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ANGLO - IRAQI RELATIONS AND OIL
DURING THE KASSEM REGIME

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PREFACE

The complete facts on Anglo-Iraqi relations during the Kassem Regime will not be known for some time, if ever. But a preliminary study can be made from information available from books published in the Middle East, the Western World, from translations of Iraqi newspapers, Kassem's speeches, Iraqi Government Publications, periodicals, and documents published by the oil companies.

Many are obviously biased concerning the events in Iraq from 1958 to 1963, but the general situation can be traced.

The British and American Embassies in Iraq, the Iraqi Foreign Ministry, and various officials at Baghdad University were all helpful in providing information on the Kassem Regime. The Iraq Petroleum Company's offices in both Baghdad and Beirut contributed valuable statistics. There are many knowledgeable persons in Iraq who understandably are reluctant, or even refuse, to talk about the Kassem regime.

This paper was written to relate Anglo-Iraqi relations and the question of oil during Kassem's dictatorship. All parties concerned were adamant in their beliefs, hence, conclusions are difficult to make. But in spite of Kassem's vigorous nationalism he would not destroy the source of his nation's income.

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CHAPTER I

IRAQ PRIOR TO KASSEM

The Period from 1921 to 1948

Faisal was installed as King of Iraq in 1921 by the British. He was the son of Sharif Husain of Mecca and the first of the Hashimite Kings in Iraq. Faisal had led the Arab Revolt in World War I, and in 1918 he was proclaimed King of Syria. He was forced to leave Damascus in 1920 by the French.¹ The British, with the mandate for Iraq, selected Faisal as king at the Cairo Conference in March of 1921, and then began a propaganda program for him in Iraq.² The reception for Faisal when he entered Iraq in June 1921 was not warm despite the fact that the British had conducted a referendum which indicated that ninety-six percent of the people were in favor of his rule. The results of the referendum were at best questionable and without British control might have gone otherwise.³

Nuri as-Sa'id had gone to Baghdad prior to Faisal and it was he who organized what enthusiasm there was on the arrival of the new king. Nuri was Iraqi-born and had served as an officer

¹Gerald de Gaury, Three Kings in Baghdad (London: Hutchinson & Co., Ltd., 1961), p. 18.

²George E. Kirk, A Short History of the Middle East (6th ed. rev.; London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1961), p. 144.

³de Gaury, p. 23.

first in the Ottoman Army and then under Faisal in the Arab Revolt.¹ He became Chief of Staff of the newly organized Iraqi Army in 1921.² From 1921 to 1958, when he was murdered, Nuri as-Sa'id had a great deal to do with running Iraq. He was essentially pro-western and therefore an excellent target for anti-imperialist propaganda.

King Faisal reigned in Iraq for twelve years. He was 36 when he took the throne, and according to Longrigg ". . . he possessed unusual qualities of dignity, leadership, and sympathy; and his political adroitness, . . ." enabled him and the country to survive dangers and establish a state structure better than most had expected.³ There were many problems: the Kurdish question, the Assyrians, and the Turkish territorial claims in the Mosul area. The British were obliged to use their air force many times in support of the Government of Iraq.⁴

Nationalists were already calling for the departure of the British. The British proposed an Anglo-Iraqi treaty to disguise the notorious mandate,⁵ and the treaty was signed at Baghdad on the 10th of October 1922.⁶ It was little more than a minor compromise between the nationalists and the British position

¹Ibid., p. 25.

²Stephen H. Longrigg, Iraq, 1900 to 1950: A Political, Social, and Economic History (London: Oxford University Press, 1956), p. 129.

³Ibid., p. 134.

⁴de Gaury, p. 37.

⁵Longrigg, Iraq, 1900-1950, p. 139.

⁶de Gaury, p. 215.

in Iraq. The Iraqis did get limited control of foreign affairs and a bigger say in domestic matters, but the mandatory system was not basically changed.¹

The Hashimite dynasty began under foreign domination which was "the outcome of incompatible Arab and Allied arrangements made for Iraq."² Iraq had a host of problems and only a few qualified leaders to help solve them. Internal dissension was already apparent as were troublesome neighbors. But the kingdom managed to survive. Faisal died of a heart attack in Berne, Switzerland in September 1933 at the age of forty-nine.³ One year earlier his kingdom had become independent and a member of the League of Nations.

Faisal was succeeded by his only son, Ghazi. Ghazi was born in Mecca in 1912 and was brought up with the women of the family, ". . . until it was almost too late for him to recover from it and go to a school."⁴ But in 1925 he was packed off to England to get an education. He did not do well in school and he resented the entire time he spent there.⁵ Ghazi was 21 when he became King of Iraq: ". . . his lack of intellectual equipment and of interest in public affairs, and his devotion to pleasure

¹J. C. Hurewitz, Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East (2vols.; Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Co., Inc., 1956), II, p. 111 (with text of treaty).

²Abid A. Al-Marayati, A Diplomatic History of Modern Iraq (New York: Robert Speller & Sons, 1961), p. 147.

³James Morris, The Hashimite Kings (London: Faber and Faber, 1959), p. 103.

⁴de Gaury, p. 52.

⁵Ibid., p. 54.

and to sport, forbade the hope that he would prove adequate to the royal functions in Iraq."¹ There were three army coups in Iraq during the reign of Ghazi while he devoted himself with increasing energy to the diversions of aircraft, cars, and radios.² There was confusion in the government and almost continuous trouble in the rural areas. Ghazi was killed in an auto accident in 1939 while ". . . driving his car with habitual recklessness . . ."³ Although his death was tragic, his political and administrative abilities were not missed in the Iraqi government.

Ghazi's son, Faisal II, three years old, became King of Iraq with Amir Abdulilah as Regent. Abdulilah was another grandson of King Husain and the elder brother of Ghazi's widow. Abdulilah ". . . held the Regency for fourteen years, until the King came of age, ruling longer than Faisal the First or King Ghazi and in more difficult times."⁴ Things went fairly well at first. Nuri as-Sa'id was Prime Minister, the fifth time he had headed a cabinet since the monarchy was founded.⁵ When World War II began Nuri tried desperately to define Iraq's position concerning the warring powers. He was able to convince the leading politicians that Iraq must break diplomatic relations with Germany, but there was much opposition to further aid to Britain. Nuri wanted to participate actively in the war by providing two divisions

¹Longrigg, Iraq, 1900-1950, p. 237.

²de Gaury, p. 102.

³Longrigg, Iraq, 1900-1950, p. 276.

⁴de Gaury, p. 111.

⁵Ibid., p. 217.

for the Libyan front or the contemplated invasion of the Balkans. But he dropped this proposal because of the objections of the Army.¹ Nuri resigned on 18 February 1940, but three days later he was asked to form another cabinet after squabblings in the Army forced the Regent to act.² But in March 1940 Nuri was again out of office and Rashid Ali al-Gailani became Premier. There followed a quick deterioration in Anglo-Iraqi relations. Militarism became part of nationalism and deliberate flirtations with the Axis Powers began.³

Nuri remained a force in the government but by the end of 1940 he was losing influence to a group of senior army officers. In April 1941 four generals seized power and stationed their troops at strategic points in the capital. The Regent and Nuri were forced to flee. The Thirty Days War followed and British Forces restored their lines of communications through Iraq for the remainder of the war. British occupation brought relative stability to the country, and in October 1941 Nuri returned to the post of Premier which he held until June 1944.⁴ He resigned in 1944 because of lack of support from the Regent. His successor was Hamdi al-Pachachi, who retained his post until 1946.

But the Regent had reversed himself in 1945 and become a partisan of Nuri as-Sa'id. He handled the post-war problems

¹Majid Khadduri, Independent Iraq, 1932-1958 (2nd ed.; London: Oxford University Press, 1960), Appendix II, p. Bb2.

²Longrigg, Iraq, 1900-1950, pp. 310-311.

³Morris, p. 169.

⁴Khadduri, Independent Iraq, Appendix II, p. Bb2.

with some skill. There was agitation for a break with Britain, discontent among the middle classes, and in 1948 a violent riot in protest against the Treaty of Portsmouth. The Regent again shifted his position and killed the treaty by refusing to sign it.¹ The Portsmouth Treaty had come about because of Britain's great interest in Iraq after World War II. There were communications to be maintained, Middle East oil was of greater importance year after year, and Russia was becoming a grimmer menace. Hence, a new formula was devised: the general relationship was to continue as before, but the British bases were to revert to Iraq and there was to be a joint board to coordinate the strategy of the two countries. The treaty was signed by Nuri at Portsmouth in January, 1948.² British personnel were to remain and Anglo-Iraqi equipment and training methods were to be standardized. Britain was determined to block Soviet advances in the direction of the Persian Gulf.³

The treaty was liberal concerning bases but still too unequal for national sentiment in Iraq and this was why the Regent refused to ratify it.⁴ The British were aware of the need to replace the treaty of 1930, due to expire in 1957, and the easiest way was to insert themselves into a wider military alliance

¹Morris, p. 169.

²Stephen Longrigg and Frank Stoakes, Iraq (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1958), pp. 223-224.

³William Spencer, Political Evolution in the Middle East (New York: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1962), p. 227.

⁴Pierre Rondot, The Changing Patterns of the Middle East (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1962), p. 140.

which included Iraq. Thus, Britain would succeed in giving its political relations with Iraq a new lease on life, in giving its Hashimite ally a better handicap in the Arab stakes, in becoming the Western partner in the Middle Eastern defence organization, and in restoring its credit and influence in the Middle East.

As stated above, nationalist sentiment was against the treaty. A violent outburst by the urban masses in January 1948, brought down the cabinet and led to the repudiation of the Portsmouth Treaty by the Regent and a quicker modification of the electoral system.¹ Secondary reasons for the public rejection of the treaty were famine, the mishandled publicity for an agreement signed in England, and the climax towards which events were moving in Palestine.² The type of demonstration which forced the Regent to kill the treaty was commonly started by students. Once in motion, events were apt to pass out of the hands of the instigators. When trouble threatened, resolute governments were quick to take preventive action. On the other hand, if police lacked timely or clear instructions, the situation might escape from their control, especially if the mob were inflamed by bloodshed.³

The Last King

Despite the Regent's sometime skill, "His country remained incorrigibly unreformed. . . . The democratic system had proved a failure in Iraq. The deputies did not represent the electorate,

¹Longrigg and Stoakes, p. 242.

²Elizabeth Monroe, Britain's Moment in the Middle East: 1914 - 1956 (London: Chatto & Windus, 1963), p. 156.

³Longrigg and Stoakes, p. 243.

and the elections were dishonest."¹

King Faisal II entered Harrow School in 1949, and in 1953 when he came of age the Regency came to an end without incident.² The former Regent did not lose his influence in Iraq; he had much personal charm and retained his influence in the Court and on the political scene. He still possessed good connections throughout the country and was as active in political life as Nuri as-Sa'id. He was considered as not only part of the regime but also as a powerful and active maintainer of it. But his close association with Great Britain aroused the suspicion of the political public and some of this suspicion became attached to the Iraqi Monarchy itself.³ The King himself showed some promise. His education ". . . had included that of an English nanny, governess, tutor, preparatory school and public school."⁴ There was considerable enthusiasm in Baghdad when he became King. Because of his youth he escaped for a time the attacks of the nationalists and Cairo Radio. Nuri and Abdulilah were the targets and were even accused of murdering King Ghazi.⁵ Faisal had a sense of responsibility for his position and might have been able to gather support from the young Iraqis who desired national progress. But his English upbringing separated him to some extent from his own generation. His activities were mainly formal in

¹Morris, p. 169.

²de Gaury, pp. 217-218.

³Longrigg and Stoakes, p. 129.

⁴de Gaury, p. 167.

