

BEYOND OIL: THE COLD WAR RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE UNITED  
STATES, BRITAIN, AND THE IRAQI MONARCHY, 1946-1958

A THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT  
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS  
IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THE  
TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND GOVERNMENT  
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

BY

RASHA TALIB AL TAMEEMI B.S.

DENTON, TEXAS

MAY 2018

Copyright © 2018 by Rasha Talib Al Tameemi

## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the soul of my father, Talib Altameemi, who taught me the meaning of life and whose love and support I will never forget.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is a great pleasure to express my gratitude to all those who made this thesis possible. I would like to express my deepest appreciation to my advisor, Dr. Katherine Landdeck, who has always given considerable and valuable suggestions regarding this work and has been a great advisor throughout the period of this work. I am indebted to my committee, Dr. Paul Travis and Dr. Lybeth Hodges, who mentored me and took the time to read my work and offer invaluable guidance. I would also like to express my gratitude to Dr. Thulfiqar Hussein Altahmazi from Iraq for his help and to Dr. Clare Brock, with whom I have worked as a TA, who has been supportive and understanding during my work on this thesis.

I remain deeply indebted to my brother Mohamed; this work would not have been accomplished without his assistance and support.

This thesis is also dedicated to my husband, Safaa Hassan, who has provided unending motivation, encouragement, and support through every step of this process, and to my sons, Yousuf and Yasir. I am grateful to my family in Iraq; my mother, my brothers, and my sisters.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not express my gratitude to my friends Katerina Kvapilova, Megan Joblin, and my friend and editor Cindy Lewis.

## ABSTRACT

RASHA TALIB AL TAMEEMI

BEYOND OIL: THE COLD WAR RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES, BRITAIN, AND THE IRAQI MONARCHY, 1946-1958

MAY 2018

This thesis examines Anglo-American relations in Iraq during the Cold War and evaluates the way that the conflict, along with the growing demand for oil, shaped the relationship between Great Britain and the United States and influenced the Iraqi perspective of Anglo-American relations from 1946-1958. This thesis covers the aspects of cooperation and rivalry between the United Kingdom and the United States in the period immediately following WWII during the administrations of Harry Truman and Dwight Eisenhower. Through close examination of both Western and Arabic sources, this thesis argues that dissention between the Western allies, which both powers attempted to conceal, indirectly contributed to the toppling of Iraq's pro-Western monarchy in 1958. Thus, the Cold War triggered tensions not only between the United States and the Soviet Union but between the Western Allies as well.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
DEDICATION.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENT.....	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
LIST OF FIGURES.....	vi
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION: HISTORIOGRAPHY AND KEY THEMES.....	1
II. BRITAIN AND AMERICA IN IRAQ BEFORE 1946.....	20
Britain and the U.S During the Revolt of Rashid Ali Al- Gaylani in 1941.....	27
III. COMPETITION OR COOPERATION? BRITISH STRATEGY AND AMERICAN POLICY TOWARD THE IRAQI MONARCHY 1946- 1952.....	35
Britain, the United States, and the Iraqi Monarchy During the Portsmouth Treaty of 1948.....	44
The Arab- Israeli War of 1948 and its Repercussions on the British and American Presence in Iraq.....	52
Internal Instability, External Deterioration, and Involvement of Britain and America in Iraq 1949-1953.....	62
Conclusion.....	69
IV. BRITISH-AMERICAN TENSION OVER IRAQ THROUGH THE EISENHOWER PRESIDENCY, 1953-1958.....	72
U.S. Military Aid to Iraq and The Reaction of Britain, 1953 -1958.....	77
Anglo-American Diplomatic Relations through Iraqi Economic and Educational Fields, 1953 -1958 .....	92
Conclusion.....	108

V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.....	110
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	114

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Iraqi Scientific Missions .....	100
2. Shareholding Companies of the IPC.....	101
3. Shareholding Companies of the IPC (British, American, and French) .....	102
4. Iraqi Oil Revenue Following the Fifty-Fifty Arrangement .....	105

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION: HISTORIOGRAPHY AND KEY THEMES

During World War II, obvious parallels existed between the United States' and the United Kingdom's strategies to defeat the Axis Powers. These parallel strategies continued throughout the Cold War, as both countries endeavored to contain the spread of Communism. These similarities between the two countries' approaches were especially pronounced with respect to their policies toward the Middle East. However, the two superpowers' interests diverged when it came to Iraq, when both were looking for oil concessions in order to gain influence and power there.<sup>1</sup> In the beginning of WWII the US began to intervene significantly in Iraq's affairs despite the acknowledgment of Britain's existing dominance and its discouragement of Iraqi government development or promotion of relations with the United States.<sup>2</sup> Although the details of Anglo-American involvement in Iraq are still being debated, there are many sources of information and documentation. On the other hand, concrete information specifically about American-Iraqi relations is inadequate because of the lack of historical literature. This is most likely the result of strict oversight regarding the release of information on U.S. policy in the Middle East.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Michael J. Cohen and Martin Kolinsky, *Demise of the British Empire in the Middle East: Britain's Responses to Nationalist Movements, 1943-55*, (Frank Cass: London, 1998). P 87.

<sup>2</sup> Wm. Roger Louis, *The British Empire in the Middle East, 1945-1951: Arab Nationalism, The United States, Postwar Imperialism*, (New York: Oxford University, 1984), P 23-43.

<sup>3</sup> Williamson, Daniel C, "Understandable Failure: The Eisenhower Administration's Strategic Goals in Iraq, 1953-1958," *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 17, no. 3 (September 2006): 597-615. *Military & Government Collection*, EBSCOhost (accessed January 26, 2017) p. 65.



In more recent years, after the 1991 Gulf War and the 2003 American-led invasion of Iraq, many historians continue to raise questions about the origins of Iraqi-American relations. For example, Nathan Citino, a historian at Ohio State University, noted that “scholarship on American diplomacy in the Middle East...has devoted limited attention to relations with Iraq prior to the Gulf War.”<sup>4</sup> Also, in 2009, Kenneth Osgood, Florida Atlantic University historian, pointed out that American - Iraqi relations in the forties and fifties are still a “black hole in US diplomatic history.”<sup>5</sup> Therefore, the purpose of this work is to explore the history and nature of U.S. involvement in Iraq and to expand on this topic. This study also will illuminate not only the historical antecedents of U.S. policy in Iraq but will also compare it to British policy in the region throughout the Cold War. Thus, the essential focus of this project is threefold: to evaluate Anglo-American relations in Iraq during the Cold War, to assess the Anglo-American presence during the Cold War from the Iraqi perspective, and to provide a more understandable context concerning how their strategies were influenced by the Cold War. This study argues the Cold War and the need for oil shaped the relationship between Great Britain and the U.S. in Iraq, and influenced Iraqi perspective of Anglo-American relations from 1946-1958.

---

<sup>4</sup> Nathan Citino, *Middle East Cold Wars: Oil and Arab Nationalism in US-Iraqi Relations, 1958-1961*, in Kathryn C. Statler (eds.) *The Eisenhower Administration, the Third World, and the Globalization of the Cold War* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), 246; and see also Brandon Robert King, “America’s Search for Control in Iraq in the Early Cold War, 1953-1961,” (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2014), p6.

<sup>5</sup> Kenneth Osgood, *Eisenhower and Regime Change in Iraq: The United States and the Iraqi Revolution of 1958*, edited by David Ryan and Patrick Kiely, *America and Iraq: Policymaking, Intervention, and Regional Politics*, (New York: Routledge, 2009), p 4. it also quoted by Brandon Robert King, “America’s Search for Control in Iraq in the Early Cold War, 1953-1961,” p6.

Some criticisms of the United States administration's policies during Eisenhower's presidency assert that the failure of the US in Iraq in the 1950s can be attributed to the constraints of its partnership with the United Kingdom, and the similar intentions of U.S. and U.K. officials.<sup>6</sup> Yet, former Professor at Georgetown University, Barry Rubin, in his work, *The Great Powers in the Middle East 1941-1947: The Road to the Cold War*, stated that although British officials had concerns regarding the expansion of any military and economic footholds of the U.S. in Iraq, their partnership seemed fully courteous and cooperative toward the US<sup>7</sup> at that time. In his work, "U.S. Support for the British Position in Pre-Revolution Iraq," historian Frederick Axelgard proclaims that America could have stabilized the Iraqi situation to prevent the Revolution of 1958, but the U.S. relationship with its ally was so deferential it thus "indirectly contributed to the inability or unwillingness of Britain and the Iraqi government to address the social and political pressures that gave rise to the Revolution."<sup>8</sup> This study examines how this partnership was influenced by the Cold War, and whether the United States and United Kingdom, while adhering to their main aim to defeat their Communist adversaries, remained cooperative or became competitive regarding Iraq.

---

<sup>6</sup> Michael J. Cohen and Martin Kolinsky, *Demise of the British Empire in the Middle East: Britain's Responses to Nationalist Movements, 1943-55*, (Frank Cass: London, 1998), P223.

<sup>7</sup> Barry Rubin, *The Great Powers in the Middle East 1941-1947: The Road to the Cold War*, (Frank Cass: London, 1980), p46.

<sup>8</sup> Frederick W. Axelgard, "U.S. Support for the British Position in PreRevolutionary Iraq," in *The Iraqi Revolution of 1958: The Old Social Classes Revisited*, Robert A. Fernea and Wm. Roger Louis, Eds. (New York: New York, 1991), 78.

In answering these questions, this thesis covers the aspects of cooperation and rivalry between the United Kingdom and the United States in the period immediately following WWII. The debate among scholars on the state of affairs between the Allies regarding the Middle Eastern states during the complex Cold War era has been ongoing and contentious. Thus, this research evaluates and analyzes the diplomatic strategies of the UK, US and the Iraqi monarchy, which fosters a wider understanding of how these strategies were affected by the Cold War's events, as the Allies fought exhaustively to stop Communist threats. This study is pertinent because it extensively explains agreements and treaties between the Iraqi monarchy and the Allies. It clarifies how, though the Allies' main purpose was to stop the spread of Soviet Communism, the United States' policy clashed with British policy in Iraq. The United States sought to exploit any weakness in Britain's position, often providing military assistance to Iraq, which helped to gain the trust of Iraqi politicians. Washington encouraged Britain to maintain its role in the region; at the same time U.S. officials were often distancing themselves from British officials, who were consistently questioning Washington's reliability as Allies.<sup>9</sup> The Anglo-American diplomacy dispute concerned not only oil, but also expanded into the Suez crisis in Egypt. Finally, this study analyzes how the events of the Cold War period affected the balance of power in Iraq the "Great Game," between the Allies and the Soviets in the Middle East.

---

<sup>9</sup> W. Taylor Fain, *American Ascendance and British Retreat in the Persian Gulf Region*, (Palgrave Macmillan: New York, 2008), p88.

Despite the dearth of scholarly sources, there are some existing secondary contributions, which illuminate American and British influence in Iraq during the Cold War. They help to illustrate how the cooperation and rivalry between the Allies affected each other's position in Iraq during this time, though some are tangential in nature. However, Wm. Roger Louis's masterful work, *The British Empire in the Middle East 1945-1951: Arab Nationalism, the United States, and Postwar Imperialism*, presents a broader analysis of the formation of British policy toward the Middle East, and the explicit Anglo-American presence in the region, among other complexities of Cold War events which arose within Arab regimes.<sup>10</sup>

A professor of Middle Eastern history at Oxford University, Louis' central theme is predicated upon the difference in judgment displayed by U.K. and U.S. officials regarding the issues of Arab nationalism and Arab-Israeli conflicts; the main purpose of this was to gain a foothold in the region and access to increase oil privileges. Much of his interpretation, based upon British archives, provides a broader understanding of the stance of the British against U.S. growth in Iraq. Louis aids in the exploration of the origins of tension between the UK and the US in Iraq. To spread its dominance in Iraq, the U.K.'s Labour government worked to support Arab-nationalism, which the US fought to eliminate. Louis' study is rich within examinations of the methods of U.K. officials, who tried to exploit the Cold War's circumstances, to preserve its presence by asking help from U.S. despite of its weakness. The author concentrates on the controversy of

---

<sup>10</sup> Wm. Roger Louis, *The British Empire in the Middle East, 1945-1951: Arab Nationalism, The United States, Postwar Imperialism*, (New York: Oxford University, 1984), 188.

Allied relations through the implication of Arab Israel War, when Sir John Troubeck, Britain's ambassador in Baghdad, describes the Palestinian situation to Arab leaders who were anti- Zionist. Troubeck states, "We cannot stand against the U.S.A. plus U.S.S.R."<sup>11</sup> Eventually, this revealed the fact that the British sought its interests in the region despite its obligations to its main ally, the United States. Louis states that Britain did not want to lose its predominance, especially because a new power, Israel, could possibly compete with Britain, and in part because they were aware that the American presence could become more dominant than Britain's. Consequently, Louis argues that the complexities of the Arab-Israeli war affected Allied relations in Iraq.<sup>12</sup>

In the same vein, Ritchie Owendale, a professor of Middle Eastern history at University College Wales, in his 1996 work *Britain, The United States and the Transfer of Power in the Middle East, 1945- 1962*, argues that Britain's power was the paramount influence in the region of the Middle East, and America acknowledged its vital role there; yet America's influence increased during the Cold War, even surpassing that of the British.<sup>13</sup> Owendale also believes that, in the mid-1940s, Britain's and America's relationship was established with cooperation in mind. This collaboration was clear with regard to quelling the spread of Communism and presenting a united opposition to the Soviet Union. However, Washington did not acquiesce to Britain's position in Iraq.

---

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, P76.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ritchie Owendale, *Britain, the United States, and the transfer of power in the Middle East, 1945-1962*, (London: Leicester University Press, 1996), p49-66.

Though the U.S. government anticipated difficulties due to Britain's established presence and the oil concessions it had been granted, Edward C. Crocker, U.S. Ambassador to Iraq in the 1950s, recommended pursuing further interests with Iraq. In particular, Britain had two air bases in Iraq. Additionally, the pro-British regime included King Faisal, who was raised and studied in the UK, Prince Abd-Allah and the Prime Minister Nuri al Said, all of whom were supportive of the British presence in Iraq. During Eisenhower's presidency, the US initiated talks with Iraq to develop a relationship between the two countries and gain access to oil.<sup>14</sup>

Ovendale goes on to explain how the relationship between the U.S. and U.K. officials regarding Iraq was somewhat stunted at the outset of the Cold War, as the British Labour government saw itself as the paramount power in Iraq and the Persian Gulf, with the US as merely its ally. However, this view began to shift in the mid-1950s, when even Churchill admitted that U.S. became the only western country who had real influences in Iraq and in the region because of the substantial military and economic aid, drawn through Truman's doctrine, and the pronouncement of Eisenhower's policy.<sup>15</sup> Lastly, Ovendale's argument is particularly helpful to this work because it outlines the underlying contradictions between the United States' objectives and the U.K.'s policies in Iraq and the region as a whole, which eventually led to the loss its interests there.<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p 88.

<sup>16</sup>Ritchie Ovendale, *Britain, the United States, and the transfer of power in the Middle East, 1945-1962*, p 88-92.

A professor of international relations at University of Hartford, Daniel C.

Williamson, presents a similar argument in his work, "Understandable Failure: The Eisenhower Administration's Strategic Goals in Iraq, 1953-1958," pointing out that Iraq was a top priority to the Eisenhower Administration, especially after U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles visited Iraq and the region in 1953. Dulles' main goals in Iraq were to maintain stability, neutralize the threat of Communist influence, and to develop the U.S.'s oil investments.<sup>17</sup>

The vital point that Williamson makes in this work is that the failure of the U.S. interests in Iraq was linked to its strategic arrangements with Britain, noting that Waldemar Gallman, U.S. Ambassador to Iraq from 1954-1958, confirmed that the United States lost its position and opportunity to be the dominant power in Iraq because it was too "deferential to the British," and did not offer adequate support and military aid to the Iraqi monarchy.

Gallman posited that if the United States offered to provide Baghdad with sufficient military aid, Washington would gain popularity within the Iraqi regime. Williamson also indicates that Washington lost its opportunity in Iraq because of its attitude toward Arab-nationalism and the Arab- Israel conflict.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, he argues that, although the strong Anglo-American position against the Soviet Union as a whole held, the United States constantly did not allow Britain to have complete in Iraq, especially within oil

---

<sup>17</sup> Williamson, Daniel C. "Understandable Failure: The Eisenhower Administration's Strategic Goals in Iraq, 1953-1958," *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 17, no. 3 (September 2006): 597-615. *Military & Government Collection*, EBSCOhost (accessed January 26, 2017), p 56.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, p 77.

investment.<sup>19</sup> Finally, Williamson suggests that the US worked tirelessly to present Iraq with military aid, and also facilitated its involvement in the Northern Tier Alliance and the Baghdad Pact to make Iraq safe from Communist aggression.<sup>20</sup>

Importantly, in his 2004 article “Exploiting Opportunities: Iraq Secures Military Aid from the West, 1953-56,” Williamson argues that Iraqi officials observed the rivalry between the U.K. and the U.S., and exploited this conflict, asking for more military grants from both Allies. Williamson points out that, although U.K. and U.S. officials attempted to ignore this, there was a rivalry regarding the expansion of their influence in Iraq. Williamson provides essential evidence regarding Britain’s growing fear of America at that time. In particular, John Troutbeck, British Ambassador to Iraq from 1951-1954, declared that the presence of America and its growing interests in Iraq posed a considerable threat to Britain’s predominance. In addition, Anthony Eden, British Foreign Secretary, observed that if the Iraqi government requested assistance from Washington to pressure the British for more aid, it would weaken his nation’s position. This situation led London to make secret arrangements with Washington to limit the arm grants to Baghdad.<sup>21</sup> Finally, Williamson’s article demonstrates how the relationship between the Allies seemed outwardly cooperative, but in fact contention existed between them; that

---

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Williamson, Daniel C. “Exploiting Opportunities: Iraq Secures Military Aid from the West, 1953-56.” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 36, no. 1 (2004): 89-102.



led Iraq to exploit Britain's fears while gaining more equipment and weapons from the U.S.<sup>22</sup>

Michael J. Cohen and Martin Kolinsky's work *Demise of the British Empire in The Middle East: Britain's Response to Nationalist Movements 1954-1955*, highlights the primary factors of the deterioration and demise of Britain's influence in the Middle East, especially in Iraq and Palestine. Britain's 1947 economic crisis caused her to reach out to promote partnerships with Arab countries, especially Iraq, and to seek deep cooperation with the United States to improve its position. However, the circumstances of the Cold War, including the Palestine war in 1948, Pan-Arabism or Arab Nationalism, and Nasser's movement against the ambitions of Western imperialism, influenced its dominance in the region. The authors' work presents and analyzes the differences in U.S. and U. K. tactics which generated friction between them.<sup>23</sup>

A professor of international relations at University of Oxford, Louise Fawcett, in her 2013 book, *International Relations of the Middle East*, provides crucial arguments regarding the complex relationship between the superpowers concerning Iraq at the outset of the Cold War.<sup>24</sup> Fawcett asserts that Anglo- Iraqi relations deteriorated when Iraq defied Britain in the Anglo-Iraqi war of 1941. This led not only to anti-British feelings among Iraqis, but it also negatively affected American relations with Iraq, resulting in

---

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>Michael J. Cohen and Martin Kolinsky, *Demise of the British Empire in the Middle East: Britain's Responses to Nationalist Movements, 1943-55*, (Frank Cass: London) 1998. P101.

<sup>24</sup>Louise Fawcett, *International Relations of The Middle East*, (Oxford University Press: New York, 2009), p. 97.

anti-American sentiments as well. This eventually opened the door to Communist expansion and exploitation of the discontented Iraqi people.<sup>25</sup> Additionally, this work demonstrates how the policy of Britain and the U.S. toward Egypt and Nasser in 1956 contributed to increased anger among citizens of the Arab world, who saw Nasser as an “Arab political figure.” Nasser then began to promote a relationship with the Soviet Union, which eventually provided Nasser with military aid against the Allies.<sup>26</sup>

Along with secondary sources, this research will also focus on recent unpublished Ph.D. dissertations, some of which demonstrate recent perceptions of scholars regarding the Cold War and the Allies’ policies in Iraq. Brandon Robert King, is now a professor at University of Toronto. His 2014 dissertation, “America’s Search for Control in Iraq in the Early Cold War, 1953-1961,” sheds light on relations between Iraq and Eisenhower’s administration.<sup>27</sup> This work includes deep insight and sustained attention to the complexities of American- Iraqi relations in the fifties, especially during the July 1958 Iraqi Revolution when Allies lost its pro-Iraqi regime. King’s argument reveals the limitations of U.S. capacities despite its massive military aid to Iraq. King’s in depth analysis puts the situation in Iraq in context with other ongoing growth events in Syria,

---

<sup>25</sup>Al -Akeidi, Bashar Fathi Jassim, *The Anglo-American Influence in Iraq 1939-1958*, (Dar-Al Ghaida for Publishing and Distribution, Iraq- Baghdad, 2015), p 56.

<sup>26</sup>Louise Fawcett, *International Relations of The Middle East*, p. 97.

<sup>27</sup>Brandon Robert King, “America’s Search for Control in Iraq in the Early Cold War, 1953-1961,” (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2014), P15-23.

Egypt, and Saudi Arabia to illuminate how the Cold War affected other Middle Eastern states and Anglo- American interests in Iraq.<sup>28</sup>

More valuably, King presents an essential analysis of the Eisenhower Administration's attempts to stabilize the Iraqi situation and protect U.S. interests there, from Communist or other threats, via the exploitation of Iraqi oil reserves by American companies.<sup>29</sup> American officials were aware that they had to gain advantages from Iraq Petroleum Company (IPC), and they adapted their relationships with the Iraqi government to meet that end. More importantly, although a transatlantic partnership existed between the US and UK, Iraqi petroleum sector yields caused disputes between the U.S. government and U.K. officials, especially during Eisenhower's presidency. Additionally, the constancy of American oil privilege with IPC was strongly challenged by the Egyptian and Iranian crises. Thus, the US sought a new partner in the region, Saudi Arabia, for oil concessions.<sup>30</sup>

A different perspective is presented by Frederick Axelgard, a Senior Fellow in International Relations in Wheatley Institution at Brigham Young University. His dissertation, "U.S. Policy Toward Iraq, 1946-1958," explores the challenges of the United States not only in Iraq, but with other Arab countries at the outset of the Cold War. Axelgard takes a different view from other historians by proffering that the divergence of U.S. relations with Iraq came to a peak in the 1950s. More uniquely, he argues that the

---

<sup>28</sup> Brandon Robert King, "America's Search for Control in Iraq in the Early Cold War, 1953-1961," (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2014), P15-23.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

United States diminished its ties with Iraq and that was obvious via the Baghdad Pact and its military aid.<sup>31</sup>

Finally, in his monograph, *The Twilight of British Ascendancy in the Middle East: A Case Study of Iraq, 1941-1950*, professor at Leicester University, Daniel Silverfarb asserts that, although Britain reduced its military presence in the Middle East, especially in Iraq, Jordan, and Egypt, it did not mean that Britain changed its priorities. Silverfarb states that, within the 1950s, there is no evidence to elucidate that Britain's predominance was eliminated. Silverfarb also notes that the United Kingdom was more welcomed by many Arab countries than the United States, especially after the U.S.'s role in the Arab-Israeli conflict.<sup>32</sup>

In contrast to works published in the US and UK, this work utilizes Arabic sources to provide a broader comprehension of the political and economic dimensions of the U.S./U.K. relationship with the Iraqi monarchy. Arabic sources are a substantial element of this work and are used to illustrate Iraqi historians' perceptions of this critical period in Iraqi history, in comparison to the perceptions in British and American sources. Arabic historians provide different insights regarding U.S. and U.K. collaboration in Iraq. Presenting Iraqi, along with more familiar British and American perceptions, produces a new historical context that has been overlooked in the annals of scholarly research concerning Middle Eastern relations with the West.

