

America's Search for Control in Iraq in the Early Cold War, 1953-1961

by

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ABSTRACT

The United States emerged from the destruction of World War II a superpower with burgeoning global interests. Nowhere was this more evident than in Iraq. US policymakers greatly expanded their relationship with the pro-Western regime in Baghdad during the 1950s. To examine these trends more closely, this dissertation analyzes the American relationship with Iraq during the presidency of Dwight D. Eisenhower (1953 to 1961). This study discusses how American oil concessions, military aid programs, collective defense arrangements, and modernization initiatives shaped the US-Iraqi bilateral relationship of the 1950s. It also looks intensively at American intelligence assessments and covert action programs in Iraq in this period.

An in-depth examination of the Eisenhower administration's policies vis-à-vis Baghdad offers important lessons about the ways US officials understood and navigated complex political developments in the Middle East. In addition, this dissertation considers US strategies in Iraq in the context of ongoing developments in Egypt, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Jordan, Iran, and elsewhere in the region. This transnational lens yields fascinating insights into how American interests throughout the Middle East influenced US policies in Iraq.

As with their partners in the Iraqi government, American officials privileged the pursuit of “order” and “stability” in Baghdad. When confronted with the prospect of “unrest” in Iraq, the Eisenhower administration decisively supported its Iraqi allies’ moves to clamp down on political dissent. The United States worked energetically to control Iraqi developments in channels favourable to US interests. However, the regime led by Abdel Karim Qasim fundamentally transformed the patterns of the US-Iraqi relationship following the July 1958 Iraqi Revolution. Qasim’s program calling for the “Iraqification” of national economic resources collided with larger American understandings of Washington’s power in Baghdad. The Eisenhower administration proved unable to control the disorderly nature of revolutionary rule in Iraq, suggesting (as with the pre-revolutionary period) the tangible limits to American power in Iraq and the Middle East in this critical period of the Cold War.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AIOC	Anglo-Iranian Oil Company
ARL	Agrarian Reform Law
BNA	British National Archives
BPC	Basra Petroleum Company
CDF	Central Decimal File
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CREST	CIA Records Search Tool
DDEL	Dwight D. Eisenhower Library
DDRS	Declassified Documents Reference System
DOD	Department of Defense
ERR	Electronic Reading Room (CIA)
ESS	Egyptian-Syrian-Saudi Alliance
FRUS	Foreign Relations of the United States
GOI	Government of Iraq
ICA	International Cooperation Administration (also known as USOM or Point IV)
ICP	Iraqi Communist Party
ID	Iraqi Dinar
IDB	Iraqi Development Board
INR	Bureau of Intelligence and Research (State Department)
IPC	Iraq Petroleum Company
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
MAAG	Military Assistance Advisory Group
MEC	Middle East Centre Archive
MEC	Middle East Command
MEDO	Middle East Defense Organization
MEEC	Middle East Emergency Committee
MI6	Military Intelligence 6 (also known as Secret Intelligence Service)
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPC	Mosul Petroleum Company
MSLD	Miri Sirf Land Development Program
NARA	National Archives and Records Administration
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDP	National Democratic Party

NEA	Near Eastern Affairs (State Department)
NIE	National Intelligence Estimate
NIS	National Intelligence Survey
NSA EBB	National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book
NSC	National Security Council
OCB	Operations Coordinating Board
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
OSP	Off-Shore Purchase
PL	Public Law
PRF	Popular Resistance Force
RAF	Royal Air Force
RCC	Revolutionary Command Council
RG	Record Group
SCOI	Special Committee on Iraq
SNIE	Special National Intelligence Estimate
Socony-NJ	Standard Oil Company of New Jersey
Socony-Vacuum	Standard Oil Company of New York
TPC	Turkish Petroleum Company
UAR	United Arab Republic
USIS	United States Information Service
USOM	United States Operations Mission (also known as ICA or Point IV)

Introduction: Historiography and Key Themes

This dissertation examines the American relationship with Iraq during the presidency of Dwight D. Eisenhower. It analyzes how officials in the Eisenhower administration understood, navigated, and, at times, subverted political change in Hashemite Iraq and the revolutionary Iraqi Republic. In turn, this study draws important conclusions about the tangible limits to American power in an era defined by the rapid emergence of the United States as the preeminent global power.

The United States formed a close strategic partnership with the authoritarian, pro-Western government in Baghdad in this period.¹ As the title of this thesis suggests, the Americans worked hard before July 1958 to “control”² and shape the direction of political change in Iraq and safeguard political “stability” and Western interests in Baghdad. American officials fully appreciated they were taking a “calculated risk” in supporting a conservative regime facing serious domestic opposition. The Eisenhower administration’s strategic gambit succeeded only for a time, as the Iraqi government was subsequently toppled during the revolutionary events of July 1958. The new Iraqi

¹ This study uses the terms “relationship” and “partnership” to describe US-Iraqi relations during the Eisenhower presidency. It is fair to suggest that the terminology surrounding this bilateral relationship is complicated and contentious. One could very well use the word “collusion” to describe the US-Iraqi alliance given that the United States formed a strategic partnership with an authoritarian, repressive regime in Baghdad in the 1950s. This study utilizes the term “collusion” to characterize US-Iraqi attempts to overthrow the Syrian regime in the mid-1950s, as well as Washington’s secret alliance with Egypt to pursue regime change in Iraq after July 1958. These two case studies are particularly disturbing and merit the term “collusion” as they revealed the willingness of American officials to engage in subversive, covert tactics to topple unfriendly regimes. Outside of these specific cases, I prefer to use the phrases “relationship” and “partnership” to describe US-Iraqi bilateral relations, as I feel they fit effectively with this study’s overall objective, which is to understand the motivations and strategic decisions of US policymakers relating to Iraq in this period.

² This author is using the term “control” to describe the powerful sense among American officials (particularly in the pre-revolutionary period) that they had the ability (in conjunction with Iraqi authorities) to maintain a political environment in Iraq that protected and advanced American political, economic, and larger security interests. The term “control” is not meant to suggest that the Americans simply dictated policy strategies to the Iraqi leadership. Rather, I am using the phrase to describe a much more subtle, yet equally impactful, perception among US policymakers that they could count on Iraq as a reliable, pro-American ally and, with the help of the government in Baghdad, also shape events in the country in more favourable, pro-American directions when “instability” or “unrest” appeared to threaten US interests.

government, led by Prime Minister Abdel Karim Qasim, challenged American assets, interests, and wider conceptions of US power and authority in Iraq. US policymakers struggled to regain their ability (limited as it was previously) to control and direct Iraqi developments in stable, pro-American directions after July 1958. The frustrations US officials experienced in Qasim's Iraq were the "price" the Americans had to "pay" for their partnership with the repressive regime in Baghdad and the privileged strategic position Washington enjoyed in Iraq before July 1958. They were, in short, one of the expected outcomes of the calculated risk the Eisenhower administration accepted in Iraq in this decade.

There is a sizable existing historiography relating to the Eisenhower administration's policies in the Middle East that serves as a critical foundation for this dissertation. William Stivers and Roby Barrett have each produced wide-ranging assessments of President Eisenhower's strategies in the Middle East. Stivers' chapter is particularly helpful in emphasizing the contradictions underlying US objectives vis-à-vis Arab nationalists and Cold War European allies.³ More numerous are studies that examine the 1950s as a period of rising American power in the Middle East, with the Suez War of 1956 an obvious touchstone marking the transition from British to American preponderance in the region. Ritchie Owendale, Tore Petersen, and Diane Kunz each tangentially discuss Iraq in their broader analyses of the transition from UK to US authority in the Middle East. W. Taylor Fain's recent study similarly offers a convincing

³ William Stivers, "Eisenhower and the Middle East," in Richard Melanson and David Mayers (eds.) *Reevaluating Eisenhower: American Foreign Policy in the 1950s* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987); Roby Barrett, *The Greater Middle East and the Cold War: US Foreign Policy Under Eisenhower and Kennedy* (London: IB Tauris, 2007).

macro-level analysis of the emergence of American power and disintegration of the British Empire in the Middle East, particularly the Persian Gulf.⁴

Equally valuable is the historical literature relating to Washington's relationship with pan-Arab Nasserism, the formation of the Baghdad Pact, and the pronouncement of the Eisenhower Doctrine. Nigel Ashton and Malik Mufti's respective studies are essential for understanding the ebb and flow of pragmatic and antagonistic American attitudes vis-à-vis Arab nationalists and pro-Nasser groups. Mufti's work also focuses on the complexities of Washington's engagement with the pan-Arabism of the Hashemite Iraqi leadership, an issue that proved a major point of contention between the US and Iraq in the 1950s.⁵ Nigel Ashton's insightful article on the Baghdad Pact places the collective defense arrangement in the context of the complicated US-UK partnership in the Middle East, while Magnus Persson, Behçet Kemal Yeşilbursa, and Elie Podeh's respective studies are essential for considering the regional complexity of American policy regarding the Baghdad Pact.⁶ Finally, Salim Yaqub's 2004 monograph *Containing Arab Nationalism: The Eisenhower Doctrine and the Middle East* offers an insightful look at

⁴ Ritchie Ovendale, *Britain, the United States, and the Transfer of Power in the Middle East, 1945-1962* (New York: Leicester University Press, 1996); Tore Petersen, *The Middle East between the Great Powers: Anglo-American Conflict and Cooperation, 1952-1957* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000); Diane Kunz, "The Emergence of the United States as a Middle Eastern Power, 1956-1958," in William Roger Louis and Roger Owen (eds.) *A Revolutionary Year: The Middle East in 1958* (London: IB Tauris, 2002); W. Taylor Fain, *American Ascendance and British Retreat in the Persian Gulf Region* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

⁵ Nigel Ashton, *Eisenhower, Macmillan, and the Problem of Nasser: Anglo-American Relations and Arab Nationalism, 1955-1959* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996); Malik Mufti, "The United States and Nasserist Pan-Arabism," in David Lesch (ed.) *The Middle East and the United States: A Historical and Political Reassessment* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2003).

⁶ Nigel Ashton, "The Hijacking of a Pact: The Formation of the Baghdad Pact and Anglo-American Tensions in the Middle East, 1955-1958," *Review of International Studies* 19, no. 2 (April 1993), 123-137; Magnus Persson, *Great Britain, the United States, and the Security of the Middle East: The Formation of the Baghdad Pact* (Lund: Lund University Press, 1998); Behçet Kemal Yeşilbursa, *The Baghdad Pact: Anglo-American Defence Policies in the Middle East, 1950-1959* (London: Frank Cass, 2005); Elie Podeh, "The Perils of Ambiguity: The United States and the Baghdad Pact," in David Lesch (ed.) *The Middle East and the United States: A Historical and Political Reassessment* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2003).

the ideological foundations of the Eisenhower Doctrine of January 1957. Yaqub's discussion of Eisenhower's strategies vis-à-vis the Arab Cold War divide between "radical" pan-Arab nationalists and conservative monarchical regimes (including Iraq) is particularly strong. Yaqub's book deeply influenced this study's assessment of the Eisenhower Doctrine and broader American attempts at containing the spread of Arab nationalist sentiment in the 1950s.⁷

Beyond these studies lay an impressive collection of monographs focusing on specific bilateral relationships formed between Washington and regional actors during Eisenhower's presidency. Irene Gendzier and Douglas Little have devoted considerable attention to the administration's policies in Lebanon, especially the American military intervention in July 1958 in Beirut. Nathan Citino's analysis of US-Saudi relations places particular emphasis on American oil diplomacy in the late 1950s and the complexities of regional petroleum politics.⁸ Articles produced by Anthony Gorst and W. Scott Lucas, Stephen Blackwell, and Matthew Jones respectively examine the Central Intelligence Agency's [CIA] covert action programs in Damascus and discuss how US and Iraqi approaches to political unrest in Syria converged and differed in this period.⁹ Isaac Alteras and Abraham Ben-Zvi have each written excellent books on US-Israeli ties in the 1950s that consider how Israel's security interests affected American policies in the

⁷ Salim Yaqub, *Containing Arab Nationalism: The Eisenhower Doctrine and the Middle East* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

⁸ Irene Gendzier, *Notes from the Minefield: United States Intervention in Lebanon and the Middle East, 1945-1958* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997); Douglas Little, "His Finest Hour? Eisenhower, Lebanon, and the 1958 Middle East Crisis," *Diplomatic History* 20 (Winter 1996), 27-54; Nathan Citino, *From Arab Nationalism to OPEC: Eisenhower, King Sa'ud and the Making of US-Saudi Relations* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002).

⁹ Anthony Gorst and W. Scott Lucas, "The Other Collusion: Operation Straggle and Anglo-American Intervention in Syria, 1955-1956," *Intelligence and National Security* 3, no. 3 (July 1989), 576-595; Stephen Blackwell, "Britain, the United States and the Syrian Crisis, 1957," *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 11, no. 3 (2000), 139-58; Matthew Jones, "The 'Preferred Plan': The Anglo-American Working Group Report on Covert Action in Syria, 1957," *Intelligence and National Security* 19, no. 3 (Autumn 2004), 401-415.

Middle East. Mary Ann Heiss' book on US-Iranian relations addresses how US officials, fearing revolutionary changes in Iran's oil industry, helped facilitate the return of pro-Western, autocratic rule in Tehran.¹⁰ Finally, Peter Hahn's study of relations between Washington, London, and Cairo from 1945 to the Suez Crisis of 1956 greatly influenced this dissertation's conclusions. Hahn's book, among other factors, highlights the tendency of US policymakers to privilege the interests of their British allies and larger Western strategic priorities over the concerns of Arab nationalists.¹¹

Noticeably absent from this rich compilation of scholarly material is a comprehensive study of US-Iraqi relations during the Eisenhower presidency. This gap is symptomatic of a larger oversight in the historical literature on US foreign policy in the Middle East. Nathan Citino wrote in 2006 that “[s]cholarship on American diplomacy in the Middle East...has devoted limited attention to relations with Iraq prior to the Gulf War.” Existing studies of US policy in the Middle East in the 1950s often discuss US-Iraqi relations only in a tangential manner. In this sense, Citino notes, Iraq has been “an almost peripheral issue for historians of U.S. foreign policy.”¹² Surveying the literature

¹⁰ Isaac Alteras, *Eisenhower and Israel: US-Israeli Relations, 1953-1960* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993); Abraham Ben-Zvi, *Decade of Transition: Eisenhower, Kennedy, and the Origins of the American-Israeli Alliance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998); Mary Ann Heiss, *Empire and Nationhood: The United States, Great Britain, and Iranian Oil, 1950-1954* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997). On the CIA coup in Iran in 1953, see Mark Gasiorowski and Malcolm Byrne (eds.) *Mohammad Mosaddeq and the 1953 Coup in Iran* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2004) and Stephen Kinzer, *All the Shah's Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2003).

¹¹ Peter Hahn, *The United States, Great Britain, and Egypt, 1945-1956: Strategy and Diplomacy in the Early Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991).

¹² Nathan Citino, “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), 246 (both quotes).

in 2009, Kenneth Osgood agreed that the subject of US-Iraqi relations in the years preceding the First Gulf War was “a black hole in US diplomatic history.”¹³

Despite the dearth of scholarly studies of US-Iraqi relations in the Cold War, one should not overlook the few existing contributions that form the nucleus of secondary literature for this dissertation. Frederick Axelgard’s work, particularly his unpublished doctoral thesis from 1988, provides in-depth discussion of US military assistance packages for Iraq and Middle East collective defense strategies during the Truman and Eisenhower administrations. Daniel Williamson’s 2006 article examines how the US-UK alliance shaped US military aid programs in Iraq in the 1950s.¹⁴ Citino’s 2006 article is essential for its discussion of Arab nationalism as a driver in US-Iraqi relations after July 1958. Brandon Wolfe-Hunnicuttt’s unpublished dissertation from 2011, though primarily focused on US-Iraqi ties in the 1960s and 1970s, offers valuable insights into American oil policies in Baghdad before the revolution and amplifies Citino’s insights into US petroleum diplomacy following the consolidation of Qasim’s regime.¹⁵ Finally, Peter Hahn’s 2012 book examines the entirety of US-Iraqi relations from World War I to the present. Though Hahn’s treatment of the 1950s is necessarily brief, his work is full of insight into the nuances and complexities of American policies in Iraq.¹⁶

¹³ Kenneth Osgood, “Eisenhower and Regime Change in Iraq: The United States and the Iraqi Revolution of 1958,” in David Ryan and Patrick Kiely (eds.) *America and Iraq: Policymaking, Intervention, and Regional Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 4.

¹⁴ Frederick Axelgard, “US Support for the British Position in Pre-Revolutionary Iraq,” in Robert Fernea and William Roger Louis (eds.) *The Iraqi Revolution of 1958: The Old Social Classes Revisited* (London: IB Tauris, 1991); Frederick Axelgard, “US Policy Toward Iraq, 1946-1958.” Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, 1988; Daniel Williamson, “Understandable Failure: The Eisenhower Administration’s Strategic Goals in Iraq, 1953-1958,” *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 17, no. 3 (September 2006), 597-615.

¹⁵ Citino, “Middle East Cold Wars.”; Brandon Wolfe-Hunnicuttt, “The End of the Concessionary Regime: Oil and American Power in Iraq, 1958-1972.” Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Stanford University, 2011.

¹⁶ Peter Hahn, *Missions Accomplished? The United States and Iraq Since World War I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

One particular aspect of US-Iraqi relations in the 1950s has received limited attention from scholars. Following the July 1958 Iraqi Revolution, the Eisenhower administration contemplated launching a military intervention in Baghdad to restore the former regime. Washington ultimately opted for a covert response, turning to the CIA and its clandestine capabilities in a failed bid to overthrow Qasim's government. Ashton, Blackwell, and Barrett have each explored the debate in Washington concerning overt and covert intervention in Iraq through the prism of US-UK relations.¹⁷ Kenneth Osgood's recent article on this subject focuses on the limits to American capabilities in Iraq in the late 1950s. Osgood's article is an essential component of this study's analysis of CIA covert operations in Iraq.¹⁸

This dissertation seeks to fill a number of the gaps in the historical literature on US-Iraqi relations. A significant number of the studies thus far produced focus on the 1958 revolution and its immediate aftermath. This thesis gives sustained attention to US-Iraqi relations in the critical years preceding the 1958 revolution, when the Eisenhower administration formed a close partnership with the pro-Western government in Baghdad. For instance, American military aid packages and collective defense agreements relating to Iraq, discussed in Chapters Two and Three, are analyzed through the "transnational" prism of regional security, with particular emphasis on US policy priorities and interests throughout the Middle East and Europe. In addition, Chapter Two offers one of the first sustained analyses of oil politics as an important component of the US-Iraqi partnership

¹⁷ Nigel Ashton, "A Great New Venture? Anglo-American Cooperation in the Middle East and the Response to the Iraqi Revolution, July 1958," *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 4, no. 1 (March 1993), 59-89; Stephen Blackwell, "A Desert Squall: Anglo-American Planning for Military Intervention in Iraq, July 1958-August 1959," *Middle Eastern Studies* 35, no. 3 (July 1999), 1-18; Roby Barrett, "Intervention in Iraq, 1958-1959," *The Middle East Institute Policy Brief* 11 (April 2008), 1-12.

¹⁸ Osgood, "Eisenhower and Regime Change in Iraq."

in the pre-revolutionary period. Chapter Five incorporates insights from the field of intelligence studies to examine the nuances and complexities of American intelligence assessments of the Iraqi regime in the years preceding the 1958 revolution, a topic only tangentially explored in previous works. This study also follows an emerging scholarly trend by assessing the topic of “modernization” as a specific historical encounter between the United States and the Arab Middle East during the Cold War.¹⁹ While Paul Kingston has examined British modernization efforts in Iraq before July 1958, no comparable study exists of American development initiatives.²⁰ Chapter Four looks at how modernization served as an arena for both convergence and debate between American and Iraqi modernizers in the pre-revolutionary period.

This dissertation then gives considerable attention to US policy in Iraq following the July 1958 revolution. Chapter Six amplifies and expands upon the limited scholarly work produced on the subject of oil politics as a critical driver in US-Iraqi relations after the summer of 1958. Chapter Seven extends this study’s analysis of American modernization programs beyond July 1958 to address how Qasim’s regime challenged the definitions of modernity employed by Point IV technical experts. Chapter Eight builds on the recent studies produced by Osgood and Citino on the topic of American intervention in Iraq following the revolution. This author has examined the most up-to-date documentary evidence available to chart, in a comprehensive manner, how the

¹⁹ See Nathan Citino, “Suburbia and Modernization: Community Building and America’s Post-World War II Encounter with the Arab Middle East,” *Arab Studies Journal* 13, no. 2 (2005), 39-64; Nathan Citino, “The Ottoman Legacy in Cold War Modernization,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 40, no. 4 (2008), 579-597; Nathan Citino, “The ‘Crush’ of Ideologies: The United States, the Arab World, and Cold War Modernization,” *Cold War History* 12, no. 1 (February 2012), 89-110.

²⁰ Paul Kingston, *Britain and the Politics of Modernization in the Middle East, 1945-1958* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

Eisenhower administration redefined the strategy of intervention in Iraq at various points after July 1958.

In sum, this dissertation represents the first monograph-length assessment of the American relationship with Iraq during the Eisenhower presidency. It is designed, in part, to complement existing studies of US relations with critical Middle East actors during the 1950s. It also seeks to help fill the gaps identified by Citino and Osgood in the historiography of US-Iraqi relations. In doing so, this thesis aims to provide critical historical context to the complicated relationship that has developed between Washington and Baghdad in recent decades.

This author has made several pragmatic decisions about the scope, subject range, and shape of this dissertation. For one, the primary focus of this project is American policy in Iraq during the Eisenhower presidency. This study is not an authentic “history of international relations” in the sense that it does not purport to give equal attention to the motivations and policy priorities of Iraqi as well as American leaders. The purpose of this project is to analyze how American officials understood and responded to events in Iraq, to understand the motivations and strategic decisions of US policymakers, and to assess the relative merits and flaws of the Eisenhower administration’s policies in Baghdad.

Second, while this dissertation offers some discussion of important developments in the US-Iraqi relationship of the late 1940s and early 1950s, this study focuses on US-Iraqi relations during the Eisenhower presidency. In a practical sense, this organizational structure permits this study to mirror and complement existing books on US policy in the

Middle East during the Eisenhower era. More than that, it is fair to suggest that the most important developments in the immediate postwar US-Iraqi partnership took place during Eisenhower's tenure in office. Nathan Citino argues that the "troubled and contentious history [of US-Iraqi relations] began with Eisenhower."²¹ Peter Hahn adds that the "mid-1950s marked the apogee of stability in U.S.-Iraq official relations during the Cold War era."²² For instance, President Eisenhower oversaw the signing of the US-Iraqi military aid agreement and the creation of the Baghdad Pact. Moreover, while President Truman officially authored the agreement to commence Point IV's development program in Iraq, the agency's modernization initiatives did not become fully operational until Eisenhower had taken office. In addition, an exclusive focus on the Eisenhower administration allows one to explore, in close detail, how the United States formed a strategic partnership with the Iraqi regime and then redefined and adapted its policies to meet the challenges of the revolutionary situation in Baghdad after July 1958. While the organization of this study around a single presidency reflects an artificial periodization of US-Iraqi relations, it serves important practical and analytical purposes and brings clarity to a number of important trends in the US-Iraqi relationship.

This author made another important pragmatic decision in terms of research materials. Given this author's linguistic limitations, this study does not utilize primary materials written in Arabic. However, I have worked assiduously to integrate, whenever possible, secondary sources in English relating to the Iraqi "side" of the bilateral relationship with Washington. Broader overviews of Iraqi history, including classic texts by Phebe Marr and Marion Farouk-Sluglett and Peter Sluglett, as well as newer studies

²¹ Citino, "Middle East Cold Wars," p. 246.

²² Hahn, *Missions Accomplished?*, p. 28.

from Charles Tripp and Adeed Dawisha, have proven valuable in understanding Iraqi developments in the 1950s, particularly the nature of political opposition in pre-revolutionary Iraq. Orit Bashkin's recent book on pluralism and culture in Hashemite Iraq was essential in clarifying this study's discussion of the Iraqi government's modernization initiatives.²³ Juan Romero's recent dissertation has provided valuable insights into the policies of the pre-revolutionary regime, as well as the impact of the 1958 revolution on Iraqi society. Johan Franzen's modern study of the Iraqi Communist Party [ICP] has been exceptionally useful in tracking the rise and fall of the ICP as a powerful political force during the 1950s.²⁴ An English translation of Fadhil Jamali's memoirs has also proven particularly helpful. Jamali, a top Iraqi government official in the pre-revolutionary era, provides a fascinating window into the motivations and policy decisions of the Iraqi leadership, including the government's perceptions of US policies.²⁵ Finally, one cannot possibly write on Iraqi politics in this period without consulting Hanna Batatu's magisterial history of Iraq's social classes and political groups. Batatu's work greatly shaped this author's understanding of the structural inequalities built into the post-colonial foundations of the Iraqi state.²⁶ Taken together, these studies (among others) have provided an illuminating window into the Iraqi "side" of the US-Iraqi relationship of the 1950s.

²³ Phebe Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2012); Marion Farouk-Sluglett and Peter Sluglett, *Iraq Since 1958: From Revolution to Dictatorship* (London: IB Tauris, 2001); Charles Tripp, *A History of Iraq* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Adeed Dawisha, *Iraq: A Political History from Independence to Occupation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); Orit Bashkin, *The Other Iraq: Pluralism and Culture in Hashemite Iraq* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009).

²⁴ Juan Lennart Michel Romero, "The Iraqi Revolution of 1958 and the Search for Security in the Middle East." Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of Texas at Austin, 2008; Johan Franzen, *Red Star over Iraq: Iraqi Communism Before Saddam* (London: Hurst, 2011).

²⁵ Mohammed Fadhil Jamali, *Inside the Arab Nationalist Struggle: Memoirs of an Iraqi Statesman* (London: IB Tauris, 2012).

²⁶ 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).

It is also worth outlining in some detail the primary materials consulted during the research for this dissertation. Archival collections, of course, serve as the primary research base for this study. The records held by the National Archives and Records Administration [NARA] in College Park, Maryland, are essential for researchers interested in topics relating to American foreign policy. In this vein, the collections of the State Department and National Security Council [NSC] proved vital in shaping the structure and content of this project. The records of the Office of the Director of Point IV in Iraq, also held at NARA, were likewise essential in directing this study's assessment of American modernization programs. NARA's CIA Crest Search Tool database also yielded a wealth of declassified CIA reports relating to Iraq and the Middle East previously inaccessible to researchers.

The records of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library in Abilene, Kansas, also figure prominently in the research base for this study. The papers of President Dwight Eisenhower and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles were of particular importance, as were the various collections of White House Office files. Moreover, the Eisenhower Library holds the partly declassified papers of Philip Halla, the NSC representative on the Special Committee on Iraq. These documents represent, as Citino writes, "some of the best sources for historians researching the administration's Iraq policy."²⁷ This author has made extensive use of these documents, including materials recently declassified through the Mandatory Review process. These records give a broad outline (notwithstanding the countless redactions) of the CIA's covert activities in Iraq after July 1958. To my knowledge, I am only the third scholar (along

²⁷ Citino, "Middle East Cold Wars," p. 255.

with Citino and Osgood) to utilize these documents to assess the Americans' strategies for regime change in Iraq.

In addition to American archival material, this dissertation makes extensive use of collections held at the British National Archives in Kew, England, particularly the records of the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Defence. These files are essential for understanding the contours of British policy in Iraq. They also provide innumerable insights into London's perceptions of American policies and illuminate the conflicts emerging between the two allies over appropriate policies to pursue in Baghdad. Finally, this thesis incorporates materials drawn from the Middle East Centre [MEC] Archive at St. Antony's College at Oxford University. In this respect, Elizabeth Monroe's papers have yielded exceptionally valuable information relating to British modernization programs in Iraq. They also provide another important source of British critiques of American development and modernization practices before the revolution of July 1958.

In addition, this study draws on several memoirs written by US officials who served in Iraq in the 1950s. Nicholas Thacher's account offers valuable revelations into the official perspective of US diplomats working in Iraq on a range of policy issues. The article written by the former head of Point IV in Iraq, Henry Wiens, offers insight into how US officials evaluated their modernization efforts in this period. Finally, the memoirs of the former US ambassador to Iraq, Waldemar Gallman, provide a fascinating defense of American policies designed to support the authoritarian Iraqi regime headed by Prime Minister Nuri al-Said.²⁸

²⁸ Nicholas Thacher, "Reflections on US Foreign Policy Toward Iraq in the 1950s," in Robert Fernea and William Roger Louis (eds.) *The Iraqi Revolution of 1958: The Old Social Classes Revisited* (London: IB Tauris, 1991); Henry Wiens, "The United States Operation Mission in Iraq," *Annals of the American*

This study also consulted a number of primary materials published online. The *Foreign Relations of the United States* [FRUS] series provides a plethora of primary government documents relating to US policy in Iraq and the Middle East. A number of US Senate committee proceedings have been mined for valuable material relating to American oil interests and foreign aid programs. The Declassified Documents Reference System [DDRS] and the CIA's Electronic Reading Room also produced a wealth of valuable material. Finally, the online collection entitled *Frontline Diplomacy: The Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training* contains several revealing interviews conducted with top and mid-level US officials stationed at the American embassy in Baghdad in the 1950s. These materials help illuminate what officials believed to be both the merits and flaws of US diplomacy in Iraq during the Eisenhower presidency.

This thesis identifies a number of critical themes and trends relating to US policy in Iraq during the Eisenhower presidency. Before turning to the substantive content of this dissertation, it is worth briefly discussing these themes to outline the analytical foundations and parameters of this study. First, it will come as no surprise to scholars of US foreign relations that the superpower competition with the Soviet Union proved essential in shaping US strategies in Iraq in the 1950s. Many of Washington's policy initiatives vis-à-vis Baghdad were heavily determined by larger geopolitical considerations tied to the Cold War. American officials were particularly concerned that the Soviet Union could manipulate the emerging anti-Western nationalisms of Iraq and

Academy of Political and Social Science 323 (May 1959), 140-149; Waldemar Gallman, *Iraq Under General Nuri: My Recollections of Nuri al-Said* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1963).

the region to expand its influence at the expense of US and UK power.²⁹ Each of the respective components of US policy in Iraq, including oil concessions, military aid programs, collective defense initiatives, modernization programs, intelligence estimates, and covert action plans were designed by US officials with the superpower contest with Moscow firmly in mind. Western security interests linked to the global competition with communism thus significantly affected the configuration of US policy toward Baghdad.³⁰

On a related note, US policies in Iraq were inextricably linked with America's alliance with Britain. The Americans understood that their public association with London, particularly their cooperation to support the pro-Western government in Iraq, greatly angered nationalists and anti-colonial elements in Iraq. Even so, American strategists insisted on supporting UK power and interests in Iraq and the Middle East to defend against possible Soviet encroachments and prevent the emergence of a regional "vacuum of power." Moreover, Britain's foundational role in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization [NATO] and its importance as a global ally in the Cold War meant that the Americans had to ponder UK interests when designing their strategies for Iraq.³¹ The overarching US-UK partnership significantly influenced American policies relating to Iraqi oil developments, military aid programs, and collective defense strategies. Point IV's modernization programs in Iraq also worked in conjunction with ongoing British development plans. Alliance politics resurfaced after the July 1958 revolution when US and UK policymakers sparred over Washington's attempts to engineer Qasim's downfall.

²⁹ Thacher, "Reflections on US Foreign Policy Toward Iraq in the 1950s," p. 63; Fain, *American Ascendance and British Retreat in the Persian Gulf Region*, p. 42.

³⁰ Hahn, *Missions Accomplished?*, p. 7-8.

³¹ Barrett, *The Greater Middle East and the Cold War*, p. 5, 12-13; Stivers, "Eisenhower and the Middle East," p. 193. On Dulles' views of European colonialism, see Ronald Pruessen, "John Foster Dulles and Decolonization in Southeast Asia," in Marc Frey, Ronald W. Pruessen, Tan Tai Yong (eds.) *The Transformation of Southeast Asia: International Perspectives on Decolonization* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 2003).

British interests served as a foundational component of US diplomacy in Iraq throughout the Eisenhower presidency. On this point, among others, the lines of continuity linking earlier decades of US policy in Iraq and the Eisenhower administration's strategies are clear.

This dissertation also examines US-Iraqi relations with an eye to the transnational and regional dimensions of this subject. As Chapters Two and Six explain, American officials were unable to prevent ongoing oil developments in Iran, Saudi Arabia, and elsewhere in the Middle East from spilling over into the Iraqi petroleum arena. The Eisenhower administration's decision to eschew formal membership in the Baghdad Pact was similarly a function of transnational politics, as US policymakers faced conflicting pressures from Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Syria, and Kuwait, among other states. Moreover, Chapter Eight gives sustained attention to the pressures placed by America's regional allies on Washington to respond vigorously to the 1958 revolution in Baghdad. The Eisenhower administration even turned to a regional partner, in this case Gamal Abdel Nasser's Egypt, for assistance in toppling Qasim's regime.

The persistence of divisions within the US government over the appropriate strategies to pursue in Iraq functions as another overarching theme for this study. The US government did not speak with a single voice on questions relating to military aid, collective defense planning, or covert operations. Representatives of the military, as well as elements of the foreign service, pushed the State Department to expand Washington's formal role in the military supply and collective defense arenas. In essence, these agencies battled over the definition of the doctrine of diplomatic "freedom of action." The persistence of these inter-agency debates throughout the decade reveals, in turn, the

uncertainty and unease some elements of the US government felt about the rapid expansion of American responsibilities and commitments in Iraq and the Middle East. This was certainly the case, as Part I demonstrates, even before the formative Suez War vividly captured the regional decline of UK power. In this way, US-Iraqi relations serve as a useful prism through which to dissect larger trends in the US relationship with the Middle East in the 1950s. In these debates, the State Department often proved to be the voice of pragmatism and restraint, though even Foggy Bottom found itself swept up in the appealing opportunities presented by the diminution of UK power in Baghdad.

This dissertation also emphasizes the complex and contentious relationship the United States experienced with Arab nationalists, neutralists, and anti-colonial elements in Iraq. Prior to the 1958 revolution, intelligence assessments characterized Arab nationalists, neutralists, and anti-colonial groups as potential threats to larger Western interests in Iraq. This was particularly true since Iraqi nationalists derided the Iraq Petroleum Company's [IPC] concession arrangements as evidence of foreign subjugation and called for the nationalization of the company's assets. Similarly, the announcement of the US-Iraqi military aid agreement and formation of the Baghdad Pact infuriated Iraqi nationalists. While the Americans were, in theory at least, sympathetic to Arab nationalists' demands for greater independence from the former colonial powers, the Eisenhower administration also privileged the protection of Western access to Iraqi oil reserves and the stability of the pro-Western regime in Baghdad. This meant, as William Stivers argues, that "there were strict limits to Washington's ability to tolerate Arab nationalists...."³² As Stivers correctly notes, in the view of US officials, "Arab Nationalism presented a great unknown and threatened to upset the established order of

³² Stivers, "Eisenhower and the Middle East," p. 193, 203 (quote).

things.”³³ After July 1958, US officials were angered to find that Qasim’s regime, unlike its predecessor, was heavily influenced by communist, nationalist, and neutralist pressures and ideologies. Washington’s relationship with Iraq, in turn, remained distinctly cool through to the end of the Eisenhower administration.

American officials after July 1958 longed for the return of the status quo ante, conservative monarchical order that had ruled Iraq for several decades. Indeed, the convergence of interests between the Eisenhower administration and the pro-Western Iraqi regime proved essential to shaping US-Iraqi relations in the pre-revolutionary period. This bilateral partnership was, at its core, one of inter-dependency.³⁴ The Americans’ support for the status quo ante, pro-Western regime in Baghdad served their objectives of protecting Western economic and political interests in Iraq. Similarly, the Iraqi government was able, for a time at least, to enhance its internal security in the face of domestic challenges and expand its military and regional defense capabilities and objectives through an alliance with the Western powers. Both the Americans and the Iraqi leadership, foremost among them Prime Minister Nuri al-Said, valued the continuation of “stable,” “orderly,” and ultimately authoritarian controls over the Iraqi political, economic, and social arenas to repress challenges posed by anti-colonial nationalists and larger opposition forces. In the oil and modernization sectors, the convergence of interests between US and Iraqi leaders provided for the continued export of Iraqi petroleum by Western companies and the pursuit of gradual, top-down modernization reforms to enhance internal stability. As Chapter Five makes clear, even

³³ Stivers, “Eisenhower and the Middle East,” p. 215.

³⁴ The concept of “inter-dependency” was inspired by Johan Franzen, “The Failure of British Policy Towards Iraq, 1945-1958,” at the British Academy’s “Rethinking the Middle East? Values, Interests, and Security Concerns in Western Policies toward Iraq and the Wider Region, 1918-2010,” conference, March 2010, London UK.

within the relatively limited grouping of “old guard” Iraqi politicians, US observers felt uncomfortable about the prospects for internal stability when Nuri al-Said was on the sidelines. Washington’s dependence on the authoritarian rule of the central government was revealed clearly after July 1958 when Qasim’s regime defiantly challenged American assets and interests.

The doctrine of modernization theory served as another essential component of US diplomacy in Iraq. Scholars often link modernization theory’s emergence to the publication of Walt Rostow’s book *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* in 1960, as well as the larger foreign policy strategies of the Kennedy White House.³⁵ However, this dissertation demonstrates that modernization theory formed a critical element of the Eisenhower administration’s approach to Iraq in both the pre-revolutionary period and in the years after July 1958.³⁶ On this issue, this study benefits from a rich and expanding secondary literature on American modernization strategies in the Cold War. For instance, Odd Arne Westad has argued that American and Soviet intervention in the politics of the Third World was a byproduct of their competition to prove the universality of their respective conceptions of modernity. The emergence of the Soviet Union, Westad argues, “meant the rise of an alternative form of modernity” that might prove appealing to leaders around the globe.³⁷ Moreover, as Nathan Citino has demonstrated, “modernity” functioned as a specific historical encounter and debate between the United States and the Arab Middle East. Modernization, Citino suggests,

³⁵ For instance, Victor Nemchenok, “In Search of Stability Amid Chaos: US Policy Toward Iran, 1961-1963,” *Cold War History* 10, no. 3 (August 2010), 343 suggests that modernization was a new impulse among policymakers in the Kennedy administration. I strongly disagree with this conclusion.

³⁶ For example, see Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East* (London: The Free Press, 1958) for a primary account of Western modernization strategies in the Middle East, including Iraq, in the late 1950s by a leading proponent and practitioner of modernization theory.

³⁷ Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 4, 25 (quote).

was actually a contested principle between American technical aid experts and modernizing elites in developing countries.³⁸

American modernizers emphasized the provision of development assistance as a means of directing Iraq along the “proper” path to modernity and enhancing the stability of the central government. Indeed, the expansive programs developed by Point IV in Iraq during the 1950s are a testament to the importance US officials accorded to their quest to control Iraq’s development initiatives in pro-American directions. Echoing Citino and Kingston’s respective assessments, this study demonstrates that modernization processes served as a matter of intense debate between American officials and Iraqi leaders throughout the decade. This was particularly true after July 1958 when Qasim’s regime turned to the Soviet Union for technical assistance and defiantly rejected many elements of Point IV’s modernization initiatives.³⁹

³⁸ Citino, “Suburbia and Modernization,”; Citino, “The Ottoman Legacy in Cold War Modernization,”; Citino, “The ‘Crush’ of Ideologies.”

³⁹ The principles of counter-insurgency doctrine are of some value in assessing American modernization strategies in Iraq. The counter-insurgency expert John Nagl writes that the “indirect approach of defeating an insurgency” focuses on “protecting and hence earning the support of the populace” through a combination of military and non-military measures. It is worth outlining a definition of the term “insurgents.” David Kilcullen, quoting a modified version of the official US Department of Defense definition, describes insurgents as “members of ‘an organized movement that aims at overthrowing the political order within a given territory, using a combination of subversion, terrorism, guerrilla warfare and propaganda.’” Bard E. O’Neill offers a similar definition, noting that the “use of violence by opponents of the government distinguishes insurgencies from sociopolitical protest movements...” As Chapters Five suggests, the Iraqi Communist Party [ICP] of the 1950s does not fit this prototypical definition of an insurgency. The ICP resembled a traditional underground political party more than a network of insurgents, and scholars of Iraqi history have not used the term “insurgency” to describe the ICP of this period. Johan Franzen characterizes the ICP of the pre-revolutionary period as a “clandestine oppositional party, operating under unfavourable conditions, hunted down and executed by the political police of the monarchical regime...” Charles Tripp argues that the ICP, by the time of the 1954 elections, was “veering towards social democracy.” The ICP’s decision to pursue a “pacifist line” of “peaceful coexistence” from 1955 to the 1958 revolution, including giving up its demand for cabinet posts in a future national government, is another important case in point. “Given that the ICP voluntarily had chosen to pursue its new pacifist line,” Franzen adds, it is “perhaps not a surprise” that it was the Free Officers rather than the ICP that led the overthrow of the Iraqi regime in July 1958. Nonetheless, it is certainly true that a close identity of strategies existed between modernization and counter-insurgency doctrines in this period, particularly in their emphasis on securing the support of the civilian population. One could perhaps also argue that the Iraqi government pursued the ICP as though they were facing a full-blown communist insurgency. The Iraqi regime’s brutal repression of the Suez riots in Iraq in late 1956, in Franzen’s words,

American fears about Iraqi leaders buying into “incorrect forms of modernity” dovetailed closely with their persistent fear of the perils that could arise from rapid political reform and the outbreak of revolution in Iraq and the Middle East.⁴⁰ These anxieties had deep roots in the annals of American diplomacy. Michael Hunt argues that Americans have traditionally sought to define and limit the form of “acceptable political and social change” for other nations out of fear that rapid reform would develop in “dangerous direction[s].” American views of revolutions and political transformation, Hunt writes, “approached political upheaval with extreme caution and eyed assaults on the social order with abhorrence.” Given these realities, he adds, US officials privileged the pursuit of gradualism, order, stability, and moderation in other nations’ political affairs.⁴¹ Hunt’s arguments have been echoed by a number of scholars.⁴² Michael Latham, for example, suggests that American policymakers traditionally aligned themselves with “technocratic elites” in developing countries who could offer a strong bulwark against the unruly passions and energies of populism and mass politics. Latham contends that these leaders were, like the Americans, “more inclined toward progressive,

“proved beyond any doubt that Nuri al-Said and the ruling clique in Iraq were unimpressed with the ICP leadership’s newfound peace-loving inclinations...” See John Nagl, *Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam: Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife* (Westport: Praeger, 2002), 28-30 (first footnote quote); David Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 12 (second footnote quote); Bard E. O’Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism: Inside Modern Revolutionary Warfare* (Washington: Brassey’s, 1990), 28 fn 1 (third footnote quote); Johan Franzen, *Red Star over Iraq: Iraqi Communism Before Saddam* (London: Hurst, 2011), 68-78, 3, 70, 78, 75 (fourth, sixth, and seventh footnote quotes); Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, p. 132 (fifth footnote quote); Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, p. 63.

⁴⁰ Westad, *The Global Cold War*, p. 134.

⁴¹ Michael Hunt, *Ideology and US Foreign Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 18 (first quote), 92 (second quote), 93-97, 116.

⁴² Westad, Bacevich, and Little have similarly offered important insights into the importance of gradual, controlled reform to American foreign policy. See Westad, *The Global Cold War*, p. 10-11, 16; Andrew Bacevich, *Washington Rules: America’s Path to Permanent War* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2010), 20-21; Douglas Little, *American Orientalism: The United States and the Middle East Since 1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 157.

staged reform instead of sweeping, structural revision guided by popular demands,” thereby safeguarding political stability at the national level.⁴³

Historians have extended these insights to their assessments of the Eisenhower administration. William O. Walker III argues that gradualism and stability served as Eisenhower’s “preferred...modus operandi” in foreign affairs.⁴⁴ Roby Barrett, in analyzing the Middle Eastern policies of Eisenhower and Kennedy, argues that both presidents were fundamentally committed to gradual, “controlled reform” in the Middle East. When confronted by possible unrest targeting US interests (and potential Soviet expansion), the two presidents vigorously promoted the imposition of authoritarian measures by local governments to protect stability and order.⁴⁵ Ronald Pruessen similarly identified in John Foster Dulles, well before Dulles took office as secretary of state, a fundamental adherence to and defense of status quo politics in global affairs, particularly in relation to underdeveloped countries. Dulles, Pruessen argues, was firmly committed to the “*conservative functions of reform.*” His “‘peaceful change’ proposals” were designed to avoid violent, revolutionary upheaval and defend the larger political and economic status quo on the global stage.⁴⁶ Outside the 1950s, the American commitment to gradual reforms similarly shaped US diplomacy vis-à-vis the Mexican revolution in the early 20th century, American strategies during the Vietnam conflict, and the formulation

⁴³ Michael Latham, “Modernization, International History, and the Cold War World,” in David Engerman et al (eds.) *Staging Growth: Modernization, Development, and the Global Cold War* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003), 11.

⁴⁴ William O. Walker III, *National Security and Core Values in American History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 139 (quote), 145.

⁴⁵ Barrett, *The Greater Middle East and the Cold War*, p. 2-3, 7, 14.

⁴⁶ Ronald Pruessen, *John Foster Dulles: The Road to Power* (New York: Free Press, 1982), 175- 177. On Dulles’ policies in Southeast Asia in the 1950s, see Pruessen, “John Foster Dulles and Decolonization in Southeast Asia,” p. 235-236.

of détente policy as a means to stabilize the international status quo at the expense, Jeremy Suri says, of “progressive change.”⁴⁷

It is entirely fair to question the extent to which this obsession with stability and gradualism, coupled with persistent fears of radical unrest, is a *uniquely* American concern. For instance, Suri has argued that Willy Brandt’s political philosophy of Ostpolitik in the late 1960s worked to defend political stability at the expense of progressive change in European Cold War affairs.⁴⁸ It may be that these specific concerns are less a distinctly American phenomenon and more a function of traditional “Great Power” anxieties about managing complex (and often contradictory) global interests, commitments, and responsibilities. Even so, it is clear that US policy in Iraq during the Eisenhower presidency, among all other features, was defined by persistent fears of instability and radical change in the Iraqi arena, particularly if these developments presented opportunities to the Soviets to expand their influence. In turn, the Eisenhower administration remained committed to gradual, controlled reform, thereby defending the broader status quo in Iraq in the process.

As the beginning of this Introduction noted, the Americans worked hard to control the direction of political change in Iraq and safeguard political stability in Baghdad. In the pre-revolutionary period, American attempts to reform and modernize Iraqi society fundamentally revealed the conservative function of reform in American strategies. Point IV’s modernization initiatives were designed, in part, to enhance the internal stability of the Iraqi regime. While US observers hoped for a broadening of popular participation in

⁴⁷ Jeremi Suri, *Power and Protest: Global Revolution and the Rise of Détente* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 262 (quote), 136, 255; Westad, *The Global Cold War*, p. 16, Hunt, *Ideology and US Foreign Policy*, p. 174.

⁴⁸ Suri, *Power and Protest*, p. 224.

Iraqi politics, they were not willing to tolerate potential threats to American interests in the country. Before July 1958, US policy toward Iraq vacillated between energetic attempts to reform Iraqi society and stringent efforts to restrict and direct the types of changes that might occur in the country. The Americans again demanded gradual, controlled, “moderate” reforms from the new regime in Baghdad after July 1958 to create a stable, pro-Western environment for American economic and political assets.

Washington’s strategic objectives were fundamentally challenged by Qasim’s call for the Iraqification of national economic resources. The rapid pace and revolutionary ideas underlying Iraqification outstripped the Americans’ ability to control events in Baghdad. The troubled relationship that emerged between Qasim and the Eisenhower administration from 1958 to 1961 was significantly influenced by their differing conceptions of the acceptable shape and pace of political, economic, and social change in Iraq.

Finally, this dissertation emphasizes the limits to American power in Iraq, even at a moment of unprecedented US influence on the international stage. In the pre-revolutionary period, despite Washington’s best efforts at crafting a nuanced policy on the Baghdad Pact, it proved nearly impossible for the United States to adequately mollify Arab nationalist sentiment while preserving its strategic partnerships with conservative, pro-Western allies like Iraq. Similarly, the relative failures of the Point IV program in Iraq reflected the tangible limits to American power and its ability to shape events in directions favourable to US interests. Equally, the United States was largely unsuccessful at preventing the diminution of American authority and influence in Iraq after July 1958. CIA covert operations failed to restore a pro-American regime in Baghdad. Moreover,

the policies of the revolutionary Iraqi Republic undermined American power in the oil and modernization sectors. Yet again, expanding regional power did not translate into effective capabilities to control and shape events in the manner American policymakers preferred. Even though the United States functioned after 1945 as a global superpower, this study reminds us of the tangible limits to American authority, power, and capabilities in this period.

Chapter One: US-Iraqi Relations Before 1953

The historical roots of America's engagement with Iraq date back to the 19th century, a period marked by early signs of local resistance to the Ottoman Empire's rule in the territory known as Mesopotamia. The Ottoman Empire's conquest of Mesopotamia in 1514 nominally produced four centuries of Ottoman influence in the three provinces of Mosul, Baghdad, and Basra that later comprised the modern Iraqi state. However, Ottoman authorities exerted limited control in these territories through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.⁴⁹ The year 1831, in the words of the historian Ebubekir Ceylan, marked the beginning of centralized Ottoman control in the Iraqi provinces as well as the "modernization of the Ottoman province of Baghdad." Though Arab Shi'a Iraqis outnumbered Arab Sunnis and Kurds by a three to one margin, Ottoman authorities relied on representatives from the Iraqi Sunni community to administer these territories. This, in turn, laid the groundwork for the dominance of the Sunni population in future Iraqi governments for many years to come.⁵⁰

American interaction with these Ottoman-ruled provinces before 1900 was, as with broader US engagement with the Middle East in this era, limited and inconsistent. American interests in the Middle East, though expanding by the 1890s, were still

⁴⁹ Peter Hahn, *Missions Accomplished? The United States and Iraq Since World War I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 11; Charles Tripp, *A History of Iraq* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 8-11.

⁵⁰ Ebubekir Ceylan, *The Ottoman Origins of Modern Iraq: Political Reform, Modernization and Development in the Nineteenth-Century Middle East* (London: IB Tauris, 2011), 3-4 (quote), 13; Phebe Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2012), 5-6, 15. Ottoman leaders themselves were of Sunni background.

restricted almost exclusively to economic assets and religious expeditions.⁵¹ American commercial interests in the three future provinces of Iraq focused on dates and licorice root as key commodities. US missionaries first visited Mesopotamia in the early 19th century, establishing schools and churches in the Kurdish north in the 1840s as part of a wider “philanthropic” campaign in the region.⁵²

British interests came to dominate Mesopotamia during the course of World War I. UK policymakers first showed interest in the territory in the 19th century. The area was considered important in protecting lines of communication with India and defending against French and Russian expansion in the region. When the Ottoman Empire sided with Germany and the Central Powers in WWI, the British dispatched an expeditionary force to acquire strategic control over the enticing oil reserves of the Mesopotamia provinces. UK troops occupied Basra in November 1914, later moving on to Baghdad in March 1917 and Mosul (reputed to contain the largest oil reserves) in 1918.⁵³ Officials in London negotiated formal agreements with their imperial allies to secure control over the region. The Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916 dictated that France would gain control over

⁵¹ Douglas Little, *American Orientalism: The United States and the Middle East Since 1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 14; W. Taylor Fain, *American Ascendance and British Retreat in the Persian Gulf Region* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 17.

⁵² Hahn, *Missions Accomplished?*, p. 17; Michael Oren, *Power, Faith, and Fantasy: America in the Middle East, 1776 to the Present* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2007), 327; Stephen Hemsley Longrigg and Frank Stoakes, *Iraq* (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1958), 75. On the subject of American missionaries in the Middle East in the 19th century, see Ussama Makdisi, *Faith Misplaced: The Broken Promise of US-Arab Relations, 1820-2001* (New York: Public Affairs, 2010), 19-53 and Ussama Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven: American Missionaries and the Failed Conversion of the Middle East* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007).

⁵³ Toby Dodge, *Inventing Iraq: The Failure of Nation Building and a History Denied* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 10-11; Barry Lando, *Web of Deceit: The History of Western Complicity in Iraq, from Churchill to Kennedy to George W. Bush* (Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 2007), 9; Abbas Kadhim, *Reclaiming Iraq: The 1920 Revolution and the Founding of the Modern State* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2012), 52-53; Fain, *American Ascendance and British Retreat in the Persian Gulf Region*, p. 15.

Syria and Mosul following the conclusion of the war. In turn, the UK would hold authority over Palestine and the other provinces of Mesopotamia.⁵⁴

The decade that followed the conclusion of WWI proved critical for establishing the authority of Western powers over the future Iraqi state. In 1918, President Woodrow Wilson dispatched the King-Crane commission to the region to gauge the views of local people regarding the political administration of these areas. The commissioners visited Syria, Palestine, and Anatolia over the course of forty-two days, but were unable to travel to Mesopotamia. The commission's appointment, coupled with Wilson's Fourteen Points, raised popular hopes that citizens of the Middle East would secure their right to self-determination.⁵⁵ The end result proved far different. Wilson instead backed the establishment of British mandates (under the auspices of the League of Nations) over Iraq and Palestine and French mandates over Syria and Lebanon.⁵⁶ The president's support for the mandate system, announced at the San Remo conference of April 1920, underscored the limited applicability of his views regarding political self-determination for other nations. Wilson did not seek the dissolution of colonial practices entirely, but rather their regulation and gradual modification. For Wilson, the mandate systems promised "order" and "stability" in regional economic developments. At the same time, the firm hands of the Western powers would guide these nations slowly toward (what the

⁵⁴ David Fromkin, *A Peace to End all Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East* (New York: Avon Books, 1989), 189-193; Daniel Yergin, *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money, and Power* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991), 185, 189.

⁵⁵ Makdisi, *Faith Misplaced*, p. 140; Oren, *Power, Faith, and Fantasy*, p. 389; Geoffrey Wawro, *Quicksand: America's Pursuit of Power in the Middle East* (New York: Penguin Press, 2010), 22-23. Philip Ireland, a future American diplomat in Baghdad in the 1950s and staunch defender of the monarchical order in Iraq, wrote disapprovingly in his history of Iraq from 1937 that the "ready acquiescence by the Muslims [of Iraq] in British Administration was being rendered extremely difficult by the general acceptance of President Wilson's Fourteen Points...." Philip Ireland, *Iraq: A Study in Political Development* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1937), 256 (footnote quote), 241-242.

⁵⁶ Makdisi, *Faith Misplaced*, p. 152; Hahn, *Missions Accomplished?*, p. 12.

Americans and British defined as) political “maturity,” “modernization,” and independence.⁵⁷

Citizens of the future Iraqi provinces did not wait long to voice their anger over the establishment of the mandate and denial of their independence. A nationalist revolt exploded in 1920 among a coalition of citizens resisting the imposition of an Indian-style colonial structure and their incorporation into the British Empire. Abbas Kadhimi also argues, in a recent monograph on the revolution, that the events of the Egyptian revolution of 1919, combined with battles ongoing in Iran and Turkey for constitutionalism and the financial costs of British colonial rule for the Iraqi populace, inspired some Iraqis to resist London’s political maneuvers.⁵⁸ The revolt was violently crushed by UK intervention, yet it had two important consequences. For one, as Charles Tripp notes, the 1920 revolt “became part of the founding myth of Iraqi nationalism....”⁵⁹ More than that, the events of 1920 forced British officials to find a more palatable means of exercising their authority over Iraqi affairs. Rather than pursuing the annexation of Iraq (in the manner UK colonial authorities “dealt” with India), UK leaders decided at the Cairo Conference of 1921 to create the (theoretically) sovereign Kingdom of Iraq to safeguard London’s interests in the region.⁶⁰ The throne was presented to Amir Faisal, leader of the short-lived Hashemite monarchy in Syria from 1918 to 1920. Along with King Faisal came scores of officers and administrators whom he served alongside during

⁵⁷ William Stivers, *Supremacy and Oil: Iraq, Turkey, and the Anglo-American World Order, 1918-1930* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1982), 62-66; Fromkin, *A Peace to End all Peace*, p. 410-411. For a detailed treatment of Wilson’s views on self-determination, see Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

⁵⁸ Fromkin, *A Peace to End all Peace*, p. 452-454; Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, p. 21-23; Kadhimi, *Reclaiming Iraq*, p. 49-51, 66-68.

⁵⁹ Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, p. 43.

⁶⁰ Adeer Dawisha, *Iraq: A Political History from Independence to Occupation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 12-13; Kadhimi, *Reclaiming Iraq*, p. 135-143.

the Arab Revolt and his tenure in Damascus. These sharifian, former Ottoman, Arab Sunni figures quickly dominated both the military and political arenas of Iraq down to the 1958 revolution.⁶¹

The sovereignty of the Iraqi monarchy during the mandate period was, not surprisingly, regularly undermined by London's machinations. British diplomats retained ultimate authority over Iraq's army, foreign affairs, and finances. Moreover, the British continually interfered in the political process by manipulating the King, suspending the Council of Ministers, and favouring candidates for Iraq's institutions.⁶² The mandate period of UK rule in Iraq was defined by another important political phenomenon. In the search for an ordered, seemingly "modern" reorganization of the purportedly corrupt, "stagnant" Ottoman bureaucracy, UK administrators chose to empower the Iraqi tribal sheikhs as the major political brokers of the countryside. The wealthy tribal landlords and sheikhs quickly became the political allies of the small sharifian ruling class in Baghdad.⁶³

⁶¹ "Sharifian" refers to members of the army led by Sharif Hussein of Mecca during the Arab Revolt. Hussein's son, Faisal, was later forced out of Syria by French intervention. See Kadhim, *Reclaiming Iraq*, p. 142, 151; Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, p. 45-47.

⁶² Kadhim, *Reclaiming Iraq*, p. 140, 147; Dodge, *Inventing Iraq*, p. 20-21. Philip Ireland offered a glowing account of the role played by British advisers in the Iraqi judicial system in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Ireland, in reference to the British advisers, argued that their "insistence on justice without regard to distinctions of class or religion and their unfaltering rectitude in conformity with the best British traditions have left what may be hoped is an indelible imprint on the Judicial system of Iraq. To them is due in a great degree the high standard of justice which prevailed in Iraq before 1932." Ireland, *Iraq*, p. 446 (footnote quote).

⁶³ Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, p. 23, 32 (quote); Dodge, *Inventing Iraq*, p. 43-51, 61, 84, 91; Kadhim, *Reclaiming Iraq*, p. 61; 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), 439. Reflecting these views, Philip Ireland argued in his history of Iraq that, in the years prior to 1932, "Iraq was an isolated lethargic mal-administered portion of the Ottoman Empire." Reflecting his critical assessment of Ottoman rule in Mesopotamia, Ireland titled another sub-heading in his book "Why the Turks Failed to Give Good Government to Iraq." Ireland, *Iraq*, p. 450, 77 (footnote quotes). See Ceylan, *The Ottoman Origins of Modern Iraq*, p. 132-218 for an excellent scholarly treatment of the dynamics of Ottoman rule in the Iraqi countryside and modernization initiatives in the mid-19th century that dispels the myth of a "stagnant" Ottoman administration in Iraq.

British colonial authority in Iraq was also institutionalized through formal agreements. The 1930 Anglo-Iraqi Treaty accorded London sovereign rights over two key military bases in Iraq, as well as full access to additional military assets. These provisions made mockery of Baghdad's independence when Iraq was admitted as an independent state to the League of Nations in 1932.⁶⁴ By this time, the British were seeking to reduce their financial and political commitments to Baghdad while still nominally fulfilling their legal responsibility under the mandate system to prepare the country for independence. UK officials abandoned their stated objective of creating a "modern, liberal" Iraqi state. Instead, the "independent" Iraq admitted to the League of Nations in 1932 could not defend itself against its neighbours and lacked ideological legitimacy amongst its citizens.⁶⁵ Moreover, political power was centralized in Baghdad amongst a tiny group of elite Sunni politicians who relied heavily on repressive tools, particularly the Royal Air Force [RAF], to maintain their tenuous authority.⁶⁶

Washington's official interest in the politics of Baghdad steadily increased throughout this period. Treaties relating to extradition, commerce, and navigation were signed between the Americans and Iraqis in the interwar period. Baghdad College, administered by Jesuit missionaries, opened in 1931 and earned high praise from Iraqi notables.⁶⁷ Despite these signs of growing US interest in Baghdad, American officials remained highly deferential to existing UK power and authority in Iraq in this period. As demonstration of the immense authority wielded by UK administrators, the US consul in

⁶⁴ Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, p. 33; Peter Sluglett, *Britain in Iraq: Contriving King and Country* (London: IB Tauris, 2007), 123.

⁶⁵ Dodge, *Inventing Iraq*, p. 9, 15, 25, 30-40, 133, 158.

⁶⁶ Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, p. 33, 35; Dodge, *Inventing Iraq*, p. 31; Daniel Silverfarb, *The Twilight of British Ascendancy in the Middle East: A Case Study of Iraq, 1941-1950* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), 39, 41.

⁶⁷ Hahn, *Missions Accomplished?*, p. 19.

Iraq throughout the 1920s liaised with Iraqi government officials through the offices of the UK High Commissioner.⁶⁸

The interwar period also witnessed the consolidation of Western assets in the Iraqi petroleum sector. The Royal Navy's shift from coal to oil and the mechanized warfare of WWI placed a premium for Western powers on continued access to global oil reserves.⁶⁹ The Iraqi oil industry first emerged in 1914 when Ottoman authorities awarded a concession for mineral rights in Baghdad and Mosul to the Turkish Petroleum Company [TPC], an alliance of UK and German financial interests. This agreement proved vital in legitimizing TPC's claims over Iraqi oil following the conclusion of WWI and the collapse of Ottoman power in the Middle East.⁷⁰ British officials worked hard to ensure Iraq's promising oil deposits would fall under their economic influence. At the Lausanne conference of 1923, Turkey was pressured to relinquish its claims to Mosul, thereby facilitating complete UK control over the major oil reserves of the former Mesopotamia provinces.⁷¹ Two years later, TPC and Iraqi authorities signed an agreement that provided for the firm's exploration and production of oil over a period of 75 years. Oil was first discovered in large quantities in 1927 in Kirkuk, though petroleum was not exported until 1934.⁷² It is equally important to note that the concession deals signed during the mandate period gave petroleum companies the exclusive right to develop and

⁶⁸ Hahn, *Missions Accomplished?*, p. 19. Philip Ireland's history of Iraq suggests the depth of sympathy American observers had for broader UK policies and objectives in Iraq in this period. See Ireland, *Iraq*, p. 80-95, for instance, for a positive review of UK colonial governance in Iraq during WWI and its immediate aftermath.

⁶⁹ Fain, *American Ascendance and British Retreat in the Persian Gulf Region*, p. 18; Yergin, *The Prize*, p. 152-156.

⁷⁰ Stivers, *Supremacy and Oil*, p. 88; Sluglett, *Britain in Iraq*, p. 67-68; David Styan, *France and Iraq: Oil, Arms, and French Policy Making in the Middle East* (London: IB Tauris, 2006), 13.

⁷¹ Hahn, *Missions Accomplished?*, p. 14; Styan, *France and Iraq*, p. 20.

⁷² Styan, *France and Iraq*, p. 10, 20-21; Longrigg and Stoakes, *Iraq*, p. 149.

export oil. The Iraqi government had no formal role until the early 1950s in the pricing of its petroleum.⁷³

There was a great deal of jockeying for power behind the scenes to determine the precise division of shares within TPC. French interests formally replaced the Germans in the company by 1920.⁷⁴ American corporations seeking an “Open Door” in the Iraqi oil arena were infuriated by the 1920 San Remo Agreement that divided Iraq’s oil resources between London and Paris. The Standard Oil Company of New York, which already held rights for oil exploration in Palestine and Syria, vigorously lobbied the State Department to convince the British to permit their participation in TPC.⁷⁵

UK officials eventually relented to this pressure, believing British companies alone lacked the vast capital required to develop the oil resources of the new Iraqi state. Moreover, US participation in the company could strengthen US-UK relations and help repel any challenges posed by the Turks to Western control over Mosul.⁷⁶ The 1928 Red Line Agreement formalized American participation in TPC, finally giving US companies a stake in Iraqi oil developments.⁷⁷ In the agreement, a literal red line was drawn around the boundaries (as defined by the Western powers) of most of the Middle East and former Ottoman Empire (excluding Kuwait and Iran). The 1928 deal restricted all TPC (now renamed the Iraq Petroleum Company [IPC]) members from pursuing new agreements within the agreed upon boundaries of the deal without the approval of all consortium

⁷³ Abbas Alnasrawi, *The Economy of Iraq: Oil, Wars, and Destruction of Development and Prospects, 1950-2010* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1994), 1.

⁷⁴ They did so by agreeing to the construction of a pipeline to carry Iraqi crude across French Syria to the Mediterranean. See Michael Palmer, *Guardians of the Gulf: A History of America’s Expanding Role in the Persian Gulf, 1833-1992* (New York: The Free Press, 1992), 15; Styan, *France and Iraq*, p. 21.

⁷⁵ Fromkin, *A Peace to End all Peace*, p. 534-535; Little, *American Orientalism*, p. 46-47; Ireland, *Iraq*, p. 324-325.

⁷⁶ Palmer, *Guardians of the Gulf*, p. 17; Stivers, *Supremacy and Oil*, p. 91.

⁷⁷ Frederick W. Axelgard, “US Policy Toward Iraq, 1946-1958.” Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, 1988, 11-12.

members.⁷⁸ In essence, the Red Line deal created a Western cartel that provided for secure sources of Middle East oil for UK, French, and American interests. At the same time, it froze other powers out of the exploitation of regional resources. The Red Line deal was a clear violation of the Americans' vaunted Open Door principle, though this time in Washington's favour.⁷⁹ The 1928 Agreement also formalized the division of IPC shares, with British Petroleum, Shell Petroleum, and the Compagnie Francais des Petroles each securing 23.75% ownership. The Near Eastern Development Corporation, a joint venture between the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey (later Exxon) and Standard Oil of New York (Mobil), accounted for the Americans' 23.75% shares in IPC.⁸⁰ Similar arrangements divided the shares of the Mosul Petroleum Company (created in 1932) and Basra Petroleum Company (1938), both of which operated as IPC subsidiaries. These general profit-sharing arrangements endured until the 1972 oil nationalization initiative under Saddam Hussein.⁸¹

In addition to their Iraqi assets, American oil firms were awarded concessions in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia in the 1930s. American interest in the region still remained primarily economic, and government officials deliberately avoided entangling political and military commitments and responsibilities in the area. As W. Taylor Fain writes, however, the events of World War II turned the US government into "an active participant in the politics and diplomacy of the region...."⁸² The Allied countries worried about retaining access to the region's resources and denying these assets to the Axis

⁷⁸ Little, *American Orientalism*, p. 47; Yergin, *The Prize*, p. 204.

⁷⁹ Little, *American Orientalism*, p. 47; Palmer, *Guardians of the Gulf*, p. 17; Styan, *France and Iraq*, p. 28.

⁸⁰ A firm headed by C.S. Gulbenkian owned the remaining 5%. See Little, *American Orientalism*, p. 46-47.

⁸¹ Alnasrawi, *The Economy of Iraq*, p. 2.

⁸² Palmer, *Guardians of the Gulf*, p. 20; Fain, *American Ascendance and British Retreat in the Persian Gulf Region*, p. 20 (quote).

powers.⁸³ The emerging American political commitment to the Middle East during WWII was demonstrated by the close alliance forming between the United States and Saudi Arabia. This partnership was highlighted by the meeting held between President Roosevelt and King Ibn Saud of Saudi Arabia on board the *USS Quincy* following the conclusion of the Yalta conference in 1945.⁸⁴

The end of World War II and the emerging conditions of the Cold War and process of decolonization further expanded and complicated US interests in the region. American objectives for the postwar arena demanded continued Western access to the oil reserves of the Middle East and Persian Gulf for the economic recovery of Western Europe. Washington also insisted on the denial of these resources to the Soviet bloc and the protection of Western military assets in the event of war with Moscow.⁸⁵ In addition, American diplomats relied on and defended British political and military assets in the area while simultaneously adjusting to the region's calls for greater independence from the former colonial powers.⁸⁶

For all these reasons, members of the Truman administration believed that American interests and commitments in the region would necessarily expand in the immediate postwar period. These strategic calculations had a discernible impact on US policy in Iraq. In an effort to improve and expand US-Iraqi contacts, President Truman hosted the Iraqi Regent Abdullah at the White House in May 1945. The two powers signed a Lend-Lease deal later that summer. As a further symbol of expanding interest in

⁸³ Palmer, *Guardians of the Gulf*, p. 19.

⁸⁴ Wawro, *Quicksand*, p. 84-85.

⁸⁵ Mary Ann Heiss, *Empire and Nationhood: The United States, Great Britain, and Iranian Oil, 1950-1954* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 226; Little, *American Orientalism*, p. 50.

⁸⁶ Fain, *American Ascendance and British Retreat in the Persian Gulf Region*, p. 28; Salim Yaqub, *Containing Arab Nationalism: The Eisenhower Doctrine and the Middle East* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 23.

Baghdad, the United States formally upgraded its legation in Iraq to an embassy in November 1946.⁸⁷

Roadblocks stood in the way of this developing partnership. For one, American policies on the Palestine question greatly aroused Arab anger and, as Frederic Axelgard writes, “did much to dampen U.S. interest in close relations with Iraq.”⁸⁸ Truman’s support for the admission of additional Jewish refugees into Palestine generated outrage among many Iraqis. Local press outlets called for a boycott of American goods. At the same time, Iraqi government mandarins, led by Prime Minister Salih Jabr, accused the president of encouraging illegal Jewish immigration into the disputed territory.⁸⁹

American support for the 1947 United Nations Partition Plan inspired a mob attack on the United States Information Service [USIS] building in Baghdad. As former diplomat Nicholas Thacher recalls, larger American policy objectives in Iraq were, for a considerable period, overshadowed by “persistent recriminations [among Iraqis] concerning US policies toward the Palestine issue.”⁹⁰ In part due to this dispute, US relations with Iraq remained tense when Dwight D. Eisenhower entered the White House in January 1953.⁹¹

A series of other complicating factors appeared within the US-Iraqi bilateral relationship of the late 1940s and early 1950s. For one, US officials worked hard to

⁸⁷ Hahn, *Missions Accomplished?*, p. 25; Frederick Axelgard, “US Support for the British Position in Pre-Revolutionary Iraq,” in Robert Fernea and William Roger Louis (eds.) *The Iraqi Revolution of 1958: The Old Social Classes Revisited* (London: IB Tauris, 1991), 79.

⁸⁸ Axelgard, “US Policy Toward Iraq, 1946-1958,” p. 29 (quote); Yaqub, *Containing Arab Nationalism*, p. 25.

⁸⁹ Axelgard, “US Policy Toward Iraq, 1946-1958,” p. 30-32. See Orit Bashkin, *The Other Iraq: Pluralism and Culture in Hashemite Iraq* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 56-57, 101 for an excellent treatment of the subject of Palestine in Iraqi public discourse and debate in the 1930s and 1940s.

⁹⁰ Axelgard, “US Policy Toward Iraq, 1946-1958,” p. 34; Hahn, *Missions Accomplished?*, p. 26; Nicholas Thacher, “Reflections on US Foreign Policy Toward Iraq in the 1950s,” in Robert Fernea and William Roger Louis (eds.) *The Iraqi Revolution of 1958: The Old Social Classes Revisited* (London: IB Tauris, 1991), 64 (quote).

⁹¹ Hahn, *Missions Accomplished?*, p. 28.

convince the American partners in IPC to adopt more progressive policies (in the labour realm and in relations with authorities in Baghdad) to ameliorate local discontent and safeguard company assets. These appeals for reform, deployed for the conservative function of defending the broader status quo, continued well into the Eisenhower presidency.⁹² The continuation and intensification of Arab Cold War tensions between Egypt and Iraq also complicated Washington's ties to Baghdad. Egypt and Iraq, longtime rivals for regional power, competed for influence throughout the decolonizing Middle East after WWII. Their covert war centered on Syria, which was regarded as the regional "prize" and "swing state" in this contest.⁹³ The Americans wandered into this complex, pre-existing regional conflict and firmly landed, by virtue of the West's alliance with Baghdad, within the Iraqi camp. Even so, American officials anxiously worked to restrain the "Fertile Crescent" expansionist ambitions for union with Syria among some Iraqi leaders, particularly Prime Minister Nuri al-Said, for fear of the backlash it would inspire amongst Iraq's opponents in Cairo and Riyadh.⁹⁴ Finally, American interest in the domestic political arena in Baghdad was heavily coloured by concerns about the rising influence of the Iraqi Communist Party [ICP], which earned the title, in Marr's assessment, of "best-organized political group in the country" after World War II.⁹⁵ These fears overlapped closely with America's anxieties about a wider Soviet "offensive" in the Middle East; Soviet support for Mustapha Barzani's Kurdish army in the late 1940s exacerbated American fears of a nexus of power connecting the ICP with Moscow's

⁹² Hahn, *Missions Accomplished?*, p. 27.

⁹³ The best treatment of Syria's role in the Arab Cold War is found in Patrick Seale, *The Struggle for Syria: A Study in Post-War Arab Politics, 1945-1958* (London: Oxford University Press, 1987).

⁹⁴ Dawisha, *Iraq*, p. 139; Yaqub, *Containing Arab Nationalism*, p. 34-36.

⁹⁵ The ICP drew its support mostly from students, bureaucrats, and teachers, as well as workers in the oil, port, and railway sectors. See Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, p. 64 (quote); Dawisha, *Iraq*, p. 105.

regional designs.⁹⁶ As will be seen, US policies in Iraq during the Eisenhower presidency continued to be influenced by worries about the residual strength and capabilities of Iraqi communists, even when facing heavy government repression.

American officials believed they had several carrots at their disposal to improve the larger contours of the US-Iraqi partnership and defend Western strategic interests in Baghdad. One such inducement was technical assistance. The Truman administration established a brand new technical assistance program for Iraq in April 1951, to be administered by Point IV (also known as the United States Operations Mission [USOM] or the International Cooperation Agency [ICA]).⁹⁷ Chapter Four describes in detail how Iraqi government authorities, particularly Nuri al-Said and Fadhil Jamali, eagerly applied for Point IV assistance in executing their vaunted development and modernization program.

Equally attractive for Iraqi officials was the allure of American military aid. Iraqi government leaders actively campaigned for military assistance in 1949 and 1950, insisting to their American counterparts that Washington was neglecting its ally. US diplomats eschewed formal commitments on this front out of deference to their British partners' authority in this realm and in retribution for Iraq's position on the Palestine question. Prime Minister Nuri al-Said's emerging interest in joining a regional defense organization convinced some US policymakers to consider extending military assistance as a reward.⁹⁸ It is ironic, given London's opposition to the expanding US role in the Iraqi arms arena in the 1950s, that it was actually a British request for US assistance that

⁹⁶ Hahn, *Missions Accomplished?*, p. 24-25.

⁹⁷ Hahn, *Missions Accomplished?*, p. 28.

⁹⁸ Thacher, "Reflections on US Foreign Policy Toward Iraq in the 1950s," p. 65-66; Axelgard, "US Policy Toward Iraq, 1946-1958," p. 86-96.

opened the formal door to US aid programs. In 1952, with UK defense production unable to meet the necessary requirements for Iraq's military expansion program, UK government authorities asked the Joint Chiefs of Staff whether they could help fill in the gaps. By the time official channels in the US government deemed Iraq eligible for military assistance in late 1952, the British were again able to fulfill Iraq's requirements without American assistance.⁹⁹ It was too late by this point. For the rest of the pre-revolutionary period in Iraq, UK officials found themselves on the defensive, working feverishly to restrict the scope of US military aid programs. This slow disintegration of UK power and the concurrent rise of American influence in the Iraqi arms arena closely mirrored larger trends apparent throughout the Middle East in the first two decades of the postwar era.

Along with these broader trends in the US-Iraqi partnership, it is worth briefly discussing several political crises that took place within Iraq in this period. Three specific episodes from the 1940s and early 1950s clearly foreshadowed important aspects of US policy toward Baghdad under Eisenhower. Within Iraq in the 1930s and 1940s, a generational conflict emerged between the young "effendiya" (a term often used to describe an emerging and educated middle class) and the older sharifian officers who dominated state institutions. The result was a trend of rising political factionalism, with ongoing debates over the appropriate policies to pursue vis-à-vis Iraq's traditional ally in London.¹⁰⁰ As evidence of this dynamic, a cabinet headed by a group of nationalists, including Prime Minister Rashid Ali al-Gailani, rejected British pressures in 1940 to cut ties with Fascist Italy. Rashid Ali's resistance to London's strong-armed tactics inspired

⁹⁹ Axelgard, "US Policy Toward Iraq, 1946-1958," p. 103-106.