⁵Ibid., p. 175.

public - the very thing to alienate his people. He often made trips to England for his health.¹ The King eventually became the target of resentment in Iraq, a country difficult for even the best of men to rule.

In the early 1950's there were two major political groups in Iraq: the conservative landowning group, and the nationalists and socialists who found their support in the cities. The conservatives supported Nuri, ". . . who emerged, as time went on, not only as an undisputed leader of the status quo forces, but also as the 'strong man of Iraq', . . ." ² The opposition demanded elimination of British influence, neutralism, and the voiding of the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of 1930. They were not unanimous in asking for nationalization of the oil industry, but did insist on more favorable terms for Iraq.³

Domestic opposition to the Nuri regime was stifled during the course of 1954 by the dissolution of all political parties and by a ban on almost all political activity. From then onwards, until the revolution in 1958, Iraq was a police State, where criticism of the Government, whether by organizations or by individuals, was kept within strictly limited bounds by the operation of a severe censorship, an efficient security force and capacious prison accommodation. The opposition, thus driven underground, crystallized into two broad tendencies about equal in strength. On the one hand there were followers of the Arab nationalism preached by Abdul Nasr; on the other hand there were communists.⁴

¹Longrigg and Stoakes, p. 234.

²George Lenczowski, The Middle East in World Affairs (2nd ed.; New York: Cornell University Press, 1962), p. 282.

³Ibid., p. 284.

⁴John Marlowe, The Persian Gulf in the Twentieth Century (London: The Cresset Press, 1962), pp. 194-195.

The elder statesmen kept themselves in power, dominated in turn by Nuri and the Palace. They ". . . preserved their control over the country's fortunes through cabinet, parliament and individual systems of patronage."¹ The outward tranquillity was misleading. According to Shwadran, Nuri and the Regent were the most hated men in the country because of their methods of terrorizing all opposition to the regime.² Despite oil profits Iraq still had the most antiquated agrarian system in the Middle East. ". . . the land holdings of the tribal chiefs and the government made the country the closest to a feudal society in modern times. The existing regime was blamed for both imperialism and feudalism."³

Nuri did set up the Development Board to utilize the profits from oil for widespread projects within the country. He wanted to establish a systematic agricultural and industrial base for the future - in case the oil ran out.⁴ But these projects did not bring immediate, obvious relief to the peasant. He could understand little of long-range development. "The development plan was thought of too much in terms of bricks and mortar, and insufficient account was taken of the 'human capital' that had to be improved and made more receptive to economic progress."⁵

¹Longrigg and Stoakes, p. 235.

²Benjamin Shwadran, The Power Struggle in Iraq (New York: Council for Middle Eastern Affairs Press, 1960), p. 12.

³Ibid., p. 13.

⁴Rondot, p. 19.

⁵George E. Kirk, Contemporary Arab Politics (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1961), p. 142.

Egypt and Syria were envious of Iraq's oil revenues¹ and lost no opportunity to attack Nuri and his regime. Nasser railed at him for his 1954 arms deal with the United States, and later for becoming part of the Baghdad Pact.²

The Turkish-Iraqi pact was signed in Baghdad in February, 1955. The reaction of the remainder of the Arab countries, especially Egypt, would eventually be a contributing factor to revolution in Iraq.

Before the pact was signed with Turkey, Iraq broke diplomatic relations with Russia and ordered the personnel in the Soviet Embassy to leave the country. The predictable propaganda blasts came from the USSR and from Egypt whose government ". . . was apparently most angered by Iraq's failure to consult either it or the Arab League first."³

Great Britain ratified the pact in April and at the same time Iraq and Britain signed a new treaty of alliance which specified that Britain would withdraw her forces from Iraq and British bases would be put under the command of the Iraqis.⁴ In July 1955, Pakistan joined the pact followed by Persia in October of the same year. In July 1955, Pakistan joined the pact followed by Persia in October of the same year.

Nuri could maintain order at home, ". . . but outward stability was purchased at the price of much bitterness on the

¹Ibid., p. 143.

²Ibid.

³Spencer, p. 228.

⁴Longrigg and Stoakes, p. 107.

part of frustrated intellectuals and adherents of the new nationalism, . . . many condemned the Pact and sympathized with . . . Egypt and Syria."¹ Nuri was not skilled in keeping the masses informed on his programs and policy. Perhaps he thought it unnecessary. He had an intense fear of Russia and international communism and any opposition he encountered he blamed on the communists. "Iraq was rumbling with political discontent and social grievance, but he elected to sit fast upon the volcano."²

The British had their own ideas about the Baghdad Pact.

According to Marlowe:

Although formally designed as an instrument of defence against Russian communism, the Pact was in fact regarded both by the British and by the Iraqi Governments, as a means of preserving British influence in the Middle East by way of sustaining the Iraqi Government against its opponents both inside and outside Iraq.³

Britain's interest in the Pact increased with the evacuation of Suez. Iraq became even more important for the protection of British interests, especially in the Persian Gulf and the oil supplies which were indispensable to England's economy.⁴ Iraq essentially was isolated from her Arab neighbors and her ties with the West appeared to grow along with her isolation in the Arab world.

Iraq tried to concentrate on its own economic development

¹Ibid.

²Morris, p. 184.

³Marlowe, p. 194.

⁴John C. Campbell, Defense of the Middle East: Problems of American Policy (rev. ed.; New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1960), p. 58.

after the signing of the Baghdad Pact. Oil royalties were expected to be about 220,000,000 million dollars a year and in 1956 a development plan was begun which scheduled the spending of a billion and a half dollars in the next five years. A Development Week was celebrated throughout the country for the purpose of drawing public attention to the country's economic progress. If outside agitation could have been stopped Iraq might have made significant progress and the material benefits of the program might have trickled down to the people who desperately needed them. Social and political tensions might have been reduced and the safety of the country assured.¹

The trends of Faisal's reign were identification with the West, autocracy at home, and the development of the resources of Iraq behind the shield of absolute rule. The theory was good but it did not work. Nuri was not representative of the electorate; he used his own methods, and he was out of touch with the radical new ideas being spread in Iraq by Nasser's radio stations.²

Nuri had always worried about the army and hesitated to make it strong. On the one hand he sometimes needed it to keep order in the country, but on the other he felt that if it became too strong it would take over as it had done many times before. Since 1932, there had been nine coups carried out by the army, ". . . either because leading army officers decided to replace one unpopular civilian government with another or

¹Lenczowski, p. 294.

²Morris, p. 186.

because the army officers desired direct control of authority."¹ The revolt of 1941 followed by the "Thirty Days War" with Great Britain was an especially vivid reminder to Nuri to keep the army "short of oats". At the end of World War II the Iraqi Army was in a pitiful condition. It had done no training in eight years and two-thirds of its established strength of thirty thousand men were classified as deserters.² Britain's Major General Malcolm Renton undertook the job of rebuilding the Iraqi Army and although arms remained in short supply some semblance of order emerged. Mr. de Gaury speculates on what Nuri thought of his stronger army during his last hours in 1958.³

The Suez incident in 1956 brought the end in sight for the Hashimite dynasty and for Nuri. "In Iraq every circumstance of the incident combined to discredit and to disarm the Baghdad Pact policy, . . ."⁴ Great Britain's reputation in Iraq was reduced to nothing. Nuri tried to save what he could; he broke off relations with France (but not with England), and agreed to exclude Great Britain from the next meeting of the Baghdad Pact.⁵ Anti-British riots broke out in Najaf and Karbala, and the Iraq Petroleum Company's pipeline to Sidon, Lebanon, was blown up by Syrian saboteurs.⁶ The loss of oil revenue was another blow which Iraq could not withstand.

¹Majid Khadduri, "The Role of the Military in Iraqi Society", The Military in the Middle East, ed. Sydney N. Fisher (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1963), p. 44.

²de Gaury, p. 146.

³Ibid., p. 147.

⁴Marlowe, p. 199.

⁵Ibid., p. 200.

⁶Spencer, p. 229.

The attempted coup by popular forces in 1956 was put down by force without regard to the consequences. No concessions were made by the ruling oligarchy. The repressive measures ended the patience of the army officers and they decided to intervene and to end what they considered a fiasco.¹ Their only problems were timing and ammunition for their weapons. The question of timing would solve itself, and secret contacts with the Syrian and Egyptian Armies provided ammunition and arms for the rebellion.²

¹Khadduri, "The Role of the Military in Iraqi Society", p. 44.

²Ibid., p. 45.

CHAPTER II

THE JULY 14TH REVOLUTION

The reign of Faysal II was both short and unhappy from his point of view. He was too young to exercise his royal prerogatives independently, and his uncle and heir apparent, the former Regent, was too close to him to let him learn from experience. As a result the political process was conducted in the same manner as it had been under the Regency, and the King had to bear the consequences of the perennial quarrel between the elder politicians, backed by the Royal Diwan, and the bloc of opposition parties and groups. Had the young king been left alone to choose his Prime Ministers from the party or parties that could command some popular support, his throne might have been saved.¹

Early in 1954, a group of young army officers, calling themselves the Free Officers, formed a secret organization. The chief center was in Baghdad, but there were two or three others outside the capital. They concentrated on enlisting a sufficient number of younger officers, organizing them, and preparing them for revolt.²

In the first part of 1958 Syria and Egypt united and two weeks later Jordan and Iraq decided to become one kingdom as a rival federation. But most of the Iraqis wanted to join Nasser's new "club" and rebellion was now almost inevitable.³ The stage was set for the coup that occurred on the 14th of

¹Khadduri, Independent Iraq, p. 286.

²Khadduri, "The Role of the Military in Iraqi Society", p. 44.

³Morris, p. 193.

July, 1958.

Early in the day units of the 20th Brigade, commanded by Brigadier-General Abdul Karim Kassem, on their way to Jordan, seized control of Baghdad. Within hours all members of the royal family in Baghdad, including King Faisal II and the Crown Prince, met their death. Cabinet ministers were placed under arrest, except for Nuri, who went into hiding but was discovered a few days later disguised as a woman and killed.¹ There are several versions of the story of Nuri's capture and his death. The truth may not be known for some years, and perhaps never.

On July 12th, 1958, the American Ambassador to Iraq, Waldemar J. Gallman, called on Nuri prior to his (Nuri's) leaving for Istanbul on July 14th for talks with Menderes about the scheduled meeting in London of the Council of the Baghdad Pact late in July. They also discussed the Lebanese situation and its effect on Iraq. Iraqi forces had been placed on the Iraqi-Jordanian border in anticipation of an appeal from Amman to move troops into Jordan. Nuri felt adequate measures had been taken, but he was disturbed that he did not know what the United States might do. Nuri felt that the potential trouble-makers in Iraq were limited to a few hundred students and lawyers, and that the army could be relied upon to support the Crown and the government.²

¹Lenczowski, p. 298.

²Waldemar J. Gallman, Iraq Under General Nuri: My Recollections of Nuri Al-Said, 1954-1958 (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1964), pp. 200-201.

The timing problem for the revolution had been solved indirectly by Lebanon early in July 1958. The civil war there might spread to Jordan; Nuri ordered an extra army unit sent to the Jordanian frontier. This unit was stationed north of Baghdad and was commanded by Kassem. It was ordered to move southward, skirting the capital, but Kassem diverted it and it entered Baghdad.¹

Gallman states that on the 14th of July he heard gunfire shortly after 5 A.M. in the morning but the scene appeared normal and he concluded it was part of the ceremonial send-off for the King and his party. Then a member of his staff said troops were firing on the Palace and Nuri's home and that mobs were gathering. At 6 A.M. an associate of Nuri appeared at the American Embassy seeking asylum; he began translating broadcasts of decrees setting up the Republic of Iraq. By 7 A.M. the new regime had established itself. A Presidium was to replace the Royal Family: Mohammad Mahdi Kubba, Khalid Naqshbandi, and Brigadier Najib Rubay'i. Some forty military officers were retired - among them chief of staff, Rafiq Arif and one-time assistant chief of staff, Ghazi Daghistani. Many whose names were broadcast were later brought to trial before a special military court.²

Gallman says that on the 14th of July Nuri escaped just ahead of the mob; the radio then announced a 10,000 dinar reward for his capture. He had taken refuge with the Istrabadi family, wealthy Shi'ahs from Kadhimain. Members of the family

¹Shwadran, p. 15.