---

<sup>31</sup> Frederick Axelgard, "U.S. Policy toward Iraq, 1946-1958," (PhD diss., Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy: Tufts University, 1988), p33-45.

<sup>32</sup> Daniel Silverfarb, *The Twilight of British Ascendancy in the Middle East: A Case Study of Iraq, 1941-1950*, (Palgrave Macmillan: USA, 1949), p233.

The most valuable Arabic source is by Alaa Harby, a professor at Al-Mustansiriya University in Baghdad. In his book *The Iraqi-British Relations From 1945-1958*, Harby argues that as the United States emerged as superpower after WWII, the US could have controlled the Iraqi Revolution in 1958, but their partnership with the U.K. halted or prevented that. He also proves that the dispute between the British and the Americans sole contention was gaining influence over the oil companies operating in Iraq, as these companies were backed by their governments. This was pursued to the extent of threatening the Iraqi government when it attempted to nationalize its oil. The Allies had been trying, through their support of these companies, to guarantee the continued flow of oil to their countries, regardless of the requirements and the need for Iraq.<sup>33</sup> Also, within his book, *Iraq's Oil Political-Economic Study*, Sami Suleiman, professor at Baghdad University, examines the important strategies the US and UK used to draw its guidelines within the IPC and in the Middle East. Conflicting British and American interests in Iraq, particularly in the period following World War II, took different forms of armaments and military missions, economics, oil, and even education.<sup>34</sup>

The important Arabic source that determines conclusion to this study is Al – Akeidi, Bashar Fathi Jassim's book, *The Anglo-American Influence in Iraq 1939-1958*, Al –Akeidi highlights the dispute between the British and Americans and their devoted

---

<sup>33</sup> Alaa Harby, *The Iraqi-British Relations From 1945- 1958*, (Baghdad: University of Baghdad Press, 1998), P 23.

<sup>34</sup> Hikmat Sami Suleiman, *Iraq's Oil Political Economic Study*,” (Baghdad: University of Baghdad Press, 1979), p78.

efforts to maintain the presence of the oil companies operating in Iraq.<sup>35</sup> He also offers some facts regarding US and UK interests over educational and economic sectors in Iraq, and how U.K. diplomats worked tirelessly to undermine U.S. growth in Iraq.

Despite the fact that most secondary sources chronicle Anglo- American relations with Iraq in tangential ways, there are expansive primary sources that exist from that time. This study utilizes American, British, and Iraqi archives which include a wealth of unique documents. For the U.S. perspective, “Office of the Historian” will be utilized, which includes congressional records that all related to agreements and pacts. The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) and the State Department and National Security Council (NSC) also hold valuable records, such as reports by the Departments of State, Defense and the Interior on Security and International Issues to the National Security Council 1952-1954. The Truman and Eisenhower libraries are also important sources of this research because both respectively have all documents of Truman’s and Eisenhower’s foreign policies between the US, UK, and Iraqi monarchy. The National Iraqi papers and the House of Iraqi Documents, which contain all original Iraqi government papers that were not lost in various wars is utilized as well. Additionally, the Public Record Office in London will provide valuable British documents. Most of primary sources will be accessed via online and links provided.

This study also sheds light on some memories written by Iraqi officials, including Iraqi Prime Minister, Nuri al-Said and by other U.S. diplomats who directly worked in

---

<sup>35</sup>Al-Akeidi, Bashar Fathi Jassim, *The Anglo-American Influence in Iraq 1939-1958*, (Dar-Al Ghaida for Publishing and Distribution, Iraq: Baghdad, 2015), p25.

Iraq, such as Waldemar Gallman, U.S. ambassador to Iraq. Gallman, during his memories, offers an incredible evidence how the U.K. diplomats tried to impede the growth of U.S.-Iraqi relations.<sup>36</sup> For secondary sources, the Texas Woman's University (TWU), and the University of North Texas (UNT) provide essential books and allowed access to various articles and PhD dissertations, such as Frederick W. Axelgard's work "US Policy Toward Iraq, 1946-1958," which is one of the paramount elements to this master's thesis.<sup>37</sup> Also, the University of Baghdad provides Arabic sources which offer an invaluable interpretation regarding the Iraqi situation through Anglo-American presence in 1946-1958.

The themes of this study are organized into three chapters. Following this introduction, chapter two traces the history of the United Kingdom and the United States in Iraq in World War I, and it also examines their relationship with the Iraqi monarchy during WWII. It also evaluates the US and UK within the most critical event in Iraq, during the Rashid Ali Revolt in 1941.

Chapter Three explores whether British Strategy and American Policy toward Iraqi monarchy 1946- 1952 were cooperative or not, especially within Truman presidency. This chapter analyzes some of the following questions: How did the result of WWII affect British influence in Iraq? Why were British officials so concerned with developments in

---

<sup>36</sup>Waldemar Gallman, *Iraq Under General Nuri: My Recollections of Nuri al-Said*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1963), p 72.

<sup>37</sup>Frederick Axelgard, "U.S. policy toward Iraq, 1946-1958," (PhD diss., Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy: Tufts University, 1988), p 78.

Iraqi- American relations, and what did Britain do to gain Arab and Iraqi trust? These questions will be addressed during this chapter to evaluate British and American strategies in Iraq at the outset of the Cold War.

The financial and economic burden of WWII affected Britain's influence in the Middle East causing Britain to propose a new treaty guaranteeing it many concessions in Iraq.<sup>38</sup> Additionally, this chapter will offer why British officials were anxious to preclude U.S. economic interests from "infiltrating" or "intervening" in Baghdad's affairs, while at the same time trying to maintain its friendship with Washington and making it clear to Washington that Iraq was under its influence.<sup>39</sup> Light will also be shed on their relations with the Iraqi monarchy, especially King Faisal and Prime Minister Nuri Al Said; both strongly advocated the presence of the British and believed in establishing Arab unity through the support of British officials, such as Ernest Bevin, a foreign secretary in Clement Attlee's Labor Party. Furthermore, this chapter examines the essential pacts, such as the Portsmouth Treaty of 1948, when Britain sought further advantage after a 1930 treaty in which that nation maintained its military presence at two vital Iraqi airbases. Via the Portsmouth Treaty, Britain aimed, in part, to destroy and prevent the threats of the Soviet Union, and to clarify to American officials that they were the dominant power there.<sup>40</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup> Daniel Silverfarb, *The Twilight of British Ascendancy in the Middle East: A Case Study of Iraq, 1941-1950*, (Palgrave Macmillan: USA, 1949), p 254.

<sup>39</sup> Barry Rubin, *The Great Powers in the Middle East 1941-1947: The Road to the Cold War*, (Frank Cass: London, 1980), p76-70.

<sup>40</sup> Ritchie Ovendale, *Britain, the United States, and The Transfer of Power in the Middle East, 1945-1962*, (London: Leicester University Press, 1996), p84-87.



This chapter not only evaluates how British strategy in Iraq influenced the UK's relationship with its partner, the US, and transformed it from collaboration to rivalry, but it also illuminates the role of Britain regarding the Arab Nationalism issue, and the Arab-Israeli conflicts in Palestine and the resulting consequences for Anglo-American relations in Iraq during the complex era of the Cold War. Also, Chapter Three explains the Iraqi perspective of Anglo-American presence in Iraq. The presentation of the Iraqi perspective and the circumstances of the Cold War will facilitate further comprehension of the contentiousness present in Anglo-American relations and why the Allies ultimately failed in their goals.

There were several internal and external factors that led the Iraqi people to position themselves against the Western Alliance. The Iraqi monarchy and British government had various constrictions to prevent the Iraqi people from practicing their rights freely, and even endeavored to curb the national press.<sup>41</sup> Additionally, most of the Iraqi population had lived in miserable conditions because of the spread of poverty, including a bread shortage. This resulted in increased opposition to Western influence. Also, to be addressed are crucial opposition movements, especially concerning Communist exploitation of the outrage of Iraqi people at its pro-Western government, although Iraq received massive aid from the U.S. government through the Truman Doctrine.

Chapter four focuses on Anglo-American relations with the Iraqi monarchy during Eisenhower's presidency, 1953-1958 by highlighting on American military aid to Iraq,

---

<sup>41</sup> Daniel Silverfarb, *The Twilight of British Ascendancy in the Middle East: A Case Study of Iraq, 1941-1950*, (Palgrave Macmillan: USA, 1949), p40.

and how U.K. diplomats reacted to it. Alliances and pacts, such as the Northern Tier Alliance and Baghdad Pact were one of the most vital strategies of the US and UK to prevent encroachments of the Soviet Union in Iraq and in the region as a whole. While military aid is an essential component throughout this chapter, other issues, such as education, oil, and economy will be explained throughout this chapter and these issues will determine the conclusion of this study.

## CHAPTER II

### BRITAIN AND AMERICA IN IRAQ BEFORE 1946

Britain and the United States had been involved in Iraq since the First World War. During this time, Iraq, then known as Mesopotamia, was under the control of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>42</sup> Since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, Iraq has served as one of the most important countries in the Middle East, attracting many major superpowers including Britain, France, and the United States. By 1920, Iraq became dominated by the United Kingdom. Although the nation gained its independence by the League Nations in the 1930s, British hegemony over Iraq persisted through 1958 when a revolution toppled the Hashemite monarchy. The Ottoman Empire crumbled after the war and Iraq came under British mandate by the San Remo conference in 1920.<sup>43</sup> In 1921, the British government established the Hashemite Kingdom of Iraq. Unlike Britain, since the United States had declared war on Germany, not the Ottoman Empire President Woodrow Wilson rejected the opportunity to become a “mandatory power.” Thus, the United States opted to remain aloof in the maintenance of Ottoman provinces. Due to President Wilson’s policies, the United States stayed out of Iraqi political affairs and maintained only minimal commercial agreements. Britain, in contrast, achieved extensive privileges

---

<sup>42</sup> Mesopotamia referred to the land of Tigris- Euphrates rivers which located in Iraq.

<sup>43</sup>San Remo conference held at San Remo in Italy in 1920 when the Prime ministers of the Allies met to determine the areas of the Allied influence in the Middle East after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Throughout San Remo treaty Iraq became a mandated state under the British presence. San Remo was one of development of the Paris Peace conference meetings in 1919. San Remo treaty also set the division of Middle Eastern oil among Allied powers. Yet, the United States did not get any oil interests through this treaty.

in Iraq.<sup>44</sup> Despite the United States' professed desire to remain neutral in Middle Eastern affairs, evidence suggests that a rivalry between Britain and the United States regarding influence in the Middle East had already begun to take shape. Thus, this chapter gives background and traces Anglo-American relations in Iraq in the World War I and World War II. Following the World War I, American interest in Iraq, particularly in Iraqi oil, increased significantly.

Several contemporary studies have elucidated the importance of Iraqi oil revenue.<sup>45</sup> These oil reserves, along with the nation's geographical location, prompted many Allied powers to take an interest in Iraq.<sup>46</sup> The first evidence of competition between Britain and the United States over Iraqi oil emerged in late 1919 when the American company Socony sent two geologists to Iraq to investigate oil sources. Walter Toffler, chairman of the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey, asked the State Department to allow the Socony Company to send a geological survey team to that nation. The United States consulted Britain on the matter, but Britain denied the request, prompting American companies to persuade the United States government to intervene in hopes of achieving a more favorable advantage; Iraq whose oil reserves were deemed essential to American

---

<sup>44</sup>Barry Rubin, *The Great Powers in the Middle East 1941-1947: The Road to the Cold War*, (Frank Cass: London, 1980), p 56

<sup>45</sup>Gary M. Boutz and Kenneth H. Williams, "U.S. Relations with Iraq: From the Mandate to Operation Iraqi Freedom," *Air Force History & Museums Program*, (Washington, D.C., 2015), P 34.

<sup>46</sup>Abdalrazzaq Al-Hasani, *Tarikh al-wizarat al-Iraqiya: History of the Iraqi Cabinets*, (Baghdad: Iraq, 1988), p.76

aspirations. Hence, in the 1920s, the United States began putting greater pressure on Britain to allow American access to Iraqi oil.<sup>47</sup>

A secret agreement between Britain and France, established in 1920 during the San Remo Conference, divided Iraqi oil privileges between the two nations. France received a twenty-five percent share while Britain acquired the remainder. American and Italian companies received none, a predicament which roused dissatisfaction among American business and government leaders.<sup>48</sup> The United States considered itself an ally deserving of equal rights in Iraq and viewed the agreements between Britain and France as monopolistic arrangements which undermined America's presence in the Middle East. The United States continued to negotiate with Britain for American economic interests in Iraq, of which oil concessions remained a top priority. Despite the United States having acquired a 23.75 percent share of Iraqi oil through the Red Line Agreement of 1928, the United States surmised that Britain aimed to exclude the United States from obtaining any oil in Iraq while it remained under British mandate.<sup>49</sup> After securing their percentage in the Turkish Oil Company (TPC), the United States pursued a stake in the Mosul Oil Company (MOC), which was established in 1932 when the oil concession was granted to

---

<sup>47</sup>Ibid.

<sup>48</sup>Gary M. Boutz and Kenneth H. Williams, "U.S. Relations with Iraq: From the Mandate to Operation Iraqi Freedom," *Air Force History and Museums Program*, (Washington, D.C., 2015), P 34-56.

<sup>49</sup> Red Line Agreement of 1928 held in Ostend, Belgium, determined the percentage of shareholders from crude oil, especially after the discovery of oil in Iraq in the 1920s. Partners of Turkish Petroleum Company. The TPC partners decided to give 23% of oil to all partners oil companies. That agreement subjected the partners to maintain oil interests of other members. Turkish Petroleum Company (TPC) has been called Iraqi Petroleum Company since 1929; Gary M. Boutz and Kenneth H. Williams, "U.S. Relations with Iraq: From the Mandate to Operation Iraqi Freedom" *Air Force History and Museums Program*, (Washington, D.C., 2015), P 45.

the British Petroleum Development Company. Britain owned all shares of the company and did not wish to allow the involvement of the United States, a nation which was already experiencing financial prosperity, for fear that Britain's own interests would be compromised. Hence, Britain rejected the United States' request and refused to allow any American influence in the Mosul Oil Company.<sup>50</sup>

In addition to pursuing oil concessions, the United States worked to enhance its official presence in Iraq following Iraq's joining the League of Nations in 1932. The United States decided to establish diplomatic representation in Iraq and appointed Paul Knabenshue as the first minister to Iraq. Documents show that Iraqi officials initially hesitated to establish diplomatic representation with Washington because of Britain's unwillingness to allow the expansion of Iraqi-American relations.<sup>51</sup> The Iraqi royalty owed their position to the British, and Britain resented the strengthening of relations between the United States and Iraq.<sup>52</sup>

Meanwhile, the United States played an active role in sending missionaries to Iraq whose purpose it was to prepare for incoming Americans and to spread Christian ideals in Islamic regions.<sup>53</sup> The missionaries undertook many noteworthy tasks, the most

---

<sup>50</sup> Fadel Mohammed Al-Husseini, "The British-American Competition for the Oil Privilege in Oman 1922-1937", *Journal of the Document, Bahrain*, 37, no 19(2000): p 159.

<sup>51</sup> Khalil Ali Murad, *The Evolution of American Policy in the Arab Gulf Region 1941-1947*, (Basra: Iraq,1980), p 78.

<sup>52</sup> Al – Akeidi, Bashar Fathi Jassim, *The Anglo-American Influence in Iraq 1939-1958: Political and historical study*, (Dar-Al Ghaida for Publishing and Distribution, Iraq- Baghdad, 2015), p124.

<sup>53</sup> Abdalrazzaq A-Hasani, *Tarikh al-wizarat al-Iraqiya (History of the Iraqi Cabinets*, (4<sup>th</sup> ed, Iraq: Baghdad 1988), p. 23.

significant of which being the construction of schools and churches which were thought necessary to address Iraq's highly diverse population.<sup>54</sup>

The result of these American missions was the establishment of a number of educational institutions administered by the American Jesuit Fathers; in 1932, the order received official permission from the Ministry of Iraqi Education to establish Baghdad College, the largest school in Baghdad.<sup>55</sup> In 1930, Edmund Walsh, a professor at Georgetown University, visited Iraq where he studied the conditions of education at the Catholic schools and looked for further educational growth. His zeal was to establish other Catholic schools in Iraq, especially when he realized the diversity and ethnicity of Iraqi society. Because of his visit, he formed an association by cooperating with the heads of eight Jesuit universities, including Loyola University in Chicago, Saint Louis University, and the University of San Francisco to oversee U.S. educational activities in Iraq. Indeed, the first Catholic school was opened in 1932 in Baghdad. However, the British High Commissioner stepped in to prevent further foreign educational interests from taking root in Iraq, an act which greatly hindered the ability of the Ministry of Iraqi Education to integrate foreign institutions into the Iraqi educational system.<sup>56</sup>

Yet, Britain's interference did not halt American's missionary and educational activities. When Iraq joined the League of Nations, the United States seized the

---

<sup>54</sup>Ibid,

<sup>55</sup>Al -Akeidi, Bashar Fathi Jassim, *The Anglo-American Influence in Iraq 1939-1958*, (Dar-Al Ghaida for Publishing and Distribution, Iraq- Baghdad, 2015), p23.

<sup>56</sup> Ibrahim Khalil Ahmed, *The Evolution of National Education in Iraq 1869-1932*, (Basra; Iraq, 1982), p. 340-341

opportunity to reinforce its own influence after noting that the British had adopted the principle of non-interference regarding Iraqi internal affairs. The United States sent several educational experts to Iraq. The Monroe Commission, established in 1932 and headed by Paul Monroe, Director of International Education at Columbia University, sought to assist in the educational development of Iraq.<sup>57</sup> Most likely owing to the sentiments of several highly influential Iraqi politicians who had been educated in the United States and felt that Iraq could benefit from America's experience in various fields, including education, the Iraqi government welcomed the opportunity to enhance its relations with the United States.<sup>58</sup> The Commission met with many Iraqi education officials and subsequently issued a detailed report, entitled "Report of the Educational Commission," which included its observations and suggestions. The Iraqi government took most of the Committee's suggestions into consideration. The United States also offered five fellowships to Iraqi students to promote their relationship.<sup>59</sup>

The development of Iraqi-American relations during the years preceding the Second World War involved the fostering of commercial ties in addition to oil, education, culture, and diplomatic representation. The commercial relationship between the United States and Iraq dated back to the first half of the nineteenth century when Iraq was part of the Ottoman Empire. The nature of this original relationship was based on reciprocal

---

<sup>57</sup> Professor Paul Monroe (1869-1947), after his visited to Iraq, published a book regarding the Iraqi educational system, called "Report of the Educational Inquiry Commission", it mentioned how Iraqi education was prejudiced by Ottoman and British educational systems.

<sup>58</sup> Al – Akeidi, Bashar Fathi Jassim, *The Anglo-American Influence in Iraq 1939-1958*, (Dar-Al Ghaida for Publishing and Distribution, Iraq- Baghdad, 2015), p78.

<sup>59</sup> Royal Court Files, SAI, no19, Mission to America, (6 August 1940, Iraq- Baghdad), p. 121.



commercial agreements rather than political matters. While the British had more legitimate political power in Iraq following the inception of the mandate, Iraqi historical sources reveal that commercial agreements between America and Iraq paralleled Anglo-Iraqi ones. This means that although the United States did not possess a regional influence equal to that of the British, they nonetheless had a foothold in Iraq based on economic and commercial agreements.

American companies began to compete with British companies in Iraq. The United States' "open door" policy, established in early 1920, stimulated Iraqi-American relations through trade contracts. During this period, Iraq began to export raw materials--such as dates, licorice, and wool to the United States and other international markets. The United States remained the largest importer of Iraqi wool until the end of the 1930s, thanks in large part to the persistence of American companies who pushed for exclusive wool trading rights with Iraq.<sup>60</sup> To facilitate and develop trade, the United States established numerous companies, such as the Michaels Brothers and the Mac Andrews Forbes Companies, which had an immense impact on the Iraqi economy. Likewise, American banks, especially prevalent in Baghdad and Basra, further bolstered the American economic presence in Iraq. Thus, through the development of import/export processes, Iraqi-American relations reached their zenith. In 1935, United States exports to

---

<sup>60</sup> Mohammed Salman Hassan, *Economic Development in Iraq Foreign Trade and Economic Development, 1864-1958*, (Beirut: Lebanon, 1965), p138.

Iraq reached an estimated 2.2 million dollars while Iraqi exports to the United States reached over 2.6 million dollars.<sup>61</sup>

### **Britain and the US during the Revolt of Rashid Ali Al- Gaylani in 1941**

Although this study does not focus on the period of WWII, it is valuable to trace the nature of British-American relations during the beginning of WWII through Rashid Ali Al-Gaylani revolt, also known as the Anglo-Iraqi War of 1941. Evidence shows that during this time the United States became more directly involved in Iraqi affairs, a finding that contrasts the views of several historians who argue that United States' interests in Iraq materialized during the 1950s.<sup>62</sup> Following the death of King Ghazi in a car accident in 1939, Anglo-Iraqi relations became particularly unstable during the early years of WWII. Many Iraqis accused Britain of masterminding the assassination of Ghazi. This, coupled with the weakening of the British government, created a volatile situation in Iraq.<sup>63</sup> Anglo-Iraqi relations became further strained by Britain's unwillingness to respond to Iraqi demands which led many Iraqi nationalist leaders to view negotiations with the British as futile endeavors. The Rashid Ali al-Gaylani initiated a critical period in Iraq. Axis states, including German and Italy, tried to find a foothold in the Middle East and used al-Gaylani's revolt to threaten the British presence in Iraq. After the fall of France in 1940, Axis agents spread anti-British propaganda, aimed

---

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, p 322.

<sup>62</sup> Silverfarb Daniel, *The Twilight of British Ascendancy in the Middle East: A Case Study of Iraq, 1941-1950*, (Palgrave Macmillan: USA, 1994), p 67.

<sup>63</sup> Alaa Harby, *The Iraqi-British Relations From 1945- 1958*, (University of Baghdad Press: Baghdad, 1998), p 134.

primarily at political and military sectors, which declared that Germany would win the war and that the surrender of Britain was inevitable.<sup>64</sup>

The United States became increasingly concerned about the situation in Iraq during WWII and directed Paul Knabenshue, a minister resident in Iraq to meet with the British Ambassador to Iraq in hopes of stabilizing the situation.<sup>65</sup> America became directly involved when the al-Gaylani revolt erupted in April 1941 and lasted into May of 1941. Rashid Ali al-Gaylani, an Iraqi nationalist, led a coup to take control of all official sectors in Iraq from the British supported government. During this crisis, Regent 'Abd al-Ilah disguised himself in women's attire and escaped to America's legation in Iraq where he sought refuge. He was soon located by four rebel army leaders who demanded his resignation.<sup>66</sup> Using his wife's car, Knabenshue managed to sneak 'Abd al-Ilah to the British air base at Habbaniyah where he escaped to Basra. At this juncture, al-Gaylani asked for recognition of his new government. Talks between the British Ambassador and Wallace Murray, American chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs, resulted in both Britain and the United States refusing to recognize al-Gaylani's so-called "national

---

<sup>64</sup> Ibid, p.

