

Nr. 21

**Statement by the Honorary Chairman of the SPD, Brandt, about
his discussions in Baghdad
12 November 1990¹**

AdsD, WBA, A 19, 187.

Published in: Berliner Ausgabe, vol. 10

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The efforts toward a non-military solution to the Gulf Crisis must not be abandoned, but rather should be intensified. My discussions in Baghdad have convinced me of that even more. Additionally, our humanitarian duty towards those being illegally detained in Iraq requires more than mere solemn protestations, that is to say, additional concrete efforts.

Before I travelled to Iraq a week ago today, I made it clear that I did not consider it possible to act as an intermediary. Nevertheless, I expressed a willingness to take part in discussions about how the serious conflict which came about there could be settled politically. I linked this with the expectation that the detained Germans and other foreigners would be allowed to leave at once.²

All people in distress deserve the efforts of others on their behalf. I cannot confirm in this respect that I consider the outcome of my trip to be disappointing. I would rather ask others whether it is appropriate in this context to speak condescendingly of “a handful of hostages,”³ or whether one may confuse solidarity with doing nothing. (Or whether one can so quickly let it be forgotten that just last year considerable sums of public money were expended to gain the release of fellow countrymen who had been deprived of their freedom elsewhere.)⁴

Besides, we can not say that the Iraqi leadership did not want to know anything about our views concerning a framework for peace in the Middle East; quite the opposite is true.⁵ Of course, you could by all means get the impression that the Iraqi president did not

sufficiently appreciate his ensuing isolation resulting from the occupation of Kuwait. He had hardly even taken note of the ramifications of a different international situation – due to the changed relationship between the USA and the Soviet Union and to the continuing unification of Europe. Along with that is the hope of being able to sway the opinions of a large portion of the masses in the Arab world in favour of one's own camp if it should come to an armed confrontation. Adequate attention is also not being paid to the notion that not only the world powers but also the community of nations could set an example here in the matter of annexation.

I have not found confirmation for the idea that the president of Iraq aims to allow the Gulf Conflict to smoulder until a breakthrough has been achieved on a Middle East peace settlement. Whereas on the one hand historical justifications have been advanced for his own aggression, on the other hand he also has begun to think about “Arab solutions.” That is to say: they sense that conditions caused by the occupation cannot stay as they are, but they are still shying away from the consequences of this realisation – and also do not like to hear that their account continues to be debited considerably because of the pillaging of Kuwait.

In the case that a military confrontation can still be avoided, several ways are becoming apparent in which a Middle East peace agreement (or else a preceding security conference) could be advanced. The experiences that we in Europe have had with the Helsinki process⁶ and with negotiations on joint security certainly cannot be transferred schematically from one region to another, but they could be factually useful and awaken interest – in Baghdad as well.

An especially perceptive contemporary has expressed in writing the opinion that whoever travels to Baghdad now will be misused for purposes of propaganda.⁷ I did not get that impression. No one exacted a price from me, and I would not have paid it. Besides, it is well known that the Secretary General of the United Nations had given me his best wishes and his moral support along the way, even though he considered an official authorisation to be the opposite of

helpful.⁸ I am reporting to him as well as to our own government and to some other interested parties.⁹

To our fellow countrymen left behind in Iraq I have given my word not to leave them to their own devices.¹⁰ With regard to peace I feel strongly committed, at least as strongly as those who speak for the government, or as the French President, whose word is listened to in the Arab world, and whose countrymen have long since been back home. This will not have escaped the attention of officials in Bonn any more than it has that of the European Community.

¹ Brandt delivered the statement in Bonn.

² Cf. No. 73, Note 7.

³ Günter Wolf had written in his commentary "Das Manko der Brandt-Reise" in the *Frankfurter Neuen Presse* of 8 November 1990: "Saddam Hussein appears to have found pleasure in the game of receiving respected Western statesmen and giving them a handful of hostages to take back home." 198 people were able to leave Iraq with Brandt.

⁴ Brandt must be referring to the ransoming of prisoners from the GDR by the Federal Republic.

⁵ Beyond the memo of 10 November 1990 (No. 73), no memos could be found in the WBA about Brandt's discussions with the Iraqi leadership in Baghdad.

⁶ Meant here is the bloc-spanning Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), whose first meetings had taken place 1973–1975 in Helsinki. Subsequent meetings had been held in Belgrade (1977–1978), Madrid (1980–1983) and Vienna (1986–1989).

⁷ By the "writing contemporary" Brandt must have meant the journalist Herbert Kremp. On 10 November 1990, the latter had published a commentary in the newspaper "*Bild*" titled "Von Hussein mißbraucht" which dealt critically with the trip of the Honorary SPD Chairman to Baghdad. That Brandt and other foreign emissaries would be misused by Hussein for propaganda purposes, had already been stated by the American government. Cf. Mideast Tensions – U.S. Declares Missions To Iraq Are „Being Used“, in: *New York Times* of 8 November 1990.

⁸ Cf. No. 73.

⁹ This was carried out by sending the memo of 10 November 1990, printed here as No. 73.

¹⁰ Brandt had secured the departure of 138 Germans. Before that, according to press reports, there had been 317 Germans in Iraq. Cf. "Da muß noch was drauf", in: *Der Spiegel*, No. 46 of 12 November 1990, p. 18–21. On 20 November, the Iraqi government announced the immediate release of all remaining Germans. Cf. EA 45 (1990) 24, p. Z 249.