²Gallman, p. 202.

and servants were later tried for aiding Nuri: seven were found guilty and sentenced to one to five years in prison. The eighty-year-old family head, whose wife had been killed in the street with Nuri, was sentenced to three years.¹

On the 15th of July (Lenczowski states a few days after July 14th, see p. 18) Nuri was apprehended and shot. The mob learned that his body was to be taken to the morgue, they intercepted it, mutilated it, and dragged it through the streets.² This mob consisted mostly of youths aged from twelve to twenty years. The new regime supplied the trucks which brought many of them to Baghdad and transported them around the city. They had a free hand for two days.³

Nuri and the former Regent had obviously lost their touch for keeping their necks intact. Both had survived many coups in the past and were veterans in the use of informers throughout the country and in the army. That either, but especially Nuri, could make such a blunder as to give an army unit with ammunition the chance to enter Baghdad seems inconceivable.

Many authors are quick to decide that the Hashimite dynasty and Nuri were brought down because of autocracy and suppression, but autocratic rule had been commonplace in Iraq rather than the exception. The new regime was no different. Perhaps Iraq needed a few more years under Nuri and his development plan to break the cycle of revolution.

¹Ibid., p. 203.

²Ibid., p. 210.

³Ibid., p. 203.

Khadduri believes otherwise as when he states:

. . . but the regime previous to the coup d'etat of 1958 betrayed such defects as corruption in almost all high Government positions, favouritism, and exploitation that there was almost universal agreement as to the necessity of complete change in the political process.¹

King Hussain of Jordan, commenting on the death of King Faisal II, said:

How ironic that my cousin should have been murdered instead of me. Feisal, a few months my senior, never harmed anybody and never had enough control of events to make a single major political decision that could have angered anybody. . . . I believe many Iraqis for or against the monarchy, feel a deep sense of shame at the brutal manner in which he was done to death.²

Even in 1960 the newspaper Sawt al Ahrar had the temerity to state that in Iraq no political terrorist assassinations were committed and the killing of Faisal, Abdulilah and Nuri as-Sa'id was effected by a joint operation by the people and the army to ensure success of the July 14th Revolution.³

In contrast to King Hussain's beliefs, Rondot believes that:

These excesses (on the 14th of July) revealed the violence of popular Arab passions. But the members of the new Iraqi government . . . were not among the actual perpetrators. The President of the Sovereignty Council, Major General Mazib al-Rubai (sic), and the Prime Minister, Brigadier Abdul Karim Kassem, were enlightened and patriotic officers who had studied their profession in England. . . . one of their first acts was to calm foreign residents, many of them connected with Iraq's

¹Khadduri, Independent Iraq, p. 367.

²King Hussain of Jordan, Uneasy Lies the Head (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1962), pp. 162-163.

³Sawt al-Ahrar (Baghdad), Sept. 1, 1960.

major public works and with the Iraq Petroleum Company, dispenser of the vital royalties.¹

It may have been difficult to calm foreign visitors and residents after four of them were pulled apart in the streets. The British Embassy was severely damaged and one of the members of its staff was shot. Curiously, the American Embassy went untouched, except for minor harrassment.

Spencer and Gallman disagree on the term to use for the overthrow of the Hashimites. Gallman believes it was not a revolution because it was not a popular uprising, but ". . . simply a seizure of power by a small, determined group. . . . among the masses, only stunned acquiescence was in evidence."²

Spencer states: "The July affair should be termed a revolution, in contradistinction to Iraq's long series of pre-war coups, because it had popular support. Nearly all elements of Iraqi society welcomed it."³

Laqueur writes that there were several causes for the revolution: revenge of the army commanders against Nuri, rebellion against the pro-Western orientation of the government, the movement of Pan-Arabism, and the social revolution.

The new government stood for radical Arab nationalism; most of its leaders were members of extremist right or left-wing groups who had joined forces in order to supplant the old regime. Moscow hailed the revolution as a victory of the people.

¹Rondot, p. 22.

²Gallman, p. 205.

³Spencer, p. 245.

Pravda stated the U.S. landings in Lebanon at the time were "a direct act of war and open aggression." It hinted that unless the landings were stopped, volunteers would come from Soviet bloc countries. It was also announced that Soviet land and air forces had begun maneuvers in the military districts of Turkestan and Transcaucasia.¹

The ruling stratum after the 14th of July consisted of four or five groups who were jockeying separately for power and positions from the start. The most prominent group was the "Istiqlal" (Independence) Party, with Mohammed al Kubbah a member of the three-man Council of Sovereignty, and Siddiq Shanshal minister of propaganda. In the 30's and 40's the party had been pro-Fascist and its leaders took part in the Rashid Ali coup in 1941. After World War II it adopted a neutralist attitude and then began to collaborate with pro-Soviet movements in Iraq. The party was bitterly anti-Western.

On the Left the influence of the old National Democratic Party decreased while that of the Ba'ath Party increased. The National Democratic Party was joined by the Communists after 1945, who used it as a front while their party was illegal. The Ba'ath combined pro-Soviet neutralism with radical Pan-Arab slogans and Socialist demands. At the beginning this party was stronger than the National Democrats, but subsequently, it was out-manuevered by an alliance between Kassem, the National Democrats and the Communists.

¹Walter Z. Laqueur, The Soviet Union and the Middle East (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1959), p. 337.

The Iraqi Communist Party emerged as probably the strongest single party immediately after the coup. Its influence was not limited to the intelligentsia, but it also had a "mass basis" in the trade unions.¹

The Iraqi revolution ushered in an era of Arab dissension and backbiting, plotting and counter-plotting, and patterns of friendship and enmity that changed so fast that outside woovers desisted from the wooing, and all three drew back. Never had the members of the Arab League been more divided. . . . From 1958, all the great powers, Britain included, watched inter-Arab politics from the side-lines.²

¹Ibid., pp. 338-341.

²Monroe, p. 212.

CHAPTER III

KASSEM AND EARLY ANGLO-IRAQI RELATIONS

Kassem

Kassem was born in 1914, the son of a farmer. At seventeen he was in the army; he attended the Military College in Baghdad and later the Army Staff College. After some combat experience in the Arab-Israeli war he spent six months in England at a school for senior army officers. (At this school one British officer classified him as mediocre). In 1955 he became commander of a brigade with the rank of brigadier.¹ A few years later he found the brigade to be a useful weapon.

A pamphlet² prepared by the Press Bureau to H. E. the Leader, the Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, gives further details on Kassem's life. It is difficult to determine if all these details are actual fact, but most probably a good share of them are essentially true. In 1921 he entered the government school in Suwaira, and later he studied at the Mamuniya School and the Rusafa School, both in Baghdad. He obtained his Primary School Certificate in 1927, and the next year entered the Central Secondary School where he studied for one

¹Shwadran, p. 15.

²Press Bureau (Baghdad), Glimpses from the Life History of the Leader Abdul Karim Qassim.

year. His studies were interrupted for a year because of ill-health; he later resumed his education and received the Secondary School Certificate in 1931. Kassem taught at the Government Primary School at Shamiya from November, 1931, until October, 1932, when he resigned to enter the Military College in Baghdad. He was commissioned in 1934 and assigned as a platoon commander in an infantry battalion. Kassem was promoted to 1st Lieutenant in 1937, and to Captain in 1940. In May of 1941 he participated in operations against "the British and the forces of imperialism in Iraq".¹ He returned to the Staff College in June, 1941, graduated in December 1941, and from then until 1947 held a variety of jobs in infantry units. At the end of May, 1947, he was promoted to the rank of Staff Lieutenant Colonel. When Iraqi Armed Forces were in Jordan in 1948, Kassem was Assistant Adjutant General to those forces, and later was put in command of an infantry battalion. He was promoted to Staff Colonel in 1951, and to Brigadier in 1955. After the revolution in 1958, his titles included that of Prime Minister, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, and Acting Minister of Defence.

In February, 1963, he was shot to death.

Early Anglo-Iraqi Relations

Kassem's first proclamation on the 14th of July proclaimed the deliverance of "our beloved country from the corrupt clique installed by imperialism", announced the formation of a popular republic, and called for brotherly ties with the Arab and Moslem states and a foreign policy conforming to the principles of the

¹The so-called "Thirty Days War".

Bandung Conference, i.e., a policy of neutralism and non-alignment.¹

Shwadran thought that:

Perhaps the time has come to discard once and for all the worn nomenclature of communism, democracy, nationalism, socialism, and so on, in appreciating the political, economic and social changes in the Middle East, and to dispense with the practice of trying to fit the peoples of the region into the picture of the East-West struggle.²

The new revolutionary authorities consisted of a Council of Sovereignty with three members. The Council of Sovereignty was temporary. Kassem became Prime Minister and formed the first republican cabinet with a number of generals and politicians who had been enemies of Nuri and jailed under the old regime. Kassem retained supreme command of the armed forces, and Aref was deputy commander in chief. The leaders of the former opposition who obtained posts were Mohammed Hadid of the National-Democratic Party as Minister of Finance, Siddiq Shanshal as Minister of Guidance (Laqueur called him Minister of Propaganda), Fuad Rikabi, a Ba'athist, Minister of Development, and Ibrahim Kubbah, who had Marxist leanings, as Minister of National Economy.³

Hussain, in Jordan, was afraid that the difficulties in Iraq and Lebanon would spread, meaning the end of his regime. He called for either British or American troops to help him retain his crown. "I had purposely allowed the British and Americans to decide which country should send troops, and the answer came

¹Lenczowski, p. 299. For full text of Pronouncement, see Muhammad Khalil, The Arab States and the Arab League (2 vols.; Beirut: Khayats, 1962), I, pp. 27-28.

²Shwadran, p. vii.

³Lenczowski, p. 298.

swiftly. British parachute troops would fly in from Cyprus."¹ Hussain speaks of the magnificent response by Macmillan, probably his most difficult decision, to send the troops. American Marines were already engaged in Lebanon and the British had crack forces alerted in Cyprus. The British Cabinet was afraid the Middle East situation might deteriorate beyond Jordan if action was not taken immediately. On July 17th, the Cabinet ordered British paratroops from Cyprus to Jordan. The planes took off before getting permission to fly over Israel. Three transports crossed that country, but not until six hours later, after clearance by the Israeli Cabinet, could the airlift proceed in full force.² The presence of British troops in Jordan contributed to maintaining order. The crisis in Lebanon subsided also.

The revolution (and murders) took place on the 14th of July. Turkey recognized the new government on the 31st of July and Great Britain and the United States on the 1st of August. Hussain quotes Sir Anthony Eden as saying in his memoirs, Full Circle, that "Within a few days the free nations of the West recognised the Government which had endorsed, if it had not sanctioned, the gruesome deeds. . . ."³

On July 20th a special military tribunal under Kassem's cousin, Colonel Fadhil Abbas al-Mahdawi, was set up to try ministers of the royalist regime for conspiring against the state.⁴

¹Hussain, p. 169.

²Ibid., pp. 169-170.

³Ibid., p. 165. (de Gaury, p. 218, states that Great Britain recognized the new government on 31 July 1958).

⁴Spencer, p. 247.

The court became a circus with idiotic buffoonery substituting for justice. Mahdawi brought all anti-communist forces before his court, and in long speeches, interrupted by poetry readings and popular outbursts, he insulted the Western countries.¹ The insults to Western countries were unimportant, but the travesty of justice was totally uncivilized.