<sup>65</sup>Memorandum by The Minister Resident in Iraq (Knabenshue) to the Secretary of State Baghdad, December 29, 1940. Diplomatic Papers, 1940, The Near East and Africa, Vol III, 741.90G 11/37. FRUS.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid.

defense government.”<sup>67</sup> Rashid Ali Al-Gaylani headed the new Iraqi government, declaring his support of the Axis states and accepting their military assistance.<sup>68</sup>

Although the United States supported Britain’s policy toward the al-Gaylani coup, American officials suggested that it would be wise for Britain to attempt some manner of agreement or compromise with the new Iraqi government. Fearful that the al-Gaylani government might pose a serious threat to their presence in Iraq, the British argued that Iraq’s new government had to be removed. British unease intensified with German victories in Libya and Greece and they anticipated German attacks on British bases in Basra and Shaiba.<sup>69</sup>

The United States made clear their support for Britain in the crisis with al-Gaylani. Knabenshue sent a telegram to al-Gaylani informing him that the United States would deal strongly with anything that threatened the British government. Perhaps most significantly, the United States threatened to halt all financial dealings with Iraq by stopping the exchange of US dollars. Knabenshue admitted to the Secretary of State that “this would, of course, adversely affect [their] normal trade with Iraq.”<sup>70</sup> Additionally, the United States informed al-Gaylani’s government that they opposed anti-British media

---

<sup>67</sup> Wallace Murray, was Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs, discussed the present situation in Iraq with the British ambassador. Murray pointed out to the British Embassy’s aide-mémoire of April 5, 1941, that the Legation of America was very respectful to any decision that Britain would be taken toward al-Gaylani coup.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid.

<sup>69</sup>Silverfarb Daniel, *The Twilight of British Ascendancy in the Middle East: A Case Study of Iraq, 1941-1950*, (Palgrave Macmillan: USA, 1994), p 78.

<sup>70</sup> Memorandum by The Minister Resident in Iraq (Knabenshue) to the Secretary of State Baghdad, December 29, 1940. Diplomatic Papers, 1940, The Near East and Africa, Vol III, 741.90G 11/37. FRUS.

in Iraq. Yet, ironically, the U.S. expressed that they would not contribute with Britain in any military action against Iraq. The United States strongly advocated British policy and offered all military means under its disposal. The United States wanted to clarify that it would not allow any Axis powers to act in Iraq.<sup>71</sup>

After discovering secret agreements between al-Gaylani and Axis leaders regarding Iraq joining the fight against the Allies, Britain put extra pressure on al-Gaylani's government. Rudolf Hess, Deputy Führer of the Nazi regime, met with British officials in London in 1941 to discuss the possibility of British-German cooperation to expel Al- Gaylani government. One of Hitler's terms, however, required Britain withdrawal from Iraq. To British officials, this served as proof of al-Gaylani's friendliness toward the Axis powers. Basil Newton, the British Ambassador to Iraq, sent a telegram to the Prince of Iraq and to Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nuri Al Said, which stated that, "Unless a new government could be formed without Rashid Ali Gaylani, British relations with Iraq must continue to deteriorate until they [reach] a crisis."<sup>72</sup>

Meanwhile, the United States sustained their support for British policy by following Britain with its policy in Iraq where Britain applied greater pressure by enacting arms and economic sanctions and vowed to abstain from buying Iraqi products such as cotton and dates. In addition, Britain refused to provide the Iraqi government with weapons that Iraq had purchased from London. To strengthen the arms embargo, Britain asked the United

---

<sup>71</sup>El-Solh Ragid, *Britain's 2 Wars With Iraq: 1941-1991*, (Ithaca: UK, Sep 1997), p 34.

<sup>72</sup>Silverfarb Daniel, *The Twilight of British Ascendancy in the Middle East: A Case Study of Iraq, 1941-1950*, (USA, Palgrave Macmillan, 1994), p 87.

States to halt all arms supplies to Iraq to prevent al-Gaylani from sending weapons to Palestinian insurgents. The British Ambassador sent a message to the American legation requesting that “the United States Government...prohibit or prevent the export of all arms to Iraq, at all events until a new and more friendly government had taken office in Baghdad.”<sup>73</sup> The United States again complied with Britain’s appeal. The United States Secretary of State sent a telegram to Knabenshue which stated that “...licenses for the exportation to Iraq of war materials and equipment are currently being denied except spare parts for the planes already delivered.”<sup>74</sup>

Although the Allies overthrew the Al-Gaylani revolt, the success of the revolt for a short time owed a great deal to deep-seated anti-British sentiment among the people of Iraq who harbored resentment toward Britain dating back to the signing of the 1930 treaty. Thus, for Iraqis, the al-Gaylani revolt “was an important phase in a long process of struggle, a continuation in another form and by other social forces of the 1920 uprising. Now pan-Arab middle-class army officers . . . were the chief motive forces; but the principal immediate aim was the same: the elimination of British influence from Iraq.”<sup>75</sup> The situation in Iraq was fueled almost entirely by social unrest and political distress. The strata of Iraqi society included the ruling elite, who benefited from the British presence in Iraq, and the middle strata or “effendiyya,” who, along with the poor strata, supported a

---

<sup>73</sup> Memorandum from The British Embassy by Sir Basil Newton (British ambassador in Baghdad) to the Department of State in 1941, Vo III, Diplomatic Papers, 1941, FRUS.

<sup>74</sup> Telegram from London to Baghdad in 1941, British Foreign Office(FO),317/27100. See also El-Solh Ragid, *Britain's 2 Wars With Iraq: 1941-1991*, (Ithaca: UK, 1st edition, Sep 1997), p 45.

<sup>75</sup>El-Solh Ragid, *Britain's 2 Wars with Iraq: 1941-1991*, (Ithaca: UK, 1st edition, Sep 1997), p 67

radical nationalist movement. Thus, Iraqi society became split between those who supported British hegemony and those who hoped for a more independent Iraq. The al-Gaylani revolt had enjoyed support for fighting the British and the ruling elite, including the crown prince Abdel-Allah. Iraqi political parties, such as the Istglal and Communist parties, which helped spread the ideologies of Nazism and fascism, also helped crystalize al-Gaylani's coup.<sup>76</sup> The revolt, therefore, serves as a crucial juncture from which incredible insight into the overriding sentiments of the Iraqi public can be drawn. It left a lasting imprint on Anglo-American strategies in Iraq and its consequences and repercussions continued to affect Iraqi affairs through the 1958 revolution and beyond.<sup>77</sup> Historian El-Solh Ragid points out that one of the most significant consequences of the al-Gaylani revolt was the emergence of the Al-Baath Party, a nationalist, socialist, and anti-imperialist party who advocated the consolidation of Arab nations into a single, unified state.<sup>78</sup>

Although the United States played a decisive role in securing Britain's victory in the 1941 crisis, the revolt became a watershed in Iraqi political relations with Britain. It illuminated the friction and distrust between the Iraqi and British governments, particularly after British officials expressed their suspicions that a secret agreement existed between Nuri Pasha and the Nazis.<sup>79</sup> Lastly, the al-Gaylani revolt revealed the

---

<sup>76</sup>Wm. Roger Louis, *The British Empire in the Middle East, 1945-1951: Arab Nationalism, The United States, Postwar Imperialism*, (New York: Oxford University,1984), p420.

<sup>77</sup>El-Solh Ragid, *Britain's 2 Wars With Iraq: 1941-1991*, (Ithaca: UK, 1st edition, Sep 1997), p 94.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid, 34.

<sup>79</sup> Wm. Roger Louis, *The British Empire in the Middle East, 1945-1951: Arab Nationalism, The United States, Postwar Imperialism*, (Oxford University,1984), P321.

tenuous nature of Anglo-American relations regarding Iraq. America's support for Britain in the crisis materialized because "there was widespread concern during this early period of the Second World War because of Germany's advances and Britain's defeats" and the United States aimed to keep Britain in fighting condition.<sup>80</sup>

One of the foremost motives behind the United States' acceleration of provisional aid to Britain was the prevention of Iraqi oil fields falling into the hands of any local or foreign hostile power, particularly after the United States acquired reports which demonstrated the possibility of German forces taking control of the Iraqi oil sector. Therefore, it may be argued that America's pro-British and anti-revolutionary stance stemmed more from a desire to strengthen their own political and economic influence in the region than it did an inclination to protect British interests. The Second World War exhausted Britain both militarily and economically and the nation proved unable to protect the region or defend Western interests against new world powers. Liberation movements, driven by rising anti-colonial sentiment among Arab peoples, added additional strain on Britain. Meanwhile, the influence of the United States on Iraqi affairs grew exponentially through Iraqi-American commercial and cultural ties. The first tangible instance of rivalry between the Western Allies occurred during WWII with the arming of Iraqi forces.<sup>81</sup>

---

<sup>80</sup>Axelgard Frederick, "U.S. policy toward Iraq, 1946-1958," (PhD diss., Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy: Tufts University, 1988), p150.

<sup>81</sup>Al-Akeidi, Bashar Fathi Jassim, *The Anglo-American Influence In Iraq 1939-1958*, (Dar-Al Ghaida for Publishing and Distribution, Iraq- Baghdad, 2015), p.45.



Iraq officially entered the war on the side of the Allies in 1943 and, according to a treaty signed in 1930, Britain held the responsibility of equipping Iraqi forces. However, Britain's main concern regarding Iraq was domestic stability rather than the maintenance of an army and they often provided Iraq with outdated supplies.<sup>82</sup> Britain feared that a powerful Iraqi army might pose a threat to British dominance in the region. Iraqi officials voiced their grievances to Britain and when these issues remained unaddressed, turned to the United States for assistance. In 1943, Iraq signed a Lend-Lease agreement with the United States which provided that nation with defense services. Moreover, Iraq dispatched Iraqi officers to the United States, an endeavor that had a significant impact upon the development of military relations between the two countries. Similarly, the United States sent military missions to Iraq to identify the requirements of the Iraqi army. This mission represented a major shift in the context of Iraqi-American bilateral relations, and mutual arms agreements brought the two nations closer together. American officials were pleased with the growth of their relationship with the Iraqi government, and in 1945, Prince 'Abd al-Ilah, the regent of Iraq, visited President Truman at the White House. It was the first official visit of the twentieth century.<sup>83</sup> The meeting served as a testament to the spirit of cooperation between the two nations.

---

<sup>82</sup> Silverfarb Daniel, *The Twilight of British Ascendancy in the Middle East: A Case Study of Iraq, 1941-1950*, (Palgrave Macmillan: USA, 1994), p 78-120.

<sup>83</sup> Al -Akeidi, Bashar Fathi Jassim, *The Anglo-American Influence in Iraq 1939-1958*, (Dar-Al Ghaida for Publishing and Distribution, Iraq- Baghdad, 2015), p23.

CHAPTER III  
COMPETITION OR COOPERATION? BRITISH STRATEGY AND AMERICAN  
POLICY TOWARD THE IRAQI MONARCHY 1946 - 1952

In 1946, the American delegation to the embassy in Iraq outnumbered that of the British embassy. The establishment of the American embassy took place only after permission from the British officials. In fact, the expansion of United States' influence in Iraq can be largely credited to Britain. Despite this cooperation, the political and economic climate of the post-war era presented several challenges to the Allied powers. Britain exited World War II with severe economic burdens yet its officials hoped to preserve British dominance in the Middle East. In contrast, due partly to its immense economic growth during the war, the United States emerged as a global super power. The US now wanted to ameliorate its relations in the Middle East, an aspiration rooted primarily in the increasing need for oil.<sup>84</sup>

The purpose of this chapter is to elucidate the nature of Anglo-American policies toward the Iraqi monarchy following World War II and to trace its influence during the outset of the Cold War in Iraq. Moreover, this chapter aims to provide a broader analysis of the complicated relationship between the United States and Britain during the early years of the Cold War. Thus, this chapter will examine the most vigorous events during

---

<sup>84</sup>Brandon Robert King, "America's Search for Control in Iraq in the Early Cold War, 1953-1961," (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2014),23.

this period, including the Portsmouth treaty in 1948 and the conflict in Palestine. The dual-threat that Anglo-Americans faced in the Cold War was the emergence of Communism and Arab nationalism. Both precluded the Western alliance from pursuing its interests in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf. The Allied powers thus decided to prevent the spread of Russian Communism by defending Arab states.

At the same time, Foreign Secretary of the British Labor government, Ernest Bevin worked diligently to establish treaties with Iraq, Egypt, and Transjordan in which Britain offered full recognition of these countries as independent states.<sup>85</sup> Bevin felt confident that the United States would aid Britain in these efforts. Roger Louis explains that “The British were under no illusion about American motives. If the Americans came to the aid of the British Empire it would not be because of love for British imperialism, but because of the lure of Middle Eastern oil and the fear of Communism and Russian expansion.”<sup>86</sup> The turning point in Anglo-American relations in the Middle East occurred in the beginning of 1947 during the Pentagon Talks, which provide a broader understanding of British imperialist ambitions during the Cold War. Although the “Pentagon Talks” did not chiefly discuss Iraq, they became the cornerstone of Anglo-American strategies in the Middle East and particularly in Iraq. British documents reflect the deviate viewpoints of

---

<sup>85</sup> Ernest Bevin was Foreign Secretary in the labor government, his policy was vital in the Middle East, but there was a severe opposition to his strategy due to his role for weakening Britain to overcome obstacles of the British Empire during the postwar era; Wm. Roger Louis, *The British Empire in the Middle East, 1945-1951: Arab Nationalism, The United States, Postwar Imperialism*, (New York: Oxford University 1984), P80.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid*, p 80.

Britain toward Americans. British officials were aware of their inability to fulfill any political and economic developments in Iraq without the backing of America.

Meanwhile, the United States made clear that it did not intend to replace or relinquish its partner, Britain, which was viewed as guardian of the Arab world against Communism and Russian expansion.<sup>87</sup> British official R.M.A. Hankey, head of the Northern Department, for example, indicated the importance of British influence in the Middle East to American leverage. He stated that “Even the United States has a new empire in the Pacific. I suggest that it is now our turn, and that if we are going to hold our own in the Middle East notwithstanding events in Palestine and Egypt (which will eventually have grave repercussions in Iraq) we should think of our own interests...at this point.”<sup>88</sup> Thus, Britain’s main concern was the maintenance of its dominance. But would the United States allow Britain to sustain their hold on the Middle East? The US had become the world’s foremost Western power and therefore would not probably permit Britain to remain the leading force in the Middle East.

During 1947, talks among American and Britain Pentagon Talks discussed the political situation in various countries that became increasingly unstable; these included the crisis between Greece and Turkey, the conflict in Palestine, the rise of Arab nationalism, and growing communist threats. These informal talks between British and American officials came to define their approaches to stabilizing those countries. However, Britain regarded the talks as unfavorable to its position in the region. The

---

<sup>87</sup> Ibid, 120.

<sup>88</sup> Telegram by R.m.A Hankey, was head of Northern Department, in 29 May 1947, to FO 371/63195.

potential for the expansion of American leverage in the Middle East led some British officials, such as Michael Wright, Assistant Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, to criticize the talks. However, Wright clarified that “The principle result of the Washington talks is that for the first-time American policy has crystalized on the line of supporting British policy. It is not the Americans who have altered our policy, but we have secured American support for our position.”<sup>89</sup>

Records of Pentagon discussions show tangible evidence of the divergence of Anglo-American relations in regard to Iraq. According to Roger Louis, historian of the Middle East, the Anglo-American alliance in defending Arab states against Communist domination fueled the illusion of harmony in their cooperative partnership as it became known as a “special relationship.”<sup>90</sup> He purports that, if the Allies allowed their differences to become evident, they risked losing their interests in the region, especially in oil-rich countries, including Iraq, which might fall into the hands of Russia.<sup>91</sup> In turn, British and American officials went to great lengths to hide any semblance of conflict between their two nations; they instead presented the world with an image of cooperation so as to maintain global faith in Western democracy and capitalism as a means of diminishing the appeal of Communism.<sup>92</sup>

---

<sup>89</sup> Michael Wright, Jan 20, 1948, (British Foreign Office, FO 371/68041).

<sup>90</sup> Wm. Roger Louis, *The British Empire in the Middle East, 1945-1951: Arab Nationalism, The United States, Postwar Imperialism*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), P 112.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid*, P 132.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid*, 143.

The eruption of the Cold War brought pressure to many countries bordering Iraq. The Turkey and Greece crisis, the Soviet-American conflict over Azerbaijan in addition to Iranian government which drained all their forces against the regime of Iraqi Kurds. The United States took responsibility to help vulnerable countries, which the US believed might fall under Communist influence by establishing the Truman Doctrine. Although Turkey and Greece were top priorities for the Truman administration, Iraq also received American aid through Truman's program.<sup>93</sup>

In addition to the Truman Doctrine, other U.S. documents confirm the competition of Anglo-American in Iraq. In 1946, United States Minister to Iraq Loy Henderson sent a memorandum to Washington elucidating the necessity of ameliorating the U.S. image within Iraq. Henderson made a clear statement in his reports to Washington by criticizing British policies which worked to prevent other powers, including the United States, from strengthening their leverage in Iraq.<sup>94</sup> Throughout this period, he made robust efforts to reinforce rapport with Iraqi leaders and sought a "powerful friendly America beyond the seas."<sup>95</sup> Although American aid to Iraq remained minimal, it proved vital to Iraqi-American relations.<sup>96</sup>

Moreover, a secret memorandum in 1946 from Adrian B. Colquitt of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs reminded the State Department of the origin of United States

---

<sup>93</sup> Axelgard Frederick, "U.S. policy toward Iraq, 1946-1958," (PhD diss., Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy: Tufts University, 1988), p 45.

<sup>94</sup> Telegram by Loy Henderson from the U.S. Legation in Baghdad to the Department of State, March 13, 1945; FRUS 1944, VI, p. 3-5; see also Axelgard Frederick in "U.S. policy toward Iraq, 1946-1958," p27.

<sup>95</sup>FRUS, (DS 890F.00/695), 1944, V, pp. 3-5.

<sup>96</sup>Ibid, p 5.

economic and cultural development roots within Iraq and its desire to improve and maintain Iraqi-American relations. While Colquitt did admit the preponderance of British influence in Iraq, he clarified that “this does not mean, of course, that the United States has given its approval to many of the British policies toward the Iraqi Government.”<sup>97</sup> In addition, he suggested that the United States should promote its presence in Iraq, pointing out that, “It will be increasingly necessary for us to maintain closer relations with Iraq, since our standing in the entire area will to a considerable degree be dependent on the attitude of Iraq toward the United States.”<sup>98</sup> Colquitt’s memorandum reveals a key piece of evidence regarding the U.S.’s desire to expand in Iraq. He concluded that “It is undeniable that one of the reasons for the lack of a more well-defined or characteristic policy of this Government toward Iraq is the existence of the powerful British influence in that country.”<sup>99</sup> These documents reflect further tensions among U.S. officials toward Britain. U.S. officials viewed the British presence in Iraq as a threat that undermined U.S. interests in the region.

Ironically, although American officials possessed the support and the ability to expand U.S. leverage and diminish the British presence in Iraq, American policymakers continually displayed an unwillingness to take audacious steps against the British. Notably, U.S. strategy tended to fluctuate in the region during the onset of the Cold War.

---

<sup>97</sup> Wm. Roger Louis, *The British Empire in the Middle East, 1945-1951: Arab Nationalism, The United States, Postwar Imperialism*, (New York: Oxford University, 1984), P 92.

<sup>98</sup> Secret telegram by Adrian B. Colquitt of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs to the State Department, 1946, VII, no, 3, FRUS.

<sup>99</sup> Memorandum of *Adrian B. Colquitt* in February 1946, (DS 711.90G/8-2945). FRUS.

These fluctuations were not a result of faults made by the State Department but along with other factors the consequences of the turbulence of the Cold War. On one hand, U.S. officials admitted the prime role of British influence. On the other hand, they pressured Britain to revoke agreements which stipulated that the Iraqi government could appoint only British foreign consultants and no others.<sup>100</sup> Additionally, U.S. officials pushed for equitable involvement in the development of various massive projects for the Tigris and Euphrates rivers which aimed at bolstering the Iraqi economy. U.S. officials also made clear their desire to be involved in the IPC projects in effort to reinforce American economic status in Iraq.<sup>101</sup>

There are, in fact, considerable factors that contributed to undermine the expansion of Iraqi-American relations. Various Cold War circumstances in Iraq caused the United States to continue to back Britain's status in the region. The rise of the Iraq Communist Party (ICP), for example, raised fears among State Department officials who became concerned that the ICP might prove able to infiltrate Iraqi political affairs. Many Iraqi people, such as workers, students, and lawyers, welcomed the ICP and, despite strict laws against the party, the ICP had an active impact in several national events, such as the Rashid Ali alGaylani revolt in 1941 and the uprising of 1948. The Iraqi government worked tirelessly to arrest suspected communists and to ban any communist activities including the Peace Partisan. Al-Said's cabinet desired to prove their support for their

---

<sup>100</sup> Axelgard Frederick, "U.S. policy toward Iraq, 1946-1958," (PhD diss., Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy: Tufts University, 1988), p 35.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid, 45.



American and British counterparts by expelling all communist associations in Iraq and by making the ICP illegal.<sup>102</sup>

The Palestine-Israel conflict of 1948 also factored heavily in British-American policies in the region, and in their relationship with Iraq. Truman's foreign strategy toward the conflict brought a disaster to the Anglo-American presence in the Middle East and served as one of the primary roadblocks which stood in the way of American-Iraqi rapport during the Cold War. The United States' support of Israel roused the anger of the Iraqi people against the United States.<sup>103</sup> Additionally, Iraqi nationalists became increasingly outraged at foreign powers who meddled in Iraqi affairs and refused to recognize Iraqi sovereignty. In turn, anti-colonial and anti-imperialist sentiments grew rapidly and became key elements of the Cold War. These circumstances created a dire situation in the Middle East and damaged the reputations and influence of both Britain and the United States in that region.<sup>104</sup>

Declassified documents, first analyzed by Professor Fredrick Axelgard, prove that the tone of U.S. officials toward the expansion of British influence had changed in the incipient Cold War. The United States intended to maintain close relations with Britain in Iraq or, at the very least, rejected the opportunity to diminish Britain's presence. Simultaneously, based on "the declassified documentation indicates clearly that good

---

<sup>102</sup> Axelgard Frederick, "U.S. policy toward Iraq, 1946-1958," (PhD diss., Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy: Tufts University, 1988), p 67.

<sup>103</sup> Batatu, Hanna, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq: A Study of Iraq's Old Landed and Commercial Classes*, (Princeton: University Press, 1978), P 87.

<sup>104</sup> Alaa Harby, *The Iraqi-British Relations From 1945- 1958*, (Baghdad: University of Baghdad Press, 1998), P 120.

many U.S. officials believed that British influence in Iraq during these years [between 1946 and 1958] was in sharp decline, and that its perpetuation was upsetting the social and political climate of the country.”<sup>105</sup> Since Britain’s status had been declining in the region, it became possible for America to spread its leverage. It can be argued that if the United States had put greater effort into ameliorating discontent brought on by social and economic situations in the country, it would have gained the trust of the Iraqi people, and potentially avoided tensions which eventually culminated in the 1958 revolution.

However, the United States faced a myriad of obstacles, namely Arab nationalism.

Scholars of Middle Eastern history, Richard H. Nolte and William R. Polk argued that:

“If the United States is to pursue its objectives successfully in the Middle East it must understand that the decisive social and political force at work there is Arab nationalism and must come to terms with it; and it must also accept realistically the fact that the Soviet Union now plays an important role in Arab affairs. Thus, the United States should be quite aware that not only Britain might affect its presence but also Iraqi nationalists, and Communist Russia.”<sup>106</sup>

Ultimately, the Pentagon Talks between American and British officials offer clear evidence of a rift in Anglo-American relations regarding Iraq. Americans simultaneously recognized the British presence in Iraq while they attempted to expand their own influence by seeking greater privileges and intervening in Iraqi affairs. The winds of the Cold War brought dissension not only between the Soviets and Americans, but between

---

<sup>105</sup>Wm. Roger Louis, *Reflections on US Policy towards Iraq in the 1950's*, in *The Iraqi Revolution of 1958: The Old Social Classes Revisited*, Robert A. Fernea and Wm. Roger Louis, Eds. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), p, 67-54.

<sup>106</sup>Richard H. Nolte and William R. Polk, "Toward a Policy for the Middle East." *Foreign Affairs Magazine*, July 7, 1986, Accessed by <https://libproxy.library.unt.edu>.

the Western Allies as well. The complicated relationship between the United States and Britain heavily influenced their tactics in the Middle East.

