, torpedo boats, tanks, and the promise of eventual supply of MIG-23 aircraft (sic). (Headquarters Comment: Source did not further identify the type of aircraft promised by the Soviets. Arabs frequently use the designation "MIG-23" when referring to the "Foxbat" aircraft.)

2. The Kurds have learned that Soviet officers are already advising on the establishment of a SAM defensive system at Shu'aybah. Of more importance in Kurdish opinion, however, is the offer made by Saddam Husayn to the Soviet Union to nationalize all foreign oil installations in Iraq and to invite Soviet leaders to visit Baghdad, an invitation which was accepted in principle. The Kurds understand that a visit by the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Leonid A.

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Brezhnev, or Premier Aleksey N. Kosygin is likely to take place in April 1972, during which time Iraq will sign with the Soviet Union a friendship treaty modeled on the Egyptian-Soviet friendship treaty signed in May 1971.

3. The only condition stipulated by the Soviet Union for full backing for the Ba'th Government in Baghdad is the successful conclusion and signature of a national charter (Al-Mithaq al-Watani) by the BPI, the Communist Party of Iraq (CPI), and the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP). The signature of the national charter would be followed by a cabinet reshuffle bringing Communist ministers into the cabinet alongside the existing Kurdish ministers.

4. Direct pressure was exerted on the Kurds by a Soviet delegation which visited Kurdistan in late February 1972 for one night and included a member or alternate member of the Soviet Party Central Committee and representatives of the Soviet Embassy in Baghdad, including an intelligence officer. (Headquarters Comment: Other reporting has identified this CPSU representative as V. P. Rumyantsev, head of the Arab or Middle East Sektor of the International Department of the CC CPSU [but not himself a member or candidate member of the CC CPSU].) During discussions with the Soviet delegation, KDP leader Mulla Mustafa al-Barzani attacked the record of Saddam Husayn al-Tikriti and the Ba'th Government very strongly. He made it clear to the Soviet visitors that Kurdish experience in dealing with the Ba'th, leading up to the abortive assassination attempt against al-Barzani on 27 September 1971, prevented the Kurds from trusting the Ba'th. Al-Barzani pointed out that the Kurds had developed good relations with Iran and intended to retain them. The Soviet visitors replied that the Kurds should gradually reduce their dependence on Iran when they gradually gained confidence in the Ba'th, after signing the national charter. They offered to send a Soviet liaison officer to remain permanently at al-Barzani's headquarters and to guarantee al-Barzani's safety.

5. After the Soviet delegation left, Kurdish representatives in Baghdad, including Muhammad Mahmud Abd-al-Rahman (aka Sami), Minister of State Salih al-Yusufi, Nuri Shawish (pro-Moscow), Dara Tawfiq (a Communist), Minister of Municipalities Ihsan Shirzad, and Minister of Agriculture Nafidh Jalal, were summoned to the north. Of these, only Sami is trusted by the ruling Kurdish

group around al-Barzani: his sons Idris and Mas'ud Barzani, Dr. Mahmud 'Uthman, and Habib 'Abd-al-Karim. The Baghdad Kurds tendered the advice that the Ba'th was offering a lot and that the Kurds had their own faults, particularly their reliance on Iran. They suggested that the Ba'th was sincere in wanting to negotiate a national pact. In reply, al-Barzani again violently attacked the Ba'th and refused to listen to their arguments. Nevertheless, a committee was formed consisting of Salih al-Yusufi, Dara Tawfiq and Muhammad Mahmud Abd-al-Rahman to negotiate with the Ba'th. The committee was immediately given a brief to demand the most difficult conditions in their negotiations with the Ba'th with a view to bringing about a delay, forestalling a quick agreement, and allowing the Kurds time to study the situation. These conditions included:

A. A demand for immediate local autonomy for the Kurdish areas as laid down in the 11 March 1970 agreement;

B. A demand for the Kirkuk area to be made over to the Kurds; and

C. A demand that two-fifths of the revenue of Iraq should be spent in the Kurdish areas in proportion to the Kurdish population.

6. Kurdish leaders are well aware that the Ba'th will not accept these conditions but fear that for tactical reasons they will propose to sign an agreement incorporating them, later refusing to implement the agreed conditions. The Kurds believe that the Ba'th will take every opportunity to instigate plots against them, buy off Kurds whose loyalty is divided, and try to isolate and weaken al-Barzani with a view either to assassinate him or fight him when he has been sufficiently weakened. Al-Barzani is hesitating to take a decision to move openly against the Ba'th, since he fears that the Soviet Union would turn against him. The Soviet Union has openly said that it will oppose any elements working against the Ba'th. Al-Barzani believes that the small amount of aid received from Iran during recent months makes fighting impossible at present.

7. If an Iraqi government in exile, consisting of Kurds and Arabs, however, could be established in the north, backed by other outside groups, there would be a good hope of

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destroying the Ba'th. If help did not become available, the Kurds believe that the increasing willingness of the Soviet Union to throw its weight behind the Ba'th eventually will undermine their ability to adopt an independent stance and will open the way to the Ba'th controlling the whole area of Iraq.


Richard Helms
Director

CC: Assistant Secretary of State for
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Director, Intelligence and Research

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