Mahdawi became abusive to anyone who criticized his court. Anthony Nutting was a victim; he was a former British cabinet member turned journalist. In an interview with Kassem he asked why such a court should be allowed to function. Kassem gave two contradictory answers: the court was independent and he could do nothing; and, it was an excellent outlet for pent-up emotions and there was no harm in the exercise. Mahdawi went to great length to justify the court's practices, playing on the sound of Nutting's name in Arabic, calling him: "this stinking fellow".² The interview took place in May 1959, and the questions and answers were printed in a pamphlet by the Times Press, Baghdad. Nutting interrupted Kassem during the interview to ask about the People's Court. Nutting stated that he had watched the proceedings of the court on television the night before and that he had noticed that the attacks of the President of the Court and the Military Prosecutor were ". . . fierce against U.A.R., American and Britain, as if the Court was little concerned in the charges made against the plotters. The

¹Hans E. Tutsch, From Ankara to Marrakesh: Turks and Arabs in a Changing World (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1964), p. 117.

²Shwadran, pp. 66-67.

Court was apparently only concerned with making comments."¹

Kassem rambled in his answer. He said the attacks made by the court were against the quarters which had cooperated with the plotters, and secondly, towards ". . . other countries, not in their present capacity, but with an eye on their former record."² He continued:

The best example to this is Iraq's position after withdrawal from the Baghdad Pact. The Iraqi people became more understanding in regard to the affairs with England. Relations with them were based on mutual benefits. All factors of differences between us have given way. No longer does Britain seek to colonize this country through the Baghdad Pact or through unequal treaties. Our friendship with them is now placed on a new basis of goodwill and cordiality. Everything will be up to the best of expectations.³

Nutting persisted and stated that he had talked to the people on the streets and in the coffee houses and that these people did not approve of the attacks by the court on foreign countries. Nutting states that a charge had been made that there was a Cairo-English-American-Israeli plot against the new regime, that Nasser plotted with Britain or with America against Iraq, and that Britain wanted to carry out a counter-revolution during the first week of the new regime. And for that reason Britain landed forces in Jordan in preparation for an attack on Iraq.⁴

Kassem's answer was again evasive. He stated that perhaps the interpreters in the court might be taking liberties with the

¹Press Interviews granted by Major-General Abdul Karim Qassim, The Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq to Mr. R. Karanjia, Mr. Peter Worthington and Mr. Anthony Nutting, at the Ministry of Defence, Baghdad (Times Press, Baghdad), (28 May 1959, pp. 37-38).

²Ibid., p. 38.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., pp. 38-39.

translations of the official proceedings, and that eventually the two countries (Britain and Iraq) would come to a mutual understanding.¹

Previously, on the 20th of May, 1959, Kassem granted an interview with Peter Worthington, a Canadian journalist from the Toronto Telegraph. Worthington asked about foreign intrigues against the Kassem Regime, specifically the personnel working with the U.S. Point Four Program during the previous regime. Kassem answered that he felt the Americans were not working for the true welfare of the people, that Iraq should have emerged as a strong, well-developed country. Instead the country was entangled in agreements with other countries (presumably Western) which were not in the best interest of the country.² He then declared that his government was neutral, free from outside influences.³ The tone of his answers seemed to be lucid and well thought out, although this may be the result of alteration by script-writers and the Times Press of Baghdad.

¹Ibid., p. 39.

²Though Iraq did not formally withdraw from the Baghdad Pact until March 1959, it had in fact died in July 1958. (Spencer, p. 229) Campbell says this decision "flowed from the honest conviction of its leaders that this was the best way to strengthen the country's security and its international position." (Campbell, pp. 238-239) Gallman agrees that the Pact did not have the backing of the Iraqi Public, but wonders why Kassem waited so long to withdraw formally. He feels it was because Kassem was "so worried in the early months about how firm his grip on the country was, he saw some advantage in only holding aloof at first and not breaking completely." (Gallman, p. 86).

³Press Interviews, p. 18.

CHAPTER IV

OIL AND ANGLO-IRAQI RELATIONS

Oil Development

Oil, important throughout the Middle East, has for some time been a major factor in Anglo-Iraqi relations. In fact, during the Kassem regime oil considerations were the main factor in relations between the two countries. Oil concessions in Mesopotamia date from the end of the 19th century when, in 1888, the Turkish Government gave a contract to the German-owned Ottoman Railway Company of Anatolia. The concession consisted of a priority of rights in mining development, including petroleum.¹ However, the concessions never became operative.²

The Germans were not the only ones interested in Turkish oil. There was also William Knox d'Arcy, an Australian geologist who found oil in the southern Iranian area;³ Rear-Admiral Colby Chester, sponsored by the New York Chamber of Commerce; and the Shell and Royal Dutch Petroleum Companies.⁴ The Turkish coup d'etat of July 1908 put an end to all negotiations and the Empire's

¹Stephen Longrigg, Oil in the Middle East (2nd ed., London: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 13.

²George B. Cressey, Crossroads: Land and Life in Southwest Asia (New York: J. B. Lippincott, 1960), p. 212.

³Rondot, p. 48.

⁴Longrigg, Oil in the Middle East, p. 28.

oil properties were re-transferred to the Ministry of Finance.¹

It was not until June 28, 1914 that the first effective oil concession in Iraq was granted. It was given to the Turkish Petroleum Company - representing the interests of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, Deutsche Bank (controller of the Ottoman Railway Company), and the Royal-Dutch Group. Through this agreement the company was promised a lease of the petroleum resources discovered, and to be discovered, in the vilayets of Mosul and Baghdad.²

Oil development was suspended during the First World War. As a consequence Germany lost her interests in the Ottoman Empire, and in the San Remo Agreement of April 24, 1920,³ her shares were given to France, the Compagnie Francaise des Petroles; Britain, the Anglo-Persian Oil Company (later named British Petroleum Company); and Holland-Britain, represented by the Royal Dutch Shell group. In 1922, the company was joined by two American shareholders - Standard Oil Company of New Jersey and Socony Mobil Oil Company. A small block of stock for the original concession is with the heirs of G. S. Gulbenkian, the Armenian intermediary.⁴

In March of 1925 the Iraqi Government gave the Turkish

¹Ibid., pp. 28-29.

²Khadduri, Independent Iraq, pp. 352-353.

³While reviewing the oil history of Iraq, the newspaper Ittihad al Sha'b (Baghdad) said on July 26, 1960 that its oil wealth had always been the covetous bait of world imperialism. And that as a result of the San Remo Treaty, Britain was successful in obtaining Iraq as its share.

⁴Cressy, pp. 212-213.

Petroleum Company a new concession covering the whole country.¹ This agreement also included a 4 shillings (gold) royalty, per ton, to be paid to the Iraqi Government. In 1927, drilling operations began and oil was discovered, in abundance, at Qayyara and at Baba Gurgur. The Company, in June 1929, changed its name to the Iraq Petroleum Company.²

A new agreement was concluded by Iraq and IPC in March 1931. The company's rights of exploitation were limited to east of the Tigris. The relinquished part was awarded to British Oil Developments Ltd. on a 75 year concession. (British Oil Developments was later purchased by IPC which made it into a subsidiary company - Mosul Petroleum Company). There were other provisions in the 1931 concession: the 4 shillings royalty stipulated in 1925 was made subject to a minimum payment of 400,000 Pounds Sterling per annum; certain annual payments to be made to the government pending discovery and export of commercial oil; and the company to undertake construction of a pipeline to the Mediterranean for export of oil.³

In 1938, IPC formed another subsidiary - Basra Petroleum Company. It was given a 75 year concession for the Province of Basra under basically the same conditions as the 1931 agreement.⁴

The period of the Second World War in Iraq was, for the oil industry, one of limitation and disturbance followed by full operation and valuable work for the war effort. At the close of

¹Khadduri, Independent Iraq, pp. 352-353.

²Ibid.

³Marlowe, pp. 91-92.

⁴Ibid.

the war the Companies and the Government were "maturing plans for the future."¹ After the war the Communists, though an illegal party, became involved with the oil industry when they took part in inciting a strike at Kirkuk on July 3, 1946.² The workers for IPC had demanded an increase in wages and a trade union. When these were not conceded they went on strike. During the demonstration the Police fired into the 400 workers, killing five to eight persons. Many Iraqis felt this action had been inspired by IPC. As a result of public opinion and the criticism of opposition parties, the Company sent conciliators to the Government to work out an agreement with the workers. The workers returned to work with the promise of a wage increase (16 to 75%), addition of daily allowances for rent, extension of medical facilities, and plans for housing. "However, neither the Iraqi Government nor the Company would allow the workers to organize a trade union, since it would be liable to fall under Communist influence."³

Post-war nationalism served to deny Britain its special position. The political parties were, until 1952, conducting campaigns against international oil companies in Iraq.⁴ Nuri as-Sa'id was instrumental in the signing of a new agreement, more favorable to Iraq, on February 2, 1952.⁵ This agreement was based on a fifty-fifty division of net profits before foreign taxation -

¹Longrigg, Oil in the Middle East, p. 122.

²Khadduri, Independent Iraq, pp. 360-361.

³Ibid.

⁴Longrigg and Stoakes, p. 224.

⁵Gallman, p. 108.

its precedent in the Middle East was the Aramco-Saudi Arabia agreement of 1950.¹ Other sections of the contract provided for the minimum production of 22 million tons per annum from the northern fields from 1954 onwards and a minimum of 8 million per annum from the Basra field from 1955 onwards. As its profits, the Government would never receive less than 25% of the seaboard value of the oil in the case of northern production and 33% in Basra production; and that the government could take, at its option as part of its share of profits, up to one-eighth of the total amount of oil produced under the agreement as a payment in kind.² The new agreement was retroactive to January 1951.³ Seventy per cent of the oil revenues were marked for development purposes and the prospects for Nuri's Development Board were bright at this time.⁴

Criticism of the oil companies subsided for a time and in March 1955, IPC again increased Iraq's revenues and enlarged the pipeline and pumping facilities. During November 1956, at the time of the Suez crisis, a "temporary set-back"⁵ occurred - the IPC pumping stations in Syria were blown up.

According to an eyewitness, a driver in IPC employ who escaped from station T2, a Syrian army column of a hundred armored vehicles surrounded this station early in the morning of November 3. All company employees were placed under arrest and driven off into the desert. Then the station was blown up. That same day an IPC plane made a reconnaissance flight over Syrian territory and found that

¹Longrigg, Oil in the Middle East, pp. 190-191.

²Marlowe, pp. 169-170.

³Charles Issawi and Mohammed Yeganeh, The Economics of Middle Eastern Oil (London: Faber and Faber, 1962), p. 31.

⁴Gallman, p. 109.

⁵Ibid.

in addition to station T2, stations T3 and T4 were also in flames. The demolition, . . . had been carefully planned and expertly executed. The pipelines affected by this destruction had been carrying about 25,000,000 tons annually, or three-fourths of all of Iraq's oil exports.¹

Nuri then called upon IPC for help but must have, at first, felt rebuffed. When talking to Gallman in December 1956, Nuri made the only derogatory remark about IPC that Gallman had ever heard him make. He said IPC was "out of date" and that the company should operate "on the same basis as the consortium in Iran."²

Nuri asked IPC for an advance of 20-25,000,000 Pounds Sterling over a twelve month period. The loan agreement was concluded in February 1957, and Iraq was to get the difference between six million dinars, the anticipated quarterly share of oil revenues, and the actual receipts from the exports through Basra and the partially restored lines through Syria. When the Iraqi share exceeded six million dinars quarterly, repayment was to begin.³

In March 1957, the pumping of oil across Syria was resumed. At the end of the first quarter, petroleum exports were already about 40% normal. At the end of the third quarter, recovery had reached the point where the Development Program could continue at a good rate. It appeared, in May 1958, that exports through Syria would soon reach 25,000,000 tons annually - the pre-Suez level. "Nuri had come through the crisis with the program and relations with IPC in a satisfactory state."⁴

The July 14th Revolution concerned the oil companies

¹Ibid., pp. 109-110.