### **Britain, the United States, and the Iraqi Monarchy during the Portsmouth Treaty of 1948**

The basis of Anglo-Iraqi relations at the start of the Cold War lay in the treaty of 1930, which placed all Iraqi economic and military capabilities under the British control and was intended to remain in effect until 1957. However, Britain's status following WWII prompted British officials to extend the time line of the treaty. In Iraq, the rise of nationalism compelled Iraqi leaders to press for revisions to the treaty that would recognize their country's sovereignty. Meanwhile, the United States remained pessimistic regarding Anglo-Iraqi discussions. The British Embassy in Washington persuaded U.S. officials to take part in talks with Iraqi leaders. Despite previous reservations about these negotiations, American officials decided to participate.<sup>107</sup>

Britain's insistence on American participation in talks with Iraq provides clear evidence of both Britain's diminishing role and America's expanding influence in the region. The State-Department thus seized the opportunity to expand. The U.S. embassy in Baghdad appointed Edmund Dorsz to work with British official Douglas Busk in negotiations with Crown Prince Abdul-Allah. Both the British officials and the Regent were pleased with the active role of the United States during a critical time for Anglo-

---

<sup>107</sup> Letter from Denis Allen to Loy Henderson, January 12, 1948 (DS 741.90G/1-1248).

Iraqi relations.<sup>108</sup> Initial negotiations started in autumn of 1947. Salih Jabr, Prime Minister of Iraq, presented the requests of the Iraqi people to British officials. Most significant were requests by Iraqi leaders for Britain to remove its monopoly on foreign representation in Baghdad and to grant greater authority to Iraqi governmental circles. Additionally, Iraqi leaders wanted the British to elevate the status of the Iraqi embassy in London to match that of the Egyptian embassy. American officials backed Iraqi requests for greater autonomy because it provided them with the opportunity to expand their own influence.<sup>109</sup>

Although most Western sources suggest that these negotiations came about as a result of popular pressure on Iraqi leaders, Alhassani, an Iraqi historian, argues that British officials pushed for revision of the treaty because that nation was well aware of the danger of discontent over Iraq's internal and external affairs. Because Britain became faced with the dual challenge of maintaining their own influence in Iraq while appeasing Iraqi demands for greater autonomy, they sought American support in negotiations with Iraqi local leaders as a way of maintaining their advantage. In other words, Britain knew that their presence in the area was dependent on a stable Iraq, but they wanted to appease Iraq on their own terms.

At the same time, critics of the Iraqi government accused its leaders of being tools of the British and spread dissent among the masses. Responding to increasing pressure,

---

<sup>108</sup> Axelgard Frederick, "U.S. policy toward Iraq, 1946-1958," (PhD diss., Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy: Tufts University, 1988), p 140.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

Iraqi leaders aimed to remove restrictions within the treaty. British Foreign Office officials knew that they could not grant Iraq its full independence without jeopardizing their own authority. Thus, Ernest Bevin, Foreign Secretary, surmised that the best approach would be finding the “basis of equality” thereby allowing Iraqi officials to share the tasks and duties with British officials without granting full sovereignty to Iraq. British officials hoped that the “basis of equality” concept would satisfy the demands of the Iraqi people and government. They feared that a rejection of their proposal by Iraqi leaders might mean the end of British control over Iraq.<sup>110</sup>

The United States used the Anglo-Iraqi treaty negotiations to improve their own standing. The United States’ most noteworthy contribution proved to be their role in negotiations regarding the presence of the British military and their control over air bases in Habbaniya and Shaiba.<sup>111</sup> Iraqi leaders asked Britain to move these bases to different Arab states, such as Jordan and Kuwait. American officials felt that these proposals had the potential to serve their interests by diminishing British military presence in Iraq; they pressed Britain to build a base in Kuwait, citing the many possible benefits of having a base there "in case British treaty negotiations with Iraq could not be successfully

---

<sup>110</sup> Wm. Roger Louis, *The British Empire in the Middle East, 1945-1951: Arab Nationalism, The United States, Postwar Imperialism*, (New York: Oxford University 1984), P 523; Abdalrazzaq Al-Hasani, *Tarikh al-wizarat al-Iraqiya: History of the Iraqi Cabinets*, (Baghdad: Iraq, 1988) p. 23.

<sup>111</sup> Silverfarb, Daniel, *The Twilight of British Ascendancy in the Middle East: A Case Study of Iraq, 1941-1950*, (Palgrave Macmillan: USA, 1994), p 90-123.

concluded.” Britain, however, rejected the idea of relocating their air bases due to fear that this act might leave Iraq more susceptible to Soviet aggression.<sup>112</sup>

Despite Dorsz’s efforts to lead the Anglo-Iraqi talks and his promise to work tirelessly to ensure successful negotiations, secret telegrams between American officials and the U.S. Department of State reflect a clear contention between the British and the Americans. When the State Department observed Dorsz’s attitude toward Britain’s advantage, they warned that he should remain neutral throughout the Anglo-Iraqi talks; he must avoid giving the impression “that Americans [were] acting as British tools.”<sup>113</sup> They feared that their “objective might be defeated if the impression [were] obtained that the British and Americans [had] some kind of an understanding with regard to the treaty.”<sup>114</sup> The State Department also instructed Dorsz that “it would be helpful for you to assume a similar attitude when approached by other key Iraqi officials. It feels that your attitude would be more effective if you refrain except in unusual circumstances from taking initiative in conversations of this kind.” It seemed that developing and maintaining friendly relations with Iraq served American interests more profoundly than did preserving close ties with their British ally.

Anglo-Iraqi negotiations culminated in the signing of the Treaty of Portsmouth in England on 15 January 1948, which granted some minor concessions to Iraq but ultimately reinforced British dominance. The treaty stipulated the “sharing” of air bases

---

<sup>112</sup> Statements by the United States and the United Kingdom Groups, *"Iraq as a Factor in the Maintenance of Stability in the Middle East"* (undated) (FRUS 1947, V, pp. 594-596).

<sup>113</sup> The Department of State to the U.S. embassy in Baghdad, January 16, 1948 (FRUS 1948, V1, p. 205).

<sup>114</sup> Secret telegrams from the Secretary of the State department to the U.S. Embassy in Iraq, 1948, FRUS.

between Britain and Iraq and it granted the British control over the Iraqi military, education missions, and railroad work. Britain also became responsible for providing financial aid for the training of Iraqi officers. In turn, Britain required Iraqi leaders to hire only “British advisers and employees,” a condition which roused discontent among U.S. officials in Baghdad. Similarly, outraged Iraqi nationalists protested the treaty and eventually brought about its repudiation.<sup>115</sup>

The ill-fated Treaty of Portsmouth provided a springboard from which nationalists launched the 1958 overthrow of the Iraqi monarchy. But who is ultimately to blame for the failure of the Portsmouth Treaty and how did the British not anticipate widespread opposition? The answers to these questions are vital to understanding the nature of Anglo-Iraqi relations during the early Cold War. The signing of the treaty had massive repercussions for the Iraqi people and it faced a storm of protests. The eruption of public outrage devastated Baghdad. Iraqi opposition parties opposed the treaty and issued their statements in the following days. In turn, many students and workers announced strikes. In an attempt to quash civil unrest, the Deputy Prime Minister in Baghdad, standing in for the Prime Minister who was still in London, issued a statement prohibiting demonstrations and strikes. Parties and students considered the statement as provocative and renewed their demonstrations and strikes with vigor. The Iraqi government exacerbated the

---

<sup>115</sup>Daniel Silverfarb, *The Twilight of British Ascendancy in the Middle East: A Case Study of Iraq, 1941-1950*, (Palgrave Macmillan: USA, 1949), p 145; See also Axelgard Frederick, “U.S. policy toward Iraq, 1946-1958,” (PhD diss., Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy: Tufts University, 1988), p55.

situation by ordering police forces to shoot demonstrators, a directive that led to the injury and death of several student demonstrators.<sup>116</sup>

Other factors also contributed to rising unrest among the Iraqi population and helped solidify opposition to both Britain and Iraq's pro-Western government. In 1948, Iraqi internal affairs faced almost complete deterioration and the Iraqi people suffered from the inflation, bad harvests, and aggravated bread shortage. An Anglo-Iraqi treaty signed in 1930 had made Britain responsible for improving Iraqi living conditions but Britain never showed any concern or made any effort to solve or ameliorate Iraq's problems. Britain's foremost goal was to maintain its dominance and to preserve the right to keep its bases and ongoing military presence in Iraq rather than intervening in Iraqi affairs.<sup>117</sup>

Meanwhile, British Foreign Office officials blamed the Iraqi government and Saleh Jabr's cabinet for the treaty's failure. Accusations caused Anglo-Iraqi relations to sharply deteriorate. For example, the Regent and Saleh Jabr were charged by British officials Bask and G.C. Pelham as being part of the "Old Gang" and proclaimed that Hashemites "never succeeded in establishing themselves firmly in the heart of people." There is some legitimacy to this argument because the Iraqi government had always paid more attention to British interests than they did the needs of their own people.<sup>118</sup>

---

<sup>116</sup>Abdalrazzaq, Al hassani, *Tarikh al-wizarat al-ciraqiya: History of the Iraqi Cabinets*, (Baghdad: Iraq, 1988), p. 67; See also Hikmat Sami Suleiman, *Iraq's Oil Political Economic Study*, (Baghdad: University of Baghdad Press, 1979), p 34-45.

<sup>117</sup>Ibid.

<sup>118</sup>Memorandum of busk in 1948 to Bevin, 28 Jan 1948, British Foreign Office (FO), 371/ E1242.



The United States' policy toward Israel also contributed to the demise of the Portsmouth Treaty. During the talks, the United Nations, motivated by Truman's foreign policy, declared the partition of Palestine.<sup>119</sup> Sir John Troutbeck, head of the Middle East in the British Foreign Office, one of the staunchest critics of U.S. policy toward Zionism, blamed the United States for Iraq's unrest, stating that "it is [the United States'] connection with Jews, and with what is regarded here as the new imperialistic power of Israel, that appears to strike the Arab...forcibly."<sup>120</sup> He also warned Arab states that "the 'West,' above all the United States, was something alien and uncomprehending."<sup>121</sup> However, although the U.S. faced criticism for supporting Jews, Britain also struggled to gain the goodwill of Arab states. British officials acknowledged concern about the situation in Iraq and Bevin realized how their position fluctuated regarding the vehement protests. Nevertheless, he advised his colleagues that they should "show no anxiety" to prevent any loss to their stature. Bevin's approach to the "entire Middle East strategy dealt a severe blow."<sup>122</sup>

The Portsmouth debacle revealed the depth of anti-British feeling among the people of Iraq. To fully understand the magnitude and significance of the protests, it is necessary to analyze the demonstrations and to explore the ways in which the extreme opposition and

---

<sup>119</sup> Alaa Harby, *The Iraqi-British Relations From 1945- 1958*, (Baghdad: University of Baghdad Press, 1998), P 56.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid, p 143.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid, p 43.

<sup>122</sup> Bevin to Attlee, 26 Jan. 1948, FO 371/68444. This also (quoted) in Louis Roger, *The British Empire in the Middle East*, p 336.

Communists exploited the discontent among the Iraqi public. Iraq had been suffering from a fragile political system and economic deterioration.

Key parties played a vital role in agitating Iraqi anxiety and it is important to analyze these elements to more fully understand Iraqi sentiment during this time. Iraqi opposition parties seized the nation's precarious situation as an opportunity to advance their own agendas. The Istiqlal Party, for example, was considered by the British as "the most violently hostile section of the politically conscious class in Iraq."<sup>123</sup> Despite most leaders and members being imprisoned by the Iraqi government, the Istiqlal Party found massive support among citizens who felt scorned by the nation's pro-Western government.<sup>124</sup> The party often welcomed German activities because they increased the threat to British dominance and although the Istiqlal Party opposed Communism, it frequently showed willingness to work with Communists in minimizing the influence of Western powers in Iraq. During the height of the protests, British official Walker warned that "it is becoming clear that [the Istiqlal Party] will not hesitate to welcome the communist if by that means they will have another chance to turn British out." The Istiqlal party, indeed, declared their willingness to cooperate with communists by stating in its newspaper "Liwa Al Istikalal" that "we resist the communist today because we not only abhor...[Communist] principles but also because we have no desire to become [one of] a group of nations lost among the satellites dominated by dictatorship. We shall never

---

<sup>123</sup>Wm. Roger Louis, *The British Empire in the Middle East, 1945-1951: Arab Nationalism, The United States, Postwar Imperialism*, (New York: Oxford University, 1984), p 745.

<sup>124</sup>Alaa Harby, *The Iraqi-British Relations From 1945- 1958*, (Baghdad: University of Baghdad Press, 1998), p 78.

on other hand tolerate or surrender to Zionist imperialism but rather than accept Jews as rulers of our countries, we should hand ourselves over to communism.”<sup>125</sup>

The Portsmouth negotiations, ultimately revealed the changing global roles of both the United States and Britain. The opportunity to lead the Anglo-Iraqi negotiations gave the United States a significant boost in leverage. At the same time, Britain’s diminishing stature quickly became evident to all parties. The events of 1948 foreshadowed the future of Western and Iraqi relations as well as the many challenges, including Communism and Arab nationalism, that would be faced by government officials during the early years of the Cold War. These challenges not only caused a rift among Iraqi and Western leaders but among Allied nations as well. The British partially blamed the pro-Israel United States for the failure of the Portsmouth Treaty. The reality, however, was that if they wished to stabilize the nation the Western powers needed to simultaneously fend off the Communist menace while placating the people of Iraq.

### **The Arab- Israeli War of 1948 and its Repercussions on the British and American Presence in Iraq**

From the beginning of Truman’s administration, U.S. officials were keen to strengthen relations with Iraq, and that goal is evident throughout the telegrams between U.S. officials in Iraq and the State Department. The United States’ involvement in Iraqi affairs had intensified significantly after 1945, particularly following the establishment of its embassy in Baghdad in 1946. British officials noticed the increase of U.S. presence in

---

<sup>125</sup> Minute by Walker, 14 Jan 1948, Foreign Office (FO), 317/ 68441/E324.

Iraq but they hoped that the strength of American-Iraqi relations would not impede their own standing in the area. As a precaution, British officials warned Nuri al-Said and the Regent against expanding American-Iraqi relations without British consultation.<sup>126</sup>

However, the Arab-Israeli crisis put an end to the harmony of Iraqi-American relations, a development that had immense potential benefit for the British who assured Eastern Arab states that they opposed the Jewish presence in Palestine. Herein, alongside the divergence of the United States and the British during the Pentagon negotiations, the Western allies repeatedly exhibited their contention over the Arab-Israeli conflict.

It can be argued that the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and its repercussions for other Arab states, particularly Iraq, continue to influence Middle Eastern perceptions of the Western powers, especially the United States.<sup>127</sup> The Arab- Israeli conflict has been called a “war without end.”<sup>128</sup> The people of Iraq, already facing domestic turmoil and political restiveness brought on by the Portsmouth riots, found in the Palestine issue yet another reason to reject the influence of Western states. In addition, Iraqis lacked trust in their government which had thus far proved unable to solve the nation’s many problems. U.S. officials in Baghdad, such as U.S. ambassador George Wadsworth, warned that the United States’ attitude toward Israel and their stance on the Arab-Israeli conflict would be detrimental to their standing in the region and would have especially disastrous effects

---

<sup>126</sup> Abdalrazzaq Al-Hasani, *Tarikh al-wizarat al-ciraqiya: History of the Iraqi Cabinets*, (Baghdad: Iraq, 1988), p. 123.

<sup>127</sup> Vaughn P. Shannon, *Balancing Act: US Foreign Policy and the Arab- Israeli Conflict*, (Oxford, Ashgate Publishing, 2003), p 33.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid*, p 33- 37.

on their relations with Iraq.<sup>129</sup> Secretary of State Dean Acheson, who played a vital role in American foreign policy during the onset of the Cold War, cautioned Truman that recognition of the state of Israel would be “poison” for U.S. activities in Iraq. Despite opposition, the president maintained his support for the United Nations’ decision to create and recognize the state of Israel.<sup>130</sup>

The Anglo-American divergence over the Arab-Israeli conflict added further strain on the already weakened Western alliance. The British Foreign Office worried that the situation would threaten their own influence in the Middle East, especially since Palestine was under British mandate. British officials, therefore, demonstrated their dissent from the U.S. attitude toward the Israel-Palestine conflict. After the British failed to persuade the US to abandon its decision, they accused the US of wanting to replace Britain with a powerful Jewish state. They attempted to exploit Arab fears for their own advantage by openly objecting to American policy toward Israel and assuring Arab states that Britain served as a better ally than the United States.<sup>131</sup> To earn the goodwill of these states, British officials branded themselves the “protectors” of Muslim countries by promising to help defend them against the potentially hazardous presence of Jews. The British warned that the United States faced the possibility of losing their access to Middle Eastern oil if

---

<sup>129</sup> Memorandum by Wadsworth to the Director of the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs, February 4, 1948 (FRUS1948, V, Part 2, pp. 592-599), which gives an account of Wadsworth's interview with Truman in 1948.

<sup>130</sup> Memorandum of Conversation with the President Truman, with Acheson- Secretary of State, March 24, 1949, Acheson papers, Truman library.

<sup>131</sup> Alaa Harby, *The Iraqi-British Relations From 1945- 1958*, (Baghdad: University of Baghdad Press, 1998), P 95.

they continued to support Israel.<sup>132</sup> Troutbeck, known by his advocacy of the Arab cause, and his criticism toward the US, made him as a controversial figure. A known anti-Zionist, he expressed his perspective by stating that recognition of a new Jewish state was determined “by an utterly unscrupulous set of leaders,”<sup>133</sup> and he insisted forcefully that the British would not be held accountable for that decision over the course of “historical justice.” Troutbeck, in turn, warned that if the purpose of U.S. support for the Jewish State was rooted in hopes of blocking their British ally, and expanding their own influence in region, “[the United States] would be rudely disillusioned.”<sup>134</sup> Recognizing the growing influence of the United States, however, Troutbeck made clear that “[Britain] should in the long run serve our own cause in the Middle East far better by frankly telling the Arabs, who are realists in these matters, that we have done what we can for them but that we cannot stand up against the U.S.A plus U.S.S.R., nor run the risk of wrecking the U.N.”<sup>135</sup>

Other British officials had their own suspicions regarding the U.S. attitude toward the Palestine-Israel crisis. They viewed that American support of Jewish immigration to Palestine as an effort to diminish British rule in the Middle East. They went so far as to warn the US not to expect any additional expansion of their influence in Iraq.<sup>136</sup> Once

---

<sup>132</sup>Wm. Roger Louis, *The British Empire in the Middle East, 1945-1951: Arab Nationalism, The United States, Postwar Imperialism*, (New York: Oxford University,1984), p 98.

<sup>133</sup> Secret telegram by Troutbeck to Bevin, 2 June 1948, FO 371/68559.

<sup>134</sup>Wm. Roger Louis, *The British Empire in the Middle East, 1945-1951: Arab Nationalism, The United States, Postwar Imperialism*, (New York: Oxford University,1984), p 78.

<sup>135</sup> Telegram of Troutbeck to Bevin, July 1948, FO,731.

<sup>136</sup> Troubeck to the British Foreign Office, June 1951, 371/91185/E1024. See also Louis p 743.

again, the British attempted to prove that Iraq remained under its sphere of influence. Their officials, including Troutbeck, made an acute comparison between the present situation in Arab states and the events in Czechoslovakia in 1938, and faulted the United States for adding fuel to the fire in continuing to support the creation of Israel. Bevin, frustrated that the US had thus far failed to follow British advice, summarized the United States' policy toward the Palestinian-Israeli crisis by exclaiming "let there be an Israel and to hell with consequences."<sup>137</sup>

To understand Britain's staunch opposition to the creation of Israel, it is necessary to first understand the motives behind their position. Britain's global status had declined significantly since the war's end and Britain was concerned about its provinces in the region. The creation of Israel, they anticipated, would seriously affect British territories, such as Transjordan, one of Britain's most vital regions. Hence, their primary qualm with America's pro-Israel policy revolved around the security of British provinces. They warned the United States that they would lend military support for Arab forces in fighting Jews. The United States, backed by the United Nation's 1947 decision, imposed arms embargo. Therefore, the British cut off any arms supplies from the Arab states.

The growing friction between Britain and the United States worried many officials that the Arab-Israeli conflict had the potential to become an international conflict. During talks between the American Ambassador and British officials in London, Lord Tedder, a British official, made a vital point by comparing U.S.-Anglo relations to

---

<sup>137</sup> Wm. Roger Louis, *The British Empire in the Middle East, 1945-1951: Arab Nationalism, The United States, Postwar Imperialism*, (New York: Oxford University, 1984), p 543,

those of Germany and the Soviet Union during the Spanish Civil War. U.S. ambassador, Lewis Douglas, reacted to Lord Tedder's concern about a "repetition of Civil War in Spain during which both sides were supplied with arms by different sets of outside powers."<sup>138</sup> Due to rising domestic pressure within the United States to end the war in favor of the Jews, Britain feared the U.S. might lift the embargo. Various treaties obligated Britain to provide military support to Iraq, Jordan, and Egypt. Also, "Britain's policy on the question of arms exports was motivated by the desire to ingratiate itself with Iraq and the other Arab countries and thereby protect its vital strategic and economic interests in the Middle East."<sup>139</sup> In fact, circumstances of the Cold War associated with other different facets at that time spread anxiety among the allies.

After the creation of Israel in 1948, the British Foreign Office hoped that Arab states might become more pro-British. Specifically, British officials anticipated that divided Arab states would look to the British, rather than the United States, for essential guidance. British official Michael Wright wrote that, "If there was Patriation the Arab area would almost certainly be divided up mainly between Transjordan and Egypt."<sup>140</sup> However, the British still had concerns regarding the new the Jewish state. They worried that Israel, with its large population of Eastern European immigrants, might become

---

<sup>138</sup>Wm. Roger Louis, *The British Empire in the Middle East, 1945-1951: Arab Nationalism, The United States, Postwar Imperialism*, (New York: Oxford University, 1984), p 184.

<sup>139</sup> Silverfarb, Daniel, *The Twilight of British Ascendancy in the Middle East: A Case Study of Iraq, 1941-1950*, (Palgrave Macmillan: USA, 1994), P 77.

<sup>140</sup> Louis p 538.



Communist.<sup>141</sup> Yet, despite the reservations of this Western ally, the United States continued to support the state of Israel.

Iraqi-American relations sharply deteriorated when Truman threw his support behind the Zionist movement. U.S. officials in Washington raised concerns regarding the possibility of Iraqi volunteers offering to help Arab troops in Palestine. In an interview with George Wadsworth, Truman responded by warning that, if Iraq joined Palestine in the Palestinian-Israeli War, the United States would halt U.S. projects associated with Iraq, including the huge Tigris-Euphrates projects.<sup>142</sup> The situation became progressively worse when the Arab League announced that all Arab forces should join Palestine in their fight against Israel. The Iraqi government, in turn, formally proclaimed their support for Palestine and immediately reacted to the United States' hostile position toward Palestine by halting United States access to Iraqi oil pipelines. This had the potential to be highly damaging to the United States economy by causing a severe oil shortage.<sup>143</sup> Hence, Truman's seemingly unwavering support of Israel further affected the United States' relationship with both Iraq and their greatest ally, Britain.

The outrage of Arab states toward Israel caused a wave of anti-American sentiment among the Iraqi people who, until recently, had harbored hatred only against the British. Indeed, it seemed the Arab-Israeli conflict marred the honeymoon of U.S-Iraqi relations.

---

<sup>141</sup> Minute by wright, 15 June 1948, FO 371/68650/ E8409/G.

<sup>142</sup> Axelgard Frederick, "U.S. policy toward Iraq, 1946-1958," (PhD diss., Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy: Tufts University, 1988), p 49.