¹⁰⁰ Peter Wien, *Iraqi Arab Nationalism: Authoritarian, Totalitarian, and Pro-Fascist Inclinations, 1932-1941* (London: Routledge, 2006), 114-115.

a British military intervention to overthrow his government. A pro-UK regime was restored under occupation in Baghdad, and several of Rashid Ali's supporters were executed. The UK military occupation of Iraq from 1941 to 1945 not only kept Baghdad on a pro-Allied path, but it also safeguarded and firmly cemented the pro-Western regime of "old guard" politicians, led by Nuri al-Said, in power.¹⁰¹ As Phebe Marr concludes, the "second occupation indissolubly linked the ruling circles of Iraq, especially the regent and Nuri, to the British."¹⁰²

The Rashid Ali episode is important for our analysis of US policy in Baghdad in the post-1945 period. President Roosevelt gave critical support to his British allies during the political crisis. The Americans, like the UK, worried about a possible threat to Western oil reserves and the potential loss of Iraq to the Axis powers.¹⁰³ The US minister resident in Iraq, Paul Knabenshue, repeatedly insisted that Rashid Ali agree to London's demands. Washington also terminated Iraqi access to American dollar exchange credits and passed relevant intelligence to London on the maneuvers of the Iraqi military during the crisis.¹⁰⁴ Finally, Knabenshue physically sneaked the Iraqi Regent, hidden in the back seat of his car, out of Baghdad to escape the hands of nationalists during the crisis. Peter Hahn notes that Knabenshue's actions "marked the first recorded physical U.S. intervention in the internal politics of Iraq."¹⁰⁵ Knabenshue and other US officials thereafter cheered the return of the pro-Western regime, led by Nuri al-Said, to power.

As Axelgard and others have rightly noted, the Rashid Ali episode served as a

¹⁰¹ Axelgard, "US Policy Toward Iraq, 1946-1958," p. 15, 18; Silverfarb, *The Twilight of British Ascendancy in the Middle East*, p. 81; Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, p. 102.

¹⁰² Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, p. 56.

¹⁰³ Hahn, *Missions Accomplished?*, p. 20; Yaqub, *Containing Arab Nationalism*, p. 23-24.

¹⁰⁴ Axelgard, "US Policy Toward Iraq, 1946-1958," p. 16-18; Axelgard, "US Support for the British Position in Pre-Revolutionary Iraq," p. 79.

¹⁰⁵ Axelgard, "US Support for the British Position in Pre-Revolutionary Iraq," p. 79; Hahn, *Missions Accomplished?*, p. 8 (quote).

“harbinger” for future US policy vis-à-vis the Iraqis and the British.¹⁰⁶ In this episode, as was the case under Eisenhower in later years, American officials firmly supported the re-entrenchment of the conservative, authoritarian, pro-Western regime in Baghdad, along with the larger dimensions of UK policy in Iraq.

The second political crisis emerged shortly after the conclusion of World War II. The Iraqi Regent took steps in late 1947 to renegotiate the terms of the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of 1930 to make the agreement more palatable to nationalists demanding the end of UK authority over Baghdad’s affairs.¹⁰⁷ The subsequent agreement, signed at the Portsmouth naval base in January 1948, provided for the withdrawal of UK forces and the transfer of authority over two RAF bases to Iraqi hands. Even so, the deal still seriously restricted Iraqi sovereignty. It allowed the UK unrestricted access to Iraqi military facilities in the event of war and provided for the continuation of UK-Iraqi military supply lines.¹⁰⁸ The Iraqi public’s anger with the ruling regime had already been whetted by the inflationary costs of World War II, the poor harvest of 1947, and the Partition Plan announcement of the same year for Palestine. The 1948 Portsmouth Treaty added to this volatile mix. It led to an explosion of outrage from many Iraqis, including its students, trade unionists, and lower classes. Massive demonstrations broke out across the country in opposition to the treaty, with police killing scores of protestors in response.¹⁰⁹ The Regent was forced to withdraw his support for the agreement. The 1948 *Wathba* (meaning “the leap”), Marr argues, “illustrated the depth and breadth of resentment, from both left and right, against the regime and its foreign connection.” The

¹⁰⁶ Axelgard, “US Support for the British Position in Pre-Revolutionary Iraq,” p. 79.

¹⁰⁷ Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*, p. 545-546.

¹⁰⁸ Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*, p. 550; Silverfarb, *The Twilight of British Ascendancy in the Middle East*, p. 134, 136.

¹⁰⁹ Dawisha, *Iraq*, p. 107; Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, p. 65; Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, p. 113, 118.

episode also served, as Axelgard notes, as a precursor to the revolutionary unrest of July 1958.¹¹⁰

Equally important for our purposes was the role of the United States in this crisis. Not surprisingly, American diplomats gave UK officials and the Iraqi Regent their strong support for the process of treaty renegotiation. US officials informed their Iraqi counterparts that Washington considered it critical that the treaty discussions conclude successfully. American enthusiasm for the deal was quickly muted when observers came to appreciate the depth of popular resentment toward the agreement in Baghdad.¹¹¹ Yet again, as in the Rashid Ali episode and in later years, American actions in the 1948 *Wathba* placed Washington firmly in the camp of its UK allies and the elite-led regime in Baghdad.

The final episode of political upheaval in Iraq in the immediate post-1945 period came just a few months before Eisenhower entered the White House. A wave of popular strikes and violent demonstrations broke out in Iraq in the summer and fall of 1952. The protests, described by Marr as the “most serious outbreak of violence since the *Wathba*,” were fueled by a number of factors. This included the postponement of national elections, rising costs of living, and general discontent with the status quo rule of the central regime. The unrest also came directly on the heels of revolutionary upheaval in Iran and Egypt in the prior two years.¹¹² Central authorities in Baghdad again resorted to repressive tactics to crush protestors leading the 1952 *Intifada* (meaning “the upheaval” or “the shaking off”). Despite the violent imposition of martial law, Marr suggests, the

¹¹⁰ Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, p. 65 (quote); Axelgard, “US Policy Toward Iraq, 1946-1958,” p. 25.

¹¹¹ Axelgard, “US Support for the British Position in Pre-Revolutionary Iraq,” p. 80-81; Hahn, *Missions Accomplished?*, p. 25.

¹¹² Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, p. 71 (quote), 72; Dawisha, *Iraq*, p. 110; Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*, p. 666-670.

“widespread alienation of critical sectors of the population was clear.”¹¹³ For the purposes of this study, the 1952 *Intifada* offers fascinating parallels with the anti-colonial, anti-American spirit that formed a central part of the Qasim regime’s governance and popular sentiment in Baghdad following the July 1958 Iraqi Revolution. In the 1952 disturbances, Axelgard argues, protests against the regime “became mingled with denunciations of ‘Anglo-American imperialists.’” The USIS facility in Baghdad was burned down by demonstrators in spectacular fashion.¹¹⁴ The events of late 1952 offered a clear warning: the Americans’ position was now inextricably linked with the unpopular British and Iraqi authorities in the minds of important segments of Iraqi opposition forces.

The incoming Eisenhower administration brought to the fore two individuals with a wealth of experience in international affairs. President Dwight D. Eisenhower famously served as chief of staff of the US Army and later as Supreme Allied Commander of NATO forces.¹¹⁵ Secretary of State John Foster Dulles worked at the law firm Sullivan and Cromwell in the interwar period focusing on German debt and reparations problems.¹¹⁶ He then served as chief foreign policy adviser to the presidential candidate Thomas Dewey before leading negotiations on the Japanese peace treaty. By

¹¹³ Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, p. 71, 72 (quote); Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*, p. 666-670.

¹¹⁴ Axelgard, “US Policy Toward Iraq, 1946-1958,” p. 80 (quote), 79, 99; Thacher, “Reflections on US Foreign Policy Toward Iraq in the 1950s,” p. 71; Dawisha, *Iraq*, p. 110.

¹¹⁵ Robert Divine, *Eisenhower and the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 4; Robert Bowie and Richard Immerman, *Waging Peace: How Eisenhower Shaped an Enduring Cold War Strategy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 42-43.

¹¹⁶ Yaqub, *Containing Arab Nationalism*, p. 27; Ronald Pruessen, *John Foster Dulles: The Road to Power* (New York: Free Press, 1982), 58-79, for example.

the time of Eisenhower's election in 1952, Salim Yaqub writes, Dulles was "widely regarded as the Republican Party's chief foreign policy adviser."¹¹⁷

President 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.¹¹⁸ Revisionist scholarship on the Eisenhower presidency has added valuable insights on this point. Eisenhower and Dulles worked much more as a "team" on foreign policy questions than earlier historians recognized. Contrary to popular perceptions at the time, Wm. Roger Louis argues, President Eisenhower was "highly intelligent, hardworking, and decisive."¹¹⁹ More than that, Eisenhower skillfully utilized Dulles as his "lightning rod" that saved the president from public scrutiny.¹²⁰ While the president gave Dulles wide latitude on many foreign affairs questions, Eisenhower carefully directed policy directions on important issues and even overrode Dulles' decisions when necessary.¹²¹ These trends held true for the process of policy deliberation regarding Iraq. Dulles and Eisenhower collaborated closely to develop policy relating to Middle East collective defense before the July 1958 Iraqi Revolution. The president also made his presence known on debates relating to

¹¹⁷ Yaqub, *Containing Arab Nationalism*, p. 27, 28 (quote).

¹¹⁸ For a discussion of the "older" historiography of the Eisenhower presidency, see Wm. Roger Louis, "Dulles, Suez, and the British," in Richard Immerman (ed.) *John Foster Dulles and the Diplomacy of the Cold War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 134-135; Richard Melanson and David Mayers, "Preface," in Richard Melanson and David Mayers (eds.) *Reevaluating Eisenhower: American Foreign Policy in the 1950s* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 1.

¹¹⁹ Wm. Roger Louis, "Dulles, Suez, and the British," p. 134, 135 (quote). See also Divine, *Eisenhower and the Cold War*, p. viii; Stephen Rabe, *Eisenhower and Latin America: The Foreign Policy of Anti-Communism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 174.

¹²⁰ Richard Immerman, "Introduction," in Richard Immerman (ed.) *John Foster Dulles and the Diplomacy of the Cold War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 9, 12.

¹²¹ Kenneth Thompson, "The Strengths and Weaknesses of Eisenhower's Leadership," in Richard Melanson and David Mayers (eds.) *Reevaluating Eisenhower: American Foreign Policy in the 1950s* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 17; Immerman, "Introduction," p. 9.

American covert intervention programs in Baghdad in the spring of 1959, openly disagreeing with Dulles in the process.

The Eisenhower administration inherited an extraordinarily complex international situation in which America's global commitments had undergone a dramatic transformation. Since the end of WWII, the United States had proclaimed the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan, and established NATO alongside its closest allies to counter the Soviet threat.¹²² More than that, Rolf Steininger argues that the crises in Czechoslovakia and Berlin, the fall of China, and the start of the Korean War each "contributed to Dulles's sense of urgency" in "regaining" the American "initiative" in the global competition with the Soviet Union.¹²³ The official rhetoric of the Eisenhower administration quite famously portrayed the specter of international communism as a monolithic enemy whose actions were determined exclusively by communist ideology. In fact, the administration spoke privately in much more nuanced tones about the communist threat than the public record indicates.¹²⁴ As Ronald Pruessen has argued, Dulles' previous experience serving as a lawyer in the world of international finance instilled in him the qualities of flexibility, pragmatism, and commitment to gradual reforms that belied his ideological, anti-communist public diatribes.¹²⁵

¹²² Bowie and Immerman, *Waging Peace*, p. 11-12.

¹²³ Rolf Steininger, "John Foster Dulles, the European Defense Community, and the German Question," in Richard Immerman (ed.) *John Foster Dulles and the Diplomacy of the Cold War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 79, 80 (quote); Richard Melanson, "The Foundations of Eisenhower's Foreign Policy," in Richard Melanson and David Mayers (eds.) *Reevaluating Eisenhower: American Foreign Policy in the 1950s* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 35; Bowie and Immerman, *Waging Peace*, p. 39; John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy During the Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 145.

¹²⁴ Richard Melanson and David Mayers, "Preface," p. 3; David Mayers, "Eisenhower and Communism: Later Findings," in Richard Melanson and David Mayers (eds.) *Reevaluating Eisenhower: American Foreign Policy in the 1950s* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 88.

¹²⁵ Pruessen, *John Foster Dulles*, especially p. 75, 132, 168-177, 214-217, 294-297; Yaqub, *Containing Arab Nationalism*, p. 28.

Officials in the administration feared that additional communist advances would further overturn the global configuration of power and damage American credibility on the international stage. In guarding against this scenario, however, the Eisenhower White House had to align the limited means of American capabilities with Washington's expanding global interests.¹²⁶ The "New Look" strategy was the product of this broader recognition that the United States could not afford to endlessly expand American interests, along with its defense budget, without enduring major economic stresses, including rampant inflation or the imposition of centralized economic constraints and taxes.¹²⁷ The New Look instead emphasized "asymmetrical response." The Americans would deploy, in a cost-effective manner, their own unique advantages against the weaknesses of their Soviet adversary. On this point, Washington's project emphasized nuclear weapons over expensive regular force deployments.¹²⁸ The administration also felt, in Gaddis' words, that they must "appear willing to use nuclear weapons wherever its interests were at stake." Therefore, Dulles' chilling pronouncements of "massive retaliation" against communist aggression were carefully designed to enhance the credibility of the US nuclear deterrent.¹²⁹

Equally important for our purposes was the New Look strategy's emphasis on global alliances and covert action capabilities. These components fit comfortably within what Gaddis calls the New Look's broader mandate of pursuing the "maximum possible

¹²⁶ Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, p. 128-131, 142-45; Bowie and Immerman, *Waging Peace*, p. 43-44.

¹²⁷ Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, p. 130-32; Jean Edward Smith, *Eisenhower in War and Peace* (New York: Random House, 2012), 642-644; Richard Melanson, "The Foundations of Eisenhower's Foreign Policy," p. 51-54; Divine, *Eisenhower and the Cold War*, p. 33-34.

¹²⁸ Richard Melanson, "The Foundations of Eisenhower's Foreign Policy," p. 54 (quote); Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, p. 145-146; Smith, *Eisenhower in War and Peace*, p. 643-645; Divine, *Eisenhower and the Cold War*, p. 37.

¹²⁹ Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, p. 146 (quote), 144-146; Bowie and Immerman, *Waging Peace*, p. 200; Divine, *Eisenhower and the Cold War*, p. 13, 38-39; Smith, *Eisenhower in War and Peace*, p. 643.

deterrence of communism at the minimum possible cost.”¹³⁰ The Eisenhower administration committed itself to extending the American “security umbrella” to states bordering the Soviet Union and China. This would theoretically discourage communist aggression while drawing on the assets and resources of those allied nations.¹³¹ Similarly, the expanding clandestine capabilities of the Central Intelligence Agency [CIA] seemed to offer a quick, bloodless, and relatively cheap method of effecting political change around the globe. Under the broad mandate extended by Eisenhower to the agency, the CIA experienced what was later termed the “golden age of covert operations.”¹³² These related components of the New Look strategy were, as will be seen, equally manifest in the Iraqi theatre. Dulles, in this period of “Pactomania,” helped bring Iraq into the anti-Soviet collective defense organization known as the Baghdad Pact. Equally, following the July 1958 Iraqi Revolution, the government deployed the CIA’s covert action capabilities in an effort to unseat the revolutionary regime in Baghdad.

Not surprisingly, the administration’s primary focus in foreign affairs was on Europe. Much like his predecessor Dean Acheson, John Foster Dulles considered European Cold War issues of primary significance to American security.¹³³ The German problem occupied much of the administration’s attention, as the United States sought to

¹³⁰ Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, p. 162 (quote), 145; James Callanan, *Covert Action in the Cold War: US Policy, Intelligence, and CIA Operations* (London: IB Tauris, 2010), 86, 93.

¹³¹ Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, p. 150-151; Richard Melanson, “The Foundations of Eisenhower’s Foreign Policy,” p. 54-55; Divine, *Eisenhower and the Cold War*, p. 37.

¹³² Nick Cullather, *Secret History: The CIA’s Classified Account of Its Operations in Guatemala, 1952-1954* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 7, 36; Callanan, *Covert Action in the Cold War*, p. 93, 103; Gregory Trevorton, *Covert Action: The Limits of Intervention in the Postwar World* (New York: Basic Books, 1987), 44-83. The term “golden age of covert operations” is also borrowed from Professor Wesley Wark.

¹³³ Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, “John Foster Dulles and the Taiwan Roots of the ‘Two Chinas’ Policy,” in Richard Immerman (ed.) *John Foster Dulles and the Diplomacy of the Cold War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 235; Divine, *Eisenhower and the Cold War*, p. 10.

ally West Germany with the Western powers and bring about a Franco-German rapprochement. Washington's pursuit of Western European integration through the European Defence Community, however, later ran aground because of continental tensions.¹³⁴ Events outside Europe did, of course, occupy the new administration's attention at various points. In Southeast Asia, and Vietnam in particular, Dulles and Eisenhower would create a collective security apparatus, as in the Middle East, to prop up US allies and defend against communist encroachments.¹³⁵ In Latin America, similarly, Eisenhower and Dulles feared they were witnessing the expansion of a vast, well-organized communist movement.¹³⁶ In these arenas, as in the Middle East, the Eisenhower administration tended to view regional political tensions and problems through the wider lens of Cold War competition with the Soviet Union.¹³⁷

The president approached Middle East questions with a specific set of priorities in mind. For one, the new government believed that Truman had been overly partial to Israel at the expense of US relations with the Arab states. Eisenhower was therefore determined to find a more "even-handed" approach to relations with the Jewish state and the Arab countries of the Middle East.¹³⁸ Moreover, Eisenhower and Dulles engaged Middle East policy debates with a deep appreciation for the complexities created by the existing British position in the region. British power, though diminished in the years

¹³⁴ Rolf Steininger, "John Foster Dulles, the European Defense Community, and the German Question," p. 79-82; Marc Trachtenberg, *A Constructed Peace: The Making of the European Settlement, 1945-1963* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 62, 122.

¹³⁵ From this strategy emerged the domino theory, which suggested that the loss of any single portion of Indochina to the communist bloc would lead to the collapse of all of Southeast Asia. See George Herring, *America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1950-1975* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2002), 47-49.

¹³⁶ Guatemala soon came to seize particular American attention. See Rabe, *Eisenhower and Latin America*, p. 32; Cullather, *Secret History*, p. 37.

¹³⁷ Stephen Rabe, "Dulles, Latin America, and Cold War Anticommunism," in Richard Immerman (ed.) *John Foster Dulles and the Diplomacy of the Cold War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 162.

¹³⁸ Isaac Alteras, *Eisenhower and Israel: US-Israeli Relations, 1953-1960* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993), xv, 21, 316; Abraham Ben-Zvi, *Decade of Transition: Eisenhower, Kennedy and the Origins of the American-Israeli Alliance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 28-29; 33, 35.

after 1945, remained formidable. The British economy produced close to “one-third of the industrial output” of the non-Soviet European countries, while British military officials owned nuclear weapons and more overall weaponry than the combined forces of other NATO members.¹³⁹ The British maintained valuable military assets in the Middle East necessary for waging a potential war against the Soviet Union. Western political influence in the region also helped defend against possible Soviet encroachments on Middle Eastern oil reserves.¹⁴⁰ On the other hand, British and French political power was closely associated with colonial governance and did much to inflame anti-Western nationalisms in places like Iraq. Even so, a rapid collapse of British power in the Middle East could theoretically open the door to Soviet meddling.¹⁴¹ The Eisenhower administration saw itself as tasked with carefully walking the tightrope between supporting its ally in London and securing the goodwill of nationalist groups in Iraq, Egypt, Syria, and elsewhere.¹⁴² As the subsequent chapters explain, Washington was not particularly successful in carefully treading this fine line.

¹³⁹ Daniel Williamson, “Understandable Failure: The Eisenhower Administration’s Strategic Goals in Iraq, 1953-1958,” *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 17, no. 3 (September 2006), 605.

¹⁴⁰ William Stivers, *America’s Confrontation with Revolutionary Change in the Middle East, 1948-1983* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1986), 9.

¹⁴¹ Yaqub, *Containing Arab Nationalism*, p. 29.

¹⁴² Stivers, *America’s Confrontation with Revolutionary Change in the Middle East, 1948-1983*, p. 12.

Introduction to Part I: Hashemite Iraq in the Eisenhower Era

Iraq in the period before July 1958 was an authoritarian parliamentary state whose sovereignty was undermined by the British colonial presence in Baghdad. The country nominally had the trappings of a constitutional monarchy. In reality, one US intelligence study concluded, control of the government and crown lay monopolized in the hands of an “established oligarchy of professional politicians, wealthy landlords, businessmen, and tribal leaders.”¹⁴³ An “old guard” grouping of politicians, trained as Ottoman bureaucrats before World War I, dominated the landscape of Hashemite Iraq and left few avenues open for opposition elements to challenge for control of the government.

Of all the old guard figures, none was more critical to the direction of Iraqi politics than Nuri al-Said. Nuri al-Said was the dominant political force in Iraq for nearly three decades, serving as prime minister more than a dozen times before his death during the revolution of July 1958.¹⁴⁴ Al-Said was a former member of the Ottoman armed forces and later fought alongside the sharifian forces during the First World War.¹⁴⁵ In addition, al-Said regularly served in a variety of other important government posts, including the portfolio of minister of defence. In the 1953 to 1958 period alone, al-Said ruled the country as prime minister on three separate occasions for almost three years in total. In addition, he served as the first and only prime minister of the Arab Union between its formation in March 1958 and the Iraqi Revolution of 14 July 1958. Al-Said

¹⁴³ #435 - NIE 36.2-56 – The Outlook for Iraq’s Stability and Foreign Policies, 17 July 1956, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 998.

¹⁴⁴ Charles Tripp, *A History of Iraq* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 105; Peter Hahn, *Missions Accomplished? The United States and Iraq Since World War I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 16.

¹⁴⁵ Hahn, *Missions Accomplished?*, p. 16.

was Great Britain and America's "man" in Baghdad and the quintessential "strong man" of Hashemite Iraqi politics.

Fadhil Jamali loomed large in the pre-revolutionary period, Silverfarb writes, as another "staunch upholder of the existing order" in Iraq.¹⁴⁶ Jamali, an Iraqi Shi'a, served two terms as prime minister from 1953 to 1954 and held several other powerful positions, including foreign minister and president of the Iraqi parliament. He embodied the hopes of many American officials seeking the pro-Western "modernization" of Iraq. Jamali's personal life certainly suggested a pro-Western disposition; he was married to a Canadian woman and earned his Ph.D. from Columbia University.¹⁴⁷ More than that, he pursued policies, like Nuri al-Said, that aligned closely with the Americans' strategic objectives in Iraq. Jamali was firmly anti-communist in outlook, avowedly supported the Baghdad Pact, and signed the US-Iraqi military aid agreement of April 1954 as one of his final acts as prime minister. Jamali was equally an enthusiastic supporter of collaboration with Point IV development experts in modernizing Iraqi society.

While Jamali offered great promise as a sincere and dedicated reformer, his political platform also collided at points with the privileges of Iraq's powerful stakeholders.¹⁴⁸ As Chapter Five explains, Nuri al-Said and his core group of supporters engineered the downfall of Jamali's cabinet in the spring of 1954. These developments confirmed for many American observers that Iraq's best hope for substantive development and reform lay with the person of Nuri al-Said. More than that, many US observers insisted that al-Said was the only leader capable of maintaining a tight lid on

¹⁴⁶ Daniel Silverfarb, *The Twilight of British Ascendancy in the Middle East: A Case Study of Iraq, 1941-1950* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), 128.

¹⁴⁷ Silverfarb, *The Twilight of British Ascendancy in the Middle East*, p. 128.

¹⁴⁸ Matthew Elliot, *'Independent Iraq': The Monarchy and British Influence, 1941-58* (London: IB Tauris, 1996), 35.

internal dissent and opposition in an attempt to preserve political “stability” and shape (or “control”) Iraqi developments in pro-American directions. Indeed, Nuri al-Said’s tenure as prime minister recorded a long history of ruthlessly exercising repressive authority to crush forces opposed to the old guard’s rule.¹⁴⁹ The criminalization of constitutional activities and political parties were key features of Hashemite Iraq’s political sphere, particularly under Nuri al-Said’s watch.¹⁵⁰ Members of the dissolved National Democratic Party [NDP] and Istiqlal (two of the most important nationalist and neutralist opposition organizations) regularly submitted petitions demanding the resumption of open political activities.¹⁵¹ Following Jamali’s downfall in 1954, Nuri al-Said returned to the post of prime minister and again abolished political parties.¹⁵² Attempts by opposition groups to distribute leaflets in the streets of Baghdad often led to the arrests of party activists.¹⁵³

The Iraqi Communist Party [ICP], a powerful player in Iraqi politics following the July 1958 revolution, remained an illegal organization for much of this era. The ICP was all but decimated by government repression and the execution of its leadership in 1949. However, the party enjoyed a revival in the early to mid-1950s, establishing “front organizations” and auxiliary groups like the Peace Partisans and securing popular support

¹⁴⁹ Juan Lennart Michel Romero, “The Iraqi Revolution of 1958 and the Search for Security in the Middle East,” Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of Texas at Austin, 2008, 69.

¹⁵⁰ #861 - From Baghdad (Berry) to Secretary of State, 9 January 1953, Confidential US State Department Central Files: Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954 [Hereby referred to as Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954], Reel 2.

¹⁵¹ Department of the Air Force – Staff Message Division –From USAIRA Baghdad Iraq Sgd Berry to CSAF Washington DC for Dir Intel, 24 May 1953, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 3.

¹⁵² Adeed Dawisha, *Iraq: A Political History from Independence to Occupation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 112-113.

¹⁵³ #637 - From Hermann Frederick Eilts, Second Secretary of Embassy in Baghdad to Department of State –Arrest of Persons Distributing ‘Liberation Party’ Leaflets, 13 February 1956, Confidential US State Department Central Files: Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959 [Hereby referred to as Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959], Reel 1.

among key segments of the population, including port workers, students, and lawyers, in spite of intensive government scrutiny.¹⁵⁴ As part of its violent anti-communism, al-Said's government actively expelled "student agitators" and arrested scores of suspected communists. Other anti-communist measures adopted by al-Said's cabinets included outlawing youth groups serving as communist associations (such as the Peace Partisans), dismissing suspected leftists from the civil service, and denationalizing citizens convicted of either communist or leftist activities.¹⁵⁵ Iraqi officials openly bragged to their American counterparts that their intelligence service routinely beat suspected communist prisoners to extract confessions.¹⁵⁶ The government also regularly issued emergency ordinances that allowed them to censor critical press outlets.¹⁵⁷

Government authorities redeployed authoritarian tactics following the outbreak of the Suez War in late 1956. Major demonstrations broke out in Baghdad, Mosul, and Najaf in November and December involving students and other groups protesting British imperial policy and the central government's rule. These disorders were contained when Nuri al-Said dispatched the army to crush the protests.¹⁵⁸ In the immediate post Suez-aftermath, al-Said resorted to jailing former leaders of leftist and Arab nationalist groups (like the NDP and Istiqlal), promulgating martial law, censoring the press, and closing all post-secondary schools in Baghdad to maintain order.

¹⁵⁴ Phebe Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2012), 58, 71-72; Marion Farouk-Sluglett and Peter Sluglett, *Iraq Since 1958: From Revolution to Dictatorship* (London: IB Tauris, 2001), 41-43; Johan Franzen, *Red Star over Iraq: Iraqi Communism Before Saddam* (London: Hurst, 2011), 56-80; Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, p. 120-121, 126, 130, 138. Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett, Franzen, and Tripp each refer to these groups from the pre-revolutionary period, particularly the Peace Partisans, as communist "front organizations." See Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett, *Iraq Since 1958*, p. 43; Franzen, *Red Star over Iraq*, p. 58-59; Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, p. 126.

¹⁵⁵ Romero, "The Iraqi Revolution of 1958 and the Search for Security in the Middle East," p. 84.

¹⁵⁶ #617 - From Hermann Frederick Eilts, Second Secretary of Embassy in Baghdad to Department of State - Recent Police Operations Against the Iraqi Communist Party, 10 June 1955, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 1.

¹⁵⁷ Dawisha, *Iraq*, p. 112-113.

¹⁵⁸ Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, p. 76.

The rigging of elections by the governing elite, the censorship of critical press voices, and the suspension of political activities all fueled the public's anger with the central authorities.¹⁵⁹ Opposition elements were further animated by the related issues of Western oil concessions and Iraqi foreign policy vis-à-vis the United States and Britain. Nationalists, neutralists, and anti-colonial groups regularly demanded the nationalization of the British-dominated Iraq Petroleum Company [IPC].¹⁶⁰ The government undertook a vigorous campaign of media repression to dampen criticism of IPC and insulate the regime's relationship with the West in the petroleum sector from these pressures. As later chapters explain, nationalist groups also criticized the American and Iraqi governments for signing the US-Iraqi military aid agreement in 1954 and Baghdad Pact in 1955.

Outside the formal parameters of political life, wide segments of the population, including students, professionals, and emerging middle class, consistently professed strong anti-government sentiment. These groups would search in vain before July 1958 for legalized political outlets for their activism. On top of these challenges, deep structural inequalities inherent to the makeup of the Iraqi post-colonial state remained throughout the period, including major disparities in wealth and power between the masses and old guard of politicians. Iraqi leaders would turn to the United States for assistance in executing a massive development program in a failed effort to solidify the foundations of the government and ameliorate some of these problems.

¹⁵⁹ Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, p. 66; Dawisha, *Iraq*, p. 110-111.

¹⁶⁰ Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, p. 71; #75 - From Basra (James Cortada) to Department of State – Basra Political Developments – December 1953, 6 January 1954, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2.

During Eisenhower's presidency, the United States formed a close strategic partnership with a troubled, fragile Iraqi regime that faced serious challenges at home and abroad. The Eisenhower administration saw itself as tasked with protecting and advancing American interests in the realm of Iraqi oil concessions, military aid, collective defense efforts, and modernization programs while also closely monitoring the pace and direction of Iraqi political trends. More broadly, they worked to channel, shape, and control Iraqi political developments in pro-American directions and safeguard political stability in Baghdad. The following four chapters examine these critical issues and the ways in which they influenced and shaped the US-Iraqi relationship in the period from January 1953 to the July 1958 Iraqi Revolution.

Chapter Two: The US, Iraqi Oil, and Western Military Aid

Chapter One examined how American companies gained access to the Iraqi oil market following the 1928 Red Line Agreement and maintained this point of access after World War II. In addition, the preceding chapter discussed how the US government stumbled into an opportunity to enter the Iraqi arms arena when the British requested their help in providing military aid to Baghdad. This chapter examines the American role in the Iraqi oil industry and the provision of Western military aid to Baghdad from the beginning of the Eisenhower administration in January 1953 to the revolution of 14 July 1958. The first section focuses on the Americans' strategies to promote and defend their interests in the Iraqi oil sector from a variety of challenges and threats. Section two examines the provision of US military aid to Iraq in the pre-revolutionary period. While portions of this chapter (and Chapter Three) discuss the important role played by the Iraqi leadership in securing US military assistance, this chapter is primarily focused on how the Eisenhower administration navigated its partnership with Britain in light of the emerging American interest in supplying military aid to Baghdad.

American Oil interests in Iraq, January 1953 to July 1958

The Eisenhower administration sought to preserve a stable, status quo environment conducive to the exploitation of Iraqi oil by Western companies and the shaping of Iraqi oil developments in pro-American avenues. To do so, US government officials tried to insulate American oil interests in Iraq from a variety of challenges. First, they needed to maintain amicable relationships not only with the heads of US companies operating in Iraq, but also with their British allies who dominated the Iraq

Petroleum Company [IPC] and its subsidiaries. At the same time, the rising tide of Arab nationalism sweeping across the Middle East presented a formidable threat to the stability of Western oil concessions in Iraq. By the summer of 1958, as well, IPC's relationship with the Iraqi ruling elite had begun to fray under the weight of regional, domestic, and marketplace pressures.

Before we turn to these key issues, several important operational details of the Iraqi oil industry must be noted. The Iraqi petroleum industry of the 1950s would have been barely recognizable to those who first secured Western oil concessions decades earlier. Exports from IPC fields at Kirkuk, the country's largest oil-producing area, travelled through northern pipelines owned by IPC to Banias, Syria and Tripoli, Lebanon.¹⁶¹ Subsidiary companies of IPC, the Basra Petroleum Company [BPC] and Mosul Petroleum Company [MPC], also began production in 1951 and 1952. BPC produced oil from a site near Basra that was connected by pipelines to the port of Al Faw. The relatively small amounts of oil produced by the Mosul Petroleum Company were similarly exported through IPC pipelines.¹⁶²

Pricing arrangements for Iraqi petroleum had also been transformed. IPC's original concessions gave them the "exclusive right" to market Iraq's oil and set levels of production. Thus, the Iraqi government had little formal power in the actual pricing of

¹⁶¹ AmEmbassy Baghdad (Gilbert Larsen, Economic Officer) to Department of State, #638, 14 February 1956, National Archives and Records Administration [NARA], Record Group [RG] 59, Central Decimal File [CDF] Iraq 1955-1959 - 887.2553, Box 4960; National Intelligence Survey – Iraq – NIS 30, 1 October 1957, CIA Electronic Reading Room [ERR], p. 9.

¹⁶² From Basra (James Cortada, American Consul) to Department of State, #63, 20 May 1953, Confidential US State Department Central Files: Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954 [Hereby referred to as Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954], Reel 15; National Intelligence Survey – Iraq – NIS 30, 1 October 1957, CIA ERR, p. 10; National Intelligence Survey – Iraq – NIS 30, 1 October 1957, CIA ERR, p. 40.

exported petroleum.¹⁶³ The Iraqi government's role in this regard changed in the years after 1950. In 1950, Middle East oil prices were posted publicly rather than decided at oil-exporting terminals in the Persian Gulf and Mediterranean.¹⁶⁴ As well, the Iraqi government headed by Prime Minister Nuri al-Said signed an agreement with IPC in February 1952 that transformed the original "fixed payment-per-unit of production" to a new profit-sharing formula. The Iraqi government would henceforth receive 50% of all profits derived from the oil companies' Iraqi operations.

As Abbas Alnasrawi notes, the 1952 accord "ushered in an era of unprecedented growth in the oil sector."¹⁶⁵ Relevant statistics from this period highlight the vast expansion of the Iraqi oil industry in the early 1950s. IPC alone jumped from producing 4.5 million tons of oil in 1946 to 23.5 million tons in 1954.¹⁶⁶ In the Middle East, only Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Kuwait were producing more petroleum annually than Iraq. More broadly, the Iraqi economy, which prior to World War II had been heavily focused on agriculture, had undergone a sizeable shift. As the 1957 National Intelligence Survey on Iraq noted, "by 1956 the petroleum sector outdistanced agriculture and accounted for about 27% of an estimated national income of ID [Iraqi Dinars] 292.4 million (US \$820 million)."¹⁶⁷ The growth of the Iraqi petroleum sector also dovetailed closely with the strategic requirements of America and its European allies in the postwar era. France,

¹⁶³ Abbas Alnasrawi, *The Economy of Iraq: Oil, Wars, and Destruction of Development and Prospects, 1950-2010* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1994), 1, 6.

¹⁶⁴ Alnasrawi, *The Economy of Iraq*, p. 6.

¹⁶⁵ Alnasrawi, *The Economy of Iraq*, p. 2 (quote), 6.

¹⁶⁶ IPC, MPC, and BPC Annual Report for 1954 – "Iraq Oil in 1954," 20 July 1955, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 – 887.2553, Box 4960; See Peter Hahn, *Missions Accomplished? The United States and Iraq Since World War I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 27 and Phebe Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2012), 68 for additional statistics on the growth of the oil sector.

¹⁶⁷ National Intelligence Survey – Iraq – NIS 30, 1 October 1957, CIA ERR, p. 35, 39.

Italy, and the UK (in that order) topped IPC's list as the three most common destinations for exported Iraqi oil in 1954.¹⁶⁸

Oil production and government revenues steadily rose in the early to mid-1950s. However, there were emerging problems for officials in the Eisenhower administration seeking "control" and "stability" in the Iraqi petroleum sector. One of the first crises to strike Iraqi oil was the move by pro-Nasser elements based in Syria to cut IPC pipelines carrying Iraqi crude in late 1956. This development, as well as the events of the Suez Crisis more broadly, visibly highlighted European dependency on Middle East oil supplies. British Foreign Office representatives noted that nearly the entire amount of IPC production went to European markets. More broadly, just less than 100 million tons out of a total 140 million tons of European oil supplies came from the Middle East in 1957.¹⁶⁹ America's European allies were vitally and inextricably tied to the fate of Iraqi oil. So too were Iraqi government officials who relied on oil revenues to fund their national development projects.¹⁷⁰

Other systemic problems lay underneath the seemingly prosperous façade of the Iraqi and international oil markets in the 1950s. The stability of prices for Iraqi petroleum soon crumbled in the post-Suez era. The imposition of voluntary oil import quotas by the US government in 1957 began to block access to the lucrative American oil

¹⁶⁸ National Intelligence Survey – Iraq – NIS 30, 1 October 1957, CIA ERR, p. 35, 39.

¹⁶⁹ David Lesch, *Syria and the United States: Eisenhower's Cold War in the Middle East* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), 96; From Foreign Office to Washington, #3375 - V1533/138, 28 August 1957, FO371-127795, British National Archives [BNA].

¹⁷⁰ Wm. Roger Louis, "The British and the Origins of the Iraqi Revolution," in Robert Fernea and Wm. Roger Louis (eds.) *The Iraqi Revolution of 1958: The Old Social Classes Revisited* (London: IB Tauris, 1991), 45; Stephen Randall, *United States Foreign Oil Policy Since World War I: For Profits and Security* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005), 262.

market for many foreign suppliers.¹⁷¹ The beginning of large-scale Soviet oil exports and the emergence of independent, non-integrated firms like the Japanese Arabian Oil Company onto the global petroleum scene also drove down prices.¹⁷² Finally, discounts offered by integrated firms like IPC on posted oil prices led to corresponding drops in the value of Iraqi petroleum.¹⁷³ The impact of these changes was just beginning to be felt by Western companies and the central authorities in Baghdad when the revolution struck Iraq in 1958.

It was in the context of this boom and bust cycle of petroleum pricing that the US government and oil firms operated in Iraq. One of the most important means by which US officials could navigate and control these marketplace challenges and protect American interests was by ensuring an amicable relationship with the US partners in IPC. This task was certainly not a new one for American policymakers, since government-business relations had strongly influenced US foreign policy considerations since the 18th century.

The relationship between the American government and business in the global oil market has been explored at length by the historian David Painter. Painter's seminal study describes a "symbiosis" of US foreign policy objectives and corporate profit

¹⁷¹ *Report, Multinational Oil Corporations and US Foreign Policy*, US Senate Subcommittee on Multinational Corporations of the Committee on Foreign Relations (Washington, 1975), 88.

¹⁷² *Report, Multinational Oil Corporations and US Foreign Policy* (quote); David Painter, *Oil and the American Century: The Political Economy of US Foreign Oil Policy, 1941-1954* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 206; Daniel Yergin, *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money, and Power* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991), 505-506; Alnasrawi, *The Economy of Iraq*, p. 7-8.

¹⁷³ Alnasrawi, *The Economy of Iraq*, p. 8; Yergin, *The Prize*, p. 514. The discounts were a means for integrated firms like IPC to compete with non-integrated corporations who could sell their product to "independent buyers at lower than posted prices." The impact of these marketplace changes are reflected in the relevant statistics from the period. Alnasrawi notes that while the price of Iraqi oil exported before the Suez Crisis was \$1.87 per barrel, by 1957-1958 the oil companies were being forced to offer significant discounts on their oil (as high as 40 cents). Posted prices correspondingly fell in short order.

interests that led Washington to support oil firms operating in the Middle East.¹⁷⁴

Painter's definition of the "corporatist" relationship between government and private enterprise in the oil market is worth quoting:

Even though private interests rather than government agencies were given primary responsibility for implementing US foreign oil policy, the US government was nonetheless deeply involved in maintaining an international environment in which private companies could operate with security and profit, assuring the security and stability of the Middle East, containing economic nationalism, and sanctioning and supporting private control of the world's oil.¹⁷⁵

Painter, of course, does not see the corporatist partnership between government and business as perfectly harmonious. Divisions within the oil industry and between government and private companies were a regular feature of US oil diplomacy.¹⁷⁶ The case of American government-business interaction in Iraq was no different from the occasional disputes between oil companies and government in Saudi Arabia or Latin America in the postwar period.¹⁷⁷ In the Iraqi context, government mandarins in Washington faced stringent criticism from the American partners in IPC (the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey [Socony-NJ] and the Standard Oil Company of New York [Socony-Vacuum]) over the civil suit anti-trust action launched by the Eisenhower administration against major US oil companies operating in the Middle East in 1953 and 1954.¹⁷⁸ The US partners in IPC (as well as the Eisenhower White House) were similarly

¹⁷⁴ Painter, *Oil and the American Century*, p. 1 (quote), 209. His ideas were later echoed and expanded by writers like Daniel Yergin. See Yergin, *The Prize*, p. 397.

¹⁷⁵ Painter, *Oil and the American Century*, p. 1.

¹⁷⁶ Painter, *Oil and the American Century*, p. 207.

¹⁷⁷ See, for the Saudi example, Robert Vitalis, *America's Kingdom: Mythmaking on the Saudi Oil Frontier* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 105-106.

¹⁷⁸ President Truman initially opened criminal indictments against the major US oil companies overseas on the basis of their supposed monopolistic practices. Though Truman chose to drop the criminal suit, the Eisenhower administration continued with a civil suit anti-trust action. See Burton Kaufman, "Mideast Multinational Oil, US Foreign Policy, and Antitrust: The 1950s," *Journal of American History* 63 (March 1977), 938-943.

investigated by the Senate Judiciary Committee in 1957 for cartel-like practices under the aegis of the Middle East Emergency Committee [MEEC] during the Suez Crisis.¹⁷⁹

Foreign policy strategies were fair game for contestation as well. The US firms in IPC at times questioned the wisdom of the Eisenhower administration's approach to Syria in 1957.¹⁸⁰

Nonetheless, as Painter reminds us, these divisions between Congress and the executive, and between the executive and US businesses, did not preclude consensus that “the United States had a preemptive right to the world's resources” after World War II. Debate centered on the extent of the government's role in this process and how best to achieve this common end (in this case, the orderly, profitable development of Iraqi oil concessions).¹⁸¹ The aforementioned examples are noteworthy exceptions to the general pattern of close cooperation and consultation between branches of the US government and US oil companies operating in Iraq.

In a general sense, the former US military attaché in Iraq, Wilbur Crane Eveland, recalled that the State Department gave great credence to reports on the situation in Baghdad produced by the US partners in IPC. Moreover, Eveland explained that visits by Howard Page of Socony-NJ to the US embassy in Baghdad were “frequent and elicited serious attention” from the ambassador.¹⁸² There were also a number of specific examples in which IPC and the US government maintained an active dialogue on local and regional issues. This dialogue, in turn, revealed and strengthened their overlapping

¹⁷⁹ Kaufman, “Mideast Multinational Oil, US Foreign Policy, and Antitrust,” p. 955; *Petroleum, the Anti-Trust Laws, and Government Policies*, US Senate Committee on the Judiciary (Washington, 1957), Introduction, 1.

¹⁸⁰ Memorandum of Conversation – Iraq Petroleum Company Operations, 9 December 1957, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 - 887.2553, Box 4961.

¹⁸¹ Painter, *Oil and the American Century*, p. 208.

¹⁸² Wilbur Crane Eveland, *Ropes of Sand: America's Failure in the Middle East* (New York: Norton, 1980), 46.

interests in guarding American oil rights and directing Iraqi petroleum developments in pro-American directions.

Some cases pre-date the Eisenhower administration. In September 1950, members of Socony-NJ and Socony-Vacuum met with representatives from the State Department's Near Eastern Affairs Division [NEA] to discuss IPC's decision to raise royalty payments to Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Said's government. NEA officials explained they had long pushed for a resolution of the dispute to avoid instability in IPC-Iraqi relations. Burton Berry of NEA was pleased with IPC's decision, but stressed the need for improvement in IPC's public relations campaign in Iraq.¹⁸³ Berry also distanced Washington's positions from those of the company when he refused to support wholeheartedly IPC's stance on hotly-contested questions like the deferment of production in the firm's concession areas.¹⁸⁴

One year later, the US companies in IPC requested State Department intercession with the French government to pressure their French partners in IPC to resolve a complicated intra-company issue involving Nuri al-Said's cabinet. The State Department formally refused to involve themselves in the dispute. However, they promised they would informally discuss the matter with the French embassy and would hold the French partner in IPC responsible for any breakdowns in IPC-Iraqi talks.¹⁸⁵ In these instances, as in many others, US government-business exchanges on Iraqi oil questions were frank and

¹⁸³ Memorandum of Conversation – Latest IPC Developments, 5 September 1950, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 14.

¹⁸⁴ Memorandum of Conversation – Latest IPC Developments, 5 September 1950, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 14.

¹⁸⁵ From G. Lewis Jones (Department of State) to AmEmbassy Baghdad, #312, 10 December 1951, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 14.

wide-ranging in scope, and the US government demonstrated strong (but not unconditional) support for their corporate partners in IPC.

This cooperative partnership continued as the Eisenhower administration took office. The heads of Socony-NJ and Socony-Vacuum met with the chief of the Petroleum Policy Staff, Robert Eakens, in September 1953 to discuss the recent round of talks between ARAMCO and the Saudi Arabian government.¹⁸⁶ The companies decried ARAMCO's reluctance to share information regarding the terms of a new profit-sharing deal under discussion in Saudi Arabia. They also informed the Eisenhower administration that IPC would likely be forced to conclude an agreement with the Iraqis similar to ARAMCO's proposed deal.¹⁸⁷ These exchanges meant that the Eisenhower administration was well prepared for future disputes which lay ahead in Iraqi oil politics.

The open lines of communication between the US government and business worked both ways. IPC officials often sought the advice of the Eisenhower administration on regional trends and conflicts. In the fall of 1957, the US partners in IPC queried the State Department for strategic advice on responding to the Iraqi government's plan to conclude an oil transit agreement with Syria. The State Department advised the company to dissuade the Iraqis from doing so, since such a move might torpedo American efforts to broker a multilateral treaty in the Middle East. The State Department also reminded the companies of the larger geopolitical dangers of IPC's decision to expand its pipelines in Syrian territory while political chaos continued in

¹⁸⁶ ARAMCO stood for the Arabian-American Oil Company, a joint venture between Socony and Texaco. See Yergin, *The Prize*, p. 410. In addition, Vitalis, *America's Kingdom*, p. 138-143 offers an excellent overview of the continued pressures ARAMCO faced following the conclusion of the 50/50 profit-sharing deal in 1950.

¹⁸⁷ #310 - Memorandum of Conversation by the Chief of the Petroleum Policy Staff (Eakens), 1 September 1953, *FRUS 1952-1954*, vol. IX, p. 725-727.

Damascus.¹⁸⁸ This exchange was again reflective of a broader pattern in government-corporate interaction in US foreign oil policy in the 1950s. As Randall and Painter have separately noted, Washington's regular advice to US oil companies helped appease oil-producing nations and maintain reliable Western access to regional oil reserves.¹⁸⁹

Even in the spring of 1957, as the congressional relationship with US oil companies soured as a result of the Senate's investigation of the MEEC, cooler heads prevailed amongst trust-busting members of the committee. Their report took many shots at the executive branch and the major oil companies. Even so, their final study suggested few significant alterations to the existing relationship between government and foreign oil companies or the laws that permitted the formation of the MEEC in the first place.¹⁹⁰ Senator Everett Dirksen, for his part, wrote an impassioned minority report praising the Eisenhower administration and the US partners in IPC for their efforts to ensure a continuous and stable oil supply during the Suez Crisis.¹⁹¹ What began as an investigation into serious allegations of anti-trust violations by American companies and the executive ended as a slap on the wrist. As the historian Burton Kaufman concludes, "the nation's foreign antitrust program, at least insofar as it concerned oil, became a casualty of the Cold War" and the American pursuit of control and order in Middle East oil concessions.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁸ From Sir H. Caccia to Foreign Office, #1879 - V1533/142, 21 September 1957, FO371-127795, BNA; Department of State (Rockwell) to Embassies in Middle East, #599, 17 October 1957, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 - 887.2553, Box 4961.

¹⁸⁹ Randall, *United States Foreign Oil Policy Since World War I*, p. 254; Painter, *Oil and the American Century*, p. 167.

¹⁹⁰ Kaufman, "Mideast Multinational Oil, US Foreign Policy, and Antitrust," p. 956-957; *Petroleum, the Anti-Trust Laws, and Government Policies*, p. 3.

¹⁹¹ See *Petroleum, the Anti-Trust Laws, and Government Policies*, p. 85-94 for an example.

¹⁹² Kaufman, "Mideast Multinational Oil, US Foreign Policy, and Antitrust," p. 959.

The close government-corporate partnership helped safeguard American interests in the Iraqi oil arena. Archival records also reveal a high degree of cooperation in the US government's relationship with their British partners. This cooperative partnership, in turn, served the American cause of stability in Iraqi oil affairs well. As will be seen, the US-UK relationship in the realm of oil politics was noticeably more harmonious than in other policy fields, particularly in the debates over American military aid to Iraq and the US role in the Baghdad Pact.

To be sure, the transatlantic partnership in the petroleum sector produced bursts of conflict between American and British government officials and businesses. As evidence of this dynamic, the British government protested to its American counterparts throughout the summer of 1953 that ARAMCO'S forthcoming proposals to the Saudi government would have an adverse effect on IPC's position in Iraq.¹⁹³ British insecurity over their future position in Iraq, a key theme in the realm of military aid, also occasionally manifested itself in oil politics. In 1957, the search continued for the next managing director of IPC. The UK ambassador to Iraq, Michael Wright, wrote a feverish cable to Howard Beeley of the Foreign Office emphasizing the necessity of ensuring the next appointment would be someone of British descent. Wright's analysis offers a clear glimpse into the latent sense of British insecurity about their role in Iraq in this period. If the successor was an American, Wright warned:

The Iraqi reaction would be 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 and methods are not whole-

¹⁹³ #302 - Memorandum of Conversation by the Deputy Assistance Secretary of State for Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Affairs (Jernegan), 25 July 1953, *FRUS 1952-1954*, vol. IX, p. 693; #308 - United States Record of the 1st Session of the United States - United Kingdom Talks on Middle East Oil, 27 August 1953, *FRUS 1952-1954*, vol. IX, p. 717.

heartedly admired or liked by the Iraqis. A Frenchman would, of course, be out of the question.”¹⁹⁴

Wright later acknowledged there was a degree of jockeying for power between US and UK interests among the shareholders of IPC, particularly with the recent appointment of an American joint managing director. This clearly indicated, in Wright’s view, some degree of intent on the part of US officials to expand their influence in the Iraqi oil industry at the expense of the UK.¹⁹⁵

Wright may have thought his suspicions of American motives well-founded, but they seem exaggerated in light of the broader picture of US-UK interactions. As with the case of American government-business relations, the examples of conflict between the US and UK on Iraqi oil issues constitute the exception rather than the rule. One can turn to the Truman administration for early examples of collaboration between the US and UK in protecting and controlling their privileged access to Iraqi oil reserves. In 1951, for example, State Department figures were disturbed by rumours that an independent US firm, the Ryan Oil Company, was in talks with Nuri al-Said’s regime to potentially replace IPC’s concession in Iraq. Al-Said’s government, it was reported, was threatening to cancel IPC’s concession in Basra and then split profits with the upstart Ryan Company. US bureaucrats acted with resolve to squash this scheme (which probably served primarily as a negotiating ploy for the Iraqis). Noting that this proposed plan would create major instability in Iraq and the Middle East, State Department officials argued (in talks with Ryan Oil Company officials) that such a move would also “cause

¹⁹⁴ From Michael Wright to H. Beeley, V1533/83, 4 April 1957, FO371-127793, BNA.

¹⁹⁵ Michael Wright (Baghdad) to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd, #10 – VQ10345/9, 19 July 1957, FO481-11, BNA.

serious difficulties in our relations with the British and French.”¹⁹⁶ In addition to prodding Ryan Oil’s leadership, US officials discussed ways to pre-empt the scheme with their British partners. They agreed that the UK would publicly discredit the Ryan Oil Company’s founder through a propaganda campaign and by passing information about the company’s financial difficulties to the Iraqis.¹⁹⁷ The proposed Ryan Oil takeover of the IPC concession never materialized.

Strategic cooperation between US and UK officials on Iraqi and Middle East oil issues remained a regular feature of the Eisenhower administration, with discussions often occurring on a monthly basis.¹⁹⁸ In March 1957, as Eisenhower and British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan sought to heal the wounds of the Suez debacle, policy discussions ongoing in the State Department and the British government focused on ensuring the security of Middle East oil supplies.¹⁹⁹ These strategies included a proposed multilateral pipeline treaty involving the US, UK, France, the Netherlands, Iraq, and several other Middle Eastern countries. The plan, which did not materialize, was designed to ensure unfettered access for Western oil companies operating in Iraq and the Middle East whose operations had been disrupted by Syrian agents during the Suez Crisis.²⁰⁰ Similarly, meetings continued throughout the summer of 1957 to discuss US-UK contingency plans for oil disruptions and closures of the Suez Canal, as well as strategies for reducing the West’s reliance on Middle East petroleum. The British and

¹⁹⁶ Memorandum of Conversation – Ryan Oil Company Activities in Iraq, 6 February 1951, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 14.

¹⁹⁷ From Baghdad (Tenney) to Secretary of State, #220, 16 October 1950, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 14; From London (Douglas) to Secretary of State, #2487, 31 October 1950, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 14.

¹⁹⁸ #308 – United States Record of the 1st Session of the United States – United Kingdom Talks on Middle East Oil, 27 August 1953, *FRUS 1952-1954*, vol. IX, p. 717.

¹⁹⁹ Irene Gendzier, “Oil, Politics, and US Intervention,” in William Roger Louis and Roger Owen (eds.) *A Revolutionary Year: The Middle East in 1958* (London: IB Tauris, 2002), 113; Yergin, *The Prize*, p. 498.

²⁰⁰ Outline of Multilateral Pipeline Treaty, 21 March 1957, FO371-127209, BNA.

Americans also formed working groups to study their potential responses to an attack on Iraqi pipelines by Egyptian leader Gamal Abdel Nasser and the United Arab Republic [UAR] in the spring of 1958.²⁰¹

What is most revealing from the documentary record is the relative degree to which American and British authorities operated quite seamlessly in their quest to defend Western interests in the Iraqi petroleum arena. Instances of open conflict or tension between the two powers were noteworthy precisely because they stood out from standard operating procedure. One can account for the relative harmony of this relationship in a number of ways. For one, the Americans had few opportunities to expand their relative power and influence within the British-dominated IPC. The clear division of ownership shares between US and UK partners in IPC meant that the British remained the primary foreign actor to profit from the commercial development of Iraq's oil fields.²⁰² IPC was in fact registered in London as a British company. American officials were well aware of the constellation of power within IPC between British and American interests; the State Department explained to the US partners in IPC in the spring and summer of 1953 that since the company was predominantly a British-led institution, it was only natural for

²⁰¹ Middle East Oil Supplies to the West, S1171/164, 6 June 1957, FO371-127209, BNA. An agreed-upon consensus does not appear to have been developed before July 1958. See Memorandum of Conversation – Possibility of United Arab Republic Cutting Iraq Pipeline, 31 March 1958, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 - 887.2553, Box 4961; Roger Owen, “The Dog that Neither Barked Nor Bit: The Fear of Oil Shortages,” in William Roger Louis and Roger Owen (eds.) *A Revolutionary Year: The Middle East in 1958* (London: IB Tauris, 2002), 277.

²⁰² Matthew Elliot, *‘Independent Iraq’: The Monarchy and British Influence, 1941-58* (London: IB Tauris, 1996), 160; Daniel Silverfarb, *The Twilight of British Ascendancy in the Middle East: A Case Study of Iraq, 1941-1950* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1994), 215; Matthew Elliot, “Defeat and Revival: Britain in the Middle East,” in Wolfram Kaiser and Gillian Staerck (eds.) *British Foreign Policy, 1955-1964: Contracting Options* (London: Macmillan, 2000), 241.

London to assume responsibility for supporting IPC in ongoing talks with Iraqi authorities.²⁰³

The relative absence of American activism in the Iraqi oil arena vis-à-vis the British can also be attributed to the larger significance of the US-UK alliance in the Cold War. The Americans appreciated the strategic value of Iraqi petroleum to Britain and its economic well being. Iraq took on great importance to British policymakers as the Iranian oil crisis deepened from 1951 to 1953 and exports from Iran ground to a halt. Corresponding Iraqi crude petroleum exports to the UK rose dramatically in the early part of the 1950s and remained strong from 1955 to 1958 despite the momentary blip caused by the IPC pipeline destruction in Syria.²⁰⁴ The British were also particularly dependent on the hard currency obtained from oil sales in Iraq and Kuwait. The Americans were unwilling to challenge British positions in Iraqi and Kuwaiti oilfields where UK officials sought to control oil that could be paid for with sterling.²⁰⁵

Even after the Suez War, the relationship between Washington and London did not change as dramatically in the realm of oil politics as it did with other issues like military aid for Baghdad. Iraq and Kuwait, even after the Suez debacle, were repositories of much of Britain's economic influence in the Middle East. Despite his concerns over US intentions, the UK ambassador to Baghdad, Michael Wright, considered IPC one of

²⁰³ #295 - Memorandum of Conversation, by Herbert Liebhafsky of the Petroleum Policy Staff, 9 June 1953, *FRUS 1952-1954*, vol. IX, p. 673-674; #289 - The Acting Secretary of State (Smith) to the Embassy in Lebanon, 23 April 1953, *FRUS 1952-1954*, vol. IX, p. 665.

²⁰⁴ Frank Brenchley, *Britain and the Middle East: An Economic History, 1945-1987* (London: Lester Crook Academic Publishing, 1989), 112-120.

²⁰⁵ Matthew Elliot, "Defeat and Revival: Britain in the Middle East," p. 241; Nathan Citino, *From Arab Nationalism to OPEC: Eisenhower, King Sa'ud and the Making of US-Saudi Relations* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 9.

the greatest remaining assets for British prestige in Iraq.²⁰⁶ Rather than directly challenging London, the Americans instead helped preserve British economic positions in the Iraqi oil arena and throughout the Persian Gulf. They did so, as Nathan Citino has argued, in order that Britain could play a central role in the Bretton Woods system and the Western program for European recovery. This, in turn, depended on addressing London's major balance-of-payments deficit.²⁰⁷ More than that, the existing terms of the transatlantic partnership worked effectively to safeguard American interests in Iraqi oil in this period.

Considerable attention to the overall "Arab World" dimension of the Iraqi oil sector is also warranted. Roger Owen argues that Western access to Arab oil resources in the 1950s was inextricably tied to the political situations in oil-producing nations and those along the "major transit routes of the Gulf, the trans-desert pipelines, and the Suez Canal."²⁰⁸ This chapter confirms Owen's characterization of the regional petroleum arena in this decade and adapts it to the Iraqi arena. The forces of Arab nationalism greatly influenced and threatened American interests in shaping and controlling a stable, secure Iraqi oil industry in the pre-revolutionary period. Much to the chagrin of US government and oil officials, developments in the petroleum industries in Saudi Arabia, Iran, and elsewhere in the region had a powerful influence on the shape of Western oil concessions in Iraq. These events blurred divisions between petroleum questions and debates ongoing in Baghdad and those in other Middle Eastern countries.

²⁰⁶ Diane Kunz, "The Emergence of the United States as a Middle Eastern Power, 1956-1958," in William Roger Louis and Roger Owen (eds.) *A Revolutionary Year: The Middle East in 1958* (London: IB Tauris, 2002), 92; Michael Wright (Baghdad) to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd, #10 – VQ10345/9, 19 July 1957, FO481-11, BNA.

²⁰⁷ Citino, *From Arab Nationalism to OPEC*, p. 9.

²⁰⁸ Owen, "The Dog that Neither Barked Nor Bit," p. 285.

The case of Saudi Arabia after 1950 is a clear example where disputes over oil concessions and royalty payments in a neighbouring country altered the American position in Iraqi oil. ARAMCO signed a historic 50/50 profit-sharing agreement with the Saudi government in December 1950. The deal sent shockwaves through the region. The US government played an important role in the arrangement by providing a tax credit to ARAMCO to offset the income taxes it would now pay to the Saudis. The US government found the 50/50 profit-sharing agreement to be a useful way to maintain the regional status quo and keep oil flowing to the West. They soon pushed other US oil companies to follow ARAMCO's lead and adopt the 50/50 Saudi "model" in other regional concessions.²⁰⁹

The US partners in IPC were not so quick to see the bright side of this outcome. IPC officials complained to the US government in the spring of 1951 about the "short-sighted" ARAMCO deal. Charles Darlington, the director of IPC (and London representative of Socony-Vacuum) bemoaned ARAMCO'S failure to consult with IPC before signing the agreement.²¹⁰ Another top IPC official predicted that Iraqi leaders would become more obstinate to negotiate with and "it would be impossible to see where their demands would end."²¹¹ Representatives from the Compagnie Francaise de

²⁰⁹ Vitalis, *America's Kingdom*, p. 130; Painter, *Oil and the American Century*, p. 171; Yergin, *The Prize*, p. 446-447. Nathan Citino alludes to the notion of Saudi Arabia as a "model" for US diplomacy in the Middle East. Citino discusses Washington's strategy of relying on corporate interests to advance US foreign policy. He writes that "Saudi Arabia was the oil-producing Arab country in which the Americans pursued their approach to the fullest extent." See Citino, *From Arab Nationalism to OPEC*, p. 2-3 (footnote quote).

²¹⁰ From London (Rodney Wiloughby, Petroleum Advisor) to Department of State, #4403, 16 March 1951, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 14; From Baghdad (Crocker) to Department of State, #188, 24 February 1951, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 14.

²¹¹ From Baghdad (Crocker) to Department of State, #188, 24 February 1951, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 14.

Petroleum [CFP], the French interest in IPC, similarly complained to US officials in Baghdad about the ARAMCO deal.²¹²

Representatives of Socony-NJ and Socony-Vacuum had begrudgingly come around to the State Department's position by April 1951. They soon decided they should offer an ARAMCO-style deal to the Iraqis. In early April, with few alternatives at hand, the IPC managing director informed Prime Minister Nuri al-Said that IPC would agree to pay petroleum royalties on a 50/50 basis.²¹³ IPC officials were still less than enthusiastic about the new arrangements. While working on the agreement, Paul Anderson of Socony-NJ complained that the new royalty provisions were even more favorable than the ARAMCO deal for the host government.²¹⁴

The 50/50 profit-sharing provisions were codified in the 1952 agreement between Nuri al-Said's cabinet and IPC. Yet events in the Saudi oil industry continued to extend their reach to Baghdad and challenged American objectives of maintaining a stable arrangement for Iraqi oil. From 1953 to 1956, a debate continued amongst ARAMCO, IPC, and their host governments regarding the basis on which royalty and tax payments were calculated.²¹⁵ The Iraqi government headed by Prime Minister Jamil al-Madfai demanded in 1953 that the division of profits be based on the Gulf of Mexico prices for

²¹² From Baghdad (Crocker) to Department of State – Oil Policy Developments: Views of CFP Officials, 24 February 1951, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 14.

²¹³ From Baghdad (Crocker) to Department of State, #2208, 11 June 1951, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 14; From Department of State (Acheson) to US Embassy Baghdad, #297, 4 April 1951, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 14; From Baghdad (Crocker) to Department of State – Present Status IPC Oil Negotiations, 1 June 1951, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 14; Hahn, *Missions Accomplished?*, p. 27.

²¹⁴ Memorandum of Conversation – New IPC Agreement with Iraq, 14 December 1951, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 14.

²¹⁵ From Baghdad (Berry) to Department of State, #93, 1 August 1953, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 6; #302 - Memorandum of Conversation, by the Deputy Assistance Secretary of State for Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Affairs (Jernegan), 25 July 1953, *FRUS 1952-1954*, vol. IX, p. 693.

crude petroleum. Al-Madfai's cabinet also complained that while the ARAMCO 50/50 agreement was backdated to January 1950, their agreement only went back to 1951.²¹⁶

The Iraqi and Saudi governments maintained a close channel of consultation to ensure unity in their negotiating ranks. An Iraqi delegation landed in Riyadh in June 1953 to coordinate their positions with the Saudis.²¹⁷ UK and US officials warily monitored these discussions.²¹⁸ In an extremely prescient analysis, Edwine Moline, petroleum advisor in the Eisenhower administration, wrote to the State Department in August 1953 about the Saudi-Iraqi contacts. His cable offers a window into US thinking about the troubles that lay ahead for Western oil companies operating in the Middle East that would appear later with the formation of OPEC in 1960, particularly with regard to the ability of American oil companies to dictate concession terms to local governments.

Moline wrote:

The efforts of the Iraqi government, coupled with the corresponding efforts of the Government of Saudi Arabia regarding which the two governments have agreed to keep each other informed, appear to threaten seriously the freedom of companies to make their prices in line with their business judgment. The governments' actions seem to be forcing the establishment of uniform prices at high levels with a rigidity far more striking than has been the case in the recent past and without the promise of relief in the future.... The increasing exchange of information between Iraq and Saudi Arabia and the coordination of their ever-increasing financial demands on the oil companies does not augur well for the stability of the concessions and the future development of Middle East oil to which so many Western interests are related.²¹⁹

²¹⁶ PLV Mallett to Foreign Office, EQ1532/18, 13 August 1953, FO371-104712, BNA; From AmEmbassy London (Edwin Moline, Petroleum Advisor) to Department of State – Iraq government attempts to influence IPC oil prices, 6 August 1953, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 15.

²¹⁷ From Baghdad to Department of State – Petroleum Report – Iraq – January-June 1953, 5 September 1953, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 15; From Baghdad to Department of State, #643, 11 March 1954, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 15; AmEmbassy Baghdad (Gilbert Larsen) to Department of State – Annual Petroleum Report, Iraq, 1954, #428, 15 March 1955, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 - 887.2553, Box 4960.

²¹⁸ #302 - Memorandum of Conversation, by the Deputy Assistance Secretary of State for Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Affairs (Jernegan), 25 July 1953, *FRUS 1952-1954*, vol. IX, p. 693.

²¹⁹ From AmEmbassy London (Edwin Moline, Petroleum Advisor) to Department of State – Iraq Government Attempts to Influence IPC Oil Prices, 6 August 1953, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 15.

The IPC-Iraqi stalemate continued through 1955. The company and British diplomats were not pleased with Saudi “interference” in the negotiations and routinely complained about ARAMCO’S role in dictating the course of IPC-Iraqi talks.²²⁰ One IPC figure similarly expressed his anger with the ARAMCO agreement, which, in his words was “spoiling the market for everyone.”²²¹ Even as the negotiations neared a conclusion, Iraqi contacts with the Saudis again put the brakes on a settlement. Talks in November 1954 broke off suddenly when the Saudis passed information to Prime Minister Nuri al-Said’s government about the terms of their newly-signed deal with ARAMCO.²²² The issue was partially resolved in March 1955, with IPC agreeing to compute profits based on posted prices. They also committed to reducing pricing discounts to 2%. Even so, bickering between the two sides continued for a time over the retroactive date of the agreement.²²³ By the end of the year, it was clear to officials in Washington that events in Saudi Arabia had played a fundamental role in changing the environment, tenor, and direction of IPC-Iraqi discussions. American and British government and oil leaders expressed frustration with the need to continually revise IPC arrangements to reflect recent developments in Saudi Arabia. US officials were lucky,

²²⁰ #302 - Memorandum of Conversation, by the Deputy Assistance Secretary of State for Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Affairs (Jernegan), 25 July 1953, *FRUS 1952-1954*, vol. IX, p. 694; #308 - US Record of the 1st Session of the United States-United Kingdom talks on Middle East Oil, 27 August 1953, *FRUS 1952-1954*, vol. IX, p. 717; #310 - Memorandum of Conversation, by the Chief of the Petroleum Policy Staff (Eakens), 1 September 1953, *FRUS 1952-1954*, vol. IX, p. 727, 757.

²²¹ Shuckburgh to Foreign Office, VQ1531/25, 4 October 1954, FO371-111035, BNA.

²²² #376 - The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Aldrich) to the DOS, 30 November 1954, *FRUS 1952-1954*, vol. IX, p. 869; AmEmbassy Baghdad (Gilbert Larsen) to Department of State –Annual Petroleum Report, Iraq, 1954, #428, 15 March 1955, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 - 887.2553, Box 4960.

²²³ AmEmbassy Baghdad (Gilbert Larsen, Economic Officer) to Department of State, #746, 13 March 1956, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 - 887.2553, Box 4960.

even so, that the foundational relationship linking IPC and the Iraqis was not radically threatened by events in Saudi Arabia.

Western oil concessions in Iraq were similarly affected by the Iranian nationalization episode of 1951 to 1953. The Iranian crisis erupted when the British refused to turn over the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company [AIOC] to Iranian hands following Mohammed Mossadeq's nationalization of the company in 1951. UK officials feared their loss of AIOC would further damage their global prestige following withdrawals from India and Palestine in the late 1940s. The Americans, for their part, worried that the nationalization crisis revealed a weakening of British power in the broader Middle East.²²⁴ As with the Saudi case, events in the Iranian oil sector extended their reach to Baghdad. The bold move to nationalize AIOC resonated among large numbers of Iraqi nationalists, neutralists, and anti-colonial opposition figures who wanted to replicate Mossadeq's experiment. Though the government in Baghdad ultimately resisted such calls, the Iranian episode nevertheless highlighted the Americans' reliance on the ruling regime in Baghdad to control and protect the favourable environment enjoyed by Western petroleum companies in Iraq. The stability of American oil concessions in Iraq were, for a time, immediately and seriously challenged by the Iranian crisis.

French interests in IPC and the French government pressed the Americans in March 1951 for a speedy resolution of the Iranian crisis for fear that chaos could spread to Iraq. French officials blamed UK procrastination for the instability in regional oil politics and compared the ongoing IPC-Iraqi negotiations over the minor issue of the gold

²²⁴ Mary Ann Heiss, *Empire and Nationhood: The United States, Great Britain, and Iranian Oil, 1950-1954* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 226; Frederick W. Axelgard, "US Policy Toward Iraq, 1946-1958," Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, 1988, 91.

pound value to “fiddling while Rome burns.”²²⁵ Indeed, though an IPC-Iraqi settlement was close by the summer of 1951, US officials feared that Nuri al-Said’s cabinet was deliberately delaying negotiations while it awaited the outcome of the Iranian crisis.²²⁶ The US embassy in Baghdad added that the Iranian dispute exercised a “major influence (perhaps a dominant one) on the Iraq petroleum question.”²²⁷

The Iraqi-IPC agreement was eventually passed by the Iraqi Senate in February 1952, though not without controversy. US observers at the embassy were cognizant that local opposition to the agreement had been sparked by events in Iran. The favourable IPC deal depended on the strength and determination of Iraqi authorities, particularly Prime Minister Nuri al-Said, who passed the agreement in the face of domestic unrest.²²⁸ Events in Tehran continued to influence American objectives in the Iraqi petroleum arena while the Eisenhower administration took office and laid plans for a CIA-supported coup in Iran.²²⁹ In April 1953, the second secretary of the US embassy in Baghdad, J.R. Barrow, hosted a series of meetings with opposition leaders. Barrow met with Muhammad Hadid, vice president of the dissolved National Democratic Party [NDP], a neutralist left-wing party. Barrow asked him whether the Iranian nationalization gamble had been a sound policy decision. Hadid replied coolly that even though the

²²⁵ From Paris (Bohlen) to Secretary of State, #5591, 21 March 1951, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 14.

²²⁶ From Baghdad (Crocker) to Department of State – Present Status IPC Oil Negotiations, 1 June 1951, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 14; From Baghdad (Crocker) to Secretary of State, #431, 4 December 1951, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 14.

²²⁷ From Baghdad (Crocker) to Department of State, #2208, 11 June 1951, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 14.

²²⁸ From AmEmbassy Baghdad (Crocker) to Department of State – Parliamentary Consideration of the Oil Agreements, 19 February 1952, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 15.

²²⁹ Randall, *United States Foreign Oil Policy Since World War I*, p. 258. On the CIA coup in Iran (code-named Operation AJAX), see Stephen Kinzer, *All the Shah’s Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2003) and Mark Gasiorowski and Malcolm Byrne (eds.) *Mohammad Mosaddeq and the 1953 Coup in Iran* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2004).

nationalization venture had failed, he felt Iranian leaders made the right decision.²³⁰

Echoing Barrow's findings, James Cortada, the American consul in Basra, warned that the Iranian action heightened the desires of some Iraqis for nationalizing IPC.²³¹

American observers searched for silver linings to regain a sense of confidence about the relative stability of their shares in the Iraqi petroleum market. They pointed to the fact that the newly-signed concession agreement of 1952 ensured IPC would continue its normal operations, the Iraqi government would receive regular royalty payments, and that "a great deal of ground will have been cut from under the Iranian position."²³² US analysts were also cheered by the relative failure of a general strike organized by opposition parties in response to the agreement. One embassy figure wrote:

One should not fail to note that Iran's difficulties have had a sobering effect on the man in the street in Iraq; i.e. the merchant who is sensitive to business conditions, and to some extent the working man who is interested in having a steady job. Many people with whom Embassy representatives have talked seem genuinely happy in the contemplation that the agreements will bring revenues, revenues will bring development projects, the projects will create jobs and more employment will bring better business. Most will still say that they think the oil companies are 'cheating,' but they seem to prefer to take what they can get and ask for more rather than be bothered by all the fuss made in Iran.²³³

As subsequent events following the July 1958 revolution would reveal, Iraqi citizens were not nearly as content with what they could "get" from IPC as many US diplomats believed.

²³⁰ Memorandum of Conversation – Hadid and Barrow, #847, 29 April 1953, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2.

²³¹ From Basra (James Cortada, American Consul) to Department of State, #63, 20 May 1953, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 15.

²³² From AmEmbassy Baghdad (Crocker) to Department of State – Parliamentary Consideration of the Oil Agreements, 19 February 1952, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 15.

²³³ From AmEmbassy Baghdad (Crocker) to Department of State – General Strike Against Oil Agreements, 23 February 1952, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 15.

The Iranian oil crisis was brought to an end with the August 1953 CIA-backed coup against Mossadeq that returned the Shah to power. The subsequent 1954 Iranian oil consortium agreement permitted the entry of US firms into the Iranian oil industry. The deal gave them a 40% interest and ensured Western control over Iranian oil for another two decades. By the end of 1954, the Americans had become the dominant player in Iranian oil, temporarily defeated regional economic nationalism, and seemingly protected their stake in foreign petroleum supplies.²³⁴ James Cortada, for his part, believed the decisive resolution to the Iranian crisis would ultimately serve as a deterrent lesson for the more vociferous Iraqi voices calling for oil nationalization.²³⁵ His confident prediction, as Chapter Six reveals, would be undermined by developments in the US-Iraqi petroleum relationship following the revolution of July 1958.

Yet again, US oil executives and government officials were powerless to contain developments in the Iranian oil industry within national borders. The ARAMCO 50/50 profit-sharing arrangement proved frustrating for IPC members. The Iranian nationalization crisis portended catastrophic dangers for the US partners in IPC. The specter of oil nationalization appeared in Baghdad in part because of Iranian developments. For a time, the Iranian crisis seemed to threaten the foundations and basic stability of Western oil concessions in Iraq.

American officials seeking to guard the orderly, status quo petroleum arena in Iraq were again confronted by events ongoing beyond Baghdad's borders during the Suez

²³⁴ Heiss, *Empire and Nationhood*, p. 234; Yergin, *The Prize*, p. 477; Kaufman, "Mideast Multinational Oil, US Foreign Policy, and Antitrust," p. 954; Painter, *Oil and the American Century*, p. 206.

²³⁵ From Basra (James Cortada, American Consul) to Department of State, #63, 20 May 1953, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 15.

Crisis of late 1956.²³⁶ The Suez Crisis vividly demonstrated the interconnected nature of Iraqi petroleum developments with events in the wider Arab world. The American government was already considering options for the delivery of Middle East oil to Western Europe if the Suez Canal were closed well before Gamal Abdel Nasser nationalized the Canal in July 1956.²³⁷ Once Nasser nationalized the Canal, US officials worried about the psychological impact of the move on Western prestige in the Middle East. US officials feared that a blueprint for nationalization and expropriation could be set for Middle East oil-producing nations intent on following Nasser's lead. Such eventualities could seriously damage American economic, political, and security interests in the region.²³⁸ The Special National Intelligence Estimate [SNIE] of 5 September 1956 also predicted that, in the event of the use of force by Western nations against Egypt, Middle East nationalists might engage in a campaign of sabotage against regional oil installations.²³⁹

The American intelligence community's conclusions proved correct. Syrian agents (acting with Egyptian support) sabotaged IPC pipelines shortly after the outbreak of the Suez War. They destroyed three pumping stations and forced a virtual shutdown

²³⁶ On the Suez Crisis, see Peter Hahn, *The United States, Great Britain, and Egypt, 1945-1956: Strategy and Diplomacy in the Early Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 211-239; Ussama Makdisi, *Faith Misplaced: The Broken Promise of US-Arab Relations, 1820-2001* (New York: Public Affairs, 2010), 250. Makdisi's work offers a useful overview of key events in this period, though he devotes very little attention to the subject of oil politics in the region.

²³⁷ From DFI (Henry Brodie) to S/P Mr. Bowie, 29 March 1956, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) Subject Files, 1945-1960 – Lot 58D776, Box 10.

²³⁸ Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, 3 August 1956, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 – Administrative and Chronological Files, 1953-1961, Box 119.