²Ibid., p. 110.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., pp. 110-111.

greatly as to how it would affect them. The European and Arab points of view differ widely on the subject of oil. Europeans see a degree of monopoly in Middle East oil. Order, stability, and large-scale organization are greatly admired and they feel that market control by the international majors is necessary in order to avoid extreme instability in price. The British approach has a large political component and includes the notion of military action.¹ On the other hand, most Arabs "would say that it is far better to manage, even mismanage, your own industry than to have it managed by others."² There is also bitterness, distrust and fear of the oil companies.

Fundamentally, the Arabs look at oil as a weapon in their national struggle for independence and unity, . . . Pecuniary returns are often of far less importance than the desire to become independent of the international majors, and money will be sacrificed for national pride. Considerable risks may even be taken: 'If driven to despair in the West's correct understanding of their planning and aspirations, the Arabs can handle their oil in a technically and economically hazardous way.' . . . willingness to make economic sacrifices for national independence.³

"The lessons of Abadan and of Suez were apparent in the attitude adopted by the revolutionary regime in Iraq towards the I.P.C."⁴ The regime made no attempt to nationalize the companies, though Nasser was for it,⁵ and there was no serious interference with the operations. Concerning IPC, Kassem spoke over Radio Baghdad on the 18th of July:

¹Wayne A. Leeman, The Price of Middle East Oil: An Essay in Political Economy (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1962), pp. 240-242.

²Ibid., p. 243.

³Ibid., pp. 243-244.

⁴Marlowe, p. 221.

⁵Shwadran, p. 34.

In view of the importance of oil to the world economy, the Government of the Iraqi Republic wishes to declare its anxiety to see the continuation of the production and flow of oil to the markets where it is sold, because of its importance to national wealth and to national and international economic and industrial interests.

The Government of the Iraqi Republic respects its commitments with the parties concerned. It has taken all necessary steps to protect the oil wells, pumping stations, pipelines, and all other installations within the borders of the Iraqi Republic.

The Government of the Iraqi Republic will, at the same time, work for the preservation of its sublime national interests, and hopes those concerned will respond to its desire to see the continued existence of this vital resource for the good of the national economy as well as the international economy.¹

Although the Revolution had no serious effects on the oil industry's operations, it did lead to "an increase of supervision and 'security' measures."² There were also delays and difficulties in obtaining decisions; there was censorship and movements were restricted. Most of the high officials experienced in the oil industry disappeared from Government service. This, of course, added to the difficulty of Government - Company liaison; and political considerations became more important than economic considerations.³

Concerning this post-revolutionary period, Rondot says the new government "seemed adverse to any extreme measures which might kill the goose that laid the golden eggs."⁴ Baghdad was intent

¹Ibid., p. 27.

²Longrigg, Oil in the Middle East, p. 263.

³Ibid.

⁴Rondot, pp. 189-190. (See Khalil, I, pp. 29-30 for Kassem's statement concerning the oil companies.)

upon increased production and an increase in its share of the proceeds after the reduced earnings during the Suez crisis.¹

When Kassem announced that Iraq was honoring IPC's concessions, Nasser came out in favor of nationalization. (Aref was also openly in favor of nationalization and said on July 28, 1958, that he looked forward to it).² It is significant, however, that the UAR, "although seriously at odds with the regime in Iraq, made no attempt to use its control of the transport lanes to hinder the flow of Iraqi oil to European markets."³

The first indication of trouble came in September 1958, when it was announced:

. . . first that Government would expect greater revenues resulting from accelerated production, and, secondly, that it reserved its right to invoke the terms of its letter of September 1951, to the effect that, in the event of a neighboring country receiving a higher average revenue per ton of oil exported than was currently being received by 'Iraq then the Government would claim a similar amount.⁴

Kassem stated on July 16, 1959:

The great wealth of this country was usurped in the past. I swear to God that I shall not allow any part of this wealth to go into the pockets of the imperialists. This wealth will be spent on the people of this country.⁵

He had said earlier in an interview with Mr. Karanjia, the editor of the Indian magazine, Blitz, that the Development Board had not spent seventy per-cent of the oil revenues on projects within the country as claimed. Instead, Kassem claimed, only ten per-cent

¹ Ibid.

² Shwadran, p. 34.

³ Marlowe, p. 221.

⁴ Longrigg, Oil in the Middle East, p. 264.

⁵ Shwadran, p. 31.

was utilized while the rest was smuggled out of the country.¹

The British had been more than ready to extend recognition to the Kassem Regime once they had been assured of the continuous flow of oil, and were even ready to offer military and economic aid. On the controversy between Nasser and Kassem they were more anxious to remain with Kassem because they felt Nasser was a major threat to their Middle East oil. But they now found themselves accused of thievery and ". . . described by both Baghdad and Cairo as the enemies of the Arabs and each accuses the other of working with their enemies: the imperialist U.S. and Great Britain."²

The Oil Negotiations

When Kassem took power he promised that the oil industry would not be interfered with and the rights of the oil companies operating in Iraq would be protected. Acting upon these assurances the Companies went ahead with an expansion program designed to double the export capacity for Iraq oil at a cost of about one hundred million pounds, with an export capacity of 70,000,000 tons a year as the objective.³

Caractacus writing in Revolution in Iraq makes bitter charges against the British policy in Iraq, but states: ". . . furtunately the oil company is rather more flexible than the

¹Press Interviews, p. 4.

²Shwadran, pp. 82-83.

³The Iraq Oil Negotiations: A commentary written at the request of the Iraq Petroleum Group of Oil Companies by an experienced outside observer (London, February 1962), p. 1.

government, and 'recognized' the Republic of Iraq long before Her Majesty's Government did so."¹

But points of difference cropped up between the oil companies and the new regime. Negotiations went on between the two from August, 1958, until October, 1961, partly on points brought up by the previous government and partly on a number of new and larger claims which the Iraqi Government - in many cases General Kassem personally - introduced into the talks from time to time. The matters discussed ranged from questions of finance, accounting, and management policy to general arguments involving the economics and conduct of the oil industry.

Kassem sometimes reproached the Companies for supposed failure or neglect to carry out the provisions of the agreements between them and the Iraq Government; more often they were told that the agreements were in their favour and ought to have been quite different. One difficulty in settling the agreements was that the official attitude presumed all previous Iraqi Governments were complaisant and careless of their country's interests in their dealings with foreigners generally and with the oil companies in particular.

On several points the Iraq Petroleum Company negotiators were able to offer to meet the Government's demands. But none of their offers was ever conclusively adopted, the Government negotiators preferring, when such an offer was made - even if it coincided exactly with what they had just been demanding - to change the subject, leaving the matter unsettled and returning to other demands, or raising new ones.²

¹Caractacus (Pseud.), Revolution in Iraq (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1959), p. 185.

²The Iraq Oil Negotiations, p. 1.

Ashraf Lutfi felt that the oil producing countries wanted to abandon the role of spectator and take measures to ensure a solid foundation for their economies. He wrote:

It is also to be hoped that Iraq has trained a sufficient number of Iraqi engineers who can be relied on to manage and operate the refineries themselves and to arrange for the distribution of petroleum products on a commercial basis. . . . The important thing as far as Iraq is concerned is to acquire experience in distribution and marketing abroad even if on a minor scale to begin with.¹

Any chance of cooperation between the companies and the Government was precluded by sudden, unilateral demands from the Government, such as the one in the summer of 1960, when an additional duty of five shillings per ton was put on all crude oil exported from Basra. This rendered the oil less competitive and forced a cut-back in production - which of course was resented by the Government.²

But progress was made in introducing Iraqi personnel into positions of responsibility in the Companies. By the end of 1959, 50 per-cent of the senior administrative and technical grades were Iraqi, as against 35 per-cent at the end of 1958. The total number of personnel employed by the three branches of the Iraq Petroleum Company was 13,165, and 96 per-cent were nationals and 4 per-cent foreigners.³

Some of the Baghdad papers consistently attacked the oil companies, commenting on the ". . . intrigues of the imperialist

¹Ashraf Lutfi, Arab Oil: A Plan for the Future (English ed.; Beirut: The Middle East Research and Publishing Center, 1960), p. 52.

²Longrigg, Oil in the Middle East, p. 263.

³Ibid., p. 268.

oil companies against the Iraqi Republic."¹ In an editorial on July 4, 1960, the same paper contended that in the interest of Iraq's national economy its oil policy must be reconsidered and its positions towards the "monopolistic" oil companies should be changed to subject the companies to Iraqi law.²

The paper Khabat in an editorial on July 13, 1960, said that "The monopolistic oil company's sole intention was to sabotage the movement of laborers for betterment of conditions." Continuing, it stated that imperialism backed the oil company and tried to keep Kurdistan in a backward condition and prevent its growth.³

Kassem apparently did not openly muzzle the newspapers and made a point of saying so. But none criticized him as a truly free press inevitably would have. Though he had said he wanted no impressive titles, within a few days after the revolution the papers began calling him "His Excellency", "The Leader", "The Sole Leader", "The Hero Leader", and other almost childish names. Kassem remained obsessed with what he called imperialism and the press reflected his views.

The oil negotiations went on intermittently and the Iraqi press took full advantage of them to disparage anything smacking of Westernism. Al-Fajr Al-Jadīd on July 21, 1960, commented that forthcoming oil negotiations between Iraq and the companies would involve the "tricky ways" used by these companies when negotiating

¹Ittihad al-Sha'b (Baghdad), June 28, 1959.

²Ibid., July 4, 1960.

³Khabat (Baghdad), July 13, 1960.

with the ex-regime and that the companies benefited at the expense of Iraq. Kassem, in a speech at the Military College, said that his government would force the oil companies to accept the rightful demands of Iraq.¹

In 1959, the world picture of oil supply and demand could best be understood by comparing production and consumption area by area. Western Europe, North America, and the Far East and Africa were all net importers. In all these areas, local consumption exceeded local production, forcing them to import oil. The Middle East, Venezuela and the Soviet Union were exporters, competing to supply the main importing areas. Iraq's exports to world markets in 1959 amounted to 38,800,000 tons, over 80% of which went to Western Europe. In June, 1960, the paper Al-Akhbar stated that the revenue from the 1959 oil production was 68 million dinars,² but the Iraq Petroleum Company put it at 86 million dinars.³ The paper, Al-Zaman, said the 1959 exports of oil were approximately 22,000,000 tons.⁴ The constant discrepancy in the claims of the oil company and the claims of Iraqi sources as to the export tonnage and revenue obtained could only lead to strained relations. The ogre was always Britain, personified by the Iraq Petroleum Company.

In July, 1959, rioting broke out in the oil-field center

¹Al-Fajr Al-Jadīd (Baghdad), July 21, 1960.

²Al-Akhbar (Baghdad), June 4, 1960.

³Iraq Petroleum Company Ltd. (London) Iraq Oil in 1959,
p. 6.

⁴Al-Zaman (Baghdad), June 25, 1960.

of Kirkuk. Turkomans and Kurds had been more or less enemies since the revolt of Colonel Shawwaf in March; many Kurds were pro-communist while the Turkomans were resistant to that ideology. Quarrels broke out over the celebration of the first anniversary of the revolution. An army division was sent to restore order, but instead took the side of the Kurds. The Communists were quick to take advantage of the situation and for several days ruled the town with the help of the army division. Designated homes were looted, groups of Turkoman notables were lynched and buried in mass graves, and the main amusement was dragging people through the streets at the end of a rope. Atrocities were commonplace. Kassem visited the city after order was restored, condemned the atrocities and placed the blame on "a faction which I do not wish to name."¹

The communists then published a manifesto and indulged in self-denunciation and breast-beating and almost apologized for "mistakes made in the past". But they still sought to evade responsibility for the Kirkuk massacres.²

On July 21, 1960, the Communist-dominated newspaper, Ittihad Al-Sha'b, put the blame for the Kirkuk massacres on advocates of nationalist fanaticism. The paper then accused the Iraq Petroleum Company of complicity and of "arranging one plot after another to direct a blow to the national government in Iraq."³

Al-Istiqlal joined the chorus the next day talking of

¹Kirk, pp. 161-163.

