

April 17, 1985
**Report of the Hungarian Embassy in Iraq on the
development of the Iraqi-American relationship in 1985**

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Summary:

This report issued by the Hungarian Embassy in Iraq discusses the declining importance of the Iran-Iraq War for the United States and the need for the superpowers to mediate the conflict in order to focus on broader aspects of their relations.

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- English Translation

To comrade [Foreign Minister]Dr. Péter Várkonyi
Minister of Foreign Affairs

Budapest

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Top Secret!

Baghdad, 17 April 1985.

Subject: American and Iraqi views on the Iraqi-
American relations

The restoration of diplomatic relations between Iraq and the United States in November 1984 has brought about much smaller changes in the relations of the two countries than what was expected. Even some Western diplomats have expressed their surprise at how cautious the United States is when it comes to the development of relations with Iraq. So far we have not seen any significant rapprochement between the two countries that was predicted by many at the end of 1984. It has to be added that it is mainly due to the rather passive attitude of the American side, for Iraq is ready to broaden its relations both in a political and an economic sense.

According to an American diplomat the relations between the two countries develop at a normal pace. The American party is content with the present situation and does not wish to establish a closer relationship with Iraq. For the time being Iraq does not play a prominent role in the Middle Eastern policy of the United States. It is still Egypt, Jordan and Syria that enjoy a key role in the region. The main reason for this is that the US continues to be interested in a protracted conflict between Iraq and Iran within the existing framework. Although the developments of the war that occurred in March may be a warning, the American position is that the conflict is more unlikely to spread over to other countries today than it was at the beginning of 1984 when Iraq subjected the region of the Iranian Kharg Island to an air blockade.

The USA pursues a policy of wait-and-see in the issue of the war and it is obvious that they can keep a close tab on any actions and preparations of the two parties by means of their AVACS system operating in Saudi Arabia. In this respect the American view is quite similar to the Soviet position according to which neither of the two parties is in the position to be able to put an end to the war by military means.

Another part of this wait-and-see policy is that USA has not appointed its ambassador to Iraq since the restoration of diplomatic relations in 1984. According to an American diplomat the reason for this delay is only formal (a lengthy process of approval, etc.). He also added that there were many other places more significant than Iraq where the post of the ambassador was yet to be filled.

In the present situation the USA does not wish to commit itself to Iraq more than necessary. The postponement of appointing the ambassador demonstrates that although Iraq, not long ago qualified as a "supporter of terrorism", is regarded as more moderate now by the USA, the president of the country, Saddam Hussein is not likely to receive much support.

This is even more likely in a situation when the USA can see that the internal Iraqi opposition has become active (they are responsible for some of the explosions), and the renewal of the war and its protraction may jeopardize the fate of Saddam Hussein. From another aspect Iran will continue to be a more important relation for the USA, and if circumstances develop in the desired way, the USA will be ready to normalize its relations with Iran and regain its influence on it.

As a response to delaying the appointment of the American ambassador Iraq finally appointed a former chargé d'affaires, Nazar Hamdoun ambassador to the USA instead of Ismat Kittani (deputy minister of foreign affairs). (He presented his credential to President Reagan on 6 March.) It has to

be added that Kittani was ready to head the Iraqi embassy as early as December.

Iraq has made rather neutral statements on the Iraqi-American relations. However, it is obvious that they are quite dissatisfied with the passive attitude of the USA, as a result of which Iraq has not received the requested loan and the negotiations on favorable trade relations have not proved successful either. The already rather moderate American political support for Iraq has further diminished in the past few weeks, and Iraq was especially hard hit by the American position expressed at the meeting between Tariq Aziz and foreign secretary Schultz on 25 March when the USA raised the issue of condemning the use of chemical weapons in general. It is worth noting here that the Iraqi press sharply criticizes the American foreign policy in general as well as in relation to the war, while it speaks very highly of Soviet-Iraqi relations. This is demonstrated by celebrating the 13th anniversary of signing the Soviet-Iraqi agreement of friendship and cooperation. A meeting organized by the Iraqi- Soviet Friendship Society was attended by two Iraqi ministers, and it was the first time that Iraq spoke publicly about a Soviet-Iraqi military cooperation.

Zoltán Pereszlényi ambassador