²³⁹ Probable Repercussions of British-French Military Action in the Suez Crisis – SNIE 30-4-56, 5 September 1956, CIA ERR, p. 2.

of Iraq's oil industry.²⁴⁰ Repairs to IPC lines in Syria were an exhausting task. The Joint Chiefs of Staff predicted in March 1957 that IPC would be resigned to producing 220,000 barrels per day (about 40% of the pre-Suez output) for the next nine to twelve months. Moreover, the pipelines were not expected to be fully restored until April 1958.²⁴¹ The financial pressure on the Iraqi government from the loss of oil revenues could have been catastrophic since Baghdad was receiving close to 70 million GBP per year in oil royalty payments. Substantial loans from IPC in 1957 allowed Nuri al-Said and Ali Jaudat al-Ayyubi to proceed with their national development schemes without disruption.²⁴² Even though the Iraqis escaped the Suez Crisis without serious damage to their revenue streams, the crisis demonstrated the enduring connections between Arab nationalism and oil politics in Iraq and the broader Middle East. After the Suez Crisis, American and British policy planners would be consumed with shielding IPC's pipelines from another disruption by Nasserist groups.

In this vein, the Suez War placed a spotlight on events in Syria as a major concern for the American partners in IPC. Proposals for securing pipeline transit rights and expanding IPC pipelines in Syria were discussed in 1955 and 1956.²⁴³ After the Syrian sabotage of the IPC lines, US government officials reconsidered their views on the wisdom of giving the Syrians greater control over the company's assets. IPC officials

²⁴⁰ The Outlook for Iraq – NIE 36.2-57, 4 June 1957, CIA ERR, p. 2; National Security Council Minutes, National Security Council, 9 November 1956, Declassified Documents Reference System [DDRS], p. 1-2, 11; Lesch, *Syria and the United States*, p. 96.

²⁴¹ Status of Middle East Oil Pipelines, Department of Defense, 12 March 1957, DDRS, p. 1; The Outlook for Iraq – NIE 36.2-57, 4 June 1957, CIA ERR, p. 1; Memorandum of Conversation – Syria and Iraq, 4 October 1957, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 - 887.2553, Box 4961.

²⁴² *The Times*, 6 March 1957, GB165-0296 - Donald Cameron Watt Papers, Middle East Centre Archive [MEC], Box 3; Michael Wright to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd – Iraq Annual Review for 1957, VQ 1011/1, 24 April 1958, FO481-12, BNA; The Outlook for Iraq – NIE 36.2-57, 4 June 1957, CIA ERR, p. 2-3.

²⁴³ From London (Aldrich) to Secretary of State, #1938, 10 November 1955, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 - 887.2553, Box 4960; Memorandum of Conversation – IPC Expansion Plans in the Near East, 12 June 1956, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 - 887.2553, Box 4960.

shared the cautious approach of the US and UK governments on expanding infrastructure in Syria. They believed it would be unwise to put much faith in the Syrian government's written commitments given the political instability in Damascus in the summer of 1957.²⁴⁴ However, sustained pressure from Ali Jaudat al-Ayyubi's cabinet in the fall of 1957 to expand the oil industry's capacities (through either northern pipeline expansion in Syria, the diversion of the Haifa line, or more aggressive development of IPC's concessions) forced the company to agree (albeit reluctantly) to expand the Syrian lines in the near future.²⁴⁵

The State Department was not pleased with this development. Defending their position, representatives from Socony-NJ and Socony-Vacuum argued that the Haifa diversion plan was too expensive, time consuming, and riddled with politically explosive issues. Conversely, the expansion of the Syrian pipelines could be done within a calendar year and at relatively little cost.²⁴⁶ Under pressure from the Iraqis to increase production, IPC officials concluded they had no alternative but to expand IPC's Syrian lines.²⁴⁷ The State Department's cool response warned the company of the risks involved in relying on the Syrians at a time when the "government's assurances are of most questionable value" and urged them to "move slowly in Syria."²⁴⁸ Despite the company's commitment to expand its Iraqi production, little progress was made in securing pipeline transit rights or

²⁴⁴ From Sam Falle to Foreign Office, V1533/141, 17 September 1957, FO371-127795, BNA; Conversation between the Secretary of State (Selwyn Lloyd) and Dr. Nadim Pachachi on September 27 1957, VQ 1051/49, 28 September 1957, FO481-11, BNA.

²⁴⁵ Conversation between the Secretary of State (Selwyn Lloyd) and Dr. Nadim Pachachi on September 27 1957, VQ 1051/49, 28 September 1957, FO481-11, BNA; From Baghdad (Gallman) to Secretary of State, #598, 9 October 1957, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 - 887.2553, Box 4961.

²⁴⁶ Department of State (Rockwell) to Embassies in Middle East, #599, 17 October 1957, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 - 887.2553, Box 4961.

²⁴⁷ Memorandum of Conversation – Iraq Petroleum Company Operations, 9 December 1957, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 - 887.2553, Box 4961.

²⁴⁸ Department of State (Rockwell) to Embassies in Middle East, #599, 17 October 1957, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 - 887.2553, Box 4961.

expanding IPC pipelines in Syria in light of the continued political unrest in Damascus. These matters lay unresolved when the revolution in Iraq swept away the Hashemite monarchy.²⁴⁹ Again, as in the case of Saudi Arabia, Iran, and the Suez Crisis, the Syrian pipeline issue highlighted the inability of American and British government and corporate leaders to compartmentalize and insulate Iraqi petroleum issues from larger regional conflicts and disputes. Political unrest in Syria in 1957 spilled over into Western oil planning and rendered IPC's vision for pipeline expansion inoperable for the time being.

Other proposals for increasing Iraqi oil production were considered in 1957 and 1958. One option, promoted by US, UK and IPC officials, was to build a new pipeline running from Iraq through Turkey to the Mediterranean. The idea proved more attractive to American and British officials and oil representatives after the Syrian sabotage of the IPC lines. The Iraqis were not particularly enthusiastic about the proposal. At an Arab League meeting in the summer of 1957, the Saudis, Syrians, and Egyptians jointly drafted a resolution that condemned any Arab nation [with implicit reference to Iraq] that built a pipeline passing through Turkey.²⁵⁰ The Iraqis were reluctant to raise this sensitive issue publicly out of deference to popular Arab world opinion.²⁵¹ Government leaders,

²⁴⁹ Nat King, Counsel of Embassy for Economic Affairs to Department of State, #699, 10 January 1958, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 - 887.2553, Box 4961; AmEmbassy London (William Burdett, 1st Secretary of Embassy) to Department of State, #3131, 14 March 1958, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 - 887.2553, Box 4961.

²⁵⁰ From ARH Kallas to E.M. Rose, S1171/168, 7 June 1957, FO371-127209, BNA.

²⁵¹ From ARH Kallas to E.M. Rose, S1171/168, 7 June 1957, FO371-127209, BNA; The Outlook for Iraq – NIE 36.2-57, 4 June 1957, CIA ERR, p. 6.

including the Minister of Economics, Nadim Pachachi, resisted appeals from US officials and the British Secretary of State, Selwyn Lloyd, to pursue the Turkish option.²⁵²

The events of 14 July put a halt to any plans for an IPC pipeline running through Turkey. To the consternation of American and British government and oil officials, the debate over the IPC Turkish pipeline closely mirrored wider debates within the “Arab Cold War” between conservative monarchical and republican regimes. As Chapter Three explains, the Iraqis had already thrown their lot in with the Turks in collective defense matters under the auspices of the Baghdad Pact. They could ill afford to further alienate Arab nationalists in Egypt and Syria by publicly dividing Middle East oil matters between the pro-Western and neutralist camps. The Turkish IPC proposal became a casualty of the larger Arab Cold War struggle between the nations of the Baghdad Pact and the Arab nationalist grouping led by Nasser’s Egypt. Arab nationalist politics succeeded, in this case, in disrupting the Americans’ efforts to control and shape the course of Iraqi oil politics in their preferred direction.

The security and stability of America’s access to Iraqi petroleum also depended on the strength of their relationship with the governing elite in Baghdad. Conflict arose at multiple points between the two sides, as noted earlier, when Arab nationalist politics affected the course of IPC-Iraqi negotiations. Even so, American and British officials were fortunate to find a pliant partner in the Iraqi regime who did not dramatically undermine or overturn the stability of Western oil concessions. This was particularly true given the Iraqi opposition’s distaste for the privileged concessions held by Western oil companies.

²⁵² Michael Wright to Harold Beeley, 12 July 1957, FO371-127209, BNA; Conversation between the Secretary of State (Selwyn Lloyd) and Dr. Nadim Pachachi on September 27 1957, VQ 1051/49, 28 September 1957, FO481-11, BNA.

The Iraqi government's relationship with IPC entered a more contentious phase by early 1958. Iraqi officials continued to voice traditional concerns about the problems with IPC profit-sharing agreements.²⁵³ The Iraqi government also formally requested the return of unexploited IPC concession areas. The development of concessions had been an important point of dispute between IPC and the Iraqis; IPC barely met its contractual obligations each year to explore their concession areas.²⁵⁴ This dispute was reflective of broader tensions underlying the IPC-Baghdad partnership; the Iraqi government's revenues were still tied in this period to the level of petroleum output in Iraq, which was regulated exclusively by IPC. Since IPC shareholders had strategic shares in nearly all other Middle Eastern oil markets, the company refused to produce oil at maximum output in Iraq (as leaders in Baghdad demanded) since this would have necessarily produced a decline in global oil prices. Baghdad's call for the return of unexploited concession areas (and the granting of new concession agreements to emergent oil companies for these territories) was a means for the Iraqi leadership to diversify the ownership of its oil resources and, in turn, help reach the maximum capacity for its oil production.²⁵⁵

Appeals from the Iraqi government for company loans also appeared on IPC desks throughout 1957 and again in May and June 1958. While representatives from Socony-NJ were not opposed to additional loans in principle, they were inherently

²⁵³ From AmEmbassy Baghdad (John Miles, Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs) to Department of State, #11117, 27 May 1958, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 - 887.2553, Box 4961.

²⁵⁴ Eveland, *Ropes of Sand*, p. 68; Memorandum of Conversation – Iraq Petroleum Developments, 30 June 1958, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs – Office of Near Eastern Affairs – General Subject Files Relating to the Middle East, 1955-1958, Box 12.

²⁵⁵ Abbas Alnasrawi notes that British Petroleum, Shell Petroleum, Compagnie Francais des Petroles, Standard Oil of New Jersey, and Mobil (each of whom were shareholders in IPC) accounted for five of the eight “major oil companies” in the Middle East. As Alnasrawi writes, “in one combination or another, a number of or all of the major oil companies owned 100 percent of the operating companies in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, 94 percent of those in Iran, and 95 percent of those in Iraq. In addition to these joint ventures, five major oil firms were parties to long-term contracts of the sale and purchase of oil from Kuwait and Iran.” See Alnasrawi, *The Economy of Iraq*, p. 3 (quote), 4.

skeptical of offering loans based on the regime's projected future oil earnings.²⁵⁶ Reports from US officers at the embassy in Baghdad described a "confused" series of meetings held on 10 July and 11 July, only three days before the revolution, between the two sides. In these talks, a "desperate" Iraqi government pleaded for additional oil revenues and company loans.²⁵⁷ According to US reports, IPC declined an Iraqi request for a four million Iraqi Dinars [ID] credit owed to the government. IPC was unhappy with the justifications offered by the Iraqis for additional loans. Moreover, the total outstanding balance of IPC loans to the Iraqis already stood at more than 11 million I.D (equivalent to 30.8 million US dollars).²⁵⁸

Iraqi government officials, led by Prime Minister Ahmed Mukhtar Baban, insisted they needed to commit additional funds to Baghdad's vaunted development program, which was intended to promote political stability through slow-yet-steady economic and social advancement. Insisting IPC was not aggressive enough in its oil exploration, they requested that IPC turn over unexplored concession areas so they could find developers willing to quickly expand Iraqi exports.²⁵⁹ The Iraqis, clearly pressed for time, saw few merits in IPC's measured marketing programs and pleaded, to no avail, for immediate financial assistance.

The emerging points of conflict between the Iraqi regime and IPC were overshadowed by the events of 14 July 1958. Disputes regarding oil concession

²⁵⁶ Memorandum of Conversation – Iraq Petroleum Developments, 30 June 1958, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs – Office of Near Eastern Affairs – General Subject Files Relating to the Middle East, 1955-1958, Box 12.

²⁵⁷ AmEmbassy Baghdad (John Miles) to Department of State, #96, 25 August 1958, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 - 887.2553, Box 4961.

²⁵⁸ AmEmbassy Baghdad (John Miles) to Department of State, #96, 25 August 1958, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 - 887.2553, Box 4961. The exchange rate at the time was 1 ID = \$2.80 USD

²⁵⁹ AmEmbassy Baghdad (John Miles) to Department of State, #96, 25 August 1958, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 - 887.2553, Box 4961.

relinquishment, loans to the government, and profit-sharing agreements did not disappear with the Iraqi Hashemite leaders. IPC and Western government officials now faced a seemingly more defiant character in the person of Brigadier Abdel Karim Qasim. The nature of the relationship between IPC and the new Iraqi leadership remained to be seen.

US and UK Military Aid to Iraq, January 1953 to July 1958

The provision of American military aid to Iraq served an important function as a means to safeguard the stability of the Iraqi government and control and shape Iraqi developments in pro-American ways (particularly by encouraging the Iraqi leadership to participate in regional collective defense arrangements). As with the American role in the Iraqi petroleum industry, however, Washington's military assistance program for Iraq necessitated cooperation with their British allies. The Americans first gave serious thought to supplying military aid to Iraq after London floated the idea in 1952. After declaring Iraq eligible to receive aid under the provisions of the Mutual Defence Act, the Americans needed to coordinate their aid program with the British. This led to the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding [MOU] on military aid between the US and UK in February 1954.

The MOU laid out the conditions under which Washington could provide military aid to Baghdad. Even so, multiple branches of the Eisenhower administration sought revision of the MOU and a strengthening of their bilateral military relationship with Iraq up to the 1958 revolution. The discussions ongoing between the US and UK from January 1953 to July 1958 offer revealing insights into how the rising profile of the United States (and the relative decline of the British) was expressed in Iraq and the

broader Middle East. In this sense, while the Suez War quite rightly serves as a critical moment in the historical literature on broader US and UK policies in the Middle East, the crisis of late 1956 was only one development among many that shaped specific trends in the US-Iraqi military aid relationship before July 1958. As the subsequent analysis makes clear, the Suez War mostly exacerbated and intensified trends already present within the respective rise and decline of the US and UK positions in the Iraqi military aid arena. The events at Suez gave proponents of an expanded US role in Iraqi military affairs, who were already active well before late 1956, the opportunity to seize the initiative on policy development in Washington.

President Eisenhower could not simply ignore the existing British position in Iraq when deciding on the direction of the US military aid program. For one, the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of 1930 gave the UK the exclusive right to supply weapons and materiel to Iraq's armed forces. Given the extensive UK plans to reorganize Iraq's army, the US government felt it was essential to reach an advance understanding with London regarding the US aid program.²⁶⁰ The British warmly welcomed this American recognition of not only the importance of regional defense in the Cold War, but also their more "traditional" concerns about their preponderant power and influence in Iraqi military affairs.²⁶¹

Beyond this general consensus, the two sides had very different understandings of the contours of an American military aid program for Iraq. On the American side, the US ambassador to Iraq, Burton Berry, felt that the time was ripe in August 1953 for the

²⁶⁰ From AmEmbassy Baghdad (Berry) to Secretary of State, #869, 11 January 1953, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 5; From NEA (Byroade) to G – Mr. Murphy, Defense Concurrence in statement of principles governing US relations with British in implementing arms assistance program to Iraq, 5 January 1954, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 5.

²⁶¹ Foreign Office – US Military Aid to Iraq Draft Brief, 26 November 1953, FO371-104241, BNA.

opening of an American-Iraqi military relationship. He based his assessment on the instability ongoing in Iran that purportedly shocked many Iraqis into acknowledging the dangers of communism. He also felt his government needed to positively respond to continued Iraqi requests for American weapons.²⁶² American visions for regional defense were perhaps the most important factor underlying the opening of the program of military aid to Iraq. As the next chapter explains, President Eisenhower and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles viewed their aid offer as a means to persuade the Iraqis to join Middle East collective defense arrangements.

To get the maximum political return from their offer, Berry petitioned State Department officials to send American arms rather than distributing US funds within a larger British military package.²⁶³ Members of the Department of Defense [DOD] echoed Berry's suggestions. Among the Pentagon's recommendations was a plan for the permanent stationing of an American Military Assistance Advisory Group [MAAG] in Baghdad to turn over US equipment and advise Iraqi military officers.²⁶⁴ By providing equipment and weapons that the UK could not furnish, the Department of Defense reasoned, they would create and define an independent American role within Iraq's military and prevent the British from completely determining how American "dollars and...equipment would be utilized."²⁶⁵

²⁶² See Daniel Williamson, "Exploiting Opportunities: Iraq Secures Military Aid from the West, 1953-1956," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 36, no. 1 (2004), 89-102 for an excellent analysis of the Iraqi role in persuading the US to send arms to Baghdad by playing the "Cold War card"; The British Position in Iraq, Department of State, 21 May 1953, DDRS, p. 26.

²⁶³ #1395 - The Ambassador in Iraq (Berry) to the Department of State, 24 August 1953, *FRUS 1952-1954*, vol. IX, p. 2355; Axelgard, "US Policy Toward Iraq, 1946-1958," p. 124.

²⁶⁴ #1396 - Memorandum of Conversation by the 2nd Secretary of the Embassy in Iraq (Barrow), 3 September 1953, *FRUS 1952-1954*, vol. IX, p. 2358.

²⁶⁵ #1396 - Memorandum of Conversation by the 2nd Secretary of the Embassy in Iraq (Barrow), 3 September 1953, *FRUS 1952-1954*, vol. IX, p. 2359.

The Americans tried to cloak these strategies in terms the British would find palatable. US diplomats formally acknowledged Britain's "special position" in Baghdad and agreed the UK should have influence over the complementary US aid program. They also reassured British officials in September 1953 that the US assistance initiative would be small in scope and would not disrupt ongoing British reorganization of Iraqi forces.²⁶⁶ However, the US charge d'affaires in Iraq, Philip Ireland, informed UK officials that the US could not accept their demand that Washington furnish 100% of their military aid via off-shore purchases [OSPs] in Britain. For congressional reasons, they would need at least some distinctly American assistance to the Iraqis.²⁶⁷

Discussions ongoing in the summer and fall of 1953 heightened British fears about American intentions in Iraq. UK officials openly expressed their anxieties regarding the shape of the US aid package in cables to and meetings with the Americans. They voiced substantive concerns about American weaponry arriving in Iraq and the presence of MAAG in Baghdad. UK officials in Baghdad tried to convince US military officers to restrict their aid to supply vehicles, water supply equipment, and electrical gear. When Colonel Siever of the US group stressed his desire to create an Iraqi unit equipped entirely with American weaponry, UK officials reminded him of the importance of standardization in the Iraqi army. In their view, the provision of American weaponry would create a second supply channel and greatly disrupt Iraqi and British organizational

²⁶⁶ JG Powell Jones – US Military Aid to Iraq, 7 December 1953, FO371-104241, BNA; T.N Bromley (Baghdad) to P.S. Falla (Foreign Office), 14 September 1953, FO371-104240, BNA.

²⁶⁷ T.N Bromley (Baghdad) to P.S. Falla (Foreign Office), 14 September 1953, FO371-104240, BNA. Philip Ireland, along with Ambassador Waldemar Gallman, was one of the most vehement defenders of the Iraqi monarchy and pro-Western regime in Iraq among US observers in the pre-revolutionary period. Chapter Five offers more information about Ireland's background, including his experience authoring a history of Iraq in 1937.

methods.²⁶⁸ Most vehement of all were British objections to MAAG's arrival. Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden sent a telegram to Secretary of State John Foster Dulles arguing that the dispatch of MAAG to Baghdad could disrupt British training methods.²⁶⁹ UK officials also stressed an important Cold War justification for their reticence. They argued that the presence of MAAG in Iraq might destroy the collaborative partnership the British enjoyed with the Iraqi military and disrupt British access to its air bases at Habbaniya and Shaiba. If the UK lost access to these facilities, they reasoned, the Western defense position in the Middle East could be compromised.²⁷⁰

London's insecurities over the US role in the Iraqi military were vividly expressed in private communications between members of the British government. In late November 1953, the British ambassador to Iraq, Sir John Troutbeck, warned the Foreign Office that with the introduction of American military vehicles in Iraq, it would only be a matter of time before the British-dominated Iraqi motor vehicle industry would be overtaken by the Americans. Troutbeck noted that this conflict between "the interests of UK suppliers and the wider plain of Anglo-American solidarity" had been clear from the beginning of this process.²⁷¹ The British were equally cognizant of the problems that lay ahead for their economy. They sought to convince the Eisenhower administration to finance a large portion of their military program through off-shore purchases of UK

²⁶⁸ T.N Bromley (Baghdad) to P.S. Falla (Foreign Office), 14 September 1953, FO371-104240, BNA; #1393 - The Department of State to the British Embassy, 1 July 1953, *FRUS 1952-1954*, vol. IX, p. 2350; From AmEmbassy Baghdad (Ireland) to Parker T. Hart, Director of NEA, 9 September 1953, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 5; #1396 - Memorandum of Conversation by the 2nd Secretary of the Embassy in Iraq (Barrow), 3 September 1953, *FRUS 1952-1954*, vol. IX, p. 2360.

²⁶⁹ Chief of Staff Committee Roger Allen, Foreign Office to the Secretary, Chiefs of Staff Committee, E1199/46, 17 December 1953, DEFE 7-835, BNA; Williamson, "Exploiting Opportunities," p. 92-93.

²⁷⁰ Foreign Office – US Military Aid to Iraq Draft Brief, 26 November 1953, FO371-104241, BNA; Daniel Williamson, "Understandable Failure: The Eisenhower Administration's Strategic Goals in Iraq, 1953-1958," *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 17, no. 3 (September 2006), 602-603.

²⁷¹ From Baghdad (Troutbeck) to Foreign Office, #656, 25 November 1953, FO371-104241, BNA.

equipment to avoid a major strain on sterling reserves and British exports to the Middle East.²⁷² The Foreign Office lamented that the US did not seem responsive to their concerns. UK officials saw American behaviour as quite unreasonable given that the British were providing the fighting forces to support Middle East countries against the Soviet threat. They felt, in turn, they had earned the right to a “deciding vote in the extent and manner of United States aid.”²⁷³

British officials discussed amongst themselves the MAAG “problem” with great candor. Sir Roger Makins argued that the presence of MAAG would bring “discredit” to foreign military observers, just as Point IV officials had apparently done in the economic realm.²⁷⁴ Troutbeck sounded alarm bells over this issue. He noted that MAAG would interfere with British contacts with the army and persuade the Iraqis to “exploit any real rivalry [between the US and UK] which might come into existence as a result of an ill-conceived and un-agreed programme of aid from the Americans.”²⁷⁵ The British similarly refused to countenance any American intrusion into the Iraqi Air Force, a flying corps based on British models. The British provided 15 UK-made Venom aircraft to Iraq in the summer of 1953 in part to ward off the potential challenge posed by the Americans.²⁷⁶ Troutbeck insisted that the Americans be steered away from aid to the Iraqi Air Force, which “would be a waste of their money quite apart from the

²⁷² Sir Roger Makins – The Heads of American Missions in the Middle East, E1199/1, 13 August 1953, FO371-104240, BNA; Williamson, “Understandable Failure,” p. 603.

²⁷³ From Foreign Office to Washington, #5384, 23 December 1953, DEFE 7-835, BNA (quote); Williamson, “Understandable Failure,” p. 604.

²⁷⁴ Sir Roger Makins – The Heads of American Missions in the Middle East, E1199/1, 13 August 1953, FO371-104240, BNA.

²⁷⁵ Troutbeck (Baghdad) to Foreign Office, 1192/26/1953, 30 October 1953, DEFE 7-835, BNA; Williamson, “Exploiting Opportunities,” p. 92.

²⁷⁶ ADM Ross – Jet Aircraft for Iraq, E1192/192, 29 June 1953, FO371-104222, BNA.

undesirability of their competing with us for the supply of aircraft.”²⁷⁷ He and the Foreign Office were further irritated when the Americans initially refused to accept London’s control over the Air Force.²⁷⁸ US aid to the Iraqi Air Force remained a central point of debate between the two sides over the next five years.

British diplomats also assessed the potential American military aid program from a long-range strategic vantage point that emphasized the decline of British power in the Middle East. Sir John Troutbeck retained a negative attitude toward US aid to Baghdad, fearing in part that it would make the Iraqis less willing to purchase UK arms.²⁷⁹ More than that, the ambassador was unwilling to graciously accept the rise of American power in the Middle East. He wrote in November 1953:

While no one would dispute the desirability, in principle, of a United Western Front on Middle East matters, I venture to suggest that it is possible to pay too high a price for it... In general I believe we shall weaken our own position in Iraq without in any way strengthening that of our Western powers as a whole if we allow ourselves to be overmuch influenced by the views of the US and French governments. It is rather they who should be influenced by ours. And it is arguable that the whole Western position in Iraq, and not merely our own, will be strengthened if the Iraqis can be made to feel that they have, at any rate, one reliable supporter in the Western camp. They will never regard the United States or France in that light.²⁸⁰

The British commander-in-chief of Middle East forces similarly reflected on the larger political trends in the Cold War and the decline of UK prestige throughout the globe. He argued that the UK needed to decide whether they would strongly resist American intrusions or simply allow Iraq to become another American sphere of influence.²⁸¹ The

²⁷⁷ Sir John Troutbeck to PS Falla, Foreign Office, E1199/31, 10 November 1953, FO371-10424, BNA.

²⁷⁸ From 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; Williamson, “Understandable Failure,” p. 603.

²⁷⁹ Troutbeck (Baghdad) to Foreign Office, 1192/26/1953, 30 October 1953, DEFE 7-835, BNA.

²⁸⁰ Troutbeck (Baghdad) to Foreign Office, #607, 2 November 1953, DEFE 7-835, BNA.

²⁸¹ JG Powell Jones – US Military Aid to Iraq, 7 December 1953, FO371-104241, BNA.

decline of British power in Palestine, India, and other areas of the world after 1945 was never far from the minds of British diplomats.

J.G. Powell Jones, P.S. Falla, and Roger Allen of the Foreign Office offered less aggressive but similarly bleak assessments of the future of British prestige in Iraq and the larger Middle East. Powell Jones worried that Washington might lose interest in the Middle East if the British resisted their initiative too vigorously. Worse yet, the Americans could craft an independent policy without any regard for British interests.²⁸² Falla and Allen concurred with Powell Jones' assessment of the potentialities of American power and the need to accommodate US interests.²⁸³ British resignation to the near-inevitable march of American power in Iraq and the Middle East was summarized by Roger Makins in December 1953. Makins wrote:

Thus 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, we consider, 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.²⁸⁴

As Daniel Williamson notes, the British were greatly threatened by the prospect of being displaced by Washington in the Middle East. Even so, they were desperate to secure a greater American role in containing the Soviet threat.²⁸⁵ The British were skeptical even here of the sincerity of American commitments to Middle East defense. The Foreign Office sent incensed messages to its embassy in Washington lambasting the

²⁸² JG Powell Jones – US Military Aid to Iraq, 7 December 1953, FO371-104241, BNA.

²⁸³ JG Powell Jones – US Military Aid to Iraq, 7 December 1953, FO371-104241, BNA; Chief of Staff Committee Roger Allen Foreign Office to the Secretary, Chiefs of Staff Committee, E1199/46, 17 December 1953, DEFE 7-835, BNA; From Foreign Office to Washington, #5384, 23 December 1953, DEFE 7-835, BNA.

²⁸⁴ Chief of Staff Committee Roger Allen Foreign Office to the Secretary, Chiefs of Staff Committee, E1199/46, 17 December 1953, DEFE 7-835, BNA.

²⁸⁵ Williamson, "Exploiting Opportunities," p. 95.

Americans several weeks before the signing of the MOU. The cables suggested the Americans were gaining immediate political advantages in the region without any corresponding commitments to a greater share of responsibility for defense of the Middle East that would “relieve the burden of responsibility resting on Great Britain.”²⁸⁶

The Americans and the British, having spent months negotiating the principles guiding US aid to Iraq, finally brokered a text in Washington on 26 February 1954. The MOU, drafted without the knowledge of Iraqi Prime Minister Fadhil Jamali’s cabinet, made specific reference to the 1930 Anglo-Iraqi Treaty that gave the UK the exclusive right to arm the Iraqi military. In what the UK considered major concessions, the US was officially permitted to develop a military aid program for Iraq on certain conditions. For one, the Americans were required to coordinate their military aid for Iraq with the UK. The agreement emphasized that the UK would remain the primary supplier of arms; US military aid to Iraq would be complementary to the weapons supplied by London.²⁸⁷ Other conditions were placed on the program: US aid would be configured so as to minimize potential disruptions in the flow of UK arms; US aid would be administered when possible through off-shore purchases; and Britain retained overall responsibility for directing and training Iraqi forces. Though the UK ultimately conceded to the establishment of MAAG in Iraq, it held fast to its refusal to permit any American involvement with the Iraqi Air Force. The only exception to this rule, the MOU stated, was if London was unable to meet the requirements of the Air Force for certain types of equipment. Any spaces for Iraqi candidates in US training schools would be limited, and

²⁸⁶ From Foreign Office to Washington, #183, 13 January 1954, DEFE 7-835, BNA (quote); Foreign Office to Washington, #315, 20 January 1954, DEFE 7-835, BNA. A similar complaint was leveled by the UK at US oil companies three decades earlier.

²⁸⁷ #1407 - Memorandum of Understanding Between the Governments of the United States and the United Kingdom, 26 February 1954, *FRUS 1952-1954*, vol. IX, p. 2372.

could only begin in the FY 1955.²⁸⁸ Taken as a whole, the MOU contained concessions from both sides. Though it necessarily limited the Americans' freedom of action in Baghdad, the deal still facilitated their formal entry into the Iraqi arms trade.

US officials still had not yet finalized an official agreement with Iraq on the terms of a military aid partnership. As Chapter Three discusses, the reasons for this delay were related in large part to the reluctance of the Iraqis to join a Middle East defense organization and the resistance expressed by Israeli and pro-Israeli officials in Washington to the deal. Ambassador Berry and Prime Minister Fadhil Jamali finally reached an agreement on 20 April 1954. The Council of Ministers and the Iraqi King approved the text the following day, paving the way for the formal announcement on 25 April of a military aid agreement between the United States and Iraq.²⁸⁹

The principles guiding US aid to the Iraqi military had now been formally codified on all fronts. Even so, the British still entertained doubts about US intentions in the Iraqi military arena. British anxieties about their uncertain future in Iraq were exacerbated by reports in the 1954 to 1956 period that American suppliers could provide materiel to the Iraqis at cheaper prices than the British.²⁹⁰ Moreover, in several instances, major deliveries of British arms destined for the Iraqis were found to be defective. One shipment of UK weapons arrived via Israel, complete with the Star of David on top of the crate. These embarrassing mishaps did nothing, E.M. Rose of the Foreign Office

²⁸⁸ #1407 - Memorandum of Understanding Between the Governments of the United States and the United Kingdom, 26 February 1954, *FRUS 1952-1954*, vol. IX, p. 2372.

²⁸⁹ #1415 - Editorial Note, *FRUS 1952-1954*, vol. IX, p. 2384; Department of the Air Force – Staff Message Division – From USAIRA Baghdad Iraq Sgd Berry to CSAF Washington DC for Dir Intel, 1 May 1954, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 3.

²⁹⁰ Chancery in Washington to Levant Department, VQ1192/143, 11 March 1954, FO371-110809, BNA.

lamented, to inspire confidence among Iraqis in their abilities to provide top-quality military gear.²⁹¹

Equally disconcerting were reports that the Iraqis were trying to exploit differences between London and Washington. The Iraqi leadership proved adept at maneuvering and cajoling their Western allies to provide expanded shipments of military assistance. Prime Minister Nuri al-Said and high ranking military officers routinely stressed to British officials that they could not afford additional military equipment. Iraq could only strengthen its military, al-Said insisted, through grants that the Americans were evidently willing to provide.²⁹² Nuri al-Said, Ambassador Troutbeck wrote to Anthony Eden in November 1954, was a “brilliant beggar...[who] evidently feels that he has an opportunity of squeezing both us and America and forcing us to pay the maximum price for building up the Iraqi forces.” Such a scenario, they agreed, must be avoided if the British hoped to maintain a competitive edge.²⁹³ Troutbeck maintained an extremely suspicious eye toward American intentions, routinely questioning whether the United States intended its military aid program to be complementary to Britain’s. Just as likely, he warned, was that Washington sought to reduce London’s role while American military advisers slowly “swarmed” Iraq.²⁹⁴ The British War Office similarly accused the

²⁹¹ E.M. Rose – Defective Ammunition Supplied to Iraq, V1192/758, 23 July 1956, FO371-121348, BNA.

²⁹² Sir John Troutbeck to Mr. Eden, #701 - V1193/107, 6 November 1954, FO481-8, BNA; Waldemar Gallman, *Iraq under General Nuri: My Recollections of Nuri al-Said* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1963), 19.

²⁹³ Sir John Troutbeck to Mr. Eden, #701 - V1193/107, 6 November 1954, FO481-8, BNA.

²⁹⁴ Sir John Troutbeck to Mr. Eden, #26 – VQ1015/83, 9 December 1954, FO481-8, BNA; Axelgard, “US Policy Toward Iraq, 1946-1958,” p. 147; Michael Cohen, *Strategy and Politics in the Middle East, 1954-1960: Defending the Northern Tier* (London: Frank Cass, 2005), 88-89; Williamson, “Exploiting Opportunities,” p. 98.

Americans in May 1955 of deliberating failing to finalize OSPs and agitating to supply Iraq with American-manufactured tanks.²⁹⁵

Continued complaints from Iraqi politicians and military officers about the poor quality and slow delivery of British arms presented opportunities for the Americans to push for a greater role in the military sphere.²⁹⁶ Prior to the Suez War, the Eisenhower administration officially followed a conservative strategy and generally did not act on these opportunities to challenge the British in Iraqi military affairs. US officials agreed not to provide American-manufactured equipment to Iraqi fighting units.²⁹⁷ State Department representatives were especially committed to the MOU's terms, stressing (among other objectives) the importance of maintaining cordial relations with the British. This did not mean that the Eisenhower administration simply toed the British line in Iraqi military affairs. As in the debates over the MOU, Ambassador Berry and others stressed the importance of creating a distinctly and identifiably American position in Iraq. Berry felt that MAAG members should meet with Iraqis directly to ensure that they did not get the impression that the British were "supervising the team's [MAAG's] activities and formulating its conclusions."²⁹⁸ Still, by January 1955, the actual expenditures of the US military aid program conformed fairly closely to the MOU. Under the FY 1950-1954 US

²⁹⁵ Axelgard, "US Policy Toward Iraq, 1946-1958," p. 199-200.

²⁹⁶ From Baghdad (Gallman) to Secretary of State, #127, 12 August 1955, Confidential US State Department Central Files: Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959 [Hereby referred to as Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959], Reel 9.

²⁹⁷ US Military Aid to Iraq, 18 March 1954, DEFE 7-835, BNA.

²⁹⁸ From Baghdad (Berry) to Secretary of State, #576, 29 March 1954, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 5 (quote); #1416 - Editorial Note, *FRUS 1952-1954*, vol. IX, p. 2385; Axelgard, "US Policy Toward Iraq, 1946-1958," p. 146.

program for Iraq, \$10.9 million was allotted to supply vehicles, engineering equipment, and recoilless rifles and guns that were procured through OSP channels in Britain.²⁹⁹

Even before the Suez War of late 1956, however, it was plainly evident that not all members of the Eisenhower administration were pleased with the deference shown to the British. In response to a government review of the MOU in March 1955, James Ball, the US air attaché in Baghdad, recommended several modifications. Among his suggested changes were new provisions that allowed Nuri al-Said's regime to procure equipment and other military items (including aircraft) from any country of its choice.³⁰⁰ The Joint Chiefs of Staff [JCS] chairman, Arthur Radford, likewise called for an expanded American role in providing weapons to Iraq after Egypt began receiving MiG fighters from the Soviets.³⁰¹

The US ambassador to Iraq, Waldemar Gallman, also weighed in with his assessment of potential changes. Gallman understood there was little appetite within the Eisenhower administration for substantially increasing its political or military commitments to Baghdad. In light of that reality, he felt the British should retain primary responsibility for equipping Iraqi forces. Gallman suggested the Americans continue to procure equipment for the Iraqis via OSPs whenever possible, though only if the British could provide the equipment in an orderly time-frame.³⁰² Gallman suggested measured changes on the all-important issue of Iraq's Air Force. He argued they should not codify any additional provisions regarding US aid to the Air Force. Rather, Gallman wrote, the

²⁹⁹ From NEA Jernegan to G Mr. Murphy – US Military Assistance to Iraq, 20 January 1955, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 9.

³⁰⁰ James Ball, (Colonel USAF Air Attache) to Gallman, Baghdad – Modification of MOU between UK and US, 1 March 1955, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 9.

³⁰¹ Axelgard, "US Policy Toward Iraq, 1946-1958," p. 202.

³⁰² #420 - The Embassy in Iraq (Gallman) to the Department of State, 22 March 1955, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 968.

matter should be discussed “locally on an informal basis.”³⁰³ Gallman’s review, in his own words, was a measured call for more “elasticity” in the MOU.

State Department officials held fast to the MOU’s provisions on the Air Force. Given British anxieties over instability in Jordan in March 1956, they insisted, the US government should avoid any actions that might be interpreted as an attempt to displace London in Iraq.³⁰⁴ Equally, as the chief of MAAG in Baghdad indicated, the Americans could not identify any areas of the Air Force where the British were unable to provide requested equipment.³⁰⁵ The Iraqi Air Force remained hands-off to the Americans for the time being.

The tensions percolating within the American-British partnership, appearing well before the Suez War thanks to the rising American profile in Baghdad, were best reflected in their attempts to jointly supply British-made Centurion tanks to Prime Minister Nuri al-Said’s government. Anthony Eden and Harold Macmillan suggested to President Eisenhower in July 1955 that the two countries offer concrete assistance to the Iraqis to mollify their anger over the forthcoming Alpha peace proposals.³⁰⁶ In a case of

³⁰³ #420 - The Embassy in Iraq (Gallman) to the Department of State, 22 March 1955, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 970.

³⁰⁴ #431 – Department of State (Hoover) to the Embassy in Iraq, 15 March 1956, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 993. On 1 March 1956, King Hussein of Jordan dismissed Glubb Pasha as commanding general of the Jordanian Arab Legion. See Stephen Blackwell, *British Military Intervention and the Struggle for Jordan: King Hussein, Nasser, and the Middle East Crisis 1955-1958* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 27-28.

³⁰⁵ #432 - Chief of the Military Assistance Advisory Group in Iraq (Hannah) to the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, 24 March 1956, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 994.

³⁰⁶ Memorandum of 7/20/1955 meeting, Department of State, 20 July 1955, DDRS, p. 5; Memorandum by Dillon Anderson – Centurion Tanks for Iraq, 26 July 1955, White House Office, Office of the Staff Secretary: Records, 1952-1961 – Subject Series, Department of Defense Subseries, Box 6, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library [DDEL]. The Alpha peace proposals were a joint US-UK-sponsored attempt at mediating peace between Egypt and Israel in 1954 and 1955. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles publicly announced the basic contours of the American and British plans for Arab-Israeli peace in a speech at the Council on Foreign Relations in August 1955. Among the items expected to infuriate the Iraqis and other actors in the Arab world was the insistence that the “solution to the [Palestinian] refugee problem should come through resettlement in Arab lands” rather than the right of return to Israel. For more, see Isaac Alteras, *Eisenhower and Israel: US-Israeli Relations, 1953-1960* (Gainesville: University Press of

miscommunication, the Americans only provided ten Centurion tanks through OSPs rather than the expected gift of seventy.³⁰⁷ Macmillan wrote in cool tones to John Foster Dulles about London's disappointment with the American offer.³⁰⁸ Adding to the British frustration was the failure of US authorities in London to make proper arrangements for the shipment of the ten tanks to Iraq.³⁰⁹ Similar delays plagued the next American shipment of Centurion tanks in the summer of 1956 through OSP channels.

British officials worried even more about the pace of American weapons deliveries following the outbreak of the Suez Crisis. The Suez Crisis, while dramatically and publicly highlighting the decline of British and rise of American power in the Middle East, primarily exacerbated those trends already present within the US and UK profiles in the Iraqi arms arena. In a broad sense, American responsibilities and interests in the Middle East certainly increased in the immediate post-Suez era. This was particularly true in light of the popular sentiment in the American government and Congress for distancing the American position in the Middle East to an extent from their disgraced European allies.³¹⁰ As a response to the concurrent decline of British power and the rise of Nasserist Arab nationalism, the Eisenhower administration proclaimed the Eisenhower

Florida, 1993), 128-134 (footnote quote); Abraham Ben-Zvi, *Decade of Transition: Eisenhower, Kennedy, and the Origins of the American-Israeli Alliance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 48-51.

³⁰⁷ Letter to President Eisenhower from British Prime Minister Sir Anthony Eden, White House, 23 July 1955, DDRS, p. 1-2; Memorandum of Conversation – Secretary Dulles and Eisenhower, White House, 5 August 1955, DDRS, p. 1; John Foster Dulles Telephone Conversation with Robert Anderson, 5 August 1955, John Foster Dulles: Papers, 1950-61 – Telephone Conversation Series, Box 4, DDEL.

³⁰⁸ Letter from Harold Macmillan to John Foster Dulles, #3760, 20 August 1955, PREM 11-1895, BNA; Cohen, *Strategy and Politics in the Middle East, 1954-1960*, p. 90; Frederick Axelgard, "US Support for the British Position in Pre-Revolutionary Iraq," in Robert Fernea and William Roger Louis (eds.) *The Iraqi Revolution of 1958: The Old Social Classes Revisited* (London: IB Tauris, 1991), 88-89.

³⁰⁹ From Foreign Office to Washington, #4311, 22 September 1955, PREM 11-1895, BNA; Axelgard, "US Policy Toward Iraq, 1946-1958," p. 200-201.

³¹⁰ Informal State Department Comment on JCS Paper concerning US Military Representation in the Middle East, November 1957, NARA, RG 59, Records of the Policy Planning Council – Subject Files, 1954-1962, Box 129; *Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq: Report on United States Foreign Assistance Programs*, US Senate Special Committee to Study the Foreign Aid Program (Washington, 1957), 2.

Doctrine in early 1957. The Americans' pursuit of a greater role in Middle East affairs after November 1956 should not be confused with a desire for complete unilateralism. Instead, the Eisenhower Doctrine was specifically designed to recover and reintegrate remaining British influence in the Middle East -- though on American terms.³¹¹ The Eisenhower Doctrine promised an expanded US role in the region, Stivers writes, through "concerting Anglo-American actions toward common ends."³¹²

These themes are closely reflected in the US-UK relationship on Iraqi military matters in the period from the Suez War to the July 1958 Iraqi Revolution. The Eisenhower administration battled amongst itself as to whether it should completely subsume existing British influence in the Iraqi military theatre or continue its role as a complementary foreign power. In the end, the Americans opted for a middle path. The British decline after Suez permitted the Americans to achieve a degree of diplomatic flexibility in Baghdad and the Middle East as a whole and to build on the expansion of US influence in the Iraqi military sector that had begun years earlier.³¹³

The debate within the Eisenhower administration over the future of the US aid program was revived shortly after the Suez War. Ambassador Gallman, writing in late November 1956, argued the Americans should bolster al-Said's government (at the time facing political instability and riots) by providing radar equipment, fighter interceptor trainer aircraft (F-86Ds), and training for Iraqi pilots in the US.³¹⁴ The Joint Chiefs of

³¹¹ Salim Yaqub, *Containing Arab Nationalism: The Eisenhower Doctrine and the Middle East* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 4, 66, 97; William Stivers, "Eisenhower and the Middle East," in Richard Melanson and David Mayers (eds.) *Reevaluating Eisenhower: American Foreign Policy in the 1950s* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 201; Williamson, "Understandable Failure," p. 605-606.

³¹² Stivers, "Eisenhower and the Middle East," p. 200 (quote); Yergin, *The Prize*, p. 497.

³¹³ Kunz, "The Emergence of the United States as a Middle Eastern Power, 1956-1958," p. 99.

³¹⁴ #440 - Embassy in Iraq (Gallman) to the Department of State, 26 November 1956, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 1015.

Staff seconded Gallman's suggestions. They noted that they could deploy twelve F-86Ds and three mobile radars in Iraq under the guise of a training mission. The political repercussions of such a move, the JCS argued, would be lessened if the Americans also joined the Baghdad Pact.³¹⁵ The suggestions to place American planes in Iraq were rebuffed by the Pentagon and the State Department since they would violate the MOU and heighten regional instability by provoking the Soviets to send planes to Syria.³¹⁶

The American military program received a considerable boost with the visit by Ambassador James Richards to Iraq in April 1957. Richards was a former Democratic congressman who previously served as head of the Foreign Affairs Committee in the House of Representatives. His appointment as the president's special emissary to the Middle East was an attempt to shore up domestic and regional support for the newly-declared Eisenhower Doctrine.³¹⁷ While in Baghdad, Richards announced several additions to the US military aid package. Richards committed the United States to supplying (over time) military aid on a grant basis for the Iraqi third infantry division, along with "artillery, mortars, rifles, ammunition" and a battery of 90mm anti-aircraft artillery with radar and electronic equipment.³¹⁸ Richards also announced that the US

³¹⁵ #441 - Memorandum of Conversation, 26 November 1956, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 1020.

³¹⁶ #156 - Informal Record of a Meeting, Secretary Dulles' Office, Department of State, 3 December 1956, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 366; Iraqi Request for Immediate Air Defence Assistance, Joint Chiefs of Staff, 11 June 1957, DDRS, p. 14; Axelgard, "US Policy Toward Iraq, 1946-1958," p. 204.

³¹⁷ On the Richards Mission, see Brandon King, "In the Eye of the Storm: Ambassador James Richards' Mission to Iraq in April 1957," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* (July 2012), 1-18.

³¹⁸ Department of State - Aide Memoire, Undated, NARA, RG 59, Office of Near Eastern Affairs, Country Files Prepared for the Richards Mission to the Middle East, 1956-1957, Box 13; Gallman to Department of State, #1667, 8 April 1957, NARA, RG 59, Office of Near Eastern Affairs, Country Files Prepared for the Richards Mission to the Middle East, 1956-1957, Box 18; From Baghdad (Michael Wright) to Foreign Office (Lloyd), #130, 23 May 1957, DEFE 7-1271, BNA; Cohen, *Strategy and Politics in the Middle East, 1954-1960*, p. 179.

would accelerate its FY 1957 program by providing Centurion tanks (via OSP). Careful not to step on British toes, Richards rejected al-Said's request for aid to his Air Force.³¹⁹

The Americans continued their pre-Suez tradition of close consultation with the British on the supply of arms following the Richards Mission. While the British were concerned the Eisenhower administration would provide assistance to the Air Force, representatives from the Near Eastern Affairs office in the State Department assured them in May 1957 they had no such plans despite Iraq's repeated requests.³²⁰ NEA diplomats also informed them they would adhere to the MOU's terms even though it had technically expired with the end of the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty in 1955.³²¹ The British considered it one of their "prime objectives" to ensure the MOU would still govern US-UK arms shipments. As such, they believed they achieved a significant diplomatic victory.³²²

The British were nonetheless still anxious about the Americans' intentions in 1957. The UK ambassador in Washington detected more than a hint of a strategic shift in the post-Suez remarks of Secretary of State Dulles. He and the British press lambasted Dulles' remarks to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and Armed Services

³¹⁹ Chief MAAG in Iraq – Military Aid, 2 April 1957, NARA, RG 59, Office of Near Eastern Affairs, Country Files Prepared for the Richards Mission to the Middle East, 1956-1957, Box 13; From Baghdad (Michael Wright) to Foreign Office (Lloyd), #130, 23 May 1957, DEFE 7-1271, BNA; Memorandum of Conversation - US Military Assistance to Iraq, 14 March 1957, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs – Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Subject Files Relating to Iraq and Jordan, 1956-1959, Box 13.

³²⁰ Memorandum of Conversation - US Military Aid to Iraq, 9 May 1957, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs – Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Subject Files Relating to Iraq and Jordan, 1956-1959, Box 13; From NE (Fraser Wilkins) to NEA (Lampton Berry) – Discussions with the British on Military aid to Iraq, 8 May 1957, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs – Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Subject Files Relating to Iraq and Jordan, 1956-1959, Box 13.

³²¹ From NE (Fraser Wilkins) to NEA (Lampton Berry) – Discussions with the British on Military aid to Iraq, 8 May 1957, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs – Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Subject Files Relating to Iraq and Jordan, 1956-1959, Box 13; From Dulles to AmEmbassy Baghdad, #2196, 14 May 1957, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 9; Axelgard, "US Support for the British Position in Pre-Revolutionary Iraq," p. 88.

³²² Sir H. Caccia to Foreign Office, #1081, 10 May 1957, PREM 11-1895, BNA (quote); From British Embassy, Washington to Foreign Office (Lloyd), #130, 16 May 1957, DEFE 7-1271, BNA.

Committee in early 1957. In these speeches, Dulles seemed to suggest that the Americans would disassociate themselves from the UK in the Middle East.³²³ The ambassador wrote to the Foreign Office:

By looking at these statements and [Dulles'] references to 'colonialism' together, it is impossible not to conclude that major elements in his thinking are a sanctimonious, subjective moral judgment that America would be besmirched by association with the justly tarnished reputation of the ex-colonial powers; and a political judgment that, simply by disassociating herself from the actions of countries which have hitherto looked after western interests in the Middle East, America can operate an effective policy in the area without acquiring the stigma of imperialism.³²⁴

His comments betrayed the depth and intensity of British fears that the Americans might dramatically withdraw support for its positions throughout the Middle East.

The British ambassador to Iraq, Michael Wright, offered several insightful analyses in the summer of 1957 that highlighted London's concerns about the expanding American role in Baghdad. Wright noted positively that the highest levels of government in Washington favored close cooperation with the UK on military aid to Iraq. This trend was evidenced by the continuation of OSP orders and the Americans' decision to limit their aid to trucks, radio sets, anti-aircraft guns and other small items. This was particularly noteworthy, Wright explained, since the Americans now had the political clout to replace the UK altogether in this realm if they so desired.³²⁵ Even so, Wright warned that the steady rise of US influence in Iraq must not come at the expense of

³²³ *The Times*, 1 January 1957 and 16 January 1957, in GB165-0296 - Donald Cameron Watt Papers, MEC, Box 3.

³²⁴ From British Embassy Washington (Morris) to RM Hadow Foreign Office, V10345/83, 27 February 1957, FO371-127741, BNA.

³²⁵ Sir Michael Wright (Baghdad) to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd, #8 – VQ10345/8, 11 July 1957, FO481-11, BNA; Sir Michael Wright (Baghdad) to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd, #10 – VQ10345/9, 19 July 1957, FO481-11, BNA.

British power.³²⁶ Wright reserved particular criticism for the American military attachés in Baghdad who seemed more zealous than their superiors in Washington to expand US influence.³²⁷ Wright's predecessor, Sir John Troutbeck, previously referred to the activism of American military attachés as a form of "empire building" and viewed them as a threat to the preponderant British role in Iraq.³²⁸ Despite their misgivings, UK officials had few alternatives but to cooperate closely with the United States after the Suez War.³²⁹

Wright had good reason to be fearful of the activism of American military officers. A debate raged within the Eisenhower administration in the summer of 1957 as to whether the United States should replace the British as the primary arms supplier to Iraq and formally repudiate the MOU. In many ways, this dispute between the DOD / JCS and State Department closely mirrored the concurrent debate (discussed in Chapter Three) over whether Washington should join the Baghdad Pact, with the State Department exercising caution on both fronts.

Iraqi leaders played an important role in this process by pressing the Americans for air defense support against Syrian provocations. In response in part to requests from Rafiq Arif, chief of the Iraqi General Staff, the JCS proposed a survey of the Iraqi Air Force in the summer of 1957 to provide a basis for recommendations for US aid. They also recommended the dispatch of a squadron of American aircraft to Iraq on a goodwill visit.³³⁰ The Iraqi leadership, led by Abdul Wahab Mirjan and Nuri al-Said, again

³²⁶ Sir Michael Wright (Baghdad) to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd, #8 – VQ10345/8, 11 July 1957, FO481-11, BNA; Sir Michael Wright (Baghdad) to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd, #10 – VQ10345/9, 19 July 1957, FO481-11, BNA.

³²⁷ Sir Michael Wright (Baghdad) to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd, #8 – VQ10345/8, 11 July 1957, FO481-11, BNA.

³²⁸ Sir Michael Wright (Baghdad) to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd, #8 – VQ10345/8, 11 July 1957, FO481-11, BNA.

³²⁹ C.J. Bartlett, *The Special Relationship: A Political History of Anglo-American Relations Since 1945* (London: Longman, 1992), 77.

³³⁰ Iraqi Request for Immediate Air Defence Assistance, Joint Chiefs of Staff, 11 June 1957, DDRS, p. 7.

pressed the State Department for American aircraft in light of Syrian and Nasserist pressures in the spring and summer of 1958.³³¹

The Joint Chiefs of Staff were particularly sympathetic to the Iraqi requests. The JCS recommended to the Pentagon in May 1957 that the United States discontinue its adherence to the MOU and assume primary responsibility for equipping Iraqi forces.³³² The Pentagon echoed many of the JCS' complaints about the MOU. Given the substance of the Eisenhower Doctrine, Pentagon figures argued it was only natural that the US should supply aid to the Iraqi Air Force.³³³ The Deputy Secretary of Defense, Donald Quarles, stressed the need for greater American "freedom of action" in Iraq. With the support of the JCS and the chief of MAAG in Baghdad, Quarles argued that the US should modify the terms of the MOU.³³⁴ In practical terms, this meant preparing for US assistance to the Iraqi Air Force and assuming responsibility for training Iraqi forces if the UK was unable to fulfill its commitments.³³⁵ Ambassador Gallman similarly pushed for the US to assume the preponderant role in equipping the Iraqi military. Gallman wrote to the State Department in August 1957, arguing that "the UK today has neither the material strength nor the moral prestige, especially since the attack on Egypt, to play the

³³¹ From Baghdad (Gallman) to Secretary of State, #1375, 19 February 1958, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 9; From Baghdad (Gallman) to Secretary of State, #1689, 12 April 1958, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 9; Elliot, *Independent Iraq*, p. 131.

³³² Iraqi Request for Immediate Air Defence Assistance, Joint Chiefs of Staff, 11 June 1957, DDRS, p. 16.

³³³ From NEA (William Rountree) to NEA (Eli Stevens) – Request from Defense on Action on US-UK MOU, 2 July 1957, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs – Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Subject Files Relating to Iraq and Jordan, 1956-1959, Box 13; Memorandum of Conversation – Assistance to Iraqi Air Force, 14 June 1957, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 9.

³³⁴ From Donald Quarles (Office of Department of Defense) to Robert Murphy, Deputy Undersecretary of State, 16 July 1957, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 9; From Jeremiah O'Connor to Near Eastern Affairs (Rountree) – Excerpt from OCB Meeting of 31 July 1957, 31 July 1957, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 – 611.87/7-3157, Box 2257.

³³⁵ From Donald Quarles (Office of Department of Defense) to Robert Murphy, Deputy Undersecretary of State, 16 July 1957, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 9; #460 – Department of State (Herter) to the Embassy in Iraq, 31 July 1957, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 1059.

primary role in Iraq.”³³⁶ Those who envisioned a larger role in the Iraqi military cited statistics to demonstrate the disparity between US and UK contributions to the Iraqi military. American military aid to Iraq from FY 1955-1957 totaled \$44.2 million. From 1955 to August 1957, the net grant military aid provided by the British totaled \$2.3 million.³³⁷

The State Department tried to dampen the activism and enthusiasm of the Pentagon and JCS for departing radically from the MOU. William Rountree explained that the Department of State, on overriding “foreign policy grounds,” could not support the DOD’s goal of outright disavowal of the MOU.³³⁸ More specifically, State Department figures stressed the need to bolster London’s special relationship with Iraq.³³⁹ Christian Herter, writing to Ambassador Gallman, argued in July 1957 that it was neither “desirable nor feasible” for the US to replace the British as the primary arms supplier to the Iraqis.³⁴⁰ Moreover, assuming the role of primary arms supplier to Iraq would violate President Eisenhower’s commitment to Prime Minister Macmillan at Bermuda in March 1957 to bolster British positions in the Middle East.³⁴¹ To agree to the DOD’s underlying

³³⁶ #461 - Embassy in Iraq (Gallman) to the Department of State, 3 August 1957, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 1060 (quote); From NEA William Rountree to The Secretary – Modification of MEMO b/w US and UK on Military Assistance to Iraq, 27 August 1957, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 9.

³³⁷ From NEA William Rountree to The Secretary – Modification of MEMO b/w US and UK on Military Assistance to Iraq, 27 August 1957, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 9.

³³⁸ From NEA (William Rountree) to G (Murphy) – Modification of US-UK MOU on military assistance to Iraq, 25 October 1957, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs – Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Subject Files Relating to Iraq and Jordan, 1956-1959, Box 13.

³³⁹ Memorandum of Conversation – Assistance to Iraqi Air Force, 14 June 1957, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 9; From Jeremiah O’Connor to Near Eastern Affairs (Rountree) – Excerpt from OCB Meeting of 31 July 1957, 31 July 1957, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 – 611.87/7-3157, Box 2257.

³⁴⁰ #460 – Department of State (Herter) to the Embassy in Iraq, 31 July 1957, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 1059.

³⁴¹ Williamson, “Understandable Failure,” p. 606.

aim of scrapping the MOU, Rountree believed, would deliver a “serious political blow” to the UK.³⁴²

The DOD’s approach to the MOU was also regarded by the State Department as unattractive given the undesirability of assuming additional responsibilities in Iraq and the dangers of provoking the Soviets. As State Department bureaucrats reasoned, sharing responsibility with the UK for defense in the region (including arming Iraqi forces) helped keep down the costs of containment policy. Indeed, this sense of fiscal conservatism functioned as a central principle of Eisenhower’s “New Look” policy.³⁴³ Stuart Rockwell of the State Department argued that an American disavowal of the MOU’s principles “might involve the US in greater aid responsibilities toward Iraq, responsibilities which we do not desire to undertake.”³⁴⁴ The US ambassador in London echoed these concerns. He noted that while British aid to the Iraqi Air Force had been greatly restricted by financial problems, he assumed that Washington would “not want to take on this additional burden itself.”³⁴⁵ There was also the added fear of potentially provoking the Soviets into greater activism in the Syrian sphere, a concern voiced previously by State Department officials in late 1956 and the spring of 1957.³⁴⁶

³⁴² From NEA William Rountree to The Secretary – Modification of MEMO b/w US and UK on Military Assistance to Iraq, 27 August 1957, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 9.

³⁴³ Bartlett, *The Special Relationship*, p. 78; From NEA William Rountree to The Secretary – Modification of MEMO between US and UK on Military Assistance to Iraq, 27 August 1957, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 9; Memorandum of Conversation – Assistance to Iraqi Air Force, 14 June 1957, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 9; John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy during the Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 131-134, 162. For more on the “New Look” strategy, see Chapter One.

³⁴⁴ From Jeremiah O’Connor to Near Eastern Affairs (Rountree) – Excerpt from OCB Meeting of 31 July 1957, 31 July 1957, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 – 611.87/7-3157, Box 2257.

³⁴⁵ From London (Barbour) to Secretary of State, #4199, 17 January 1958, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 9.

³⁴⁶ #156 – Informal Record of a Meeting, Secretary Dulles’ Office, Department of State, 3 December 1956, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 366; Iraqi Request for Immediate Air Defence Assistance, Joint Chiefs of Staff, 11 June 1957, DDRS, p. 14; Axelgard, “US Policy Toward Iraq, 1946-1958,” p. 204.

As a potential solution, Robert Murphy believed the US should seek greater contributions from their British allies.³⁴⁷ Rountree also recommended talks with the British to relax some of the MOU's conditions and persuade them to increase their military aid to the Iraqis.³⁴⁸ President Eisenhower shared these general sentiments. Eisenhower emphasized to members of the Operations Coordinating Board that while the Americans must not push the British out of Iraq, they could not give the Iraqis the impression that Washington considered Iraq "a pawn allotted to the British sphere of influence." Eisenhower wanted to give more tangible military support to the Iraqis (particularly given the purported threat posed by Syria to Baghdad).³⁴⁹ Circumstances in the region were changing, Eisenhower declared, and Macmillan's government in London needed to step up its contribution to Iraqi defense while the Americans studied options for expediting emergency aid to Baghdad.³⁵⁰

To this end, Selwyn Lloyd and John Foster Dulles agreed in mid-October 1957 that the US and UK would hold talks to ensure greater American flexibility in their aid program. Foremost among the State Department's objectives was open cooperation on military issues between all three parties, more flexibility in the provision of equipment, and an expanded role in training Iraqis in the use of American arms.³⁵¹ The State Department continued, however, to express clear misgivings about the JCS proposal for

³⁴⁷ From Robert Murphy, Deputy Undersecretary to Donald Quarles, Deputy Secretary of Defense, 28 October 1957, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 9.

³⁴⁸ From NEA William Rountree to The Secretary – Modification of MEMO between US and UK on Military Assistance to Iraq, 27 August 1957, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 9.

³⁴⁹ Memorandum of Conversation – Eisenhower meeting with Dulles, Twining, etc, White House, 28 August 1957, DDRS, p. 1, 2; #462 - Operations Plan for Iraq – NSC 5428, 7 August 1957, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 1063.

³⁵⁰ From Arthur Richards to Near Eastern Affairs (Rountree), Excerpt from OCB Meeting of 7 August 1957, 7 August 1957, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 – 611.87/8-757, Box 2257; Memorandum of Conversation – Eisenhower meeting with Dulles, Twining, etc, White House, 28 August 1957, DDRS, p. 1-2.

³⁵¹ US-UK MOU on US Military Assistance to Iraq, 7 November 1957, NARA, RG 273, Records of the National Security Council - Policy Papers, Box 46.

the introduction of a squadron of American aircraft (F-86Ds) and 500 US Air Force personnel into Iraq.³⁵² The better approach, Rountree and others advised, was to conduct a survey of the existing Iraqi Air Force and undertake discussions with the UK on these issues.³⁵³

Policymakers in Washington prepared for their meetings with their British counterparts. The State Department expressed great frustration with the DOD and JCS and their lack of interest in pursuing substantive cooperation with the British. The State Department's approaches to the DOD were of no avail, as the Pentagon continued to insist on outright renunciation of the MOU. Such an approach was impractical, David Newsom of the NEA argued. Newsom noted that:

It is clear from all the recent high-level US-UK exchanges that a smooth working relationship with the British in the ME is a fundamental part of present US policy. In Iraq we are required to decide the degree to which our common objectives in building Iraq's defenses and in preserving the position of the Free World will best be met by our assuming a greater share of responsibility in Iraq. We continue to believe that this question can only be determined by a review of specific problems of the type which you have listed.³⁵⁴

While the State Department's policy did not mean according the UK a veto over American assistance, it required the Pentagon to commit to serious consultation with the

³⁵² From NEA William Rountree to G Mr. Murphy – JCS Proposal for emergency air defense assistance to Iraq, 20 November 1957, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 9.

³⁵³ From NEA William Rountree to G Mr. Murphy – JCS Proposal for emergency air defense assistance to Iraq, 20 November 1957, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 9; From NE David Newsom to NE Stuart Rockwell – JCS Recommendation re: Air Defense Facility in Iraq, 22 October 1957, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 9; From Deputy Under Secretary Robert Murphy to Mr. John Irwin, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, 21 November 1957, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 9.

³⁵⁴ From NE (Newsom) to NEA (Roswell McLelland) – JCS Desire to Discuss US-UK Relations in Iraq, 26 November 1957, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs – Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Subject Files Relating to Iraq and Jordan, 1956-1959, Box 13.

British to fulfill their promises extended at Bermuda.³⁵⁵ Rountree and Murphy also reminded DOD officials that Iraq had historically been a country of predominant British influence. Without British approval, the two repeated, the Americans never could have established a military aid program in the first place.³⁵⁶

As preparations continued for meetings with the UK in January 1958, members of the DOD continued to press for the immediate dispatch of F-86Ds.³⁵⁷ Representatives in the State Department by this time had tempered their opposition to US aid to the Iraqi Air Force. However, there were still major differences between State's emphasis on collaboration with the British and the unilateralist sentiment of the DOD and JCS. Stuart Rockwell of NEA suggested that the Americans wait on dispatching aircraft until they informed the British of their intention to send an air survey team to Iraq.³⁵⁸ This would theoretically provide a means and forum for meaningful consultation with the British. The two sides met on 14 January 1958 and the US informed the anxious British participants of their plan to send the air survey team. As Axelgard rightly notes, the State Department's focus on "continued close coordination with Britain" on Iraqi military matters had appeared to hold the line against pressures from the military for a more active, unilateral approach.³⁵⁹

³⁵⁵ From NEA William Rountree to Robert Murphy, Deputy UnderSecretary – Modification of US-UK MOU on Military Assistance to Iraq, 31 December 1957, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 9.

³⁵⁶ From NEA William Rountree to Robert Murphy, Deputy UnderSecretary – JCS Discussion on Military Assistance to Iraq, 9 January 1958, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 9.

³⁵⁷ From NEA (Stuart Rockwell) to NEA (Rountree) – Air Assistance to Iraq, 13 January 1958, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs – Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Subject Files Relating to Iraq and Jordan, 1956-1959, Box 13.

³⁵⁸ From NEA (Stuart Rockwell) to NEA (Rountree) – Air Assistance to Iraq, 13 January 1958, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs – Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Subject Files Relating to Iraq and Jordan, 1956-1959, Box 13.

³⁵⁹ Memorandum of Conversation - US-UK Cooperation on Military Aid to Iraq, 14 January 1958, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs – Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Subject Files

The State Department misjudged the British reaction to these developments. The US ambassador in London noted that members of the British delegation resented the Americans' unilateral decision to send the air survey team; such "discussion" was a "disservice to Anglo-American cooperation" in the minds of UK officials.³⁶⁰ He warned Dulles that the adverse reaction from the Macmillan government stemmed more from the manner than the substance of US actions. He felt that such behaviour could seriously endanger the spirit of US-UK cooperation.³⁶¹ Dulles was annoyed by London's sore sensibilities. In a responding cable, he stressed that the US had already agreed to hold off on informing the Iraqis of the survey team's dispatch. These actions were hardly unilateral, Dulles argued, nor was the general US approach of buttressing British interests in the Middle East.³⁶²

To the relief of some in Washington, members of the State Department and DOD visited London in March 1958 to discuss the Air Force and left for Iraq to conduct their survey.³⁶³ Having already offended British sensibilities, the Americans now battled with the British over the specific form of US aid to the Air Force. Selwyn Lloyd emphasized in late April that they could furnish UK Hawker Hunter Mark IV aircraft through OSPs at a cheaper and more efficient rate than American-made F-86s.³⁶⁴ The Americans insisted on sending their own aircraft. On 29 April, the US finally secured "reluctant" British

Relating to Iraq and Jordan, 1956-1959, Box 13; Axelgard, "US Policy Toward Iraq, 1946-1958," p. 209 (quote).

³⁶⁰ From London (Barbour) to Secretary of State, #4199, 17 January 1958, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 9.

³⁶¹ From London (Barbour) to Secretary of State, #4199, 17 January 1958, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 9.

³⁶² From Dulles to AmEmbassy London, 18 January 1958, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 9.

³⁶³ From Acting Secretary (Herter) to Assistant Secretary of Defense (Mansfield Sprague), 17 March 1958, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs – Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Subject Files Relating to Iraq and Jordan, 1956-1959, Box 13.

³⁶⁴ #100 - Secretary of State (Herter) to the Department of State, 11 March 1958, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 295; #103 - Editorial Note, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 299.

approval for the grant of 15 F-86 US fighter aircraft to Iraq.³⁶⁵ As a quid pro quo, the Pentagon grudgingly agreed to long-range military planning sessions with the UK on the supply of aircraft to Jordan and Iraq.³⁶⁶

The Americans informed Prime Minister Nuri al-Said at the end of April 1958 they would provide the squadron of US aircraft as a means of supporting Iraq and the Arab Union against pressures from the United Arab Republic.³⁶⁷ After a long series of delays, al-Said was “greatly cheered” on 11 June 1958 by news that several F-86s would finally arrive in Iraq. Unfortunately for al-Said, he did not live to see their arrival. The first shipment of the F-86s arrived on 17 July, but the government that had pleaded for the aircraft no longer existed.³⁶⁸

Conclusion

The prosperity and strategic stability of the Americans’ shares in the Iraqi petroleum sector depended on amicable relationships between the US government and US firms operating in Iraq, the British government, and Iraqi authorities. The corporatist partnership between the American government and private enterprise served the Western cause of stability in Iraq’s petroleum sector relatively well through to the 1958 revolution. The partnership was built on a strong foundation and long history of

³⁶⁵ Operations Coordinating Board – Weekly Activity Report, 5 May 1958, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 – Administrative and Chronological Files, 1953-1961, Box 4; Briefing book for Macmillan visit, Department of State, 6 June 1958, DDRS, p. 1; From AmEmbassy Baghdad (Gallman) to Department of State, #1140, 4 June 1958, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 9

³⁶⁶ From NE Stuart Rockwell to NEA Rountree – Discussions with British on Assistance to Iraqi, Jordanian, and Lebanese Air Forces, 4 June 1958, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 10.

³⁶⁷ #104 – Department of State (Dulles) to the Embassy in Iraq, 30 April 1958, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 300; Gallman, *Iraq under General Nuri*, p. 190.

³⁶⁸ From Baghdad (Gallman) to Secretary of State, #2058, 11 June 1958, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 10 (quote); #107 - Editorial Note, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 304; Hahn, *Missions Accomplished*, p. 28.

government-private cooperation in foreign oil policy. It was able to withstand occasional conflicts over government anti-trust laws and policy decisions in pursuit of the larger objective of maintaining controlled, secure access to Iraqi petroleum.

US-UK relations were at a premium in maintaining order and stability for Western oil concessions in Iraq given the relative distribution of power within IPC. To a degree unparalleled in other arenas, the American and British partners in IPC and their counterparts in government cooperated relatively smoothly on oil matters. Manifest expressions of a desire on the part of American oil companies to supplant their British counterparts in Iraq were few and far between. The roles of the British and American partners in IPC were clearly delineated by the shares they held since 1925. This left few substantive opportunities for the US partners in IPC to increase their market share of Iraqi oil. Equally, the British viewed the Iraqi oil sector as one of particular significance for their strategic position in the Middle East and economic well-being and were determined to protect it.

Equally important to American strategy was the overarching significance of what Nathan Citino and Daniel Yergin have called the “postwar petroleum order.” In Citino’s words, this involved a set of relationships and linkages between “producing states, transit countries, major petroleum firms, and the Western powers.”³⁶⁹ While constantly in flux, the stability of these linkages allowed for the delivery of Iraqi and Middle East oil to Europe to finance its reconstruction while underwriting American Cold War containment policy. At the same time, the Americans could utilize Western hemisphere petroleum reserves to serve rising domestic consumption.³⁷⁰ This arrangement was seemingly stable

³⁶⁹ Citino, *From Arab Nationalism to OPEC*, p. 6 (quote); Yergin, *The Prize*, p. 416-430.

³⁷⁰ Citino, *From Arab Nationalism to OPEC*, p. 6.

and prosperous enough for both US and UK interests that it would have been unwise for the Americans to upset this “order” by pushing for immediate advantages in Iraq’s petroleum sector at the expense of the British. Deference to the preponderant British influence within IPC remained a fairly constant component of US policy prior to the 1958 revolution.

American control and authority in the Iraqi oil industry also required the US to navigate the challenges presented by the interconnected nature of petroleum developments in Iraq and the Middle East. The relationship between IPC and the Iraqis was profoundly shaped by events outside of Iraq’s borders. As Citino writes:

The postwar petroleum order and its set of relationships therefore evolved as part of a historical process shaped by Arab nationalism, efforts by producing states to increase their revenue, and the Anglo-American determination to preserve Western access to Mideast oil.³⁷¹

The linkages and congruence of interests within the postwar petroleum order between Iraq, Britain, and the United States were reasonably strong on the surface. This structural arrangement, and the pragmatism demonstrated by US government officials (and sometimes reluctant oil figures), allowed IPC to successfully renegotiate its contracts with Iraqi authorities several times without experiencing a serious nationalization crisis as occurred in Iran in 1951 to 1953 or Egypt in 1956. The overlapping strategic interests of US oil companies, Western governments, and Iraqi leaders in maintaining stable production of Iraqi oil helped supersede IPC’s concerns about temporary financial setbacks and the desires of some on the Iraqi side for outright nationalization.

³⁷¹ Citino, *From Arab Nationalism to OPEC*, p. 6.

American and British officials and oil leaders did not have a free hand in developing and expanding their Iraqi petroleum assets. IPC routinely expressed frustration to officials in Washington about raising royalty payments to the Iraqis to match new arrangements in Saudi Arabia. Moreover, disputes between pro-Nasserist and conservative regimes in the region spilled over into Iraqi petroleum questions and frustrated IPC's expansion plans. In the case of the Suez Crisis, Syria, and Turkey after 1956, IPC and the US and UK governments deferred to local opposition to their proposed schemes. Despite the best efforts of the US government and companies, the Americans could not contain the spread of nationalist sentiment calling for greater Arab control over petroleum resources. However, these adjustments to profit-sharing deals and regional oil strategies were a small price to pay for continued Western access to Iraq's resources. This was particularly true in light of events in Iran, which galvanized opposition elements calling for the full nationalization of Iraq's oil industry.

The strength of the postwar petroleum order certainly helped fulfill the Americans' objective of maintaining an environment conducive to the exploitation of Iraqi oil by Western companies. Yet this period of US-Iraqi oil diplomacy also revealed the extent to which the Americans' ability to safeguard their Iraqi oil assets was a function of the Eisenhower administration's strategic gambit to buttress the pro-Western regime in Iraq. The security and stability of American oil interests in Iraq was not guaranteed. American and British officials were fortunate to find a pliant partner in the Iraqi regime who did not dramatically undermine the stability of Western oil concessions. The Iraqi government, for its part, was also strong enough and determined to repress those opposition elements pushing for a dramatic reassessment of national oil policies

and priorities. As Chapter Six explains, the difficulties the Americans experienced in defending their oil assets in Iraq after the 1958 revolution revealed the considerable extent to which they previously relied on the Iraqi regime's repression of opposition elements seeking a radical reconfiguration of the oil industry. As will be seen, the privileged positions and broader perceptions of authority and control the United States and Britain enjoyed in the Iraqi petroleum sector gradually dissipated following the revolutionary events of July 1958.

The historian Andrew Bacevich has written that the defining characteristics of American foreign policy are pragmatism and opportunism.³⁷² These are particularly useful conceptual tools for reviewing the American role in the Iraqi arms arena during the Eisenhower administration. In navigating their relationship with the British on military aid to Iraq, the American record shows a clear mixture of the two characteristics. The opportunistic impulse was given life by members of the DOD, JCS, and US embassy in Baghdad who sought to expand the American role in the Iraqi arms trade at the expense of their British partners. In this instance, unlike the oil sector, tension between the Americans and British at times devolved into open competition.³⁷³

In the 1953 to 1958 period, there was an ongoing debate within the Eisenhower administration concerning the degree to which the US would defer to the preponderant British role in Iraqi military affairs. Members of the DOD, JCS, and US embassy in Baghdad were reluctantly willing to play the subordinate role in providing aid to the Iraqi military before the Suez War. Even so, military officers in Washington and Baghdad

³⁷² Andrew Bacevich, *The Limits of US Power: The End of American Exceptionalism* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2008), 22.

³⁷³ Cohen, *Strategy and Politics in the Middle East, 1954-1960*, p. 88.

chafed under the limitations they faced as a result of the MOU. After the disastrous events of October and November 1956, many figures in the DOD, JCS, and US embassy felt the British moment in the Middle East and Iraq was finished. In their view, circumstances now required the Americans to play the preeminent role in Iraq.

The State Department expressed serious reservations about the wisdom of this approach. The White House tended to agree with the State Department's assessment of the situation; President Eisenhower, as Daniel Williamson notes, did not want to simply force the British out of Iraq.³⁷⁴ The State Department continually resisted the recommendations of the DOD, JCS, and Ambassador Gallman that the US repudiate the MOU and assume primary responsibility for equipping Iraq's military, including its vaunted Air Force.

Even so, the State Department was not immune to a sense of opportunism and the allure of the potentialities presented by the gradual decline of British power in Iraq. Under the weight of continual DOD and JCS (and Iraqi) pressures for additional aid, the State Department agreed in January 1958 to dispatch the US air survey team to Iraq, a violation of one of the most important MOU provisions. This development was not a full victory for the American military. The State Department never formally renounced the MOU nor informed the British they were taking over primary responsibility for Iraq's armed forces. The impulse of opportunism driving the American military relationship with Iraq was not a uniform or consistent one within the Eisenhower administration.