²Ibid., p. 163.

³Al-Sha'b (Baghdad), July 21, 1960.

the "wicked endeavors" of the oil companies to distort and undermine the economy of an independent country recently liberated from "the imperialistic fetters". It continued, saying that "our Leader" clearly stated that the national authority was never to loiter in taking preventive measures against oil companies that play with the rights of the people.¹

The communists had been strong in the cabinet; there had been some in important posts and the extremists set the tone. They took part in the bloody suppression of the uprising in Mosul in March, 1959 (Colonel Shawwaf's Revolt), and in general spread terror throughout the country. According to Tutsch the Kirkuk incident was the turning point. "The government never gave the Communist party a licence. As with the Moslem party and the Kurdish party it demanded changes in the party programme."²

The machinations on both sides seem incredible; the oil companies published what was obviously propaganda - although closer to the truth than the bilge printed in the Iraqi press and government publications at the time.

Still, Iraqis were sent to the U.S., Britain, and Holland for training in all aspects of the Petroleum industry, as well as civil and electrical engineering, architectural design and industrial management. The regular training program for Iraqi drillers was also enlarged during 1959 to include training in Holland and the United Kingdom. The actual number of Iraqi staff sent abroad for training in 1959 amounted to fifty.³

¹Al-Istiqlal (Baghdad), July 22, 1960.

²Tutsch, p. 119.

³Iraq Oil in 1959, p. 15.

The managers and negotiators for the oil companies obviously were not, and are not, idiots. They tried and will always try to obtain the best for their companies. Any commercial organization must do the same. But to constantly charge them with thievery, bad faith, and subversive activities seems somewhat ludicrous. Caractacus is extremely critical of British policy during the period immediately after the revolution, but had he been an executive in the Iraq Petroleum Company his attitude might have been different. He states:

Certainly friendship based on trust, trust based on sincerity and sincerity seeking an equitable arrangement are the only means of promoting (or protecting) our interests, whether oil interest, or engineering, or commercial, or cultural, or political. To seek whatever will best suit both sides and seek it sincerely is essential.¹

The paragraph sounds noble, but businessmen are not always noble - their concern is more often concentrated on the color of the ink in the ledger books. To think otherwise is foolish, and to blame the money-making operations of a commercial company on imperialism is idiotic.

The newspaper attacks continued. On July 23, 1960, Al-Akhbar charged that the Basra Oil Company's decision to stop production in Rumaila was a move to cause damage to the Iraqi interest.

The company beyond doubt is aware of the hazards behind the deliberate decreases of production and how it will adversely effect our economic plan, but we are now vigilant and their dreams will never materialize. . . . Let it be known to the oil companies that they no longer live in the era of the bygone regime when they were pampered; . . . Let it be known to the monopolistic companies that we are

¹Caractacus, p. 185.

stronger than what they are and stronger than their fleets.¹

Kassem's hopes for the economic future of Iraq had been high. He did not realize the complexities of economic development, and was not aware of the problems of industrialization. He considered Iraq's land and water resources, the revenue from oil and the sparse population, assumed the wealth of the country had until now been exploited for the benefit of foreign imperialists, and pictured the most ideal future. In a speech to a delegation from Mosul on March 25, 1959, he said: "Three or less years from today the standard of people will be great. From this country goods will be exported to the neighboring states."²

Al-Bilād stressed the necessity of following a coordinated oil policy by all the Arab oil producing countries to foil the "outrageous maneuvers of the imperialistic oil companies," and spoke of the necessity of founding an Arab company for oil tankers.³

The next move was the call for a National Company for Oil. The paper, Al-Taqaddum, recalled that ". . . all the advanced oil producing countries of the world founded national companies for the exploration of oil."⁴ Al-Istiqāl commented on August 15, 1960, on the arrival of Mr. Herridge and Mr. Ekserdjian from London for participation in the oil talks, and quoted Baghdad Radio as warning

¹Al-Akhbar (Baghdad), July 23, 1960.

²Shwadran, p. 31.

³Al-Bilād (Baghdad), August 5, 1960.

⁴Al-Taqaddum (Baghdad), August 7, 1960.

the oil companies against the use of pressure and said ". . . we shall not be the losers anyway . . . the Government will not budge one inch from the people's rights, because Iraq of July 14th, is not the Iraq of yesterday."¹

Al-Bilād joined the attack again on August 16th, saying that the ". . . monopolistic oil companies were successful in securing hired traitorous elements in the past," but today there are no such elements and the companies cannot create a State within a State.²

In October, Al-Faiḥā' called for the nationalization of the oil companies, so that the Iraqi Government could extract oil and market it. "The oil companies always work under the inspiration of their imperialistic countries."³

A new level of output by the oil companies was achieved in 1960, with a production of some 46 million tons, an increase of fourteen per-cent over 1959. But the Basrah Port Authority demanded an increase in cargo dues from 5.6 pence to 5 shillings and 7 pence per ton. This amounted to an increase of 1,100 per-cent and brought strong protests from the oil company. Oil sales decreased as a result and exports declined by some two million tons.⁴

The Iraqi position was stated by Al-Zamān: The Basra Oil Company yielded to the demand that it pay 280 fils instead

¹Al-Istiqlāl (Baghdad), August 15, 1960.

²Al-Bilād (Baghdad), August 16, 1960.

³Al-Faiḥā' (Baghdad), October 15, 1960.

⁴Iraq Petroleum Company Ltd. (London) Iraq Oil in 1960,

of 23 as loading charges for each ton of crude oil exported from Iraq. The increased revenue will amount to 3 million dinars. This was disclosed by General Muzhir al-Shawi, Director General of Ports Administration.¹ (al-Shawi had stated earlier that he had no knowledge of port operations, but as an army officer he managed the port as he saw fit. He was very proud of the fact that he kept the area "extremely clean".)

Even after this, Al-Mustaqbal quoted a supposedly secret bulletin issued by the Ittihad al-Sha'b group, (the Politbureau), saying: "The main charge is summed up in their accusing the national authorities with reactionary attitudes and with leniency towards I.P.C. and CENTO."²

Kassem continued to refrain from obvious interference with the press. He was either naive or playing his own game.

On January 3, 1961, the paper Al-Ra'i Al-'Am referred to a pamphlet issued by the Arab-American Oil Company (ARAMCO) on April 1, 1960, which contains information and figures on the possessions of the oil companies in the Middle East: "The imperialist countries monopolizing oil live in luxury and progress, while we sons of the Middle East, owners of this black gold live in misery, hunger and backwardness. . ."³

On the 3rd of April, 1961, Al-Thawra printed Notification Number 137, issued by the Military Governor General, Major General Ahmad Salih al-Abdi. The notification is not particularly lucid

¹Al-Zaman (Baghdad), December 16, 1960.

²Al-Mustaqbal (Baghdad), December 24, 1960.

³Al-Ra'i Al-'Am (Baghdad), January 3, 1961.

or clear, but is definitely not pro-oil company:

The elements of intrigue and anarchism, and the stooges of imperialism, are conspiring against the nation and desire to sell the country for nothing in return. They were in strange timing with the start of negotiations with the foreign companies. Their purpose was to plot against the Republic and to suggest to the foreign companies that there are stooges, imperialist lackeys and agents of foreign companies working against the nation's interest and the National Government so that the Government would not take a firm position towards the foreign quarters and companies. The National Government is a government of the people, and the faithful Leader is the pious son of the people protected by divine providence and guided by God to preserve the country's peace and independence, and redeem the people's rights from the imperialist claws and from the foreign companies. . . .¹

The newspapers' main preoccupation was the progress of the oil talks. The "imperialists" have "The ugliest forms of unfairness and exploitation" in the oil concessions.² Al-Bayān continued, saying that no economic relationship or contract based on greed, unfairness, fraud and excessive gain can last.³

In Al-Mustaqbal, the oil minister, Muhammed Selman, was quoted as saying that the revolution had resolved to take back by force the right of the Iraqi people in its oil. The suspension of oil negotiations is due to the obstinacy shown by the negotiation team of the oil companies.⁴

. . . the imperialist oil companies still dream of bringing back Iraq to the side of the imperialist States, and that the remnants of the old regime are still working in the dark against the sovereignty and independence of the country.⁵

¹Al-Thawra (Baghdad), April 3, 1961.

²Al-Bayān (Baghdad), April 10, 1961.

³Ibid.

⁴Al-Mustaqbal (Baghdad), April 10, 1961.

⁵Sawt Al-Shrar (Baghdad), April 14, 1961.

The attacks on the oil companies continued incessantly; the Minister of Oil was quoted on September 2, 1961, as saying that the ruling authority is still desirous of taking an easy course, but the companies have failed to respond because they no longer find the medium of negotiations as a method which secures the embezzlement of the Iraqi oil wealth.¹

On October 11, 1961, at the end of a five-hour session, General Kassem broke off the negotiations and told the Iraq Petroleum Company representatives that legislation had been prepared, and would now be brought in, to restrict the operations of their company and its associates, the Mosul and Basra Petroleum Companies. The first of these threatened measures was promulgated on December 12, 1961; it restricted the three companies to only 740 square miles (less than half of one per-cent) of their combined concession areas, and went so far as to deny them some areas where wells had been drilled and oil had been found. The same enactment called upon the Companies to surrender within three months, free of cost, all geological and geophysical data and oil engineering studies concerning the areas arbitrarily taken back by the Government; failing which, the Companies were to be held liable for any losses the Government might incur in consequence. This law formalised a position in which the Companies' exploration work outside the producing or proven areas had already been brought to a standstill by Government order in April, 1961. The Companies protested against the law, and called for arbitration, as their agreements with the Iraq Government

¹Al-Mustaqbal (Baghdad), June 2, 1961.

provide.

Nothing occurred in the negotiations, and nothing in the Companies' conduct, to justify these actions of the Iraq Government. They can be reconciled neither with the existing agreements, nor with the basis of mutual trust upon which the Companies have made large investments urgently desired by Iraq, and calculated to strengthen her national economy.¹

The Companies had invested a huge amount of money and time to develop the oil fields and perhaps were justified in making loud protests against the actions of the Iraqi Government, but on the other hand nationalism in Iraq had to have its day. The following table (see p. 54) shows the extent and ownership of the oil fields in Iraq before the Iraqi Government decree.

It is almost impossible to sort out the claims and counter-claims of the oil companies and the Kassem Government. Conflicting figures are commonplace and depending on the source anything can be proven.

The truth can never be determined. Iraqi nationalism on one hand and canny businessmen on the other produced a situation which none can unravel. Many authors claim to know the answer, but most are neither Iraqi nationalists nor canny businessmen. Hence, the Iraqis place the blame on the Western Companies and the Western Companies place the blame on the Iraqi Government.

The oil negotiations definitely were the main consideration in Anglo-Iraqi Relations. It would be childish and naive

¹The Iraq Oil Negotiations, p. 2.