<sup>143</sup> Abdalrazzaq Al-Hasani, *Tarikh al-wizarat al-ciraqiya: History of the Iraqi Cabinets*, (Baghdad: Iraq 1988), p. 65; See also Hikmat Sami Suleiman, *Iraq's Oil Political Economic Study*, (University of Baghdad: Baghdad, 1979), p345.

Despite direct warnings by the U.S., Iraqi forces participated in the war. Initially, the Iraqi government dispatched roughly 4,500 troops. That number eventually increased to about 20,000 and there was a possibility to increase that number again if needed.

The relationship between U.S. and Iraqi officials became so tense that Iraqi officials frequently ignored the United States. Iraqi officials also threatened, on many occasions, to completely cut off all relations with the United States. Iraqi ministers made clear their anti-American sentiments. For instance, Salih Jabr stated that “[I] will do my best, not only within Iraq but elsewhere, to paralyze American interest.”<sup>144</sup> Muzahim al-Pachachi, Prime Minister of Iraq during the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, promised that he would never ask for or accept any financial aid from the United States that would “in any way [assist] the expansion of American interests in Iraq.”<sup>145</sup> These statements from Iraqi officials evoked the suspicion of the State Department which sent a firm warning to U.S. embassy staff and advised them to take necessary precautions in case the deteriorating situation called for an evacuation of United States personnel. The Iraqi press also expressed anti-American sentiment.

Although the U.S.-Iraqi relationship faced serious challenges following the Arab-Israeli conflict, the United States soon realized the value of Iraqi cooperation and searched for a way to regain Iraqi trust while maintaining their support for Israel. After repeated appeals from the Iraqi people, the United States vowed to offer aid to help

---

<sup>144</sup>Ibid, 98.

<sup>145</sup> Silverfarb, Daniel, *The Twilight of British Ascendancy in the Middle East: A Case Study of Iraq, 1941-1950*, (Palgrave Macmillan: USA, 1994), p 41-44.

alleviate the nation's economic and political turmoil. In addition, after getting report from the U.S embassy that the Communist Party and their supporters might manipulate the situation in Iraq for their own interests, the State Department stepped up their involvement in Iraqi affairs.

Ultimately, Iraq received assistance from the Truman administration under the "Point Four Program." Administered under the guidance of newly appointed ambassador to Iraq Edward Crocker, the Program allotted roughly \$700,000 to aid Iraq in the absorption of Palestinian refugees.<sup>146</sup> Although this amount was not adequate to cover the cost of aiding roughly 75,000,000 Palestinian immigrants, many viewed the assistance provided by the United States to be of much greater significance than that of the British who provided Iraq with little to no aid in this endeavor.<sup>147</sup> To help alleviate Iraq's food shortage, the United States secured grain shipments to Iraq from the International Emergency Food Council.<sup>148</sup> The increase in Iraqi appeals for American aid, rather than British aid, serves as evidence of the Iraqi government's willingness to strengthen Iraqi-American relations. Moreover, the ability of the United States to maintain its support for Israel while mending relations with Iraq further illustrates the significance of American influence in the Middle East over that of their ally, Britain.

---

<sup>146</sup>Axelgard Frederick, "U.S. policy toward Iraq, 1946-1958," (PhD diss., Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy: Tufts University, 1988), p 63-67.

<sup>147</sup>Alaa Harby, *The Iraqi-British Relations From 1945- 1958*, (Baghdad: University of Baghdad Press, 1998), P 456.

<sup>148</sup>Axelgard Frederick, "U.S. policy toward Iraq, 1946-1958," (PhD diss., Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy: Tufts University, 1988), p 63.

Despite widespread anti-American sentiment among its people, the Iraqi government-recognized the need to repair relations with the allies to maintain and improve its domestic affairs. The Palestine issue had become the focal point for Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri Al Said who, despite criticism of his policies, actively sought an alliance with the Western powers. Al Said alleged that working with the West could minimize Zionist and Communist threats, both of which endangered the stability of Arab states. However, Al Said faced resistance from Iraqi opposition parties and their public supporters who staged protests and strikes which served to further intensify the already unfavorable conditions in Iraq.

Eventually, despite differences with Britain, and criticism of their pro-Israel policies, the United States managed to salvage their standing in the Middle East and its relationship with Iraq.<sup>149</sup> The United States was able to sketch out a foothold to its strategy in the Middle East regardless of Britain's presence and their failed efforts to exploit the Arab-Israel conflict for their own interests. Because the United States had proved a significant force in the Middle East, Britain finally began to embrace, albeit cautiously, the United States' policy toward Israel. The Western Allies, nonetheless, continued to face severe opposition from Arabs, particularly in Iraq where Iraqi opposition parties worked tirelessly to encourage and reinforce anti-American and anti-imperialist sentiment. The adverse repercussions of the Arab-Israeli conflict on the

---

<sup>149</sup> Wm. Roger Louis, *The British Empire in the Middle East, 1945-1951: Arab Nationalism, The United States, Postwar Imperialism*, (Oxford University: New York, 1984), p 535.

people of Iraq served as one vital component in the demise of Western influence in Iraq and helped bring about the overthrow of the Iraqi monarchy in the revolution of 1958.

### **Internal Instability, External Deterioration, and Involvement of Britain and America in Iraq 1949-1953**

Iraq's situation throughout the end of 1940s and beginning of 1950s reached a boiling point because of the deteriorated state of domestic affairs which coincided with the development of external turmoil. The Arab defeat in Palestine in 1948 had grave repercussions on Iraq and its regime which aligned with the West to avert the threat of nationalist trends and communist activities. Iraq suffered from an economic crisis which stemmed from a sharp increase in expenses and a decline in revenue. For instance, Iraq's involvement in the Palestine war increased Iraq's military spending to 1.5 million [ID] per year and that amount rose as additional troops were sent to Palestine.<sup>150</sup> During the conflict, the Iraqi government halted oil pipelines through Kirkuk and Haifa in effort to prevent Israel from accessing much-needed oil.<sup>151</sup> Moreover, after the eruption of the Arab-Israel conflict, a strong hostility emerged toward Iraqi Jews who were accused of harboring Zionist sentiments. The Iraqi government placed potent restrictions on Jewish businesses. Jews, in fact, played an active role in the development of Iraq's economy and

---

<sup>150</sup> Silverfarb, Daniel, *The Twilight of British Ascendancy in the Middle East: A Case Study of Iraq, 1941-1950*, (Palgrave Macmillan: USA, 1994), p 67. It also mentioned in Iraqi records at Iraqi Defense Ministry in Baghdad, 34/ 234/ 1949. 1-27.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid, p 22.

the repressive constraints placed on Jewish businesses negatively impacted the nation's financial structure and contributed to the increase in Jewish emigration.<sup>152</sup>

In the 1940s, Iraq's economy was mainly based on the production of agricultural crops, but bad harvests resulted in a severe shortage of numerous grains including wheat. Intensive droughts and the spread of locusts exacerbated the situation. A severe wheat shortage, which worsened significantly between 1946 and 1948, eventually brought disaster to the country. Neither the Iraqi government nor the British proved able to improve the deteriorating situation. The British, in fact, bore partial responsibility for the financial crisis in Iraq, especially when the British Foreign Office requested that the Iraqi government hire British advisors and employees in various Iraqi sectors which resulted in Iraq having to pay high salaries to British employees. At the same time, the Iraqi government also increased the salaries of their official employees, particularly for those deemed most essential. Teachers and police officers, for instance, saw an increase in salary because their jobs were considered vital to educating and protecting the people of Iraq. These salary increases constituted fifty percent of Iraq's budget.<sup>153</sup> Consequently, the deterioration of the economy prevented the Iraqi government from collecting taxes, which contributed to widespread tax evasion and corruption among various Iraqi sectors. Tax evasion became particularly rampant among influential Iraqi politicians, who managed to pay only ten percent of their tax debt. The government requested urgent loans

---

<sup>152</sup>Ibid.

<sup>153</sup>Telegrams of the Ministry of Defense which are kept at (KD) in Baghdad, no 1, 10 to British Military Advisory Mission, Iraq- Baghdad, 1949, document Number 4, p.21.

from the British government to help alleviate the nation's dire financial situation. Britain, however, rejected these requests.<sup>154</sup>

Restrictions on political liberties further magnified the turmoil within Iraq. The Iraqi government proclaimed several constraints of the press and other free practices of political parties. Despite promises by Britain's Labor Government to support the liberalization of political life in Iraq, the Iraqi government managed to censor the press and initiate martial law to curb opposition. Waves of protests aimed at liberalizing political life in Iraq coupled with mounting tension surrounding the Portsmouth Treaty prompted the government to permit the establishment of political parties, including the Istiqlal Party, the National Democrats Party, and the National Union Party. The Communist Party, however, remained illegal despite efforts of party leaders to gain legalization. Communist party leaders, for example, tried to legitimize the party by renewing its name under the National Liberation Party but the application was denied.<sup>155</sup> Yusuf Salman, a leader of the Communist party, sought to gain popularity among workers. Because of the ban, Communist Party members joined different organizations and groups, such as the railway workers union, the League Against Zionism, and the Student and Lawyers Unions. The party made considerable progress among the middle class (Efiindia), particularly the educated generation whose ideals

---

<sup>154</sup>Ibid, 5.

<sup>155</sup>Hanna Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq: A Study of Iraq's Old Landed and Commercial Classes*, (Princeton: Princeton, University Press, 1978), p 77.

tended to coincide with those of the Communist Party. By the end of the 1940s, the Communist Party influenced between twelve and sixteen unions.<sup>156</sup>

Although prohibition of the Communist Party may have been beneficial to Iraq, the lack-of political liberty contributed to the growth of anti-Western sentiment among the Iraqi public.<sup>157</sup> British officials became concerned about the situation. On the one hand, the British felt that political liberty in Iraq might help ensure stability. On the other hand, they feared this liberty, it had the potential to undermine British influence in the region, especially since the British often found its greatest regional ally in the Iraqi government. Meanwhile, the Iraqi government split into two camps: those who favored maintaining the Iraqi-British alliance and those who supported strengthening relations with the United States. Mohamed Fadel Al Gmail, an Iraqi politician, was well known for his support of strengthening Iraqi-American relations.<sup>158</sup> Throughout his premiership, Al Gmail worked to strengthen and reinforce American projects in Iraq.<sup>159</sup> His pro-American inclinations created strong adversaries, such as Nuri Al Said and Salah Jabr, who were well-known for their pro-British stance. Their endeavors eventually drove

---

<sup>156</sup>Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> Matthew Elliot, *Independent Iraq: The monarchy and British Influence, 1941-58*, (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 1996), P 95.

<sup>158</sup> Dr. Mohamed Fadel, had studied in the United States, and got married to Canadian American woman during his presence in America, he faced vehement opposition due to its pro- to the United States, especially from the communist party. His opponents incited Nuri Al Said who was pro-British enforced Fadel to resign.

<sup>159</sup> Abdalrazzaq Al-Hasani, "*Tarikh al-wizarat al-ciraqiya: History of the Iraqi Cabinets*, (Baghdad: Iraq, 1988), p 221.



Fadel out of his cabinet.<sup>160</sup> Like Nuri Al Said and Salah, the Iraqi public generally viewed Iraqi-American relations with great antipathy.

In addition to internal deterioration, regional and international incidents had an adverse effect on Iraq during the Cold War. Iran, which shared borders with Iraq, nationalized their oil in 1951 after Prime Minister Mohommad Mossadegh managed to move the Iranian Parliament against Britain. The bold step of nationalizing the Anglo-Persian Oil Company (AIOC) provoked anger among British officials who became convinced that their predominance in the region had begun to erode. In 1952, the Free Officers of Egypt, which had been under British control since the signing of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936, initiated a revolution against the pro-British and pro-Western King Faruq. The Free Officers managed to overthrow the Egyptian monarchy. This revolution served as one of the sparks that ignited the intifada (uprising) in Iraq in 1952. Motivated by the success of revolutionaries in Egypt, Iraqi nationalists and the Communist Party seized the opportunity to again fuel the anger of the Iraqi public against the Iraqi government and Western influences. This intifada proved more violent and forceful than the Wathba in 1948.<sup>161</sup> Waves of anti-government and anti-Western protests, led by opposition and nationalist groups, roared through the streets of Baghdad.

---

<sup>160</sup> Karol Sorby, "Iraq Under The Reign Of Faysal II ,1953-1958," *Asian And African Studies*, no 13, (2004), p 12.

<sup>161</sup>Matthew Elliot, *Independent Iraq: the monarchy and British influence, 1941-58*. (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 1996), P 95.

At the most basic level, the purpose of these protests was the attainment of better living conditions in Iraq.<sup>162</sup>

Events in the Middle East and their relation to Communism became the overriding focus of British-American negotiations during the beginning of the 1950s. More broadly, developments in the Middle East spurred the United States to create the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1949 as a means of deterring Soviet expansion. NATO became the foremost global military alliance and included several nations from Europe and North America. The most tangible evidence of Soviet expansion took form in the Korean War (1950-1953), which was preceded by the Communist coup in Czechoslovakia in 1948 and the Berlin blockade in 1948 and 1949. These incidents show that the Cold War affected nations and people across the globe.<sup>163</sup>

The last two years of Truman's presidency focused on the containment of Communism, chiefly in the Middle East. Despite promises of the State Department to provide economic aid to Iraq, the United States failed to offer any palpable assistance. However, after it became evident that Communists had begun to penetrate local and international affairs, the United States became profoundly involved in Iraqi affairs. One important matter that brought the direct attention of the U.S. toward Iraqi affairs was the mass exodus of Iraqi Jews from Iraq. In the beginning of the 1950s, after anger and violence against them increased, Iraq's Jewish community was the main concern of the

---

<sup>162</sup>Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> Louise Fawcett, *International Relations of The Middle East*, (Oxford University Press: New York, 2009), p 98.

U.S. embassy in Baghdad; American worked tirelessly to secure Jewish lives in Iraq and organize Jewish immigration to Israel. The Iraqi government also tried to protect its Jewish population. The Iraqi government and Israel exchanged accusations regarding the mounting of attacks on Iraqi Jews. The United States took on the role of mediator to defuse the situation.

The progression of Iraqi-American relations was marked in August 1952 when King Faisal II visited the United States and met with President Truman and Secretary of State Dean Acheson. This meeting marked the closest point of relations since before the Second World War and was the only one of its kind in the history of American-Iraqi relations.<sup>164</sup> By the mid-1950s, both nations promoted bilateral relations which focused on various fields, such as health, education, and trade developments. One example of the cooperation between the United States and Iraq could be found in Iraqi markets, previously dominated by British supplies; these sold American equipment, such as tractors, which were used by Iraqi farmers to grow crops and bolster the Iraqi economy.<sup>165</sup> The United States' need for oil played a vital role in the nation's willingness to enhance its relationship with Iraq. The Cold War placed U.S. commitments across the globe and increased the nation's oil demand. At the same time, a booming economy caused U.S. domestic demands for oil to rise drastically. For example, the construction of

---

<sup>164</sup>Barry Rubin, *The Great Powers in the Middle East 1941-1947: The Road to the Cold War*, (Frank Cass: London, 1980), p 90.

<sup>165</sup>Harby, Alaa, *The Iraqi-British Relations From 1945- 1958*, (University of Baghdad Press: Baghdad, 1998), p 97.

new roads rose from 26 million to 40 million between 1946-1950.<sup>166</sup> Hence, U.S. officials were eager to present direct aid to Iraq in 1951 if it meant gaining access to Iraqi oil.

Another element that contributed to the United States to be involved in Iraqi affairs was the attempted secession of the Kurds in 1948. The Kurds cooperated with Iraqi communists, an act that the United States viewed as a direct threat to its leverage in Iraq. In response, the United States, in cooperation with the British, dispatched a mission to aid the Iraqi government against the Kurds. Shortly after that both the British government and its strategy in the Middle East had changed drastically. The British Labor Government under Prime Minister Clement R. Attlee lost its majority in the election that returned his predecessor, Winston S. Churchill, to the office of Prime Minister. The British government adopted a new defense scheme in the region. Striving to mirror the United States' policy toward the Middle East, the British took major steps in providing military aid to Iraq. The following chapter is devoted to British aid and attitude toward the Iraqi monarchy.

### **Conclusion**

Anglo-American relations in Iraq during the onset of the Cold War illuminated many variables in Allied interests in the Middle East. The most significant development during this time was the decline of British influence and the unprecedented role of the United

---

<sup>166</sup>Gary M. Boutz and Kenneth H. Williams, "U.S. Relations with Iraq: From the Mandate to Operation Iraqi Freedom" *Air Force History and Museums Program*, (Washington, D.C., 2015), P 13.

States in the region after decades of British dominance. The Pentagon Talks of 1947 indicated a rift in Allied relations and made clear the vast differences in Anglo-American objectives. Britain found in the United States a savior to protect British influence in Iraq and in the region as whole. Although the United States appeared to support the British in its dealings with Iraq, including the Portsmouth Treaty of 1948, their motives lay in preventing the Soviet Union from using the instability in Iraq to gain a foothold there. Because the Portsmouth Talks were primarily orchestrated by United States officials, they provided an opportunity for the US to expand its own presence in Iraq. American documents related to the Portsmouth Talks make clear that the State Department placed greater emphasis on earning the trust of the Iraqi government than they did on satisfying its British ally. As Axelgard explains, “Both Iraq and the United States sensed genuine possibilities at hand. Iraqi leaders had expressed the clear desire to end the monolithic dependence on Britain by putting relations with Washington on par with London.”<sup>167</sup>

The Palestine-Israel crisis deepened the rift between the United States and Britain. Lengthy negotiations between British and U.S. officials reflected underlying friction as both sides hoped to gain the upper hand in the region. The talks also indicated the growth of U.S. leverage. However, U.S. policy toward the Arab-Israeli conflict in 1948 fractured the developing relationship between the United States and Iraq and spurred the growth of anti-American sentiment among Iraqis. U.S. officials, however, quickly realized the importance of improving relations with Iraq and Truman’s administration provided aid to

---

<sup>167</sup> Ibid, p 71.

alleviate some of the nation's burdens. Nonetheless, anti-Western sentiment, promoted by communists and Arab nationalists, continued to flourish throughout Iraq. Thus, neither the U.S. nor Britain managed to earn the goodwill of the Iraqi public.

## CHAPTER IV

### BRITISH-AMERICAN TENSION OVER IRAQ THROUGH THE EISENHOWER PRESIDENCY, 1953-1958

During the early 1950s, tension of Anglo-Americans over their relationships increased.<sup>168</sup> More importantly, it was during this time that the United States replaced Britain, not only in the Middle East but elsewhere as well, as the foremost Western power. This had great consequence for Iraq. It became evident that Britain's global influence was quickly diminishing. For instance, Britain faced a crisis with Iran, between 1950-1953 when a new Iranian government deprived Britain of oil by nationalizing the nation's oil reserves. Britain also lost control over Egypt after a nationalist revolution brought Gamal Abdel Nasser to power in 1952. Thus, regional and political matters had massive repercussions upon the prominence of Western powers in Iraq.<sup>169</sup> Remarkably, Anglo-Iraqi relations reached a nadir in the 1950s while Iraqi-American relations reached its zenith. Both the United States and Britain, however, lost its foremost ally in the Middle East when nationalist forces successfully toppled Iraq's pro-Western government in 1958. This chapter examines the course of Anglo-American relations during the 1950s by focusing on key themes, including military aid, oil privileges, and educational and economic matters, along with regional collective defense strategies such as the Baghdad

---

<sup>168</sup> W Taylor Fain, *American Ascendance and British Retreat in the Persian Gulf Region*, (Palgrave Macmillan: New York, 2008), p 46.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid*, 46.

Pact. Thus, this chapter assesses how Cold War complexities in the 1950s created and amplified tension among the transatlantic allies.

In 1953, two significant characters entered the White House; President Dwight D. Eisenhower and his Secretary of State John Foster Dulles. Eisenhower inherited a complex situation in the Middle East from his predecessor, Truman. Eisenhower in fact faced many problems. The political situation in the Middle East was boiling up. By the beginning of 1950s, the Soviet Union embarked on a broad diplomatic campaign to gain Middle Eastern countries into their sphere of influence. Stalin was impressed with Iraq and Iran because of their oil concessions and sought to make Middle Eastern countries satellites of the Soviet Union.<sup>170</sup> The Iraqi government was consistently pro-Western, but Iraq was threatened by Communist activities because of its border with Iran and Syria. Iraq was also menaced by Communist party actions when party members not only took part in a violent public disturbance, but also became involved in various Iraqi parties. Surprisingly, Egypt and Syria favored Communist ideologies. Egypt and Syria eventually accepted arms deals with Soviet weapons.

To contain Middle Eastern countries situation and to prevent Communist threats in the region, Eisenhower and Dulles decided to establish a regional defense alliance to fend off communist infiltrations with many countries including, Iraq, Iran, Turkey, and Pakistan. Iraqi stability was important to the U.S. strategy in the region. Thus, the United States desired to build and strengthen its economic relationship with Iraq which the State

---

<sup>170</sup> Abdalrazzaq Al-Hasani, *Tarikh al-wizarat al-Iraqiya: History of the Iraqi Cabinets*, (Baghdad 1988), p 208.



Department considered “important to the United States and Western democracies because of its strategic location, its vast petroleum reserves, its control of the potentially fertile Tigris- Euphrates valley, and its control of Basra, the largest seaport on the Persian Gulf.”<sup>171</sup> Similarly, the CIA’s National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) in 1956 stated that “Iraq is unique in the Arab world in its political stability, its effective management of substantial economic potential, and its collaboration with the West.”<sup>172</sup> More importantly, the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff issued a report which argued the value of Iraq geographically and economically, and that made Iraq indispensable to the U.S. policy in the Middle East by announcing that:

“By virtue of its geographical location and topography, Iraq includes the most practicable land routs from the USSR to the Mediterranean via Iran. It possesses an estimated seven per cent of the world’s petroleum reserves .... Iraq is strategically located in the “backstop” area of the Zagros Mountain line and contains the most practicable land routs, between not only the Zagros passes and the Mediterranean, but other important inland routes to both Turkey on the north and Kuwait on the south as well.”<sup>173</sup>

However, Eisenhower faced another problem in Iraq during the Cold War. American policy, in fact, conflicted with its main ally, Britain. After WWII, Britain’s position in the region suffered and the United States emerged as a strong competitor to Britain. Although the Cold War compelled them to be allies, the regional ambitions of the British clashed with those of the United States; particularly in the 1950s in Iraq because Eisenhower

---

<sup>171</sup>The Department of State, FRUS; see also W Taylor Fain, *American Ascendance and British Retreat in the Persian Gulf Region*, (Palgrave Macmillan: New York, 2008), p 98.

<sup>172</sup> The outlook for Iraq stability and foreign policies, 36.2- 56 17 July 1956, FRUS, 1955-1957; see also W. Taylor Fain, *American Ascendance and British retreat in the Persian Gulf Region*, P 56.

<sup>173</sup> Report by the Joint Strategic Plans Committee, “Scope of Mutual Defense Assistance Program for Iraq,” JCS 2099/513, September 1955, FRUS, 1955-57.

wanted to develop U.S. relations with Iraqi monarchy in many fields, such as militarily and economically to maintain Iraq as a pro-Western ally.

However, Eisenhower and Dulles left an imprint in Iraq during the 1950s, yet both have been widely criticized by many historians. Some criticism of Eisenhower has seen its policy in Iraq was unsuccessful because he gave many considerations to Britain, eventually contributed the loss of Iraqi monarchy in 1958. Others have found that Eisenhower policy was weak because it did not offer a strong assistance to the Iraqi government. While Louis Roger argues that Eisenhower was “highly intelligent, hardworking, and decisive,” others contend that “Eisenhower was, for a long period, popularly regarded as a man who was out of his depth in the White House and whose decisions and strategic priorities were determined primarily by his Secretary of State.”<sup>174</sup> Much of the criticism of the President stems from his allowing Dulles to make critical decisions in matters regarding the Middle East and from America’s inability to contain and prevent the revolution of 1958. Despite these historical reproaches, Eisenhower and Dulles had managed to cooperate in solving overlapping and complex situations that translated into a new collective defense strategy during the period preceding the Iraqi revolution.