On the whole, the State Department's approach to the US-Iraqi bilateral military relationship was more complicated, nuanced, and pragmatic than that of the DOD and JCS. It was strongly affected (at least before January 1958) by concerns about

³⁷⁴ Williamson, "Understandable Failure," p. 605-606.

undesirable financial burdens and strategic responsibilities. It was also influenced by an overarching understanding of the importance of grand-scale US-UK cooperation in the Middle East, even after Suez. Indeed, as historians have shown, the American partnership with the British in the Middle East, as in Iraq, continued in important fashion after the Suez War. Of course, as evidenced by the proclamation of the Eisenhower Doctrine in early 1957, the balance of power in the region shifted from the British to the Americans. The UK was relegated, as Blackwell says, to the role of “junior partner” in the Middle East after Suez: it maintained hegemony in the Persian Gulf, but it did not have the breadth of power throughout the Middle East that it did even in 1953. Even so, the Americans could not simply ignore British influence in Iraq and the broader Middle East following the Suez Crisis. US-UK cooperation during the Syrian crisis in 1957 greatly impressed and reassured anxious British officials.³⁷⁵ Equally, Anglo-American talks in Washington in October 1957 led to the US and UK continuing joint contingency planning for Jordan and Lebanon.³⁷⁶ Tore Petersen and Salim Yaqub similarly suggest that the UK intervention in the Oman crisis and the debate over London’s intervention in Jordan in 1958 show that Suez did not entirely destroy all UK influence in the Middle East.³⁷⁷

While the Suez Crisis struck at the foundations of US-UK partnership, the importance of the Middle East as a regional theatre in the postwar period ensured the

³⁷⁵ Blackwell, *British Military Intervention and the Struggle for Jordan*, p. 8 (quote), 85-87; Tore Petersen, *The Middle East between the Great Powers: Anglo-American Conflict and Cooperation, 1952-1957* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000), 108-120; Nigel Ashton, *Eisenhower, Macmillan, and the Problem of Nasser: Anglo-American Relations and Arab Nationalism, 1955-1959* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996), 2-3, 17, 210.

³⁷⁶ Blackwell, *British Military Intervention and the Struggle for Jordan*, p. 88.

³⁷⁷ Petersen, *The Middle East between the Great Powers*, p. 115; Yaqub, *Containing Arab Nationalism*, p. 278 ff 5.

dispute would not last long.³⁷⁸ The Americans relied on the British in the Middle East as a primary foreign military actor and depended on British access to and arrangements for Mideast oil.³⁷⁹ Outside the Middle East, American global commitments in the Cold War also necessitated close American-British cooperation after the Suez Crisis.³⁸⁰ The French surrender in Vietnam in 1954 and the debate over the membership of West Germany in NATO put a premium for Washington on close partnerships with policymakers in London. Likewise, British contributions to NATO and SEATO were essential to American Cold War containment strategy.³⁸¹ In early 1957, the UK agreed to the stationing of 60 Thor nuclear rockets in Britain to provide European bases for American nuclear missiles.³⁸² Eisenhower's New Look policy also placed a premium on reducing American defense expenditures. As Williamson rightly notes, "allies such as Great Britain, whose worldwide military and political relations reduced the need for more American military commitments to containment, were of particular value from Washington's point of view."³⁸³

The foundations of post-war cooperation between Washington and London in the Iraqi military aid arena were laid by the conditions of the Cold War. This vital alliance necessarily limited America's freedom of action to a considerable degree.³⁸⁴ Daniel Williamson correctly notes that Ambassador Gallman and recent historians like Frederick

³⁷⁸ Blackwell, *British Military Intervention and the Struggle for Jordan*, p. 3.

³⁷⁹ Citino, *From Arab Nationalism to OPEC*, p. 3; Yaqub, *Containing Arab Nationalism*, p. 4

³⁸⁰ Nicholas Thacher, "Reflections on US Foreign Policy Toward Iraq in the 1950s," in Robert Fernea and William Roger Louis (eds.) *The Iraqi Revolution of 1958: The Old Social Classes Revisited* (London: IB Tauris, 1991), 63.

³⁸¹ Williamson, "Understandable Failure," p. 597; Ashton, *Eisenhower, Macmillan, and the Problem of Nasser*, p. 116; Bartlett, *The Special Relationship*, p. 90.

³⁸² Bartlett, *The Special Relationship*, p. 93.

³⁸³ Williamson, "Understandable Failure," p. 605.

³⁸⁴ Ashton, *Eisenhower, Macmillan, and the Problem of Nasser*, p. 22; Williamson, "Understandable Failure," p. 600.

Axelgard have undervalued the importance of US foreign relations with the British in the postwar period in Iraq.³⁸⁵ Opportunities certainly existed for an expansion of American influence in the Iraqi military arena prior to the spring of 1958. Pragmatic State Department planning ensured the Americans did not needlessly damage US-UK relations to pursue a short-term gain in Baghdad. To paraphrase Nathan Citino, US engagement with the British in the Iraqi military arena does not support previous historical research which argued that the Americans actively fought to subsume Britain as the primary Western power in the Middle East in the early Cold War.³⁸⁶ Officials in the State Department viewed such possibilities with an eye toward the larger geopolitical risks of upsetting a vital Cold War ally. US relations with the British on Iraqi military matters were thus a mixture, as is typical in American diplomacy, of both opportunistic and pragmatic impulses.

³⁸⁵ Axelgard, "US Policy Toward Iraq, 1946-1958," p. 159, 216; Axelgard, "US Support for the British Position in Pre-Revolutionary Iraq," p. 77, 86.

³⁸⁶ See Citino, *From Arab Nationalism to OPEC*, p. 8 for this debate.

Chapter Three: The US, Britain, Iraq, and Middle East Collective Defense

Chapter Two highlighted the importance of Western oil concessions and military assistance to promoting the stability of the US-Iraqi relationship as well as Washington's broader conception of its power in Baghdad up to July 1958. This chapter seeks to broaden this study by placing this bilateral partnership in the wider context of American policies throughout the Middle East and Washington's campaign for regional stability and control. It focuses specifically on how competing ideas among the United States, Britain, and Iraq regarding Middle East collective defense affected the US-Iraqi relationship before the 1958 revolution.

Middle East defense arrangements were formalized during President Eisenhower's first term in office. Turkey and Iraq concluded a joint agreement in February 1955 designed to strengthen their defenses against communist aggression. The Turkish-Iraqi deal provided an umbrella arrangement for the accession of other states to the Baghdad Pact. The British joined the Baghdad Pact in April 1955. Pakistani and Iranian accession followed in September and October.³⁸⁷ The Baghdad Pact became the "chosen vehicle" for Britain and Iraq in buttressing and expanding their regional influence.³⁸⁸ The Eisenhower administration, once an enthusiastic supporter of Middle

³⁸⁷ Richard Jasse, "The Baghdad Pact: Cold War or Colonialism?" *Middle Eastern Studies* 27, no. 1 (January 1991), 150; Roby Barrett, *The Greater Middle East and the Cold War: US Foreign Policy Under Eisenhower and Kennedy* (London: IB Tauris, 2007), 19; Behçet Kemal Yeşilbursa, *The Baghdad Pact: Anglo-American Defence Policies in the Middle East, 1950-1959* (London: Frank Cass, 2005), 64-74; Peter Hahn, *Missions Accomplished? The United States and Iraq Since World War I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 29.

³⁸⁸ Tore Petersen, "Suez 1956: European Colonial Interests and US Cold War Prerogatives," in Victor Mauer and Daniel Mockli (eds.) *European-American Relations and the Middle East: From Suez to Iraq* (London: Routledge, 2010), 14 (quote); Peter Hahn, *The United States, Great Britain, and Egypt, 1945-1956: Strategy and Diplomacy in the Early Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 198; Jasse, "The Baghdad Pact," p. 147.

East collective defense schemes, joined various sub-committees of the Baghdad Pact as “observers” but rejected formal membership in the group.

The reasons for this confusing shift in Washington’s strategy are found in the complicated realities of US policy in the wider Middle East and the contested nature of ideas about regional defense in American thinking. The first section of this chapter examines how American, British, and Iraqi conceptions of Middle East defense differed before February 1955. It emphasizes the use of US military aid as a lubricant to secure Iraqi participation in a pro-Western defense group. Section two addresses the concerted campaign launched by members of the Baghdad Pact and agencies of the US government to secure American accession to the Pact. The decision to abstain from official membership, discussed in sections three and four, was determined in large part by the anticipated responses of the Soviet Union, Saudi Arabia, Israel, and Egypt to US accession. On top of these considerations, British and Iraqi actions in the Middle East further complicated wider US interests and publicly revealed the major liabilities that came with formal US membership in the Pact. The State Department and White House had little appetite for pursuing formal US participation in the Pact after surveying the reactions of critical regional actors to the group. British and Iraqi policies in the Middle East further infuriated American officials and served as the final nails in the coffin of the campaign for US membership.

US policy vis-à-vis the Baghdad Pact, spearheaded by Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and President Dwight Eisenhower, was ultimately an attempt to retain diplomatic flexibility and a degree of “freedom of action” on the question of Middle East

collective defense.³⁸⁹ Dulles and Eisenhower were willing to risk damage to American credibility on the international stage to protect larger US interests in the Middle East. Together, they gambled on the assumption that their complicated, nuanced approach to the Baghdad Pact could mollify the demands of their allies in London and Baghdad and salvage US relationships with other regional allies and antagonists.

The Creation of the Baghdad Pact

US efforts in the early 1950s to promote collective defense in the Middle East laid the foundations for the Baghdad Pact. The roots of the Baghdad Pact are found in two failed initiatives proffered by the Truman administration: the Middle East Command [MEC] and the Middle East Defense Organization [MEDO]. The globalization of the Cold War in the late 1940s and early 1950s led officials in Washington and London to search for a means of organizing anti-Soviet defense in the Arab Middle East.³⁹⁰ Western containment plans gave special attention to military assets in the Middle East. Britain's base at the Suez Canal was particularly valuable since it could serve as a launching pad to wage war against the Soviet Union. However, Egyptian nationalists demanding the withdrawal of British forces vociferously challenged Western military planning for Suez. The MEC subsequently emerged as an initiative to link Egypt, the linchpin of Western defense schemes, with the US and UK and thereby retain access to the Canal base.³⁹¹

³⁸⁹ Elie Podeh, "The Perils of Ambiguity: The United States and the Baghdad Pact," in David Lesch (ed.) *The Middle East and the United States: A Historical and Political Reassessment* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2003), 112 and Yeşilbursa, *The Baghdad Pact*, p. 177 mention the concept of freedom of action, but I believe it deserves greater attention than these studies provide.

³⁹⁰ Juan Lennart Michel Romero, "The Iraqi Revolution of 1958 and the Search for Security in the Middle East," Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of Texas at Austin, 2008, 41.

³⁹¹ Nigel Ashton, "The Hijacking of a Pact: The Formation of the Baghdad Pact and Anglo-American Tensions in the Middle East, 1955-1958," *Review of International Studies* 19, no. 2 (April 1993), 125-126.

Egypt's rejection of the MEC led the Truman administration to pursue an alternate arrangement known as MEDO that would again connect Egypt to Western defense contingencies. The Americans also saw Iraq's participation in MEDO as an important element of Middle East security, as Washington could draw on the manpower resources of the Iraqi state in pursuing regional containment strategies.³⁹² Even so, MEDO's future prospects were uncertain as Truman left office. Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Said expressed concern that MEDO could generate instability in regional politics. In Cairo, a final decision regarding Egypt's views of MEDO awaited the conclusion to the revolutionary events of 1952.³⁹³

The Eisenhower administration inherited Truman's MEDO initiative and the task of selling the plan to the Free Officers' regime in Egypt. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles' whirlwind tour of the Middle East in May 1953 revealed just how difficult this assignment would be. Dulles' discussions with Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser made it clear that Egyptian participation was, in Douglas Little's words, a "nonstarter."³⁹⁴ Egypt's rejection of MEDO was based in large part on the ongoing Arab conflict with Israel and Britain's unwillingness to surrender its Canal base. Nasser carefully explained to Dulles that Egyptians viewed Zionism and imperialism as greater security threats than

³⁹² Hahn, *The United States, Great Britain, and Egypt, 1945-1956*, p. 144; Memorandum from Richard E. Funkhouser to Parker T. Hart, Additional Notes on Possible Iraq, Syria, Lebanese Reactions to MEDO, 5 November 1952, National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book 78: US Propaganda in the Middle East [Hereby referred to as NSA EBB 78]; Frederick W. Axelgard, "US Policy Toward Iraq, 1946-1958," Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, 1988, 104-105.

³⁹³ Memorandum from Richard E. Funkhouser to Parker T. Hart, Additional Notes on Possible Iraq, Syria, Lebanese Reactions to MEDO, 5 November 1952, NSA EBB 78; Hahn, *The United States, Great Britain, and Egypt, 1945-1956*, p. 145.

³⁹⁴ Douglas Little, *American Orientalism: The United States and the Middle East Since 1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 127 (quote); Frederick Axelgard, "US Support for the British Position in Pre-Revolutionary Iraq," in Robert Fernea and William Roger Louis (eds.) *The Iraqi Revolution of 1958: The Old Social Classes Revisited* (London: IB Tauris, 1991), 83.

communism.³⁹⁵ Moreover, Nasser sought to head a security pact amongst the Arab states under the aegis of the Arab League that would operate with a singular policy toward Israel and the superpowers. A Western-led Arab defense group ran counter to Egyptian aspirations to leadership in the Arab and Muslim worlds.³⁹⁶

In light of MEDO's pitfalls, the United States turned to an alternate strategy known as the "Northern Tier." US officials in late 1953 began to encourage the Northern Tier states of Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey to form a collective defense organization as a way of sidestepping UK-Egyptian and Arab-Israeli tensions.³⁹⁷ In theory, the Northern Tier plan also limited Arab participation and thus minimized the problems that might emerge in inter-Arab politics. Moreover, the strategy favoured those states that were, in Dulles' view, "keenly aware" of Moscow's threat and geographically positioned to resist "possible Soviet aggression."³⁹⁸ Iraq, the lone Arab state in the Northern Tier, was

³⁹⁵ Yeşilbursa, *The Baghdad Pact*, p. 18; Hahn, *The United States, Great Britain, and Egypt, 1945-1956*, p. 158-159; Mohamed Hassanein Heikal, *The Cairo Documents: The Inside Story of Nasser and His Relationship with World Leaders, Rebels, and Statesmen* (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1973), 40-41; Nathan Citino, "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), 248; Ussama Makdisi, *Faith Misplaced: The Broken Promise of US-Arab Relations, 1820-2001* (New York: Public Affairs, 2010), 220-221.

³⁹⁶ Romero, "The Iraqi Revolution of 1958 and the Search for Security in the Middle East," p. 42.

³⁹⁷ Substance of Discussions of State-Joint Chiefs of Staff Meeting, 9 July 1954, National Archives and Records Administration [NARA], Record Group [RG] 59, Records of the Policy Planning Council - Subject Files, 1954-1962, Box 82; National Security Council Report, United States Objectives and Policies with Respect to the Near East, 23 July 1954, NSA EBB 78; Poteh, "The Perils of Ambiguity," p. 102; Ashton, "The Hijacking of a Pact," p. 126; Hahn, *Missions Accomplished?*, p. 28-29; Heikal, *The Cairo Documents*, p. 43.

³⁹⁸ From James S. Lay, Jr. to the United States National Security Council, United States Objectives and Policies with Respect to the Middle East [Includes Draft Amendments], 6 July 1954, NSA EBB 78 (quote); Barrett, *The Greater Middle East and the Cold War*, p. 16-17. One could also see the Americans' interest in Middle East collective defense as a function, in part, of counter-insurgency politics aimed at containing the expansion of communism. For instance, David McKnight's work demonstrates how the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization [SEATO] provided a venue for its member states to plan operations to defeat communist insurgencies in Laos and Thailand. As the Introduction explained, the Iraqi Communist Party [ICP] of the 1950s does not fit the prototypical definition of an insurgency. Nonetheless, there is some value in viewing the Eisenhower administration's commitment to collective defense in Iraq and the Middle East as part of a function of counter-insurgency doctrine, as the Americans engaged in a battle with communists for the "hearts and minds" of the region. See David McKnight, "Western Intelligence and SEATO's War on Subversion, 1956-63," *Intelligence and National Security* 20, no. 2 (June 2005), 291.

critical to American planning given its leaders' staunch anti-communism and willingness to cooperate with Western defense schemes.³⁹⁹ The Northern Tier strategy also appealed to US officials for a final reason that regularly shaped American approaches to Middle East defense before July 1958. Given its aversion to the legacies of British imperialism, the Eisenhower administration preferred a regional strategy that did not draw on British colonial assets (in this case, the Egyptian Canal base).⁴⁰⁰

The rapid sequence of events in 1954 and 1955 that led to the Baghdad Pact deserves attention since they add clarity to an analysis of US conceptions of Middle East defense. Many of the problems and tensions that appeared between the United States and the UK and Iraq over Middle East defense after February 1955 were readily apparent before the creation of the Baghdad Pact. The respective governments in Washington, London, and Baghdad held differing, and at times contradictory, understandings of the Northern Tier's objectives and the ways it should operate that, in turn, influenced American views of the Baghdad Pact in later years.

There was naturally a good deal of convergence between American and British strategies for the containment of communism in the Middle East. Even so, their respective objectives for and understandings of collective defense differed in important ways. Washington viewed the announcement in April 1954 of an "Agreement of Friendly Cooperation" between Turkey and Pakistan as an important first step toward the realization of the Northern Tier. The US was enthusiastic about the prospects for Iraqi and Iranian participation. They were careful, however, to try to hide the American hand in the process leading to the emergence of a defense outfit. As part of this policy, US

³⁹⁹ Axelgard, "US Policy Toward Iraq, 1946-1958," p. 212.

⁴⁰⁰ Ashton, "The Hijacking of a Pact," p. 125.

officials insisted that any future Middle East defense organization exclude formal Western participation in order to avoid charges of colonialism.⁴⁰¹ The National Security Council [NSC] explained in July 1954 that there was “little possibility of including both the Arab states and the West (except Turkey) in a formal defense organization” until Arab resentment over Western policies subsided.⁴⁰² In spite of these efforts, as this chapter and Chapter Five explain, many Iraqis still associated the United States and Washington’s strong-armed tactics with the unpopular Baghdad Pact and Iraq’s decision to participate in the group.

London had a differing view of this process. Prime Minister Winston Churchill’s government was concerned that the Americans’ plans for Iraqi participation in the Northern Tier would inspire Egyptian opposition. These calculations were closely linked to Britain’s recent dealings with the Egyptian regime. Churchill’s government concluded its long-awaited agreement with Egypt in July 1954 on the redeployment of British troops from the Suez base and was hesitant to squander Nasser’s hard-earned goodwill.⁴⁰³ The UK ambassador to Iraq, Sir John Troutbeck, warned that the Northern Tier would directly challenge Egyptian claims to leadership of the Arab world. The Americans, for their

⁴⁰¹ National Security Council Report, United States Objectives and Policies with Respect to the Near East, 23 July 1954, NSA EBB 78; Operations Coordinating Board – Progress Report on NSC 155/1 (Now 5428) – US Objectives and Policies with Respect to the Near East, 29 July 1954, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 - Administrative and Chronological Files 1953-1961, Box 25; #1400 - The Secretary of State to the Embassy in Iraq, 5 January 1954, *FRUS 1952-1954*, vol. IX, p. 2363; Operations Coordinating Board – Progress Report on NSC 5428 – Period of Report: July 1 1954 through February 28 1955, 10 March 1955, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 - Administrative and Chronological Files 1953-1961, Box 25.

⁴⁰² National Security Council Report, United States Objectives and Policies with Respect to the Near East, 23 July 1954, NSA EBB 78.

⁴⁰³ Ashton, “The Hijacking of a Pact,” p. 126; Author Unclear, V1078/26, 11 January 1955, FO371-115484, British National Archives [BNA]; Hahn, *The United States, Great Britain, and Egypt, 1945-1956*, p. 178.

part, believed the British were overstating Nasser's likely reaction and were disappointed by London's hesitancy.⁴⁰⁴

Britain's opportunistic drive for larger strategic prizes in Iraq led to a reversal of their position in the immediate period before February 1955. British officials began to view Iraq's participation in a collective defense group (alongside the UK) as a means by which the UK could re-negotiate the much-maligned Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of 1930. This would permit Churchill's cabinet to retain access to important Iraqi military facilities, including airfields at Habbaniya and Shaiba. These calculations soon took precedence over London's existing fears of provoking the Egyptians.⁴⁰⁵ A new Anglo-Iraqi Special Agreement, signed in 1955, paved the way for British participation in the Baghdad Pact while preserving their strategic assets in Iraq.⁴⁰⁶ UK accession to the Pact, however, directly contradicted American desires to maintain the Northern Tier as an exclusively "regional" organization. As Behçet Kemal Yeşilbursa argues, the British saw the Baghdad Pact as an "umbrella for the security of the defence facilities in Iraq...while the Americans appeared to look on a regional grouping as an end in itself."⁴⁰⁷

The Iraqi leadership's motivations and designs for Middle East defense are equally important. The Baghdad Pact served the Iraqi governing elite's interests in multiple ways. The emerging organization offered leaders like Fadhil Jamali and Nuri al-

⁴⁰⁴ Sir John Troutbeck to Mr. Eden - New American Initiative in the Middle East: Probable Repercussions in Iraq, #64, 15 March 1954, FO481-8, BNA; Author Unclear, V1078/26, 11 January 1955, FO371-115484, BNA; Ashton, "The Hijacking of a Pact," p. 129.

⁴⁰⁵ Operations Coordinating Board – Progress Report on NSC 5428 – Period of Report: July 1 1954 through February 28 1955, 10 March 1955, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 - Administrative and Chronological Files 1953-1961, Box 25; #420 - Telegram from the Embassy in Iraq (Gallman) to the Department of State, 22 March 1955, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 968; Jasse, "The Baghdad Pact," p. 141; Ashton, "The Hijacking of a Pact," p. 131.

⁴⁰⁶ Daniel Williamson, "Understandable Failure: The Eisenhower Administration's Strategic Goals in Iraq, 1953-1958," *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 17, no. 3 (September 2006), 604-605; Phebe Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2012), 74.

⁴⁰⁷ Yeşilbursa, *The Baghdad Pact*, p. 75.

Said an opportunity to replace the outdated Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of 1930 with a new arrangement that would secure greater Iraqi sovereignty while solidifying their partnership with the British. As Jasse adeptly notes, treaty revision could occur “under the cover of an indigenous regional defense agreement” that would serve convergent British and Iraqi interests.⁴⁰⁸ Jamali and al-Said, among others, also gravitated toward the Northern Tier given their anti-communist disposition. US officials regularly pointed to Iraq’s recognition of the “menace to them of international Communism” as a major reason for supporting Iraqi participation in a pro-Western defense scheme.⁴⁰⁹ Baghdad’s concerns about the dangers posed by communism appear to have been genuine in part. They were a product of their fears of facing a Soviet attack as well as their recognition of the serious domestic challenge posed by the powerful Iraqi Communist Party, particularly the party’s appeal among considerable numbers of Iraqi Kurds. Even so, it is without doubt that Iraqi leaders, particularly Nuri al-Said, also exaggerated their anxieties for their American audience to build their credentials as a reliable, anti-communist partner.

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⁴⁰⁸ This was important as a way to placate Iraqi nationalists. See Sir Harold Beeley Interview, 23 February 1983, GB165-0124 - Granada Television Interview Transcripts, Middle East Centre Archive [MEC]; Mohammed Fadhel Jamali, *Inside the Arab Nationalist Struggle: Memoirs of an Iraqi Statesman* (London: IB Tauris, 2012), 262-263; Daniel Williamson, “Exploiting Opportunities: Iraq Secures Military Aid from the West, 1953-1956,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 36, no. 1 (2004), 90; Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, p. 74-75; Jasse, “The Baghdad Pact,” p. 145 (quote).

⁴⁰⁹ The US ambassador to Iraq, Burton Berry, believed that the threat posed by the Iranian Tudeh (Communist) Party to the Shah in the summer of 1953 “jolted many high-placed Iraqi officials out of their lethargy” and led to a greater understanding amongst them of the Soviet threat. See #1395 - The Ambassador in Iraq (Berry) to the Department of State, 24 August 1953, *FRUS 1952-1954*, vol. IX, p. 2355; #1411 - The Ambassador in Iraq (Berry) to the Department of State, 16 April 1954, *FRUS 1952-1954*, vol. IX, p. 2379; Central Intelligence Agency – NIE 36-54 – Probable Developments in the Arab States, 7 September 1954, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) – Record Set of NIEs, Special Estimates, and SNIEs, 1950-1954, Box 2.

⁴¹⁰ Nicholas Thacher, “Reflections on US Foreign Policy Toward Iraq in the 1950s,” in Robert Fernea and William Roger Louis (eds.) *The Iraqi Revolution of 1958: The Old Social Classes Revisited* (London: IB Tauris, 1991), 67; Jamali, *Inside the Arab Nationalist Struggle*, p. 262-265; Johan Franzen, *Red Star over Iraq: Iraqi Communism Before Saddam* (London: Hurst, 2011), 61; Williamson, “Exploiting Opportunities,” p. 90.

Iraqi and US interests still diverged in important respects. The Iraqi leadership entertained its own unique objectives in the Arab world that fueled its interest in the Northern Tier. Jamali and Al-Said's "Fertile Crescent" schemes, meaning Iraqi hegemony over parts of Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan, required US acquiescence. Therefore, close US-Iraqi relations in the collective defense realm were a mechanism to secure American support for their regional designs.⁴¹¹ Nuri al-Said was disappointed with the American vision for the Northern Tier since it did not call for additional Arab states to join and diminished Iraq's ability to extend its regional leadership.⁴¹² For their part, US officials were especially fearful of Iraqi "ambitions to achieve Arab leadership against the opposition of Egypt (and Saudi Arabia)" since they could seriously complicate larger US policies in the Middle East.⁴¹³ The signs of potential discord between the US and Iraq over the latter's regional designs were evident to US observers prior to the signing of the Baghdad Pact. The period from February 1955 to July 1958 would witness a regular debate between the United States and Iraq in delineating the limits to Iraqi expansionism in the Middle East. This contest, in turn, diminished the prospects for US membership in the Pact alongside Baghdad.

Finally, the Iraqis saw their cooperation with Western defense plans as a means to secure extensive shipments of American military aid. The Eisenhower administration dangled military aid in front of prime ministers Fadhil Jamali, Arshad al-Umari, and Nuri

⁴¹¹ S/P Study – US Policy in the Middle East, 18 July 1956, NARA, RG 59, Records of the Policy Planning Council - Subject Files, 1954-1962, Box 108; Jasse, "The Baghdad Pact," p. 144. See Adeed Dawisha, *Iraq: A Political History from Independence to Occupation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 139-140 and Jamali, *Inside the Arab Nationalist Struggle*, p. 5-72, 262-264, 287 for a detailed discussion of Iraq's Fertile Crescent plans.

⁴¹² Yeşilbursa, *The Baghdad Pact*, p. 53, 218; Podeh, "The Perils of Ambiguity," p. 104; Romero, "The Iraqi Revolution of 1958 and the Search for Security in the Middle East," p. 111-112.

⁴¹³ Central Intelligence Agency – NIE 36-54 – Probable Developments in the Arab States, 7 September 1954, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) – Record Set of NIEs, Special Estimates, and SNIEs, 1950-1954, Box 2.

al-Said as an inducement to participate in the Northern Tier. In fact, scholars tend to understate the fact that the US-Iraqi arms deal of April 1954 was predicated on the clear provision that military assistance would be forthcoming only if Iraq joined a collective defense group.⁴¹⁴ The lead-up to the April 1954 arms deal, as well as the period that followed, highlights the critical role that military aid played in early American and Iraqi conceptions of the Baghdad Pact.

US officials registered their frustration as early as April 1952 with Iraqi pressure to provide military aid “without any quid pro quo.” Their response, as was the case through April 1954, was that military aid would not flow until Iraq made it clear it was willing to cooperate “in creating [an] effective ME [Middle East] defense org[anization].”⁴¹⁵ The US ambassador to Iraq was again encouraged in early 1954 to inform Prime Minister Fadhil Jamali’s cabinet that Baghdad’s cooperation in regional security was essential and necessary for the provision of arms.⁴¹⁶

Months later, Jamali’s regime moved toward formalizing an arms agreement with the Americans. Negotiations soon hit a major roadblock in April. The deal was nearly scuttled in part due to the uproar the proposed arms agreement created amongst members of Congress and the pro-Israeli American public.⁴¹⁷ Equally important, for our purposes, was the last minute move by Jamali and other Iraqi leaders to back away publicly from commitments to join a pro-Western defense organization. The most galling of these

⁴¹⁴ See, for instance, Yeşilbursa, *The Baghdad Pact*, p. 49-50.

⁴¹⁵ #1378 - The Ambassador in Iraq (Crocker) to the Department of State, 21 April 1952, *FRUS 1952-1954*, vol. IX, p. 2328.

⁴¹⁶ #1400 - The Secretary of State to the Embassy in Iraq, 5 January 1954, *FRUS 1952-1954*, vol. IX, p. 2364; From Washington (Sir Roger Makins) to Foreign Office, #295, 18 February 1954, DEFE 7-835, BNA.

⁴¹⁷ From Troutbeck to Anthony Eden, #65, 10 March 1954, DEFE 7-835, BNA; Memorandum of Conference with President Eisenhower and John Foster Dulles, White House, 21 April 1954, Declassified Documents Reference System [DDRS], p. 1; Axelgard, “US Support for the British Position in Pre-Revolutionary Iraq,” p. 85; Axelgard, “US Policy Toward Iraq, 1946-1958,” p. 139.

actions, in Washington's view, was a public communique issued by the Iraqi delegation on 1 April 1954 at the Arab League meeting in Cairo. The statement denied all rumors Baghdad would be joining the Turkish-Pakistani alliance. The communique also followed a period of events a year earlier where it appeared the Iraqis were resisting Turkish entreaties to adhere to a defense group.⁴¹⁸

One wonders about the sincerity of the Arab League communique. Daniel Williamson suggests that Jamali's regime was simply seeking to "extract as large a reward as possible from the West" for participating in the Northern Tier.⁴¹⁹ Whether a ploy or not, the declaration had the opposite effect on American policymakers. Secretary of State Dulles wrote a scathing cable to the US embassy in Baghdad on 8 April 1954 denouncing Iraq's apparent timidity. His note visibly delineates the connection in American thinking between the military agreement and Iraq's role in Middle East defense. Dulles stated:

It seems to us that if the Iraqis are so unwilling to stand up and be counted on side of free world that at this late stage in negotiations they subscribe to statements such as foregoing [the Arab League communique], we should reflect very carefully before concluding agreement.⁴²⁰

Dulles chose to suspend negotiations until Prime Minister Jamali openly endorsed the Turkish-Pakistani Pact and promised that US weapons would be used only in the interests of collective defense.⁴²¹ In this respect, regional defense was intimately connected to the uproar from pro-Israeli observers over the proposed arms deal. Without an Iraqi commitment to eventually join the Turkish-Pakistani pact, the State Department

⁴¹⁸ #1409 - Secretary of State (Dulles) to Embassy in Iraq, 8 April 1954, *FRUS 1952-1954*, vol. IX, p. 2375; Axelgard, "US Policy Toward Iraq, 1946-1958," p. 111, 138.

⁴¹⁹ Williamson, "Exploiting Opportunities," p. 97.

⁴²⁰ #1409 - Secretary of State (Dulles) to Embassy in Iraq, 8 April 1954, *FRUS 1952-1954*, vol. IX, p. 2375.

⁴²¹ #1409 - Secretary of State (Dulles) to Embassy in Iraq, 8 April 1954, *FRUS 1952-1954*, vol. IX, p. 2377.

reasoned, it would be difficult to convince the Israelis and pro-Israeli Americans that US arms destined for Baghdad would not be deployed against Israel. The US ambassador to Iraq, Burton Berry, subsequently informed Prime Minister Jamali that negotiations were henceforth suspended given the lack of “clear-cut recognition by Iraq of her interests in regional defense...and her willingness to cooperate with other states who also see the dangers.”⁴²²

The logjam was broken on 19 April. A new provision attached by the State Department indicated that US aid to Baghdad would be related “in character, timing and amount to international developments in the area.” Washington hoped this clause, along with US references to the Northern Tier’s alignment against communism, would be sufficient to deflect criticism from pro-Israeli circles.⁴²³ It also subtly indicated Washington’s continued insistence that Iraq join a formal organization of Northern Tier states. President Eisenhower commented to Dulles two days later that he “very much hoped that the agreement would in fact lead to [Iraqi] identification of agreement with Turkey-Pakistan.”⁴²⁴

Eisenhower was perhaps too imprecise with his words on this occasion. US officials very much insisted on Iraqi participation in the Northern Tier after April 1954. A series of requests for additional weaponry raised the ire of US diplomats and led them scrambling to remind the Iraqi leadership of the agreed-upon provisions of their deal.

When Fadhil Jamali, now foreign minister, approached Dulles on 17 July about a

⁴²² #1410 - The Acting Secretary of State (Smith) to Embassy in Iraq, 15 April 1954, *FRUS 1952-1954*, vol. IX, p. 2377; #1412 - The Ambassador in Iraq (Berry) to the Department of State, 18 April 1954, *FRUS 1952-1954*, vol. IX, p. 2380. On Israeli fears of US weapons flowing to Iraq, see Isaac Alteras, *Eisenhower and Israel: US-Israeli Relations, 1953-1960* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993), 109-110.

⁴²³ #1413 - The Secretary of State (Dulles) to the Embassy in Iraq, 19 April 1954, *FRUS 1952-1954*, vol. IX, p. 2382; Axelgard, “US Support for the British Position in Pre-Revolutionary Iraq,” p. 86.

⁴²⁴ Memorandum of Conference with President Eisenhower and John Foster Dulles, White House, 21 April 1954, DDRS, p. 1.

possible Iraqi federation with Syria, Dulles lambasted Jamali. Dulles sternly reminded Jamali of the “difficulties he encountered domestically in going through with the military aid agreement with Iraq.” If Iraq pursued federation with Syria before committing to a regional defense organization, Dulles threatened, the United States “might have to reexamine our action under the US-Iraqi military aid agreement.”⁴²⁵ As Dulles later reminded the Iraqi ambassador Moussa al-Shabandar, “our military assistance to Iraq was based largely upon the belief that Iraq would adhere to the pact.”⁴²⁶ US officials repeated these same points in response to Prime Minister Nuri al-Said’s pleas in early 1955 for larger shipments of weaponry.⁴²⁷ Soon afterwards, al-Said’s regime signed the Turkish-Iraqi deal of 24 February that formed the basis for the Baghdad Pact. The Eisenhower administration had little trouble finding a suitable way to express its appreciation. In March 1955, the US rewarded the Iraqi government with an expedited shipment of guns for their army.⁴²⁸

American, British, and Iraqi conceptions and understandings of Middle East collective defense continuously evolved and underwent processes of renegotiation in the period leading to the creation of the Baghdad Pact in February 1955. The extent of

⁴²⁵ #1418 - Memorandum of Conversation by Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern, South Asian and African Affairs (Byroade), 22 July 1954, *FRUS 1952-1954*, vol. IX, p. 2387 (quote); Memorandum of Conversation –General Review of US-Arab Problems, 11 February 1955, NARA, RG 59, Central Decimal File [CDF] Iraq 1955-1959, Box 2257.

⁴²⁶ #1420 - Memorandum of Conversation by Secretary Dulles and Dr. Moussa al-Shabandar, Iraqi Ambassador, 11 October 1954, *FRUS 1952-1954*, vol. IX, p. 2389.

⁴²⁷ #417 – From the Embassy in Iraq (Gallman) to the Department of State, 5 January 1955, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 964. The US and UK coordinated their policies in the face of these requests; London also made military aid contingent on progress in regional defense. See #1423 - Memorandum of Conversation by the Officer in Charge of Arabian Peninsula – Iraq Affairs (Fritzlan), 4 November 1954, *FRUS 1952-1954*, vol. IX, p. 2394; From JG Ward, 16 December 1954, FO371-110817, BNA; Yeşilbursa, *The Baghdad Pact*, p. 69; Jasse, “The Baghdad Pact,” p. 149.

⁴²⁸ Operations Coordinating Board – Progress Report on NSC 5428 – Period of Report: July 1 1954 through February 28 1955, 10 March 1955, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 - Administrative and Chronological Files 1953-1961, Box 25; #419 - The Embassy in Iraq (Gallman) to the Department of State, 18 February 1955, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 968.

Western participation in the Northern Tier, Iraqi ambitions in the Middle East, and the flow of American military aid were under constant debate between the three sides. Each of these matters, in turn, suggested broader, underlying differences between the US, UK, and Iraq regarding the role and function of Middle East collective defense. These divergences were early indicators of the difficult, complicated relationship the United States would form with Britain, Iraq, and the Baghdad Pact from February 1955 to July 1958.

The Push for American Adherence

With the creation of the Baghdad Pact, American objectives in the realm of Middle East defense appeared, on the surface, to have been reasonably satisfied. The Northern Tier states had begun to unite in a pro-Western defense organization aimed at resisting communist aggression. Even so, the purpose and functions of the Baghdad Pact remained a major point of contention between the United States and the UK and Iraq before July 1958. The Americans' relationship with the new organization remained in flux since the Eisenhower administration deferred a final decision on US membership. The British and Iraqis would spend the next three years vigorously pressing the United States to join the group. Their calls for American participation were echoed by various US government agencies. As in the previous chapter, the Department of Defense [DOD], Joint Chiefs of Staff [JCS], and members of the US diplomatic corps pursued an activist, opportunistic strategy in the Middle East. Their respective appeals for American accession to the Baghdad Pact failed to convince top policymakers at the State Department and White House. As in the January 1953 to February 1955 period, the

American relationship with and connection to the strategy of Middle East defense remained hotly contested, even amongst bureaucrats in Washington.

US officials were cognizant that pressure would quickly come from the Baghdad Pact powers for US membership.⁴²⁹ True to this prediction, Turkish leaders expressed their disappointment in 1955 with the “hands-off” attitude the US had shown to the new organization. The Turks compared the American approach to “practically disowning our own child.”⁴³⁰ UK officials were similarly suspicious that the Americans might disassociate themselves from their Northern Tier strategy. Nigel Ashton recounts how Foreign Minister Anthony Eden told the State Department in 1955 that their “enthusiastic support of the Turkish-Iraqi Pact is too recent in men’s minds to enable them to execute a *volte-face* with safety or dignity.”⁴³¹ UK officials feared the Pact’s momentum was waning. American accession, they contended, would strengthen the US position in the Middle East and highlight the benefits Iraq accrued from joining the group.⁴³²

Pressure came from the Iraqi side as well. Prime Minister Nuri al-Said sought to secure American participation even before the Turkish-Iraqi agreement was finalized. In December 1954, he insisted that America’s membership in a collective defense group

⁴²⁹ Operations Coordinating Board – Progress Report on NSC 5428 – Period of Report: July 1 1954 through February 28 1955, 10 March 1955, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 - Administrative and Chronological Files 1953-1961, Box 25.

⁴³⁰ #37 - Memorandum from the Embassy in Turkey (Warren) to the Department of State, 21 May 1955, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 55 (quote); From Commander in Chief, U.S. Naval Forces, Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean to Chief of Naval Operations (Executive Agent for the Joint Chiefs of Staff), 30 November 1955, DDCS.

⁴³¹ Ashton, “The Hijacking of a Pact,” p. 133.

⁴³² Dillon Anderson, Special Assistant to the President – Centurion Tanks for Iraq, 26 July 1955, White House Office, Office of the Staff Secretary: Records, 1952-1961 – Subject Series, Department of Defense Subseries, Box 6, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library [DDEL]; Memorandum of Conversation – Secretary Dulles, Mr. Francis Russell, Mr. Macmillan, and Mr. Shuckburgh at the residence of the US Ambassador in Paris, 14 July 1955, FO371-115872, BNA; Memorandum of Conversation – Call of the British Foreign Secretary regarding Soviet-Egyptian Arms Agreement, 3 October 1955, NARA, RG 59, Records of the Policy Planning Council - Subject Files, 1954-1962, Box 97.

alongside Baghdad would help offset Egyptian objections.⁴³³ Al-Said gained little traction with these appeals since they contradicted the American plan to maintain the regional identity of the group. Iraqi officials again pressed their counterparts in the fall and winter of 1955. Nuri al-Said pleaded with Admiral Arthur Radford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, that “Iraq was on trial before the Arab world” and that “US adherence to the Pact would give it strength and substance, and would do much to answer the Arab nation critics.”⁴³⁴ Radford lent a sympathetic ear, but official policy in Washington did not change.

The outbreak of the Suez War in late 1956 inspired a new round of pleas. Anthony Eden’s government in London argued that American participation in the Pact would give the US a greater role in regional affairs and repair the recent breach in transatlantic relations. The Iraqi ambassador to the US, Moussa al-Shabandar, likewise made a vague call in late November 1956 for the US to “‘come openly’ into the area,” a code-word for US accession to the Baghdad Pact.⁴³⁵ This issue remained a priority for the Pact powers after Suez. The British Foreign Secretary Selwyn Lloyd tried to cajole John Foster Dulles in late June 1958 to attend an upcoming Baghdad Pact meeting in London. Lloyd wrote to Dulles “I cannot stress too strongly how important we feel your

⁴³³ #1426 - From Gallman to the Department of State, 21 December 1954, *FRUS 1952-1954*, vol. IX, p. 2402.

⁴³⁴ #70 – Memorandum of Conversation – US Support for Baghdad Pact, 20 October 1955, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 174; #428 - Editorial Note, February 1956, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 987 (quote).

⁴³⁵ Memorandum of Conversation – US delegation to the Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Paris France– Subject: Baghdad Pact, 10 December 1956, NARA, RG 59, Records of the Policy Planning Council - Subject Files, 1954-1962, Box 109; John Foster Dulles – Memorandum of Conversation with Sir Harold Caccia, British Ambassador at my residence, 24 December 1956, John Foster Dulles: Papers, 1950-1961 – General Correspondence and Memoranda Series, Box 1, DDEL; BNA; Memorandum of Conversation – Ambassador Husa Shabander of Iraq, Brigadier Hassan Mustafa, Iraqi Armed Forces Attache - Iraqi-US Relations, 26 November 1956, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959, Box 2257 (quote).

presence would be. I really mean this.” Dulles offered a non-committal reply.⁴³⁶ Nuri al-Said’s regime also stepped up its campaign following the proclamation of the Eisenhower Doctrine in early 1957. The visit of the Iraqi Crown Prince Abdullah to Washington in February 1957 and the Richards Mission of early April provided forums for Iraqi officials to press the United States for Pact membership.⁴³⁷ Al-Said’s government eventually grudgingly accepted the US decision to abstain from the Pact. Even so, they did not always adequately hide their disappointment. When discussing the instability of Middle East politics with US officials in February 1957, the Iraqi Crown Prince snipped that “if the United States had joined the Pact at the outset, much of the opposition to it would never have developed.”⁴³⁸

The repeated appeals from Pact members helped propel an ongoing debate amongst officials in Washington about US policy. The military (as well as ambassadors in the Pact countries) became major proponents of US membership in the Pact and repeatedly urged the State Department and White House to revise their approach. As with the military aid issue outlined in Chapter Two, these tensions were apparent in Washington circles well before the Suez War. Months after the Turkish-Iraqi agreement,

⁴³⁶ Letter from Selwyn Lloyd to John Foster Dulles, 24 June 1958, Dwight D. Eisenhower: Papers as President, 1953-1961 (Ann Whitman File) – Dulles-Herter Series, Box 10, DDEL (quote); Letter from John Foster Dulles to Selwyn Lloyd, 27 June 1958, Dwight D. Eisenhower: Papers as President, 1953-1961 (Ann Whitman File) – Dulles-Herter Series, Box 10, DDEL.

⁴³⁷ John Foster Dulles – Memorandum for the President: Visit of Crown Prince Abdullah of Iraq, February 1957, Dwight D. Eisenhower: Records as President (White House Central Files), 1953-1961 – Confidential File, Box 72, DDEL; #119 – Ankara for Richards, 23 March 1957, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs - Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Country Files Prepared for the Richards Mission to the Middle East, 1956-1957, Box 18.

⁴³⁸ From British Embassy in Washington (R.W. Bailey) to E.M. Rose, Levant Department of the Foreign Office, VQ10345/1, 13 February 1957, FO371-128052, BNA; Memorandum of Conversation – Letter from King Faisal; US Policy in the Middle East, 3 January 1958, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs – Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Subject Files Relating to Iraq and Jordan, 1956-1959, Box 13; #448 – Memorandum of Conversation – Visit of Crown Prince Abdullah of Iraq – Baghdad Pact, 5 February 1957, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 1035 (quote).

the Joint Chiefs of Staff argued that the US should formally adhere to the deal.⁴³⁹ From that point on, US membership in the Baghdad Pact remained a critical objective of the JCS, DOD, US ambassadors in the Pact countries, and even some State Department figures. Their arguments for US membership, couched in practical, strategic, and even moral terms, demonstrate the complicated and contested nature of Middle East defense policy, even within the friendly confines of Washington.

In the view of the Pact's supporters in Washington, there was first a practical reason to push for full US membership. Since Washington was a strong supporter of the Northern Tier, US ambassador to Iraq Waldemar Gallman noted, it was only logical that the US adhere to the organization. The Secretary of Defense, Charles Wilson, professed to be "bewildered" by the Americans' reluctance to join given Washington's energetic attempts to expand the pact to Iran and Pakistan.⁴⁴⁰ Later, in the midst of the Suez Crisis, Admiral Radford enunciated the views of the Joint Chiefs in a position paper. Given that the United States issued strong public declarations of support for the Pact during the crisis, Radford and the Joint Chiefs believed US membership was the only "forthright and logical" action to take. If the US was willing to offer statements in support of the Pact, Radford asked, "why is the US unwilling to join the Baghdad Pact?"⁴⁴¹

Strategic considerations were at the heart of the case produced by the Pact's supporters. For one, it was assumed that adherence would reward the US with a greater position in Middle East defense planning. Membership would create a formal US role in

⁴³⁹ Podesh, "The Perils of Ambiguity," p. 108.

⁴⁴⁰ #24 - Telegram from the Embassy in Iraq (Gallman) to the Department of State, 16 March 1955, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 35; Waldemar Gallman, *Iraq under General Nuri: My Recollections of Nuri al-Said* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1963), 57-58; #66 - Memorandum of Discussion at the 260th meeting of the NSC, 6 October 1955, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 164.

⁴⁴¹ Arthur Radford, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Secretary of Defense (CE Wilson) – US Adherence to the Baghdad Pact, 30 November 1956, White House Office, Office of the Staff Secretary: Records, 1952-1961 – Subject Series, Department of Defense Subseries, Box 1, DDEL.

military sessions and lead, one NSC study opined, to “a more authoritative voice in political deliberations” in the Pact.⁴⁴² This, in turn, could help improve planning between the Baghdad Pact and allied nations in NATO and SEATO.⁴⁴³ It was also assumed that the United States could secure expanded access to strategic regional facilities through formal adherence. Admiral Radford believed that US accession would permit Washington to create new military bases in Iraq and the wider region. The American military could, theoretically, use these bases to stockpile weapons and prepare their forces in the event of a sudden US intervention in the Middle East during a regional crisis.⁴⁴⁴ On the whole, those elements seeking US adherence expected that membership would enlarge the American military footprint in the Middle East.⁴⁴⁵

Related to these considerations was the presumed impact membership would have on Washington’s vital relationship with Britain. Ambassador Gallman supported adherence in part to “preserve our historic friendship and valuable ties with the United Kingdom.”⁴⁴⁶ Loy Henderson, the longtime State Department mandarin, concurred. In the wake of the Suez Crisis, Henderson reminded the State Department of Britain’s tremendous influence in the region. Rather than treating the British as a “pariah,”

⁴⁴² #127 - Draft Paper by the NSC Planning Board Assistants – Immediate US Adherence to Baghdad Pact, 2 May 1956, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 296.

⁴⁴³ Yeşilbursa, *The Baghdad Pact*, p. 180.

⁴⁴⁴ Yeşilbursa, *The Baghdad Pact*, p. 176-177, 180; Michael Cohen, *Strategy and Politics in the Middle East, 1954-1960: Defending the Northern Tier* (London: Frank Cass, 2005), 176.

⁴⁴⁵ Arthur Radford, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Secretary of Defense (CE Wilson) – US Adherence to the Baghdad Pact, 30 November 1956, White House Office, Office of the Staff Secretary: Records, 1952-1961 – Subject Series, Department of Defense Subseries, Box 1, DDEL; Probable Consequences of US Adherence or Non-Adherence to the Baghdad Pact – SNIE 30-7-56, 14 December 1956, CIA Electronic Reading Room [ERR]; Statement by Defense of the Reasons for US Adherence to the Baghdad Pact at this time, Undated, White House Office, Office of the Staff Secretary: Records, 1952-1961 – Subject Series, Department of Defense Subseries, Box 1, DDEL.

⁴⁴⁶ Cable Excerpts – Gallman in Baghdad, 15 November 1956, White House Office, Office of the Staff Secretary: Records, 1952-1961 – Subject Series, Department of Defense Subseries, Box 1, DDEL.

Henderson sought a rapprochement that could begin with US adherence to the Pact.⁴⁴⁷

Intelligence assessments offered in the National Intelligence Estimate [NIE] of 14 December 1956 confirmed that US adherence would find warm approval among members of Anthony Eden's government.⁴⁴⁸

Along with accentuating the Pact's positive attributes, these officials pointed to the strategic limitations and relative weakness of the group. In essence, they tried to scare the State Department and White House into adherence. Admiral Radford provided President Eisenhower and Secretary of State Dulles in the spring of 1956 with the JCS assessment that the Baghdad Pact could disintegrate without US participation. Secretary of Defense Wilson similarly forwarded the Pentagon's view in April that adherence was necessary to save the Pact from collapse.⁴⁴⁹ Like the Pact members, American advocates of accession vigorously renewed their campaign following the Suez War. Britain's attack on Egypt "had gravely discredited the Pact," Ambassador Gallman warned, and the Pact would "slowly die" without US adherence. The "continued existence of the Baghdad Pact," Admiral Radford agreed, "is at stake."⁴⁵⁰

⁴⁴⁷ #162 - Memorandum from the Deputy Under Secretary of State for Administration (Henderson) to the Secretary of State, 6 December 1956, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 388. Henderson, in his distinguished diplomatic career, served (among other positions) in Iraq (1943-1945), and as US ambassador to India (1948-1951) and Iran (1951-1954). He also headed the Near Eastern Affairs bureau in the State Department and served as Deputy Undersecretary of State for Administration.

⁴⁴⁸ Probable Consequences of US Adherence or Non-Adherence to the Baghdad Pact – SNIE 30-7-56, 14 December 1956, CIA ERR.

⁴⁴⁹ #102 - Memorandum of Conference with the President, 15 March 1956, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 258; Memorandum of Conference on March 28 between Dwight D. Eisenhower and others, White House, 29 March 1956, DDRS; From C.E. Wilson – Memorandum for the Executive Secretary of the National Security Council – US Adherence to the Baghdad Pact, 5 April 1956, White House Office, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs: Records, 1952-1961 – Special Assistant Series, Presidential Subseries, Box 3, DDEL; #126 - Letter from the Secretary of State to the Secretary of Defense (Wilson), 23 April 1956, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 294.

⁴⁵⁰ Cable Excerpts – Gallman in Baghdad, 15 November 1956, White House Office, Office of the Staff Secretary: Records, 1952-1961 – Subject Series, Department of Defense Subseries, Box 1, DDEL (first quote); Arthur Radford, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Secretary of Defense (CE Wilson) – US Adherence to the Baghdad Pact, 30 November 1956, White House Office, Office of the Staff Secretary: Records, 1952-1961 – Subject Series, Department of Defense Subseries, Box 1, DDEL (second quote).

These appeals were grounded in an assessment of the challenges the Pact faced in resisting Soviet penetration of the Middle East and filling the vacuum of power left by London. The aftermath of Suez prompted Secretary Wilson to request an urgent review of US policy. The issue was originally scheduled for NSC debate in December, but consideration of the matter, Wilson argued, “must be given on an urgent basis if the vacuum created by the recent developments is to be effectively filled.”⁴⁵¹ Other reports likewise indicated that adherence could serve as an effective mechanism for reversing the Soviets’ rising influence amongst the Arab states.⁴⁵² The Pentagon’s position paper, drafted in late 1956 for the NSC, surmised that:

[US adherence] would permit the US to fill the political and military vacuum which has been created by the decline in the UK’s position and prestige in the area. The US and the USSR are the only major powers capable of filling this vacuum. The Soviets are already making a strong bid in this direction, and failure of the US to adhere to the Baghdad Pact will be looked upon as a sign of weakness and enable the Soviets to move in uncontested.⁴⁵³

The Pact’s proponents were willing to risk a confrontation with Gamal Abdel Nasser in their quest to strengthen the American position in the Middle East. Ambassador Gallman and the military were convinced the US should wholeheartedly back Iraq in its propaganda war with Egypt over the regional defense issue. Gallman felt US adherence was the perfect antidote to strengthen the Pact and blunt the effectiveness

⁴⁵¹ From Office of the Secretary of Defense – C.E. Wilson, 14 November 1956, White House Office, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs: Records, 1952-1961 – Special Assistant Series, Presidential Subseries, Box 3, DDEL.

⁴⁵² Cable Excerpts – Gallman in Baghdad, 15 November 1956, White House Office, Office of the Staff Secretary: Records, 1952-1961 – Subject Series, Department of Defense Subseries, Box 1, DDEL; Arthur Radford, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Secretary of Defense (CE Wilson) – US Adherence to the Baghdad Pact, 30 November 1956, White House Office, Office of the Staff Secretary: Records, 1952-1961 – Subject Series, Department of Defense Subseries, Box 1, DDEL.

⁴⁵³ Statement by Defense of the Reasons for US Adherence to the Baghdad Pact at this time, Undated, White House Office, Office of the Staff Secretary: Records, 1952-1961 – Subject Series, Department of Defense Subseries, Box 1, DDEL.

of the newly formed Egyptian-Syrian-Saudi [ESS] alliance of 1955, Nasser's rebuttal to the Pact.⁴⁵⁴ Others warned the United States was perilously walking a "tightrope" by seeking a working relationship with both Egypt and the pro-West Pact members. In a pointed reference to Egypt, Admiral Radford wrote in December 1955 that adherence would send a firm signal about US attitudes toward "so-called neutralist countries."⁴⁵⁵ Radford also linked Nasser's rising influence after Suez with the potential for Soviet aggrandizement. He believed the Kremlin would ride Nasser's coattails as a means to further penetration of the region.⁴⁵⁶ Along with bolstering Iraq and other Pact members, the Pentagon believed that US membership would "wean" Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Lebanon "away from Nasser's domination."⁴⁵⁷ Rather than distancing themselves from inter-regional tensions over collective defense, the American defenders of the Pact sought to parachute Washington directly into the "minefield" of the Arab Cold War.⁴⁵⁸

Though strategic factors were ultimately the linchpin arguments for US accession, there was a final "moral" consideration influencing the thinking of some in Washington. While the principals never explicitly used the term, what was at stake in this debate was a struggle over the matter of credibility in American foreign policy. The concept of credibility has a long history as an important driver in US foreign relations.⁴⁵⁹ Members

⁴⁵⁴ #24 - Telegram from the Embassy in Iraq (Gallman) to the Department of State, 16 March 1955, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 36.

⁴⁵⁵ Chief MAAG Pakistan (Karachi) from Chairman JCS Admiral Radford, Department of Defense, 23 December 1955, DDRS.

⁴⁵⁶ Arthur Radford, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Secretary of Defense (CE Wilson) – US Adherence to the Baghdad Pact, 30 November 1956, White House Office, Office of the Staff Secretary: Records, 1952-1961 – Subject Series, Department of Defense Subseries, Box 1, DDEL.

⁴⁵⁷ Statement by Defense of the Reasons for US Adherence to the Baghdad Pact at this time, Undated, White House Office, Office of the Staff Secretary: Records, 1952-1961 – Subject Series, Department of Defense Subseries, Box 1, DDEL.

⁴⁵⁸ The term is borrowed from the title of Irene Gendzier, *Notes from the Minefield: United States Intervention in Lebanon and the Middle East, 1945-1958* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

⁴⁵⁹ For example, the Kennedy and Johnson administrations regularly emphasized the importance of maintaining American credibility abroad as a motive for expanding US commitments to the war in

of the government believed that America's international credibility would be seriously damaged if the US refused to join the Pact. The value some policymakers attached to the notion of international credibility drove them to push for an expansion of US commitments to allied nations.

Supporters of the Pact in Washington felt the United States played a critical role in inspiring and consolidating the Baghdad Pact. Given that Iraq had shown great "courage" by joining the Pact in the face of Egyptian criticism, some officials felt the United States should show its own sense of moral courage by joining the Pact. Ambassador Gallman concluded in March 1955 that American accession was a reasonable carrot to extend to Nuri al-Said as "recognition of his statesmanlike act."⁴⁶⁰ Admiral Radford similarly recognized the intense opposition the Pact inspired in the Arab world. He felt US membership was a proper reward for al-Said's cabinet for its "very bold move vis-à-vis their fellow Arab countries."⁴⁶¹

These officials were equally explicit as to the likely repercussions of abstention. They believed this scenario would deal a major blow to America's reputation amongst its allies and enemies. NSC representatives felt membership would dispel "doubts concerning US support which our present relationship to the Pact appears to engender."⁴⁶² Ambassador Gallman warned that if US membership was "dashed by lengthy equivocation and / or a decision not to adhere, there is a good possibility that the

Vietnam. See George Herring, *America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1950-1975* (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2002) and Andrew Bacevich, *Washington Rules: America's Path to Permanent War* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2010), 107.

⁴⁶⁰ #24 - Telegram from the Embassy in Iraq (Gallman) to the Department of State, 16 March 1955, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 36.

⁴⁶¹ Chief MAAG Pakistan (Karachi) from Chairman JCS Admiral Radford, Department of Defense, 23 December 1955, DDRS.

⁴⁶² #127 - Draft Paper by the NSC Planning Board Assistants – Immediate US Adherence to Baghdad Pact, 2 May 1956, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 295.

resulting disappointment may result in less friendly and cooperative relations between the US and some Pact members.” The Pentagon argued that continued American resistance would result in “a general lack of confidence in the US resolve to support its friends and allies in the face of Soviet pressure.”⁴⁶³ Loy Henderson offered similarly insightful comments in his assessment of US Middle East policy in December 1956. He noted that:

We have a reputation, which I believe is unearned, in the Middle East of lack of stability in our relations with that area. We are said to grow hot and cold, to be uncertain of ourselves, to take certain positions for a time only to abandon them, leaving those who are supporting us out on a limb. There is now a feeling among the supporters of the Baghdad Pact that we may be about to leave them out on such a limb.⁴⁶⁴

Henderson’s solution to this dilemma was US membership in the Pact as a way of protecting American credibility on the international stage.

The lines of battle were drawn in the debate over the US role in the Baghdad Pact. Secretary of State Dulles and President Eisenhower faced an avalanche of requests from the Baghdad Pact powers for US membership. These appeals were supplemented by a divisive exchange in Washington where elements of the government vigorously pressed their case for participation. Though their motivations differed greatly, the British and Iraqis shared a convergent understanding with members of the US government about the appropriate US policy vis-à-vis the Baghdad Pact. As we will see, the State Department and White House shared their own understanding of the functions and prospects for

⁴⁶³ Cable Excerpts – Gallman in Baghdad, 15 November 1956, White House Office, Office of the Staff Secretary: Records, 1952-1961 – Subject Series, Department of Defense Subseries, Box 1, DDEL (first quote); Statement by Defense of the Reasons for US Adherence to the Baghdad Pact at this time, Undated, White House Office, Office of the Staff Secretary: Records, 1952-1961 – Subject Series, Department of Defense Subseries, Box 1, DDEL (second quote).

⁴⁶⁴ #162 - Memorandum from the Deputy Under Secretary of State for Administration (Henderson) to the Secretary of State, 6 December 1956, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 388.

Middle East defense that ran directly counter to the versions promoted by supporters of the Pact at home and abroad.

The Complications of US Middle East Policy

Despite lobbying from Pact members and various US officials, the United States did not formally join the Baghdad Pact before the July 1958 Iraqi Revolution. The State Department and White House sought other means of expressing support for the Pact. Private and public statements reaffirming American support for the grouping remained a consistent feature of Dulles' approach to this thorny issue, particularly during regional crises.⁴⁶⁵ The United States followed these declarations with other expressions of commitment to the group that allowed them to participate in Pact activities while abstaining from official membership. As part of this policy, the Eisenhower administration dispatched a handful of military officers to participate in the Pact secretariat. In November 1956, in the midst of the Suez Crisis, the US expanded its connection with the Pact by creating a Military Liaison Group that included a US Air Force officer.⁴⁶⁶ The Americans also participated in each of the sub-committees formed under the Pact's aegis. The US joined the Economic and Counter-Subversion committees of the Pact in April 1956, which provided opportunities for intelligence sharing between the US and regional security agencies. As a carrot to Pact members, the Americans also

⁴⁶⁵ In the immediate period following the Suez War, as riots convulsed Iraqi cities, US officials took care privately to express to Iraqi leaders their strong support for the Pact and their desire to assist them regain internal stability. Washington also released a public statement "reaffirming its support of the Baghdad Pact" and commitment to repel threats to the "political independence" of Pact nations. See Gallman, *Iraq under General Nuri*, p. 37; Memorandum of Conversation – Ambassador Husa Shabander of Iraq, Brigadier Hassan Mustafa, Iraqi Armed Forces Attache – Iraqi-US Relations, 26 November 1956, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959, Box 2257.

⁴⁶⁶ Thacher, "Reflections on US Foreign Policy Toward Iraq in the 1950s," p. 69; From NEA – William Rountree to the Acting Secretary – Position Paper on the Baghdad Pact, 18 November 1956, NARA, RG 59, Records of the Policy Planning Council - Subject Files, 1954-1962, Box 109.

became members of the Military Committee during the Richards Mission in the spring of 1957.⁴⁶⁷ Notwithstanding these moves, the official answer from Dulles and Eisenhower regarding membership remained the same from February 1955 to July 1958.

Before discussing the strategic considerations that dominated the thinking of the State Department and White House, one should also briefly address the “practical” factors that influenced the decision-making process in Washington. For one, there was the simple consideration as to whether official US membership would provide substantive additional benefits. William Rountree of the State Department thought US participation in the Pact’s committees was a sufficient means of demonstrating US support. Nicholas Thacher, an official at the US embassy in Iraq, similarly noted that some US figures felt the Pact’s proponents exaggerated the benefits the US would accrue from membership.⁴⁶⁸

The debate over the Baghdad Pact further shifted to the State Department’s position with the announcement of the Eisenhower Doctrine in January 1957. Elie Podeh argues that the “Eisenhower Doctrine sealed the fate of the BP [Baghdad Pact]. If there had been a chance that the United States would join it, the doctrine made this step superfluous.”⁴⁶⁹ This is partly true, as the Doctrine devalued American membership for some of its proponents. The Pentagon realized that the Eisenhower Doctrine had, for the

⁴⁶⁷ From William Rountree, NEA to R/ Mr. Hugh Cumming – Recommendation that the Department Assume Responsibility for Preparation of Baghdad Pact Counter-Subversion Committee Report, 13 August 1957, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) – Subject Files, 1945-1960, Box 27; OCB – Progress Report on the Near East (NSC 5428) – Period of Report – November 3 1955 to May 4 1956, 4 May 1956, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 - Administrative and Chronological Files 1953-1961, Box 25; Operations Coordinating Board – Progress Report on the Near East (NSC 5428), 7 August 1957, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 - Administrative and Chronological Files 1953-1961, Box 25.

⁴⁶⁸ From NEA – William Rountree to the Acting Secretary – Position Paper on the Baghdad Pact, 18 November 1956, NARA, RG 59, Records of the Policy Planning Council - Subject Files, 1954-1962, Box 109; Thacher, “Reflections on US Foreign Policy Toward Iraq in the 1950s,” p. 70.

⁴⁶⁹ Podeh, “The Perils of Ambiguity,” p. 112.

time being, superseded the debate over the Pact. Dulles tried to sell the Doctrine to Selwyn Lloyd by arguing that the congressional resolution allowed the US to “take stronger action in the area than is now possible” through the Baghdad Pact.⁴⁷⁰

The Eisenhower Doctrine still did not entirely resolve the debate. Crown Prince Abdullah of Iraq took the familiar step of requesting US accession in a conversation with Dulles in February 1957. Dulles, as he had with Lloyd months earlier, responded that the Eisenhower Doctrine permitted the US to take more vigorous action in protection of its allies than Pact membership allowed for.⁴⁷¹ These arguments did not satisfy the Iraqis or the other Pact members. Lloyd warned Dulles in January 1958 that the other Pact members would “strongly” press for US membership in upcoming plenary sessions. Dulles, clearly annoyed, noted that “[h]e thought that it was foolish of the members of the Pact to go on pressing this issue because it gave the impression that the United States were not fully behind the Pact.”⁴⁷² State Department representatives hoped the proclamation of the Eisenhower Doctrine would put the question of membership to rest. Though their objective was largely realized in Washington, the members of the Baghdad Pact still saw this as a matter of ongoing debate after January 1957.

The Americans’ position on the Pact was most directly shaped by their assessments of the likely responses of both their regional allies and rivals to US membership. Foggy Bottom viewed its complicated relationships with the Soviet Union

⁴⁷⁰ From C.E. Wilson – Memorandum for the Executive Secretary of the National Security Council – US Adherence to the Baghdad Pact, 10 January 1957, White House Office, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs: Records, 1952-1961 – Special Assistant Series, Presidential Subseries, Box 3, DDEL; Memorandum of Conversation – US delegation to the Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Paris France – Baghdad Pact, 10 December 1956, NARA, RG 59, Records of the Policy Planning Council - Subject Files, 1954-1962, Box 109 (quote).

⁴⁷¹ Memorandum of Conversation with Crown Prince Abdullah of Iraq, 5 February 1957, John Foster Dulles: Papers, 1950-1961 – General Correspondence and Memoranda Series, Box 1, DDEL.

⁴⁷² Record of Conversation between the Secretary of State and Mr. Dulles at the United States Embassy, 26 January 1958, CAB 21-3302, BNA.

and Saudi Arabia as barriers to accession. America's bilateral connections to Israel and Egypt were even more influential in molding attitudes at State and the White House. State Department and White House figures were greatly worried that adherence would jeopardize these relationships. These fears also served a dual purpose, since they provided Dulles and Eisenhower with convenient excuses and scapegoats. They permitted US officials to blame the behaviour of other Middle East actors for Washington's reticence about joining the British and Iraqis in the Pact.

For one, the State Department was reluctant to press forward with membership owing to their concerns of igniting Cold War tensions with the Soviets. Supporters of the organization believed accession would demonstrate Washington's resolve to contain Soviet "adventurism." Their opponents felt accession would only encourage further Soviet economic, political, and military maneuvers in the Middle East. The specific timing of this debate is important. 1955 was a critical year for not only the Baghdad Pact, but American calculations of the Soviet threat to the Middle East. Yaqub argues that Arab anger toward Zionism and imperialism rose dramatically in 1955, creating an opportunity for Soviet political machinations in the Middle East.⁴⁷³ Foreshadowing his support for "sacred wars" of national liberation years later, Nikita Khrushchev proclaimed a new initiative from the Kremlin to increase aid to the decolonized world. The Czech-Egyptian arms deal of September 1955, following closely on the heels of the Baghdad Pact's birth, was an early manifestation of this new Soviet strategy in the Middle East.⁴⁷⁴

⁴⁷³ Salim Yaqub, *Containing Arab Nationalism: The Eisenhower Doctrine and the Middle East* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 37.

⁴⁷⁴ Hahn, *The United States, Great Britain, and Egypt, 1945-1956*, p. 190-191; Galia Golan, *Soviet Policies in the Middle East: From World War II to Gorbachev* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 44-

In the midst of this new approach, the Kremlin saw the creation of the Baghdad Pact as a “threat to its security.”⁴⁷⁵ State Department representatives were mindful of Moscow’s interpretation and saw American accession as an unnecessary risk to superpower relations. They stressed this point to the British Foreign Office in January 1956, describing adherence as a major provocation that would “arouse the Soviets considerably.”⁴⁷⁶ Fears of provoking Khrushchev’s government remained a consistent element of the State Department’s strategic calculations in both public and private forums. Operations Coordinating Board [OCB] status reports on NSC 5428 from January and April 1956 argued that US accession would “probably attract further Soviet designs and intrigues” in the Middle East. Analysts feared that membership would lead to greater support from the Kremlin to the trio of Arab states most vigorously opposed to the Pact: Egypt, Syria, and Saudi Arabia.⁴⁷⁷ As deliberations continued in the post-Suez period, the State Department regularly pointed to their relationship with the Soviet Union as a critical justification for refraining from Pact membership.⁴⁷⁸ The consensus opinion of

46. It is conceivable that the formation of the Warsaw Pact in May 1955 may have been linked, in part, by Khrushchev and the Soviet leadership to the creation of the Baghdad Pact. American officials at the time did not appear to link the two pacts together. Scholars tend to view the creation of the Warsaw Pact primarily as a Soviet response to the official entry of West Germany into NATO in early May 1955. Even so, the timing of the Warsaw Pact’s birth is certainly suggestive of possible linkages to the newly-formed Baghdad Pact.

⁴⁷⁵ Yeşilbursa, *The Baghdad Pact*, p. 96 (quote); Hahn, *Missions Accomplished?*, p. 29-30.

⁴⁷⁶ #93 – Memorandum of Conversation – The Baghdad Pact, 18 January 1956, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 235.

⁴⁷⁷ Operations Coordinating Board – Status Report, 17 January 1956, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 - Administrative and Chronological Files 1953-1961, Box 5 (quote); OCB – Detailed Development of Major Actions Relating to US Policy on the Near East (NSC 5428) – From Nov 3 1955 through April 23 1956, 25 April 1956, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 - Administrative and Chronological Files 1953-1961, Box 25; OCB – Progress Report on the Near East (NSC 5428) – Period of Report – November 3 1955 to May 4 1956, 4 May 1956, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 - Administrative and Chronological Files 1953-1961, Box 25.

⁴⁷⁸ Herbert Hoover Jr. – Memorandum for the President: Near East Policy, November 1956, Dwight D. Eisenhower: Papers as President, 1953-1961 (Ann Whitman File) – Dulles-Herter Series, Box 8, DDEL;

the intelligence community supported their position. US adherence to the Pact “would probably increase Soviet fears about the extension of US military power in the area,” the Special National Intelligence Estimate [SNIE] of 14 December 1956 argued, and lead to fresh waves of Soviet assistance pouring into the Middle East.⁴⁷⁹ Dulles and the State Department therefore sought a policy for the post-Suez period that facilitated an American entry into the region’s “vacuum” while avoiding greater Cold War tensions. The Eisenhower Doctrine, rather than adherence to the Baghdad Pact, was the outcome of these deliberations.

Anxieties about aggravating Cold War competition with Moscow were an important factor in the Eisenhower administration’s strategies. The complicated and often contradictory nature of US foreign policy in the Middle East also influenced the decision to forgo formal participation. The State Department and White House gave substantive consideration to the impact US membership in the Baghdad Pact would have on Saudi Arabia. The Saudis had been an invaluable US ally in the Middle East since the end of World War II. Saudi Arabia was one of the few places in the region where US influence was predominant over that of the British. The US also held an important oil concession run by ARAMCO in Saudi Arabia and leased a critical airfield at Dhahran from King Saud’s regime.⁴⁸⁰ US-Saudi relations, however, were rocky in the early years

From NEA William Rountree to the Secretary – US Position on Middle East Problems, 7 December 1956, NARA, RG 59, Records of the Policy Planning Council - Subject Files, 1954-1962, Box 109.

⁴⁷⁹ Probable Consequences of US Adherence or Non-Adherence to the Baghdad Pact – SNIE 30-7-56, 14 December 1956, CIA ERR.

⁴⁸⁰ On the US military airbase at Dhahran, see Robert Vitalis, *America’s Kingdom: Mythmaking on the Saudi Oil Frontier* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 80-82 and Nathan Citino, *From Arab Nationalism to OPEC: Eisenhower, King Sa’ud and the Making of US-Saudi Relations* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 32, 44, 124. See also Operations Coordinating Board – Progress Report on NSC 155/1 (Now 5428) – US Objectives and Policies with Respect to the Near East, 29 July 1954, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 - Administrative and Chronological Files 1953-1961, Box 25.

of the Eisenhower administration owing to conflicts over oil royalties and the Saudis' dispute with the UK over Buraimi.⁴⁸¹

The Baghdad Pact added another complicating factor to the US-Saudi relationship. This was especially true given the traditional animosity that existed between the Saudi and Iraqi royal houses. Saudi-Iraqi rivalry first emerged with the Hashemites' surrender of the Arabian Peninsula to the house of Saud in 1925. More recently, Saudi-Iraqi clashes erupted with the formation of the Baghdad Pact; the Saudis, Yaqub notes, viewed the Pact "as an instrument of Hashemite aggrandizement."⁴⁸² In response, King Saud emerged as an early opponent of the Baghdad Pact in an attempt to check Hashemite expansion in the Middle East.

US relations with Saudi Arabia improved over the course of 1956 as King Saud uncovered Nasserist plots to overthrow the Saudi royal family. In response, the Americans encouraged building up King Saud as a rival to Nasser.⁴⁸³ In light of these critical policy objectives, Washington showed little appetite for endangering the burgeoning US-Saudi partnership. Studies produced by the NSC, State Department, and intelligence agencies in the summer and fall of 1956 argued that US accession to the Pact would adversely affect the US-Saudi relationship and the Americans' ability to renew

⁴⁸¹ Central Intelligence Agency – NIE 36-54 – Probable Developments in the Arab States, 7 September 1954, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) – Record Set of NIEs, Special Estimates, and SNIEs, 1950-1954, Box 2; Citino, *From Arab Nationalism to OPEC*, p. 82-83.

⁴⁸² Yaqub, *Containing Arab Nationalism*, p. 76 (quote); Central Intelligence Agency – NIE 36-54 – Probable Developments in the Arab States, 7 September 1954, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) – Record Set of NIEs, Special Estimates, and SNIEs, 1950-1954, Box 2; Operations Coordinating Board – Progress Report on NSC 5428 – Period of Report: July 1 1954 through February 28 1955, 10 March 1955, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 - Administrative and Chronological Files 1953-1961, Box 25.

⁴⁸³ Memorandum of Conversation – US delegation to the Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Paris France–Baghdad Pact, 10 December 1956, NARA, RG 59, Records of the Policy Planning Council - Subject Files, 1954-1962, Box 109; Probable Consequences of US Adherence or Non-Adherence to the Baghdad Pact – SNIE 30-7-56, 14 December 1956, CIA ERR; Citino, *From Arab Nationalism to OPEC*, p. 125, 130; Yaqub, *Containing Arab Nationalism*, p. 48.

their air base contract at Dhahran.⁴⁸⁴ The Americans hammered this point home to their British counterparts in December 1956, arguing that accession was not feasible since it would “antagonize the Saudis.”⁴⁸⁵ The British were not pleased with this arrangement, particularly since their own relations with Riyadh were deeply troubled. The US and Britain repeatedly sparred over what the UK decried as US acquiescence in Saudi “bribery and aggression” against Buraimi and other UK protectorates in the Persian Gulf.⁴⁸⁶ The Eisenhower administration responded that they had little choice but to work with the Saudis in a constructive manner in the hopes Riyadh might help save allies like Jordan and Iraq from Nasserist plotting.⁴⁸⁷

A rapprochement began in February 1957 between the Saudi and Iraqi royal families as part of a joint campaign to block Nasser’s intrigues. This process was highlighted by King Saud’s visit to Iraq in mid-May 1957. Though the Saudis’ distrust of the Iraqis tempered to a degree, they still tried to maintain a delicate balancing act vis-à-

⁴⁸⁴ #175 - Memorandum of a Conference with the President, 20 December 1956, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 415; #127 - Draft Paper by the NSC Planning Board Assistants – Immediate US Adherence to Baghdad Pact, 2 May 1956, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 297; S/P Study – US Policy in the Middle East, 18 July 1956, NARA, RG 59, Records of the Policy Planning Council - Subject Files, 1954-1962, Box 108.

⁴⁸⁵ Memorandum of Conversation – US delegation to the Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Paris France–Baghdad Pact, 10 December 1956, NARA, RG 59, Records of the Policy Planning Council - Subject Files, 1954-1962, Box 109 (quote); Memorandum of Conversation with Sir Harold Caccia, British Ambassador at my residence, 24 December 1956, John Foster Dulles: Papers, 1950-61 – General Correspondence and Memoranda Series, Box 1, DDEL.

⁴⁸⁶ They believed that the Americans were willingly ignoring Saudi aggression against Buraimi and therefore endangering Western assets in the Arabian Peninsula. See Foreign Office Minute (Mr. Samuel) – American Views on Buraimi and Oman, E1021/2, 10 January 1956, FO371-120525, BNA; From British Embassy in Paris to Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick, Foreign Office, E1021/1, 28 December 1955, FO371-120525, BNA; From British Embassy, Washington (Willy Morris) to D.M. H Riches, African Department of the Foreign Office, V10345/1, 26 February 1957, FO371-126843, BNA.