MAJOR OIL FIELDS AND CONCESSION OWNERSHIP, 1960.*

Country, Co., Operation Base	Area, Sq. Mi.	Concession Ownership	Main Fields	Discovery Year
Iraq Petroleum Co., Kirkuk	32,000	British Petroleum 23.75% Royal Dutch Shell 23.75% Cie. Francaise des Petroles New Jersey Stan- dard 23.75% Socory Mobile 11.87% Gulbenkian 11.87% 5.	Kirkuk	1927
Mosul Petroleum Co.,	46,000	Same as IPC	Ain Zalah Brtmah	1939 1951
Basra Petroleum Co.,	93,000	Same as IPC	Zubair Rumaila	1949 1953

Cressey, p. 196.

to think otherwise. Aside from oil, and later the Kuwait issue, what business did England have with Iraq?

When Kassem broke off the oil negotiations Al-Bilād hailed Moscow Radio's comments on the matter and condemned London Radio's as distorting.¹

Kuwait

On June 25, 1961, a few days after Kuwait became independent and no longer a protectorate of Great Britain, Iraq announced it would annex its southern neighbor.² Kassem said Iraq's claim was based on historical facts and was not for material gain. (As early as June, 1960, one Baghdad paper said that it is well known to Kuwait that Iraq has no covetous ends but wants only to consolidate relations between Arab countries.)³ However, most comments at the time reflected the material aspect. "Kassem covets its harbor as much as its oil, for Iraq has plenty of the last, but no good port, or even a site for one."⁴ It was also felt that Iraq's internal difficulties led Kassem to launch the affair.

Dr. Adnan al-Pachachi, the Iraqi delegate to the United Nations at that time, stated that Iraq was not seeking to annex Kuwait but, rather, it was a matter of regaining an area which was part of Iraq.⁵ Mahdawi also had his say on the subject -

¹Al-Bilād (Baghdad), October 13, 1961.

²"Middle East", Time, July 7, 1961, pp. 21-22.

³Al-Taqaddum (Baghdad), June 17, 1960.

⁴"Kuwait, Apple of Discord", The New Republic, July 10, 1961, pp. 4-5.

⁵Al-Zaman (Baghdad), June 30, 1961.

Kuwait belongs to Iraq just as Formosa belongs to the Chinese People's Republic. He went on to state that the "timid Shaikhs of Kuwait are oppressing our sons there."¹

Kuwait's 2,400-man army was no match for that of Iraq so the Shaikh called upon Britain for help. This presented a dilemma to Britain: the presence of British troops in Kuwait would mean that its independence was not genuine;² and also that it might hinder IPC's negotiations with the government of Iraq. The Iraqi Army ". . . saw itself offered the prospect of a glorious and easy campaign. But . . . the army did not receive orders to cross the border, and the British contingents had all the time they needed to disembark in order to guarantee the independence of London's new ally."³ The British sent 6,000 men with tanks and aircraft to Kuwait, putting a stop to Kassem's plan.⁴ Great Britain showed a maximum of good will in order to ease the tension and agreed to withdraw her troops if the Arab League undertook Kuwait's protection.

Iraq's claim led to dissension among the members of the Arab League. The League, on July 20, accepted Kuwait as a member, in spite of Iraq's objection. Kuwait was admitted by "unanimous" vote, the Iraqi delegate having walked out while the vote was being taken.⁵ The League promised to ensure Kuwait's independence

¹Sawt Al-Ahrār (Baghdad), June 30, 1961.

²Spencer, p. 339.

³Rondot, pp. 207-208.

⁴Tutsch, pp. 124-125.

⁵Spencer, p. 340.

and it was decided that troops from Saudi Arabia, Jordan and the U.A.R. would enter Kuwait.¹ (The Egyptians withdrew following the Syrian revolution.)² Had Iraq invaded Kuwait, ". . . Arab soldiers (would have been) fighting side by side with British forces against other Arab soldiers!"³

The Iraqi press launched a massive anti-British, anti-Western, anti-imperialism campaign. Comments found in the pages of the Baghdad newspapers and in their editorials included: "We consider Kuwait the haven of the Iraqi Republic; what is good for Kuwait is good for us; . . ."⁴ The return of Kuwait to Iraq will deprive British imperialism of the enormous profits that it is making out of Kuwait oil and the benefits derived from Kuwait funds deposited in British banks;⁵ (we are) astonished when Arab brothers (Saudi Arabia and Jordan) join hands with British forces against an Arab nation which is still fighting imperialism;⁶ the U.S. is Britain's partner in Kuwait oil, . . ."What a Shame!" for the U.S. to follow imperialist policy when it was the first to revolt against it;⁷ imperialist agents in Kuwait (according to

¹Tutsch, pp. 124-125.

²Concerning Egypt, Tutsch (p. 124) says Nasser managed to blame the crisis more on London than Baghdad; Lenczowski (p. 649) says Cairo policy was based mainly on "opposition to any undue accretion of wealth and power by Iraq."

³Spencer, p. 339.

⁴Al-Bilād (Baghdad), May 31, 1961.

⁵Al-Mustaqbal (Baghdad), June 28, 1961.

⁶Al-Bilād (Baghdad), July 1, 1961.

⁷Al-Thawra (Baghdad), July 5, 1961.

Al-Basra newspaper) are preventing the entry of Iraqi transport vehicles into Kuwait;¹ the British are making one of the greatest suicidal operations known in history;² Imperialism wants to turn Kuwait into a military base; The British are aggressors, deceivers and oppressors (speech by Kassem).³

Hashim Jawad, the Iraqi Foreign Minister, declared that As-Sabah of Kuwait presented Queen Elizabeth, at the time of her marriage with a gift of one hundred million pounds, but did not give anything to the Algerians "for fear of offending the imperialists."⁴

The Ministry of Education instructed the Directorate of Text Books and Curriculum to include the subject of Kuwait to be taught in all schools and to issue a new map of Iraq including the Qadha of Kuwait.⁵ Included among the 38 official slogans to be used during the third anniversary of the Revolution were: "Down with the imperialist conspiracies in Kuwait, the part of Iraq", and "Long live Iraq's complete unity from the North of Zakho to the South of Kuwait".⁶

On July 20, 1961, Al-Ahd Al-Jadīd published a rumor (almost beyond belief) to the effect that a bargain was under way on the basis of granting Iraq annually 40 million dinars to give

¹Sawt Al-Ahrār (Baghdad), July 5, 1961.

²Al-Felāqa (Baghdad), July 8, 1961.

³Al-Bilād (Baghdad), July 17, 1961.

⁴Al-Ahd Al-Jadīd (Baghdad), July 19, 1961.

⁵Al-Zamān (Baghdad), July 13, 1961.

⁶Al-Bilād (Baghdad), July 7, 1961.

up its claim to Kuwait. Kassem replied: "We do not sell our country for money."¹ The same paper, about two weeks later, again accuses Britain of this and says that it is not a "new thing".² Zaki Ahmad, owner and editor of Al-Ahd Al-Jadid, reported the distribution of one million dinars among American newspapers in an attempt to delude world opinion about the legitimate right of Iraq to Kuwait. He said half of this sum went to the New York Times and one-fourth to Newsweek.³

Kuwait, even with the backing of Britain and the Arab League, did not gain admission to the United Nations. This was due to the Russian veto.⁴ Commenting on this, Hashim Jawad stated that Russia is the only Great Power to use its right of veto to promote peace and combat imperialism objectively. He went on to say that the veto was "a slap on the cheek of the British imperialists who wanted to deceive the world with their new-born child whom they called the State of Kuwait."⁵

In May 1962, Iraq broke off diplomatic relations with the United States and Lebanon as a result of the two countries' decision to exchange diplomatic relations with Kuwait. In Tokyo, the Iraqi Ambassador was able to halt Japan's recognition of Kuwait for a while, in spite of Anglo-American pressure on the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. However, the Japanese-Kuwaiti Pet

¹Al-Ahd Al-Jadid (Baghdad), July 20, 1961.

²Ibid., August 1, 1961.

³Ibid., July 30, 1961.

⁴Rondot, pp. 207-208.

⁵Al-Bilad (Baghdad), December 2, 1961.

Company joined hands and Japan was forced to recognize Kuwait.¹

Kassem never did formally withdraw Iraq's claim to Kuwait. Rondot says: "The crisis subsided rather than ended; . . ."² The effects of the affair, however, continued. "At the time of the February, 1963, coup which cost Qasim his life, we (the United States) were still without an ambassador in Baghdad."³ After the coup, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, as one of its first official acts, was studying the question of filling the vacancies in various Iraqi embassies and the appointment of a number of new ambassadors in countries from which ambassadors were withdrawn because of the Kuwaiti issue.⁴

The Last Year

The running fight between the oil companies and the Iraqis continued. On December 8, 1961, Al-Bayan⁵ quoted a Reuters dispatch saying that the oil companies in London issued a statement to the effect that their present rights in Iraq were not subject to change through unilateral action. Radio London and the British papers defended the companies' point of view; this in turn brought sharp retorts from the Baghdad papers.

Again on December 19th, Al-Bayan spoke out, saying that the oil agreements were illegal since they were concluded at a time

¹Al-Thawra (Baghdad), September 19, 1962.

²Rondot, p. 208.

³Gallman, p. 216.

⁴Al-Ayyam (Baghdad), February 23, 1963.

⁵Al-Bayan (Baghdad), December 8, 1961.

when Iraq was "either under direct occupation or nearly occupied" by British Military power.¹

But Iraqis continued to go to England for training and the elimination of foreigners in the oil business remained a phobia. On March 18, 1962, Al-Ahd Al-Jadīd announced that the authorities would complete the Iraqi-ization of all oil posts in Iraq within a period of one month except for the technical positions.² In October, 1962, the number of students from Iraq receiving higher education in British Universities had gone up to 2,000.³ This was a strange paradox after the vociferous attacks on Great Britain by the Iraqi Government and Press.

In July, 1962, Kassem announced that The National Oil Company would come into being after the July 14th celebrations. He called upon "the monopolist oil companies" to give back the rights of the people, warning that if they did not these rights would be taken by force.⁴

Iraq, as always, wanted a bigger share of the oil profits and more Iraqi personnel in leading positions. The precedents for these demands were Libya and Saudi Arabia. The law establishing the National Oil Company was published in September, 1962, but was never promulgated. There was plenty of oil being produced in the world. If production ceased in Iraq (49 million tons in 1962), it would have an adverse affect on the country, but not on

¹Ibid., December 19, 1961.

²Al-Ahd Al-Jadīd (Baghdad), March 18, 1962.

³Al-Zaman (Baghdad), October 26, 1962.

⁴Wadi Al-Rafidain (Baghdad), July 16, 1962.

the world petroleum market. "Iraq cannot easily do without the income from oil, and to find new markets after breaking with the IPC would be almost impossible for any Iraqi government given the present supply and demand."¹

The disputes between the oil companies and the Iraqis were not resolved in 1962. Production increased slightly as did payments to the Iraqi Government, but exports from Basrah declined because of the imposition of port dues by the Basrah Port Authority (mentioned earlier). The Basrah Petroleum Company nevertheless continued with its expansion program - valued at 25 million pounds sterling.²

Iraq continued to attack "imperialist" Britain. The Iraqi Government called its own oil policy since the Revolution one of wisdom and firmness. It states the oil negotiations failed to remove the injustice suffered by the people of Iraq as a result of exploitation of the country's oil wealth for over a quarter of a century.³

The Iraqi Foreign Minister stressed the new guises of British imperialism. He claimed Britain relies on illegitimate agreements to retain control in order to enjoy complete political and economic interests and privileges in the areas concerned.⁴

¹Tutsch, pp. 124-125.

²Iraq Oil in 1962, p. 2.

³The Iraqi Revolution in its Fourth Year, Issued by the High Committee for the Celebrations of the 14th July, Baghdad, 1962. Baghdad: The Times Press. (Printed under the supervision of the Committee of propaganda and Publication for the Celebrations of the 14th July, of the Ministry of Guidance.)

⁴Ibid., p. 713.