In the same vein, Anglo-American diplomatic relations became further complicated when Republicans took control of the White House and a conservative government

---

<sup>174</sup> Brandon Robert King, “America’s Search for Control in Iraq in the Early Cold War, 1953-1961,” (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2014), p76; Wm. Roger Louis, *The British Empire in the Middle East, 1945-1951: Arab Nationalism, The United States, Postwar Imperialism*, (New York: Oxford University, 1984), P190.

formed in Britain. Both Washington and London recognized their differences in philosophies during the most turbulent years of the 1950s marked by the Suez War in 1956 and the Iraqi Revolution of 1958. While Churchill argued that Britain maintained a vital role in the region, Eisenhower recognized the diminishing presence of Britain in the Middle East. Unlike the relationship between Churchill and President Franklin Roosevelt, there was little harmony in relations between Eisenhower and Churchill.<sup>175</sup> Churchill struggled to form closer ties to Eisenhower's administration. But Eisenhower stated in 1952 that "Winston is trying to relive the days of World War II."

Some historians have disparaged Eisenhower's apparent unwillingness to strengthen ties with Churchill. W Taylor Fain, for instance, explains the contradictory and dispute among Eisenhower and Churchill because advisors of the President were anxious from British officials.<sup>176</sup> However, in contrast with the Truman presidency, U.S. officials, including Dean Acheson, denied any tension between American and British officials. In fact, it can be argued that Eisenhower's administration treated Britain like other United States' allies, an approach which roused the anger of Churchill who proclaimed that "Britain and [the] British commonwealth are not to be treated just as other nations would be treated by the United States."<sup>177</sup>

The seemingly troubled relationship between the President and the Prime Minister has caused much debate among historians who have offered various perspectives on the

---

<sup>175</sup> W Taylor Fain, *American Ascendance and British Retreat in the Persian Gulf Region*, (Palgrave Macmillan: New York, 2008), p 46.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid, 46-47.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid. 47.

so-called “special relationship” between the Western powers. Fain points out that “inextricably bound issues of imperialism, anti-colonialism, anti-communism, and revolutionary nationalism created divisions between Washington and London and played an especially important role in defining the Anglo-American relationship in the Middle East and Persian Gulf region.”<sup>178</sup> Thus, controversy surrounding diplomacy in the Middle East was the key factor in Anglo-American contentions during the 1950s. An example of this rift involved dealings with Iraq, specifically U.S. military aid negotiations and the Baghdad Pact, both of which elucidate the depth of Anglo-American diplomatic difference.<sup>179</sup> In Iraq, the contention and unrest coupled with communist and nationalist activities had disastrous consequences for Allied relations. Because Britain was obligated to offer protection and military aid to Iraq but was unable to do so, the United States became significantly more involved in Iraqi affairs, especially during Eisenhower’s presidency.

### **U.S. Military Aid to Iraq and the Reaction of Britain, 1953 -1958**

The discernable retreat of British clout in Iraq and elsewhere, coupled with the turbulence of 1952, brought peril to American prestige in the region. In the minds of Iraqi opposition forces, America’s position was now inextricably linked with those of the British and Iraqi authorities.<sup>180</sup> Hence, calming Iraq’s internal turmoil became an

---

<sup>178</sup>Ibid.

<sup>179</sup> Axelgard Frederick, *U.S. policy toward Iraq, 1946-1958*, (PhD diss., Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy: Tufts University, 1988), p177.

<sup>180</sup> Brandon Robert King, “America’s Search for Control in Iraq in the Early Cold War, 1953-1961,” (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2014), p43.

overriding concern of the United States during the Eisenhower administration. It hoped to repair and strengthen Iraqi-American relations by promoting mutual regional defenses against Communist activities and nationalist aspirations. However, the tension between the British and Americans over the military aid program to Iraq played a pivotal role in the demise of both Western-Iraqi relations and the Iraqi monarchy.

To understand the details and consequences of U.S. military aid to Iraq, and Britain's viewpoints toward such endeavors, it is necessary to examine events of 1952 when the primary Allied goal was to contain Soviet infiltration in the region and to safeguard states that would be most susceptible to communist infiltration, especially those who shared borders with the Soviet Union. To contain Communist threats in the region, US and UK adopted a strategy to establish a regional defense alliance to block penetration of the Communists and to link countries there to Western states. Thus, the Allies established two organizations. The Middle East Command (MEC), which promoted cooperation between the United States, the United Kingdom, France Turkey, Iraq, and Egypt and the Middle East Defense Organization (MEDO). The Allies hoped this would be more effective than the MEC. Egypt, under the leadership of Gamal Abd Nasir, refused to participate in either organization. The United States hoped to find in Iraq a vital component in mutual regional defense.<sup>181</sup>

---

<sup>181</sup> Williamson Daniel C. "Understandable Failure: The Eisenhower Administration's Strategic Goals in Iraq, 1953–1958," *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 17, no. 3 (September 2006): 597-615. *Military & Government Collection*, EBSCOhost (accessed January 26, 2017), p 598.

To block communist expansion in the Middle East and to ensure that the Iraqi government would not fall under Communism, the US planned for a new alliance in 1955, called the “Baghdad Pact,” where the US promised to provide economic and military assistance to its members. Due to Jewish opposition to the Baghdad Pact, the US did not participate directly, the United States commissioned Britain to do so.<sup>182</sup> Axelgard stated that “Iraq was the only Middle Eastern country (including Israel) worthy of inclusion as an ally in the global tabulation of the armed strength of the West versus the East bloc.”<sup>183</sup> He also reasoned that “the central feature of Iraq's regional position was that it was the Arab bastion against the Soviet Union.”<sup>184</sup>

Iraqi-American relations experienced substantial growth after the visit of Dulles to Iraq in 1953. Dulles visited several areas of the Middle East, and due to its unique and valuable merits, was particularly impressed with Iraq. Thus, maintaining the stability of that country became a top priority of American foreign policy. Both Washington and London recognized the importance of Iraq and Eisenhower referred to the nation as the “bulwark of stability and progress”<sup>185</sup> in the relentless unrest of the Middle East. Thus, to

---

<sup>182</sup> The Baghdad Pact was one of the Cold War alliances. It was established in 1955 to counter the Communist penetration in the Middle East and was formed by the United Kingdom, Iraq, Turkey, Iran and Pakistan. The main purpose of this pact to fend off the Communist encroachment. Although the United States did not formally join to the pact, the U.S. promised to present military and economic assistance to the members. However, after the declaration of Iraqi revolution of July 14, 1958 by Abdul Karim Kassem, Iraq withdrew from the Pact, and the pact was renamed the Central Treaty Organization, or (CENTO) in 1959; Al – Akeidi, Bashar Fathi Jassim, *The Anglo-American Influence in Iraq 1939-1958*, (Dar-Al Ghaida for Publishing and Distribution, Iraq- Baghdad, 2015), P 96-98.

<sup>183</sup> Axelgard Frederick, “U.S. policy toward Iraq, 1946-1958,” p 212.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid, 212-213.

<sup>185</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The White House Years: Waging Peace, 1956-61*, (New York, 1965) P 269. See also Majid KHadduri, *Republican Iraq: A Study in Iraqi Politics Since The Revolution of 1958*, (London: Oxford University, 1969), P 75.

help stabilize the situation, the U.S. offered Iraq military aid. Iraqi officials welcomed Washington's overture. At first glance, both Western allies seemed to support the endeavor. However, while Britain publicly proclaimed support, records indicate that the program caused a great deal of anxiety among British officials. For instance, a memorandum from Ambassador Troutbeck alerted Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden that, "by a combination of free gifts and blundering diplomacy the Americans will end up seriously weakening our own position."<sup>186</sup>

Roger Makins, the British Ambassador to Washington, felt strongly that U.S. military aid would inevitably promote American influence in the region. He warned in 1953 that, "there is, in the last resort, little we can do to prevent the Americans carrying out their present intentions concerning the provision of aid to Iraq...Our aim should... now be to strengthen and tighten up the draft statement of principles... and to secure its acceptance by the Americans. This will provide us with a yard stick to which we can try to hold the Americans in the future."<sup>187</sup> Thus, the argument proposed by some scholars that the objectives of the United States and Britain coexisted harmoniously is inaccurate.<sup>188</sup> Instead, circumstances of the Cold War illustrated the depth of tension among the transatlantic allies in Iraq.

---

<sup>186</sup> Williamson, Daniel C. "Understandable Failure: The Eisenhower Administration's Strategic Goals in Iraq, 1953–1958." 602.

<sup>187</sup> Brandon Robert King, "America's Search for Control in Iraq in the Early Cold War, 1953-1961," (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2014), p 94.

<sup>188</sup> W Taylor Fain, *American Ascendance and British Retreat in the Persian Gulf Region*, (Palgrave Macmillan: New York) 2008, pp p 97.

A military grant, supplied by the United States to Iraq, reinforced both Iraqi-American relations and Anglo-American tensions. As Middle Eastern Scholar Daniel Williamson observes, the British were greatly concerned about their prestige in Iraq which became further weakened by the United States' provision of substantial military supplies to Iraq.<sup>189</sup> More distinctly, Williamson goes further to elucidate a vital point of this study: that the Cold War not only aroused competition among the Soviet Union and the United States but between the Western allies as well. Through this rivalry, Iraqi officials saw an opportunity to benefit their nation by playing both sides off one another and to negotiating valuable military grants from both sides.<sup>190</sup> While British records do not reflect a direct rejection of any Iraqi-American supply contracts, British officials openly conveyed their disapproval. The State Department suggested that the US sign the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Britain to avoid any further disputes between the two nations. Britain was set to benefit profoundly from the agreement which stipulated that the United States had to acknowledge Britain as the only foreign nation with legitimate power within Iraq and required British approval of United States military aid. According to the MOU, American military aid was to be provisional in nature, under

---

<sup>189</sup>Williamson, Daniel C. "Understandable Failure: The Eisenhower Administration's Strategic Goals in Iraq, 1953–1958." *Diplomacy & Statecraft: Military & Government Collection*, 17, no. 3 (September 2006): 597-615, EBSCOhost (accessed January 26, 2017). P 89.

<sup>190</sup>Williamson, Daniel C. "Understandable Failure: The Eisenhower Administration's Strategic Goals in Iraq, 1953–1958." *Diplomacy & Statecraft: Military & Government Collection*, 17, no. 3 (September 2006): 597-615, EBSCOhost (accessed January 26, 2017), p 90; John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History*, (Penguin Group, New York, U.S.A., 2005), p 123.



British control, and “kept within very narrow limits.”<sup>191</sup> In addition, all arms purchases had to be carried out in pound sterling rather than U.S. dollars.

Not surprisingly, United States officials reacted unfavorably to British proposals. Burton Berry, American Ambassador to Baghdad, feared that British demands would undermine American influence in Iraq, where U.S. military aid played a vital role in the sustainment of Iraqi-American relations. Berry, therefore, argued that U.S. adherence to the provisions of the MOU would have detrimental effects on the American presence in Iraq.<sup>192</sup> He suggested to the State Department that the United States furnish the Iraqi army with equipment to cover its basic needs “rather than distributing U.S. funds within a British military package.”<sup>193</sup> Nevertheless, the State Department, hoping to maintain peaceful relations with Britain, ultimately agreed to most provisions in the MOU in 1954.

The first incident that aroused British anger and concern regarding US arms supplies to Iraq occurred when Assistance Secretary of the Foreign Office, Henry Byroade informed Makins that the United States, by federal law, had decided to send a Military Assistance Advisory Group in 1954 (MAAG) to train Iraqi forces with new equipment. The British, however, were not satisfied with U.S. federal law and surmised that U.S. weaponry would hamper British martial strategies. Ongoing discussions between Anthony Eden and Makins revealed the depth of British fear of any U.S. actions in Iraq. Eden argued that unlimited U.S. interference would undermine Britain’s political

---

<sup>191</sup> Axelgard Frederick, “U.S. policy toward Iraq, 1946-1958.” p 145.

<sup>192</sup> Brandon Robert King, “America’s Search for Control in Iraq in the Early Cold War, 1953-1961,” (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2014), 89.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid, p 89.

position not only in Iraq but throughout the Middle East. He discussed with Makins regarding the U.S. weaponry supplies and suggested the British press America to accept its demands by citing the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of 1930 which granted Britain the exclusive power to determine the level of U.S. military aid to the Iraqi army. The U.S. Department of Defense, however, felt that the U.S. should not allow Britain to determine the manner and scope of the U.S. military program and that America needed to act to define its military role in Iraq, independent from British interference.<sup>194</sup>

From the Iraqi perspective, the exacerbated situation in other Middle East states--such as the exponential expansion of communist activity in Iran and contention between British officials and Nasser in Egypt--contributed to the preference of Iraqi leaders for working with the United States in fending off communist threats. Unpredictably, Nuri Al Said, who had been criticized as a British "puppet" for his pro-British leanings; he now changed his tone and sided with the United States, citing the superiority of American, rather than British, influence in the region.<sup>195</sup> Iraqi-American relations caused mounting anger and anxieties among British officials who insisted that Iraqi officials not deal with the United States without consulting them.<sup>196</sup>

In the final months of 1954, following an agreement made with Al Said, U.S. officials dispatched the MAAG to Iraq, an act that outraged British diplomats. Eden sent a memorandum to Dulles, which argued that sending MAAG to Iraq threatened to disrupt

---

<sup>194</sup> Robert King, "America's Search for Control in Iraq in the Early Cold War," p 90.

<sup>195</sup> Nuri Abd Al Hameed, "U.S. Orientation towards Iraq After World War II," *Journal of Afak Arabia*, no. 9, (Sept 1989): p 51-67.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*

British tasks with the Iraqi army and had the potential to affect both British and American presence in the region. British officials feared that MAAG expanded American influence by granting control of air bases in Habbaniya and Shaiba to U.S. forces. Moreover, British officials reacted unfavorably to Al Said's request that the United States provide Iraq with aircraft. U.K. Ambassador in Iraq Sir John Troutbeck exclaimed that sending aircraft "would be a waste of their money quite apart from the undesirability of their competing with us for the supply of aircraft."<sup>197</sup> Despite the British protest, U.S. officials insisted that its planes would be included among the military aid provided to Iraq.

The Anglo-American rift over aircraft provision to Iraq persisted until the revolution in 1958. To avoid farther rapprochement of Iraqi-American relations, the British accelerated its military aid by providing fifteen British Venom aircraft.<sup>198</sup> Meanwhile, Military Assistance Understanding (MAU) between American and Britain reached its peak in 1954; at that time, the United States deliberately increased weapons to Iraq because Syria and Egypt were receiving jets and other munitions from the USSR. Thus, Americans were concerned about the Iraqi situation. As a result, the United States allotted \$48.2 million dollars in aid over four fiscal years.<sup>199</sup> That dollar amount was

---

<sup>197</sup> Sir John Troutbeck to PS Falla, Foreign Office, E1199/31, 10 November 1953, FO371-10424, BNA. See also Robert King, "America's Search for Control in Iraq in the Early Cold War, 1953-1961," p 93.

<sup>198</sup> Memorandum of British Foreign Office to Washington, #183, 13 January 1954, PREM 11-1895, BNA; From Baghdad. (Troutbeck) to Foreign Office, #2, 2 January 1954, DEFE 7-835, BNA. See also Danial Williamson, "Understandable Failure: The Eisenhower Administration's Strategic Goals in Iraq, 1953-1958."p. 603., Robert king. 94.

<sup>199</sup>Waldemar Gallman, *Iraq Under General Nuri: My Recollections of Nuri al-Said*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1963), p 79.

determined to expand until 1958.<sup>200</sup> Despite opposition of British and some American officials, Eisenhower called for an increase in American aid to Iraq up to \$55.7 million in 1958 after the establishment of political union between Syria and Egypt by declaring their unity under the name “United Arab Republic,” in which Eisenhower considered it a direct threat to Iraq stability. The U.S. military aid program, which stood in contrast to Anglo-American agreements, was deemed “the largest military aid program then planned for an Arab country.”<sup>201</sup>

As a result, political developments in the Middle East encouraged Eisenhower to make an audacious effort to promote Iraqi-American military relations. The fact that the U.S. was not involved, Eisenhower wanted to reward Iraq and Nuri Al Said for their involvement in the Baghdad Pact in 1955. Nuri Al Said and the Iraqi government faced fierce opposition from the Iraqi public for agreeing to join the Baghdad Pact, especially after Jamal Abud Al Nasar refused to join.<sup>202</sup> Britain’s position in Iraq diminished further after Iraq became involved in the Baghdad Pact which essentially voided the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of 1930 and weakened the legitimacy of British authority. Therefore, in the Baghdad Pact, the US found the chance to take a direct involvement in Iraqi political affairs.<sup>203</sup> For instance, an Anglo-American agreement in the beginning of 1953

---

<sup>200</sup>National Security Council(NSC), Policy Paper 5428, "U.S. Objectives and Policies with Regard to the Near East," July 23, 1954. See also Axelgard Frederick, “U.S. policy toward Iraq, 1946-1958,” p 196.

<sup>201</sup>National Security Council Report, (NSC), Policy Paper 5428, "U.S. Objectives and Policies with Regard to the Near East," July 23, 1954.

<sup>202</sup> Nigel John Ashton, *Eisenhower, Macmillan, and the problem of Nasser: Anglo-American relations and Arab nationalism, 1955-59*, (Hampshire: Macmillan Press, 1996), p 56.

<sup>203</sup>Al - Akeidi, Bashar Fathi Jassim, *The Anglo-American Influence in Iraq 1939-1958*, (Dar-Al Ghaida for Publishing and Distribution, Iraq- Baghdad, 2015), p78.

stipulated the offshore purchase of British equipment by the Iraq army. However, the Military Assistance Treaty of 1954 called for this equipment to be replaced by American weapons. This act outraged Anthony Eden who felt that the American position further threatened British prominence in Iraq and jeopardized British influence in the Middle East as whole. Britain's status in the region had suffered a severe blow with losses in Palestine and Egypt, so British officials wanted desperately to maintain their hold over Iraq.<sup>204</sup>

The Anglo-American debate regarding American Military Assistance (AMA) to Iraq continued over the next five years and was not limited to the MAAG provision of weapons. The matter of Centurion tanks raised the anger of the British government and some of U.S. officials as well. The United States offered to provide tanks to Iraq even though this endeavor fell under British responsibilities. The offer to provide tanks to Iraq not only challenged Anglo-American accords on the matter but also contradicted a promise made to Israel that the United States would not furnish any Arab state, including Iraq, with military tanks.<sup>205</sup> At the Geneva Conference, Eisenhower had declared that the United States planned to provide Iraq with seventy tanks. However, after intense debate regarding tank quantities it was decided that the United States would provide ten Mark VII Centurion tanks and Britain would provide an additional two. The issue of tank provisions caused split among U.S. officials with the State Department; opposed the plan

---

<sup>204</sup> Axalgard Frederick, "U.S. policy toward Iraq, 1946-1958," (PhD diss., Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy: Tufts University, 1988), p196.

<sup>205</sup> Telegram from the U.K. Embassy in Washington to the Foreign Office, June 25, 1955 (FO 371/115585 V1193/80/G).

and the Department of Defense gave their approval. The U.S. Ambassador to Iraq however praised the Eisenhower administration for providing that nation with much-needed military weapons.<sup>206</sup>

Waldemar J. Gallman, U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, reasoned that Eisenhower's policy stemmed from the pro-western attitude of the Iraqi government and the likelihood that Iraq remained the only Arab nation that could be used as a shield against Communist penetration.<sup>207</sup> Meanwhile, circumstances in Eastern countries began to boil over in the mid-1950s. After Syria received MiG17 aircraft from Russia and Egypt entered arms deal with Czechoslovakia in 1956, Eisenhower became increasingly concerned with the security of Iraq. He felt that the best way to protect Iraq would be the provision of military equipment. Therefore, despite both foreign and domestic opposition, he went forward with the plan to provide tanks to Iraq.

Iraqi sources and ambassador Gallman's records, reveal attempts of the British to exploit the military aid program to their own advantage. Both the Americans and the British wanted to use the tanks as a grand display of support for the Iraqi government. British, American, and Iraqi officials agreed to draft a press release but debated the exact wording of the announcement. The British proposed the announcement to be worded as "Ten of these tanks are supplied under American aid program and two are a gift from the British."<sup>208</sup> The Americans, on the other hand, wanted the press release to be worded as

---

<sup>206</sup> Ibid.

<sup>207</sup> Waldemar Gallman, *Iraq Under General Nuri: My Recollections of Nuri al-Said*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1963), p 175

<sup>208</sup> Ibid.

“The twelve are without cost to the Government of Iraq.” The three governments agreed on the American proposal. Ironically, on October 24, 1955, most press outlets in Baghdad released a version closer to the one proposed by the British.<sup>209</sup> Similarly, the British and American embassies sent photographers to document the arrival of the tanks. When the ship arrived in Basra, the cameras were waiting. Photographers captured the unloading of British tanks which were marked in large letters with the words “Gift from Her Majesty.” However, cameras did not capture the delivery of the ten American tanks, which were unmarked, even though the cameras remained idle all day. It seems that the British wished to present themselves as the sole provider of aid to Iraq.<sup>210</sup>

Following the Suez Crisis of 1956 and subsequent Anglo-Egyptian conflict surrounding the Canal, Britain lost much of its prestige in the Middle East. Eisenhower recognized that the situation in the area provided fertile ground for the spread of Communism. In 1957 he announced the “Eisenhower Doctrine” which promised to assist ailing and at-risk countries militarily and economically to deal with the power vacuum left by the retreat of Great Britain in the region.

The Suez conflict had a measurable impact on the political process in Iraq. Gamal Abdel Nasser’s nationalization of the Canal earned him overwhelming approval from Arab states, particularly Iraq, who viewed Nasser as “the defender of Arab nationalism.”<sup>211</sup> Iraqi nationalists protested and expressed their abhorrence of the Iraqi

---

<sup>209</sup> Ibid.

<sup>210</sup> Gallman, 164.

<sup>211</sup> Archive of U.S. Department of State, “Suez Crisis, 1956.” January 20, 2001. Accessed October 5, 2017.

government, including Prime Minister Al Said Prime Minister and Crown Prince Abdul-Il- Allah, through the incitement of Communist and other parties.<sup>212</sup> Protesters raised banners featuring anti-Iraqi government and anti-Western rhetoric. The worsening situation in Iraq prompted Al Said to request urgent assistance from the US in the form of more jet aircraft and additional military equipment.

In Washington, opinions were divided over Iraq's request. General Nathan Twining, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, called for additional and direct American aid to Iraq. He argued that the United States needed to nullify the MOU, which forced the US to utilize off-shore purchases of British equipment since the British loss in the Suez War, and that it should take full responsibility for furnishing Iraq with a squadron of aircraft to strengthen its air force.<sup>213</sup> Twining strongly suggested that the U.S. had to take "primary responsibility for training and equipping Iraqi military forces, with U.S. materiel."<sup>214</sup> Similarly, Ambassador Gallman suggested that the US foster the Iraqi Air Force by providing F-86 jets.<sup>215</sup> The State Department, on the other hand, was among the strongest opponents of the Iraqi request and warned that the Iraqi government put pressure on the US to get additional military weapons. The U.S. State Department, in

---

<sup>212</sup>Al -Akeidi, Bashar Fathi Jassim, *The Anglo-American Influence in Iraq 1939-1958*, (Dar-Al Ghaida for Publishing and Distribution, Iraq- Baghdad, 2015), p67.

<sup>213</sup> Memorandum of the Secretary of Defense, May 15, 1957 (CCS 381 EMMEA [11-19-47], Section 58, see also Frederic, p 206-208.

<sup>214</sup>Memorandum of General Nathan Twining, Joint Chiefs of Staff to Department of the Defense, May 15, 1957.