⁴⁸⁷ Foreign Office Minute (Mr. Samuel) – American Views on Buraimi and Oman, E1021/2, 10 January 1956, FO371-120525, BNA; From British Embassy in Washington (J.E. Coulson) to Harold Beeley, Foreign Office, VQ1075/25, 13 May 1957, FO371-127756, BNA; INR Study - Interim US Objectives and Possible Courses of Action in the Middle East, 7 March 1957, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) – Subject Files, 1945-1960, Box 25.

vis Egypt and Iraq.⁴⁸⁸ American officials were terrified the Iraqis might torpedo the promising Iraqi-Saudi exchanges by pushing for Riyadh's membership in the Baghdad Pact. David Newsom of the State Department told the UK ambassador in Washington in no uncertain terms that it would be a "great mistake" if the Iraqi Crown Prince used his February 1957 meeting with King Saud to press for Saudi membership. "The Americans are concerned about the over-optimism of the Moslem Baghdad Pact Powers on this subject," the UK ambassador explained to the Foreign Office, "and are afraid that they are going to scare their bird away."⁴⁸⁹ Dulles likewise informed the visiting Iraqi delegation in Washington in February that "he did not think it possible to persuade Saudi Arabia to join the Pact at this time."⁴⁹⁰ Saudi regional concerns and interests ultimately took precedence over the Baghdad Pact in the State Department's calculations. As Dulles and the president explained to the Iraqis in February 1957, US adherence to the Baghdad Pact could only come "when we are convinced that United States adherence to the Pact may have a solidifying influence in the area rather than a divisive one."⁴⁹¹

Alarm bells sounded loudest in Washington over Israel and Egypt's expected reactions to US membership alongside the UK and Iraq in the Baghdad Pact. President Eisenhower explained to the Iraqi Crown Prince Abdullah that "the Israeli problem was

⁴⁸⁸ Jamali, *Inside the Arab Nationalist Struggle*, p.150; From British Embassy in Washington (W. Morris) to R.M Hadow, Levant Department in Foreign Office, VQ10325/2, 26 January 1957, FO371-128047, BNA; #448 – Memorandum of Conversation – Visit of Crown Prince Abdullah of Iraq – Situation in Saudi Arabia, 5 February 1957, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 1033; Yaqub, *Containing Arab Nationalism*, p. 101, 104, 140.

⁴⁸⁹ From British Embassy in Washington (W. Morris) to R.M Hadow, Levant Department in Foreign Office, VQ10325/2, 26 January 1957, FO371-128047, BNA.

⁴⁹⁰ #448 – Memorandum of Conversation – Visit of Crown Prince Abdullah of Iraq – Situation in Saudi Arabia, 5 February 1957, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 1033.

⁴⁹¹ #448 - Memorandum of Conversation – Visit of Crown Prince Abdullah of Iraq – Baghdad Pact, 5 February 1957, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 1035.

more critical [for the US approach to the Pact] in the short-term than the Soviet threat.”⁴⁹²

As noted earlier, America’s relationship with Israel was inextricably tied to Middle East collective defense efforts prior to the formation of the Baghdad Pact. This remained true for the period from February 1955 to July 1958. The State Department was acutely aware that US membership would seriously threaten US-Israeli relations and inspire Israeli requests for an American security commitment. The State Department and White House were unwilling to countenance any such move for fear of jeopardizing their larger interests in the Arab Middle East, particularly the American partnership with Iraq.

The Eisenhower administration’s first term was marked by a cool and distant relationship with Israeli leaders owing to the president’s push for a more even-handed regional approach. US frustration with retaliatory attacks launched by David Ben-Gurion and Moshe Sharett’s cabinets against neighbouring Arab states following fedayeen raids further stirred emotions between the two sides.⁴⁹³ US membership in the Pact was expected to further aggravate this already-strained relationship. The White House and State Department were cognizant that the Israelis would immediately feel isolated and threatened by American accession to the Baghdad Pact. Israeli leaders harbored great anxieties about the Pact and the intentions of its member states; the inclusion of Turkey in the Pact, a country on reasonably friendly terms with Israel previously, seriously concerned Israel.⁴⁹⁴ Prime Minister Sharett likewise regarded the possible accession of

⁴⁹² Memorandum of Conversation – Discussion of Middle East Situation between Eisenhower, Assistant Secretary Rountree, Crown Prince Abdullah of Iraq, and Iraqi Ambassador to US, 5 February 1957, Dwight D. Eisenhower: Papers as President, 1953-1961 (Ann Whitman File) – Dulles-Herter Series, Box 8, DDEL.

⁴⁹³ See Abraham Ben-Zvi, *Decade of Transition: Eisenhower, Kennedy, and the Origins of the American-Israeli Alliance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 45; Alteras, *Eisenhower and Israel*, p. 92-95; Little, *American Orientalism*, p. 89; Makdisi, *Faith Misplaced*, p. 224.

⁴⁹⁴ Operations Coordinating Board – Progress Report on NSC 5428 – Period of Report: July 1 1954 through February 28 1955, 10 March 1955, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations

Jordan, which shared a border with Israel, as a “threat to Israel.”⁴⁹⁵ Iraqi-Israeli relations were also hostile on many fronts. Despite its private expressions of moderation toward Israel, Iraq remained “violently anti-Israel” in public forums. State Department figures understood that Israel would see the inclusion of the US alongside Iraq in a collective defense organization as a blow to Israeli security. Israeli fears, already heightened by Nasser’s aggressive proclamations and military preparations, might, in turn, prompt a regional arms race.⁴⁹⁶

Beyond those problems, US accession to the Baghdad Pact was expected to produce another unfavourable outcome. State Department officials predicted, with near unanimity, that accession would lead to an Israeli request for a formal American security guarantee. In a letter to Prime Minister Anthony Eden in March 1956, President Eisenhower cited the anticipated pressure from Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion for a security guarantee as one of the key reasons why the US could not join the Pact.⁴⁹⁷ Dulles likewise warned the Pact members in December 1956 that Congress, led by

Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 - Administrative and Chronological Files 1953-1961, Box 25; Yeşilbursa, *The Baghdad Pact*, p. 93.

⁴⁹⁵ From RW Bailey (British Embassy, Washington) to E.M. Rose, Levant Department of the Foreign Office, V1073/724, 13 April 1955, FO371-115507, BNA.

⁴⁹⁶ From Robert Murphy to Admiral Arthur Radford, Chairman of the JCS – Secretary Dulles’ Comments on the Baghdad Pact from November 16 1956, 17 November 1956, NARA, RG 59, Records of the Policy Planning Council - Subject Files, 1954-1962, Box 109; #111 - Memorandum of Telephone Conversation between the President and the Secretary of State, 7 April 1956, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 270; Ashton, “The Hijacking of a Pact,” p. 133; Hahn, *Missions Accomplished?*, p. 30.

⁴⁹⁷ Memorandum of Conversation – Call of the British Foreign Secretary regarding Soviet-Egyptian Arms Agreement, 3 October 1955, NARA, RG 59, Records of the Policy Planning Council - Subject Files, 1954-1962, Box 97; #127 - Draft Paper by the NSC Planning Board Assistants – Immediate US Adherence to Baghdad Pact, 2 May 1956, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 296; From NEA – William Rountree to the Acting Secretary – Position Paper on the Baghdad Pact, 18 November 1956, NARA, RG 59, Records of the Policy Planning Council - Subject Files, 1954-1962, Box 109; Letter From Dwight Eisenhower to Anthony Eden, 10 March 1956, PREM 11-1895, BNA.

committed pro-Israeli representatives, would put heavy pressure on the administration to extend the guarantee to Israel following accession.⁴⁹⁸

This scenario was entirely unacceptable to the Eisenhower administration. For one, the extension of a formal security guarantee to Israel could drag the United States into a larger Middle East war.⁴⁹⁹ Second, offering Israel a formal security pledge complicated US efforts to mediate peace between Egypt and Israel in 1955 and 1956 under the auspices of the Alpha project. The guarantee would have committed the US to defending Israel's existing borders that Eisenhower was determined to alter substantially with the Alpha proposals. At most, the Americans considered extending a guarantee as a reward after Israel made peace with Egypt. By joining the Pact and offering a guarantee to Israel's borders at this point, Dulles feared (as Behçet Kemal Yeşilbursa recounts) that the US would "be giving up our strongest lever for use with Israel in obtaining a settlement."⁵⁰⁰

Equally, the provision of the guarantee to Israel would have infuriated Iraqi leaders who were already highly critical of US-Israeli ties. This could have led to Iraq's withdrawal from the Baghdad Pact in retaliation. Dulles tried to convince Admiral Radford, Secretary of Defense Wilson, and other administration members in the spring of 1956 that a security commitment to Israel would "quickly knock out Iraq" from the Pact, thereby undermining one of the fundamental premises of US Middle East defense

⁴⁹⁸ Memorandum of Conversation – Secretary Dulles with Ambassadors of Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Pakistan – Baghdad Pact, 4 December 1956, NARA, RG 59, Records of the Policy Planning Council - Subject Files, 1954-1962, Box 109.

⁴⁹⁹ Memorandum of Conference on March 28 between Dwight D. Eisenhower and others, White House, 29 March 1956, DDRS.

⁵⁰⁰ Memorandum of Conversation – Secretary Dulles, Mr. Francis Russell, Mr. Macmillan, and Mr. Shuckburgh at the residence of the US Ambassador in Paris, 14 July 1955, FO371-115872, BNA; Yeşilbursa, *The Baghdad Pact*, p. 145 (quote); Ben-Zvi, *Decade of Transition*, p. 50; Makdisi, *Faith Misplaced*, p. 225.

policy.⁵⁰¹ The Iraqi ambassador confirmed Dulles' suspicions in early December 1956. He noted that Iraq could not accept a US guarantee to Israel until the Arab-Israeli dispute was resolved.⁵⁰² By extending a security pledge to Israel, the Eisenhower administration would have, in effect, destroyed its freedom of action in the Arab Middle East and torpedoed the vital US-Iraqi partnership.

Conversely, it would have been nearly impossible to secure congressional approval for a bill outlining US participation in the Baghdad Pact without the guarantee. The Republican White House already faced an uphill battle on Capitol Hill since they lacked the two-thirds majority required for Senate ratification of a bill detailing US accession. Analysts concluded that congressional sentiment would be so inflamed by the American "betrayal" of Israel that it would reject US membership in the Pact.⁵⁰³ These calculations were based on evidence gathered by the administration. Senator Mike Mansfield informed Dulles in April 1956 that ratification of US accession to the Pact without the guarantee for Ben-Gurion's government would "be totally impossible" and would result in a "major explosion" in the Senate.⁵⁰⁴

⁵⁰¹ Memorandum of Conference on March 28 between Dwight D. Eisenhower and others, White House, 29 March 1956, DDRS (quote); #126 - Letter from the Secretary of State to the Secretary of Defense (Wilson), 23 April 1956, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 294; Diane Kunz, "The Emergence of the United States as a Middle Eastern Power, 1956-1958," in William Roger Louis and Roger Owen (eds.) *A Revolutionary Year: The Middle East in 1958* (London: IB Tauris, 2002), 82.

⁵⁰² Memorandum of Conversation – Secretary Dulles with Ambassadors of Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Pakistan – Baghdad Pact, 4 December 1956, NARA, RG 59, Records of the Policy Planning Council - Subject Files, 1954-1962, Box 109.

⁵⁰³ Kunz, "The Emergence of the United States as a Middle Eastern Power, 1956-1958," p. 82; #70 – Memorandum of Conversation – US Support for Baghdad Pact, 20 October 1955, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 175; From Geneva (UK Delegation to the Meeting of Foreign Ministers) to Foreign Office, #3, 26 October 1955, PREM 11-1895, BNA; From NEA – William Rountree to the Acting Secretary – Position Paper on the Baghdad Pact, 18 November 1956, NARA, RG 59, Records of the Policy Planning Council - Subject Files, 1954-1962, Box 109.

⁵⁰⁴ #111 - Memorandum of Telephone Conversation between the President and the Secretary of State, 7 April 1956, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 270; #115 - Memorandum of Conversation between the Secretary, Mr. MacArthur, and Admiral Radford – Middle East, 9 April 1956, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 275.

The problem became more acute in the aftermath of Suez. Senator Jacob Javits headed a congressional group lobbying the administration to provide the requisite security assurances to Israel. Various senators confirmed that in this climate, securing a two-thirds majority vote would be very difficult without the guarantee for Tel Aviv.⁵⁰⁵ Dulles informed the British in January 1958 that the “political difficulties in Congress were no less” than in previous years. US officials calculated that it was better to avoid the question of Pact membership altogether than run the risk of humiliating the administration through congressional rejection of membership in the Pact.⁵⁰⁶ For all these reasons, US-Israeli relations substantially limited Washington’s ability to mollify British and Iraqi requests for an expanded American role in the Baghdad Pact.

Gamal Abdel Nasser loomed large in Middle East developments. His regional stature was reflected in the strategic calculations of the State Department and White House. Egypt’s anticipated response to US membership in the Baghdad Pact was fundamental to shaping American policy after February 1955 in several ways. For one, the State Department understood that the Pact added fuel to the fire in the ongoing conflict between Egypt and Iraq. Tensions between Egypt and Hashemite Iraq were part of the pre-existing Arab Cold War into which the US stumbled after World War II. Egypt and Iraq battled for control of Syria and Lebanon following the departure of French colonial forces after 1945. This “power vacuum” in the Levant helped inspire the

⁵⁰⁵ Memorandum of Conversation with Sir Harold Caccia, British Ambassador at my residence, 24 December 1956, John Foster Dulles: Papers, 1950-1961 – General s and Memoranda Series, Box 1, DDEL; #166 - Memorandum of a Telephone Conversation between the President and the Secretary of State, 8 December 1956, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 396; Memorandum of Conversation between Secretary Dulles and Senator Knowland, 8 December 1956, John Foster Dulles: Papers, 1950-1961 – Special Assistant Chronological Series, Box 11, DDEL. On congressional pressure on the administration from pro-Israeli representatives in the aftermath of Suez, see Alteras, *Eisenhower and Israel*, p. 295-296.

⁵⁰⁶ Record of Conversation between the Secretary of State and Mr. Dulles at the United States Embassy, 26 January 1958, CAB21-3302, BNA (quote); #126 - Letter from the Secretary of State to the Secretary of Defense (Wilson), 23 April 1956, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 294.

emergence of the Arab Cold War.⁵⁰⁷ The revolutionary events of 1952 in Cairo added to these troubles. Nasser's strategic objectives included a Cairo-led offensive against imperialism and foreign subjugation throughout the Arab, Islamic, and African arenas. US figures understood Egypt and Iraq's competing claims for leadership of the Arab world would be exacerbated by the formation of a collective defense group.⁵⁰⁸

Egypt responded more vociferously to the creation of the Baghdad Pact than US diplomats anticipated. The Pact, in Nasser's view, gave Iraq a powerful voice in regional affairs and challenged Egyptian leadership of the Middle East. It also contradicted his promotion of neutralism in the Cold War, Batatu concludes, since it "entailed a severing of Arab ranks and an open taking of sides...."⁵⁰⁹ The emergent Baghdad Pact also aroused Egyptian anxiety since it offered no protection against Israeli aggression and left Egypt, one US official noted, "facing Israel without any effective support."⁵¹⁰

Nasser responded quickly to the strategic maneuvers of Iraq and its Western sponsors. He ominously warned US officials in early 1955 that "[i]t is possible that you may get away with [the] pact and that Nuri al-Said may remain in power for a few months, but your pact will be only a piece of paper." He followed these threats with specific moves that US officials lambasted as "tantrums."⁵¹¹ Nasser broadcasted anti-Iraqi propaganda through his Radio Free Iraq stations that accused al-Said of tying Iraq to

⁵⁰⁷ Romero, "The Iraqi Revolution of 1958 and the Search for Security in the Middle East," p. 122.

⁵⁰⁸ Hahn, *The United States, Great Britain, and Egypt, 1945-1956*, p. 183; Central Intelligence Agency – NIE 36-54 – Probable Developments in the Arab States, 7 September 1954, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) – Record Set of NIEs, Special Estimates, and SNIEs, 1950-1954, Box 2.

⁵⁰⁹ Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, p. 75; 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), 679 (quote).

⁵¹⁰ From HW Glidden to Mr. W. Park Armstrong Jr. – Reorientation of Egyptian Policy toward Regional Defense, 16 September 1955, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) – Subject Files, 1945-1960, Box 10 (quote); Heikal, *The Cairo Documents*, p. 46.

⁵¹¹ #11 - Telegram from the Embassy in Egypt (Jones) to the Department of State, 6 January 1955, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 15 (first quote); #22 - Telegram from the Embassy in Egypt (Byroade) to the Department of State, 8 March 1955, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 30 (second quote).

“Israel and the imperialists” in exchange for US aid. He signed into existence the Egyptian-Syrian-Saudi axis to directly counter the Pact.⁵¹² Nasser also pushed ahead with his policy of neutralism and leadership of the non-aligned movement, leading the charge against imperialism at the April 1955 Bandung Conference. Salim Yaqub recounts how Nasser persuaded the Bandung participants to insert a provision in their “final communique denouncing ‘arrangements of collective defence to serve the interests of any of the big powers,’ a clear reference to the Baghdad Pact.” Nasser’s prominent role at the Bandung conference infuriated John Foster Dulles who, as Heikal recalls, saw non-alignment as a “dirty word.”⁵¹³ Nasser also turned to the Soviet bloc for military aid in defiance of the Western powers, signing the Czech arms deal in September 1955.⁵¹⁴

The Eisenhower administration carefully charted the Egyptians’ response to the Pact. US diplomats acknowledged that the Egyptians’ hostility toward Iraq for “deserting the Arab fold” complicated the question of how best to support the emerging Northern Tier group.⁵¹⁵ Moreover, they predicted that US membership in the Pact would endanger

⁵¹² Memorandum of Conversation – General Review of US-Arab Problems, 11 February 1955, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959, Box 2257; OCB – Progress Report on the Near East (NSC 5428) – Period of Report – November 3 1955 to May 4 1956, 4 May 1956, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 - Administrative and Chronological Files 1953-1961, Box 25; Matthew Holland, *America and Egypt: From Roosevelt to Eisenhower* (Westport: Praeger, 1996), 63; Gallman, *Iraq under General Nuri*, p. 39, 47, 56; Dawisha, *Iraq*, p. 115.

⁵¹³ Juan Romero writes that the creation of the Baghdad Pact “reinforced neutralist sentiments in the Arab world” and that the nonaligned participants in the Bandung Conference, including the Egyptian delegation, “interpreted it [the gathering] as a manifestation of ‘collective resistance to imperialism...’” Romero, “The Iraqi Revolution of 1958 and the Search for Security in the Middle East,” p. 19-20 (footnote quotes); Yaqub, *Containing Arab Nationalism*, p. 38 (first quote); Heikal, *The Cairo Documents*, p. 47 (second quote); Barrett, *The Greater Middle East and the Cold War*, p. 31; Hahn, *The United States, Great Britain, and Egypt, 1945-1956*, p. 190; Holland, *America and Egypt*, p. 63-64.

⁵¹⁴ Nasser first broached the subject of Soviet military aid in a meeting with China’s Chou En-lai at the Bandung conference. See Probable Consequences of the Egyptian Arms Deal with the Soviet Bloc – SNIE 30-3-55, 12 October 1955, CIA ERR; Heikal, *The Cairo Documents*, p. 47-49; Holland, *America and Egypt*, p. 64; Makdisi, *Faith Misplaced*, p. 243.

⁵¹⁵ Operations Coordinating Board – Progress Report on NSC 5428 – Period of Report: July 1 1954 through February 28 1955, 10 March 1955, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 - Administrative and Chronological Files 1953-1961, Box 25

the already strained US-Egyptian relationship. The 14 December 1956 SNIE argued that “US adherence to the Baghdad Pact would arouse bitter opposition in Egypt, Syria, and Jordan.” William Rountree of the State Department similarly suggested at the height of the Suez Crisis that US adherence to the Pact would “involve the US more directly in Hashemite – Saudi – Iraqi – Egyptian disputes.”⁵¹⁶ Hoping to avoid these scenarios, Dulles tried to support the Pact’s members while maintaining as cordial as possible relations with Nasser. The Americans were determined not to take any unilateral steps that could further impair their relationship with Cairo, particularly while they tried to negotiate Egyptian-Israeli peace.⁵¹⁷

In sum, the US relationship with Egypt and the ongoing Arab Cold War made it difficult for the US to satisfy British and Iraqi demands for US accession to the Pact. The strained relationships between the United States and its allies in Britain and Iraq in the collective defense realm were directly linked to the complicated, multi-layered nature of American foreign policy in the Middle East, including Washington’s bilateral responsibilities vis-à-vis the Soviet Union, Saudi Arabia, Israel and Egypt. The singular issue of US policy toward the Baghdad Pact was inextricably connected to the projection of American power across the entire Middle East.

The Problems with UK and Iraqi Policies

(quote); Dulles Phone Conversation with Mr. Macarthur, 31 March 1956, John Foster Dulles: Papers, 1950-1961 – Telephone Conversation Series, Box 4, DDEL.

⁵¹⁶ Probable Consequences of US Adherence or Non-Adherence to the Baghdad Pact – SNIE 30-7-56, 14 December 1956, CIA ERR (first quote); From NEA – William Rountree to the Acting Secretary – Position Paper on the Baghdad Pact, 18 November 1956, NARA, RG 59, Records of the Policy Planning Council - Subject Files, 1954-1962, Box 109 (second quote).

⁵¹⁷ Podeh, “The Perils of Ambiguity,” p. 105-106; Ashton, “The Hijacking of a Pact,” p. 131.

American policy toward the Baghdad Pact in many ways became contingent on the views of the Soviets, Saudis, Israelis, and Egyptians regarding Middle East defense. When pressed by the British and Iraqis to join the Pact, the Eisenhower administration was able to blame other regional actors for America's vacillation. The uncomfortable reality for US policymakers, however, was that British and Iraqi attitudes, behaviour, and policies in the Middle East also seriously complicated American views of the Baghdad Pact and further dampened their enthusiasm for the group. American officials privately (and sometimes publicly) vented their frustration with the actions of their allies in London and Baghdad that made US accession to the Pact all the more problematic. The likely reactions of key regional actors already diminished the prospects for American accession to the Pact. British and Iraqi actions in the Middle East further discredited the campaign for American membership in the Pact.

The Eisenhower administration struggled with the uncomfortable truth that its close ally in London often made strategic choices in the Middle East that undercut US regional interests. The Americans' desire to uphold the "regional" identity of the Turkish-Iraqi Pact is a valuable case in point. Following the announcement of the agreement in February 1955, Nuri al-Said extended an invitation to both the US and UK to join the arrangement. Dulles reminded US diplomatic missions that the agreement was "essentially an expression [of] indigenous recognition of true threat to area...which fact we would not wish to cloud."⁵¹⁸ While British accession in April 1955 in some ways resolved the issue of Western participation in favour of the UK position, US officials continued to defer a final decision on membership in part because they wished to stress

⁵¹⁸ #13 - Circular Telegram from the Department of State (Dulles) to Certain Diplomatic Missions, 15 February 1955, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 19.

the “local” nature of the group. Sir Harold Beeley, a top Foreign Office diplomat, later admitted that the British, by joining the Pact, in essence got ahead of American planning on regional defense questions.⁵¹⁹

The clumsy, heavy-handed attempts of Eden’s cabinet to push Jordan into the Baghdad Pact similarly did little to improve the prospects for US participation. In late 1955, as Egypt sought Western assistance for the Aswan dam, the US and UK came to a tacit agreement with Nasser. The West would not push for further Arab participation in the Pact out of deference to Nasser’s concerns. In return, Nasser would end his propaganda campaign against the organization.⁵²⁰ The Eisenhower administration repeatedly stressed to its UK counterparts, who were eager to secure Jordanian membership, that they must uphold their commitment. US policymakers feared Jordanian involvement would infuriate Nasser and undermine their attempts to enlist his support for the Alpha proposals. Equally, the US expected vehement objections from Israel if Jordan joined.⁵²¹ Dulles reminded the UK ambassador to the US in April 1955 of the dangers of Jordanian participation. One UK diplomat recounted how Dulles argued that if Jordan were to join the group, the White House “would be in a very great

⁵¹⁹ Sir Harold Beeley Interview, 23 February 1983, GB165-0124 - Granada Television Interview Transcripts, MEC; From NEA – William Rountree to the Acting Secretary – Position Paper on the Baghdad Pact, 18 November 1956, NARA, RG 59, Records of the Policy Planning Council - Subject Files, 1954-1962, Box 109.

⁵²⁰ Stephen Blackwell, *British Military Intervention and the Struggle for Jordan: King Hussein, Nasser, and the Middle East Crisis 1955-1958* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 26; Hahn, *The United States, Great Britain, and Egypt, 1945-1956*, p. 198; Yeşilbursa, *The Baghdad Pact*, p. 131.

⁵²¹ #33 - Memorandum from the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Affairs (Allen) to the Secretary of State, 1 April 1955, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 48; Petersen, “Suez 1956,” p. 14; Ashton, “The Hijacking of a Pact,” p. 131; Yeşilbursa, *The Baghdad Pact*, p. 130.

difficulty with the Jews. They would regard the accession to the Pact of an Arab country bordering on Israel as a threat to Israel.”⁵²²

Eden’s government was annoyed by what appeared to be weakening American support for the Pact. The British disregarded Washington’s objections and collaborated with Nuri al-Said’s regime in planning for Jordanian participation. Foreign Office diplomats, meeting with al-Said in June 1955, argued that American fears were “a little exaggerated...” Moreover, they concluded, “the Israelis were really being very neurotic with all their talk about isolation and so on.” Al-Said agreed, castigating the Americans for their timidity.⁵²³

The British subsequently sent the chief of the Imperial General Staff, Sir Gerald Templer, to Amman in December 1955 to press for Jordanian membership in the Pact. The Templer mission was as disastrous as the Americans predicted. Riots broke out around the country protesting Jordanian involvement in the Pact. King Hussein’s government was nearly toppled and Jordan was forced to backtrack from its earlier position on the group.⁵²⁴ US officials were enraged by the actions of their Atlantic partner. Surveying the aftermath of UK policy in Jordan, they privately agreed that further Arab adherence to the Pact was not desirable.⁵²⁵ As a result of British behaviour in Jordan, the OCB added, there was now greater pressure in Iraq for withdrawal from the Pact. They concluded that the humiliating events in Jordan were a major setback to

⁵²² From RW Bailey (British Embassy, Washington) to E.M. Rose, Levant Department of the Foreign Office, V1073/724, 13 April 1955, FO371-115507, BNA.

⁵²³ From Anthony Nutting, VQ1032/20, 24 June 1955, FO371-115762, BNA.

⁵²⁴ Joseph Massad, *Colonial Effects: The Making of National Identity in Jordan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 174; Blackwell, *British Military Intervention and the Struggle for Jordan*, p. 24-26; Podeh, “The Perils of Ambiguity,” p. 109; Petersen, “Suez 1956,” p. 14.

⁵²⁵ From Cairo (Parker Hart, charge d’affaires a.i.) – Recommendations as to United States Policy in the Middle East, 11 January 1956, NARA, RG 59, Records of the Policy Planning Council - Subject Files, 1954-1962, Box 109.

British prestige.⁵²⁶ Further to this point, Ashton explains that President Eisenhower scribbled in his diary that “we tried to make the British see the danger of...pressuring Jordan to join the Northern Tier Pact. They went blindly ahead and only recently have been suffering one of the most severe diplomatic defeats Britain has taken in many years.”⁵²⁷

Disputes between Washington and London over appropriate policies vis-à-vis Egypt further hindered efforts to bring the Americans into the Pact. The Eisenhower administration sought constructive means of engagement with Egypt. The US decision to abstain from Pact membership, Roby Barrett writes, was in part a reflection of its desire to “gain something positive from its courtship of Nasser.”⁵²⁸ The administration used economic incentives as a lever in their relationship with Cairo. The United States also offered measured responses to the news of the ESS axis and Czech arms deal in 1955 in an attempt to preserve Nasser’s goodwill.⁵²⁹ US attitudes toward Nasser “hardened” with the onset of the Suez Crisis and rising tensions in the Arab Cold War. Even so, the State

⁵²⁶ OCB – Detailed Development of Major Actions Relating to US Policy on the Near East (NSC 5428) – From Nov 3 1955 through April 23 1956, 25 April 1956, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 – Administrative and Chronological Files 1953-1961, Box 25; Petersen, “Suez 1956,” p. 14; Yaqub, *Containing Arab Nationalism*, p. 41.

⁵²⁷ Ashton, “The Hijacking of a Pact,” p. 135.

⁵²⁸ Barrett, *The Greater Middle East and the Cold War*, p. 19 (quote); OCB – Detailed Development of Major Actions Relating to US Policy on the Near East (NSC 5428) – From Nov 3 1955 through April 23 1956, 25 April 1956, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 – Administrative and Chronological Files 1953-1961, Box 25.

⁵²⁹ US economic assistance to Egypt from 1952-1956, during the “sunny early years of the Nasser regime,” amounted to \$86 million. See Malik Mufti, “The United States and Nasserist Pan-Arabism” in David Lesch (ed.) *The Middle East and the United States: A Historical and Political Reassessment* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2003), 169; Little, *American Orientalism*, p. 130; #22 - Telegram from the Embassy in Egypt (Byroade) to the Department of State, 8 March 1955, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 31; #66 - Memorandum of Discussion at the 260th meeting of the NSC, 6 October 1955, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 163.

Department pursued what its representatives characterized as a “correct but reserved” attitude and avoided provocative moves that might antagonize Egypt.⁵³⁰

Relations between Washington and Cairo offered hopes for improvement later in 1957 after Nasser proved himself the only leader capable of clamping down on leftist and communist groups in Syria. In response, Washington extended its attempt at keeping “options open” vis-à-vis Nasser into 1958. Notwithstanding the creation of the United Arab Republic [UAR], the US sought a “basis for an understanding and cooperation [with Egypt] in certain areas, particularly in the limitation of Communist influence and control in the area.”⁵³¹ The move toward accommodation was formalized in the spring of 1958. The US government announced it would put US-Egyptian relations on a “more normal basis,” starting with the removal of restrictions on the export of certain items to Egypt.⁵³²

It was not long after the creation of the Baghdad Pact that US-UK disagreements over Egypt were visible.⁵³³ Eden’s government felt the Americans were too accommodating toward the Egyptians. It was particularly concerned by what it saw as American feebleness in response to the challenge posed by the ESS alliance. Washington’s decision to “avoid an openly antagonistic position” toward the ESS, the Foreign Office suggested, gave “an impression of weakness and irresponsibility” that

⁵³⁰ From S/P Matthews – Basic Elements of a US Program for the Middle East, 17 December 1956, NARA, RG 59, Records of the Policy Planning Council - Subject Files, 1954-1962, Box 109; Operations Coordinating Board – Progress Report on the Near East (NSC 5428), 7 August 1957, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 - Administrative and Chronological Files 1953-1961, Box 25.

⁵³¹ NSC - Long Range US Policy Toward the Near East, 10 January 1958, NARA, RG 273, Policy Papers, Box 46 (quote); David Lesch, “The 1957 American-Syrian Crisis: Globalist Policy in a Regional Reality,” in David Lesch (ed.) *The Middle East and the United States: A Historical and Political Reassessment* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2003), 142-144; Barrett, *The Greater Middle East and the Cold War*, p. 47.

⁵³² #4852 - From John Foster Dulles to US Embassies in Middle East, 25 April 1958, NARA, RG 84, Iraq - Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 20; Holland, *America and Egypt*, p. 152-153.

⁵³³ As early as 1953 and 1954, as the UK and Egypt sought a negotiated settlement on the Anglo-Egyptian base dispute, the Americans pushed the British to offer a more forthcoming position. As the US saw it, the UK would need to make greater concessions in order to placate Egyptian nationalists. See Hahn, *The United States, Great Britain, and Egypt, 1945-1956*, p. 160.

would adversely affect Iraq.⁵³⁴ In the wake of the Czech-Egyptian arms deal, the Foreign Office protested that little could be achieved from engagement with Nasser. Dulles had few warm feelings for Nasser and was greatly frustrated by the Egyptian leader's opposition to American policies. Even so, the secretary of state kept a watchful eye on the larger geopolitical realities of the region. Dulles believed that cutting lines of communication with Egypt would only strengthen the emerging Moscow-Cairo relationship.⁵³⁵ The dispute reached the highest levels of government in the months before the Suez War. Anthony Eden, writing to President Eisenhower in March 1956, insisted that "a policy of appeasement will bring us nothing in Egypt. The best chance is to show that it pays to be our friends." Eden's appeal for a shift in US policy was ignored. Eisenhower responded that it was not time to "close the door...on the possibility of working" with the Egyptians since their cooperation was essential in reducing Arab-Israeli tensions and limiting Soviet expansion.⁵³⁶

British emotions regarding Egypt were particularly raw in the aftermath of Suez. They reacted to the Americans' rapprochement with Nasser with "a resounding lack of enthusiasm," fearing the US would be "hoodwinked by Nasser's anti-communist rhetoric." The Foreign Office added in January 1957 that "Nasser is prepared to call in Satan to cast out sin from the Middle East."⁵³⁷ These major divergences between the US

⁵³⁴ From Foreign Office to Ankara, #1021, 22 July 1955, FO371-115516, BNA (quote); From R.M Hadow, 21 July 1955, FO371-115516, BNA.

⁵³⁵ From Washington (Sir R. Makins) to Foreign Office, #2410, 7 October 1955, PREM 11-1895, BNA.

⁵³⁶ Letter From Anthony Eden to President Dwight Eisenhower, #1216, 5 March 1956, PREM 11-1895, BNA (first quote); Letter From Dwight Eisenhower to Anthony Eden, 10 March 1956, PREM 11-1895, BNA (second quote); From Cairo (Parker Hart, charge d'affaires a.i.) – Recommendations as to United States Policy in the Middle East, 11 January 1956, NARA, RG 59, Records of the Policy Planning Council - Subject Files, 1954-1962, Box 109.

⁵³⁷ From Anthony Eden – Prime Minister's Personal Minute, 26 December 1956, PREM 11-1793, BNA; From Foreign Office to Baghdad, #3182, 27 December 1956, PREM 11-1793, BNA; From Foreign Office

and UK positions on Egypt reappeared yet again with the formation of the UAR in February 1958. Mirroring the situation with the ESS in 1955, Macmillan's government chastised the Americans for being too timid in their opposition to the anti-Iraqi UAR.⁵³⁸

Throughout the February 1955 to July 1958 period, the Eisenhower administration remained far more optimistic than the UK that a flexible policy vis-à-vis Egypt could yield dividends for the West. Egypt retained an important position in American foreign policy considerations, notwithstanding its vehement opposition to Iraq and the Baghdad Pact. With each squabble that appeared between the US and UK over Egypt, the chances the Americans would formally associate themselves with the British (and, by extension, British policies) in the Baghdad Pact further dwindled.

Larger problems festered at the foundations of the US-UK partnership that gave the White House and State Department pause. President Eisenhower inherited an extraordinarily complicated relationship with the British in the Middle East. Upon taking office, his administration was acutely aware that British power in the Middle East was on the downturn. The Suez Crisis, of course, did irreparable damage to British prestige; studies produced in the aftermath of the Suez War argued that London's position in the Middle East "had been seriously prejudiced" by its actions against Egypt.⁵³⁹ Even so, Eisenhower and Dulles understood they had to consider British concerns and interests in order to prop up London's declining power in the Middle East. A rapid abandonment of

to Baghdad, #36, 11 January 1957, PREM 11-1897, BNA; Barrett, *The Greater Middle East and the Cold War*, p. 50 (second quote), 59 (first quote), 64.

⁵³⁸ Barrett, *The Greater Middle East and the Cold War*, p. 54.

⁵³⁹ Central Intelligence Agency – NIE 73 – Conditions and Trends in the Middle East Affecting US Security, 15 January 1953, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) – Record Set of NIEs, Special Estimates, and SNIes, 1950-1954, Box 4; Memorandum for the President – Near East Policy, 21 November 1956, NARA, RG 59, Records of the Policy Planning Council - Subject Files, 1954-1962, Box 109 (quote); From NEA William Rountree to the Secretary – US Position on Middle East Problems, 7 December 1956, NARA, RG 59, Records of the Policy Planning Council - Subject Files, 1954-1962, Box 109.

UK positions in the region, intelligence agencies cautioned, would create a vacuum the Soviets could soon fill.⁵⁴⁰

On the other hand, the US government viewed Britain's imperial history and its opposition to Arab nationalism as major liabilities for America's own reputation. Analysts regularly concluded that America's association with colonial and imperial powers heightened Arab distrust of Washington and compromised US policies.⁵⁴¹ The Suez War gave these sentiments added momentum. The American alliance with the UK, the NSC concluded in 1957, made the United States a "target" for nationalist agitation and linked the US to "colonial interests in the area."⁵⁴² These assessments affected American policy, as the Eisenhower administration openly confronted the British about their actions at Suez. Testifying before Congress in support of the Eisenhower Doctrine in early 1957, Secretary of State Dulles explained that he did not "wish to see the United States fighting for colonialism anywhere." He colourfully added that if he were an American soldier fighting in the Middle East, he "would rather not have a British and a Frenchman, one on my right hand, one on my left."⁵⁴³

These assessments were of critical importance in shaping the State Department and White House's approach to the Baghdad Pact. As American frustrations with British

⁵⁴⁰ Central Intelligence Agency – NIE 73 – Conditions and Trends in the Middle East Affecting US Security, 15 January 1953, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) – Record Set of NIEs, Special Estimates, and SNIes, 1950-1954, Box 4; Thacher, "Reflections on US Foreign Policy Toward Iraq in the 1950s," p. 63.

⁵⁴¹ Central Intelligence Agency – NIE 73 – Conditions and Trends in the Middle East Affecting US Security, 15 January 1953, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) – Record Set of NIEs, Special Estimates, and SNIes, 1950-1954, Box 4; From London (Andrew Foster, Counsellor of Embassy) to Department of State – The British Position in the Middle East, 20 July 1956, NARA, RG 59, Records of the Policy Planning Council - Subject Files, 1954-1962, Box 109.

⁵⁴² Memorandum for the NSC Planning Board – Long Range US Policy Toward the Near East, 31 December 1957, NARA, RG 273, Policy Papers, Box 46.

⁵⁴³ From British Embassy, Washington (Willy Morris) to D.M. H Riches, African Department of the Foreign Office, V10345/1, 26 February 1957, FO371-126843, BNA (first quote); From British Embassy in Washington (Willie Morris) to R.M. Hadow, Levant Department of the Foreign Office, 27 February 1957, FO371-127741, BNA (second quote).

policy piled up, detractors of the Baghdad Pact revived their earlier criticisms of the UK's vision for Middle East defense. The State Department believed the British had essentially "hijacked" the Baghdad Pact and turned the organization into a vehicle for advancing purely British regional interests.⁵⁴⁴ President Eisenhower offered an early cautionary note in December 1955, arguing "the British have never had any sense in the Middle East" and that "he was a little 'afraid' of the results of the Baghdad Pact."⁵⁴⁵ Dulles similarly explained to the president in early April 1956 that "the trouble was that the British have taken it [the Pact] over and run it as an instrument of British policy – that has drawn down upon it a tremendous amount of criticism."⁵⁴⁶ In this climate of accumulating problems for the British in the Middle East, the suggestion of US membership in an organization popularly viewed as "UK-dominated" was not enticing. The State Department, meeting with the JCS and Pentagon in November 1956, astutely observed that US adherence to the Pact would further link the American position with that of the discredited British.⁵⁴⁷ Robert Murphy, writing to JCS head Admiral Radford and William Rountree of the State Department, agreed that the Pact was "largely an instrument of UK-Arab politics...."⁵⁴⁸ There was also an important consideration of power politics at work. President Eisenhower was fearful that Middle East countries would interpret US accession as a sign of British manipulation of American strategy.

⁵⁴⁴ Poteh, "The Perils of Ambiguity," p. 110; Little, *American Orientalism*, p. 130; Ashton, "The Hijacking of a Pact," p. 130.

⁵⁴⁵ ACW Diary Entry, 16 December 1955, Dwight D. Eisenhower: Papers as President, 1953-1961 (Ann Whitman File) – Ann Whitman Diary Series, Box 7, DDEL.

⁵⁴⁶ #111 - Memorandum of Telephone Conversation between the President and the Secretary of State, 7 April 1956, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 270.

⁵⁴⁷ From NEA – William Rountree to the Acting Secretary – Position Paper on the Baghdad Pact, 18 November 1956, NARA, RG 59, Records of the Policy Planning Council - Subject Files, 1954-1962, Box 109; #143 - Memorandum on the Substance of Discussions at the Department of State – JCS Meeting, 16 November 1956, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 328; Yaqub, *Containing Arab Nationalism*, p. 76.

⁵⁴⁸ From Robert Murphy to Admiral Arthur Radford, Chairman of the JCS – Secretary Dulles' Comments on the Baghdad Pact from November 16 1956, 17 November 1956, NARA, RG 59, Records of the Policy Planning Council - Subject Files, 1954-1962, Box 109.

The Americans could not allow the British to dictate the terms of American foreign policy. Such a scenario, the president concluded, would lead to Washington losing “our influence with the Arabs.”⁵⁴⁹

The dynamics of this alliance necessitated a healthy distance at times between US and UK positions on Middle East issues, including the Baghdad Pact. In theory, Roby Barrett writes, this would allow the United States to avoid the “baggage of British colonialism” by creating an identifiable, independent American policy while still safeguarding British influence in the Middle East.⁵⁵⁰ The product of this strategy was the Americans’ decision to participate in the Baghdad Pact’s sub-committees while abstaining from formal membership.

London’s actions in the Middle East had a substantive, and ultimately negative, impact on the State Department’s willingness to countenance American membership in the Baghdad Pact. The same is true of Iraqi approaches to the Middle East. Salim Yaqub has argued that the United States waged a battle with Nasserist groups in this period over the “acceptable limits of Arabism, that is, over what should be seen as falling within the mainstream of Arab politics and what should be regarded as marginal or extreme.”⁵⁵¹

The US and Iraq engaged in a similar negotiation over the proper limits to Iraqi expansion in the Middle East and attitudes to adopt vis-à-vis the Nasserist movement. This debate had its roots in the 1953 to 1955 period and helped accentuate the differences between American and Iraqi strategies and interests in the Middle East. It likewise made

⁵⁴⁹ Memorandum of Conference on November 21 between Dwight D. Eisenhower and others, White House, 21 November 1956, DDRS; Podeh, “The Perils of Ambiguity,” p. 111; Ashton, “The Hijacking of a Pact,” p. 135-136; Axelgard, “US Support for the British Position in Pre-Revolutionary Iraq,” p. 88.

⁵⁵⁰ Barrett, *The Greater Middle East and the Cold War*, p. 12-13, 36.

⁵⁵¹ Yaqub, *Containing Arab Nationalism*, p. 3.

Dulles and Eisenhower even more hesitant to consider formally aligning the US with Iraq in the Baghdad Pact.

The underlying problem for American policymakers was their recognition that the Baghdad Pact, from its very founding, was inextricably linked to the ongoing tensions and stresses of the Arab Cold War. This realization, Nigel Ashton argues, “led to a distinct cooling off in US enthusiasm” for the organization.⁵⁵² Indeed, as Chapter Five explains, US intelligence assessments regularly concluded that the Pact was viewed unfavourably throughout the Middle East. The Pact produced heated opposition amongst Iraqi nationalist and neutralist parties like the Istiqlal and National Democratic Party [NDP] and helped inspire the formation of secret cells within the Iraqi military, including the Free Officers. The State Department conceded in late 1956 that Iraqi public opinion was “apathetic if not actively opposed to membership in the Baghdad Pact.”⁵⁵³

Secretary of State Dulles outlined the problem to the Pact’s main supporters in Washington in April 1956. Dulles maintained that the group, now only a year old, had become a “forum for Arab politics and intrigue.” It was, in his view, a venue for Nuri al-Said and the Iraqi leadership to continue their covert war against Egypt and the Saudis. The Pact was also a vehicle for al-Said to expand Iraqi influence in Syria and Jordan as part of his Fertile Crescent Scheme. “In other words,” Dulles argued, “the Baghdad Pact was dealing about 90% with Arab politics.”⁵⁵⁴ He revived his critique of Iraqi regional priorities following the Suez War. Writing to Radford and the JCS, Dulles maintained

⁵⁵² Ashton, “The Hijacking of a Pact,” p. 134.

⁵⁵³ From S/P Matthews – Basic Elements of a US Program for the Middle East, 17 December 1956, NARA, RG 59, Records of the Policy Planning Council - Subject Files, 1954-1962, Box 109 (quote); Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*, p. 766-767; Matthew Elliot, *‘Independent Iraq’: The Monarchy and British Influence, 1941-58* (London: IB Tauris, 1996), 112.

⁵⁵⁴ #115 - Memorandum of Conversation between the Secretary, Mr. MacArthur, and Admiral Radford – Middle East, 9 April 1956, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 275 (quote); #126 - Letter from the Secretary of State to the Secretary of Defense (Wilson), 23 April 1956, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 294.

that the Pact's mission of combatting communism had become "confused" with Iraq's ambitions vis-à-vis Syria, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia.⁵⁵⁵ Dulles did not shy away from his critiques in discussions with Iraqi officials. He met with ambassadors from the Pact countries in December 1956. At that point, he reiterated his view that the Pact's collective defense strategy was subsumed by "area politics," a code word for Iraq's competition with the Egyptians, Syrians, and Saudis.⁵⁵⁶

American and Iraqi Middle East strategies also diverged in three specific venues of the Arab Cold War. In each of these cases, Malik Mufti argues, the Iraqi leadership pursued an "expansionist" pan-Arab strategy that became the "hallmark of Hashemite foreign policy, manifested in unity accords with amenable foreign governments, and in acts of subversion and military intimidation..."⁵⁵⁷ Iraq's determination to press Kuwait into either the Baghdad Pact or newly formed Arab Union (an Iraqi-Jordanian confederation) in early February 1958 is a valuable case in point. Rising domestic opposition to Nuri al-Said's regime following the UAR's creation fueled his aggressive policy toward Kuwait. By forming the Arab Union and pushing for Kuwait's membership in either the Pact or Union, al-Said hoped he could provide an alternative conception of pan-Arabism to compete with Nasser's popular strategy.⁵⁵⁸ Nuri al-Said did his best to force Kuwait into the Baghdad Pact and Arab Union by threatening to

⁵⁵⁵ From Robert Murphy to Admiral Arthur Radford, Chairman of the JCS – Secretary Dulles' Comments on the Baghdad Pact from November 16 1956, 17 November 1956, NARA, RG 59, Records of the Policy Planning Council - Subject Files, 1954-1962, Box 109.

⁵⁵⁶ Memorandum of Conversation – Secretary Dulles with Ambassadors of Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Pakistan – Baghdad Pact, 4 December 1956, NARA, RG 59, Records of the Policy Planning Council - Subject Files, 1954-1962, Box 109.

⁵⁵⁷ Malik Mufti, *Sovereign Creations: Pan-Arabism in Syria and Iraq* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 254.

⁵⁵⁸ From British Embassy in Baghdad (Michael Wright) to Selwyn Lloyd of the Foreign Office, VQ1071/1, 11 February 1958, FO371-134222, BNA; Mufti, "The United States and Nasserist Pan-Arabism," p. 173; Wm. Roger Louis, "The British and the Origins of the Iraqi Revolution," in Robert Fernea and William Roger Louis (eds.) *The Iraqi Revolution of 1958: The Old Social Classes Revisited* (London: IB Tauris, 1991), 55; Barrett, *The Greater Middle East and the Cold War*, p. 68.

annex parts of Kuwaiti territory. His pressure was only constrained by the fact that he required US and UK support for his scheme; Britain exerted dominant influence on Kuwait's economics and foreign policy and would not have countenanced forcible Iraqi annexation of the country.⁵⁵⁹

Iraq's aggressive drive for Kuwaiti membership in the Pact and Arab Union deeply frustrated the Americans and British. Their fears were punctuated by concerns that al-Said's plan would backfire and lead to popular calls in Kuwait for union with Nasser's UAR.⁵⁶⁰ The US and UK worked to coordinate their policies in the face of this challenge. One US official, in discussions in June 1958 with the British, decried Nuri al-Said's pressure against neighbouring Kuwait as a "Nasser-type operation" designed to impose Iraqi-Kuwait unity on its citizens. Dulles made his frustration clear as well, noting to the UK that "Nuri's personality has become a liability in recent times and that he put the most extravagant demands on us when he was here with the threat of resigning, which may be a kind of blackmail."⁵⁶¹ Britain, in response, refused to force Kuwait into the Baghdad Pact or Arab Union.⁵⁶² The Iraqi drive for Kuwait was one clear demonstration of the major differences between US and Iraqi regional strategies that, in turn, had a sobering effect on US views of Iraq and the Baghdad Pact.

Disputes also emerged with regard to policy toward Egypt. As noted earlier, one of the primary drivers influencing Dulles' strategy was his assessment that US accession

⁵⁵⁹ From British Embassy in Baghdad (Michael Wright) to Selwyn Lloyd of the Foreign Office, VQ1071/1, 11 February 1958, FO371-134222, BNA; Elliot, *Independent Iraq*, p. 101; Mufti, *Sovereign Creations*, p. 254; Mufti, "The United States and Nasserist Pan-Arabism," p. 173; Chookiat Panaspornprasit, *US-Kuwaiti Relations, 1961-1992: An Uneasy Relationship* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 19.

⁵⁶⁰ Barrett, *The Greater Middle East and the Cold War*, p. 68; Mufti, "The United States and Nasserist Pan-Arabism," p. 173.

⁵⁶¹ #105 - Memorandum of Conversation – Macmillan Talks, Situation in Iraq, 9 June 1958, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 302.

⁵⁶² From British Embassy in Baghdad (Michael Wright) to Selwyn Lloyd of the Foreign Office, VQ1071/1, 11 February 1958, FO371-134222, BNA; Elliot, *Independent Iraq*, p. 132.

would further damage the already-strained American-Egyptian relationship. This approach conflicted with the Iraqis' strategy for securing a preponderant position of authority in the Middle East. Nuri al-Said confided to the UK in January 1957 that he was greatly discouraged by the Americans' conciliatory approach to Egypt and was urging Washington to get tough with Nasser.⁵⁶³ Iraqi officials also complained directly to Eisenhower. Meeting with the president in February 1957, the Iraqi Crown Prince insisted there was no basis for cooperation with Egypt given its hostility to the Pact. Eisenhower, for his part, "wondered if the Egyptians were quite so hopeless," adding "there might be some better prospect for improvement there."⁵⁶⁴ The Iraqis revived their criticisms when the Richards Mission delegation visited Baghdad in April 1957. In these meetings, Nuri al-Said dismissed Nasser as a "Soviet tool" and identified Egyptian behaviour as the second most immediate threat to Middle East security behind only Israeli actions. Referring to Syria and Egypt, al-Said warned Ambassador Richards that the United States should not deal with nations that engaged in blackmail.⁵⁶⁵

The creation of the UAR in February 1958 was perhaps the most visible indication of the chasm separating American and Iraqi views of Cairo. US officials lamented that Iraq's refusal to grant recognition to the UAR was a major tactical blunder. It was clear, in Dulles' mind, that the US could not sacrifice its relationship with Egypt simply to appease the Iraqi leadership's demands for a stronger stand against Egyptian unity plans. Dulles remarked that "we can't deprive ourselves of intercourse with the

⁵⁶³ From Baghdad (Michael Wright) to Foreign Office, #9, 2 January 1957, PREM 11-1793, BNA.

⁵⁶⁴ Memorandum of Conversation – Discussion of Middle East Situation between Eisenhower, Assistant Secretary Rountree, Crown Prince Abdullah of Iraq, and Iraqi Ambassador to US, 5 February 1957, Dwight D. Eisenhower: Papers as President, 1953-1961 (Ann Whitman File) – Dulles-Herter Series, Box 8, DDEL.

⁵⁶⁵ Report on the Richards Mission – Iraq – April 6-8, 16 April 1957, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs - Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Country Files Prepared for the Richards Mission to the Middle East, 1956-1957, Box 13. The irony, of course, is that the Iraqis regularly engaged in what might be termed "blackmail" to secure additional military aid from Washington.

UAR.”⁵⁶⁶ In this case, the Americans’ desire to channel Egyptian policies along a “more moderate direction” by extending recognition to the UAR ran head on into Iraqi plans for subversion and sabotage against the group.⁵⁶⁷ To calm Iraqi jitters over Nasserist intrigue and smooth the breach in US-Iraqi relations, Dulles reaffirmed America’s support for the security of its regional allies. US membership in the Baghdad Pact, however, was not on the table in part because of Dulles’ frustration with the Iraqis’ obstinacy toward Nasser that threatened to disrupt larger American Middle East strategies.

Syria was the final arena where US and Iraqi regional strategies collided. American and Iraqi leaders shared similar concerns about Syria’s leftward drift toward the communist and Nasserist camp and sought to reverse these trends. Even so, the two allies vigorously disagreed about the timing and scale of Iraqi Fertile Crescent ambitions in Syria. Four separate incidents in this period elucidate the extent to which US and Iraqi objectives and policies in Syria worked at cross-purposes at critical moments. These episodes, in turn, reinforced Washington’s determination to maintain independent American positions on Middle East questions separate from that of their ally in Baghdad.

Syria was the critical “prize” in the Arab Cold War that emerged after 1945 between Egypt and Iraq. It occupied an important place in the Arab nationalist mindset given its title as the birthplace of Arab nationalist ideals and its strategic position guarding approaches to Egypt, Iraq, and the Arabian Peninsula.⁵⁶⁸ As Yaqub notes, Syria

⁵⁶⁶ Telephone Call with Mr. Berry – 9:50 a.m., 22 February 1958, John Foster Dulles: Papers, 1950-61 – Telephone Conversation Series, Box 8, DDEL (quote); Telephone Call with Mr. Berry – 6:45 p.m., 20 February 1958, John Foster Dulles: Papers, 1950-61 – Telephone Conversation Series, Box 8, DDEL.

⁵⁶⁷ #4852 - From John Foster Dulles to US embassies in Middle East, NARA, RG 84, Iraq - Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 20; Mufti, “The United States and Nasserist Pan-Arabism,” p. 173; Yaqub, *Containing Arab Nationalism*, p. 181.

⁵⁶⁸ Central Intelligence Agency – NIE 36-54 – Probable Developments in the Arab States – 7 September 1954, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) – Record Set of NIEs, Special Estimates,

was a “perceived ‘swing state’ that could vastly enhance the power and influence of whichever Arab state... won and kept its allegiance.”⁵⁶⁹ Syria faced a long period of political instability as Egypt and Iraq waged a covert war for influence in Damascus following the withdrawal of French colonial forces after WWII. As Fadhil Jamali, former prime minister of Iraq, later explained, Iraqi leaders believed it was only natural they pursue confederation with Syria under the auspices of the Fertile Crescent. By early 1955, however, Syria was a founding member of the ESS group and vociferous opponent of Iraq, the US, and the Baghdad Pact.⁵⁷⁰

The August 1955 Syrian elections offered an early manifestation of the competing American and Iraqi visions for Syria. Nuri al-Said’s cabinet funneled money to its preferred presidential candidate, Rushdi el-Kikhia of the People’s Party, who would unify pro-Iraqi elements in Syria. The Americans, however, saw Iraqi intrigue in the elections as part of Nuri al-Said’s Fertile Crescent scheme designed to expand Iraqi ambitions throughout the Middle East. This campaign, as noted earlier, was opposed not only by the United States, but also the Hashemites’ enemy in Saudi Arabia. In response, the Americans did not support Kikhia or Iraq’s subversive efforts in the elections.⁵⁷¹ The victorious candidate, Shukri al-Quwatli, frightened US and Iraqi officials as Syria moved further into the Egyptian / Soviet orbit in late 1955. Al-Said soon pressed the US for a

and SNIEs, 1950-1954, Box 2; Patrick Seale, *The Struggle for Syria: A Study in Post-War Arab Politics, 1945-1958* (London: Oxford University Press, 1987), xii, xvi, 1; Mufti, *Sovereign Creations*, p. 254.

⁵⁶⁹ Yaqub, *Containing Arab Nationalism*, p. 36.

⁵⁷⁰ Yaqub, *Containing Arab Nationalism*, p. 36; Seale, *The Struggle for Syria*, p. 11, 217-218, 224; Jamali, *Inside the Arab Nationalist Struggle*, p. 7, 47. Jamali raised the question of Iraqi unity with Syria with Dulles back in July 1954. See #1418 - Memorandum of Conversation by Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern, South Asian and African Affairs (Byroade) with Fadhil Jamali, 22 July 1954, *FRUS 1952-1954*, vol. IX, p. 2387.

⁵⁷¹ Anthony Gorst and W. Scott Lucas, “The Other Collusion: Operation Straggle and Anglo-American Intervention in Syria, 1955-1956,” *Intelligence and National Security* 3, no. 3 (July 1989), 579, 593.

“free hand” in dealing with Syria.⁵⁷² The Americans were certainly concerned about the pace of Syrian political developments. Even so, Dulles refused to support an aggressive Iraqi campaign to absorb Syria.⁵⁷³

By March 1956, the Eisenhower administration showed greater willingness to covertly intervene in Syria given their strained relationship with Nasser following the collapse of the Alpha peace process.⁵⁷⁴ The Central Intelligence Agency [CIA] collaborated with the British MI6 on a joint plan known as Operation Straggle to overthrow the Syrian government by subsidizing anti-communist politicians and encouraging the removal of leftist army officers. The planning for Straggle continued in the spring and summer of 1956 at the same time al-Said’s cabinet was independently preparing its own assets for a covert move to topple the regime.⁵⁷⁵ Again, concerns about the Fertile Crescent set off alarm bells in Washington and fueled their opposition to an Iraqi military move against Syria. Operation Straggle was delayed by the onset of the Suez Crisis and penetrated by the Syrian regime in October 1956.⁵⁷⁶ For the second time in two years, shared American and Iraqi interests in changing the political orientation of

⁵⁷² Jamali, *Inside the Arab Nationalist Struggle*, p. 65-66; Matthew Jones, “The ‘Preferred Plan’: The Anglo-American Working Group Report on Covert Action in Syria, 1957,” *Intelligence and National Security* 19, no. 3 (Autumn 2004), 403; Gallman, *Iraq under General Nuri*, p. 161 (quote); Seale, *The Struggle for Syria*, p. 256; David Lesch, *Syria and the United States: Eisenhower’s Cold War in the Middle East* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), 72. Syria’s decision to accept Soviet arms further enraged officials in Washington.

⁵⁷³ #66 - Memorandum of Discussion at the 260th meeting of the NSC, 6 October 1955, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 160; From Allen (NEA) to The Secretary – Topics to be discussed with the Iraqi Ambassador, 14 October 1955, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959, Box 2257.

⁵⁷⁴ Outlook for the Syrian Situation – SNIE 36.7-56, 16 November 1956, CIA ERR; Gorst and Lucas, “The Other Collusion,” p. 584, 585; Matthew F. Jacobs, *Imagining the Middle East: The Building of an American Foreign Policy, 1918-1967* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 121.

⁵⁷⁵ Douglas Little, “Mission Impossible: The CIA and the Cult of Covert Action in the Middle East,” *Diplomatic History* 28, no.5 (November 2004), 674-675; Yaqub, *Containing Arab Nationalism*, p. 49; Gorst and Lucas, “The Other Collusion,” p. 588.

⁵⁷⁶ James Callanan, *Covert Action in the Cold War: US Policy, Intelligence, and CIA Operations* (London: IB Tauris, 2010), 102; Jones, “The ‘Preferred Plan’,” p. 403; Gorst and Lucas, “The Other Collusion,” p. 583, 589-591; Lesch, *Syria and the United States*, p. 83;

the Syrian regime were complicated by American concerns about Iraq's territorial designs.

These trends repeated in 1957. The rising profile of leftist and suspected communist forces in the Syrian government, army, and intelligence agencies greatly worried American and Iraqi leaders, especially Nuri al-Said. As Stephen Blackwell writes, "a succession of developments appeared to signal a determined Soviet effort to secure Syria's allegiance to the Eastern bloc."⁵⁷⁷ Foremost among them was the proclamation of an economic agreement between Damascus and Moscow in August 1957 and the flow of Soviet weapons to Syria. US officials fixated on Colonel Abd al-Hamid Sarraj, leader of Syrian intelligence, who, in Jones' words, "used his covert operatives to intimidate and assassinate the regime's right-wing opponents..."⁵⁷⁸ President Eisenhower, meeting with the Iraqi Crown Prince and ambassador in February 1957, commented that "the Syrian situation disturbed him more than most others in the area."⁵⁷⁹

The US and UK formed another working group in response to the Syrian crisis. They planned to incite incidents along the Iraqi-Syrian border that could inspire sabotage

⁵⁷⁷ Memorandum of Conversation – Ambassador Husa Shabander of Iraq, Brigadier Hassan Mustafa, Iraqi Armed Forces Attache - Iraqi-US Relations, 26 November 1956, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959, Box 2257; Stephen Blackwell, "Britain, the United States and the Syrian Crisis, 1957," *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 11, no. 3 (2000), 145 (quote).

⁵⁷⁸ Jones, "The 'Preferred Plan'," p. 403. In addition, a Syrian government contract was awarded in March 1957 to the Czechoslovak Techno-Export Company for Syria's oil refinery. In May by-elections, as well, left wing elements gained ground, "further strengthening their internal position." Three months later, the Commander-in-Chief of the Syrian army was replaced by 'Afif al-Bizri, "an officer of suspected Soviet sympathies." See Seale, *The Struggle for Syria*, p. 290-291 (footnote quotes); Lesch, *Syria and the United States*, p. 112-120.

⁵⁷⁹ Memorandum of Conversation – Discussion of Middle East Situation between Eisenhower, Assistant Secretary Rountree, Crown Prince Abdullah of Iraq, and Iraqi Ambassador to US, 5 February 1957, Dwight D. Eisenhower: Papers as President, 1953-1961 (Ann Whitman File) – Dulles-Herter Series, Box 8, DDEL (quote); From Baghdad (Sir M. Wright) to Foreign Office, #1492, 27 November 1956, FO371-121659, BNA; Memorandum of Conversation – Ambassador Husa Shabander of Iraq, Brigadier Hassan Mustafa, Iraqi Armed Forces Attache – Increase in Military Aid for Iraq, 21 December 1956, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs – Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Subject Files Relating to Iraq and Jordan, 1956-1959, Box 13.

within Syria. Iraq played an important role in these plans as the key Arab state that would promote subversion.⁵⁸⁰ American fears about the Fertile Crescent had somewhat abated by this point but did not entirely disappear. US officials set one condition for Iraqi collaboration in their scheme: to assuage Saudi fears, Nuri al-Said would have to “disclaim any political objectives such as a take-over of part of Syria” or unification with Syria.⁵⁸¹ As Malik Mufti has observed, notwithstanding US concerns about communist threats in Syria, the US “remained unwilling to countenance any Hashemite action that aimed at revising the regional status quo” through Iraqi annexation of Syrian territory or forcible unification.⁵⁸²

This time the Iraqis were reluctant to press forward. A new prime minister, Ali Jaudat al-Ayyubi, had taken power in June 1957 from Nuri al-Said. While al-Said was dedicated to the plot to unseat the regime, al-Ayyubi surprised political observers by taking a staunchly “independent line on foreign policy.” Rather than executing the scheme for subverting Syria, al-Ayyubi desired to bring Iraqi foreign policy more in line with popular pan-Arab attitudes.⁵⁸³ The US was disappointed with Prime Minister al-Ayyubi’s caution and hoped the Iraqi regime could be jolted “out of its relatively soft

⁵⁸⁰ Memorandum of Conversation – Discussion of Middle East Situation between Eisenhower, Assistant Secretary Rountree, Crown Prince Abdullah of Iraq, and Iraqi Ambassador to US, 5 February 1957, Dwight D. Eisenhower: Papers as President, 1953-1961 (Ann Whitman File) – Dulles-Herter Series, Box 8, DDEL; Letter from John Foster Dulles to Selwyn Lloyd, 22 August 1957, FO371-128224, BNA; From Baghdad (Mr. Beaumont) to Foreign Office, #1066, 2 September 1957, DEFE 11-268, BNA; Blackwell, “Britain, the United States and the Syrian Crisis, 1957,” p. 149; Jones, “The ‘Preferred Plan’,” p. 404, 406-408.

⁵⁸¹ Memorandum for the Record, White House, 23 August 1957, DDRS (quote); From Istanbul to Secretary of State, Department of State, 25 August 1957, DDRS.

⁵⁸² Mufti, “The United States and Nasserist Pan-Arabism,” p. 172.

⁵⁸³ From Sir Michael Wright to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd – The Government of Ali Jaudat, June-December 1957, #15 – VQ1015/1, 27 December 1957, FO481-11, BNA; Jamali, *Inside the Arab Nationalist Struggle*, p. 67-69; Lesch, “The 1957 American-Syrian Crisis,” p. 137; Axelgard, “US Policy Toward Iraq, 1946-1958,” p. 167-168; Elliot, *Independent Iraq*, p. 100 (quote), 101.

attitude toward Egypt and Syria.”⁵⁸⁴ Rather than provoking a coup, US and UK intrigue inspired the opposite reaction. Al-Ayyubi and King Saud calmed regional tensions by visiting Damascus in the summer of 1957 and declaring support for their Syrian neighbours against possible Turkish and Western intervention. The landing of Egyptian troops in Syria in October 1957 put an end to the summer’s plots, with the Americans and Iraqis’ sense of activism vis-à-vis Syria reversed.⁵⁸⁵

In 1958, with Nuri al-Said back in power, Iraq informed the Americans and British they were ready to resume covert subversion against the Syrians. By that time, US relations with Nasser were on the upswing. As such, the US and UK had little interest in a revival of Iraqi territorial ambitions in Damascus, particularly since the Iraqis’ own plot showed little prospect of success.⁵⁸⁶ Though Dulles briefly approved an Iraqi plan to annex parts of northeast Syria in February 1958,⁵⁸⁷ cooler heads ultimately prevailed in Washington. By June 1958, the US and UK made it clear they would no longer permit Baghdad to meddle in Syria.⁵⁸⁸

US and Iraqi interests in fomenting unrest in Syria overlapped for the most part in this critical three-year period, but they were never entirely on the same track or

⁵⁸⁴ From R/ Hugh Cumming Jr. to The Secretary – Intelligence Note: Repercussions of Recent Developments in US-Syrian Relations, 19 August 1957, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) – Subject Files, 1945-1960, Box 24.

⁵⁸⁵ From Sir Michael Wright to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd – The Government of Ali Jaudat, June-December 1957, #15 – VQ1015/1, 27 December 1957, FO481-11, BNA; Lesch, “The 1957 American-Syrian Crisis,” p. 139-140; Yaqub, *Containing Arab Nationalism*, p. 165-170; Mufti, “The United States and Nasserist Pan-Arabism,” p. 172.

⁵⁸⁶ Memorandum for the Record – Secretary of State Dulles and President Eisenhower, White House, 10 December 1957, DDRS; From Sgd F.R. Hoyer Millar to Dickson – Foreign Office, 17 February 1958, DEFE 11-268, BNA; #106 - Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Affairs (Rountree) to Secretary of State Dulles – Proposed Reply to Iraqi Crown Prince’s Suggestion that a Revolutionary Movement be Fomented in North Syria, 20 June 1958, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 303; Elliot, *‘Independent Iraq’*, p. 101.

⁵⁸⁷ Record of Conversation between the Secretary of State, Mr. Dulles, Nuri Pasha, and other members of the Iraqi delegation at the Iraqi Embassy, #10, 29 January 1958, CAB21-3302, BNA.

⁵⁸⁸ Barrett, *The Greater Middle East and the Cold War*, p. 50, 55; Elliot, *‘Independent Iraq’*, p. 132; Yaqub, *Containing Arab Nationalism*, p. 190-191, 202, 216.

timetable.⁵⁸⁹ The Americans' keen sense of the dangers that emanated from Iraq's Fertile Crescent designs restrained their support for Iraqi maneuvers in Syria. The Kuwaiti, Egyptian, and Syrian case studies together reflected a larger divergence between the US and Iraq in general approaches to Middle East problems, including the question of regional defense. American frustration and unease with Iraqi policies in the Middle East portended danger for formal alignment with Iraq in the Baghdad Pact.

The Eisenhower administration's decision to join the various sub-committees of the Baghdad Pact was designed as a substitute for full American membership to assuage British and Iraqi disappointment. British and Iraqi officials were indeed frustrated with the Americans' decision to forgo participation in the group. However, neither London nor Baghdad were hapless victims in this negotiation over Middle East defense schemes. The British and Iraqis each used the opportunity provided by the Americans' rejection of membership to press for other policy goals. They specifically sought to secure additional American military aid for Iraq as the price of US rejection of the Pact.

The British saw the provision of additional US military aid to Baghdad as a way to support an Iraqi regime facing pressure from pro-Nasser elements. In July 1955, in the same meetings that Harold Macmillan and Anthony Eden pressed the president and Dulles for US membership, the UK also requested the provision of additional tanks (via off-shore purchases in Britain) to the Iraqis as a way of strengthening al-Said's government.⁵⁹⁰ The British linkage of the American position on the Pact with US aid

⁵⁸⁹ Romero, "The Iraqi Revolution of 1958 and the Search for Security in the Middle East," p. 119.

⁵⁹⁰ Memorandum of Conversation – Secretary Dulles, Mr. Francis Russell, Mr. Macmillan, and Mr. Shuckburgh at the residence of the US Ambassador in Paris, 14 July 1955, FO371-115872, BNA; Dillon Anderson, Special Assistant to the President – Centurion Tanks for Iraq, 26 July 1955, White House Office,

continued throughout the period before July 1958 and gave London a degree of maneuverability in their relationship with both Washington and Baghdad.⁵⁹¹

Iraqi leaders also skillfully capitalized on the opportunity afforded by the American position on the Pact. In this way, the Iraqis turned the tables on the Americans, who had previously tied military assistance to Baghdad's views on the Northern Tier. From the signing of the Baghdad Pact until the 1958 revolution, Iraqi leaders regularly cited their foundational role in Middle East defense schemes as a lever to extract additional and rapid deliveries of advanced weaponry.⁵⁹²

The Iraqi ambassador to the US, Moussa al-Shabandar, reminded Dulles in October 1955 that the US previously promised to expand its military aid program if Iraq joined the Northern Tier. The ambassador "would now like to recall this possibility to the Secretary," he noted, "and to state that Iraq hoped the program would be fulfilled" by equipping three divisions. Moussa al-Shabandar and the Iraqi military attaché, Hassan Mustafa, again raised the related issues of US membership in the Pact and Iraqi requests for aircraft, tanks, and mobile radar stations in late 1956.⁵⁹³ By continually reminding the

Office of the Staff Secretary: Records, 1952-1961 – Subject Series, Department of Defense Subseries, Box 6, DDEL.

⁵⁹¹ Letter From Anthony Eden to President Dwight Eisenhower, #1216, 5 March 1956, PREM 11-1895, BNA; From Foreign Office to Baghdad, #36, 11 January 1957, PREM 11-1897, BNA.

⁵⁹² The Soviets faced similar dilemmas with their own allies. See Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, *One Hell of a Gamble: Khrushchev, Castro, and Kennedy, 1958-1964* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997), 169-170 for a discussion of the Cubans' disappointment with Soviet military aid deliveries in the period leading up to the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis.

⁵⁹³ #70 – Memorandum of Conversation – US Support for Baghdad Pact, 20 October 1955, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 174 (quote); Memorandum of Conversation – Ambassador Husa Shabander of Iraq, Brigadier Hassan Mustafa, Iraqi Armed Forces Attache – Increase in Military Aid for Iraq, 21 December 1956, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs – Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Subject Files Relating to Iraq and Jordan, 1956-1959, Box 13.

Americans about their prior commitments, the Iraqis were able to secure a substantive amount of weaponry from Washington in the period before July 1958.⁵⁹⁴

The Iraqis were following a familiar pattern of producing expansive requests for American military aid. Chapter Two described Nuri al-Said's skill in inspiring US-UK competition in the arms arena, to the benefit of the Iraqi leadership. Other US allies replicated these tactics. The Shah of Iran threatened to pull Iran out of the Baghdad Pact and regularly complained about the pace of military deliveries as a lever to secure additional aid.⁵⁹⁵ American officials often extended military aid as a way to "pacify" and "appease" their frustrating partners in Iraq, Iran, Pakistan and elsewhere over the contested Baghdad Pact.⁵⁹⁶ The shared British and Iraqi objective of securing American membership in the Pact was not achieved, yet both sides found ways to maneuver in this difficult situation to secure advantages in their respective bilateral relationships with Washington.

Conclusion

The continued disappointment British and Iraqi officials harbored about the US position on the Baghdad Pact extended to figures in Washington. Nathan Twining, head

⁵⁹⁴ OCB – Detailed Development of Major Actions Relating to US Policy on the Near East (NSC 5428) – From Nov 3 1955 through April 23 1956, 25 April 1956, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 - Administrative and Chronological Files 1953-1961, Box 25; From NEA Robert Memminger to NEA William Rountree – Moves to Demonstrate Support for Baghdad Pact Members, 16 November 1956, NARA, RG 59, Records of the Policy Planning Council - Subject Files, 1954-1962, Box 109; Gallman, *Iraq under General Nuri*, p. 19, 193; Williamson, "Understandable Failure," p. 608.

⁵⁹⁵ Oral History Interview with Nathan F. Twining, #4 of 4 by John T. Mason Jr., Columbia University Oral History Project, 12 September 1967, Nathan F. Twining (OH-274), DDEL; #12 - Memorandum From the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (Irwin) to Secretary of State Dulles – US Foreign Policy and Military Assistance in the Middle East, 28 February 1958, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 42; Barrett, *The Greater Middle East and the Cold War*, p. 33-34, 87-88;

⁵⁹⁶ Barrett, *The Greater Middle East and the Cold War*, p. 87; Yeşilbursa, *The Baghdad Pact*, p. 109-110, 119.

of the JCS by 1957, complained in an interview years later that the State Department's unwillingness to fully commit to the Pact hampered the group's utility.⁵⁹⁷ Members of the US embassy in Baghdad also offered retrospective critiques of the Eisenhower administration's position. Herman Eilts, chief of the political section, later suggested that the Americans' ambivalence on the Baghdad Pact left "members [of the Pact] puzzled and hamstrung the Pact from the outset." David Fritzlan likewise resented the decision to abstain from membership because he saw few advantages in keeping lines of communication open with Nasser.⁵⁹⁸ The US ambassador to Iraq, Waldemar Gallman, one of the most vigorous proponents of US accession, was particularly disappointed by America's vacillation. Gallman suggested in his memoirs that the Americans missed a major opportunity to capitalize on their favourable reputation in the Middle East, particularly after the Suez Crisis. Gallman also incredulously argued that the Iraqi government's chances of survival would "definitely have been brighter" had the US joined the group.⁵⁹⁹ Gallman's assessment was deeply coloured by his admiration for Nuri al-Said, whom he declared "one of the great men of our time...." Gallman also chastised the Eisenhower administration for its failure to maintain credibility in its policies. He believed Nuri al-Said showed considerable courage by openly aligning Iraq with the West. Gallman believed al-Said's heroic gesture was not reciprocated by President Eisenhower.⁶⁰⁰ In this sense, the same desire to protect American credibility

⁵⁹⁷ Oral History Interview with Nathan F. Twining, #4 of 4 by John T. Mason Jr., Columbia University Oral History Project, 12 September 1967, Nathan F. Twining (OH-274), DDEL.

⁵⁹⁸ Herman Eilts interview, *Frontline Diplomacy: The Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training* (quote); David Fritzlan interview, *Frontline Diplomacy: The Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training*.

⁵⁹⁹ Gallman, *Iraq under General Nuri*, p. 197 (quote), 58-59, 81-82, 182.

⁶⁰⁰ Gallman, *Iraq under General Nuri*, p. 197, 219 (quote).

that motivated the Pact's proponents in Washington was redeployed as a critique of the administration's policies years later.

What should we make of the Eisenhower administration's approach to the Baghdad Pact before July 1958? One can return to the concept of "freedom of action" to evaluate the strategic calculations of the State Department and White House. In Chapter Two, it was noted that the Pentagon and JCS sought to cancel the MOU with Britain in order to expand the American role in the Iraqi arms arena. The military insisted, against objections from Foggy Bottom, that this policy would maintain diplomatic maneuverability for Washington in the Iraqi arms trade. There was a reversal of roles in this case study. The State Department re-deployed and re-defined the language of diplomatic flexibility and "freedom of action" in support of its position on the Baghdad Pact. In a discussion with the JCS and DOD in November 1956, Robert Murphy contended that adherence to the Pact would mean the US "would have less freedom of action...than we have now."⁶⁰¹ Dulles reiterated a similar argument with the president, suggesting abstention would "give us maneuverability in the area" that would not exist if they joined the organization. Abstention from the Pact, the State Department determined, would permit a flexible US policy in the region independent of the actions of their frustrating allies in London and Baghdad.⁶⁰²

One wonders about the overall utility of this approach. Years later, David Fritzlan challenged the entire assumption that the Americans' status as Pact observers

⁶⁰¹ #143 - Memorandum on the Substance of Discussions at the Department of State – JCS Meeting, Pentagon, 16 November 1956, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 329.

⁶⁰² #166 - Memorandum of Telephone Conversation between the President and the Secretary of State, 8 December 1956, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 395 (quote); Operations Coordinating Board – Operations Plan for Iraq (NSC 5428), 7 August 1957, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 - Administrative and Chronological Files 1953-1961, Box 25.

