

February 12, 1981

GDR-Iran Exchange of Opinions

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Summary:

Representatives of the German Democratic Republic and the Islamic Republic of Iran discuss the arms race, the presence of superpowers in Afghanistan, the Persian Gulf, and the Indian Ocean, the Iran-Iraq conflict, and the potential for bilateral cooperation between East Germany and Iran.

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On February 12, 1981, a government delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran was staying in the GDR under the leadership of the Minister of Education, Dr. Mohammed Javad Bahonar. He indicated to Comrade Oskar Fischer that his goal was find out the GDR's position toward Iran's Islamic revolution, the Iraqi invasion of Iran, and the preparedness of the GDR for further cooperation between the two countries.

Bahonar said that the Islamic revolution under Ayatollah Khomeini would be led to victory. The GDR was among the first countries that supported and recognized the Islamic revolution. The Islamic Republic of Iran would like to develop close relations for the mutual benefit with all countries and governments that recognize the goals and the outcomes of the revolution.

On international problems, Bahonar explained that Iran is interested in securing freedom, ending the arms race, and ensuring popular national independence. He condemned the "spiral" of the arms race and interference in the domestic affairs of nations. He said that Iran is concerned about the presence of the "superpowers" in the Persian Gulf and in the Indian Ocean. He said that the Islamic Republic of Iran supports allowing the nations of this region taking responsibility for its security. According to him, the Iranian people are unconcerned about the increased military presence of the USA in the region. They would not like for "another power to take the place of the USA" in the struggle to remove this danger.

Regarding the Iran-Iraq conflict Iran shares the view of the GDR, that it only serves the purposes of imperialism and must be ended as soon as possible. This is of great significance for the continuation of the revolution in Iran. The Iranian government does not expect for the GDR to give up its friendly relations with Iraq. But it asks the question of who is the aggressor. Iran would like for the GDR to influence Iraq and pull it back. The position on the Iran-Iraq conflict for Iran is an important point for the development of further relations.

On Afghanistan Bahonar stated that the Islamic Republic of Iran condemns any interference of imperialism, particularly by the USA, in this country. This however does not mean that they accept the "presence" of another country. A "government that is forced on the people" can make no decisions that the people do not support.

Iran advocates for all peoples of the region to decide their own fate, without external influence and pressure.

Bahonar emphasized that Iran is prepared to expand and deepen bilateral cooperation with the GDR in political, economic, and cultural spheres.

Bahonar invited the GDR Minister for Foreign Affairs as well as the Vice President of the National Council to visit Iran. He welcomed proposals to conclude further treaties and demonstrated particular interest in the use of the GDR's experience in the area of public education and higher education, as well as the cooperation of social forces united in the National Front. He requested the sharing of comprehensive informational materials on the GDR's education system.

Comrade Oskar Fischer elaborated on the peace policy of the GDR and the principle standpoint of the GDR toward the Iranian popular revolution. He indicated that the imperialists are preparing new actions against the peace efforts of the people and that the international situation is coming to a dangerous point. The imperialist course of heavy armament, the acceleration of the arms race, the long-term armament program of NATO, the Brussels missile decision, the so-called new nuclear strategy of the USA, and not least the neutron weapon plans of the USA endanger the peace of

the entire world. In this connection Comrade Oskar Fischer emphasized the role of the USSR and the countries of the Socialist community in the struggle for peace, security, detente, and disarmament.

The Foreign Minister of the GDR assessed the good relations that have developed between the GDR and Iran in many areas, particularly the economy and trade. He declared the preparedness of the GDR to further develop and deepen the relations between both countries, as well as to extend them into other areas. On this point he presented a number of suggestions, which were positively received by the Iranian partners.

Comrade Oskar Fischer presented the position of the GDR on the Iran-Iran conflict and Afghanistan.

Comrade Kirchhoff informed the delegation about the experiences of the National Front during the democratic transformation and the creation of the developed Socialist society of the GDR.

The conversations are the first political exchange of opinion between the two governments and have created starting points for further development of political relations.

They took place in a sober, open-minded, and constructive atmosphere.