<sup>215</sup>Waldemar Gallman, *Iraq Under General Nuri: My Recollections of Nuri al-Said*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1963), p 190.



fact, felt pressured by the British to maintain the status quo in Iraq to protect the Western alliance against the Communist threat.<sup>216</sup>

In the beginning of 1958, Eisenhower announced that the United States would supply the Iraqi Army with fifteen F-86 jets; then Iraq would possess sufficient air coverage to fend off air attacks by the Soviet Union or by Iraq's pro-Communist neighbors, such as Syria. Gallman informed Nuri that the United States also planned to train Iraqi pilots and send a U.S. military advisor to Iraq. The Iraqi government had already sent several pilots and other missions to obtain training to develop the Iraqi Army. The agreement met with unease among British officials, including Troutbeck, who recognized the significance of Iraq's affinity toward the United States and the desire of some Iraqi officials to develop Iraqi-American relations rather than strengthen ties with Britain.<sup>217</sup>

Events in Iraq did not unfold as the Western allies hoped or anticipated. On July 14, 1958, the US and the British lost their main ally in the Middle East after a group known as the Free Officers overthrew the Iraqi monarchy. Despite many foreboding factors surrounding critical political events within the Iraqi government, the revolution shocked both the British and the United States. A few months before the revolution, Nuri Al Said pleaded for jets from the United States and explained to Gallman the importance of expediting military aid. However, because Nuri Al Said had been killed by

---

<sup>216</sup> Williamson, Daniel C. "Understandable Failure: The Eisenhower Administration's Strategic Goals in Iraq, 1953–1958." *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 17, no. 3 (September 2006): 597-615. Military & Government Collection, EBSCOhost (accessed January 26, 2017), p 606.

<sup>217</sup> Iraqi Government, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Protocol Directorate, 792/311, 25 January 1942, p. 8.

revolutionary forces on July 15, he never witnessed the arrival of the F- 86 jets. The newly established Iraqi Republic, under the leadership of Abd al-Karim Qassim, seized the jets upon their arrival. Washington quickly halted all U.S. supplies to Iraq and recalled all United States training staff.<sup>218</sup>

There is ongoing scholarly debate over Eisenhower's military aid policy. Some critics suggest that, by delaying military aid to Iraq, the President's administration failed to contain the situation in Iraq and failed to protect the Hashemite monarchy. Waldemar Gallman, the last U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, argued that Eisenhower's presidency placed too great an emphasis on the British presence in Iraq and the president efforts to avoid conflict with Britain led to the downfall of the Iraqi monarchy. He also argued that the U.S. by refusing to become directly involved in the Baghdad Pact, gave Britain the opportunity to interfere in Iraqi-American relations.<sup>219</sup>

During Eisenhower's administration, the United States took a major role in Iraq through its military aid program and although American aid has been criticized as inadequate, it proved more consequential than British aid which often amounted to limited quantities of outdated supplies.<sup>220</sup> One of the most prominent objectives of Eisenhower's policy in the Middle East was the attainment of peace between Arab states

---

<sup>218</sup> Waldemar Gallman, *Iraq Under General Nuri: My Recollections of Nuri al-Said*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1963. P, 191; See also Axelgard Frederick, "U.S. policy toward Iraq, 1946-1958," p 210.

<sup>219</sup>Williamson, Daniel C. "Understandable Failure: The Eisenhower Administration's Strategic Goals in Iraq, 1953–1958." *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 17, no. 3 (September 2006): 597-615. Military & Government Collection, EBSCOhost (accessed January 26, 2017), p 597.

<sup>220</sup>Khalil Ali Murad, *The Evolution of American Policy in the Arab Gulf Region 1941-1947*, (Basra: Iraq,1980), p. 45.

and Israel and he feared sending additional equipment to Iraq might metastasize that peace.

### **Anglo-American Diplomatic Relations through Iraqi Economic and Educational Fields, 1953-1958**

Despite an evident dearth in British and American sources on the subject, Iraqi sources provide a broad understanding not only on military and economic, but also educational issues as well. By examining both Iraqi and Anglo-American endeavors within Iraqi economic and educational fields, scholars can find valuable and insightful information which may help bridge the gap between Western and Iraqi interpretations.

Anglo-America competition over military aid affected the Iraqi economy. After gaining the upper-hand in the region, Britain spent decades exploiting the Iraqi economy. However, after the end of the Second World War, British ascendancy over Iraq's imports and exports faced uncertainty as Iraqi officials pressed for more autonomy. The Iraqi Council of Representatives received requests to create the Ministry of Supply to solve Iraq's supplying problems, an arena that had for years been under the direction of the British. This proposal had serious implications. During WWII, import licenses were issued to Britain and exclusively Iraqi Jews and, during the early years of the Cold War, to British crews; Iraqi traders received none. Thus, most Iraqis eventually came to resent Britain's control of the Iraqi economy.<sup>221</sup> British domination of Iraqis' markets proves

---

<sup>221</sup>British government favored to work with Iraqi Jews instead of other Iraqis' races, and that it been reasoned to Iraqi Jewish traders who owned the most of Iraqi economic deals, but others had reasoned that British government did not like to work with Iraqi Muslims; See Al – Akeidi, Bashar Fathi Jassim, *The Anglo-American Influence in Iraq 1939-1958*, (Dar-Al Ghaida for Publishing and Distribution, Iraq-

the inability of that nations' leaders to foster the economy to benefit the Iraqi people.<sup>222</sup>

In numerous ways Britain tried to link the Iraqi economic interests to its own. In the 1940s Britain converted the Iraqi economy to one based on the British sterling and, as a result, Iraq suffered massive financial losses. Iraq also suffered from the inflation crisis of 1949, which had a dire effect on the Iraqi economy and created a dependence on foreign funds, particularly for financing major projects. In fact, loans became one of the primary avenues for Britain's exploitation of the Iraqi economy.<sup>223</sup> For instance, in December 1949, Iraq received a £13 million loan from Britain to finance the construction and improvement of Iraqi railways.<sup>224</sup>

The first attempt of the United States to promote Iraqi-American economic relations took place in April 195, when US officials and Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri Al Said established the Technical Assistance Program (TAP). The United States pledged to spend roughly 3,600,000 Iraqi dinars, or about \$10 million in Iraq.<sup>225</sup> Through the TAP, the United States dispatched hundreds of American technicians to Iraq. Ambassador Gallman explained that "the economic aid [the United States] extended [in Iraq] was largely in the nature of technical assistance."<sup>226</sup>

---

Baghdad, 2015), p 201. 211; Abdalrazzaq Al-Hasani, *Tarikh al-wizarat al-Iraqiya: History of the Iraqi Cabinets*, (7th edition, Baghdad: Iraq, 1988), p180.; Al-agedi, "Iraq Situation During the Monarchy," *Sada Al-Ahrara Newspaper*, November 5, 1949, Iraq, Baghdad.

<sup>222</sup> Al-agedi, "Iraq situation During the Monarchy," *Sada Al-Ahrara Newspaper*, November 5, 1949, Iraq, Baghdad.

<sup>223</sup> Al – Akeidi, Bashar Fathi Jassim, *The Anglo-American Influence in Iraq 1939-1958*, (Dar-Al Ghaida for Publishing and Distribution, Iraq- Baghdad, 2015), p213.

<sup>224</sup>Ibid.

<sup>225</sup>Waldemar Gallman, *Iraq Under General Nuri: My Recollections of Nuri al-Said*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1963), p 195.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid p 195.

American efforts to reinforce economic ties with Iraq naturally caused friction between the Western allies. The Iraqi Development Board, for example, served as one of many contentious issues. Established in 1950, in accordance with a law that stipulated the transfer of all oil revenue to the Board, it consisted of eight members, including the Iraqi Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance, and six others from various Iraqi sectors. The Board also included among its membership J. W. Edington Miller, a financial member and secretary-general of the British army, and Wesley Nelson, an American irrigation expert known for his work on irrigation, construction, and water storage. On December 20, 1950, U.S. officials and the Iraqi Development Board signed a Development Treaty which called for the United States to send experts to Iraq to develop a plan for improving the Iraqi economy. Because the lack of Iraqi experts had become one of the most pressing challenges to revitalizing the Iraqi economy, the Iraqi government expressed their sincere appreciation for the help of American experts.<sup>227</sup>

The formation of the Development Board created additional conflict and competition between the United States and Britain, both of whom sent their own experts to address the needs of the Iraqi economic structure. This competition led to conflict between American and British companies and their undertakings in Iraq. The British Embassy intervened to terminate the contracts of some American experts and advisers. For instance, the British Embassy succeeded in nullifying the contract with Wesley Nelson, which was set to expire in 1956 due to Nelson's popularity among Iraqi

---

<sup>227</sup>Al – Akeidi, Bashar Fathi Jassim, *The Anglo-American Influence in Iraq 1939-1958*, (Dar-Al Ghaida for Publishing and Distribution, Iraq- Baghdad, 2015), p 124.

government and business leaders, but was extended. Nelson's popularity among Iraqi officials upset the British ambassador who warned Ambassador Gallman that British officials planned to block Nelson's contract because he was American. Gallman responded by arguing that the issue of Nelson's contract should be left to the Iraqi government and that no other party had the right to intervene. The British then pressed the Iraqi government and the Development Board to cancel Nelson's contracts. This action triggered outrage among Iraqi leaders who protested the cancellation of Nelson's contract, citing that Iraq still needed Nelson's services, and objected to Britain's attempts to intervene in Iraqi-American affairs. Neither Gallman nor Al Said agreed with British demands.<sup>228</sup>

British ambassador Troutbeck worried about the presence of U.S. experts and technicians in Iraq because he considered them "a threat to Britain's commercial predominance even before the issue of arming Baghdad had come to the fore."<sup>229</sup> More importantly, Troutbeck accused American advisors of combining "an instinctive distrust of British 'imperialism' with a firm conviction of the superiority of American methods and machines as well as a pronounced inclination to 'empire-build' on their own."<sup>230</sup> Therefore, the cancellation of Nelson's contract indicated the resentment and distrust of

---

<sup>228</sup>Waldemar Gallman, *Iraq Under General Nuri: My Recollections of Nuri al-Said*, p 190-196.

<sup>229</sup>Williamson, Daniel C. "Exploiting Opportunities: Iraq Secures Military Aid from the West, 1953-56." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 36, no. 1 (2004): 89-102.

<sup>230</sup>*Ibid.*

British officials toward U.S. experts and companies and it reflected Britain's desire to protect its standing in Iraq <sup>231</sup>

Despite British attempts at obstruction, Al Said and other Iraqi officials actively sought to enhance their relationship with the United States. In August 1954, Iraq and the US signed a secret bilateral agreement which stipulated the use of American economic experts to work in Iraq and it provided an exemption from custom duties on American merchandise, particularly those intended for personal consumption. This agreement stemmed from a desire on both sides to expedite import and export processes between the two nations. As a result, many U.S. manufacturers and traders aspired to formulate investments within Iraq, especially after receiving support from the US government. Some American traders interested in paper production, for example, hoped to utilize reeds grown in Iraqi marshes to manufacture paper products. However, Britain's trade fair, held in Baghdad on November 24, 1954, served as a grand display of British industry and emphasized the strength of Iraqi-British economic relations.<sup>232</sup>

In 1956, the Development Board established the Samarra Dam to control flood waters of the Tigris and direct them to Tharthar, an act which had significant benefits for the people of Iraq. The United States benefited from the dam as well because it was an American mission that had the task of advertising the project. Advertisement proved

---

<sup>231</sup>Alaa Harby, *The Iraqi-British Relations From 1945- 1958*, (University of Baghdad Press: Baghdad, 1998), P99.

<sup>232</sup>Al-Ahrrar Newspaper, "Iraq During Iraqi Monarchy," Iraq, Baghdad, 243, no 7, October 13, 1954.

essential to highlighting Iraqi economic achievements during 1950s.<sup>233</sup> Additionally, on March 24, 1957, the United States granted the Iraqi government an atomic energy laboratory as a reminder of the American government's commitment to the use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes. The laboratory opened in June 1957 under the leadership of Dr. Mohammed Hussein who received a grant from the United States' Fulbright Foundation to study at the Argonne National Laboratory of the American Atomic Energy Commission in Lamon, Illinois.<sup>234</sup>

In 1957, American companies performed surveys for the construction of land routes between Iraq and Turkey and studied the possibility of American aid to Iraq for the improvement of land communication, transportation, and railways. Although these projects fell under the realm of responsibility of the British, Iraqi and American officials agreed to proceed with plans to link Iraq to Turkey and Iran.<sup>235</sup> Most of these plans, however, never saw completion because of the overthrow of the Iraqi monarchy in 1958.

Many American experts worked in Iraq, specifically through the Development Board. Nearly 100 American technicians, including engineers and specialists in public health, public administration, and agriculture, helped to improve conditions there. Al Said and other Iraqi officials were particularly impressed with U.S. experts who specialized in

---

<sup>233</sup> Al – Akeidi, Bashar Fathi Jassim, *The Anglo-American Influence in Iraq 1939-1958*, (Dar-Al Ghaida for Publishing and Distribution, Iraq- Baghdad, 2015), p 98.

<sup>234</sup> Reports of Ministry of Education, "Annual Report on the Conduct of Knowledge", 1950-1951, p.4-8., 1956, also see, Saleh Mohamed Hatem Abdullah, "Evolution of Education in Iraq 1945-1958," (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Faculty of Arts, University of Baghdad, 1994), p. 44.

<sup>235</sup> Fatima Hamdi Abdul Rahman Al-Ani, "Iraqi-US Relations between 1967-1987," (Unpublished Master Thesis, University of Baghdad, 1982), p.56



dam construction, flood control measures, irrigation improvements, and the establishment of public roads. Although British experts outnumbered those from America, the Iraqi government viewed the American experts and their contributions as more significant than the British.<sup>236</sup> Similarly, American investment activity in Iraq had grown exponentially by the beginning of 1957. That year, U.S. capital investments in Iraq reached an estimated \$60 million with \$48 million invested in oil operations and the remainder in plants and equipment owned by Iraqis.<sup>237</sup> Thus, economic agreements between Iraq and the United States, specifically the dispatch of American economic experts, strengthened Iraqi-American relations while further diminishing the relationship between Iraq and Britain.<sup>238</sup>

Relations between Iraq and the United States also extended through the field of education. Between 1952 and 1955, the Iraqi Ministry of Education focused on building close cultural relations with various countries for the purpose of advancing education within Iraq. For decades, the Ministry of Education had been subject to “British consultation” and the Iraqi education system had become one that closely resembled that of the British who molded the Iraqi system to better serve their interests.<sup>239</sup> The British succeeded in expelling many Iraqi teachers, many of whom harbored nationalist, anti-British sentiment; they replaced them with teachers from Britain, Egypt and Lebanon, an

---

<sup>236</sup> Al – Akeidi, Bashar Fathi Jassim, *The Anglo-American Influence in Iraq 1939-1958*, (Dar-Al Ghaida for Publishing and Distribution, Iraq- Baghdad, 2015), p 102-120.

<sup>237</sup> Ibid.

<sup>238</sup> Fatima Hamdi Abdul Rahman Al-Ani, “Iraqi-US Relations between 1967-1987,” 1982,” p.77.

<sup>239</sup> Saleh Mohammed Hatem Abdullah, “Evolution of Education in Iraq 1945-1958,” (Unpublished doctoral dissertation: University of Baghdad, 1994), p. 78.

act which eventually contributed to the deterioration of the Iraqi education system.

Therefore, the Development Board made the revitalization of the education system one of its top priorities and aimed to do so by bringing in education experts from the United States. Najeeb al-Rawi, the Iraqi Minister of Education, believed that British teachers could not meet the needs of Iraqi schools.<sup>240</sup> Iraqi officials felt confident that American teachers possessed exceptional teaching abilities and pledged that their salaries would be paid in US dollars and the method of their travel would be negotiated with the US embassy in Baghdad.<sup>241</sup>

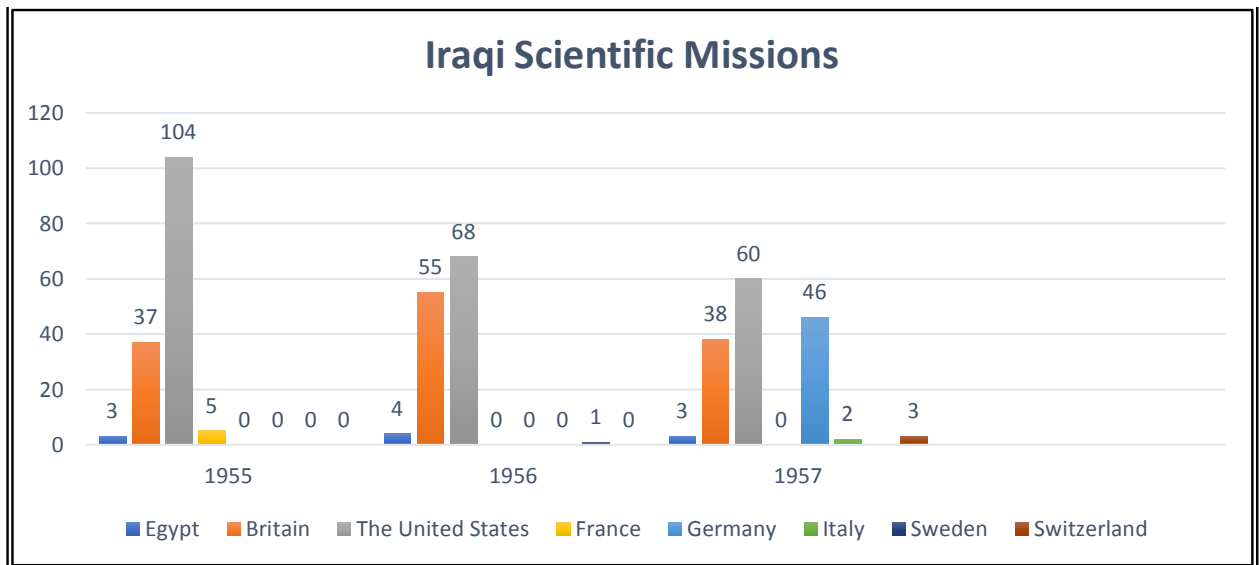
The Development Board also hoped to foster the Iraqi educational system by sending scientific missions of Iraqi students to various countries. Increases in the number of participating students were based on the diversity of their branches and their specialties toward the United States, Britain, and other countries. The educational missions were considered a remarkable development of the Ministry of Education, which adopted a new policy to expand education in all fields, such as scientific missions, to prepare an efficient teaching force to meet the needs of Iraq's evolving educational institutions.<sup>242</sup> Hoping to send Iraqi scientific missions to countries with commendable scientific reputations, the Ministry of Education dispatched most missions to the United States and Britain. Table 1, below, shows the progress of these missions and the number of students between 1954 and 1958.

---

<sup>240</sup> Iraqi Ministry of Education, "Annual Report on the Conduct of Knowledge," 1950-1951, p 34.

<sup>241</sup> Saleh Mohammed Hatem Abdullah, "Evolution of Education in Iraq 1945-1958," (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Baghdad), 1994, p 60.

<sup>242</sup>Ibid, 67.



**Figure 1.** Iraqi scientific missions

The data reflected in the above chart indicates that scientific missions from Iraq increased each year until 1957-58 when the number reached its zenith at 203 students. More importantly, Ministry of Education documents indicate that most missions were sent to the United States, a point that further illustrates the preference of Iraqi officials for the United States rather than Britain.<sup>243</sup>

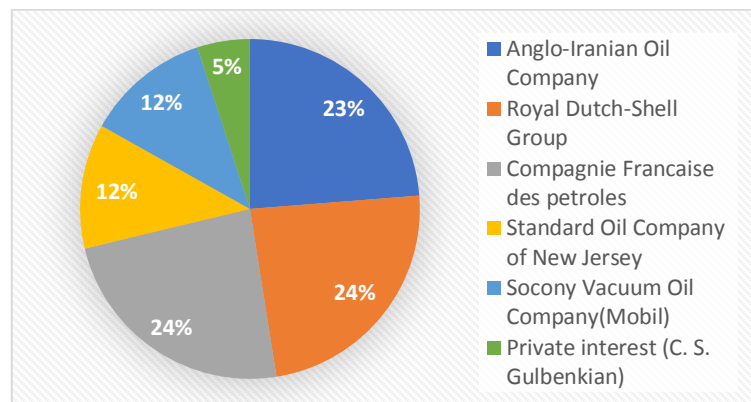
On the other hand, during the 1950s, Western interest in Iraqi oil increased drastically. By the beginning of 1952, Iraqi oil revenues had doubled.<sup>244</sup> Fearing that a Russian intrusion into the Iraqi oil sector might encumber the interests of Western oil companies throughout the Middle East, President Eisenhower made safeguarding Iraqi oil

<sup>243</sup> Iraqi Ministry of Education, “Annual Report on the Conduct of Knowledge,” 1950-1958, n.5, p 20-25.

<sup>244</sup>Hikmat Sami Suleiman, *Iraq's Oil Political Economic Study*, (University of Baghdad: Baghdad, 1979), p75-81.

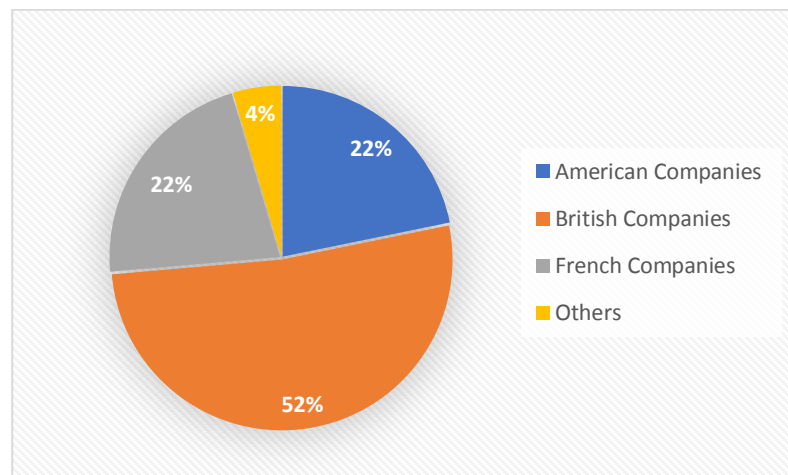
one of his prime objectives. To do so, the United States government attempted to strengthen its relations with Britain, who owned a majority of shares in the IPC, while simultaneously fostering relations with U.S. oil companies operating within Iraq. Due to the growing desire of Iraqi nationalists to wrestle control from Western powers and nationalize Iraqi oil reserves, efforts to expand U.S. influence in the IPC, however, proved challenging.

Britain exercised the most control over the IPC and consistently refused to grant the Iraqi government any power within the company. Meanwhile, per the Red Line Agreement of 1928, the United States held twenty-three percent. The IPC possessed several subsidiaries throughout the country, including the Basra Petroleum Company, the Mosul Petroleum Company, and many others. The chart below (1) indicates the names of shareholding companies of the IPC and shows the shares owned by each company:



**Figure 2.** shareholding companies of the IPC

The second chart depicts British, American, and French stocks in the IPC. British oil companies held roughly 52% of IPC shares, more than those of all other holders combined.



**Figure 3.** shareholding companies of the IPC (British, American, and French)

After the end of the Second World War, the United States government became increasingly interested in cooperating with Iraq to develop the Iraqi oil industry. American officials sought to reinforce relations with private US companies that participated in Iraqi oil projects. In 1948, the governments of Iraq and the United States entered into an agreement which called for the establishment of an oil refinery. The American company, Kellogg Brown & Root, contracted to provide Iraq with assistance in building the refinery. On December 4, 1948, another Iraqi-American agreement called for the import of all necessary building materials. Britain, of course, reacted unfavorably to the agreement and began attempts to block the project. Britain's objections rested on the presumption that the project would be too costly and might lead to the obstruction of the

convention. However, the nationalization of Iranian oil in 1951 prompted Britain to relax their efforts at obstruction.