(rather than formal members) had an appreciable difference on the way regional actors viewed the US relationship with the Baghdad Pact and its members. Fritzlan argued that:

As observers though, we were just as active, and influential, as if we'd been full members. We put in a lot of money, we had a technical staff and donated administrative staff to the Baghdad Pact organization. We took part in all the military exercises involved, and we concluded various agreements on communications and such technical matters. So that as far as the efficiency of the Pact was concerned it was not in any way diminished by our non-membership. But somehow it made us look hypocritical.⁶⁰³

There is a good deal of truth in Fritzlan's comments. US officials juggled an array of challenging and often contradictory bilateral relationships with Britain, Iraq, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Syria, the Soviet Union, and others in this period. US policymakers sought suitable policy options vis-à-vis the Baghdad Pact that kept lines of communication open with adversaries like Egypt while reasonably satisfying the impulses of allies in London and Baghdad. One can certainly sympathize with the US position given the incredible complexity of problems facing the Eisenhower administration. Yet the Americans' policy of maintaining freedom of action vis-à-vis the Baghdad Pact ultimately left all sides disappointed, as the approach frustrated both antagonists like Egypt and close allies like Iraq.⁶⁰⁴ Eisenhower's policy on the Baghdad Pact did not ameliorate opposition to the grouping that permeated amongst Arab nationalists, neutralists, and anti-colonial groups in Iraq and the Middle East. It did not prevent the creation of the ESS, the leftward drift of Syria into the Nasserist bloc, or the formation of the anti-Iraqi UAR. Nor did it entirely end the incessant appeals from London and Baghdad for greater US commitments. As Frederick Axelgard correctly

⁶⁰³ David Fritzlan interview, Frontline Diplomacy: The Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training.

⁶⁰⁴ Podeh, "The Perils of Ambiguity," p. 113.

argues, “Washington achieved probably the worst possible result by staying close enough to help incriminate the Iraqi regime as disloyal to the prevailing political trends in the Arab world, while also refraining from any decisive commitment to support it.”⁶⁰⁵

The United States ultimately failed to appreciate, as Podeh has argued, that there was likely “no middle path” between the two contenders for Arab leadership in Cairo and Baghdad. It was nearly impossible for the United States to mollify Arab nationalist sentiment on the Pact question while protecting its critical partnerships with conservative, pro-Western allies like Iraq.⁶⁰⁶ Perhaps, as Podeh adds, Washington would have been better served by decisively supporting a small number of nations (either the nationalist republican governments or the conservative monarchical regimes) rather than seeking to “forge a broad, yet inconclusive, front.”⁶⁰⁷ Such decisive, limiting choices were anathema to US policymakers witnessing the vast expansion of American power in Iraq and the Middle East in the 1950s. As US interests expanded significantly in the region, policymakers believed the options available to them narrowed in corresponding order. In essence, the Eisenhower administration was held hostage by traditional “Great Power” dilemmas and concerns. Loath to cut lines of communication with any nations in the Middle East (particularly Iraq), the administration crafted an extraordinarily nuanced, yet ultimately “ambiguous,”⁶⁰⁸ policy toward the Baghdad Pact that left much to be desired for all involved.

⁶⁰⁵ Axelgard, “US Policy Toward Iraq, 1946-1958,” p. 260.

⁶⁰⁶ Podeh, “The Perils of Ambiguity,” p. 114.

⁶⁰⁷ Podeh, “The Perils of Ambiguity,” p. 113.

⁶⁰⁸ See Podeh, “The Perils of Ambiguity.”

Chapter Four: American Modernization Programs in Hashemite Iraq

Oil concessions, military assistance packages, and collective defense arrangements were vital components of the US-Iraqi relationship of the early to mid-1950s. There were also “soft power” dimensions to this strategic partnership, including technical assistance (also known as modernization or development) programs and initiatives. This subject has received little scholarly attention, and those works that examine Western modernization programs in the Middle East focus on British initiatives in this period and American modernization campaigns in the late 1950s and 1960s.⁶⁰⁹ The wide-ranging American technical assistance program in Iraq in the pre-revolutionary period is often overlooked in the historical record. As a corrective to this oversight, this chapter examines American modernization programs in Iraq, led by the Point IV agency (also known as the United States Operations Mission [USOM] or the International Cooperation Agency [ICA]), from the inception of the program in 1952 to the July 1958 Iraqi Revolution. This chapter also indirectly addresses the operations of the Iraqi Development Board [IDB]. The Board oversaw many of Iraq’s development projects and frequently relied on Point IV’s expertise to carry out its schemes.

This chapter begins by analyzing how Point IV’s program functioned alongside British modernization efforts in Iraq. Section two discusses how Point IV’s Iraqi campaign reflected the major tenets of modernization theory that flourished in the

⁶⁰⁹ American technical assistance programs in Iraq are not discussed in the most in-depth study of US diplomacy in Iraq in this period, Frederick Axelgard’s “US Policy Toward Iraq, 1946-1958,” Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, 1988. Paul Kingston, *Britain and the Politics of Modernization in the Middle East, 1945-1958* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) refers to American Point IV programs, but its primary focus is on British modernization efforts in Iraq. See, as well, Matthew F. Jacobs, *Imagining the Middle East: The Building of an American Foreign Policy, 1918-1967* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 165-186. Jacobs’ chapter on American modernization efforts in the Middle East focuses on US programs in Egypt and Iran in the late 1950s to mid-1960s and studies produced by area specialists and modernization theorists like Daniel Lerner and W.W. Rostow.

Western social sciences. Section three follows an emerging scholarly trend by focusing on the impact of local actors on the American modernization project in Iraq. It stresses the critical role played by Iraqi elites and government technocrats in shaping and directing Point IV's work. Section three also emphasizes how modernization served as an arena for convergence, negotiation, and debate between US and Iraqi officials. This chapter concludes with an assessment of the respective successes, failures, and limits to the American modernization project and Washington's attempts to "control" and shape development initiatives in Iraq in the pre-revolutionary period.

The start of substantive Iraqi national development efforts coincided with the creation of the IDB in 1950. The IDB was a semi-autonomous government agency led by a small network of Iraqi ministers, the prime minister, and American and British representatives. The Iraqi parliament granted extensive powers and funds (approximately 70% of the country's oil revenues) to the IDB to design a wide-range of development schemes. Broadly stated, the IDB's goals were to present economic plans for resource development in the country, and to raise Iraqi citizens' standard of living.⁶¹⁰ Technical sections within the IDB and government ministries, filled by Iraqi and foreign experts, executed the major work on a variety of development projects.⁶¹¹

Point IV's representatives operated within these institutions from the onset of the program in June 1952. In addition to loaning roughly one hundred technicians on an annual basis to the Iraqi government, Point IV delivered American machinery and equipment and financed training programs for Iraqis in the United States. Point IV's

⁶¹⁰ Abbas Alnasrawi, *The Economy of Iraq: Oil, Wars, and Destruction of Development and Prospects, 1950-2010* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1994), 18-19; Henry Wiens, "The United States Operation Mission in Iraq," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 323 (May 1959), 141; Phebe Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2012), 68.

⁶¹¹ Wiens, "The United States Operation Mission in Iraq," p. 141-142.

program spanned vast segments of Iraqi society: technicians worked on initiatives for highway construction; maternal and child health; preventative medicine; and educational reform. Point IV's primary focus in this period was developing and "modernizing" Iraq's agricultural system. More than half of all US technicians worked in some capacity on agricultural issues in Hashemite Iraq.⁶¹² Point IV's staff assisted in the administration of the Abu Ghraib Agricultural College and the vaunted Miri Sirf Land Development [MSLD] program. As we will see, the MSLD scheme was a crucial (yet fatally flawed) component of the government's development plan to distribute parcels of state land to independent farmers in an effort to stabilize the political foundations of the regime.

The US, UK, and Iraqi Modernization

Previous chapters have given considerable attention to America's relationship with the British in the realm of Iraqi economic, military, and political affairs. It is also worth considering how the appearance of American technical experts in Iraq, an arena that was long the sole domain of British advisors,⁶¹³ affected the US-UK relationship. The following section examines how the US configured and managed its Point IV program in Iraq vis-à-vis Britain.

The Eisenhower administration certainly appreciated the opportunity afforded to American policymakers by the general decline of British power in Iraq in the early 1950s. The State Department's Office of Intelligence Research noted in May 1953 that the Iraqi leadership was increasingly turning to USOM and UNESCO assistance as an alternative

⁶¹² Wiens, "The United States Operation Mission in Iraq," p. 140, 143; Peter Hahn, *Missions Accomplished? The United States and Iraq Since World War I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 28.

⁶¹³ See Toby Dodge, *Inventing Iraq: The Failure of Nation Building and a History Denied* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).

to employing British technical advisors.⁶¹⁴ Provocative statements made by members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, as well as Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, after the Suez War seem, on the surface, to suggest a latent American desire to displace already-waning British authority in Baghdad.⁶¹⁵ In addition, it is revealing that the United States established a brand-new technical assistance program in Iraq in 1952 rather than contributing funds to ongoing British modernization efforts. This decision again reflects the Americans' desire, discussed in previous chapters, to openly distinguish their actions from those of their British allies.

The creation of Point IV's Iraqi initiative permitted direct competition between the American and British modernization projects in Baghdad. However, as in the oil sector, one finds comparatively little evidence in Point IV's archival records of an explicit American strategy (or desire) to supplant British authority in the Iraqi technical assistance domain. The paucity of references to British development work in these documents is surprising. The few references that appear indicate, as one US diplomat noted in May 1954, that relations between the British and Americans in the development realm were reasonably amicable.⁶¹⁶ The US ambassador to Iraq, Waldemar Gallman, stressed the importance of maintaining close US-UK ties in the development arena. Gallman noted, in reference to modernization programs, that "we should not permit ourselves to be played off against the British or be drawn into conflicts with them if this

⁶¹⁴ The British Position in Iraq, Department of State, 21 May 1953, Declassified Documents Reference System [DDRS].

⁶¹⁵ *Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq: Report on United States Foreign Assistance Programs*, US Senate Special Committee to Study the Foreign Aid Program (Washington, 1957), 2. Dulles argued in his testimony to the Senate Committee that European participation in the Eisenhower Doctrine would have "turned the Middle East over to International Communism." See *The Times*, 16 January 1957, GB165-0296 - Donald Cameron Watt Papers, Middle East Centre Archive [MEC], Box 3 (footnote quote). See Chapter Two for additional comments from Dulles.

⁶¹⁶ Summary of Conference of US Chiefs of Mission in the Middle East, Department of State, 11 May 1954, DDS.

can be avoided.”⁶¹⁷ Echoing these statements, former US embassy staffer Nicholas Thacher has written, referring in part to technical assistance efforts, that there was a high degree of cooperation between the two sides “on objectives to be achieved and policies to be followed” in Iraq.⁶¹⁸

One can account for this conclusion in a number of ways. For one, London still maintained valuable assets throughout wide swaths of Iraqi society. As one example, the entire Iraqi educational system at this time was still patterned on the English model. American analysts certainly appreciated the residual strength of British power and influence in Iraqi civil society. In addition, American and British development strategists sought markedly similar goals in Iraq: the enhancement of social and economic prosperity and internal stability and the continuation of Western authority and control in Iraq to protect their shared assets and interests.⁶¹⁹ Bitter, long-lasting disputes between American and British diplomats over Iraqi development plans would have been incredibly counter-productive given the convergence of interests and objectives between them. There was also little appetite in Washington for a dramatic expansion in financial commitments to Baghdad. In fact, proposed budget cuts in 1957 threatened USOM’s already modest annual budget for Iraq of \$2.5 million.⁶²⁰ It is rather telling that this

⁶¹⁷ From Baghdad (Gallman) to Department of State, #120 – Observations on US Technical Assistance to Iraq, 19 August 1955, Confidential US State Department Central Files: Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959 [Hereby referred to as Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959], Reel 11.

⁶¹⁸ Nicholas Thacher, “Reflections on US Foreign Policy Toward Iraq in the 1950s,” in Robert Fernea and William Roger Louis (eds.) *The Iraqi Revolution of 1958: The Old Social Classes Revisited* (London: IB Tauris, 1991), 63.

⁶¹⁹ From UK Embassy in Baghdad to Anthony Eden, Foreign Office, VQ1136/1, 8 April 1954, FO371-111016, British National Archives [BNA]; Sir Michael Wright (Baghdad) to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd – The Future Course of US-Iraq Relations and Their Effect on the UK’s Position in Iraq, #10 – VQ10345/9, 19 July 1957, FO481-11, BNA.

⁶²⁰ From Baghdad (Gallman) to Secretary of State, #533, 28 September 1957, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 11.

budget crisis took place in the post-Suez period in which American responsibilities and interests in the Middle East were expanding significantly.

British archival records add subtlety and nuance to this story of alliance politics. Point IV staffers may not have pursued an explicit strategy of challenging their British peers. Even so, UK officials were demonstrably anxious about the rise of US influence in the technical assistance arena. London's concerns about Point IV's operations reflected, in part, their fears about the threat the Americans posed to their commercial prosperity.⁶²¹ As in the military aid sector, American experts and firms now competed (with varying degrees of success) with British groups for development contracts awarded by Baghdad. More importantly, Point IV's modernization project appeared to strike at the very core of British power in Iraq. UK officials expected Point IV's scholarships and training programs targeting the growing body of students and professionals to extend US influence at London's expense. Many UK diplomats resented this intrusion of a "horde of highly paid American experts" and stressed the importance of defending their position against further American encroachments.⁶²² The UK ambassador to Iraq, Sir John Troutbeck, frequently vented about the purported arrogance of Point IV workers who seemed convinced that London's regional policies were outdated. Another UK embassy official based in Baghdad suggested that Point IV experts combined 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

⁶²¹ From UK Embassy in Baghdad to Anthony Eden, Foreign Office, VQ1136/1, 8 April 1954, FO371-111016, BNA; From Michael Wright, UK Embassy in Baghdad to Harold Macmillan, Foreign Office, VQ1424/1, 15 November 1955, FO371-115782, BNA.

⁶²² Sir John Troutbeck to Mr. Eden – Sir John Troutbeck's Report on Developments in Iraq during His Mission, #26 - VQ1015/83, 9 December 1954, FO481-8, BNA; Sir Michael Wright (Baghdad) to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd – The Future Course of US-Iraq Relations and Their Effect on the UK's Position in Iraq, #10 - VQ10345/9, 19 July 1957, FO481-11, BNA.

own.”⁶²³ The subsequent UK ambassador, Michael Wright, was generally more even-keeled than Troutbeck on the subject of US-UK relations. Even he complained in 1957 that Point IV and United States Information Service [USIS] personnel spoke of the decline of British power in Iraq as though it were part of an inevitable, historically determined process.⁶²⁴

The concerns of British diplomats often found expression in their critiques of USOM’s development methods. As Paul Kingston has argued, an important clash emerged over development strategies in Iraq between the British and the Americans. This dispute is largely absent from American records, but appears prominently in British archival documents. Kingston adeptly notes that the British felt the Americans, along with the Iraqis, were excessively focused on “technically perfect and over-sophisticated projects.” UK officials, in response, tried to get both sides to focus on more practical, socially-driven projects.⁶²⁵ The writings of the UK member of the IDB, Michael Ionides, highlight the intensity of British anxieties about and frustrations with USOM’s development practices. Ionides argued there was far too much “political and theoretical content” in the American technical aid program. He believed that too much emphasis was placed on how “Western arts and sciences were going to help...countries who were too backward to save themselves.”⁶²⁶ Ionides argued further that USOM’s development plans tended to eschew practicality in favour of “spectacular” projects crafted to

⁶²³ Sir John Troutbeck to Mr. Eden – Sir John Troutbeck’s Report on Developments in Iraq during His Mission, #26 - VQ1015/83, 9 December 1954, FO481-8, BNA; From UK Embassy in Baghdad to Anthony Eden, Foreign Office, VQ1136/1, 8 April 1954, FO371-111016, BNA (quote).

⁶²⁴ Sir Michael Wright (Baghdad) to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd – The Future Course of US-Iraq Relations and Their Effect on the UK’s Position in Iraq, #10 - VQ10345/9, 19 July 1957, FO481-11, BNA.

⁶²⁵ Kingston, *Britain and the Politics of Modernization in the Middle East, 1945-1958*, p. 109, 122 (quote).

⁶²⁶ Michael Ionides, “Help from the West in Iraq,” *Engineering*, 9 August 1958, GB165-0207 – Elizabeth Monroe Papers, MEC (quote). See also Kingston, *Britain and the Politics of Modernization in the Middle East, 1945-1958*, p. 113-114.

demonstrate the superiority of Western technical and scientific methods. In his reflections on Point IV's procedures in the Iraqi Rural Development plan, Ionides argued:

To get simple, practical things done, you don't have to put simple people through night classes to make them understand the life-cycle of the mosquito, so that when they go filling in swamps round the houses they shall understand and appreciate that they are contributing to the health of their people, thus enabling them to live better healthier and fuller lives, for the glory of Western civilization. You just tell them to go and fill in swamps, and if they don't do it, you sack them quick.⁶²⁷

The wider diplomatic corps repeated many of Ionides' critiques of Point IV's procedures and methods. Ambassador Troutbeck was highly skeptical as to whether USOM personnel could successfully teach Iraqi citizens about modern agriculture and run rural communities on "sound administrative and scientific lines."⁶²⁸ The author of an August 1953 cable sent by the chancery to the Foreign Office similarly viewed USOM's practices with great disdain. The author summarized the agency's modus operandi in agriculture and health campaigns in the following manner:

They are intended to educate Iraqi officials as much as achieve immediate practical results. The American teams are indeed supposed to diffuse the technical creed of which they are the missionaries in three main ways: by local example; by extension – mixed Iraqi-American travelling teams are briefed to carry the light to provincial centers. And by multiplication: a growing number of Iraqi missionaries are trained who can eventually proselytize to their own people without outside assistance.⁶²⁹

The author very clearly resented Point IV's tendency to characterize its technicians as missionaries sent to spread a technological and scientific creed to the Iraqi hinterlands.

⁶²⁷ Michael Ionides, "Help from the West in Iraq," *Engineering*, 9 August 1958, GB165-0207 – Elizabeth Monroe Papers, MEC; Letter from Michael Ionides to Elizabeth Monroe, 7 January 1958, GB165-0207 – Elizabeth Monroe Papers, MEC; Letter from Michael Ionides to Elizabeth Monroe, 1 October 1957, GB165-0207 – Elizabeth Monroe Papers, MEC (quote).

⁶²⁸ From JM Troutbeck, British Embassy Baghdad to Anthony Eden, 4 March 1953, FO371-104694, BNA (quote); From Chancery, to Middle East Secretariat, Foreign Office, EQ11365/10, 17 August 1953, FO371-104694, BNA.

⁶²⁹ From Chancery, to Middle East Secretariat, Foreign Office, EQ11365/10, 17 August 1953, FO371-104694, BNA.

Many British officials harbored strong cynicism about Point IV's operations. A clear sense of *schadenfreude* also coloured the reports of UK observers regarding Point IV's initiatives. Ambassador Troutbeck wrote, with some satisfaction, about the frustrations USOM officials experienced in their work on agriculture and highway construction programs. Troutbeck attributed these problems to the purported arrogance of USOM personnel and their impractical procedures. As one example, Troutbeck criticized the Americans' insistence on drafting formal written agreements for all schemes with Iraqi government figures and running all development plans "on American lines."⁶³⁰ British authorities similarly took great pleasure in meeting with J.D. Hancock, head of Point IV's Land Settlement Division, in July 1953. Hancock complained to his UK counterparts that his agency's designs for the MSLD were too theoretical and rigid for the on-the-ground realities of development work.⁶³¹

Ionides and other UK officials drew a marked distinction between Point IV's overly-theoretical and impractical operations and their own development efforts. They felt their decades of experience operating in Iraq necessarily meant they were more knowledgeable about Iraqi customs and capabilities, and thus more successful in their development work.⁶³² British diplomats routinely spoke in paternalistic terms about the Americans "beginning to learn" about the challenges posed by development efforts. As they believed it, the Americans were in desperate need of lessons about the traditions and work habits of their purportedly incompetent Iraqi partners.⁶³³ In this vein, Robin

⁶³⁰ From JM Troutbeck, British Embassy Baghdad to Anthony Eden, 4 March 1953, FO371-104694, BNA.

⁶³¹ From Foreign Office, EQ11345/9, 26 July 1953, FO371-104694, BNA.

⁶³² From Foreign Office, EQ11345/9, 26 July 1953, FO371-104694, BNA.

⁶³³ From Chancery to Middle East Secretariat, Foreign Office, EQ11365/7, 16 June 1953, FO371-104694, BNA (quote); From UK Embassy in Baghdad to Anthony Eden, Foreign Office, VQ1136/1, 8 April 1954, FO371-111016, BNA.

Hooper, counselor of the UK embassy in Iraq, observed that the Americans had yet to discover that planning was “often a rather academic exercise” in Iraq. Nor, as Troutbeck and Wright believed, could Iraqis truly value Point IV’s efforts or have the same faith in the soundness of US policy as that of the British.⁶³⁴ British authorities viewed their long history of colonial rule in Iraq as a key asset for their ongoing modernization efforts. In many ways, this line of thinking functioned as a mechanism of self-defense for British officials, helping to assuage their anxieties about their future position in Iraq’s political, economic, and social arenas vis-à-vis Washington.

The anxieties of British officials about and criticisms of Point IV’s operation operated alongside a keen sense of *realpolitik*. Even those who sounded alarmist notes about the emergence of the United States in Baghdad understood there was little they could do to reverse this trend given the constellation of power in the Middle East. UK observers recognized, as in the military aid sector, they had to accept the Americans’ profile in the development realm, Hooper suggested, with as “good a grace as possible.”⁶³⁵ British policy mandated cooperation with the Americans to the greatest extent possible on development questions.⁶³⁶ Troutbeck, Wright, and others found some relief when USOM staffers openly discussed their program with members of the UK embassy. These interactions served as further indications (for both sides) of the

⁶³⁴ From UK Embassy in Baghdad to Anthony Eden, Foreign Office, VQ1136/1, 8 April 1954, FO371-111016, BNA (quote); Sir John Troutbeck to Mr. Eden – Sir John Troutbeck’s Report on Developments in Iraq during His Mission, #26 – VQ1015/83, 9 December 1954, FO481-8, BNA; Sir Michael Wright (Baghdad) to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd – The Future Course of US-Iraq Relations and their Effect on the UK’s Position in Iraq, #10 – VQ10345/9, 19 July 1957, FO481-11, BNA.

⁶³⁵ From UK Embassy in Baghdad to Anthony Eden, Foreign Office, VQ1136/1, 8 April 1954, FO371-111016, BNA (quote); Sir John Troutbeck to Mr. Eden – Sir John Troutbeck’s Report on Developments in Iraq during His Mission, #26 – VQ1015/83, 9 December 1954, FO481-8, BNA; Sir Michael Wright (Baghdad) to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd – Development of Relations between Iraq and the US Since 1932, #8 – VQ10345/8, 11 July 1957, FO481-11, BNA.

⁶³⁶ From JM Troutbeck, British Embassy Baghdad to Anthony Eden, 4 March 1953, FO371-104694, BNA; Sir John Troutbeck to Mr. Eden – Sir John Troutbeck’s Report on Developments in Iraq during His Mission, #26 – VQ1015/83, 9 December 1954, FO481-8, BNA.

importance of close cooperation on technical assistance matters.⁶³⁷ Furthermore, UK officials were grateful that, as noted earlier, both sides were working towards similar ends. Even those USOM schemes that UK officials criticized as overly-theoretical and unrealistic were still applauded as important steps forward in the Iraqi development campaign. Robin Hooper, for instance, explained that London could not vigorously oppose Point IV assistance since “we can hardly deny to Iraq any means to greater prosperity and stability.”⁶³⁸

It is important to assess the US-UK relationship in the technical aid domain in relation to other fields of Iraqi politics. As a whole, the US-UK partnership in the modernization sphere was more troubled than in the petroleum arena. One finds far more examples in the documentary record of British complaints about the aggressive nature of US development activities than in the oil sector. This probably reflects the fact that there were more opportunities available in the modernization field for an expansion of US influence than the petroleum arena, where US interests were constrained by the inflexible IPC ownership provisions.

There are key similarities to note between British responses to the Point IV project and the US military aid program. In both cases, British behaviour betrayed a manifest sense of insecurity about their future role in Iraq vis-à-vis the Americans. In

⁶³⁷ From JM Troutbeck, British Embassy Baghdad to Anthony Eden, 4 March 1953, FO371-104694, BNA; From UK Embassy in Baghdad to Anthony Eden, Foreign Office, VQ1136/1, 8 April 1954, FO371-111016, BNA; Letter from FS Hardy to Elizabeth Monroe, 29 September 1956, GB165-0207 – Elizabeth Monroe Papers, MEC.

⁶³⁸ From RS Faber, British Embassy Baghdad to Development Division, British Middle East Office, British Embassy Beirut, 14 December 1954, FO371-111010, BNA ; From JM Troutbeck, British Embassy Baghdad to Anthony Eden, 4 March 1953, FO371-104694, BNA; From Baghdad (Gallman) to Department of State, #294, 29 December 1954, Confidential US State Department Central Files: Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954 [Hereby referred to as Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954], Reel 6; From UK Embassy in Baghdad to Anthony Eden, Foreign Office, VQ1136/1, 8 April 1954, FO371-111016, BNA (quote).

both instances, as well, UK representatives sought to accommodate Washington's rising power and sustain a modified role for London in Iraq. British diplomats understood there was little they could do to resist the expansion of US influence aside from regulating American behavior and directing it toward pro-British ends. Even so, UK officials offered far more emotional and visceral responses to US activities in the military assistance arena than with development issues. Indeed, there was a much more pronounced, visible campaign by the Americans to expand their influence vis-à-vis the UK in the military aid field than the development realm. On the development side, American officials understood that UK advisors had historically played an instrumental role in the direction of the Iraqi state. There was little desire among US officials to eliminate this force since both sides sought similar goals with their development work. Suggestions that Washington replace the British as the primary player in Iraq's modernization initiatives were also restrained by the undesirability of assuming greater financial responsibilities and the importance of propping up British power in the Middle East. These considerations also regulated American behaviour in the military aid realm, but the stakes were far greater (and the allure of possible advantages more appealing) for US officials debating the provision of US arms to Baghdad. Indeed, technical aid questions rarely attracted the attention of top-level policymakers as military issues often did.

Another key difference existed between American behavior in the Iraqi technical assistance realm and the military aid sector. The provision of US weapons to Iraq necessitated the formal codification of principles between Washington and London governing American behavior. Any attempt by US officials to expand the elasticity in

these provisions necessarily produced a reflexive British response that placed these opportunistic impulses under a microscope. A substantive paper trail was created in both bureaucracies each time the Americans debated modifications to the MOU or their larger military aid program with London. There were no comparable agreements between the US and the UK regulating American work in the Iraqi technical assistance sector. Point IV officials had more freedom to strengthen the American role (if they chose to do so) without securing London's approval. In terms of their working partnership, the Americans' relationship with the British in the Iraqi technical assistance field falls somewhere between the acrimonious military aid sector and that of the relatively harmonious petroleum industry.

The Point IV Program and Modernization Theory

Scholars have devoted considerable attention in recent years to the role of modernization theory in driving American Cold War foreign policy in the developing world. Even so, it is entirely reasonable to question the degree to which Americans working on development projects actually articulated and expressed the grand concepts that underlay modernization theory as an ideology. This section argues that the principles of modernization theory had specific and practical relevance for Point IV workers. Moreover, American development experts regularly drew on the theoretical and analytical constructs of modernization theory to express and assess their experiences in Iraq.

Modernization theory and its related principles emerged in the post-1945 period from the work of Western social scientists concerned with guiding the emerging nations

of the Third World along the historical continuum from “tradition” to “modernity.” Grounded in “linear, universalist assumptions” about the shape and direction of nation-states and their development practices, modernization theory drew a stark dichotomy between rational, democratic, and purportedly scientific modern nations and those mired in rural, hierarchical power structures.⁶³⁹ With proper guidance and tutelage from advanced Western states, modernization theorists believed these traditional societies were capable of inching their way along the historical path of development toward the goals of urban, industrial, and literate societal structures. As Nils Gilman writes, the leading proponents of modernization theory saw this process as a “totalizing, monolithic phenomenon which again and again, regardless of time and place, worked the same basic results for the same basic reasons.”⁶⁴⁰

Not surprisingly, American modernization theorists viewed the United States as the endpoint other nations should mirror in their quest to modernize their political, social, and economic structures. The United States became synonymous with modernity thanks to its abundance of technology and material goods, masses of educated elites, and

⁶³⁹ Zachary Lockman, *Contending Visions of the Middle East: The History and Politics of Orientalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 134; Michael Adas, “Modernization Theory and the American Revival of the Scientific and Technological Standards of Social Achievement and Human Worth,” in David C. Engerman et al (eds.) *Staging Growth: Modernization, Development, and the Global Cold War* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003), 35; David Ekbladh, “From Consensus to Crisis: The Postwar Career of Nation-Building in US Foreign Relations,” in Francis Fukuyama (ed.) *Nation Building: Beyond Afghanistan and Iraq* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 20; Nathan Citino, “The Ottoman Legacy in Cold War Modernization,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 40, no. 4 (2008), 581; Michael Latham, “Modernization, International History, and the Cold War World,” in David Engerman et al (eds.) *Staging Growth: Modernization, Development, and the Global Cold War* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003), 2 (quote); Jacobs, *Imagining the Middle East* p, 7, 141.

⁶⁴⁰ Latham, “Modernization, International History, and the Cold War World,” p. 5; Adas, “Modernization Theory and the American Revival of the Scientific and Technological Standards of Social Achievement and Human Worth,” p. 39; Lockman, *Contending Visions of the Middle East*, p. 134-137; Nils Gilman, “Modernization Theory, The Highest Stage of American Intellectual History,” in David Engerman et al (eds.) *Staging Growth: Modernization, Development, and the Global Cold War* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003), 50 (quote). For an example of this type of thinking, see Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East* (London: The Free Press, 1958), 46.

presumed ability to resolve existing social and political problems in American society.⁶⁴¹

America's "non-political" development aid could facilitate the proper form of modernization for developing nations if they followed the historical example of America's industrialization. Broadly speaking, as Zachary Lockman suggests, modernization theorists believed that American assistance was essential for ensuring "correct" development practices since traditional societies were static and lacking in the "institutions and internal dynamics" that led to major change "from within."⁶⁴²

American modernization theory did not emerge as a coherent, formally articulated doctrine until the publication of classic texts like Daniel Lerner's 1958 work *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East* and Walt Whitman Rostow's 1960 book *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto*.⁶⁴³ Reflecting this chronology, scholars often link modernization theory's emergence to the larger foreign policy strategies of the Kennedy White House.⁶⁴⁴ However, this chapter demonstrates that the widely-shared assumptions that later crystallized as modernization theory actually formed a critical component of the Eisenhower administration's policies in Iraq, as well as Washington's broader conceptions of its control and influence in Baghdad, well before the 1958 to 1960 period. The roots of modernization theory in fact date back

⁶⁴¹ Gilman, "Modernization Theory, The Highest Stage of American Intellectual History," p. 53-60; Ekbladh, "From Consensus to Crisis," p. 26; Nathan Citino, "Suburbia and Modernization: Community Building and America's Post-World War II Encounter with the Arab Middle East," *Arab Studies Journal* 13, no. 2 (2005), 41-42.

⁶⁴² Lockman, *Contending Visions of the Middle East*, p. 135, 136 (quote), 142; Gilman, "Modernization Theory, The Highest Stage of American Intellectual History," p. 58-59.

⁶⁴³ Lockman, *Contending Visions of the Middle East*, p. 135-136. Lerner's study offers a comprehensive assessment of modernization processes ongoing in the Middle East, including Egypt, Syria, Turkey, and Iran, at the time of the book's publication in 1958. See Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society*.

⁶⁴⁴ For instance, Victor Nemchenok, "In Search of Stability Amid Chaos: US Policy Toward Iran, 1961-1963," *Cold War History* 10, no. 3 (August 2010), 343 suggests that modernization was a new impulse among policymakers in the Kennedy administration. I strongly disagree with this suggestion.

to at least the early twentieth century.⁶⁴⁵ In the post-1945 global arena, the emerging precepts of modernization theory fused with a burgeoning sense of American nationalism and the global contest with the Soviet Union. The result was a powerful sense among American diplomats of their responsibility for the fate of developing nations and a belief, fueled in part by altruistic and “humanitarian” impulses, that the exercise of American power abroad would create a “more liberal, progressive world.”⁶⁴⁶ The Americans’ competition with the Kremlin after 1945 for the hearts and minds of the Third World put a premium on the effective and expansive use of technical assistance. As one of the members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee explained, Point IV aid would produce substantial economic and social benefits for Middle Eastern countries and dissuade them from the temptation to “try Marxism as a way to catch up.”⁶⁴⁷

In the case of Point IV’s operations in Iraq, the lines separating the theoreticians and practitioners of modernization theory are not entirely clear. It is difficult to determine the professional backgrounds of many of the Point IV technicians operating in Iraq. The limited evidence available suggests that several key USOM authorities emerged from academic backgrounds in the Western social sciences and were familiar with and proponents of the tenets of modernization theory before joining the agency.⁶⁴⁸

Point IV’s chief agriculturalist in Iraq, Conrad Hammar, taught at the University of

⁶⁴⁵ Ekbladh, “From Consensus to Crisis,” p. 20; Jacobs, *Imagining the Middle East*, p. 149, 165.

⁶⁴⁶ Latham, “Modernization, International History, and the Cold War World,” p. 8, 16 (second quote); Gilman, “Modernization Theory, The Highest Stage of American Intellectual History,” p. 57; Melani McAlister, *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and US Interests in the Middle East Since 1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 46-47; Hahn, *Missions Accomplished?*, p. 27 (first quote).

⁶⁴⁷ Gilman, “Modernization Theory, The Highest Stage of American Intellectual History,” p. 48-56; Ekbladh, “From Consensus to Crisis,” p. 21; *Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq*, p. 2 (quote).

⁶⁴⁸ This assessment fits with Matthew Jacobs’ characterization of the group of Americans seeking to modernize the Middle East in this period. He describes this group as an “informal transnational network of academics, businesspersons, journalists, and policymakers” who sought to “imagine a transformed or modernized Middle East.” See Jacobs, *Imagining the Middle East*, p. 7 (quote), 49-50.

Missouri before joining the organization. His academic work focused on farm finance and land use questions in the American agricultural experience. Robert Tidwell, an education consultant in Iraq, previously published academic pieces at the University of Alabama examining rural education modernization in the United States. Equally, though he was not of an academic background, the Point IV Director in Iraq, Henry Wiens, had extensive experience working on the modernization of financial and tax structures in Greece and Iran before arriving in Iraq. This limited evidence suggests that the lines dividing those persons who formulated modernization theory's key tenets and those charged with executing American development projects in Iraq were in fact quite permeable.

It is perhaps not surprising, given the professional backgrounds of some Point IV technicians, that the records of the agency's operations in Iraq are replete with language closely resembling the broad objectives outlined by key modernization writers of the late 1950s and 1960s. USOM figures regularly suggested, as modernization writers would have noted, that the Iraqis' attempts to industrialize were destined to fail because of their supposedly "inherent" deficiencies. Among the problems faced by the Iraqis were, Point IV officials claimed, inefficient economic production practices, low wages, poor health practices, and a dearth of skilled workers. Henry Wiens concluded in 1955 that Iraq's independent attempts at modernization had been "halting and fumbling and slow."⁶⁴⁹

Point IV aid was viewed by its architects and evaluators (both in Point IV and the State Department) as essential to ensuring the Iraqis pursued "sound" and "effective"

⁶⁴⁹ Country Program – Technical Cooperation FY 1954: Iraq, 15 October 1953, National Archives and Records Administration [NARA], Record Group [RG] 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 3; From Henry Wiens - Recruitment of Physician of Basra Project, 5 May 1955, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 18 (quote).

development projects as defined by America's own standards and unique historical experiences. These qualifications gave Point IV staffers the right to alter, for example, proposed Iraqi reforms to its farm credit system and irrigation practices to ensure they did not go off on "tangents."⁶⁵⁰ With the proper assistance to control and channel Iraqi development plans, USOM technicians believed they could help Iraqi citizens climb the ladder towards independence and make Iraq, as Ambassador Gallman wrote, a "showcase for democracy." Henry Wiens believed his agency could help "developing nations acquire technical 'know-how'" and properly guide the Iraqis on the path to modernity.⁶⁵¹

In more specific terms, modernization theorists claimed that Western technical aid could, as one of its great benefits, effectively build a strong middle class in the host country. Michael Adas argues that American development programs in the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, and Iran emphasized and anticipated the rise of a prosperous middle class from "which moderate political leaders, committed to representative democracy and continuing economic ties to the US, could be drawn."⁶⁵² These initiatives were, in many ways, an attempt to replicate the American middle class existence abroad. Point IV technical aid experts were devoted to the task of creating an Iraqi middle class farming

⁶⁵⁰ Operations Coordinating Board – Progress Report on NSC 5428, 10 March 1955, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 – Administrative and Chronological Files, 1953-1961, Box 26; From E.R. Pierce (Iraq Desk) to Mr. William Conrad, NE – Report of Interview with Clifford Wilson, 5 May 1958, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs – Office of Near Eastern Affairs – General Subject Files Relating to the Middle East, 1955-1958, Box 11; From Frank Robinson, Agricultural Economist, to Hermann Beck, Acting Chief of Group – Activities for the Month of December 1953, 31 December 1953, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 34; From ICA Baghdad Ben Brown – Publication on Conservation Irrigation, 26 November 1957, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 22.

⁶⁵¹ From Baghdad (Gallman) to Department of State, #120 – Observations on US Technical Assistance to Iraq, 19 August 1955, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 11 (first quote); From Baghdad FOA (Henry Wiens) – Land Problem Center and Training Course, 6 December 1955, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 5; Wiens, "The United States Operation Mission in Iraq," p. 140 (second quote).

⁶⁵² Adas, "Modernization Theory and the American Revival of the Scientific and Technological Standards of Social Achievement and Human Worth," p. 31 (quote); Citino, "Suburbia and Modernization," p. 43.

community. Agency representatives believed they could help inspire the emergence of this group by assisting in the MSLD campaign to convert millions of acres of desert into arable land for farmers and by promoting reforms at the Abu Ghraib Agricultural School.⁶⁵³ Analysts in the US intelligence community similarly projected that the expansion of educational facilities, continued inflow of oil revenues, and progress in land distribution would produce growth in “both numbers and influence” of the Iraqi middle class. Few reports indicated little more than marginal improvements in this arena, but the enthusiasm of officials like Henry Wiens and Conrad Hammar for pursuing this objective did not wane.⁶⁵⁴

As Paul Kingston rightly notes, modernization theorists also sought to bolster local development efforts by “building up human capital at the grass-roots level.” Technical assistance programs were designed to foster a cooperative relationship between American aid technicians and their local counterparts-in-training. This would, in theory, improve the “long-term sustainability” of the host country’s human resources.⁶⁵⁵ Here again, the Iraqi case study closely mirrors the theoretical underpinnings of American development theory. Documents drafted by Point IV officials and members of the US embassy in Baghdad emphasized, in paternalistic tones, the task of teaching their Iraqi counterparts strong work ethics, attitudes, and sound methods of industrial

⁶⁵³ From Baghdad FOA (Henry Wiens) – Land Problem Center and Training Course, 6 December 1955, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 5; Conrad Hammar, Chief Agriculturalist – Mission Objectives in Agriculture in Iraq, 25 October 1956, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 3; *Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq*, p. 24.

⁶⁵⁴ National Intelligence Survey – Iraq – NIS 30, 1 October 1957, CIA Electronic Reading Room [ERR], p. 36 (quote); Conrad Hammar, Chief Agriculturalist – Mission Objectives in Agriculture in Iraq, 25 October 1956, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 3; From ICA Baghdad to Willard Muller, Acting Director of USOM Nepal, 21 August 1956, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 22.

⁶⁵⁵ Paul Kingston, “The ‘Ambassador for the Arabs’: The Locke Mission and the Unmaking of U.S. Development Diplomacy in the Near East, 1952-1953,” in David Lesch (ed.) *The Middle East and the United States: A Historical and Political Reassessment* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2003), 36.

organization.⁶⁵⁶ One early USOM study on counterpart training schemes optimistically concluded that “training in technical assistance is probably a case where the one to learn emulates the one who teaches.”⁶⁵⁷ The agency designed its participant training assistance to elevate Iraqi capacities and resources to the point where American experts were no longer needed. At that stage, Iraqi trainees could gradually take over national development plans and the larger machinery of the Iraqi state.⁶⁵⁸ Point IV agricultural workers sought to strengthen the management capacities of sharecroppers so they could “graduate to the owner-operatorship level” of land use. In the case of MSLD land reclamation and settlement, Point IV advisors trained Iraqis to serve as home demonstration advisors for new families in rural districts. American congressional evaluators were confident that the newly trained rural advisors in the Latifiya village would maintain the community’s services when the American project manager eventually resigned her post.⁶⁵⁹

Prominent modernization theorists like Lerner and Rostow focused on the “transmission” of several skill sets between US aid experts and local agents, particularly an understanding of and appreciation for the key tenets of science, technology,

⁶⁵⁶ 4 Year Course Outline in Machine Shop by the Bradley University Technical Education Team – Baghdad Technical School, Undated, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 36; From Baghdad (Gallman) to Department of State, #120 - Observations on US Technical Assistance to Iraq, 19 August 1955, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 11.

⁶⁵⁷ Counterpart Training – A General Statement, Undated, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 38.

⁶⁵⁸ Nicholas Thacher’s Briefing Notes, Undated, US President’s Citizen Advisors on the Mutual Security Program (Fairless Committee): Records, 1956-1957, Box 9, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library [DDEL]; Clarence Randall Briefing Notes – Meeting with Henry Wiens, 17 October 1956, Clarence B. Randall: Journals, 1953-1961, Box 3, DDEL; ICA USOM/Iraq Participant Training Policy, 2 March 1957, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 38; From Ben Brown, Director to H.E. Sayyid Sami Fattah, Minister of Social Affairs, 14 March 1958, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 9.

⁶⁵⁹ From ICA Baghdad to Willard Muller, Acting Director of USOM Nepal, 21 August 1956, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 22 (quote); *Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq*, p. 25.

rationality, and empiricism. Many of these principles were deeply rooted in the “Progressive” traditions of the American past.⁶⁶⁰ The adoption by local officials of these attributes would thus signify their appreciation for and progress toward a national development structure modeled on the United States. American theorists particularly valued the development of engineers and government technocrats who could build the necessary technological infrastructure for greater industrialization (like power plants and factories). The strategic hamlet program in Vietnam is a useful case in point. In David Ekbladh’s words, the program’s architects believed that “[b]y replacing traditional ways with the infrastructure of modern life, such as new roads, electrification, better communication, and new agricultural techniques, peasants would not only experience material gains but also develop an outlook based on the idea of progress.”⁶⁶¹

It is particularly important to assess whether Point IV officials actually understood and described their work as part of a historic process intended to impart Iraqis with an appreciation for efficiency, rationalism, and scientific and technological development. Given the ambitious scale of these initiatives, one might expect a major disconnect to emerge between the academic writings of modernization theorists and the lived experiences of those executing development projects in Iraq. However, the archival record suggests that agency representatives were just as enthusiastic about their endeavour to educate Iraqis as those that authored the larger theories. For instance, USOM workers felt the use of mixed American-Iraqi teams tasked with designing

⁶⁶⁰ Adas, “Modernization Theory and the American Revival of the Scientific and Technological Standards of Social Achievement and Human Worth,” p. 26-38; Latham, “Modernization, International History, and the Cold War World,” p. 7; Jacobs, *Imagining the Middle East*, p. 8, 171; Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 9-12.

⁶⁶¹ Ekbladh, “From Consensus to Crisis,” p. 21, 28 (quote). For more on the strategic hamlet program in Vietnam, see George Herring, *America’s Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1950-1975* (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2002).

bridges, roads, and irrigation projects to be an effective means of teaching the principles of empiricism and efficiency. Agency staffers stressed to their Iraqi trainees the connections between accurate land classification surveys and the expansion of the country's agricultural potential.⁶⁶² In many instances, they expressed frustration with the need to accommodate local customs when designing projects. Point IV advisors working on low-cost housing units begrudgingly agreed to the design of particular styles of ceilings and walls desired by the Iraqis, even though they would “doubtless disappear with the further introduction of Western ideas.” In this instance, they sacrificed what they saw as sound empirical design for the sake of preserving the US-Iraqi cooperative relationship.⁶⁶³

American officials focused in particular on the foundational principles of scientific, mechanized, and technological approaches to development. In this vein, five American specialists at the Baghdad Technical School offered training for the school's teachers, purchased new equipment for classrooms, and taught courses on automotive design, machine shop, electricity, and woodworking.⁶⁶⁴ Elizabeth Darden and other Point IV medical experts in Basra gave sustained attention to training Iraqi personnel in scientific approaches to a variety of public health problems, including smallpox.⁶⁶⁵ The

⁶⁶² Government of Iraq – Development Board– Annual Report for the Financial Year 1953-1954, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 10; *Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq*, p. 24.

⁶⁶³ Principles to be Observed in Planning Low-Cost Housing in Baghdad, 1955, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 20.

⁶⁶⁴ Summary Report: Work of Bradley University Technical Education Team – Baghdad Technical School – November 1953 to June 1955, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 36.

⁶⁶⁵ Letter from ICA official to Muzahem Maher, Muttasarif, Basra Liwa, 26 April 1955, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 18; From Elizabeth Darden – Report on Health Activities – Village Life Improvement Program, December 1956, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 19; From John Lewis, MD, Chief Health and Sanitation Division to Ben Brown, Country Director – Health Summary for February 1957, 6 March 1957, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 17.

Miri Sirf land scheme was a critical arena in which American guidance was expected to improve the scientific and technological capabilities of local farmers. Point IV's objective, agency agriculturalists wrote, was to translate American agricultural science into local farming practices.⁶⁶⁶ In condescending tones, Henry Wiens concluded that Iraq's purported "feudalistic land tenure" had thus far restricted the country's application of scientific and technological farming systems. Nevertheless, the director insisted, Point IV's assistance would surely improve Iraqi capacities.⁶⁶⁷ Conrad Hammar similarly argued that Iraqi farming was stuck in the primitive, early stages of mechanization. To remedy this problem, Point IV focused on preparing the lands for machinery, improving efficiency in water use, and introducing scientific concepts of soil drainage and conservation to defend against the salinization of farmlands.⁶⁶⁸

Two of the agency's preferred methods for promoting these values were public demonstrations of technology and educational programs at technical schools. J.R. Morris, an agricultural engineer, described with great satisfaction how he taught all thirty-five of his students to plow farmland using an American tractor.⁶⁶⁹ The rural education program at the Baquba Teacher Training College was another venue where US experts could demonstrate the prowess of American technology and science. Henry

⁶⁶⁶ From JR Morris, Agricultural Engineer to Hermann Beck, Acting Head of Group – Monthly Report, August 1953, 30 August 1953, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 35; From Conrad Hammar to Henry Wiens – Agricultural Division Projects, 1 June 1954, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 3.

⁶⁶⁷ From Baghdad FOA (Henry Wiens) – Land Problem Center and Training Course, 6 December 1955, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 5 (quote); Clarence Randall Briefing Notes – Meeting with Henry Wiens, 17 October 1956, Clarence B. Randall: Journals, 1953-1961, Box 3, DDEL.

⁶⁶⁸ Conrad Hammar – A Land Improvement Service for Iraq, 23 July 1956, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 22; From Conrad Hammar – Modern Farm Credit for Iraq, 1 April 1957, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 4.

⁶⁶⁹ From JR Morris, Agricultural Engineer to Hermann Beck, Acting Head of Group – Monthly Report, August 1953, 30 August 1953, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 35;

Wiens wrote with confidence in 1954 that students at the college were now familiar with modern agricultural practices thanks to American tutelage.⁶⁷⁰ USOM experts also found the screening of American films in mobile cinemas to be an effective way of introducing these principles to apparently simple-minded farmers. More than eighteen villages were showing American films by July 1955 that focused on modern methods of sheep shearing and poultry husbandry to large audiences.⁶⁷¹ Conrad Hammar believed the most valuable films were those that showed “in any evolutionary manner the progress [made by Americans] from hand agriculture to highly-mechanized agriculture.” These films were also useful since they explained how Iraqi farmers could prepare for the “painful adjustments” that were to come with the transformation of rural life to an Americanized, mechanized agricultural landscape, including the flight from the countryside to urban areas.⁶⁷² Hammar believed the country’s agriculture could someday resemble that of the United States if Iraqi citizens successfully adjusted to these changes.

Point IV workers saw themselves as direct agents in the transfer of knowledge and scientific and technical expertise to the Iraqi citizenry. Moreover, as this chapter has implicitly noted, they regularly wrote about their experiences and understood their work in relation to America’s own industrial experience. The historian Michael Latham argues that development theorists found suitable answers and models for the developing world

⁶⁷⁰ From Baghdad FOA (Henry Wiens) – Rural Education Program, 22 April 1954, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 2.

⁶⁷¹ From Henry Betch, Agricultural Extension Advisor to Dr. Conrad Hammar (Chief Agriculturalist) – Monthly Report for July 1955, 29 July 1955, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 6. On the importance of mass media as a driver in modernization processes, see Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society*, p. 52-54.

⁶⁷² Conrad Hammar, Chief Agriculturalist – Mission Objectives in Agriculture in Iraq, 25 October 1956, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 3. On urbanization as a sign of modernization, see Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society*, p. 61.

“embedded in the American past.”⁶⁷³ Point IV authorities similarly made sense of changes ongoing in Iraqi society by referring to America’s history of development. This was particularly true for those officials whose professional backgrounds centered on academic studies of the patterns of American industrialization.⁶⁷⁴

Point IV’s analyses of the problems plaguing the Iraqi education system were heavily coloured by a mythologized reading of America’s educational institutions. Robert Tidwell authored a report for the Ministry of Education in May 1957 examining Iraq’s education infrastructure. His study gave sustained attention to the exceptional status and achievements of the American education system that he studied in his prior academic career. Tidwell’s report is representative of the “end of ideology” assumption central to modernization theory. His study presumed that all problems in American education had been resolved; illiteracy was abolished, girls attended school, and the population was well read and politically engaged. Taken together, these factors resulted in a high degree of civic loyalty, pride of citizenship, and political stability in America.⁶⁷⁵ While Iraq had none of these exceptional qualities possessed by the United States, Tidwell assured his readers that Iraq and the United States shared many characteristics. Thus, he wrote, the “American experience can be drawn upon to help solve Iraq’s problem.”⁶⁷⁶

⁶⁷³ Latham, “Modernization, International History, and the Cold War World,” p. 2.

⁶⁷⁴ It should be noted that it is quite conceivable that American modernization programs, experiences, and interactions with local actors in Iraq also produced a “boomerang effect” that shaped the development and modernization of America’s own economic, social, and political structures. This question lies outside the immediate scope of this dissertation, but offers promising ground for future historical research.

⁶⁷⁵ Consultant Robert Tidwell - A Report to the Minister of Education, Baghdad – Teacher Education and Training in Iraq and Contributing to the Program by the Proposed University, May 1957, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 13.

⁶⁷⁶ Consultant Robert Tidwell - A Report to the Minister of Education, Baghdad – Teacher Education and Training in Iraq and Contributing to the Program by the Proposed University, May 1957, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 13.

USOM specialists took a similarly expansive view of their responsibilities in the domain of community development. Not only were they to assist in the program's execution, but they were also expected to foster a greater desire among Iraqis for participation in the construction of their homes and community facilities. This would, in J. Sheldon Turner's estimation, lay the basis for "responsible citizenship" and produce a sense of loyalty among Iraqis to their local government as existed in America.⁶⁷⁷ Taken as a whole, Point IV's studies of Iraq's community development were an exercise in the promotion and idealization of particular American civic values that permitted them to play the role of educator to the infantilized Iraqis.

American methods, traditions, and institutions also provided the template for the agency's agricultural work in Iraq, including the Agricultural Extension Service. American operations largely dictated the agency's plans to improve sheep breeding. Studies concerning the future of Iraqi agricultural education were equally influenced by what Point IV workers believed to be the great strengths of the American model.⁶⁷⁸ Agency technicians relied heavily on their understandings of the similarities between the American and Iraqi agricultural systems. Conrad Hammar concluded that Iraqi soil and climate conditions were similar to those existing in areas of the United States he studied earlier in his career. Hammar presumed that with proper land leveling, Iraq's farm mechanization might one day approach that of California and Arizona. He added in October 1956 that "in the US, farming has become highly specialized and that is what

⁶⁷⁷ From J. Sheldon Turner to Hermann Beck, Chief of Group, MSLD, 22 December 1954, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 24.

⁶⁷⁸ From Conrad Hammar to Henry Wiens – Agricultural Division Projects, 1 June 1954, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 3; Conrad Hammar, Chief Agriculturalist – Mission Objectives in Agriculture in Iraq, 25 October 1956, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 3.

Iraq's agriculture also must expect in time to become."⁶⁷⁹ This expectation among American modernizers about the future structure and organization of Iraq's agricultural sector was based as much on a historical reading of the development patterns of America's farming community as an "objective" analysis of Iraqi agriculture.

These trends extended beyond the Point IV community. State Department official Norman Burns specifically compared Iraqi landowning programs to "our own Homestead Act of western pioneer days."⁶⁸⁰ Hamilton Fish Armstrong, editor of *Foreign Affairs* and member of the Senate Committee to study American aid programs, assessed American and Iraqi developments in similar terms. Armstrong directly compared the MSLD land settlement scheme to America's homestead movement. Armstrong was effusive in his praise of the American supervisor of the new communities at Latifiya. He wrote in his report that "She has been busy for the last two years organizing the school and its free lunch, the dispensary, and other community necessities; despite the usual 'frontier' landscape, she has persevered and met with remarkable success."⁶⁸¹ His direct conflation of Iraq's development processes with the American historical experience (particularly the frontier) again speaks to the tendency of US officials to apply lessons from the history of American industrialization to their development work abroad.⁶⁸² Armstrong noted in his report that

⁶⁷⁹ Conrad Hammar – A Land Improvement Service for Iraq, 23 July 1956, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 22; From Conrad Hammar – Modern Farm Credit for Iraq, 1 April 1957, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 4; Conrad Hammar, Chief Agriculturalist – Mission Objectives in Agriculture in Iraq, 25 October 1956, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 3 (quote).

⁶⁸⁰ Citino, "The Ottoman Legacy in Cold War Modernization," p. 583.

⁶⁸¹ *Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq*, p. 24-25.

⁶⁸² William O. Walker III, *National Security and Core Values in American History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 131.

By bringing the receiving countries in at all stages, we can prove to them that the disappointments which they are bound to experience as operations proceed result not from arbitrary decisions of ours, much less from any ulterior motives on our part, but from difficulties inherent in an attempt to telescope centuries of experience and progress into a single generation.⁶⁸³

The reports drafted by Hammar, Tidwell, Armstrong, and others introduce a fascinating corollary of modernization theory's understanding of the developing world. While Iraq was deemed capable of moving along the historical continuum toward modernity, there were still qualities that intrinsically separated the United States from Iraq. In this vein, as Latham writes, modernization theory shared with colonialism an emphasis on the values of "deficiency [and] tutelage" in understanding the developing world.⁶⁸⁴ The main premises of modernization theory, fused with a spirit that promoted the exceptionalism of the American national experience, assured Americans they would retain their privileged position as the most modern of global nations. The Iraqis could emulate the Americans, but could not entirely replicate them.

Modernization theory was not simply a matter of academic exercise for Point IV officials operating in Iraq. Agency technicians regularly articulated the main tenets of modernization theory (as expressed by principals exponents) when planning and assessing their development work in Iraq. These tendencies extended beyond the Point IV agency itself. Members of the US intelligence community, congressional representatives, and diplomats at the embassy in Baghdad drew on these analytical constructs as well. The degree to which this conclusion applies to other American modernization experiments around the globe is uncertain. In the case of Iraq, USOM experts and US government officials articulated their objectives and experiences in much

⁶⁸³ *Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq*, p. 7.

⁶⁸⁴ Latham, "Modernization, International History, and the Cold War World," p. 5.

the same analytical terms that the authors of modernization theory understood these dynamics and processes. US officials in Iraq took the major tenets of modernization theory seriously, even if the results of their work were not exactly what they hoped for or expected.

American-Iraqi Convergence in Modernization

Point IV operated in many ways with the “bottom up,” human resource development model in mind. American development projects also called for pressure from the “top-down.” This was particularly true since modernization theorists assumed the civil societies of developing nations were too weak to improve their social and economic structures without assistance from the government.⁶⁸⁵ Development thus required the cooperation and contributions of local elites who wielded the greatest authority within the institutions of foreign states. As Gilman and Latham point out, modernization theory was heavily steeped in the belief that indigenous elites could “bend (possibly recalcitrant) populations to their modernizing will...” and show the less-enlightened population the proper route to “liberal, capitalist growth.”⁶⁸⁶

The cooperation of local elites was crucial given the political realities US officials faced in the Middle East. Nathan Citino noted that the enthusiasm American officials shared for extensive land reform in Middle Eastern countries quickly waned in the early Cold War once they understood it would undermine their key local supporters, including

⁶⁸⁵ Gilman, “Modernization Theory, The Highest Stage of American Intellectual History,” p. 56; Ekbladh, “From Consensus to Crisis,” p. 24.

⁶⁸⁶ Gilman, “Modernization Theory, The Highest Stage of American Intellectual History,” p. 51 (first quote); Latham, “Modernization, International History, and the Cold War World,” p. 6 (second quote); Adas, “Modernization Theory and the American Revival of the Scientific and Technological Standards of Social Achievement and Human Worth,” p. 36.

the anti-communist tribal sheikhs. US policy discarded far-reaching land ownership reform in favour of the less ambitious goals of limited land distribution and increasing land yields.⁶⁸⁷ On this point, US government officials and development experts found common cause with local elites to pursue controlled, conservative land distribution rather than broad-based, radical land reform. This shift meshed well with the preferences of US officials for the pace of global change. As Michael Latham argues, modernization theorists distrusted mass politics and “preferred the stability that might be promoted by technocratic elites, leaders more inclined toward progressive, staged reform instead of sweeping, structural revision guided by popular demands.”⁶⁸⁸

These trends are applicable to US policies throughout the Middle East in the post-1945 period. One needs to examine the Iraqi case more closely to understand the complex relationships formed between American modernization experts and the elites of the Iraqi government. In doing so, we can further our understanding of how the Point IV program was directly influenced and shaped by the Iraqis. It can also offer greater insight into how the agency defined its program objectives and highlight how modernization became a contested and debated principle between Americans and Iraqi governing authorities in the pre-revolutionary period.

There were overlapping strategic interests that dictated close cooperation between the Americans and Iraqis in the technical assistance field. In a broad sense, officials in Point IV and US government circles shared an understanding of the state of Iraqi society in the early 1950s with Iraqi government leaders. Both sides believed that Iraq was in the

⁶⁸⁷ Citino, “The Ottoman Legacy in Cold War Modernization,” p. 584-586.

⁶⁸⁸ Latham, “Modernization, International History, and the Cold War World,” p. 11 (quote); Lockman, *Contending Visions of the Middle East*, p. 136. See Jacobs, *Imagining the Middle East*, p. 9, 158-159 for more on this tension between promoting modernization and ensuring stability in Middle East states.

midst of a “nation building project” that would transform the state and society by consolidating the authority of the central government in Baghdad. Orit Bashkin argues that urbanized Iraqi elites and Western officials shared an appreciation for the challenge that subaltern Iraqi groups posed to the power of government authorities. Fadhil Jamali and Makki Jamil, along with their colleagues in the Ministry of Education, saw Iraqi villagers (as did their US and UK counterparts) as “‘problems’ that jeopardized national order...”⁶⁸⁹ As such, the Americans and their Iraqi partners sought ways to inculcate new ideas among the masses and integrate them into the national fabric.⁶⁹⁰ They attempted to modernize tribal life by altering the customs and habits of villagers. Iraqi elites and American officials, to quote Partha Chatterjee from Bashkin’s book, conceptualized the countryside and peasantry “as an object of their strategies, to be acted upon, controlled, and appropriated within their respective structure of state power...”⁶⁹¹ As the National Intelligence Survey on Iraq noted in 1957, each of these processes were part of a broader campaign by Iraqi authorities to weld “the heterogeneous peoples of the country into one population infused with a feeling of nationhood.”⁶⁹² A stronger sense of Iraqi nationalism, in turn, could serve as a barrier against Gamal Abdel Nasser’s pan-Arab philosophies.

American officials shared specific goals for their development programs with the Iraqi leadership. As we have seen, the Americans were deeply committed to the

⁶⁸⁹ Orit Bashkin, *The Other Iraq: Pluralism and Culture in Hashemite Iraq* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 4 (quote), 1-5, 199-205.

⁶⁹⁰ Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, p. 142; Kingston, *Britain and the Politics of Modernization in the Middle East, 1945-1958*, p. 94-95; Magnus Bernhardsson, “Visions of Iraq: Modernizing the Past in 1950s Baghdad,” in Sandy Isenstadt and Kishwar Rizvi (eds.) *Modernism and the Middle East: Architecture and Politics in the Twentieth Century* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008), 83-84. In doing so, the Iraqi regime could further centralize state power over the countryside and work to break down organized peasantry.

⁶⁹¹ Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, p. 195.

⁶⁹² National Intelligence Survey – Iraq – NIS 30, 1 October 1957, CIA ERR, p. 42.

principles of modernization theory as a program objective in Iraq. Their campaign was, however, multi-faceted and complex. In addition to its modernizing impulses, Point IV's assistance was also designed by US officials (and their Iraqi counterparts) as a means to stabilize the shaky foundations of the Hashemite Iraqi state. Taking a page out of the playbook of counter-insurgency doctrine (and mirroring US strategies in South Vietnam in the 1950s and 1960s), American technical aid experts in Iraq sought to provide tangible benefits in health care, education, and agriculture to secure the population's loyalty.⁶⁹³ Point IV's Iraqi program was defined by the goal of central authority consolidation and the ever-present threat of mass revolt.⁶⁹⁴ Pursuing modernization and ensuring political stability were not mutually exclusive objectives for Point IV and the Iraqi government. Rather, they were inextricably connected. Stability was necessary for promoting modernization in Iraq, just as modernization was a prerequisite for the achievement of political and social stability.

On the Iraqi side, the Point IV program, and the MSLD scheme in particular, was a way for government elites, including Fadhil Jamali and Nuri al-Said, to bypass the major structural imbalances and inequalities inherent to the makeup of their nation-state. The power of the tribal sheikhs defined the countryside in the early 1950s; just 1% of landowners controlled more than half of all cultivable land. The uptick in economic and social tensions in the country persuaded Prime Minister Nuri al-Said (and other notables) to turn to development as a way to mollify the anger of Iraq's lower classes and buy time

⁶⁹³ Latham, "Modernization, International History, and the Cold War World," p. 6. The Introduction assesses the problems with characterizing American strategies in Iraq as a form of counter-insurgency warfare, particularly the fact that the Iraqi Communist Party [ICP] of the 1950s does not fit the prototypical definition of an insurgency. Nonetheless, it is certainly true that a close identity of strategies existed between modernization and counter-insurgency doctrines in this period, particularly in their focus on securing the support of the civilian population.

⁶⁹⁴ Citino, "The Ottoman Legacy in Cold War Modernization," p. 588.

for the state to earn the loyalty of its citizens.⁶⁹⁵ Rather than pursuing wide-ranging land reform, Nuri al-Said's plan (with American assistance) was to set up farmers on newly-settled state land. This allowed the government to avoid any major disruptions to the structures of power, privilege, and wealth in society. The MSLD scheme, and Point IV's programs in general, permitted Iraqi elites to pursue modernization without making major sacrifices or alienating the tribal sheikhs and large landowners on whom they were dependent for support.⁶⁹⁶ The government's modernization plan emphasized the conservative function of reform: development would proceed in piecemeal fashion to provide benefits to the population in pursuit of the larger conservative goal of stabilizing the central regime.

Point IV's archival records similarly demonstrate how economic and social modernization was inextricably tied to the Americans' goal of strengthening the Hashemite government and controlling Iraqi developments in pro-American channels. Point IV's review of operations at the Baghdad Technical School emphasized their concerns about the restlessness of the public who were clamoring to see tangible benefits from the country's development program and its vast oil revenues.⁶⁹⁷ One agency document from October 1953 described their operations as a means by which they could channel the Iraqi development program toward economically sound and socially

⁶⁹⁵ Kingston, *Britain and the Politics of Modernization in the Middle East, 1945-1958*, p. 96-97, 108; Adeed Dawisha, *Iraq: A Political History from Independence to Occupation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 119; 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), 1115; Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, p. 106-107.

⁶⁹⁶ Kingston, *Britain and the Politics of Modernization in the Middle East, 1945-1958*, p. 97; Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, p. 106-110, 124-125; Batatu, *The Old Social Classes*, p. 351-52.

⁶⁹⁷ From Baghdad (Gallman) to Department of State, #1140 – Country Team Development of FY 1960 Military Aid Proposals Relating to Iraq, 4 June 1958, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 9; Summary Report: Work of Bradley University Technical Education Team – Baghdad Technical School – November 1953, 1 February 1955, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 36.

progressive (read: pro-American) ends, thereby “maintaining the desirable conditions of stability and reform through orderly processes.”⁶⁹⁸ Documents from Point IV’s agricultural division similarly illustrate the agency’s emphasis on promoting and safeguarding political stability in Baghdad. Clark Glumm, an engineer, noted in January 1954 that the MSLD’s land distribution plans were the product of American and Iraqi assessments that national stability was dependent on progress in land distribution.⁶⁹⁹ Hermann Beck, a top USOM staffer with the MSLD group, concurred. He argued that the faster the Miri Sirf program settled homeless fellahin on land, the sooner agricultural production could increase and “economic and political stability would be hastened.” This was an important process, in Beck’s view, since economic and political stability were “basic and essential in any security program.”⁷⁰⁰ Point IV personnel concluded yet again in October 1956 that bolstering farming incomes was a prerequisite for the defense of “economic and political stability” in Iraq.⁷⁰¹

The Eisenhower administration’s policy statements regarding the Middle East highlight the broader significance and objectives of the Point IV program for US policy in Iraq. A National Intelligence Estimate from January 1953 identified the central problem plaguing governments throughout the region: the inadequate development of their economic and social resources that promoted internal unrest. Washington’s strategies for protecting political stability in Baghdad therefore focused on advancing the

⁶⁹⁸ Country Program – Technical Cooperation FY 1954: Iraq, 15 October 1953, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 3.

⁶⁹⁹ From Clark Gumm, Cadastral Engineer, to Hermann Beck, Acting Chief of Group – Monthly Activities Report December 1953, 4 January 1954, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 34.

⁷⁰⁰ From Hermann Beck, Chief of Group, MSLD to Henry Wiens, Director of USOM, 25 May 1954, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 24.

⁷⁰¹ Conrad Hammar, Chief Agriculturalist – Mission Objectives in Agriculture, 25 October 1956, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 3.

rate of national economic development.⁷⁰² The “Operations Plan for Iraq” of August 1957 insisted that the Point IV project contribute to Iraq’s internal stability. The document instructed the program’s architects to seek reforms that could bring about gradual improvements in Iraq’s economic and social spheres while also not “diminishing at a dangerous pace the power and influence of the traditional sources of Iraqi political power.”⁷⁰³ The administration’s plan was very much a product of the lessons US officials learned earlier in the decade that national reforms must not impair political stability or threaten the power of the tribal sheikhs. Years later, the former embassy official David Fritzlan discussed the complicated task assigned to US development experts and diplomats in Iraq. Borrowing the language of traditional counter-insurgency doctrine, he noted that:

We knew that we were, so to speak, racing against time in regard to Iraq. We knew about the nationalistic pressures in that part of the world; the intelligentsia were rising up and demanding more and more recognition of what they called Arab rights, freedom from western influence, and what they called imperialism... We hoped that the lid could be kept on a kind of simmering kettle long enough so that the benefits from the development program that had already begun, and was making considerable progress, would be spread throughout the population to the extent that people would accept their government as legitimate and reasonably benevolent.⁷⁰⁴

These political considerations do not negate the importance of modernization theory to Point IV’s Iraqi campaign. Rather, they demonstrate the agency’s conviction that they

⁷⁰² NIE 73 – Conditions and Trends in the Middle East Affecting US Security, 15 January 1953, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) – Record Set of NIEs, Special Estimates, and SNIEs, 1950-1954, Box 4; From Baghdad (Berry) to Secretary of State, #869, 11 January 1953, Iraq – Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 5; NIE 36-54 – Probable Developments in the Arab States, 7 September 1954, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) – Record Set of NIEs, Special Estimates, and SNIEs, 1950-1954, Box 2; *Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq*, p. 26.

⁷⁰³ Operations Coordinating Board – Operations Plan for Iraq (NSC 5428), 7 August 1957, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 – Administrative and Chronological Files, 1953-1961, Box 25.

⁷⁰⁴ David Fritzlan interview, *Frontline Diplomacy: The Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training*.

could only modernize facets of Iraqi life if they first maintained national stability. Point IV's efforts in Iraq were defined by the related objectives of pursuing modernization and safeguarding political stability.

US government officials, Point IV experts, and their Iraqi counterparts clearly shared convergent interests relating to the US technical assistance program. This ideological and strategic convergence manifested itself in practical terms. The most obvious example was the cooperation fostered between agency personnel and the elite-led Iraqi regime on day-to-day matters relating to various technical projects. Point IV could not have functioned without the active assistance, cooperation, and contributions of their counterparts in the Iraqi government and civil service. As an after-action review of the USOM program concluded, agency representatives worked "cooperatively and harmoniously" with Iraqi bureaucrats in a variety of government ministries before the revolution of July 1958.⁷⁰⁵

For instance, Point IV agricultural workers partnered with members of the Iraqi Finance Ministry to develop recommendations for agricultural taxation legislation. During Nuri al-Said's tenure as prime minister in the mid-1950s, the Americans and Iraqis similarly operated a joint panel on agricultural credit and planned conferences examining regional land problems.⁷⁰⁶ USOM consultants to the Ministry of Education also completed studies in April 1955 of agricultural education. The authors of the study took pains to note that their work would not have been possible without the "active

⁷⁰⁵ JB Robinson – Aide Memoire: US Technical Aid to Iraq, October 1958, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 2.

⁷⁰⁶ Donald Jackson – Recommendation on Agricultural Taxation in Iraq, 28 June 1953, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 4; From ICA Baghdad – A Farm Credit Panel for Iraq, 12 September 1956, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 4; From Baghdad FOA (Henry Wiens) – Land Problem Center and Training Course, 6 December 1955, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 5.

cooperation” of members of the Ministry of Education.⁷⁰⁷ The Ministry of Agriculture similarly established an Information and Audio-Visual Division to help Point IV disperse visual materials to farmers offering information about increasing yields and adopting modern practices.⁷⁰⁸ Joint committees were also under consideration between Point IV and the Ministry of Agriculture to study their long-term strategies for agricultural personnel, supplies, and legislation before the revolution interrupted their plans.⁷⁰⁹

In the realm of education, Iraqi officials and government technocrats worked in conjunction with US officials to determine the direction and shape of the American assistance program. The Ministry of Education enthusiastically endorsed the Baquba Teacher Training College’s efforts to improve school curricula.⁷¹⁰ Point IV officials were surprised in May 1958 by the energy and enthusiasm of Iraqi bureaucrats in the Ministry of Education for collaboration with the Americans. One report from this period cheerfully noted that the Iraqis were requesting assistance in areas that were once considered “taboo as far as foreign help was concerned,” including the Higher Teachers Training College.⁷¹¹ Point IV’s role in developing the Baghdad Technical School was

⁷⁰⁷ From Charles Russell, Technical Consultant to Iraqi Ministry of Education – A Report on Problems of Vocational Educational in Iraq, 20 April 1955, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 11.

⁷⁰⁸ From ICA Baghdad (Ben Brown) – Publication on Conservation Irrigation, 26 November 1957, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 22; From Marion Olson, Chief Extension Advisor to Ray Davis (Food and Agriculture Officer) – Monthly Report for February 1958, 25 February 1958, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 6.

⁷⁰⁹ From Ray Davis (Food and Agriculture Officer) to Mission Director, USOM Iraq – Monthly Report for June 1958, 30 June 1958, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 6.

⁷¹⁰ From Baghdad FOA (Henry Wiens) – Rural Education Program, 22 April 1954, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 2.

⁷¹¹ Frank Holmes, Chief Education Advisor – Terminal Report, 1 November 1958, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 11.

equally a response to government requests for help in “improving technical education in Iraq.”⁷¹²

American-Iraqi collaboration extended beyond the city limits of Baghdad. Public health education was an important component of their joint strategies for village community projects. USOM representatives worked closely with Iraqi chief medical officers throughout various rural provinces to plan, organize, and implement health education programs. Agency technicians accompanied leading Iraqi doctors and officials from the Director General of Preventative Medicine to observe the national campaign against smallpox in March 1957.⁷¹³ Mixed teams of Iraqi-American doctors and pediatricians worked closely in Samara on maternal health issues and were assisted by doctors assigned by the Ministry of Health.⁷¹⁴ The town of Basra received a great deal of attention in this realm. As Henry Wiens described the situation in May 1955, Nuri al-Said’s government was extremely “anxious” to recruit a Point IV representative who could promote the Basra public health program alongside their Iraqi counterparts. Agency authorities equally expressed their support for the appointments of enthusiastic Iraqis as chief medical officers in the Basra district.⁷¹⁵

⁷¹² Summary Report: Work of Bradley University Technical Education Team – Baghdad Technical School – November 1953 to June 1955, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 36.

⁷¹³ From Baghdad, ICA (C. Reed Liggitt, Director) – Health Reports – Health Education, 18 January 1958, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 19; From John Lewis, MD, Chief Health and Sanitation Division to Ben Brown, Country Director – Health Summary for February 1957, 6 March 1957, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 17.

⁷¹⁴ From Frances Pikes, Public Health Nurse Advisor – Final Report, 9 March 1957, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 19.

⁷¹⁵ From Henry Wiens - Recruitment of Physician of Basra Project, 5 May 1955, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 18 (quote); From Glenn Usher, MD, Chief, Health, and Sanitation Division to Henry Wiens, Director – Terminal Report upon Completion of My Assignment to Iraq, 15 September 1955, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 17.

The examples offered above are but a mere snapshot of the larger trend of practical American-Iraqi collaboration in the execution of the Point IV program. They suggest that Point IV's aid project was not simply an imposition of American development ideas and processes on a helpless Iraqi state. The agency's program would have looked dramatically different (or would not have existed at all, as Chapter Seven explains) without the active roles played by Iraqi authorities in planning and executing the project. The collaboration of the Iraqi government and its mid-level technocrats was essential to the execution of Point IV's program in the pre-revolutionary period.

The Americans and their Iraqi counterparts privileged initiatives that offered American expertise to the younger generation of Iraqis. USOM funded Iraqi students and technicians to travel abroad (either to the United States or American University of Beirut) to receive intensive training in their respective fields. These, and similar exchanges organized by the USIS, offered the United States an opportunity to influence younger Iraqis whose loyalties were particularly susceptible, as they believed, to "communist and other extremist propaganda."⁷¹⁶ The Americans' enthusiasm for participant training programs was matched by that of their Iraqi counterparts, particularly Fadhil Jamali. Jamali, prime minister from 1953 to 1954 and a leading politician in other roles, pushed for an expansion of Point IV's training and cultural exchange programs in discussions with American officials. In these meetings, he attributed his own pro-American outlook to his time spent studying at Columbia University as part of a \$2000 graduate student

⁷¹⁶ Wiens, "The United States Operation Mission in Iraq," p. 142-143; Operations Coordinating Board – Operations Plan for Iraq (NSC 5428), 7 August 1957, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 – Administrative and Chronological Files, 1953-1961, Box 25 (quote).

grant. One American diplomat replied that “that if we could buy Jamalis for \$2000 apiece, we would be doing very well indeed.”⁷¹⁷

Fadhil Jamali, Nuri al-Said, and other elite Iraqi bureaucrats and politicians were essential in directing the broader shape, pace, and form of Point IV assistance. Their repeated appeals for additional American assistance illustrate the extent to which the modernization agendas of US and Iraqi officials overlapped and converged. Dating back to June 1952, Fadhil Jamali (then foreign minister) repeatedly stressed to a number of American diplomats the importance of expanding the scope of US technical assistance, particularly educational programs. From that point forward, Jamali made regular requests for an expansion of Point IV aid, including his “pet project of an American technical education institution in Baghdad.”⁷¹⁸ Jamali characterized US assistance as a means to overcome many of the internal challenges faced by the Iraqi state, including the stagnant pace of internal reforms and the country’s paucity of top scientists.⁷¹⁹ Though occasionally frustrated by Jamali’s repeated complaints, American officials greatly valued Jamali’s (and others) promotion of their assistance project and his role as an astute, influential, pro-American figure in Baghdad’s ruling circles.⁷²⁰ The enthusiasm shown by the Iraqis for the USOM program extended beyond the person of Jamali.

⁷¹⁷ Memorandum of Conversation – Fadhil Jamali, William Rountree, and Richard Parker (NEA) – US Assistance to Iraq, 7 June 1958, NARA, RG 59, Central Decimal File [CDF] Iraq 1955-1959, Box 2257.