An appreciation of the role of Kassem is essential in understanding Iraq's position and prospects during that period. He was the decision maker. Nothing of importance got done without his personal approval. His decisions were often motivated by his desire for local and international prestige, and his personal whims. Kassem was obsessed with imperialism.

Deep pessimism became apparent in 1962 among businessmen, the financial, and even the political leaders - this in spite of the fact that Iraq was producing five to six per-cent of the free world output of oil. (One-fourth of Iraq's national product). Kassem had turned to the Soviet Union for arms supplies, which he could get from no other country. In September, 1962, the only modern apartment house in Baghdad was requisitioned for Russian technicians who were to begin a missile project for Iraq. It was rumored that Kassem would reduce the staffs of the British and American Embassies. In the Iraqi Foreign Ministry there was close police supervision, dismissals were frequent, and morale was correspondingly low. Kassem was living his last days.

Attacks on the British and Americans continued: Al-Mustaqbal on June 1, 1962, maintained that the resolutions of the recent CENITO session in London concerning the "Defense Programs" and the expansion of maneuvers in the Arab Gulf and around the Southern Arab Peninsula were intended to threaten and halt Arab national activities.¹ Al-Akhbar commented that the British and Americans are determined to exploit the resources of nations, particularly

¹Al-Mustaqbal (Baghdad), June 1, 1962.

the oil, for their own benefit.¹

Qasim Hasan, Iraqi Ambassador in Prague, was quoted, on the 21st of June, as saying that the terror that had reigned in Iraq (e.g., the Kirkuk massacres), was due to fascists who ". . . put on red attire, killed, dragged and committed the most dastardly crime." He said that he knew from "reliable sources" that "thousands" of British agents wore red clothes and committed crimes in the name of communism in order to harm our relations with the eastern states, and destroy the future of Iraq. Thus, the British won the battle of dividing the national front and destroying the meaning of democracy in Iraq.²

Britain was accused of everything: Bahrein was reeling under British imperialism, Britain was establishing military bases there in addition to the imperialist base stolen by them from Iraq.³ Al-Ahd Al-Jadid spoke of the British crime in creating the Palestine problem, and the perfidy of the English in supporting the Hashimite Kingdom in Jordan - another example of imperialism.⁴

Kassem and the newspapers struck out in all directions. No charge was too childish or ridiculous to make. Some have speculated that Kassem feared for his regime and his life, and tried to divert the public's attention with the charges of outside pressure and particularly the Kuwait issue. Al-Mustaqbal on September 15, quoted Kassem as saying that the imperialists wanted to stop the

¹Al-Akhbar (Baghdad), June 7, 1962.

²Ibid.

³Wadi Al-Rafidain (Baghdad), July 16, 1962.

⁴Al-Ahd Al-Jadid, August 31, 1962.

"wheels of progress" in Iraq to prevent a revolution in the CENTO countries; that ". . . they wanted to hinder restoration of Kuwait because it is pouring profits into Britain's treasury. . . 1,750 million dinars from Kuwait in British banks."¹

Al-Ahd Al-Jadīd said the Revolution uprooted British Imperialism and its bases and led the British to "make conspiracies against this republic, . . . (including) the mutiny in the north."²

Sawt Al-Ahrār condemned Anglo-American preparation for the invasion of Yemen, and incredibly, the Zionist-Jordanian-Saudi alliance for that invasion.³

November, the anniversary of the infamous Balfour declaration, provided an excellent opportunity for the press, and it was taken advantage of. No chance was missed to blast the British - and the Americans.

Kassem seemed to sense his days were numbered. During the early part of 1963, his charges - and statements - became almost incoherent. The press followed suit. Iraq celebrated Army Day on January 6, 1963, and Kassem called the United Kingdom "a force of evil" during the course of an army reception.⁴

By January 15, Baghdad University students had been on strike for a month; a petition had been presented by the students to release all "detained students" and prevent all outside interference

¹Al-Mustaqbal (Baghdad), September 15, 1962.

²Al-Ahd Al-Jadīd (Baghdad), September 28, 1962.

³Sawt Al-Ahrār (Baghdad), October 18, 1962.

⁴"Iraq", (Chronology), The Middle East Journal Vol. 17, Nos. 1 & 2. Washington: The Middle East Institute, (Winter-Spring 1963), p. 114.

with the university. "Kassem accused two unnamed Western embassies and an Arab embassy of distributing "poisonous leaflets" among students.¹

On January 28, Baghdad Radio reported that Premier Kassem said he had not attacked Kuwait because he did not like Arab bloodshed. The Premier did not reveal the means by which Kuwait would be liberated.² Kassem's statements are difficult to understand, let alone defend. Perhaps the Iraqi people understood them, even liked them, but even then they were foolish ramblings.

Al-Jamhūriya had taken up the cry on January 15th, calling it the beginning of the purging campaign: every subversive movement that takes place in this republic is connected with imperialist activity outside the republic and with the agents inside it.³ The paper continued its attack on January 17th, in an editorial entitled "Imperialist Agencies", talking of American Intelligence and British spying interests. The paper, quoting Kassem's reference to this in a recent speech, said he knew what he was saying as he is in possession of many details about the activities of these imperialist agencies: how they work, act and spend money, whose help they seek and the agents who are in their service for the achievement of their aims.⁴

Al-Sharq joined the group on January 21st with an editorial warning America not to try to "fill the gap" left when British

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., p. 115.

³Al-Jamhūriya, (Baghdad), January 15, 1963.

⁴Ibid., January 17, 1963.

imperialism began to lose its colonies.¹

Gallman believed that in January, 1963, Kassem's hold on Iraq was definitely loosening. The strikes by secondary and university students revealed the national sentiment against him. To meet the threat he arrested Ba'athist civilians; he felt unsure about the army and speeded up the retirement of officers he did not trust. There were many officers against him, mainly in the Air Force, and they saw that they must act soon.²

Kassem, and the newspapers, seemed to know a new plot was on the way. On January 16, Sawt Al-Ahrār talked of the "Faithful Leader" exposing imperialist conspiracies against the Iraqi Republic. "American intelligence agencies and British spying interests direct enemies of the people who resort to deceptive devices and conspire against the liberated immortal republic."³ Al-Mustaqbal, on the 1st of February, quoted Kassem on what he had said during a press conference the night before: "American and British quarters had penetrated our country. . . . they conspired against the Iraqi republic and its people."⁴ For this conspiracy all agents of American and British imperialist in the area are working, for which large sums of money are being spent.⁵ Kassem went on to say that the British press is shamelessly calling for revolution.

¹Al-Sharq. (Baghdad), January 21, 1963.

²Gallman, p. 216.

³Sawt Al-Ahrār (Baghdad), January 16, 1963.

⁴Al-Mustaqbal (Baghdad), February 1, 1963.

⁵Ibid., February 2, 1963.

On February 4th, Al-Mustaqbal shifted its attack entirely to the Americans, calling them the designers and financiers of the conspiratorial movements against Iraq. The aims were to organize hostile movements in central and southern Iraq to test the ability of the ruling authority in quelling such attempts, but Iraqi authorities were vigilant.¹

According to Al-Akhbar, the chiefs of the labor unions and peasants' societies in Basra called on Staff Brigadier Abd al-Qadir Faiq, the garrison commandant there, and declared their denunciation of Anglo-American conspiracies against the eternal republic, renewing their complete support for the Leader's latest press conference.²

Al-Jamhuriya called for a "Purging of Government Machinery" without mercy, so as to liquidate the harmful elements who are plotting against the immortal republic. "Those should be put in prison."³

Kassem's enemies struck on the 8th of February, when many senior officers had left their commands for the weekend and many soldiers were enjoying weekend passes. There was no military resistance to the coup aside from the 600 men garrisoned in the Defense Ministry. The survivors, including Kassem and Mahdawi, surrendered the following morning. Kassem and his aides were taken to the radio-television station, tried by military court, sentenced to death and shot on the spot. The radio announced the executions

¹Ibid., February 4, 1963.

²Al-Akhbar (Baghdad), February 4, 1963.

³Al-Jamhuriya (Baghdad), February 7, 1963.

that afternoon and that evening pictures of the dead men were shown on television.¹ All frontiers and airports were closed. Aref was appointed transitional president and all announcements were made in the name of the National Council of the Revolutionary Command. A 21-member Cabinet was announced.²

Conclusions

The failure of his (Kassem's) reforms, the unsuccessful war against the Kurds and the ineptness of his foreign policy all contributed to Kassem's downfall. On February 8, 1963, a revolution, not unlike that which had ended the Hashemite dynasty and brought him to power in 1958, put an end to his regime and his life. Dissident troops and members of the Iraqi Baath party in para-military formations cornered Kassem in the Ministry of Defence; after thirty-six hours of resistance he was overcome and shot. The victors dragged his corpse in front of a television camera for all the world to see. The Communists, who had supported Kassem, were crushed and many of them executed.

Abdul Salam Mohammed Aref, Kassem's former comrade-in-arms, who had been sentenced to death by the dictator and later released, became the new head of state. General Bakr became Prime Minister, and the secretary general of the Baath, Ali Saleh as-Saadi, became Deputy Prime Minister.³

Kassem had set out to rid the country of "imperialist chains", destroy the feudal elements, and raise the standard of living of the people. "At the time of his death, Qasim could have claimed that he had relieved the country of Western military alliances, but a claim to success in other areas would have been difficult to establish."⁴

¹Gallman, p. 217.

²"Iraq", (Chronology), The Middle East Journal Vol. 17, Nos. 1 & 2. Washington: The Middle East Institute, (Winter-Spring 1963), p. 115.

³Tutsch, p. 128.

⁴Langley, Kathleen M. "Iraq: Some Aspects of the Economic Scene", The Middle East Journal Vol. 18, No. 2. Washington: The Middle East Institute. (Spring 1964), p. 181.

Kassem's desire to banish British influence and break the power of the landowners did not amount to a development policy. His understanding of the process of development and industrialization was limited, if not nil. He hoped a welfare state could be erected easily and industrialization achieved in a short time.¹

Immediately after the revolution the newspapers abruptly changed their opinion of Kassem. Suddenly, he was a tyrant, despot, and a deviationist from the objectives of the July 14th Revolution. Kassem's former stooges rapidly became disenchanted with their "Hero Leader". One, deploring his luck, said he was wrong in not resigning his post, and that all Kassem said were lies and falsehoods. Hashim Jawad, the Foreign Minister, claimed he had tried to resign many times, but his resignations were never accepted. Jawad believed: "Kassem was serving an Anglo-American plan in this region."²

In the next few days the newspapers continued their attacks on the former regime. Al-Ayyam, in an editorial, talked of the massacres during Kassem's regime in Mosul, Kirkuk and Adhamiya and termed them worse than those of the "Tartars and Zionists". The paper bemoaned the fact that it had "suffered all kinds of oppression during the dark regime."³

The newspapers and the ministers who stayed alive adjusted with alacrity to the new regime. After all, it was a matter of life or death.

¹Ibid.

²Al-Jamaheer (Baghdad), February 14, 1963.

³Al-Ayyam (Baghdad), February 18, 1963.

Anglo-Iraqi relations continued as before - sparse except for the oil question. Monroe is perhaps a little immodest when she writes:

Britain in its forty years of dominance in the Middle East, earned enough acquiescence, and at time admiration, to save the British skin in two world wars. It also afforded the local peoples a life-giving interlude of freedom from the disagreement and upheaval that was bound to follow the break-up of the Ottoman Empire - an interlude that, at the beginning of 1963, still continues in the Persian Gulf and south Arabia.¹

Anglo-Iraqi relations during the Kassem regime were based on the oil question, the money to be obtained from oil, and Iraqi nationalism and natural pride. The Iraqis wanted total possession of their own wealth, but recognized that for the time being it was impossible. The oil companies retreated only when forced to: they were interested in money.

¹Monroe, p. 219.

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