In turn, the Iraqi Council of Ministers went ahead with entrusting the Kellogg Brown & Root company in providing Iraq with the necessary equipment and machines for construction. The refinery was established in Baghdad on November 28, 1955. King Faisal II, his Prime Minister, and many Iraqi officials attended the opening.<sup>245</sup> The projects and policies of Eisenhower's administration reflect the United States' remarkable interest in Iraqi oil during the 1950s. At the same time, these actions brought additional conflict between the United States and Britain.<sup>246</sup>

During the royal era, Iraq's pro-British government felt that global conditions after World War II along with the rising price of oil and other necessities were not consistent with the situation in Iraq because of previous oil agreements. Therefore, during the establishment of the Iraq Development Board, the Iraqi government preferred to work with American companies rather than British companies. Iraqi officials requested talks with British monopolistic companies to modify the privileges granted to the British in 1925, 1932, and 1938. Iraq hoped to alter the power structure for several reasons. First, especially after news of Iran's oil nationalization reached the Iraqi public, anti-British Iraqi nationalists protested the Iraqi government's continued willingness to cooperate with the British. Iraqi nationalists labeled Britain's influence in the Iraqi oil sector as "the

---

<sup>245</sup> Nouri Abdul Hamid Khalil, *The Political History Of The Oil Concessions In Iraq, 1945-1952*, (University of Baghdad: Iraq, 1980), P 331

<sup>246</sup> Primakov Alexander, *Middle East Oil and International Monopolies*, trans, Russian language by Bassam Khalil, (Beirut: Beirut, 1984), p 19-20.

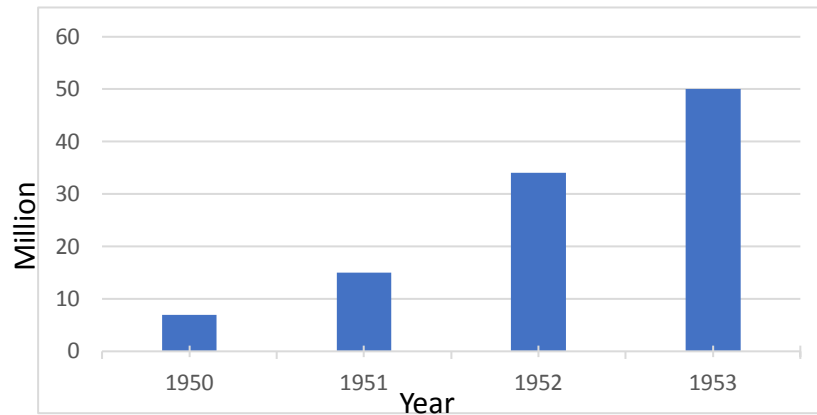
colonial exploitation of the national heritage.”<sup>247</sup> Rising enmity toward Britain’s control of the IPC prompted the Iraqi government to press for more control over Iraq’s oil reserves, arguing that such an endeavor would serve the country through economic development. Second, the agreement signed between Saudi Arabia and the Arabian American Oil Company (Aramco), which provided for equal division of profits, spurred hope among Iraqi officials that a similar Iraqi-British agreement could be made.

The Aramco- Saudi agreement in 1955 outraged the British government because Iraq stood to benefit from the arrangement. A British Foreign Office official chided that “neither we nor the British oil companies in the Middle East were warned or consulted.”<sup>248</sup> Nonetheless, the British eventually yielded to the demands of Iraqi officials and agreed to adopt fifty-fifty profit sharing. Britain’s apprehension toward such an arrangement proved accurate. Due in part to Britain’s stringent tax system, British revenue from the Iraqi oil industry diminished considerably. Britain’s loss, however, proved to be Iraq’s gain. The Iraqi government firmly benefited from a new agreement because it granted to use crude oil for local use which was estimated to have 12% of crude oil and entitled Iraq government to lower their payments than it was before. Oil incomes of Iraqi government had been increased after fifty-fifty arrangement. The chart below shows Iraqi oil revenue between 1950 and 1953.

---

<sup>247</sup> Al-agedi, “Iraq During Iraqi Monarchy,” *Sada Al -hara Newspapers*, Baghdad: Iraq, October 13, 1954.

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid.*



**Figure 4.** Iraqi Oil Revenue Following the Fifty-Fifty Arrangement

Tension between the Western allies over Iraqi oil coincided with the growing Anglo-American rift regarding military aid to Iraq. Robert King argues that “the transatlantic partnership in the petroleum sector produced bursts of conflict between American and British government officials and businesses.”<sup>249</sup> The British government feared that American aid to Iraq threatened Britain’s status and therefore tried to prevent the strengthening of Iraqi-American relations.

In 1951, during Harry Truman’s administration, several American oil company officials, including Senator Ted Tydings, visited Iraq in hopes of convincing Iraqi officials to grant an independent American company a concession of the Basra Oil Company; they promised that the company would produce 20 million tons of oil per year and that profits would be divided equally. The United States sent William Rickett, a representative of the Silver Oil Company, to persuade the Iraqi government to hand over

---

<sup>249</sup> Brandon Robert King, “America’s Search for Control in Iraq in the Early Cold War, 1953-1961,” (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2014), p 199-202.



privileges in the Basra and Mosul companies to United States businesses. In response to this request, the British ambassador in Baghdad contacted Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Said to inquire as to whether the Iraqi government planned to cooperate with Rickett's request. Nuri al-Said told the British ambassador that there was a possibility that Iraqi officials would grant concessions of the Mosul Oil Company to the Americans. Aiming to pacify both the United States and the British, Al-Said assured the ambassador that the IPC would be compensated for financial losses incurred as a consequence of the agreement.<sup>250</sup> The U.S. State Department, however, felt certain that Britain, despite assurances from al-Said, would seek to block the arrangement.<sup>251</sup> Hence, due to the threat of British interference, Rickett's plan never materialized.

In 1957, Michael Wright, the British Ambassador to Iraq, sent a memorandum to British Foreign Office official Howard Beeley regarding the appointment of a new director for the IPC and suggested that Britain should ensure that the "next appointment would be someone of British descent."<sup>252</sup> Wright warned that the appointment of an American to the position would lead Iraqis to believe that:

"American oil interests wish to supplant British interests here, that some major internal change in this direction has taken place, and that current stories of Anglo-American rivalry must have a good deal of truth in them...Moreover, American business interests

---

<sup>250</sup>Hikmat Sami Suleiman, *Iraq's Oil Political Economic Study*, (Baghdad: University of Baghdad, 1979), p 177.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid.

<sup>252</sup>Brandon Robert King, "America's Search for Control in Iraq in the Early Cold War, 1953-1961," p 93-97.

and methods are not whole- heartedly admired or liked by the Iraqis. A Frenchman would, of course, be out of the question.”<sup>253</sup>

Although tension between the Western allies over Iraqi oil can be clearly evidenced, several scholars continue to argue that the United States supported British policies toward Iraqi oil or that the United States, during Eisenhower’s presidency, lacked the power or resources to supplant British influence. In fact, several factors contributed to the United States’ failure to take the lead in relations with Iraq, particularly concerning Iraqi oil. Britain owned a majority of shares in the IPC, a British firm headquartered in London. Thus, U.S. officials felt confident that Britain had both the desire and the ability to prevent any further expansion of American influence in the Iraqi oil industry. Moreover, growing tensions in the Middle East prevented the United States from taking a more prominent role in Iraqi oil.

In Egypt, Nasser nationalized the Suez Cannel in 1956, an act that caused uproar among the Iraqi public who demanded that the Iraqi government follow Nasser’s lead by nationalizing Iraqi oil and prohibiting the influence of Western companies. The Syrian government also supported Nasser’s ideologies which further threatened the allied presence in the Middle East. More importantly, Syria which shares a border with Iraq, became a communist country in 1957 and began receiving weapons from Czechoslovakia. Soon after, Syrian agents worked to sabotage Iraqi oil pipelines. Hence, the defense of Iraqi oil against communist threats became one of Eisenhower’s primary

---

<sup>253</sup> From Michael Wright to H. Beeley, V1533/83, 4 April 1957, FO371-127793. This quote also in Brandon Robert King, “America’s Search for Control in Iraq in the Early Cold War, 1953-1961,” p 67.

goals in the Middle East. The President's policies toward Iraqi affairs aimed at containing the situation in Iraq by cooperating with Britain to build new pipelines between Iraq and Turkey to replace those linked with Syria. Therefore, the preservation of Anglo-American relations in regard to Iraqi oil aimed at not only safeguarding British interests but preserving US interests in the IPC and ensuring the continued support of the Iraqi government, the Western powers' most prominent ally in the Middle East.

### **Conclusion**

Although Dwight Eisenhower inherited complex issues from Harry Truman's administration, whose policies contributed to the destabilization of the Middle East, Eisenhower's administration managed to build a strong relationship with the Iraqi government. The 1950s witnessed fluctuations in the relationship between the United States and Britain, especially regarding their ambitions and reputations in Iraq. More importantly, the period between 1953 and 1958 witnessed a monumental change in the Iraqi government's attitude toward the United States. Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri Al Said, for example, was well-known for his pro-British leanings until the Suez conflict of 1956, at which point Al Said openly embraced the fostering of Iraqi-American relations. United States military assistance to Iraq underscored the tension between Western officials. The British felt that the United States' growing presence in Iraq jeopardized Britain's dominance. British ambassador Troutbeck consistently expressed outrage toward the growth of the U.S. military aid program, especially toward undertakings that involved direct contact between U.S. officials and the Iraqi Army, such as crew training, tank

provisions, and replacing old and outdated British equipment with newer American supplies.

The dispute between the United States and Britain over Iraqi affairs reached beyond military aid and into the economic and educational sectors as well. An analysis of foreign relations within Iraq between the years 1955 and 1958 clearly indicates both the dwindling of British dominance in the Middle East and the superiority of Iraqi-American relations over those of Iraq and Britain.<sup>254</sup> By examining the complicated relationship between the Western allies in Iraq during Eisenhower's presidency, it becomes evident that the Cold War not only created tension between the United States and the Soviet Union but between the US and Britain as well.

---

<sup>254</sup> Al – Akeidi, Bashar Fathi Jassim, *The Anglo-American Influence in Iraq 1939-1958*, (Dar-Al Ghaida for Publishing and Distribution, Iraq- Baghdad, 2015), p165.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Although there is ample scholarship which alludes to a harmonious diplomatic relationship between Britain and the United States during the Cold War, an analysis of Iraqi international and domestic affairs during the post-war years provides unmistakable evidence of a discernable rift among the Western allies. Similarly, Iraqi sources help fill a void in Cold War scholarship by providing innumerable insights into Iraqi perceptions which have been largely absent in most Western historical analyses. When taken together with Western scholarship, Iraqi sources allow for a new understanding of the complicated relationships between Western and Middle Eastern nations in the years following WWII.

This study aimed to show how Anglo-American relations in the decades following WWII splintered over each nation's ambitions in Iraq and to dispel the myth of an inexorable Anglo-American "special relationship" throughout the Cold War. Anglo-American relations in Iraq can more accurately be described as "marked by competition, suspicion and resentment as often as cooperation."<sup>255</sup> British concern regarding the United States' growing influence in Iraq and the Middle East became clear during the Pentagon Talks and the British warned U.S. officials against threatening British dominance in the region. An examination of Anglo-American relations during Truman's

---

<sup>255</sup> W Taylor Fain, *American Ascendance and British Retreat in the Persian Gulf Region*, (Palgrave Macmillan: New York) 2008, p 204.

administration and during some of the most vehement events in Iraq, such as the Portsmouth Treaty and the Arab-Israeli conflict of 1948, shows a significant increase in US involvement in Iraqi affairs, despite Britain's well-established presence. At the same time, it demonstrates that the British presence in the Middle East had already begun to diminish as Britain proved unable to properly address issues within Iraq, especially in the face of rising Iraqi nationalism and the growing presence of Iraqi opposition parties.

The Arab-Israeli conflict serves as a prime example of contradictory Anglo-American policies in the Middle East. The conflict helped shape Western policies toward Iraqi affairs as both nations struggled to earn the goodwill of the Iraqi public. The United States' pro-Israel stance upset many Iraqis while Britain continued to face growing anti-British and anti-imperialist sentiment among the people of Iraq. Because the United States' policy toward the Arab-Israeli conflict proved highly unfavorable within Iraq, Britain felt confident that the threat of American incursion into Iraqi affairs had abated. Nonetheless, the United States managed to significantly enlarge its influence in Iraqi affairs and it can be argued that anti-American sentiment among the Iraqi public stemmed more from America's supposed allegiance to the British than it did from the United States' policy toward Israel. In addition, President Truman took a major step toward strengthening the United States' relationship with the Iraqi monarchy in 1949 by supporting the Four Point Program (PVI) through which the United States provided technical assistance and American experts to Iraq. While the PVI helped strengthen Iraqi-American relations, it served as a point of contention between the Western allies.

During Truman's administration, the allies attempted to conceal any rivalry that may have existed between the two. Eisenhower's administration, however, oversaw massive and direct involvement in Iraqi affairs and as a result, enmity between Britain and the United States over Middle Eastern policies became apparent. For instance, Eisenhower's military assistance program, which aimed at assisting Iraq in fending off Soviet threats, outraged British officials. So too did the dispatch of American experts to aid Iraq in various sectors. Statements by British Ambassador Sir John Troutbeck, for example, clearly reflect Britain's displeasure with U.S. aid to Iraq.

Friction between the Western allies over relations with Iraq indirectly contributed to the overthrow of Iraq's pro-Western monarchy in 1958. The political climate in the Middle East during the early 1950s brought new challenges for Britain, the United States, and Iraq, especially in terms of their relationships with one another. Iran and Egypt came under the leadership of new governments who proved less friendly to foreign influences. Nasser, who became president of Egypt in 1952, promoted policies which stood in stark contrast to those endorsed by the Western powers. His viewpoints closely resembled Communist ideals and drove him to nationalize the Suez Canal, an act which had momentous repercussions for Iraq which was already suffering severe internal strife. The rise of pan-Arab nationalism in the Middle East coupled with Iraq's growing internal problems culminated in a revolution which removed Iraq's pro-Western government in 1958.

Future scholarship on the subject might address whether or not the United States actively sought to undermine Britain's presence in Iraq and might also look more closely at the adequacy of American aid to Iraq. Could the United States have prevented the overthrow of the Iraqi monarchy? While American aid to Iraq was sometimes criticized as being inadequate, it would have been difficult for even the most astute government officials to properly grasp and address the myriad of complexities in the Middle East during the early Cold War. Moreover, any policy toward Iraq during the 1950s must be viewed alongside the threat, whether real or perceived, of Soviet Communism. Thus, despite the vast expansion of American influence in Iraq during the early 1950s, the constant threat of Soviet aggression arguably prevented the United States from eliminating the British presence. Clearly, the Cold War raised tensions between not only the United States and the Soviet Union but between the Western allies as well in Iraq.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Primary Sources

#### **Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic papers:**

*Foreign Relations of the United States, 1946- 1952, The Near East and Africa, Iraq, volume IV, Washington 1986.*

*Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955-1957, Volume XII, Near East Region; Iraq; Iran; and United States Government Printing Office, Washington, 1991.*

*Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States, Iraq during 1930s, Volume III, Government Printing Office, document 1930.*

*Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954, Volume IX, The Near and Middle East, United States Government Printing Office, Washington, 1986.*

*Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Volume XII, Near East Region; Iraq; Iran; Arabian Peninsula, United States Government Printing Office, Washington, 1993.*

*Report, Multinational Oil Corporations and US Foreign Policy, US Senate Subcommittee on Multinational Corporations of the Committee on Foreign Relations, Washington, 1955.*

*Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Volume XII, Near East Region; Iraq; Iran; Arabian Peninsula, United States Government Printing Office, Washington, 1993.*

*Iraq, Jordan, and Lebanon: Report of the United States Foreign Assistance Programs, US Senate Special Committee to Study the Foreign Aid Program, Washington, 1957.*

#### **Truman Library and Dwight D. Eisenhower Library:**

Miscellaneous Papers: Lend-Lease Act to Iraq, 1945. Truman Papers, Truman Library, <https://www.trumanlibrary.org/online-collections.htm>.

Dean Acheson Papers, Dean Acheson to George C. Marshall, June 26, 1948; "Iraq, king Feisal, Acheson Papers", Truman Library, <https://www.trumanlibrary.org/online-collections.htm>.

Dwight D. Eisenhower: Records as President, 1953-1961 - White House Central Files Confidential Files and Papers.

#### **The National Security Council [NSC]: -**

White House Office, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs: Records, 1952-1961, Special Assistant Series, Chronological Series, and presidential Subseries.

#### **British National Archives – Kew, London, UK:**

Foreign Office (FO) 371-481, UK, Confidential Print Iraq.

Foreign Office (FO), 21, Cabinet Office and Predecessors: Registered Files, 1916-1965.

Foreign Office (FO) 924- U.K, Cultural Relations Department: Correspondence and Papers, 1940s- 1950s.

Records of Foreign Office, (FO), U.K, British- Iraqi Relations, 1950s.

### **Iraqi Archival Collections:**

The documents preserved in the Royal Court: Iraqi mission to America on 06.08.1946; 1569; commissioned officers and employees of the Royal Air Force to the United States of America 1950s, No. 91, Baghdad- Iraq.

Iraqi – U.S.A. files, Baghdad - General Records, 1949-1959.

Telegrams of the Ministry of Defense are kept at (KD) in Baghdad, no 1, 10 to British Military Advisory Mission, Iraq- Baghdad, document Number 4, p.21.

### **Secondary Sources:**

#### **Books and Articles:**

Ashton, Nigel John. *Eisenhower, Macmillan, and the problem of Nasser: Anglo-American relations and Arab nationalism, 1955-59*. Hampshire, Macmillan Press, 1996.

Axelgard, Frederick W. *US Support for the British Position in PreRevolutionary Iraq, in The Iraqi Revolution of 1958: The Old Social Classes Revisited*. Eds; Robert A. Fernea and Wm. Roger Louis, New York, New York, 1991.

Batatu, Hanna. *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq: A Study of Iraq's Old Landed and Commercial Classes*. Princeton: Princeton, University Press, 1978.

Boutz, Gary M., and Kenneth Williams H. "U.S. Relations With Iraq: From the Mandate to Operation Iraqi Freedom." *Air Force History and Museums Program*. Washington, D.C., USA, 2015.

Citino, Nathan. *Middle East Cold Wars: Oil and Arab Nationalism in US-Iraqi Relations, 1958-1961*, in Kathryn C. Statler et al (eds.) *The Eisenhower Administration, the Third World, and the Globalization of the Cold War*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006.

Cohen, Michael J, and Martin Kolinsky. *Demise of the British empire in the Middle East: Britain's Responses to Nationalist Movements, 1943-55*. Frank Cass: London, 1998.

Elliot, Matthew. *Independent Iraq: the monarchy and British influence, 1941-58*. London: Tauris Academic Studies, 1996.

El-Solh, Ragid. *Britain's 2 Wars With Iraq: 1941-1991*. Ithaca: U.K, 1997.

- Fain, Taylor W. *American Ascendance and British Retreat in the Persian Gulf Region*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.
- Fawcett, Louise. *International Relations of The Middle East*, 2ed, New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Gaddis, John Lewis. *The Cold War: A New History*. Penguin Group, New York, 2005.
- Gallman, Waldemar. *Iraq Under General Nuri: My Recollections of Nuri al-Said*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1963.
- Louis, Wm Roger. *The British Empire in the Middle East, 1945-1951: Arab Nationalism, The United States, Postwar Imperialism*. New York: Oxford University, 1984.
- Nolte, Richard H., and William R. Polk. "Toward a Policy for the Middle East." *Foreign Affairs* (Pre-1986) 36, no. 000004 (07, 1958): 645.  
<https://libproxy.library.unt.edu/login?url=https://libproxy.library.unt.edu:2165/docview/98176831?accountid=7113>.
- Osgood, Kenneth. *Eisenhower and Regime Change in Iraq: The United States and the Iraqi Revolution of 1958*. Edited by David Ryan and Patrick Kiely. *America and Iraq: Policymaking, Intervention, and Regional Politics*, New York: Routledge, 2009.
- Ovendale, Ritchie. *Britain, the United States, and the transfer of power in the Middle East, 1945-1962*. London: Leicester University Press, 1996.
- Rubin, Barry. *The Great Powers in the Middle East 1941-1947: The Road to the Cold War*. London: Frank Cass, 1980.
- Shannon, Vaughn. *Balancing Act: US Foreign Policy and the Arab- Israeli Conflict*. Oxford, Ashgate Publishing Limiting, USA, 2003.
- Silverfarb, Daniel. *The Twilight of British Ascendancy in the Middle East: A Case Study of Iraq, 1941-1950*. Palgrave Macmillan: USA, 1994.
- Sorby, Karol. "Iraq Under The Reign Of Faysal II, 1953-1958." *Asian And African Studies*, no 13, 2004.
- Williamson, Daniel C. "Understandable Failure: The Eisenhower Administration's Strategic Goals in Iraq, 1953–1958." *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 17, no. 3 (September 2006): 597-615. *Military & Government Collection*, EBSCOhost. Accessed January 26, 2017.

### **Arabic Sources:**

- Ahmed, Ibrahim Khalil. *The Evolution of National Education in Iraq 1869-1932*, Basra: Iraq, 1982.
- Alexander, Primakov. Trans, Russian language by Bassam Khalil. *Middle East Oil and International Monopolies*. Beirut: Beirut ,1984.

- Al – Akeidi, Bashar Fathi Jassim. *The Anglo-American Influence in Iraq 1939-1958*. Dar-Al Ghaida for Publishing and Distribution, Iraq- Baghdad, 2015.
- Al-Ani, Fatima Hamdi Abdul Rahman. "Iraqi-US Relations between 1967-1987." Unpublished Master Thesis, Political Science, University of Baghdad, 1982.
- Al-Hasani, Abdalrazzaq. *Tarikh al-wizarat al-ciraqiya: History of the Iraqi Cabinets*. University of Baghdad, Iraq, 1988.
- Al-Husseini, Fadel M. "The British-American Competition for the Oil Privilege in Oman 1922-1937." *Journal of the Document, Bahrain*, 37, no 19(2000): p 159.
- Harby, Alaa. *The Iraqi-British Relations From 1945- 1958*. Baghdad: University of Baghdad Press, 1998.
- Hassan, Mohammed Salman. *Economic Development in Iraq Foreign Trade and Economic Development 1864-1958*. Beirut: Lebanon, 1965.
- Hatem, Saleh Mohamed Abdullah. "Evolution of Education in Iraq 1945-1958." PhD diss., University of Baghdad, 1994.
- Khalil, Ali Murad. *The Evolution of American Policy in the Arab Gulf Region 1941-1947*. Basra: Iraq,1980.
- Khalil, Nouri Abdul Hamid. *The Political History Of The Oil Concessions In Iraq, 1945-1952*. University of Baghdad: Iraq,1980.
- Suleiman, Hikmat Sami. *Iraq's Oil Political Economic Study*. Baghdad: University of Baghdad, 1979.

### **Iraqi Newspapers:**

- Al-Agedi, Mohmed. "Iraq During Iraqi Monarchy 1950s." *Al Sada Alhara Newspaper*. October 13, 1954.Baghdad, Iraq.
- Al-Agedi, Mohmed. "Iraq During Iraqi Monarchy 1950s." *Al Sada Alhara Newspaper*. Nov. 5, 1949.Baghdad, Iraq.
- Abd Al Hameed, Nuri. "US Orientation towards Iraq After World War II," *Journal of Afak Arabia*. no. 9, Sept 1989.

### **PhD Dissertations**

- Axelgard, Frederick W. "US Policy Toward Iraq, 1946-1958." Ph.D. Dissertation, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, 1988.Multinational Corporations of the Committee on Foreign Relations, Washington, 1975.1-30.

King, Brandon. "America's Search for Control in Iraq in the Early Cold War, 1953-1961." PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2014.