⁷¹⁸ #1381 - Memorandum of Conversation, by the Ambassador in Iraq (Berry), 12 August 1952, *FRUS 1952-1954*, vol. IX, p. 2333; #1423 - Memorandum of Conversation, by the Officer in Charge of Arabian Peninsula – Iraq Affairs (Fritzlan), 4 November 1954, *FRUS 1952-1954*, vol. IX, p. 2395 (quote); From Baghdad (Berry) to Department of State, #487 – Review and Prognosis of Iraqi Political Developments, October 1 1953 – January 1 1954, 14 January 1954, Iraq – Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2.

⁷¹⁹ #1394 - Memorandum of Conversation, by the Counsellor of the Embassy in Iraq (Ireland), 20 August 1953, *FRUS 1952-1954*, vol. IX, p. 2352.

⁷²⁰ Representative of the US to the UN (Henry Cabot Lodge Jr.) to Secretary of State Dulles, 15 November 1955, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959, Box 2257; Letter from Secretary of State Dulles to the Representative of the US to the UN (Henry Cabot Lodge Jr.), 29 November 1955, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959, Box 2257; From Henry Wiens to William Rountree, 3 August 1956, William Rountree: Papers, 1935-1995, Box 2, DDEL.

Prime Minister Nuri al-Said requested greater American technical assistance “in almost all fields of economic development” when Eisenhower’s special emissary to the Middle East, James Richards, visited Iraq in April 1957.⁷²¹ Jamali represented the public face of the Iraqi elites’ enthusiasm for Point IV’s initiatives, but this sentiment ran much deeper than just one figure in Baghdad.

To further illustrate this point, it is worth discussing how Iraqi government leaders worked alongside Point IV to publicize the achievements of their national development campaign. The Iraqi foreign minister first indicated to American diplomats in September 1952 that his country lacked effective machinery to circulate pro-Western propaganda in the press.⁷²² Point IV’s program subsequently gave great attention to publicizing the development programs’ achievements. Conrad Hammar felt it was vital in February 1954 that the Americans and Jamali’s cabinet collaborate to create an Information Department that would produce posters and other print propaganda to distribute to farmers about the Iraqi Agricultural Extension Service.⁷²³ Later that year, top USOM personalities met their counterparts, including Sayid Jamal Rif’at (Ministry of the Interior), Mahmood Ibrahim (Ministry of Health), and various other ministers, to consider how to publicize the successes of various technical development schemes. The recorded minutes from this meeting reflect the enthusiasm expressed by Americans and Iraqis alike for these propaganda initiatives. The group believed this material would help

⁷²¹ Gallman from Richards, 8 April 1957, NARA, RG 59, Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Country Files Prepared for the Richards Mission to the Middle East, 1956-1957, Box 18.

⁷²² From Baghdad (Berry) to Secretary of State, #342, 11 September 1952, National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book 78: US Propaganda in the Middle East.

⁷²³ Chief Agriculture Division of ICA to Ministry of Agriculture, 10 February 1954, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 5.

convince the Iraqi masses of the benevolence and wisdom of government authorities.⁷²⁴

The USIS, in conjunction with Point IV and the Iraqis, similarly produced unattributed newsreel and films for Baghdad Radio and TV that were “designed to focus Iraqi minds on positive developments currently underway,” including the development program.

Despite the challenges Point IV and the Iraqis faced in publicizing their successes, this matter remained of top priority up to the July 1958 revolution.⁷²⁵

The annual festivities of Iraq’s “Development Week” and the Baghdad Agricultural and Industrial Fair provided an important venue for disseminating American-Iraqi propaganda regarding the development program. The IDB produced a glossy brochure to mark the occasion of Development Week in 1956. Its pages are filled with the text of triumphalist speeches given by Nuri al-Said and the Iraqi Crown Prince to celebrate the opening of flood control projects at Thathar and Habbaniyah. The IDB publication fantastically claimed that the Thathar Project was a “forerunner of a prosperous era that will shortly dawn upon Iraq after centuries of backwardness and deep slumber.” The magazine included al-Said’s stirring descriptions of road, hospital, school, and bridge construction projects ongoing (with Point IV’s assistance) throughout the country.⁷²⁶

⁷²⁴ Minutes of the Meeting Held in the Technical Assistance Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 10 March 1954, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 2.

⁷²⁵ Operations Coordinating Board – Operations Plan for Iraq (NSC 5428), 7 August 1957, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 – Administrative and Chronological Files, 1953-1961, Box 25 (quote); Report of Examination – United States Operations Mission at Baghdad Iraq, 8 September 1955, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 31; #108 - Telegram from the Embassy in Iraq (Gallman) to the Department of State, 12 March 1958, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 296.

⁷²⁶ Government of Iraq – Development Board and the Ministry of Development 1956 Publication, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 10.

Point IV was intimately involved with the Baghdad Agricultural and Industrial Fair. The agency cooperated with USIS to produce exhibits, pamphlets, and other materials highlighting the great achievements of the Iraqi modernization program. Their exhibits also emphasized the collaborative partnership established between Iraqi authorities and USOM experts.⁷²⁷ Point IV's exhibits for the 1957 festivities focused on the regime's achievements in land distribution, resettlement, and irrigation schemes. The agency estimated that more than 150,000 Iraqis viewed the pavilion during the festivities.⁷²⁸ Point IV was again active in designing its pavilion for the 1958 fair and intended to stress the joint Iraqi-US achievements in health care, sanitation, and education programs before the revolution interrupted their planning.⁷²⁹ The Americans and Iraqis lost an important opportunity to emphasize the benefits Iraqi citizens enjoyed from the supposedly far-sighted use of oil revenues by Baghdad's central authorities. The Development Week and Baghdad Fair proceedings were two important exercises in public relations work designed to legitimize the central regime among ordinary Iraqis.

The US-Iraqi relationship in the development and modernization sector was anything but perfectly harmonious. The complaints of Point IV experts operating in Iraq serve as an interesting commentary on how the practical difficulties of collaborating with their allies could collide with and disrupt their theoretical understandings of

⁷²⁷ Operations Coordinating Board – Progress Report on NSC 5428, 10 March 1955, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 – Administrative and Chronological Files, 1953-1961, Box 26; From USIS Baghdad to US Information Agency, Washington – Baghdad Agricultural and Industrial Fair, 15 July 1957, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 21.

⁷²⁸ From USIS Baghdad to US Information Agency, Washington – Baghdad Agricultural and Industrial Fair, 15 July 1957, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 21.

⁷²⁹ From USOM Baghdad (Ben Brown, Director of ICA) – USOM Section US Exhibit Baghdad Fair, 3 July 1958, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 21.

modernization processes. Agency representatives repeatedly complained about the inefficiency of the Iraqi government and its various agencies responsible for coordinating development projects.⁷³⁰ USOM figures, including C. Reed Liggit (Acting Director) and Director Ben Brown, bemoaned the resistance shown by various ministries in 1958 to coordinating their efforts with Point IV advisors in rural community development projects.⁷³¹ As in the post-revolutionary period discussed in Chapter Seven, Point IV authorities attributed the supposed incompetence of the government to the inherent deficiencies of the Iraqi population as a whole, including the absence of skilled workers. Agency officials regularly expressed frustration with the lack of progress in various technical programs by offering disparaging comments about the “poor” work habits of Iraqis, including the unwillingness of educated citizens to learn new work methods.⁷³² American aid experts tended to refer to the vast majority of labourers in Orientalist terms. They saw their purportedly poor work habits and general laziness as evidence for why the development program was proceeding at a slow pace.⁷³³ J.R. Morris, an agricultural

⁷³⁰ From Howard Watenpaugh, Land Use Specialist to Acting Chief of Group – Monthly Report for December 1953, 4 January 1954, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 34; From Hermann Beck, Chief of Group, MSLD to Henry Wiens, Director of USOM, 25 May 1954, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 24; From James Caldwell, Chief Education Division to Dr. Charles Russell, 9 March 1957, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 11.

⁷³¹ From Ben H. Brown, USOM Iraq Director, 3 January 1958, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 9; From Baghdad, C. Reed Liggit (Acting Director) – Rural Community Development, 26 March 1958, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 9.

⁷³² Country Program – Technical Cooperation FY 1954: Iraq, 15 October 1953, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 3; From Baghdad (Henry Wiens, Director) – Land Development and Distribution Program, 14 April 1955, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 24; From LM Winters to Dr. Conrad Hammar (Chief Agriculturalist) – Monthly Report of May 1957, 25 May 1957, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 6.

⁷³³ David Newsom interview, *Frontline Diplomacy: The Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training*; From Brown Rolston, Housing and Village Specialist to Hermann Beck, Acting Head of Group – Monthly Report, August 1953, 30 August 1953, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 35; Summary Report: Work of

engineer, suggested his Iraqi partners liked “leisure and comfort of offices but not the practical earthy side which necessitates getting dirty.”⁷³⁴

These specific tensions speak more broadly to the complexities and nuances of modernization and development efforts. Development schemes clearly provided an arena for convergence between US and Iraqi diplomats. As in South Vietnam, to paraphrase Westad, the “authoritarian developmentalism” of Iraqi leaders linked with American modernization processes in their struggle to stabilize the regime.⁷³⁵ Moreover, as this chapter noted earlier, the major disagreements over the direction of Iraqi modernization schemes appeared between the British on the one hand and the Americans and Iraqis on the other. Even so, as Citino, Latham, and others point out, modernization functioned as an arena for debate and contestation among even close allies. The terms, principles, shape, and goals of modernization processes were not static and were not uncritically accepted by or uniformly imposed on Iraq. Elites in Iraq and throughout the developing world carefully selected and adapted certain principles and tenets of American modernization theory while ignoring or rejecting others. The result was a form of “hybrid” modernity and development that manifested itself in Iraq’s ruling circles.⁷³⁶ As Chapter Seven explains, these trends found even greater expression after Qasim assumed power in July 1958.

Bradley University Technical Education Team – Baghdad Technical School – November 1953, 1 February 1955, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 36.

⁷³⁴ From JR Morris, Agricultural Engineer to Hermann Beck, Acting Head of Group – Monthly Report, August 1953, 30 August 1953, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 35.

⁷³⁵ Westad, *The Global Cold War*, p. 399.

⁷³⁶ Latham, “Modernization, International History, and the Cold War World,” p. 13-16; Westad, *The Global Cold War*, p. 398; Citino, “Suburbia and Modernization: Community Building and America’s Post-World War II Encounter with the Arab Middle East,” p. 40; Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, p. 5 (quote); Nathan Citino, “The ‘Crush’ of Ideologies: The United States, the Arab World, and Cold War Modernization,” *Cold War History* 12, no. 1 (February 2012), 89-110.

It is important not to overlook the important differences that arose between the two sides over development practices and models before the revolution. For instance, the Iraqi leadership contracted Western architects in the 1950s to design buildings and public spaces in Baghdad. At the same time, the regime promoted works by Iraqi artists that emphasized the country's unique Arab cultural history, particularly its golden age as the Abbasid Caliphate.⁷³⁷ The Iraqi Hashemite monarchy went to great lengths in the 1950s to incorporate the history, symbols, and traditions of the Arab Revolt into its state ceremonies and iconography in an attempt to further its legitimacy among those Iraqis supportive of pan-Arabism.⁷³⁸ The Iraqi Crown Prince commented on the hybrid nature of Iraqi modernization in 1957. He argued that Iraq would not simply imitate all Western methods but instead preferred "to have those things that suit us."⁷³⁹

These trends extended to Point IV's development projects. In the latter stages of the program, some members of the agency recognized the need for more administrative initiatives and more far-reaching MSLD reforms than Iraqi figures preferred. USOM technicians, whose visions of land distribution were a far cry from radical land reform, still frequently resented the political inertia that hampered land distribution. These delays were mostly related to the resistance of large landholders, tribal sheikhs, and Iraq's ruling elites to major changes.⁷⁴⁰ The Americans and Iraqis, as discussed earlier, jointly

⁷³⁷ Bernhardsson, "Visions of Iraq: Modernizing the Past in 1950s Baghdad," p. 83-86; Joseph Siry, "Wright's Baghdad Opera House and Gammage Auditorium: In Search of Regional Modernity," *The Art Bulletin* 87, no. 2 (June 2005).

⁷³⁸ Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, p. 127.

⁷³⁹ Siry, "Wright's Baghdad Opera House and Gammage Auditorium: In Search of Regional Modernity."

⁷⁴⁰ From Baghdad (Henry Wiens, Director) – Land Development and Distribution Program, 14 April 1955, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 24; From Hermann Beck, Chief of Group, MSLD to Henry Wiens, Director of USOM, 25 May 1954, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 24; Nicholas Thacher's Briefing Notes, Undated, US President's Citizen Advisors on the Mutual Security Program (Fairless

promoted development projects that had great political utility and worked to stabilize the state. Even so, some US authorities hoped Nuri al-Said and others would loosen the political restrictions that surrounded development.⁷⁴¹ Point IV workers also complained that the Iraqis were overemphasizing large-scale, long-range capital projects, particularly spectacular, technologically-driven ones that could be unveiled at Development Week events. These came at the expense of banal, less impressive human resource and infrastructure reforms, like health, housing, and education programs, that might have a more immediate impact for citizens.⁷⁴²

For their part, the Iraqi leadership greatly disliked Point IV's formal procedures that required written agreements at nearly every stage of project planning and execution.⁷⁴³ Some agency officials, to their credit, also recognized that American modernization experts tended to undervalue the Iraqis' role in planning and executing projects. Several studies acknowledged that American personnel were too inclined to adopt a "take it or leave it attitude" in planning projects. US technicians brashly rejected Iraqi proposals for specific initiatives because they did not fit with the Americans' visions.⁷⁴⁴ More effort was required, J. Sheldon Turner of Point IV admitted, to elevate

Committee): Records, 1956-1957, Box 9, DDEL; Kingston, *Britain and the Politics of Modernization in the Middle East, 1945-1958*, p. 110.

⁷⁴¹ Kingston, *Britain and the Politics of Modernization in the Middle East, 1945-1958*, p. 110.

⁷⁴² Kingston, *Britain and the Politics of Modernization in the Middle East, 1945-1958*, p. 109; Wiens, "The United States Operation Mission in Iraq," p. 147-148; NIE 36-54 – Probable Developments in the Arab States, 7 September 1954, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) – Record Set of NIEs, Special Estimates, and SNIEs, 1950-1954, Box 2; From Baghdad (Gilbert Larsen, Economic Officer) to Department of State, #117 – Political Stability Through Economic Development, 20 September 1954, Iraq – Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2; From Baghdad (Gilbert Larsen, Economic Officer) – Lord Salter's Report to Development Board, 16 June 1955, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 31.

⁷⁴³ Kingston, *Britain and the Politics of Modernization in the Middle East, 1945-1958*, p. 114.

⁷⁴⁴ *Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq*, p. 9 (quote); Report of Examination – United States Operations Mission at Baghdad Iraq, 8 September 1955, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 31.

the Iraqis' role in planning and executing community development plans.⁷⁴⁵ Thus, even between the Americans and the Iraqis, whose visions of development were closely aligned, disagreements still arose over the direction, character, and scope of modernization reforms. These conflicts again demonstrate the contested nature of development work between American modernizers and their closest allies.

Conclusion

Assessing the performance of Point IV's modernization program in Iraq is an exceedingly complex task. It is especially difficult to separate Point IV's work from the larger development programs of the IDB and Iraqi government. For their part, Henry Wiens and other USOM representatives pointed to public health education and vaccination programs, technical education initiatives, flood control and dam projects, and the Abu Ghraib Agricultural College as favoured agency success stories.⁷⁴⁶ Indeed, as Dawisha notes, the government's dedication to building dams helped ensure that the "threat of flooding had all but ceased" by 1957.⁷⁴⁷ Point IV assessments were less rosy in many other areas of their work. Agency officials regularly lamented the lack of progress in the modernization of Iraqi farming methods, rural community development projects,

⁷⁴⁵ From J. Sheldon Turner to Hermann Beck, Chief of Group, MSLD, 22 December 1954, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 24.

⁷⁴⁶ Wiens, "The United States Operation Mission in Iraq," p. 140; Letter from ICA official to Muzahem Maher, Muttasarif, Basra Liwa, 26 April 1955, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 18; From Elizabeth Darden – Report on Health Activities – Village Life Improvement Program, December 1956, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 19; From Frances Pikes, Public Health Nurse Advisor – Final Report, 9 March 1957, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 19.

⁷⁴⁷ Dawisha, *Iraq: A Political History from Independence to Occupation*, p. 118.

and education and housing programs.⁷⁴⁸ At best, Point IV's efforts in these arenas can be described as works in progress.

In retrospect, there were major problems that hindered the overall American development assistance program. As in the post-revolutionary period, the weakness of the Iraqi administrative service led to the delay or improper execution of multiple schemes.⁷⁴⁹ More than that, as agency staffers came to appreciate, Iraqi and Point IV development plans overlooked short-term projects in the realm of housing and rural life in favor of dramatic, technologically complex, long-range capital works schemes, including the MSLD initiative.⁷⁵⁰ The IDB, and by extension Point IV, also devoted an overwhelming amount of resources to the long-term prospects of the Iraqi agricultural arena.⁷⁵¹ Much of the development work carried out by USOM and the IDB therefore ignored the majority of the rural population. The rural Iraqi Kurds in the north and Shia in the south were, in Amatzia Baram's final assessment, "cut off from the main processes of modernization and... from the process of national integration."⁷⁵²

⁷⁴⁸ From Conrad Hammar – Modern Farm Credit for Iraq, 1 April 1957, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 4; From Baghdad, C. Reed Liggit (Acting Director) – Rural Community Development, 26 March 1958, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 9; From Robert Tidwell - A Report to the Minister of Education, Baghdad – Teacher Education and Training in Iraq and Contributing to the Program by the Proposed University, May 1957, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 13; From Frederick Lang, Regional Housing Advisor to Mr. Henry Wiens, Director of USOM in Iraq – Housing Activities Iraq, 31 October 1955, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 20.

⁷⁴⁹ Kingston, *Britain and the Politics of Modernization in the Middle East, 1945-1958*, p. 107, 118-119; From Baghdad, Ben Brown Director – Material on the IDB, 31 December 1957, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 10; From Ben Brown, Director to H.E. Sayyid Sami Fattah, Minister of Social Affairs, 14 March 1958, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 9.

⁷⁵⁰ Kingston, *Britain and the Politics of Modernization in the Middle East, 1945-1958*, p. 104-108; Alnasrawi, *The Economy of Iraq*, p. 18; Thacher, "Reflections on US Foreign Policy Toward Iraq in the 1950s," p. 65; Dawisha, *Iraq: A Political History from Independence to Occupation*, p. 118-119.

⁷⁵¹ Kingston, *Britain and the Politics of Modernization in the Middle East, 1945-1958*, p. 104.

⁷⁵² Alnasrawi, *The Economy of Iraq*, p. 25; Amatzia Baram, *Culture, History, and Ideology in the Formation of Ba'hist Iraq, 1968-89* (New York: St. Martin's, 1991), 5 (quote).

American officials were well informed about the conditions of desperate poverty that engulfed Iraq and understood their efforts to be mixed at best in producing tangible benefits for the population. Members of the US embassy in Baghdad acknowledged in 1954 that the government's modernization scheme had not yet contributed "significantly to political stability" and was so far inadequate to meet the "growing demand for economic reform generated by the very low standard of living of the masses." American and British officials shared this assessment when they commented on the "strong and widespread resentment against the Development Board among many sections of the population."⁷⁵³ The National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq of 1 July 1956 similarly admitted that the modernization programs of Point IV and the IDB were long-range in character and had little impact on "the living standards of the great bulk of the population – about 80% of which ekes out a meager livelihood." As the NIE and other studies recounted, the majority of the unskilled urban labor class lived in "extreme poverty" and the development program was proceeding too slowly in the eyes of opposition forces.⁷⁵⁴ Little had changed a year later. Ambassador Gallman defended Point IV's program budget by insisting that Iraqi citizens were still awaiting major benefits from the development work of the IDB and Point IV. Similarly, a National Intelligence Survey on Iraq from October 1957 suggested that the countryside had benefitted very little from the

⁷⁵³ From Baghdad (Gilbert Larsen, Economic Officer) to Department of State, #117 - Political Stability Through Economic Development, 20 September 1954, Iraq – Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2 (first quote); Gilbert Larsen, Economic Officer – Lord Salter's Report to Development Board, 16 June 1955, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 31 (second quote).

⁷⁵⁴ #435 - National Intelligence Estimate – NIE 36.2-56 – The Outlook for Iraq's Stability and Foreign Policies, 17 July 1956, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 1002 (first quote), 999 (second quote); #429 - Telegram from the Embassy in Iraq (Gallman) to the Department of State, 15 January 1956, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 990.

government's modernization program.⁷⁵⁵ Many of the same problems persisted in the lead up to the revolution. US estimates observed that short-range programs had been neglected, the benefits of development had not reached most Iraqis, and criticism of the government for its failures in this realm was growing.⁷⁵⁶

Part of the problem in the agricultural realm was the sheer magnitude of the MSLD program. Henry Wiens admitted that the project was “almost staggering in size” and would have stretched the administrative capabilities of even “a more advanced country.” Moreover, Wiens explained that the MSLD project was equivalent to the work “achieved by the United States Bureau of Reclamation during its fifty years of existence.”⁷⁵⁷ The immense scale of this program certainly played a key role in delaying the overall pace of the land distribution program.

The failings of the MSLD program are also linked to its strategic limitations, particularly the narrow political constraints within which this scheme (and others like it) operated. The shared US-Iraqi objective of safeguarding the stability of the ruling class necessarily meant that dramatic and radical land reform was not possible. The near-total concentration of land ownership among a small percentage of landowners and tribal sheikhs (who dominated parliament and served as Nuri al-Said's core group of supporters) put great restrictions on what was conceivable in terms of land ownership reform. Land distribution from the top-down in a controlled and restricted manner was

⁷⁵⁵ From Baghdad (Gallman) to Secretary of State, #533, 28 September 1957, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 11; *Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq*, p. 26; National Intelligence Survey – Iraq – NIS 30, 1 October 1957, CIA ERR, p. 12.

⁷⁵⁶ From Baghdad (Nat. B King, Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs) to Department of State, #727 – Economic Summary – Fourth quarter – Iraq, 17 January 1958, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 11; From Baghdad (T. Howard Peters, Commercial Attache) to Department of State, #731 – Baghdad Chamber of Commerce Recommendations for Economic Development, 18 January 1958, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 11.

⁷⁵⁷ From Baghdad (Henry Wiens, Director) – Land Development and Distribution Program, 14 April 1955, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 24.

substituted for substantive land reform.⁷⁵⁸ The MSLD scheme in effect served as the agricultural variant of trickle-down economics: the Iraqis and Americans hoped the benefits of the land distribution scheme would slowly trickle down to enough Iraqis to ameliorate their discontent and enhance the central government's legitimacy.⁷⁵⁹

The MSLD program proved, not surprisingly, fairly disappointing, since Iraq's privileged landlords continued to reap the benefits from the distribution of state land. Farmers struggled to obtain credit in Miri Sirf lands. The Agricultural Bank foreclosed the cooperative set up at Dujaila to provide equipment for farmers.⁷⁶⁰ Even though they strenuously avoided radical land reforms, Point IV officials regularly complained amongst themselves about the restrictions placed on the program by Iraqi authorities.⁷⁶¹ To their credit, many American analysts understood the complicated dilemma they faced in partnership with their allies. They could not risk the stability of the Iraqi regime by pressing for more far-reaching divisions of land. The regime also could not hold out forever against the mounting pressures from citizens calling for substantive changes in the social, economic, and political arena. Gilbert Larsen, an economics officer at the US embassy in Baghdad, offered his perceptive thoughts on the internal situation in September 1954. He noted that:

⁷⁵⁸ Batatu, *The Old Social Classes*, p. 102, 351-352; Citino, "The Ottoman Legacy in Cold War Modernization," p. 584; Afif Tannous interview, *Frontline Diplomacy: The Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training*; From ICA Baghdad to Willard Muller, Acting Director of USOM Nepal, 21 August 1956, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 22. The limitations of technical assistance in ameliorating problems with Middle East land tenure systems were predicted by some area specialists and social scientists well before the creation of Point IV. See Jacobs, *Imagining the Middle East*, p. 163.

⁷⁵⁹ Kingston, *Britain and the Politics of Modernization in the Middle East, 1945-1958*, p. 109-110; Ekbladh, "From Consensus to Crisis," p. 32.

⁷⁶⁰ Batatu, *The Old Social Classes*, p. 109-110; Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, p. 133-134; Kingston, *Britain and the Politics of Modernization in the Middle East, 1945-1958*, p. 113.

⁷⁶¹ Wiens, "The United States Operation Mission in Iraq," p. 146-147; Department of the Air Force – Staff Message Division, 8 August 1954, Iraq – Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 3; From Baghdad (Henry Wiens, Director) – Land Development and Distribution Program, 14 April 1955, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 24.

Experience suggests that this government [of Nuri al-Said] will try to preserve as much of the old order as possible, yielding where it will cost the governing class the least. Eventually, however, the old political order will probably have to make more substantial concessions to the demand for reform... The resistance of the governing class to reform is a danger to stability. The people in this group largely ignore the welfare of the majority unless doing something about it serves their own interests.⁷⁶²

As Larsen's quote indicates, US officials understood the challenges facing their development assistance program. They also appreciated, to an extent, the longer-term threats to stability posed by the inaction of the Iraqi ruling classes. Even so, the Americans had few alternatives at hand since they were locked together in a relationship of interdependence with the Iraqi government.⁷⁶³

The relative failures of the Point IV program in Iraq reflect a historical trend in which American modernizers were routinely frustrated by their inability to turn regional allies into modern, progressive, stable states. Mirroring Paul Kingston's observation of British modernization experts, Point IV's assumption that they could control and move the Iraqi development program in the "proper" direction overestimated their ability to shape events in Iraqi society.⁷⁶⁴ Point IV's initiatives in Iraq, and throughout the Middle East in the 1950s, did not have the capacity to redress the larger structural inequalities and challenges within these societies that generated political, economic, and social unrest and instability.⁷⁶⁵ The history of Point IV's program in Hashemite Iraq is a useful

⁷⁶² From Baghdad (Gilbert Larsen, Economic Officer) to Department of State, #117 - Political Stability Through Economic Development, 20 September 1954, Iraq – Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2.

⁷⁶³ The concept of the West's "interdependence" with Iraq was explored by Johan Franzen in his paper "The Failure of British Policy Towards Iraq, 1945-1958," at the British Academy's "Rethinking the Middle East? Values, Interests, and Security Concerns in Western Policies toward Iraq and the Wider Region, 1918-2010," conference, March 2010, London UK.

⁷⁶⁴ Latham, "Modernization, International History, and the Cold War World," p. 13; Kingston, *Britain and the Politics of Modernization in the Middle East, 1945-1958*, p. 103.

⁷⁶⁵ Kingston, "The 'Ambassador for the Arabs'," p. 46.

reminder of the tangible limits to American power and its ability control events on the global stage, even as the United States assumed the role of superpower in the Cold War.⁷⁶⁶ The Americans' broader conceptions of their power and control in the Iraqi modernization arena were confronted by an array of challenges that prevented the United States from achieving its strategic objectives in Baghdad before the July 1958 Iraqi Revolution.

⁷⁶⁶ Kingston, "The 'Ambassador for the Arabs'," p. 46. Frustration about the limits to American global power was not new to the Cold War. See Barbara Tuchman's *The Zimmermann Telegram* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1958), 116 for an analysis of Woodrow Wilson's frustration with his inability to convince the European states to agree to an American-negotiated peace before April 1917.

Chapter Five: American Intelligence and the 1958 Iraqi Revolution

A group of Iraqi army officers led by Abdel Karim Qasim stormed key government buildings and the royal palace on the morning of 14 July 1958. In the bloody aftermath, the entire royal family lay dead and Qasim and his fellow conspirators proclaimed a new Iraqi Republic. Long-time Western ally and Iraqi strongman Nuri al-Said was caught trying to flee the scene and was murdered in the streets of Baghdad. In a brief instant, the entire Iraqi monarchy and pro-Western government with whom the Eisenhower administration had formed an intimate strategic partnership lay in ruins.

Many officials who served in the Eisenhower administration have delivered critical post-mortems of the performance of the American intelligence community in the lead-up to the events of 14 July 1958.⁷⁶⁷ It is true that US intelligence agencies did not predict the military coup d'état led by members of the Iraqi Free Officers movement. In that sense, the American intelligence community suffered a classic “intelligence failure.” The eyes and ears of US intelligence bureaus in Iraq plainly failed to anticipate or forewarn of the events of 14 July. This oversight cost the Americans a vital ally in the Cold War struggle in the Middle East against the Soviet Union and in the Arab Cold War battle against anti-Western Arab nationalisms. After July 1958, US policymakers struggled to regain their ability (limited as it was at times beforehand) to control and direct Iraqi developments in stable, pro-American directions.

As Malcolm Gladwell and Richard Betts have rightly noted, however, it is easy for observers, with the benefit of hindsight, to criticize intelligence agencies for their failure to predict events that seem obvious after they occur. This problem of “creeping

⁷⁶⁷ See, for example, the interviews given by former diplomats David Fritzlan, David Newsom, and Robert Gordon compiled by Frontline Diplomacy: The Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training.

determinism” obscures the unpleasant dual realities that international relations are unpredictable, and by extension, that intelligence failures are inevitable.⁷⁶⁸ We can accept the proposition that the American intelligence community suffered an intelligence failure on 14 July 1958. Even so, we need to explore more closely the reasons why intelligence failed to predict the coup. Equally, making intelligence agencies the scapegoat for the failure overlooks the role of American political officers in Iraq in this period. The reporting emanating from the US embassy in Baghdad did not anticipate the overthrow of the monarchy. Nor did the Iraqi government, which paid a high price for its intelligence failure.⁷⁶⁹

This chapter explores the central question of why the United States failed to predict the military coup of 14 July 1958. More broadly, this chapter addresses in greater depth the relative degree to which the various branches of the US government (both intelligence agencies and the embassy in Iraq) understood and appreciated the revolutionary undercurrents of the 14 July coup. Was there a clear pattern evident to US observers at the time that the Iraqi government might be in grave trouble? Were American observers aware of cells within the Iraqi military dedicated to the overthrow of the government? Is it fair to criticize members of the US embassy and intelligence agencies for their failure to predict the coup, or are these critiques coloured by the phenomenon of creeping determinism?

⁷⁶⁸ Malcolm Gladwell, “Connecting the Dots: The Paradoxes of Intelligence Reform,” *The New Yorker* (March 10 2003), 83-88; Richard Betts, “Analysis, War and Decision: Why Intelligence Failures are Inevitable,” *World Politics* 31, no. 1 (1978), 961-988.

⁷⁶⁹ Charles Tripp, *A History of Iraq* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 106-107, 128.

The American embassy and intelligence community reported on a wide variety of economic and political issues in Iraq.⁷⁷⁰ Their assessments consistently showed that the Iraqi government (as well as the United States) was deeply unpopular among large portions of the public. On the surface, these findings suggest there was clear evidence apparent to American observers that the regime was in serious jeopardy. The subsequent decisions taken by the United States to strengthen its strategic partnership with the Iraqi regime in the years before July 1958 (through propaganda and security assistance) seem counter-intuitive in light of the aforementioned reporting emanating from Baghdad. However, this chapter argues that US observers did not equate the regime's unpopularity with the possibility of serious political instability. US analyses were inconsistent when it came to assessing the potential for imminent political upheaval and a change of regime in Iraq. Equally, analysts strongly discounted the likelihood of a military coup in the period before July 1958. Very quickly, the once-clear pattern of signals and warnings in US reports becomes muddled and confused.

These reports combined with other evidence from US officials that suggested the government might survive as a stable, secure entity. In this vein, this chapter explores the underlying preconceptions and assumptions that guided American thinking on Iraqi affairs in the pre-revolutionary period. American observers shared powerful assumptions about Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Said's ability to withstand political challenges to his rule by wielding repressive authority. Intelligence assessments did not lead directly to policy decisions. Instead, analyses produced by the embassy in Baghdad and intelligence

⁷⁷⁰ As Harold Glidden of the State Department's intelligence branch later wrote, the "Iraqi political climate was frequently assessed, formally and informally, among the intelligence community." See #120 - Memorandum From Harold W. Glidden of the Division of Research and Analysis for Near East, South Asia, and Africa to the Director of Intelligence and Research (Cumming) – Intelligence Indications of Coup in Iraq, 16 July 1958, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 322.

agencies created an *informational environment* for policymakers in Washington, who then chose to expand their support for Nuri al-Said and the Iraqi government.⁷⁷¹

American assumptions about the future of Iraqi politics were proven deeply flawed when Qasim and the Free Officers proclaimed a new era of Iraqi history on 14 July 1958.

Reports on Iraqi Economic and Political Trends

This chapter works to recreate the informational environment produced by US analysts of Iraqi affairs. To do so, it is essential to consider the historical roots of the 14 July coup. Hanna Batatu's magisterial history of this period makes clear that Qasim and the Free Officers were motivated by a wide variety of economic and political pressures and debates ongoing in Hashemite Iraq.⁷⁷² The celebrations that erupted in Baghdad with the regime's demise suggested that broad segments of the population shared the anti-regime sentiments of Qasim and his co-conspirators. In Batatu's view, these developments transformed a traditional military coup into a popular revolution.⁷⁷³ As such, it is critical to examine how US analysts fared in monitoring and comprehending the economic and political undercurrents of the 14 July coup. As we will see, members of the US embassy and the intelligence community identified a host of signals that indicated the regime (as well as the United States) was deeply unpopular among many Iraqi citizens.

⁷⁷¹ The term "informational environment" is inspired by Matthew Jacobs' idea of an "intellectual environment" in which "debates about the nature and direction of US-Middle East relations took place" among policymakers and academics. See Matthew F. Jacobs, *Imagining the Middle East: The Building of an American Foreign Policy, 1918-1967* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 10.

⁷⁷² 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), 764-776, 805-807; Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, p. 128.

⁷⁷³ Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*, p. 805-807.

The first elements to consider are economic ones relating to the position of foreign oil companies. Chapter Two argued that the American partners in the Iraq Petroleum Company [IPC] found the Iraqi government a reasonably pliant (if at times frustrating) partner in their endeavour to develop the Iraqi oil sector. Key segments of the population encouraged opposition to the organization of the oil industry as devised by IPC and Iraqi authorities.⁷⁷⁴ This resistance, which US analysts charted, found expression in a variety of forms. One manifestation of this discontent was the emergence of general strikes organized by students and IPC employees. Several nationalist and neutralist parties (including the National Democratic Party [NDP]) planned demonstrations in February 1952 to protest the most recent profit-sharing agreement signed between Prime Minister Nuri al-Said's regime and IPC. The government used massive repression, including the imposition of martial law and the lethal use of armed force, to end these demonstrations.⁷⁷⁵ College students and tobacco workers launched successive sympathy work stoppages in December 1953 in solidarity with striking Basra Petroleum Company [BPC] employees.⁷⁷⁶ American observers, including James Cortada of the US consulate in Basra, described how nationalist anger

⁷⁷⁴ As Marion Farouk-Sluglett and Peter Sluglett argue, “[m]ost Iraqis felt that the *ancien régime* had allowed the oil companies to cheat the country out of the profits that should have been channeled into national economic development.” See Marion Farouk-Sluglett and Peter Sluglett, *Iraq Since 1958: From Revolution to Dictatorship* (London: IB Tauris, 2001), 78.

⁷⁷⁵ From Baghdad (Crocker) to Department of State, #144 – General Strike Against Oil Agreements, 23 February 1952, Confidential US State Department Central Files: Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954 [Hereby referred to as Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954], Reel 15; From Baghdad (Crocker) to Department of State, #863 – Strike of Baghdad Students, 12 March 1952, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 17.

⁷⁷⁶ Department of the Air Force – Staff Message Division – From USAIRA Baghdad Iraq Sgd Berry to CSAF Washington DC for Dir Intel, 12 December 1953, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 3; From Baghdad (Berry) to Secretary of State, #353, 17 December 1953, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2; From Basra (James Cortada) to Department of State, #92 - Basra Petroleum Company Strike: Additional Information, 18 February 1954, National Archives and Records Administration [NARA], Record Group [RG] 84, Iraq – US Embassy and Legation, Baghdad – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 16.

toward the government's policies in the oil industry dominated the strikers' rhetoric and slogans. They also suggested the Iraqi Communist Party [ICP], now in a period of revival after the nadir of 1949, was attempting to link ongoing events in Iran with their concerns about the Iraqi oil industry.⁷⁷⁷

Closely related to these demonstrations were public calls for fundamental reassessments of the profit-sharing deals between IPC and Iraqi authorities. As early as 1950, Iraqi newspapers criticized government leaders for not pressing for greater royalty shares from IPC. Opposition parties often argued that anything short of full nationalization of IPC was unacceptable.⁷⁷⁸ While the IPC-Iraqi agreement signed in February 1952 was confirmed by the Iraqi Senate, the specific terms of the deal were viewed as anathema to significant portions of the public, particularly nationalists, neutralists, and anti-colonial elements. Edward Crocker, the US ambassador to Iraq at the time, acknowledged that the agreements only received approval because opposition parties walked out during the vote on the bill. As Crocker admitted, "unfortunately, charges by the opposition that the agreements were 'railroaded', and thus should have no validity, now have been given considerable credence even by objective and reasonable people."⁷⁷⁹

The public's desire for greater control over their national resources remained strong throughout the decade. The intelligence community's "National Intelligence

⁷⁷⁷ From Basra (James Cortada) to Department of State, #92 - Basra Petroleum Company Strike: Additional Information, 18 February 1954, NARA, RG 84, Iraq - Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 16.

⁷⁷⁸ From Baghdad to Department of State, #188 - Oil Negotiations: Press Comments, 24 August 1950, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 14; From Baghdad (Crocker) to Department of State, Quarterly Petroleum Report Covering Period July 1 to Sept 30 1951, 7 November 1951, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 14; Phebe Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2012), 71.

⁷⁷⁹ From Baghdad (Crocker) to Department of State, Parliamentary Consideration of the Oil Agreements, 19 February 1952, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 15.

Estimate”⁷⁸⁰ [NIE] of January 1953 warned that American diplomats could expect greater pressure from the Iraqi leadership for an increased share of IPC profits and a “reduction in the privileged position of the Western oil companies.” The American consul James Cortada acknowledged the strong anti-oil company sensibilities of the local population in Basra. Cortada remarked that nearly all politicians in Basra promoted the nationalization of BPC.⁷⁸¹ The most powerful of Iraq’s nationalist parties, the Istiqlal and NDP, likewise insisted on the nationalization of the oil industry and the end of Western exploitation of Iraqi oil resources. Two years later, intelligence agencies concluded that nationalist and anti-colonial hostility to IPC’s privileged position remained the principal threat to the Americans’ campaign for stability and control in the oil sector.⁷⁸²

The Iraqi government undertook a vigorous campaign of media repression to dampen criticism of its relationship with IPC. Prime Minister Fadhil Jamali’s cabinet suspended the publishing license of a Basra newspaper for “inflammatory articles” printed during the BPC strike.⁷⁸³ American observers relayed their assessments of these moves to their superiors in Washington. James Cortada confirmed in May 1953 that the press censorship carried out by Prime Minister Jamil al-Madfai hid, superficially at least, the public’s tremendous anger with BPC. Cortada explained that local newspapers had previously been full of “caustic comment regarding the company’s operations here and

⁷⁸⁰ National Intelligence Estimates are the consensus assessments of all agencies comprising the American intelligence community, including the CIA. NIEs, along with Special National Intelligence Estimates, are some of the most comprehensive intelligence reports provided to policymakers on foreign policy issues.

⁷⁸¹ Conditions and Trends in the Middle East Affecting US Security, 15 January 1953, CIA Electronic Reading Room [ERR], p. 6 (quote); From Basra (James Cortada, American Consul) to Department of State, #63 – The Basra Petroleum Company, 20 May 1953, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 15.

⁷⁸² From Baghdad (Gilbert Larsen) to Department of State, #428 - Annual Petroleum Report, Iraq, 1954, 15 March 1955, NARA, RG 59, Central Decimal File [CDF] Iraq 1955-1959 –887.2553, Box 4960; #435 - NIE 36.2-56 – The Outlook for Iraq’s Stability and Foreign Policies, 17 July 1956, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 1004.

⁷⁸³ From Basra (James Cortada) to Department of State, #75 – Basra Political Developments – December 1953, 6 January 1954, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2.

presumably would do so again if freely permitted.”⁷⁸⁴ US diplomats confirmed that press coverage of oil issues in 1954 and 1955 was mostly favourable, in large part because the government “suppressed most of the newspapers in the last semester of the year.” By 1956, officers at the US embassy claimed that public advocacy of IPC’s nationalization and popular complaints about the imperialism of Western corporations had all but vanished.⁷⁸⁵ Given what American analysts knew about the opposition’s resistance to the existing structural arrangements between IPC and authorities in Baghdad, the government’s censorship clearly did little to change popular attitudes on oil questions.

As in the economic realm, the central government deployed a heavy hand in the political arena. The governing elite regularly admitted to their American counterparts that they used a variety of tricks to rig elections in their favour. The Central Intelligence Agency [CIA] witnessed “widespread government intervention” in the June 1954 elections, as Iraqi leaders arrested opposition candidates and threatened others to drop out of the race.⁷⁸⁶ These tactics, observers wrote, ensured that Nuri al-Said and his core supporters usually went unopposed in elections and continued to enjoy the benefits of facing a “hand-picked parliament.”⁷⁸⁷ Following electoral contests, the regime continued

⁷⁸⁴ From Basra (James Cortada, American Consul) to Department of State, #63 – The Basra Petroleum Company, 20 May 1953, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 15.

⁷⁸⁵ From Baghdad (Gilbert Larsen) to Department of State, #428 - Annual Petroleum Report, Iraq, 1954, 15 March 1955, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 –887.2553, Box 4960 (quote); From Baghdad (Gilbert Larsen, Economic Officer) to Department of State, #154 – Semi-Annual Petroleum Report, Iraq, January-June 1955, 31 August 1955, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 - 887.2553, Box 4960; From Nat B. King, Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs, #416 – Iraq Petroleum 1956 – First Half, 4 January 1957, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 –887.2553, Box 4961.

⁷⁸⁶ From Baghdad (Berry) to Department of State, #479 - Conversation with Shakir al Wadi, 14 January 1953, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2; CIA NSC Briefing, “NSC Briefing – Iraqi Elections on 8 June 1954,” July 24 2009. CIA-RDP80R01443R000200330005-0, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST), National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD (quote); From Baghdad (Ireland, Charge d’affaires ad interim [ai].) to Department of State, #19 - Parliamentary Elections, June 1954, Analysis and Comment, 14 July 1954, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2.

⁷⁸⁷ Nicholas Thacher’s Briefing Notes, Undated, US President’s Citizen Advisors on the Mutual Security Program (Fairless Committee): Records, 1956-1957, Box 9, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library [DDEL]

to clamp down on opposition forces through the imposition of martial law. Reports from the embassy in Baghdad regularly commented on the al-Madfai government's cancellation of licenses for newspapers critical of the regime. While the number of martial law promulgations decreased from 1954-1956, the central government still routinely issued emergency ordinances that allowed them to impose press censorship and detain suspected opposition members.⁷⁸⁸ Iraqi authorities redeployed authoritarian tactics following the outbreak of national riots during the Suez War. While Nuri al-Said's government finally lifted martial law in May 1957,⁷⁸⁹ the regime still regularly suspended newspapers right through the summer of 1958.⁷⁹⁰

The criminalization of constitutional political activities was another key feature of government rule in Baghdad. Political party formation was outlawed in Iraq at the time Eisenhower entered office.⁷⁹¹ Jamil al-Madfai's government considered a liberalization of the political arena, but his proposed Law of Associations bill aroused massive popular

(quote); From Philip W. Ireland to the Department of State, Mechanics of Controlling an Election, 18 July 1952, National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book 78: US Propaganda in the Middle East [Hereby referred to as NSA EBB 78]; From Baghdad (Nicholas Thacher, 1st Secretary of Embassy) to Department of State, #75 – Renewed Activity of NDP and Istiqlal Leaders, 18 July 1957, NARA, RG 84, Iraq - Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 21; Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, p. 73; Adeed Dawisha, *Iraq: A Political History from Independence to Occupation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 112.

⁷⁸⁸ From Baghdad (Berry) to Department of State, #541, 3 February 1953, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 4; Berry to Department of State, #837 - Conversations with Opposition Political Figures: Abdul Razzaq Al-Shaikli, 11 May 1953, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2; From Gallman to Department of State, #410, 11 September 1956, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959 [Hereby referred to as Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959], Reel 1; Dawisha, *Iraq*, p. 112-113.

⁷⁸⁹ Memorandum of Conversation - Nicholas Thacher, 1st Secretary of Embassy and Khalil Ibrahim, Director General of Guidance and Broadcasting – Iraqi Internal Political Scene, 4 March 1957, NARA, RG 84, Iraq - Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 21; Operations Coordinating Board, Operational Guidance Paper for Iraq – Internal Security, 22 May 1957, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – OCB Central File Series, Box 44, DDEL.

⁷⁹⁰ From Baghdad (Nicholas Thacher, 1st Secretary of Embassy) to Department of State, #94 – Views of Minister of Interior Sami Fattah on the Press and Ba'ath Activities, 30 July 1957, NARA, RG 84, Iraq - Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 20; Memorandum of Conversation between David Newsom and First Secretary of Italian Embassy, Nuri al Said's visit to US; Iraqi Internal Situation, 12 December 1957, NARA, RG 84, Iraq - Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 20.

⁷⁹¹ From Baghdad (Berry) to Secretary of State, #861, 9 January 1953, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2.

opposition owing to its regulations requiring prospective party members to obtain security clearances from government intelligence agencies.⁷⁹² Nuri al-Said abolished political parties yet again following the summer elections of 1954. His government rejected respective requests in October 1954 to re-establish the NDP and in February 1956 to create a Liberation Party as an Islamic political group. Al-Said's regime again denied proposals from the Istiqlal and NDP to form a joint National Congress Party in July 1956.⁷⁹³ Conventional political activity remained outlawed in the lead-up to the revolution of July 1958.⁷⁹⁴

American observers were cognizant of the immense impact martial law, press suppression, and the criminalization of political life had on popular attitudes toward the government. The US ambassador to Iraq, Burton Berry, lambasted government manipulation in the January 1953 elections, arguing that

Embassy believes these elections have failed to give a feeling of satisfaction among the public... Moreover, the well-substantiated charges of open interference by the Government are likely to give further support to Communist propaganda that Iraq has a 'fake' government which survives by 'fake' elections of a 'fake' parliament.⁷⁹⁵

⁷⁹² From Baghdad (Philip Ireland, Charge d'Affaires) to Department of State, #954 – Increasing Opposition to Al-Madfai Government as Being Reactionary, 20 June 1953, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2; From Baghdad (Berry) to Department of State, #487 – Review and Prognosis of Iraqi Political Developments, October 1 1953 – January 1 1954, 14 January 1954, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2.

⁷⁹³ From Baghdad (Hermann Frederick Eilts, Second Secretary of Embassy) to Department of State, #551 – Speculation that Nuri May be Planning to Introduce Two Party System, 16 May 1955, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 1; From Baghdad (Hermann Frederick Eilts, Second Secretary of Embassy) to Department of State, #643 – Transmitting Memo of Convo with Kamel Chadirchi, Leader of Former NDP, 20 June 1955, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 1; From Baghdad (Hermann Frederick Eilts, Second Secretary of Embassy) to Department of State, #600 – Attempted Formation of 'Liberation Party', 3 February 1956, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 1; From Baghdad (Hermann Frederick Eilts, Second Secretary of Embassy) to Department of State, #34 – Minister of Interior's Rejection of Application to form National Congress Party, 16 July 1956, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 1.

⁷⁹⁴ From Baghdad (Nicholas Thacher, First Secretary of Embassy) to Department of State, #909 – Status of the Opposition – Interview with Sadiq Shenshal, 18 March 1958, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 1.

⁷⁹⁵ From Baghdad (Berry) to Department of State, #520 - The Parliamentary Elections: Analysis and Comment, 27 January 1953, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2.

Months later, Abdul Razzaz al-Shaikli, leader of the dissolved neutralist United Popular Front, met with Ambassador Berry to discuss political developments in Iraq. Al-Shaikli informed Berry that government suppression of the press and the imposition of martial law were two of the most important drivers behind the public's discontent. The Basra-based religious leader Sheikh Mohammad Hassan Mudahffar similarly warned James Cortada in October 1953 that the regime's authoritarian behaviour "left the seeds of grave trouble [for the al-Said government] in southern Iraq."⁷⁹⁶ Philip Ireland, counselor at the US embassy in Baghdad, concluded that public criticism of the ruling elite for their interference in the June 1954 elections was more widespread than ever.⁷⁹⁷ Years later, embassy officials and James Richards, the president's special envoy to the region, argued that popular resistance to the government was heavily influenced by the regime's suppression of political activities.⁷⁹⁸ Finally, only months before the revolution of July 1958, Nicholas Thacher of the embassy commented on the "intensified bitterness and frustration" of anti-colonial and leftist forces who could not find a legal outlet for their political energies.⁷⁹⁹ US observers clearly recognized the disconnect that emerged between debates ongoing within the Iraqi Senate and popular political attitudes.

⁷⁹⁶ From Baghdad (Berry) to Department of State, #837 - Conversations with Opposition Political Figures: Abdul Razzaq Al-Shaikli, 11 May 1953, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2; From Basra (James Cortada, Principal Officer) to Department of State, #39 - Visit of Sheikh Mohammad Hassan Mudahffar, Basra Religious Leader, 10 October 1953, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 16 (quote).

⁷⁹⁷ From Baghdad (Ireland, Charge d'affaires ad interim [ai].) to Department of State, #19 - Parliamentary Elections, June 1954 - Analysis and Comment, 14 July 1954, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2.

⁷⁹⁸ #429 - The Embassy in Iraq (Gallman) to the Department of State, 15 January 1956, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 990; Baghdad for Richards, #114, 29 March 1957, NARA, RG 59, Office of Near Eastern Affairs - Country Files Prepared for the Richards Mission to the Middle East, 1956-1957, Box 18.

⁷⁹⁹ From Baghdad (Nicholas Thacher, First Secretary of Embassy) to Department of State, #909 - Status of the Opposition - Interview with Sadiq Shenshal, 18 March 1958, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 1.

Moreover, their assessments consistently showed that the government's actions directly fueled the anger of many Iraqis.

Along with charting party politics in the country, analysts studied the political loyalties of the wide segment of Iraqi citizens that were not formal participants in the political arena. Their reports clearly demonstrated they were well aware of the deep-seeded antagonism many groups consistently exhibited toward the central government. Observers were cognizant of the strong anti-government disposition of students, the middle class, and professional groups. Ambassador Berry reported in February 1953 that student organizations were becoming increasingly cynical about politics given the unwillingness of the ruling elite to permit political expression.⁸⁰⁰ Meetings with leaders of dissolved parties and the chairman of the Iraqi Foreign Affairs Committee similarly pointed to an increasing sense of discontent among students.⁸⁰¹ The central government also acknowledged the strong anti-regime sentiments of Iraqi students. As an attempted corrective to this trend, Fadhil Jamali, then president of the Iraqi Parliament, held a series of anti-communist lectures for university students in the summer of 1953.⁸⁰²

These measures had little impact on the political sensibilities of these groups. Gilbert Larsen, an economics officer at the embassy, authored an insightful study in September 1954 on the role of intellectuals, students, professional groups, and lawyers in the political sphere. Due to the absence of economic opportunities for youthful, well-

⁸⁰⁰ From Baghdad (Berry) to Department of State, #541, 3 February 1953, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 4; Department of the Air Force - Staff Message Division - From USAIRA Baghdad Iraq Sgd Berry to CSAF Washington DC for Dir Intel, 22 November 1953, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 3.

⁸⁰¹ Memorandum of Conversation - Faiq Samerrai, VP of the Istiqlal Party and Mr. J.R. Barrow, 25 April 1953, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2; From Baghdad (Burton Berry) to Department of State, #848 - Conversations with Opposition Political Leaders: Sadiq al-Bassam, 14 May 1953, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2.

⁸⁰² From Burton Berry to the Department of State, Anti-Communist 'Brain Washing' Program to Be Instituted at Summer ROTC Camps for Students, 26 May 1953, NSA EBB 78.

educated citizens, Larsen noted, these groups were a “factor to be reckoned with” in the future.⁸⁰³ A National Intelligence Estimate from July 1956 similarly pointed to long-term dangers emanating from the poor economic prospects for the rapidly-expanding group of students and white collar workers in cities who were likely to develop heightened forms of political consciousness.⁸⁰⁴ Reports from embassy and consular officials, Americans who visited Iraq, and the Operations Coordinating Board [OCB] throughout 1956 and 1957 painted a consistently grim picture. These studies warned that the younger intelligentsia were becoming increasingly restive due to the al-Said government’s inattention to their grievances and were regularly espousing anti-regime views.⁸⁰⁵

While American analysts claimed that Nuri al-Said had successfully repressed Iraqi students for the time being by January 1957⁸⁰⁶, subsequent reporting clearly showed how deeply unpopular the regime remained among these elements. The picture painted in June 1957 by intelligence agencies was not a rosy one: there was unlikely to be any serious decrease in opposition to al-Said’s government from those groups “most

⁸⁰³ From Baghdad (Gilbert Larsen, Economic Officer) to Department of State, #117 – Political Stability Through Economic Development, 20 September 1954, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2.

⁸⁰⁴ #435 - NIE 36.2-56 – The Outlook for Iraq’s Stability and Foreign Policies, 17 July 1956, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 997-1010.

⁸⁰⁵ From Baghdad (Hermann Frederick Eilts, Second Secretary of Embassy) to Department of State, #122 – Views of Deputy Mahmud Baban on Iraqi Internal Political Situation, 14 August 1956, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 1; Baghdad for Richards, #114, 29 March 1957, NARA, RG 59, Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Country Files Prepared for the Richards Mission to the Middle East, 1956-1957, Box 18; Operations Coordinating Board, Operational Guidance Paper for Iraq – Internal Security, 22 May 1957, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – OCB Central File Series, Box 44, DDEL; Operations Coordinating Board Report - Operations Plan for Iraq (NSC 5428), 7 August 1957, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 1065; Peter Hahn, *Missions Accomplished? The United States and Iraq Since World War I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 31.

⁸⁰⁶ From Baghdad (Nicholas Thacher, 1st Secretary of Embassy), #437- Recent Student Political Activity, 22 January 1957, NARA, RG 84, Iraq - Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 20.

susceptible to...charges of Western imperialism,” including urban workers and students.⁸⁰⁷ Similar reporting from the intelligence community in October 1957 noted:

The chief challenge to the traditional ruling group rises from the growing middle class (minor officials, white-collar workers, small merchants, the professions, teachers, students...) who, impatient and hypercritical, stung by the Arab defeat in Palestine, and resentful of the West, are eager for personal and national status.⁸⁰⁸

As US analysts made clear throughout the decade, wide segments of the population, including its students, middle class, and professional groups, consistently professed strong, anti-government sentiment.

The Americans were well-attuned, as well, to the critical structural inequalities inherent to the makeup of the Iraqi post-colonial state. While the terms and concepts they used to assess these trends were over-simplified and often Orientalist in nature, US diplomats nonetheless appreciated the significance of the structural divide between the ruling oligarchy and Iraq's lower classes. In Ambassador Berry's view, the outbreak of the November 1952 *Intifada* (meaning “the upheaval” or “the shaking off”), described in Chapter One, highlighted the serious divisions between the central regime and its “frustrated middle-classes, primitive tribes, and depressed peasantry.” Similar analyses produced by James Cortada and Philip Ireland pointed to the widespread sentiment among Iraqis that their government only acted in favour of the wealthy, land-owning classes.⁸⁰⁹ Perhaps the most insightful of all analyses from the US embassy came from

⁸⁰⁷ NIE 36.2-57 - The Outlook for Iraq, 4 June 1957, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 1048-1058.

⁸⁰⁸ National Intelligence Survey – Iraq – NIS 30, 1 October 1957, CIA ERR, p. 30.

⁸⁰⁹ From Baghdad (Berry) to Department of State, #383 – The Demonstrations of November 22 to November 26; Political Aspects, 8 December 1952, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2 (quote); From American Consulate, Basra (James Cortada) to Department of State, #50 –Monthly Political Report – Basra – March, 2 April 1953, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954,

Gilbert Larsen in September 1954. Larsen believed that future threats to stability in Iraq emanated from the “resistance of the governing class to reform[s]” that would benefit the masses. “The people in this group,” Larsen added, “largely ignore the welfare of the majority unless doing something about it serves their own interests.”⁸¹⁰ In this vein, the Point IV Director for Iraq, Henry Wiens, concluded that the country was ruled “by a club of gentlemen who go in and out as occasion warrants.”⁸¹¹

American intelligence agencies similarly recorded the anti-regime sentiment of the masses of dispossessed Iraqis. Intelligence assessments from July 1956 and June 1957 described one of the central dilemmas of Iraqi political affairs: political control under the government and crown lay monopolized in the hands of an “established oligarchy of professional politicians, wealthy landlords, businessmen, and tribal leaders.”⁸¹² Studies of the situation in June 1957 also warned that a growing bloc of politically-conscious urban Iraqis and peasants harbored strong anti-government views.

As the report surmised:

Over the longer run, the natural development of factors already present in Iraqi society will probably confront the present tightly controlled system of rule with increasingly forceful challenges by elements demanding a broadening of the base of public participation in government affairs.⁸¹³

Reel 2; From Baghdad (Philip Ireland, Charge d’Affaires) to Department of State, #954 –Increasing Opposition to Al-Madfai Government as Being Reactionary, 20 June 1953, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2.

⁸¹⁰ From Baghdad (Gilbert Larsen, Economic Officer) to Department of State, #117 – Political Stability Through Economic Development, 20 September 1954, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2.

⁸¹¹ Clarence Randall Briefing Notes – Meeting with Henry Wiens, 17 October 1956, Clarence B. Randall: Journals, 1953-1961, Box 3, DDEL (quote); Dawisha, *Iraq*, p. 149 offers insightful statistics on the incredibly limited scope of “old guard” of politicians who held portfolios in cabinets before July 1958.

⁸¹² #435 - NIE 36.2-56 – The Outlook for Iraq’s Stability and Foreign Policies, 17 July 1956, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 998 (quote); NIE 36.2-57 - The Outlook for Iraq, 4 June 1957, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 1048-1058.

⁸¹³ NIE 36.2-57 - The Outlook for Iraq, 4 June 1957, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 1053.

The National Intelligence Survey [NIS] of Iraq from October 1957 similarly argued that, in the eyes of the country's rural elements, the government in Baghdad was "alien, repugnant, and corrupt." Despite the regime's efforts to improve its public image through modernization and propaganda projects, vast numbers of citizens clearly remained highly distrustful of and antagonistic toward the ruling clique in Baghdad.⁸¹⁴

American observers were particularly interested in how Iraqi citizens viewed the United States at this juncture of the Cold War. Analysts soon realized that the US image in Iraq was intimately linked to that of the unpopular ruling caste. In December 1952, Ambassador Berry commented on the essential "identity" between anti-government and anti-American sentiment among Iraqi citizens. Berry believed that many Iraqis blamed the British and the Americans for supporting Prime Minister Nuriddin Mahmud's regime. In this vein, embassy officer J.R. Barrow relayed the NDP's assessment that the "Iraqi people would hate" the Americans as long as they continued to back the central authorities in Baghdad.⁸¹⁵ The National Intelligence Survey on Iraq of October 1957 also indicated that the growing bloc of middle-class professionals and students were "resentful of the West" and strongly critical of the United States.⁸¹⁶

These anti-American sentiments found expression in several forms. American officials were occasionally targeted in violent attacks. This created a hostile working environment for personnel in USIS [United States Information Service] and Point IV. Demonstrators looted and burned the USIS building in Baghdad during the 1952 *Intifada*.

⁸¹⁴ National Intelligence Survey – Iraq – NIS 30, 1 October 1957, CIA ERR, p. 13.

⁸¹⁵ From Baghdad (Berry) to Department of State, #383 –The Demonstrations of November 22 to November 26; Political Aspects, 8 December 1952, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2; Memorandum of Conversation - Muhammad Hadid and Mr. J.R. Barrow, 29 April 1953, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2 (quote).

⁸¹⁶ National Intelligence Survey – Iraq – NIS 30, 1 October 1957, CIA ERR, p. 30.

USIS employees also faced a hostile audience when screening anti-communist propaganda films for rural audiences. Mobile USIS cinema units were attacked on numerous occasions in 1953 and 1954.⁸¹⁷ Point IV officials faced equally aggressive scenes throughout the decade. Henry Wiens acknowledged in February 1954 that a considerable number of Iraqis were highly suspicious of Point IV's activities and "lumped" the US together with the British in their expressions of purportedly "belligerent" anti-imperialism. During class boycotts at the Abu Ghraib Agricultural College and medical colleges in 1957, students turned against their teachers, denouncing the Point IV personnel as American "spies."⁸¹⁸

A myriad of issues animated the expressions of anti-Americanism among Iraqi citizens. American support for Israel and the French war in Algeria featured heavily in these calculations.⁸¹⁹ The two most influential developments were Iraq's military aid agreement with the US and Iraq's entry into the Baghdad Pact. In both cases, the decidedly negative reactions of many Iraqis frightened American analysts since these issues intimately tied the US and the Iraqi regime together. The public's anger toward the military aid arrangement emerged well before the deal was signed in April 1954. As

⁸¹⁷ From Burton Berry to the Department of State, Occupation of United States Information Service Building, 24 November 1952, NSA EBB 78; Department of the Air Force – Staff Message Division – From USAIRA Baghdad Iraq Sgd Berry to CSAF Washington DC for Dir Intel, 22 November 1953, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 3; From Baghdad (Berry) to Department of State, #657 – Samples of Anti-Communist Propaganda, 16 March 1954, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 3; Nicholas Thacher, "Reflections on US Foreign Policy Toward Iraq in the 1950s," in Robert Fernea and William Roger Louis (eds.) *The Iraqi Revolution of 1958: The Old Social Classes Revisited* (London: IB Tauris, 1991), 71.

⁸¹⁸ From Baghdad (Henry Wiens, Director of US Operations Mission, Baghdad), Attitude of Iraqis which Affect USOM in Iraq, 10 February 1954, NARA, RG 84, Iraq - Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 15; From Baghdad (Nicholas Thacher, 1st Secretary of Embassy), #437 - Recent Student Political Activity, 22 January 1957, NARA, RG 84, Iraq - Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 20.

⁸¹⁹ Department of the Air Force – Staff Message Division – From USAIRA Baghdad Iraq Sgd Berry to CSAF Washington DC for Dir Intel, 25 April 1954, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 3; Juan Lennart Michel Romero, "The Iraqi Revolution of 1958 and the Search for Security in the Middle East," Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of Texas at Austin, 2008, 18; Thacher, "Reflections on US Foreign Policy Toward Iraq in the 1950s," p.63.

negotiations dragged on between the two sides in early 1954, Ambassador Berry expressed great concern that delays were giving time for substantive opposition to emerge. He wrote frantic cables to Foggy Bottom in late March warning that public opinion was inflamed about the potential arms deal and that time was rapidly running out.⁸²⁰ Secretary of State Dulles sounded a cautionary note on the possible agreement a few weeks later. Dulles noted that the “timorous” attitude of Fadhil Jamali’s government and the intensely negative reaction rumors of the agreement engendered among other Arab states suggested the “agreement may well cause difficulties out of proportion to benefits.”⁸²¹

Dulles’ assessment proved prescient. Embassy staffers regularly reported that wide segments of the population were highly skeptical that the agreement would not require the Iraqis to join a pro-Western defense organization.⁸²² Philip Ireland noted in May 1954 that “extremist” opposition groups were focusing on denouncing the arms deal. That summer, resistance to the arms agreement featured prominently in the election platforms of the NDP and Istiqlal parties.⁸²³ Equally frightening was the fact that this issue never really disappeared from the public discourse. In April 1957, General Daghestani and other Iraqi military personnel vigorously pressed the Americans for an

⁸²⁰ From Baghdad (Berry) to Secretary of State, #406, 19 January 1954, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 5; From Troutbeck to Anthony Eden, #65, 10 March 1954, DEFE 7-835, British National Archives [BNA]; From Baghdad (Berry) to Secretary of State, #562, 24 March 1954, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 5.

⁸²¹ #1409 - From Secretary of State (Dulles) to the Embassy in Iraq, 8 April 1954, *FRUS 1952-1954*, vol. IX, p. 2375.

⁸²² Department of the Air Force – Staff Message Division –From USAIRA Baghdad Iraq Sgd Berry to CSAF Washington DC for Dir Intel, 1 May 1954, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 3; From Baghdad (Ireland) to Department of State, #792 –Iraqi Reactions to Arms Aid from the US, 17 May 1954, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 5.

⁸²³ From Baghdad (Ireland) to Department of State, #792 –Iraqi Reactions to Arms Aid from the US, 17 May 1954, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 5; From Baghdad (Ireland, Charge d’affaires a.i.) to Department of State, #789 –Election Platforms of Iraqi Political Parties, 14 May 1954, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2.

expansion of military aid. The officers insisted that Iraq's leaders had to produce "tangible benefits" that would "counteract latent dissatisfaction" within the armed forces regarding Baghdad's alignment with the United States.⁸²⁴

American observers charted nearly identical trends regarding the Turkey-Pakistan defense agreement (which developed into the Baghdad Pact). Analysts observed ominous signs of discontent among large segments of the public long before Iraq joined the regional defense organization in February 1955. As early as May 1953, staffers at the embassy were reporting that leaflets distributed by the Iraqi Communist Party and the Iraqi Lawyers Association were demanding resistance to the Turkey-Pakistan union.⁸²⁵ Rumours abounded in 1953 and 1954 that the Americans were pressuring the Iraqi leadership to join the defense group in the midst of negotiating the military aid deal. The Istiqlal, NDP, and various student associations voiced their strong opposition in 1954 to the regional defense alliance, organizing a number of demonstrations in Baghdad against Iraq's membership in the group.⁸²⁶

As US analyses warned, the news of Iraq's accession to the Turkey-Pakistan pact in February 1955 produced an explosion of outrage. Demonstrations against the Baghdad Pact took place throughout Iraq in late February that only ended with the intervention of

⁸²⁴ From Baghdad (Nicholas Thacher, First Secretary of Embassy) to Department of State, #635 –General Daghestani's Disappointment with Additions to Military Aid Program for Iraq, 5 April 1957, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 9 (quote); Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, p. 137; Thacher, "Reflections on US Foreign Policy Toward Iraq in the 1950s," p. 66.

⁸²⁵ From Baghdad (Berry) to Department of State, #866 - Communist Leaflet Attacking Secretary Dulles, 20 May 1953, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 3; From Baghdad (Berry) to Department of State, #24 –Increase in Leftist Petitions may Indicate Intensified Communist Propaganda Activity in Rural Areas, 7 July 1953, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 3.

⁸²⁶ From Baghdad (John Barrow, 2nd Sec of Embassy) to Department of State, #447 – Continued Speculation in Baghdad about US Sponsored Military Pact Including Iraq, Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan, 29 December 1953, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 5; Department of the Air Force – Staff Message Division –From USAIRA Baghdad Iraq Sgd Berry to CSAF Washington DC for Dir Intel, 20 March 1954, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 3; From Baghdad (Ireland, Charge d'affaires a.i.) to Department of State, #789 –Election Platforms of Iraqi Political Parties, 14 May 1954, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2.

the security services.⁸²⁷ Ambassador Waldemar Gallman, highly sympathetic to the Iraqi regime and Nuri al-Said in particular, conceded that Iraq's membership in the Baghdad Pact served as one of the most powerful grievances of the opposition.⁸²⁸ The intelligence community concurred. The Operations Coordinating Board's "Daily Intelligence Notes" of 5 April 1956 added that Iraq's membership in the Baghdad Pact isolated Nuri al-Said from Egypt and Saudi Arabia.⁸²⁹ The NIE of 17 July 1956 entitled "The Outlook for Iraq's Stability and Foreign Policies" rendered similar judgments. The NIE argued that the national sense of isolation from the Arab world was "widespread among politically-aware Iraqis," and that "misgivings over the Baghdad Pact among influential persons...are growing."⁸³⁰ Nuri al-Said was candid about his personal misgivings about the Baghdad Pact; US note-takers from a meeting with al-Said in late December 1955 penned the following:

Nuri said that Iraq was in disfavor in the Arab world for having been the first and only Arab state to join the Pact. He felt that Iraq was on trial before the Arab world for having taken this step, and that the Arab world in general felt that the Pact was nothing more than a 'soap bubble' organization.⁸³¹

Shared American and Iraqi anxieties about the Baghdad Pact worsened with the onset of the Suez Crisis. Students at various colleges in Baghdad protested against Iraq's

⁸²⁷ From Baghdad (Hermann Frederick Eilts, Second Secretary of Embassy) to Department of State – #543 – Transmitting PAO Kirkuk's 'Notes on the Situation in the Northern Liwas', 11 May 1955, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 1; Thacher, "Reflections on US Foreign Policy Toward Iraq in the 1950s," p. 70.

⁸²⁸ #429 - The Embassy in Iraq (Gallman) to the Department of State, 15 January 1956, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 990.

⁸²⁹ Operations Coordinating Board, Daily Intelligence Notes, 5 April 1956, Declassified Documents Reference System [DDRS].

⁸³⁰ #435 - NIE 36.2-56 – The Outlook for Iraq's Stability and Foreign Policies, 17 July 1956, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 1005.

⁸³¹ #428 - Editorial Note, February 1956, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 987.

participation in the Pact during the Suez riots.⁸³² As with the other economic and political factors discussed above, there was a close identity of views between American diplomats and intelligence analysts. The National Intelligence Survey of October 1957 and the Special National Intelligence Estimate of February 1958 (titled “Prospects and Consequences of Arab Unity Moves”) pointed to Iraq’s participation in the Baghdad Pact as one of the principal foreign policy concerns fueling popular, anti-government sentiment.⁸³³ Ambassador Gallman similarly noted a disturbing trend only weeks before the government’s overthrow. Gallman identified dissident voices among Iraqis, including the intelligentsia and young professionals, who admired Egyptian leader Gamal Abdel Nasser and detested Iraq’s foundational role in the Baghdad Pact.⁸³⁴

As a whole, American observers closely monitored a variety of important economic and political debates in Iraq in the pre-revolutionary period. It is fair to conclude, as with Western intelligence services before the 1959 Cuban Revolution and 1979 Iranian Revolution, that American observers were “under no illusions about the popularity” (or lack thereof) of the Iraqi ruling elite.⁸³⁵ Assessments from American analysts clearly described what appeared to be an obvious pattern: the Iraqi government was consistently and deeply unpopular among broad segments of its population. These trends held true for the entirety of the Eisenhower administration’s relationship with the

⁸³² From Baghdad (Nicholas Thacher, 1st Secretary of Embassy), #437 - Recent Student Political Activity, 22 January 1957, NARA, RG 84, Iraq - Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 20.

⁸³³ National Intelligence Survey – Iraq – NIS 30, 1 October 1957, CIA ERR, p. 31; SNIE 30-58 – Prospects and Consequences of Arab Unity Moves, 20 February 1958, CIA ERR.

⁸³⁴ From Baghdad (Gallman) to Department of State, #1140 –Country Team Development of FY 1960 Military Aid Proposals Relating to Iraq , 4 June 1958, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 9.

⁸³⁵ Robert Jervis, *Why Intelligence Fails: Lessons from the Iranian Revolution and the Iraq War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010), 26 (quote); Hugh Thomas, “Cuba: The United States and Batista, 1952-1958,” *World Affairs* 149, no. 4 (Spring 1987), 169-175; Louis A. Perez, Jr., *Cuba and the United States: Ties of Singular Intimacy* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2003), 233-237. Romero comes to a similar conclusion about American observers of Iraqi affairs. See Romero, “The Iraqi Revolution of 1958 and the Search for Security in the Middle East,” p. 80, 96.

Iraqi regime before July 1958. To paraphrase Malcolm Gladwell's assessment of Israeli intelligence in 1973, if one starts with the overthrow of the Iraqi government on 14 July 1958 and works backward, the "trail of clues" warning the regime would ultimately become a victim of the public's discontent seems plainly obvious.⁸³⁶

US Strategies for Iraq

Despite identifying the strong currents of anti-government sentiment in the country, American policies in Iraq were relatively consistent down through the end of the Hashemite monarchy. They remained rooted in a firm commitment to the broader political status quo as represented by Fadhil Jamali, Nuri al-Said, and other elites in Iraq's ruling circles. In fact, the Eisenhower administration chose to deepen its strategic partnership with Hashemite Iraq in the pre-revolutionary period. As the previous chapters outlined, American oil concessions, military aid programs, support for the Baghdad Pact, and modernization projects each served this larger strategic objective. The Eisenhower administration also provided tangible support to the Iraqi government in the form of propaganda and security assistance. In retrospect, these policy decisions seem almost counterintuitive given what observers knew about the economic and political dangers facing the Iraqi government in this period.

USIS was central to the Americans' dissemination of propaganda in Iraq. The agency was actively involved by 1951 in producing and distributing anti-communist and anti-Soviet propaganda for the Iraqi public's consumption.⁸³⁷ As with Point IV's

⁸³⁶ Gladwell, "Connecting the Dots: The Paradoxes of Intelligence Reform," p. 83.

⁸³⁷ From Edward S. Crocker II to the Department of State, Anti-communist Poster Material Prepared by USIS Baghdad, 10 March 1951, NSA EBB 78; From Edward S. Crocker II to the Department of State, Proposed Information Program for Iraq, 16 May 1952, NSA EBB 78.

information programs, this propaganda campaign was the product of a collaborative partnership between USIS and the central regime. The Iraqi Directorate General of Propaganda produced a series of pamphlets in 1954 that attacked the ICP's credibility by stressing the linkages between Zionism and communism. USIS played a crucial role in this initiative by furnishing a list of 500 addresses in Baghdad to which the Iraqis could mail their materials.⁸³⁸ By March 1955, the agency described itself as the "principal source of anti-communist information in the country."⁸³⁹

USIS also worked alongside the central authorities to try to change prevailing attitudes regarding the Baghdad Pact. USIS distributed literature that sought to undermine the concept of neutralism in foreign affairs.⁸⁴⁰ In this vein, the Americans briefly considered delivering mobile transmitters to Baghdad radio stations to counter Nasser's programs beaming into Iraq. They decided against this option for fear of disrupting existing British contributions in this realm and too closely identifying the United States with the broadcasts.⁸⁴¹ Even so, the US continued to utilize propaganda

⁸³⁸ From Baghdad (Berry) to Department of State, #657 –Samples of Anti-Communist Propaganda, 16 March 1954, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 3.

⁸³⁹ Operations Coordinating Board – Progress Report on NSC 5428, 10 March 1955, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 – Administrative and Chronological Files, 1953-1961, Box 26.

⁸⁴⁰ From Burton Berry to the Department of State, Attacking Iraqi Neutralism, 19 January 1954, NSA EBB 78; Operations Coordinating Board – Progress Report on NSC 5428, 10 March 1955, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 – Administrative and Chronological Files, 1953-1961, Box 26.

⁸⁴¹ From Colonel R.P. Ross JR, to Mr. Elmer B Staats, Executive Officer, 11 February 1955, DDRS; From Arthur Richards to the Under Secretary of State, Proposed Strengthening of Broadcast Facilities in Iraq, 17 April 1956, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 – Administrative and Chronological Files, 1953-1961, Box 21; From NE Mr. Wilkins to Mr. Richards, Assistance in Strengthening Broadcast Facilities in Iraq, 16 April 1956, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 – Administrative and Chronological Files, 1953-1961, Box 21.

assistance as a key means of strengthening its bilateral partnership with Iraq until July 1958.⁸⁴²

The Eisenhower administration also committed itself to supporting, supplying, and training the Iraqi police and security forces. As with propaganda assistance, this policy decision seemed to fly in the face of countless reports that indicated the US and the Iraqi government were already deeply unpopular. Studies of the Iraqi security and police services clearly showed that US support for these institutions would closely associate the United States with a hated and repressive arm of the despised ruling elite. Ambassador Berry astutely identified one of the lasting legacies of the 1948 *Wathba* (meaning “the leap”): a “carefully nurtured dislike of the police among the lower elements of the population.” Hermann Eilts of the US embassy concurred, arguing that Iraqi citizens demonstrated the “traditional Near Eastern contempt for the police.”⁸⁴³ The Operations Coordinating Board similarly described the widespread public “antipathy” toward the police that hampered the force’s effectiveness.⁸⁴⁴

Despite these plainly evident expressions of popular anti-police sentiment, the United States expanded its strategic collaboration with the Iraqi police and security forces. As with many areas of Iraqi life, the police force had traditionally been the preserve of British power. The Eisenhower administration began to consider extending assistance to the police and security forces in 1955. The United States contemplated

⁸⁴² #101 - From Embassy in Iraq (Gallman) to the Department of State, 12 March 1958, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 297.

⁸⁴³ From Baghdad (Berry) to Department of State, #383 –The Demonstrations of November 22 to November 26; Political Aspects, 8 December 1952, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2 (first quote); From Baghdad (Hermann Frederick Eilts, Second Secretary of Embassy) to Department of State, #617 –Recent Police Operations Against the Iraqi Communist Party, 10 June 1955, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 1 (second quote).

⁸⁴⁴ #427 - OCB Report on Iraq – Analysis of Internal Security Situation in Iraq and Recommended Action, 14 December 1955, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 981.

providing equipment to the police, but the British rejected the idea for fear of introducing two different types of equipment. US diplomats ultimately settled on offering annual grants for training ten Iraqi officers at American academies.⁸⁴⁵

As in the military aid sector, continued Iraqi appeals for additional assistance led to an expansion of this program. Prime Minister Nuri al-Said submitted a request for a wide-ranging list of police equipment worth over \$10 million in January 1957.⁸⁴⁶

American officials were unwilling to accede to al-Said's grandiose requests, but his agitation nonetheless led to a major expansion of US aid. During the Richards Mission visit to Iraq in April 1957, special ambassador James Richards promised the Iraqis \$1 million for the provision of modern equipment for the police and security forces. On top of this aid, he also reiterated America's commitment to assisting and training the police to shore up the shaky foundations of the government.⁸⁴⁷

Richards' announcement took place in an informational environment that clearly indicated the Americans were expanding their relationship with a deeply unpopular security apparatus. Analyses produced in the spring and summer of 1957 by Point IV, the OCB, and other agencies each warned that nationalist and opposition elements hated the Iraqi police. They also insisted that American diplomats must not identify themselves

⁸⁴⁵ #427 - OCB Report on Iraq – Analysis of Internal Security Situation in Iraq and Recommended Action, 14 December 1955, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 985; Operations Coordinating Board - Memorandum of Special Meeting on 7 May 1956 – NSC 5428 Working Group on 1290-D Iraq, 13 June 1956, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – OCB Central File Series, Box 44, DDEL; Operations Coordinating Board, Daily Intelligence Abstracts, 27 September 1955, DDRS; From ICA (Hall), Assistance for the Iraq Internal Security Forces, 4 April 1957, NARA, RG 59, Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Country Files Prepared for the Richards Mission to the Middle East, 1956-1957, Box 13.

⁸⁴⁶ From Nicholas Thacher to Edward Waggoner, Office of NEA, 1 May 1958, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs – Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Subject Files Relating to Iraq and Jordan, 1956-1959, Box 13; Telephone Conversation Between Mr. Engle and Dennis A. Fitzgerald, 31 January 1957, Dennis A. Fitzgerald: Papers, 1945-1969, Box 25, DDEL.

⁸⁴⁷ From Gallman to Department of State, #1667, 8 April 1957, NARA, RG 59, Office of Near Eastern Affairs, Country Files Prepared for the Richards Mission to the Middle East, 1956-1957, Box 18; Operations Coordinating Board, Operational Guidance Paper for Iraq, Internal Security, 22 May 1957, DDRS.

with the “political aspects” of the security forces. Even so, the authors still concluded that US assistance could greatly improve public trust in the police.⁸⁴⁸ Unfortunately, the authors of these cables offered few specific ideas as to how US assistance would actually restore public confidence in the authorities. Nor did these cables address the possibility that this public trust may never have existed previously.⁸⁴⁹

Point IV’s analyses of the police are worth closer examination. The agency drafted a series of studies in April 1957 to help policymakers determine the specific shape of their aid program in the context of the Richards Mission. One Point IV report from 4 April began by noting that Iraq was one of the most heavily policed nations of the free world, with close to 50,000 officers presiding over a population of roughly 5 million. Equally, the study observed that British colonial authorities first organized the Iraqi police to serve as a repressive, paramilitary arm of the government and crown. Not surprisingly, the authors concluded, the police were “disliked, if not hated, by the majority of the population.”⁸⁵⁰ The report continued with a list of the forces’ deficiencies: low morale, poor pay, long hours, major problems of corruption, and a general “poor performance of police in internal security matters.” To put it in the most

⁸⁴⁸ Operations Coordinating Board Report - Operations Plan for Iraq (NSC 5428), 7 August 1957, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 1062-1068; From ICA (Hall), Assistance for the Iraq Internal Security Forces, 4 April 1957, NARA, RG 59, Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Country Files Prepared for the Richards Mission to the Middle East, 1956-1957, Box 13; Operations Coordinating Board, Operational Guidance Paper for Iraq, Internal Security, 22 May 1957, DDRS; Operations Coordinating Board - Operational Guidance with Respect to Iraq in Implementation of NSC 5428, 7 June 1957, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – OCB Central File Series, Box 44, DDEL.

⁸⁴⁹ From ICA (Hall), Assistance for the Iraq Internal Security Forces, 4 April 1957, NARA, RG 59, Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Country Files Prepared for the Richards Mission to the Middle East, 1956-1957, Box 13; Operations Coordinating Board, Operational Guidance Paper for Iraq, Internal Security, 22 May 1957, DDRS.

⁸⁵⁰ From ICA (Hall), Assistance for the Iraq Internal Security Forces, 4 April 1957, NARA, RG 59, Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Country Files Prepared for the Richards Mission to the Middle East, 1956-1957, Box 13.

optimistic of terms, Point IV's study suggested the force was "in a period of transition" and required an entire overhaul of its officer corps.⁸⁵¹

What is particularly fascinating about the Point IV study is not only the tone of its observations, but also the striking disconnect between its findings and recommendations. This disconnect served as a microcosm of the much larger division between American analyses of the Iraqi economic and political arenas and US programs for propaganda and security aid. Despite the long list of failures, missteps, and serious problems facing the police, the Point IV study simply concluded that the United States had a "commitment to support the Iraqi internal security forces and it is in the national interest to do." No elaboration was provided as to exactly what the US national interest constituted in this realm. Nor did the authors grapple with the puzzling contradiction of how America's collaboration with a repressive, hated arm of the ruling elite would advance the national interest. Rather, the Point IV authors merely indicated that the Iraqi government expected American aid.⁸⁵² Evidently, the agency saw greater risk in backing away from this commitment than in providing assistance.

The study concluded by suggesting two options for policymakers. First, they could offer a one-time grant of equipment, though it would have to be provided outside of Point IV channels since "it could look bad if the first USOM [Point IV] grant to Iraq is to the very repressive and unpopular Iraqi internal security forces." The second approach, favored by Point IV, was to extend an initial grant of equipment followed by an offer to

⁸⁵¹ From ICA (Hall), Assistance for the Iraq Internal Security Forces, 4 April 1957, NARA, RG 59, Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Country Files Prepared for the Richards Mission to the Middle East, 1956-1957, Box 13.

⁸⁵² From ICA (Hall), Assistance for the Iraq Internal Security Forces, 4 April 1957, NARA, RG 59, Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Country Files Prepared for the Richards Mission to the Middle East, 1956-1957, Box 13.

train additional officers. This would include a \$1 million grant of equipment, the dispatch of American experts to work with the Directorate General of Security, and the expansion of training for Iraqi officers in the United States. These measures, it was reasoned, offered the best possible approach to “strengthening security forces and restoring public confidence in them.”⁸⁵³

As with the analytical components of the paper, what is most telling about these recommendations is not what is described, but rather what is ignored. Point IV offered no consideration of any alternative approaches aside from expanding the US assistance program. In this sense, not only did American aid to the Iraqi police reflect the gradualist, middle-ground approach favored by the US in strengthening its partnership with Iraq, but it also represented their fundamental commitment to the broader political status quo in Baghdad as represented by Iraq’s ruling elites. The suggestion of possibly drawing down support for Iraq’s police was evidently not considered in the national interest, to the extent that it was considered at all.

Frederick Axelgard’s observation of the US assistance package is telling. Though the US pledged \$1 million and further aid, Axelgard writes, “in a move that perhaps should have told Washington something, it [Iraq’s government] immediately requested an additional \$9 million to complete the police program.”⁸⁵⁴ Equally concerning was the fact that the Americans’ strategies for improving the police’s public reputation had clearly failed by the time analysts revisited the problem in May 1958. Nicholas Thacher again described the public’s strong resentment of the police and the central government

⁸⁵³ From ICA (Hall), Assistance for the Iraq Internal Security Forces, 4 April 1957, NARA, RG 59, Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Country Files Prepared for the Richards Mission to the Middle East, 1956-1957, Box 13.

⁸⁵⁴ Frederick W. Axelgard, “US Policy Toward Iraq, 1946-1958,” Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, 1988, 223-224 (emphasis in original).

in Baghdad. Thacher, as did his counterparts a year earlier, concluded by emphasizing the importance of finding a way to ameliorate public distrust of the police, now a major benefactor of American assistance and support.⁸⁵⁵ The clear failures of the US programs for propaganda and security assistance were made all the more evident with the government's overthrow only two months later.

Inconsistent Reporting on Threats to Stability

The preceding analysis has argued that American policies in Iraq, in the form of propaganda and security aid, seemed at odds with the voluminous reporting of US officials. One must examine American reporting on Iraq's political climate in a deeper manner to understand why the Eisenhower administration pursued strategies in Iraq that seemed counter-intuitive to the intelligence it possessed at the time. As noted earlier, if one starts with the overthrow of the Iraqi government on 14 July 1958 and works backward, the "trail of clues" suggesting the regime would ultimately become a victim of the public's discontent seems easy to spot. However, to paraphrase Gladwell again, if one starts several years before July 1958 and works forward, recreating what American observers "knew in the same order that they knew it, a very different picture emerges."⁸⁵⁶

American observers had clear signals available to them revealing the deep unpopularity of the Iraqi regime among its citizens. However, analysts did not believe this necessarily meant that a serious political threat to the "old guard," in the form of an imminent change in government, was at hand. One must remember that nearly all

⁸⁵⁵ From Nicholas Thacher to Edward Waggoner, Office of NEA, 1 May 1958, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs – Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Subject Files Relating to Iraq and Jordan, 1956-1959, Box 13.

⁸⁵⁶ Gladwell, "Connecting the Dots: The Paradoxes of Intelligence Reform," p. 83.

regimes in the Middle East in this period fit the characterization applied to Iraq of a government seriously lacking in popularity and legitimacy among its citizens. These problems appeared with regularity in Iran, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia in this period.⁸⁵⁷ Each of these regimes survived in power, and were the benefactors of substantive US assistance, despite their chronic lack of legitimacy among their citizens. American analysts, for their part, did not necessarily equate the Iraqi public's disapproval of the central government with the potential for serious, short-term political "instability" (or liberalization, in the eyes of opposition forces) arising from electoral or extra-legal challenges to the regime. Furthermore, many of the signals describing the deep hostility of Iraqis to the government concerned groups, like students and the lower classes, who did not have consistent, independent means of expressing their dissent. The absence of an "organized political vehicle" for these opposition sentiments suggested, one US observer later wrote, that "these symptoms could be disregarded."⁸⁵⁸ American officials viewed these groups as longer-term challenges facing the regime; it was not immediately clear to analysts that these groups could translate their grievances into a substantive, imminent threat to the government or the Americans' wider conceptions of control and power in Baghdad.

It is essential to examine the views of American analysts regarding the prospects for serious, short-term political "chaos" that might emerge from a liberalization of the Iraqi political system. In this regard, analyses were almost entirely wavering and

⁸⁵⁷ One State Department figure made this specific point in a cable drafted only two days after the July coup. See #120 - Memorandum From Harold W. Glidden of the Division of Research and Analysis for Near East, South Asia, and Africa to the Director of Intelligence and Research (Cumming) – Intelligence Indications of Coup in Iraq, 16 July 1958, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 322.

⁸⁵⁸ #120 - Memorandum From Harold W. Glidden of the Division of Research and Analysis for Near East, South Asia, and Africa to the Director of Intelligence and Research (Cumming) – Intelligence Indications of Coup in Iraq, 16 July 1958, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 322.

inconsistent when reporting on the immediate threat posed to political stability in Iraq by political opposition groups, particularly the Iraqi Communist Party, capable of leading a change in government through electoral and extra-legal means. As Frederick Axelgard rightly notes, American assessments of the immediate stability of the regime were incredibly “uneven,” marked by “dire predictions” about the dangers facing the government as well as rosy, optimistic ones.⁸⁵⁹

It comes as no surprise that American observers were particularly concerned about the capabilities (both immediate and residual) of the ICP in this period. The party had its roots in Iraq dating back to the 1930s and emerged as a major force as a “clandestine oppositional party” after 1941 when Yusif Salman, also known as Comrade Fahd, took over as party leader. Fahd worked energetically to broaden the ICP’s appeal beyond urban students, teachers, and government bureaucrats to include workers in the Basra port and labourers in the oil and railway sectors.⁸⁶⁰ The ICP also gained traction among Kurds interested in the party’s appeals for Kurdish autonomy as well as Iraqi Jews, Shi’a, and Christians through its focus, Tripp writes, on “progressive social democracy, rather than of rigorous Marxism-Leninism....”⁸⁶¹ By 1946, Marr concludes, the ICP was “the best-organized political group in the country.”⁸⁶² Along with inciting a number of strikes and demonstrations in this period, the party, after a period of initial

⁸⁵⁹ Axelgard, “US Policy Toward Iraq, 1946-1958,” p. 233-234.

⁸⁶⁰ Johan Franzen, *Red Star over Iraq: Iraqi Communism Before Saddam* (London: Hurst, 2011), 3 (quote); Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, p. 111-112; Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, p. 63-64; Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett, *Iraq Since 1958*, p. 38.

⁸⁶¹ Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, p. 112 (quote); Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett, *Iraq Since 1958*, p. 27; Dawisha, *Iraq*, p. 133-134.

⁸⁶² Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, p. 64 (quote). Dawisha adds that that ICP in this period had a “reputation for effective and popular opposition.” See Dawisha, *Iraq*, p. 105.

inaction, took control of the 1948 *Wathba* protests against the Portsmouth treaty.⁸⁶³ The Iraqi government meted out harsh repression against the party following these events. Nuri al-Said's cabinet executed key cadres among the group's leadership, including Comrade Fahd, in February 1949. Fahd's organization was shattered for a time, and many of the surviving party members found themselves imprisoned by the central authorities. By mid-1949, Franzen writes, the ICP was "fragmented and in utter confusion."⁸⁶⁴

The party led a remarkable revival throughout the 1950s in spite of successive waves of repression meted out by governments led by Fadhil Jamali, Nuri al-Said, and others. The party, still technically illegal, established a series of "front organizations" and auxiliary groups like the Peace Partisans, the Organization of Democratic Youth, and the League for the Defence of Women's Rights. These groups had particular appeal among the professional and middle class.⁸⁶⁵ Charles Tripp suggests that the Peace Partisans' calls for terminating Iraq's alliance with London tapped into a rich "vein of political sentiment in the country" that allowed the organization "to gather widespread support...."⁸⁶⁶ The ICP, through its auxiliary organizations, joined with other nationalist groups like the NDP and Istiqlal during periods of liberalization (as in 1954 and 1957) to

⁸⁶³ Batatu argues that after an initial period of deliberation, the "Communists emerged unmistakably as the fundamental force of the *Wathbah*." See Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*, p. 551 (footnote quote), 548-559; Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett, *Iraq Since 1958*, p. 40; Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, p. 64; Dawisha, *Iraq*, p. 107-108.

⁸⁶⁴ Franzen, *Red Star over Iraq*, p. 56 (quote), 52, 55; Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett, *Iraq Since 1958*, p. 41, 42. Batatu agrees, arguing that "To all intents and purposes, by the middle of 1949 the party had ceased to matter." Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*, p. 571 (footnote quote).

⁸⁶⁵ Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett, Franzen, and Tripp each refer to these groups from the pre-revolutionary period, particularly the Peace Partisans, as communist "front organizations." See Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett, *Iraq Since 1958*, p. 43; Franzen, *Red Star over Iraq*, p. 58-59; Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, p. 126. Batatu argues that the ICP's ability to get "back on its feet" by the end of 1951 should be credited primarily to the young Kurdish leader of the party Baha ud-Din Nuri, who headed the party until early 1953. See Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*, p. 662.

⁸⁶⁶ Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, p. 126.

form united organizations during elections.⁸⁶⁷ The ICP also rebounded to facilitate, and at times organize, a number of strikes and demonstrations against the central regime, foremost among them the 1952 Basra port workers strike, the 1952 *Intifada*, and the November 1956 Suez riots in Najaf.⁸⁶⁸ As part of this trend, the ICP famously led a “popular uprising” in the city of al-Hayy in December 1956 in which the ICP and its supporters held control of the city against police units for a considerable period.⁸⁶⁹ The Western powers and Iraqi government authorities, in turn, viewed these popular strikes and protests as an attack on US and UK interests and the start of additional revolutionary outbursts.⁸⁷⁰

Historians have formed a general consensus on the question of the ICP’s capacities on the eve of the 1958 revolution. Marion Farouk-Sluglett and Peter Sluglett argue that the “martyrdom” of Fahd and the party leadership in 1949, combined with violent government repression throughout the 1950s, “ensured that the ICP gained widespread popular support.”⁸⁷¹ Hanna Batatu agrees, suggesting that “Fahd dead proved more potent than Fahd living. Communism became now surrounded with the halo of martyrdom.” Following its ineffective response to the Baghdad Pact’s formation, Batatu argues, the ICP reorganized its central committee, gave greater emphasis to pan-Arab ideas to attract Sunni members, and more broadly revived its fortunes by 1956 and

⁸⁶⁷ Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, p. 77; Franzen, *Red Star over Iraq*, p. 80; Dawisha, *Iraq*, p. 154.

⁸⁶⁸ Batatu’s account of the 1952 *Intifada* and the communists’ role in the events is excellent. Batatu argues that Iraqi communists were particularly influential in the events leading to the burning of the USIS headquarters in Baghdad during the revolutionary outbreak. See Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*, p. 666-670 and 752-754 for the events in Najaf. See also Dawisha, *Iraq*, p. 110, 116; Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, p. 71-72.

⁸⁶⁹ Franzen, *Red Star over Iraq*, p. 76-77; Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*, p. 754-757.

⁸⁷⁰ Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, p. 113.

⁸⁷¹ Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett, *Iraq Since 1958*, p. 41-42.

beyond as part of a “rising trend toward the Communists.”⁸⁷² Phebe Marr writes that the party, despite government repression, successfully held influence among important segments of the “intelligentsia and the working class” in the period leading up to the 1958 revolution.⁸⁷³ Finally, Johan Franzen argues that the ICP emerged as a “mass party” in the political arena by July 1958, with particular strengths in mobilization and recruitment among students, lawyers, youth, women, and elements of the armed forces. From the denouement of 1949 to the 1958 revolution, Franzen concludes, the ICP was able to “regain its position its position as the biggest and most influential opposition party on the Iraqi political scene.”⁸⁷⁴

As a reflection of these trends, American observers often spoke in concerned terms about the threat posed by the ICP, as well as groups like the Istiqlal Party and the NDP, to the old guard’s short-term control. For instance, despite harsh sentences handed down by al-Madfaï’s regime against communists, the government admitted in 1953 to US diplomats that the majority of the ICP’s membership remained intact.⁸⁷⁵ The American consulate at Basra anxiously reported that communist sympathies were quickly spreading among large portions of Basra’s unemployed and lower class groups. The same held true for rural areas in the north where communist propaganda was on the rise.⁸⁷⁶ These

⁸⁷² Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*, p. 569 (first quote), 758 (second quote). On the weakness of the ICP’s response to the Baghdad Pact, see Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*, p. 679-689. On its period of reorganization and re-emergence, see p. 709-710, 758-763, 995.

⁸⁷³ Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, p. 58 (quote), 94.

⁸⁷⁴ Franzen, *Red Star over Iraq*, p. 57 (first quote), 56 (second quote), 52, 58-60, 80-81.

⁸⁷⁵ Department of the Air Force – Staff Message Division –From USAIRA Baghdad Iraq Sgd Berry to CSAF Washington DC for Dir Intel, 2 March 1953, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 3; Department of the Air Force – Staff Message Division –From USAIRA Baghdad Iraq Sgd Berry to CSAF Washington DC for Dir Intel, 28 March 1953, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 3.

⁸⁷⁶ From Basra (James Cortada, American Consul) to Department of State, #67 – Pro-Communist Sympathies among Basra Masses Detected through Showing of USIS Korean War Pictures, 22 May 1953, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 17; From Baghdad (Berry) to Department of

growing pro-communist sentiments found expression in the Basra BPC strike of December 1953. American analysts believed the ICP and NDP worked together to organize the strike in an attempt to provoke the downfall of Fadhil Jamali's cabinet.⁸⁷⁷ Ambassador Berry was particularly concerned about the ICP's immediate capacities to foment political unrest. The Iraqi Minister of the Interior, Said Qazzaz, shared these views. Qazzaz explained to Berry that the ICP would certainly reappear given the government's inability to apprehend the strike's organizers and the ICP's impressive residual capabilities to exploit "latent discontent in the country" and provoke crises.⁸⁷⁸

The June 1954 elections served as one of the high points of American anxieties about the short-term political stability and strength of the government. This was particularly true since the elections showed a convergence between dispossessed Iraqis and political groups who had the organizational capabilities to challenge the regime in the political arena. In pre-election assessments, US officials warned that Halabja, in the Kurdish north, was now a stronghold of communist power. Many government bureaucrats in the area were concerned they were on the "wrong side" of the political spectrum.⁸⁷⁹ Embassy officials suggested the National Front (an umbrella organization consisting of Istiqlal, NDP, and ICP members) was likely to out-perform government expectations and capture large swaths of votes in urban areas, especially among younger Iraqis dissatisfied with the old guard. The CIA echoed these assessments, predicting the

State, #24 –Increase in Leftist Petitions may Indicate Intensified Communist Propaganda Activity in Rural Areas, 7 July 1953, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 3.

⁸⁷⁷ From Basra (James Cortada) to Department of State, #92 – Basra Petroleum Company Strike: Additional Information, 18 February 1954, NARA, RG 84, Iraq - Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 16.

⁸⁷⁸ From Baghdad (Berry) to Department of State, #487 –Review and Prognosis of Iraqi Political Developments, October 1 1953 – January 1 1954, 14 January 1954, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2.

⁸⁷⁹ From Baghdad (Berry) to Department of State, #657 –Samples of Anti-Communist Propaganda, 16 March 1954, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 3.

National Front would win at least ten seats since it was the “only voice of deep political and social discontent.”⁸⁸⁰ These predictions proved correct, as the Front captured ten seats in parliament. The implications of this election for the future of Iraq’s political climate were clear to the CIA and Ireland. As both of their analyses concluded, the Front would now likely exploit anti-Western attitudes in parliament and would “impede any program of a pro-Western government.” “Their introduction into the Chamber of these Deputies,” Ireland stated, “cannot help being disturbing to pro-Western deputies.”⁸⁸¹

The second high point of American pessimism about the immediate stability of the old guard came with the outbreak of the Suez War riots in late 1956. Shortly after the outbreak of the Suez War, CIA Director Allen Dulles reported to White House staff that the internal situation in Iraq was worsening. Dulles feared that Nuri al-Said might not survive much longer given his regime’s close identification with the British.⁸⁸² The CIA shared grave concerns about the potential fall of al-Said’s regime. On 22 November 1956, the agency reported that Nuri al-Said’s government had been “severely shaken” and was under considerable pressure to step down from anti-Western elements and broad segments of the population.⁸⁸³

American officials observed a wide range of strikes and riots break out across the country in late November and December 1956. Major demonstrations in Baghdad, Mosul, and Najaf (with the latter in particular led by communists) involving students

⁸⁸⁰ Office of the Air Attaché Cable to the United States Air Force Chief of Staff, Ba’athists Emerge, 22 May 1954, NSA EBB 78; CIA NSC Briefing, “NSC Briefing – Iraqi Elections on 8 June 1954,” July 24 2009. CIA-RDP80R01443R000200330005-0, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST) (quote).

⁸⁸¹ CIA NSC Briefing, “NSC Briefing – Iraqi Elections on 8 June 1954,” July 24 2009. CIA-RDP80R01443R000200330005-0, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST); From Baghdad (Ireland, Charge d’affaires ad interim [ai].) to Department of State, #19 –Parliamentary Elections, June 1954 – Analysis and Comment, 14 July 1954, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2 (both quotes). See also Dawisha, *Iraq*, p. 156.

⁸⁸² The White House – Memorandum of Conversation with the President, 21 November 1956, DDRS.

⁸⁸³ Central Intelligence Agency, 22 November 1956, DDRS.

were brought under control only with the intervention of the army.⁸⁸⁴ These reports were especially alarming to US officials because they again indicated a convergence between Iraqi citizens and organized political groups. At the same time students were leading riots, reports also indicated that opposition political elements were petitioning the King to dismiss Nuri al-Said as prime minister. Nicholas Thacher blamed Baathists and communists for instigating the students' riots of late 1956.⁸⁸⁵ Potentially destabilizing and threatening opposition groups like the ICP continued to wield authority following the Suez War. The Operations Coordinating Board commented in August 1957 on the ICP's impressive staying power. The OCB claimed that the ICP maintained strong party discipline, was adept at exploiting political crises, and demonstrated a keen ability to withstand government repression. "If political instability should come about by the release of internal political rivalries which are now...submerged," the OCB argued, "the Communist Party could develop increased capabilities for creating disturbances."⁸⁸⁶

Analysts were equally aware that Iraq had a "sharply fluctuating political situation."⁸⁸⁷ Their assessments closely mirrored the political trends described earlier relating to the fortunes of the ICP and other opposition groups. Reports on the immediate, short-term threats to stability posed by opposition political groups were inconsistent and wavering in the period before July 1958. Just as often, American

⁸⁸⁴ From Baghdad (David Fritzlan, Counsellor of Embassy) to Department of State, #361 –Current Pressures on the Government of Iraq, 7 December 1956, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 1; Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, p. 76; Dawisha, *Iraq*, p. 116; Axelgard, "US Policy Toward Iraq, 1946-1958," p. 167.

⁸⁸⁵ From Baghdad (David Fritzlan, Counsellor of Embassy) to Department of State, #361 –Current Pressures on the Gov't of Iraq, 7 December 1956, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 1; From Baghdad (Nicholas Thacher, 1st Secretary of Embassy), #437 – Recent Student Political Activity, 22 January 1957, NARA, RG 84, Iraq - Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 20.

⁸⁸⁶ Operations Coordinating Board Report - Operations Plan for Iraq (NSC 5428), 7 August 1957, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 1065.

⁸⁸⁷ From Baghdad (Berry) to Department of State, #487 –Review and Prognosis of Iraqi Political Developments, October 1 1953 – January 1 1954, 14 January 1954, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2.

observers produced analyses that concluded dissident political groups were not strong enough to pose a serious, imminent threat. Many of these reports argued that the regime had effectively suppressed the ICP and other parties, thanks in large part to their near-continuous efforts to criminalize political activities.

American analyses of the Baath Party are a prime example of this trend. Analysts first identified the Baathists as an organized political force in 1954.⁸⁸⁸ Reporting at times suggested that US observers and their Iraqi counterparts were not particularly concerned with the influence of this subversive group on Iraq's political climate. In July 1955, following the arrest of a Baathist cell, one Iraqi official remarked to Hermann Eilts that the Baathists claimed less than two hundred members and that the regime had known about their existence for some time. Two years later, Minister of Interior Sami Fattah expressed confidence to US officials that his cabinet had the Baathists under control; no analyses appear in the documentary record of any dissenting American views on this issue.⁸⁸⁹

Several of the studies described above expressed great concern that the ICP could pose a serious threat to the central government in Baghdad. There were also numerous analyses reflecting the Americans' confidence that the ICP had been effectively neutralized. Repression meted out by al-Madfa'i's regime against the Iraqi Communist Party in 1953 led Ambassador Berry to conclude that the party was "greatly weakened" and lacking leadership. Hermann Eilts believed that constant clashes between the ICP

⁸⁸⁸ Office of the Air Attaché Cable to the United States Air Force Chief of Staff, Ba'athists Emerge, 22 May 1954, NSA EBB 78.

⁸⁸⁹ From Baghdad (Hermann Frederick Eilts, Second Secretary of Embassy) to Department of State, #16 – Iraqi Police Raids on Secret Cells of ASRP in Baghdad, 11 July 1955, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 1; From Baghdad (Nicholas Thacher, 1st Secretary of Embassy) to Department of State, #94 – Views of Minister of Interior Sami Fattah on the Press and Ba'ath Activities, 30 July 1957, NARA, RG 84, Iraq - Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 20.

and security services had seriously disrupted the organization.⁸⁹⁰ The OCB's evaluation of the ICP in December 1955 argued that the party did "not have the capacity to overthrow the government by force nor to subvert it or influence it significantly."⁸⁹¹ These latter analyses were particularly significant since they appeared at a time when the ICP was in the midst of reorganization following the Baghdad Pact's formation.

The intelligence community's appraisals at times mirrored the confident expressions of the OCB and embassy. The NIE of July 1956 insisted that ICP members could not exert "significant influence" on the country's political structures so long as Nuri al-Said's regime maintained its authoritarian controls. The National Intelligence Survey of Iraq of October 1957 optimistically testified that massive government repression rendered the Iraqi Communist Party "virtually impotent."⁸⁹² The deputy director of plans for the CIA provided one of the final reviews of the ICP before the revolution on 3 July 1958. He confidently insisted that the firm exercise of government power would keep the communists under effective control.⁸⁹³

On a broader scale as well, the pessimistic predictions offered by US analysts were matched in volume and consistency by reports that suggested exactly the opposite -- that political groups did not pose serious, short-term threats to the government. The

⁸⁹⁰ Department of the Air Force – Staff Message Division –From USAIRA Baghdad Iraq Sgd Berry to CSAF Washington DC for Dir Intel, 28 March 1953, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 3 (quote); Department of the Air Force – Staff Message Division –From USAIRA Baghdad Iraq Sgd Berry to CSAF Washington DC for Dir Intel, 18 April 1953, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 3; From Baghdad (Hermann Frederick Eilts, Second Secretary of Embassy) to Department of State, #617 –Recent Police Operations Against the Iraqi Communist Party, 10 June 1955, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 1.

⁸⁹¹ #427 - OCB Report on Iraq –Analysis of Internal Security Situation in Iraq and Recommended Action , 14 December 1955, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 982.

⁸⁹² #435 - NIE 36.2-56 – The Outlook for Iraq's Stability and Foreign Policies, 17 July 1956, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 1002 (first quote); National Intelligence Survey – Iraq – NIS 30, 1 October 1957, CIA ERR, p. 32 (second quote).

⁸⁹³ #108 - Memorandum from the Deputy Director for Plans of the CIA (Wisner) to the Director of Intelligence and Research (Cumming) –An Analysis of the Effect in Iraq of Military Intervention in Lebanon by the US and UK, 3 July 1958, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 306.

intelligence community's NIE of 7 September 1954 plainly stated that "no opposition party or combination has yet shown sufficient strength to threaten Nuri al-Said's personal following in parliament." The fact that the Istiqlal and NDP were in the process of forced dissolution at the time heavily influenced this judgment.⁸⁹⁴ These conclusions re-appeared in various forms. The NIE of 17 July 1956 described al-Said's political opposition as "splintered, intimidated, and weakened by deep-seated incompatibilities between various individual leaders and groups." In March 1958, Ambassador Gallman and Nicholas Thacher respectively characterized al-Said's opposition as weak, bitter, and frustrated by their inability to maneuver around the government's strict controls.⁸⁹⁵ Only two months before the coup in Baghdad, intelligence assessments likewise suggested the regime could ensure political stability in the short-term. The CIA stated in May 1958 that dissident political groups, outside the confines of the old guard, were poorly organized.⁸⁹⁶ The deputy director of plans of the CIA argued on 3 June that the hard core of anti-government opposition in the country was "small" and "lack[ed] the immediate capacity to overthrow the regime."⁸⁹⁷

This muddled, wavering trend in reporting was the only consistent pattern that appeared in evaluations of the imminent threat posed by political groups to Iraq's old guard. It is difficult to discern whether these inconsistent reports directly influenced the

⁸⁹⁴ NIE 36-54 – National Intelligence Estimate: Probable Developments in the Arab States, 7 September 1954, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) – Record Set of NIEs, Special Estimates, and SNIes, 1950-1954, Box 2.

⁸⁹⁵ #435 - NIE 36.2-56 – The Outlook for Iraq's Stability and Foreign Policies, 17 July 1956, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 999 (quote); #101 – From Embassy in Iraq (Gallman) to the Department of State, 12 March 1958, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 297; From Baghdad (Nicholas Thacher, First Secretary of Embassy) to Department of State, #909 – Status of the Opposition – Interview with Sadiq Shenshal, 18 March 1958, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 1.

⁸⁹⁶ Current Intelligence Weekly Summary – Iraq – Jordan Union, 1 May 1958, CIA ERR.

⁸⁹⁷ #108 - Memorandum from the Deputy Director for Plans of the CIA (Wisner) to the Director of Intelligence and Research (Cumming) – An Analysis of the Effect in Iraq of Military Intervention in Lebanon by the US and UK, 3 July 1958, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 305.

Eisenhower administration's policies in Iraq. However, it is clear that the informational environment formed by American observers did not suggest, with any consistency, any clear or plainly obvious, imminent, short-term threats to political stability in Iraq before the 1958 coup. The once-clear pattern of signals in US analyses indicating a threat to the regime was far more muddled and confused than it might appear at first glance.

Analyses of the Iraqi Military

US observers concluded, at points, that opposition parties did not pose an immediate threat to central authorities in Baghdad. Analyses of the Iraqi military's role in the nation's political arena were similarly optimistic in their tone. American observers were fairly consistent in their judgments that the military, the group ultimately responsible for leading the July 1958 coup, was not a threat to the pro-Western regime in Baghdad. In retrospect, the political disposition of the Iraqi military was the biggest blind spot of both American and Iraqi intelligence services.⁸⁹⁸ As David Fritzman and David Newsom have noted in retrospective interviews, American observers knew very little (if anything) about the Free Officers movement within the Iraqi armed forces before 14 July 1958. Assessments of the Iraqi armed forces regularly concluded that it had been "de-politicized" after 1941. These reports dovetailed nicely with the assumptions of many US analysts that Iraq was transforming into a modern, westernized state in which its armed forces were gradually insulated from the nation's political life.

Only a few analysts can be credited with much insight for issuing warnings that the army might be harboring political dissidents. James Cortada reported in 1954 that

⁸⁹⁸ On Iraqi views of Qasim's group, see #120 - Memorandum From Harold W. Glidden of the Division of Research and Analysis for Near East, South Asia, and Africa to the Director of Intelligence and Research (Cumming) - Intelligence Indications of Coup in Iraq, 16 July 1958, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 322.

some army officers in Basra were reportedly “disgusted” by the constant political realignments ongoing at the top-levels of government. Similarly, the US embassy expressed some concern that the Czech arms deal for Egypt in late 1955 would have a negative impact on the pro-Western outlook of the army corps.⁸⁹⁹ The CIA chimed in on this issue, reporting that forty junior officers had been arrested for openly voicing dissatisfaction with Nuri al-Said’s pro-British alignment during the Suez Crisis.⁹⁰⁰ The OCB and NIE of June 1957 also pointed to scattered evidence that some pro-communist, anti-government sentiment existed among a limited number of junior officers.⁹⁰¹

These isolated reports stand in stark contrast to the positions adopted by many political officers and members of the intelligence community. The majority opinion in both groups was that the Iraqi army was solidly pro-government in sentiment and did not pose a threat to the rule of Nuri al-Said and Iraq’s pro-Western elites. The US embassy expressed its confidence in 1954 that the army regarded al-Said’s rule as a means to political stability and greater prosperity for the military. Ambassador Waldemar Gallman likewise assured his readers at the State Department that Nuri al-Said retained strong control over Iraqi politics, in no small part thanks to the army’s loyalty.⁹⁰² Even after the conclusion of the Suez riots, the US embassy adamantly maintained they found “no

⁸⁹⁹ #26 –Basra Monthly Political Report, 28 September 1954, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2; From Morris to RM Hadow, Levant Department, Foreign Office, V1192/752, 17 July 1956, FO371-121348, BNA; From NE (Burdett) to NEA (Mr. Allen) – Iraqi Military Assistance Program, 19 July 1956, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs – Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Subject Files Relating to Iraq and Jordan, 1956-1959, Box 13.

⁹⁰⁰ Central Intelligence Agency, 22 November 1956, DDRS.

⁹⁰¹ Operations Coordinating Board, Operational Guidance Paper for Iraq, Internal Security, 22 May 1957, DDRS; #458 - NIE 36.2-57 – The Outlook for Iraq, 4 June 1957, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 1057.

⁹⁰² Department of the Air Force – Staff Message Division, 8 August 1954, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 3; #433 - Telegram from Embassy in Iraq (Gallman) to Department of State, 28 March 1956, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 995.

evidence of activist political groups or movements in the military forces.”⁹⁰³ Gallman again repeated his assurances about the non-political nature of the army in March 1958. He argued at that time that the Iraqi army demonstrated “no signs of disaffection.”⁹⁰⁴

The reports of intelligence agencies corroborated and amplified these judgments. Remarkably, the first substantive intelligence assessment prepared for the Eisenhower administration on the Iraqi army in May 1953 devoted almost no attention to the political loyalty or disposition of the military.⁹⁰⁵ When the intelligence community finally addressed this question in later years, their assessments closely mirrored those of their diplomatic counterparts. OCB reports in December 1955 and May 1957 insisted the army was loyal to the Iraqi regime and that little to no communist infiltration had taken place within its ranks.⁹⁰⁶ The same NIE of June 1957 that identified traces of anti-al-Said sentiment within the army nevertheless concluded that it was not interested in politics and would remain loyal to the government over the next several years. As its authors argued, any existing dissident groups in the military were not capable of “seizing the initiative” against the government.⁹⁰⁷ Intelligence assessments did not significantly change in the weeks before the July 1958 coup. The deputy director of plans for the CIA argued forcefully on 3 July that “there is no evidence to date of the existence of an effective

⁹⁰³ From Baghdad (Nicholas Thacher, First Secretary of Embassy) to Department of State, #635 –General Daghestani’s Disappointment with Additions to Military Aid Program for Iraq, 5 April 1957, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 9 (quote); Nicholas Thacher’s Briefing Notes, Undated, US President’s Citizen Advisors on the Mutual Security Program (Fairless Committee): Records, 1956-1957, Box 9, DDEL.

⁹⁰⁴ #101 – The Embassy in Iraq (Gallman) to the Department of State, 12 March 1958, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 297.

⁹⁰⁵ See National Intelligence Survey – Section 81 – Ground Forces – Iraq – NIS 30, 1 May 1953, CIA ERR.

⁹⁰⁶ #427 - OCB Report on Iraq –Analysis of Internal Security Situation in Iraq and Recommended Action , 14 December 1955, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 982; Operations Coordinating Board, Operational Guidance Paper for Iraq, Internal Security, 22 May 1957, DDRS.

⁹⁰⁷ #458 - NIE 36.2-57 – The Outlook for Iraq, 4 June 1957, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 1058; Operations Coordinating Board - Operational Guidance with Respect to Iraq in Implementation of NSC 5428, 7 June 1957, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – OCB Central File Series, Box 44, DDEL.

coordination between the opposition and the army. Thus...the opposition...lacks the immediate capacity to overthrow the regime.”⁹⁰⁸

Such definitive assessments require deeper consideration of the evidence that led observers to these conclusions. It certainly appears that both the embassy and intelligence agencies failed to collect ample intelligence on the political sentiment of members of the Iraqi armed forces. There is no evidence to suggest that any US observers were aware of specific Free Officers’ cells within the armed forces. This conclusion, in itself, is perhaps not surprising given the secretive nature of coup plotting and the immense difficulty of infiltrating anti-government cells within armed forces. Even so, the problem goes beyond a mere failure to collect relevant intelligence. In the “analysis” phase of the intelligence cycle, American thinking on the political disposition of the military was animated by a set of deeply-held assumptions and preconceptions about the nature of Iraqi politics and society in the 1950s. As William O. Walker III has argued, psychological models of decision-making, encompassing the dominant perceptions and preconceptions of policymakers, can be particularly useful conceptual tools for historians in “discovering how and why decisions are made.”⁹⁰⁹ Most critical in this case was the assumption of observers (as in the modernization realm) that Iraq was naturally moving along a historical trajectory toward a modern, westernized nation-state.

⁹⁰⁸ #108 - Memorandum from the Deputy Director for Plans of the CIA (Wisner) to the Director of Intelligence and Research (Cumming) –An Analysis of the Effect in Iraq of Military Intervention in Lebanon by the US and UK, 3 July 1958, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 305.

⁹⁰⁹ In this case, it is worth quoting Walker III’s review of Deborah Welch Larson’s discussion of schema theory, which overlaps closely with my use of the terms “preconceptions” and “assumptions.” Schema theory, Walker III concludes, “suggests how vast amounts of information are sorted and stored. Individuals seek shortcuts in processing information in order to make cognitive sense of the world around them. A schema is a general, cognitive concept, or knowledge structure, that facilitates such mental activity. In enabling one to make inferences about the behaviour of others and also about their attitudes and belief systems, schemas may be used improperly so that reality will be misrepresented and important details about an event or individual may be overlooked.” See William O. Walker III, “Decision-Making Theory and Narcotic Foreign Policy: Implications for Historical Analysis,” *Diplomatic History* 15, no. 1 (1991), 36-37.

One of the chief characteristics that defined a modern nation was its ability to insulate its military from political affairs. In this specific case, American observers and their Iraqi counterparts regularly contrasted the active political role played by the military before 1941 with its seemingly more modern history defined by the separation of the nation's military and political arenas.

Gilbert Larsen of the US embassy was one of the first Americans to directly make this association. Describing Iraq's armed forces as a stabilizing factor in the country, Larsen suggested there were no indications that the military intended to change its "apolitical status of recent years."⁹¹⁰ The NIE of July 1956 also concluded that the army was a force for stability and that there was "no evidence of a revolutionary-minded military clique among Iraqi officers." The NIE, like Larsen, heavily emphasized the recent period of Iraqi history after 1941 to insist that the military would continue to refrain from political intervention. "By Arab standards," the NIE concluded, "the Iraqi army...has been outstandingly non-political in recent years."⁹¹¹ This reality was contrasted with the period before 1941 in which, in the view of one assessment, "extensive army interference in politics" occurred in Iraq.⁹¹² American analysts specifically chose 1941 as the point of departure for the military as it marked the direct British military intervention in Iraq and the end to the pro-Axis Iraqi government. In many ways, the optimistic assessments of the armed forces produced by US observers

⁹¹⁰ From Baghdad (Gilbert Larsen, Economic Officer) to Department of State, #117 –Political Stability Through Economic Development, 20 September 1954, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2.

⁹¹¹ #435 - NIE 36.2-56 – The Outlook for Iraq's Stability and Foreign Policies, 17 July 1956, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 1001.

⁹¹² National Intelligence Survey – Iraq – NIS 30, 1 October 1957, CIA ERR, p. 32.

were intimately tied to their ringing endorsements of the policies pursued since 1941 by pro-Western Iraqis like Fadhil Jamali and Nuri al-Said.

As in the realm of arms sales and modernization projects, Iraqi authorities played a critical role in shaping American assessments by providing evidence that fit nicely within their established assumptions about the military.⁹¹³ This pattern dates back to 1952, when Nuri al-Said assured Ambassador Burton Berry there were no signs of political dissatisfaction within the army.⁹¹⁴ Similarly, Hermann Eilts questioned the director of operations, Brigadier Abdul Razzaq Hammudi, about communist penetration of the army in March 1956. Hammudi reassured Eilts that infiltration had been minimal at best and strongly discounted the possibility of a military coup. Hammudi insisted that Iraq had historically experienced military coups long before other Arab countries, and as such, was well prepared to handle any emerging threats.⁹¹⁵ A similar encounter occurred in March 1956 when embassy officials met with the Iraqi military attaché, Brigadier Hassan Mustapha. Mustapha convinced his American counterparts that the Iraqi army did not desire to take control of the government. Mustapha built his case on the argument that Iraq's army had firmly maneuvered away from intervention in the political arena as had occurred in many other Arab countries (like Egypt in 1952).⁹¹⁶ In these instances, Iraqi elites and military officials offered reassuring evidence that dovetailed perfectly with existing American assumptions about the nature of the armed forces in the period before 1941 and afterwards.

⁹¹³ Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*, p. 765; Romero, "The Iraqi Revolution of 1958 and the Search for Security in the Middle East," p. 96; Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, p. 142.

⁹¹⁴ #1386 – The Ambassador in Iraq (Berry) to the Department of State, 24 October 1952, *FRUS 1952-1954*, vol. IX, p. 2342; Dawisha, *Iraq*, p. 159.

⁹¹⁵ Memorandum of Conversation - Hermann Eilts and Brigadier Abdul Razzaq Hammudi, Director of Operations of Iraqi Army, 28 March 1956, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 1.

⁹¹⁶ Memorandum of Conversation – David Newsom (NE) and Brigadier Hassan Mustapha, Iraqi Military Attache – Views of Iraqi Military Attaché, 30 March 1956, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959, Box 2257.

Nicholas Thacher offered the most revealing of all estimates of the military in September 1957. Thacher stressed that one needed to examine the period of Iraqi history from 1932 to 1941 to understand why the military now represented a force for stability in Iraqi politics. Though the army was now “politically neutral,” Thacher explained, “it was not always so.” In this earlier decade, Thacher argued, the dominant factor in Iraqi political life was the political preferences of the army. The army led seven separate coup d’états against the government.⁹¹⁷ This era culminated in the “Golden Square” coup of 1941 that brought Rashid Ali al-Gailani to power. Following London’s intervention to destroy the Rashid Ali regime in 1941, Thacher argued, the Iraqi army no longer attempted political coups or interfered in the political system. The success of the army in quelling the Suez riots in late 1956 was, in Thacher’s view, the final proof that they had been effectively “de-politicized.”⁹¹⁸

Thacher emphasized the importance of British influence on the Iraqi military in bringing about this remarkable change. For Thacher, the immediate shift in the political identity of the military occurred at the exact moment of London’s military intervention in 1941. In his view, the forceful hand of the British was influential in reforming the military. Equally, Thacher explained, the indifference army officers now showed to political issues was a reflection of “Iraqi emulation of the British example.” Thacher explained that:

⁹¹⁷ From Baghdad (Nicholas Thacher, 1st Secretary of Embassy) to Department of State, #348 – The Role of the Army in Iraqi Political Life, 26 September 1957, NARA, RG 84, Iraq - Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 20.

⁹¹⁸ From Baghdad (Nicholas Thacher, 1st Secretary of Embassy) to Department of State, #348 – The Role of the Army in Iraqi Political Life, 26 September 1957, NARA, RG 84, Iraq - Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 20.

The greater portion of Iraqi officers have been exposed to British training either in Iraq or in military schools throughout the Commonwealth and the lessons of esprit de corps seems to have been well-learned.⁹¹⁹

As in the arena of modernization projects, American observers in this instance drew important conclusions about Western guidance in leading Iraqis along the correct path to political modernity. Thacher's study serves as a lucid demonstration of the powerful assumptions held by US observers about the benevolent role of Western influence (both British and American) in modernizing Iraq's economic, political, and military structures.

The political sensibilities of the Iraqi military were, in retrospect, the greatest blind spot of American observers. The failure stemmed from numerous factors. American officials, much like their Iraqi counterparts, failed to collect relevant intelligence on those anti-regime officers responsible for the July 1958 coup. Scattered evidence appeared in reports indicating the existence of disaffected groups in the military. However, these dispersed pieces of intelligence did not figure prominently in larger assessments of the military due to a problem in the analytical stage of the intelligence cycle. The deeply-held convictions of American observers about the nature of the Iraqi military led them to overlook the limited evidence that suggested the military might harbor deeper anti-regime sentiments. Officials were committed to the thesis that the military, as in any other modernizing nation, would naturally become less inclined to intervene in politics. In retrospect, the Americans' expectations about Iraq's military "graduating" to the level of a de-politicized force closely mirrored US assumptions about Iran's social and political structures on the eve of the 1979 revolution. In the Iranian

⁹¹⁹ From Baghdad (Nicholas Thacher, 1st Secretary of Embassy) to Department of State, #348 – The Role of the Army in Iraqi Political Life, 26 September 1957, NARA, RG 84, Iraq - Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 20.

case, American intelligence was deeply committed to the untested assumption that the Shah's liberalization of the political system would allow an emergent group of pro-Western, modernizing Iranians to steer the Shah's regime to a safer, more orderly path.⁹²⁰ In both the Iraqi and Iranian case studies, these unproven, yet extremely powerful, analytical constructs were ultimately overtaken by events.

Nuri al-Said and the Search for Control

A final set of factors influenced analyses of Iraqi affairs before July 1958. These included assessments of the relative weaknesses of other leaders aside from Nuri al-Said and the comparative strengths of the various governments headed by al-Said. These studies, as with the preceding issues noted earlier, formed an integral part of the informational environment created for policymakers in the Eisenhower White House. This environment offered some evidence that either maintaining the status quo in the US relationship with Iraq, or alternatively strengthening this bilateral partnership, presented attractive potentialities for advancing American interests in Iraq, at least in the short-term.

The first important political factor was the recognition among analysts that the old guard refused to promote any avenues for alternative political elements to challenge for power in the electoral system. In large part due to the government's restrictions on political activities, analysts concluded in 1953 that Nuri al-Said and the old guard had systematically failed to develop young and capable leaders, even within their own coterie

⁹²⁰ Jervis, *Why Intelligence Fails*, p. 61-68.

of supporters.⁹²¹ John Barrow noted with some despair to a leader of the Istiqlal Party that while the Americans would like to encourage progressive forces in Iraqi politics, those elements also lacked actual power. American officials described this void of young, progressive leadership, both inside and outside the confines of the old guard, as a “vacuum in Iraqi political life.”⁹²² Gilbert Larsen went further, arguing that younger Iraqis denied a means of political participation had developed a “negative and destructive attitude toward the regime.” The absence of youthful, capable Iraqis who could restore a degree of dynamism to politics remained a recurrent theme of American analyses right through to July 1958.⁹²³

Due to these destructive restrictions on political life, analysts and policymakers believed they were relegated to working only within the confines of the political sphere of the old guard. Even within that group of personalities, US options seemed to be limited in scope. Studies regularly contrasted the positive leadership traits of Nuri al-Said with what they saw as the very serious limitations of other old guard figures.

Analyses regularly stressed that there was no other leader in Iraqi politics that commanded as much respect or was as politically adept as Nuri al-Said.

⁹²¹ From Baghdad (Berry) to Department of State, #479 –Conversation with Shakir al Wadi, 14 January 1953, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2; From Baghdad (Berry) to Department of State, #520 –The Parliamentary Elections: Analysis and Comment, 27 January 1953, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2.

⁹²² Memorandum of Conversation –Faiq Samerrai, VP of the Istiqlal Party and Mr. J.R. Barrow, 25 April 1953, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2; From Baghdad (Ireland, Charge d'affaires ad interim [ai].) to Department of State, #19 –Parliamentary Elections, June 1954 – Analysis and Comment, 14 July 1954, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2 (quote).

⁹²³ From Baghdad (Gilbert Larsen, Economic Officer) to Department of State, #117 –Political Stability Through Economic Development, 20 September 1954, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2 (quote); From Baghdad (Hermann Frederick Eilts, Second Secretary of Embassy) to Department of State, #122 –Views of Deputy Mahmud Baban on Iraqi Internal Political Situation, 14 August 1956, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 1; Memorandum of Conversation - Nicholas Thacher, 1st Secretary of Embassy and Khalil Ibrahim, Director General of Guidance and Broadcasting – Iraqi Internal Political Scene, 4 March 1957, NARA, RG 84, Iraq - Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 21.

The complex, inter-dependent relationship formed between the United States and Iraq's old guard, and Baghdad's quintessential "strong man" Nuri al-Said specifically, was described by Ambassador Berry early in the Eisenhower presidency. On the one hand, Berry wrote, a major void would appear when al-Said finally left politics if alternative leadership was not developed. However, Berry stressed, al-Said was clearly the most capable leader for guiding Iraq safely along its pro-Western path and defending the Americans' overarching sense of authority and control in Baghdad.⁹²⁴ This double-edged sword plagued American policy toward Iraq in the pre-revolutionary period. The OCB and Ambassador Gallman arrived at similar conclusions, noting in 1956 that despite all of Nuri al-Said's shortcomings as prime minister, his government would be "the best friend the West can expect in Iraq in the near future."⁹²⁵ Gallman insisted that no other leader could match al-Said's commitment to the Baghdad Pact. This was particularly true given that the average cabinet (at least those not led by Nuri al-Said) changed every five or six months.⁹²⁶ Both Iraqi officials and American analysts regularly noted that al-Said was the only authority capable of keeping his supporters "in line" while also cracking down on "extremist" opposition forces. Brigadier Hammudi likened Nuri al-Said to a "rudder of a ship" that kept politics on a stable, secure footing.⁹²⁷ The British concurred

⁹²⁴ From Baghdad (Berry) to Department of State, #520 –The Parliamentary Elections: Analysis and Comment, 27 January 1953, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2.

⁹²⁵ Operations Coordinating Board, Daily Intelligence Abstracts No. 538, 16 January 1956, DDRS (quote); #429 - The Embassy in Iraq (Gallman) to the Department of State, 15 January 1956, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 991.

⁹²⁶ #433 - Telegram from Embassy in Iraq (Gallman) to Department of State, 28 March 1956, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 996.

⁹²⁷ #435 - NIE 36.2-56 – The Outlook for Iraq's Stability and Foreign Policies, 17 July 1956, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 1001; Nicholas Thacher's Briefing Notes, Undated, US President's Citizen Advisors on the Mutual Security Program (Fairless Committee): Records, 1956-1957, Box 9, DDEL; From E.R. Pierce (Iraq Desk) to Mr. William Conrad, NE – Report of Interview with Clifford Wilson, American Executive Member, Iraq Development Board, 5 May 1958, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs – Office of Near Eastern Affairs – General Subject Files Relating to the Middle East, 1955-1958, Box 11; Memorandum of Conversation - Hermann Eilts and Brigadier Abdul Razzaq Hammudi, Director

with the Americans' assessment of al-Said's authority. They noted that no other old guard character shared the strength of al-Said's convictions for maintaining a strategic partnership with the West or his ability to push through unpopular policies in the face of hostile public dissent.⁹²⁸

The Americans watched a wave of political crises unfold at a time when Nuri al-Said was not in power in the early 1950s. These episodes clearly indicated to US observers the limitations of other politicians who were not as reliably stable and pro-Western in outlook as al-Said. American criticisms of the "vacillation" and "weakness" of these officials are striking in their tone and sharpness.⁹²⁹ The US embassy complained about the "timidity" of Mustafa Mahmoud al-Umari's government and its failure to repress demonstrators in the *Intifada* of 1952. Members of Nuri al-Said's faction went further in their criticisms, labeling al-Umari's cabinet as "inept" and "cowardly" for its unwillingness to use force to break up the disturbances.⁹³⁰ US officials and Nuri al-Said's supporters were very clearly united in their distaste for al-Umari's attempt at engaging with and responding to political developments in Iraq in a different manner from previous cabinets.

Members of al-Said's inner clique were similarly upset by the subsequent government headed by Nuriddin Mahmoud, whom they criticized for failing to use legal

of Operations of Iraqi Army, 28 March 1956, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 1 (quote).

⁹²⁸ From J.E Coulson, British Embassy Washington DC to H. Beeley, Foreign Office, V1075/26, 13 May 1957, FO371-127756, BNA. For more on UK analyses of Nuri al-Said and the old guard, See Wm. Roger Louis, "The British and the Origins of the Iraqi Revolution," in Robert Fernea and William Roger Louis (eds.), *The Iraqi Revolution of 1958: The Old Social Classes Revisited* (London: IB Tauris, 1991), 40.

⁹²⁹ #108 - Memorandum from the Deputy Director for Plans of the CIA (Wisner) to the Director of Intelligence and Research (Cumming) - An Analysis of the Effect in Iraq of Military Intervention in Lebanon by the US and UK, 3 July 1958, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 306.

⁹³⁰ From Baghdad (Berry) to Department of State, #383 - The Demonstrations of November 22 to November 26; Political Aspects, 8 December 1952, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2 (quote); From Baghdad (Berry) to Department of State, #479 - Conversation with Shakir al Wadi, 14 January 1953, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2.

means to “destroy the Iraqi Communists.”⁹³¹ American political officers were equally unimpressed with the governing record of Mahmoud’s regime. Ambassador Berry explained that while Mahmoud eventually restored public order, he was certainly “not likely to be regarded as a hero in the manner of Naguib or Shishikly.”⁹³² Similar patterns reappeared in reports on the governing capabilities of other cabinets. US political officers despaired in March 1953 about Prime Minister Jamil al-Madfai’s inability to take vigorous action against communists and students agitating against the regime. By August, observers were predicting the imminent collapse of the al-Madfai government due to cabinet in-fighting and a rise in public criticism of the government.⁹³³

American thinking on the reliability and short-term stability afforded by al-Said’s governments was also heavily influenced by their initial enthusiasm for, and subsequent disappointment with, the cabinets headed by Fadhil Jamali from September 1953 to April 1954. Jamali appeared to US observers a sincere reformer; he was American-educated, enthusiastic about Point IV’s modernization work, and offered the promise of adding youthful vigor to the country’s political forums. Jamali explained to embassy staff that he was determined to move beyond the stagnant politics of the old guard and introduce activist reforms in all spheres of Iraqi life.⁹³⁴ American officials were pleased to note that Jamali was making significant headway early on. US analysts noted that Jamali’s regime

⁹³¹ From Baghdad (Berry) to Department of State, #479 –Conversation with Shakir al Wadi, 14 January 1953, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2.

⁹³² From Baghdad (Berry) to Department of State, #383 –The Demonstrations of November 22 to November 26; Political Aspects, 8 December 1952, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2.

⁹³³ Department of the Air Force – Staff Message Division –From USAIRA Baghdad Iraq Sgd Berry to CSAF Washington DC for Dir Intel, 18 April 1953, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 3; Department of the Air Force – Staff Message Division –From USAIRA Baghdad Iraq Sgd Berry to CSAF Washington DC for Dir Intel, 29 August 1953, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 3.

⁹³⁴ #1394 - Memorandum of Conversation between the Counselor of Embassy in Iraq (Ireland) and Jamali, President of Chamber of Deputies, 20 August 1953, *FRUS 1952-1954*, vol. IX, p. 2352.

had maintained order in the country and gained popular approval among its citizens. They attributed this success to Jamali's decisions to lift martial law, legalize political parties, lift press censorship, and open investigations into government corruption. Each of these problems, of course, had been enduring hallmarks of the old guard's rule.⁹³⁵

Neither Jamali's cabinet, nor American observers, had "fully reckoned," as one US analyst later admitted, "with Nuri al-Said." In the following months, Nuri al-Said decisively flexed his political muscles to engineer the downfall of both of Jamali's reformist cabinets.⁹³⁶ Some US officials first greeted Al-Said's direct interference in Jamali's political agenda with frustration. Later, they expressed resignation to the immense political authority wielded by al-Said's "gang."⁹³⁷ Al-Said's close supporters, who were deeply concerned that Jamali's legislation would do irreparable harm to the tribal sheikhs, delayed Jamali's reform bills in parliamentary committees. Each of Jamali's legislative efforts for land productivity taxes, land settlement laws, and civil service reforms were either "scuttled or emasculated" by his opponents.⁹³⁸ Fadhil Jamali submitted his resignation in late April 1954 in large part due to the fact that "the forces

⁹³⁵ From Baghdad (Berry) to Department of State, #364, 30 November 1953, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2; From Baghdad (Berry) to Department of State, #487 -Review and Prognosis of Iraqi Political Developments, October 1 1953 - January 1 1954, 14 January 1954, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2; Department of the Air Force - Staff Message Division -From USAIRA Baghdad Iraq Sgd Berry to CSAF Washington DC for Dir Intel, 4 October 1953, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 3.

⁹³⁶ From Baghdad (Berry) to Department of State, #487 -Review and Prognosis of Iraqi Political Developments, October 1 1953 - January 1 1954, 14 January 1954, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2 (quote); Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, p. 131.

⁹³⁷ From Baghdad (Berry) to Department of State, #487 -Review and Prognosis of Iraqi Political Developments, October 1 1953 - January 1 1954, 14 January 1954, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2; Department of the Air Force - Staff Message Division - From USAIRA Baghdad Iraq Sgd Berry to CSAF Washington DC for Dir Intel, 10 January 1954, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 3.

⁹³⁸ Department of the Air Force - Staff Message Division - From USAIRA Baghdad Iraq Sgd Berry to CSAF Washington DC for Dir Intel, 10 January 1954, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 3; From Baghdad (Philip Ireland, Charge d'Affaires a.i.) to Department of State, #816, 27 May 1954, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 4.

opposed to an internal reform program were greater than he realized.” Thanks to the obstruction of Nuri al-Said’s forces, no substantive clean-up of government affairs occurred under Jamali’s watch.⁹³⁹

With the downfall of Jamali’s administration, an entire summer of political uncertainty reigned, as al-Said battled with the monarchy for the post of prime minister. Philip Ireland described the elections that immediately followed Jamali’s resignation as a major setback for stability in Iraq. The absence of a clear majority in parliament portended a short-lived cabinet, more political crises, and a poor working environment for pursuing political reforms.⁹⁴⁰ The man appointed prime minister for the summer, Arshad al-Umari, was chosen by the monarchy in part to spite al-Said for his incessant demands to receive the post. Al-Umari’s cabinet, while popular initially among many Iraqis, was viewed at the time as a lame duck, “caretaker” regime whose inclusion of communist-backed representatives troubled the Americans.⁹⁴¹

The return of the “strongman” Nuri al-Said to the position of prime minister in August 1954 brought an end to this period of political instability. It also marked the beginning of almost three continuous years of his authoritarian rule. The NIE of 7 September 1954 argued that al-Said’s return to power indicated that the old guard was

⁹³⁹ From Baghdad (Philip Ireland, Charge d’Affaires a.i.) to Department of State, #816, 27 May 1954, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 4.

⁹⁴⁰ From Baghdad (Ireland, Charge d’affaires ad interm [ai].) to Department of State, #19 –Parliamentary Elections, June 1954 – Analysis and Comment, 14 July 1954, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2; Frederick Axelgard, “US Support for the British Position in Pre-Revolutionary Iraq,” in Robert Fernea and William Roger Louis (eds.) *The Iraqi Revolution of 1958: The Old Social Classes Revisited* (London: IB Tauris, 1991), 86.

⁹⁴¹ From Baghdad (Berry) to Department of State, #632, 11 March 1954, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 4; From Baghdad (Philip Ireland, Charge d’Affaires a.i.) to Department of State, #816, 27 May 1954, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 4; From Baghdad (Philip Ireland, Charge d’Affaires a.i.) to Department of State, #76 – Nuri Said Returns to Power, 25 August 1954, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 4.

again firmly in control of Iraq's political affairs.⁹⁴² Point IV's Henry Wiens conceded that al-Said's return marked an end to a period of confusion and instability defined by four short-lived cabinets "following each other in rapid and ineffective succession."⁹⁴³ Though Wiens insisted that Nuri al-Said was not a popular man, he conceded that he was undoubtedly the strongest politician in the country. Wiens also admitted that while Jamali's reform agenda had been appealing to his own professional objectives, al-Said's plans for limited economic and political modifications at least offered reasonable chances of success while providing Iraq "the requisite period of political stability."⁹⁴⁴

Philip Ireland's assessment was even more optimistic about the prospects for stability offered by Nuri al-Said's "triumphant return." Ireland argued that the elections that brought al-Said to power, in contrast to those held months earlier, were calm and orderly.⁹⁴⁵ Furthermore, Ireland concluded that the recent elections demonstrated the

Extraordinary psychological prestige possessed by PM Nuri Said. Although Nuri can scarcely be termed a popular man, and this is even more true of many of the members of his immediate entourage, he is generally recognized as the 'strong man' of Iraq who will brook no nonsense. There is, to be sure, considerable censure of the PM's methods which many consider unnecessarily repressive. Yet it is equally true that those elements in Iraq which have become increasingly disturbed over the lack of stability in Iraq in the past year or more have witnessed his advent to power with a certain amount of relief.⁹⁴⁶

⁹⁴² NIE 36-54 – National Intelligence Estimate: Probable Developments in the Arab States, 7 September 1954, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) – Record Set of NIEs, Special Estimates, and SNIes, 1950-1954, Box 2; Axelgard, "US Support for the British Position in Pre-Revolutionary Iraq," p. 86.

⁹⁴³ From Henry Wiens to Secretary of State, #566, 20 October 1954, NARA, RG 84, Iraq - Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 15.

⁹⁴⁴ From Henry Wiens to Secretary of State, #566, 20 October 1954, NARA, RG 84, Iraq - Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 15.

⁹⁴⁵ From Baghdad (Philip Ireland, Charge d'Affaires a.i.) to Department of State, #76 –Nuri Said Returns to Power, 25 August 1954, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 4 (quote); From Baghdad (Ireland, Charge d'affaires ad interim [ai].) to Department of State, #109 – September 12 Elections, 17 September 1954, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2.

⁹⁴⁶ From Baghdad (Ireland, Charge d'affaires ad interim [ai].) to Department of State, #109 – September 12 Elections, 17 September 1954, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2.

It comes as no surprise that Philip Ireland viewed Nuri al-Said's return to political life as a welcome respite from a frightening period of political uncertainty and indecision. Ireland was one of the strongest defenders, along with Ambassador Gallman, of Nuri al-Said and the "old guard" among US officials stationed in Baghdad. Before arriving in Iraq in a diplomatic capacity, Ireland authored a history of the Iraqi monarchy titled *Iraq: A Study in Political Development* in 1937. His study offered a positive review of the benevolent, autocratic governance of UK mandate authorities and the pro-Western Iraqi government, including the first years of Nuri al-Said's rule as prime minister.⁹⁴⁷ His optimistic views regarding the stability afforded by the old guard's rule, like Gallman, were consistent through to the revolutionary events of July 1958. Interviews conducted years later with officials stationed at the embassy in Baghdad confirm this characterization of Ireland as a staunch defender of the monarchical order. Ireland was allegedly highly dismissive, in private deliberations, of his colleagues' concerns about the Iraqi government's possible collapse. Former diplomat Morris Draper explained that Ireland regularly "derided some of the ideas of the junior officers, when they reported that trouble was brewing in Iraq." Ireland "refused to believe it," Draper added, "and was very insulting in staff meetings and would shoot down this theory."⁹⁴⁸ For Ireland in

⁹⁴⁷ For example, Ireland offered a positive assessment of the King's role in the Iraqi political system in this period, suggesting it was "as a rule well-directed and in the interests of the country as a whole." Moreover, the final paragraph of Ireland's study provided an extremely positive assessment of the future prospects for the regime's governance. Ireland wrote: "The future is not without its dark aspects, but if the new regime can provide stability with a much needed discipline, if it will be motivated by foresighted and courageous statesmanship, and if the people of Iraq can and will devote themselves to the tasks which lie before them with the same energy which they expended in achieving independence, the position of Iraq among the progressive states may yet be assured." See Philip Ireland, *Iraq: A Study in Political Development* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1937), 424 (first footnote quote), 453 (second footnote quote).

⁹⁴⁸ Morris Draper interview, *Frontline Diplomacy: The Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training*. Fellow embassy staffer Herman Eilts likewise derided Ireland's poor performance. Eilts later revealed that Ireland, at one point during his tour in Iraq, "went around telling everyone that he had arranged to have Jamali appointed as Prime Minister." See Herman

particular, the return of Nuri al-Said to the post of prime minister in the summer of 1954 provided for the continuation of reliable, “stable” pro-Western rule in Baghdad and the extension of American control and influence in Iraq.

Events in the summer and fall of 1954 in the Iraqi political arena were integral to shaping American perceptions and understandings of the tangible limits to political and economic reform in Iraq. They also dramatically shaped their view of Nuri al-Said as a leader weighed down by many liabilities but also powerful and reliable enough to maintain Iraq’s stable, pro-Western orientation in the immediate future. Al-Said’s ability to halt the reformist work of Jamali’s government dead in its tracks revealed for Americans his unchallenged political capital. The ultimate failures of Jamali’s regime struck a decisive blow against the hopes of some observers (like Henry Wiens) that substantive reform could occur within Iraq’s existing political structures. Reformist-minded Americans were resigned after August 1954 to working within the much more narrow confines of promoting political reform through cabinets dominated by Nuri al-Said. Similarly, the political instability of the summer of 1954 and the subsequent “triumphant return” of al-Said to power offered important lessons for those observers who cast a more skeptical eye on Jamali’s regime (like Philip Ireland). For these officials, this turn of events confirmed the notion that al-Said’s return to power was the panacea for the underlying problems of political instability and constant cabinet shuffling in Baghdad.

The performance of Nuri al-Said’s governments was vitally important to shaping American assessments of the regime’s stability. Al-Said’s tenure as prime minister

recorded a long history of successfully exercising repressive authority to crush opposition forces.⁹⁴⁹ The accumulated evidence suggested al-Said had mastered the technique of wielding authoritarian power. American analysts and policymakers were conditioned to expect this trend to continue. As in the comparable case study of Iran in the late 1970s, American analysts took for granted the notion that al-Said's past governing achievements would necessarily lead to a continuation of this pattern.⁹⁵⁰

Americans had long praised al-Said's "courage" and "forcefulness" for making difficult and unpopular decisions to maintain "order" and "stability," including "railroading" oil agreements through parliament and linking Iraq to the Turkey-Pakistan defense pact.⁹⁵¹ Along with al-Said's political acumen, Americans particularly valued his willingness to crack down harshly on opposition forces when unrest and instability threatened US interests. In stark contrast to the "dithering" attempts of later cabinets led by al-Umari and Mahmoud to clamp down on protestors, analysts detailed how Nuri al-Said's regime used threats of force and a heavy police presence in cities to break a potential general strike in February 1952.⁹⁵² A report from Ambassador Berry in April 1953 similarly contrasted the weak, ineffectual governance of previous regimes with that

⁹⁴⁹ Axelgard, "US Policy Toward Iraq, 1946-1958," p. 166; Romero, "The Iraqi Revolution of 1958 and the Search for Security in the Middle East," p. 69.

⁹⁵⁰ Jervis, *Why Intelligence Fails*, p. 37, 40.

⁹⁵¹ From Baghdad (Crocker) to Department of State, Parliamentary Consideration of the Oil Agreements, 19 February 1952, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 15; #1386 – The Ambassador in Iraq (Berry) to the Department of State, 24 October 1952, *FRUS 1952-1954*, vol. IX, p. 2342.

⁹⁵² From Baghdad (Berry) to Department of State, #383 –The Demonstrations of November 22 to November 26; Political Aspects, 8 December 1952, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2.

of the forceful, decisive al-Said government, which was actively expelling “student agitators” and arresting scores of suspected communists.⁹⁵³

Other anti-communist measures adopted by al-Said’s cabinets included outlawing youth groups serving as communist auxiliary groups (including the Peace Partisans), dismissing suspected leftists from the civil service, and denationalizing and deporting Iraqis convicted of either communist or leftist activities. Philip Ireland described these measures as the “most stringent anti-communist and leftist proscriptions issued to date.”⁹⁵⁴ Hermann Eilts added that repressive action by the police had continued in all forms “without letup” since al-Said assumed office in August 1954. Al-Said directed the legal system to issue convictions for communist activities down through to the outbreak of the Suez Crisis in late 1956.⁹⁵⁵

The overall American reaction to al-Said’s violent, brutal campaign was one of muted enthusiasm. Analysts did not take pleasure in his use of violent tactics that engendered public anger. Nevertheless, they viewed them as necessary instruments of statecraft for creating a secure political environment in the short-term. Thanks to his impressive wielding of authority, the OCB declared in December 1955 that Nuri al-Said

⁹⁵³ Department of the Air Force – Staff Message Division –From USAIRA Baghdad Iraq Sgd Berry to CSAF Washington DC for Dir Intel, 18 April 1953, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 3; From Baghdad (Hermann Frederick Eilts, Second Secretary of Embassy) to Department of State, #617 –Recent Police Operations Against the Iraqi Communist Party, 10 June 1955, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 1.

⁹⁵⁴ From WL Eagleton, USIS Kirkuk to the Ambassador, Assessment of the Political Situation in Northern Iraq following preliminary visits during October, 4 November 1954, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2; From Baghdad (Ireland, Charge d’affaires) to Secretary of State, #131, 2 September 1954, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2 (quote); Romero, “The Iraqi Revolution of 1958 and the Search for Security in the Middle East,” p. 84.

⁹⁵⁵ From Baghdad (Hermann Frederick Eilts, Second Secretary of Embassy) to Department of State, #617 – Recent Police Operations Against the Iraqi Communist Party, 10 June 1955, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 1; #427 - OCB Report on Iraq – Analysis of Internal Security Situation in Iraq and Recommended Action, 14 December 1955, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 981; Romero, “The Iraqi Revolution of 1958 and the Search for Security in the Middle East,” p. 24; Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, p. 133.

was “by far the strongest and most effective leader in the country.”⁹⁵⁶ The intelligence community’s judgment on al-Said’s position was equally glowing. The NIE of July 1956 attributed Iraq’s political cohesion and pro-Western orientation almost singularly to Nuri al-Said. The NIE praised his impressive political skills that kept his opponents off-balance through a well-tested mixture of “firm security controls and a monopoly of political patronage.” “At present,” the NIE concluded, “the only recourse available to Nuri’s opponents, in their efforts to unseat him, is that of persuasion and intrigue at the Palace.”⁹⁵⁷ In the final judgment of the NIE, al-Said would continue to dominate politics for as long as he chose to remain active since al-Said’s opposition was “splintered [and] intimidated.”⁹⁵⁸ The USIS representative in Kirkuk similarly praised al-Said’s repressive tactics for disrupting the ICP’s attempts at proselytization, though he cautioned that “the first taste of authority is usually sweeter than the second.”⁹⁵⁹ His warning was one of the few in the historical record before the Suez Crisis that suggested al-Said might not be able to carry on his violent campaign of repression indefinitely.

The Suez Crisis of late 1956 was another seminal moment in solidifying assumptions that Nuri al-Said could weather any political storm. The Suez riots that broke out across Iraq were not the product of al-Said’s actions; he could legitimately claim that he shared the public’s anger with Britain and France’s betrayal of the Arab world. Al-Said’s response to the Suez riots shored up his political authority in American

⁹⁵⁶ #427 - OCB Report on Iraq – Analysis of Internal Security Situation in Iraq and Recommended Action, 14 December 1955, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 985.

⁹⁵⁷ #435 - NIE 36.2-56 – The Outlook for Iraq’s Stability and Foreign Policies, 17 July 1956, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 999-1000.

⁹⁵⁸ #435 - NIE 36.2-56 – The Outlook for Iraq’s Stability and Foreign Policies, 17 July 1956, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 999-1000.

⁹⁵⁹ From WL Eagleton, USIS Kirkuk to the Ambassador, Assessment of the Political Situation in Northern Iraq following preliminary visits during October, 4 November 1954, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2.

eyes. His ability to clamp down on the chaos provided additional evidence for observers that the strong man of Iraq was truly unassailable in the immediate future.

American analysts were initially unnerved by what appeared to be Nuri al-Said's deteriorating authority when the Suez riots first broke out. However, he quickly turned things around in his favour. He did so by jailing the former leaders of leftist and Arab nationalist groups, promulgating martial law, and closing all post-secondary schools in Baghdad. He also dispatched the army to violently crush protests in several cities.⁹⁶⁰ By December 1956, David Fritzlan of the embassy argued that al-Said was once again "firmly in the driver's seat." Fritzlan predicted al-Said's government would remain in office until the end of the crisis since there was no other politician "capable or willing" to hold the prime minister's post during the upheaval. Fritzlan acknowledged the widespread criticism al-Said's violent campaign fueled among Iraqis. He decidedly argued that most "moderate educated elements" understood it was vital to save Iraq from "possible upheaval and chaos."⁹⁶¹ Nicholas Thacher similarly indicated that "the wisest Iraqi of all, Nuri al-Said" had regained his power after a momentary period of uncertainty through his strong actions against the protestors. Thacher attributed the government's

⁹⁶⁰ From Baghdad (David Fritzlan, Counsellor of Embassy) to Department of State, #361 –Current Pressures on the Government of Iraq, 7 December 1956, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 1; From Baghdad (Nicholas Thacher, 1st Secretary of Embassy), #437– Recent Student Political Activity, 22 January 1957, NARA, RG 84, Iraq - Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 20; From Baghdad (Nicholas Thacher, 1st Secretary of Embassy) to Department of State, #75 – Renewed Activity of NDP and Istiqlal Leaders, 18 July 1957, NARA, RG 84, Iraq - Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 21.

⁹⁶¹ From Baghdad (David Fritzlan, Counsellor of Embassy) to Department of State, #361 –Current Pressures on the Gov't of Iraq, 7 December 1956, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 1.

victory against the demonstrators singularly to the work of Nuri al-Said, particularly “his firmness and clarity of judgment” that went unmatched among his contemporaries.⁹⁶²

Retrospective analyses produced by the British and the Americans of the Suez Crisis similarly highlighted Nuri al-Said’s central role in leading the country through chaos. His “bold handling” of the Suez riots suggested to British and American diplomats that Iraq’s present stability was “largely the work of one man.” Chances for a coup against al-Said’s regime, as such, were judged to be “slight” in May 1957.⁹⁶³ The intelligence community’s assessments of al-Said’s stature closely mirrored those of the diplomatic corps. The NIE of June 1957 argued that Nuri al-Said was again “well ensconced in power” and that a major threat to Iraq’s short-term stability was highly unlikely with al-Said active on the political scene.⁹⁶⁴ The National Intelligence Survey of Iraq of October 1957 heaped similar praise on al-Said’s abilities. The NIS referred to Nuri al-Said as a “benevolent dictator” who routinely used force to quell civil disorder and played sources of opposition off against one another. The NIS not surprisingly argued that the “most important [factor] in maintaining the status quo, has been the political skill of Nuri al-Said.” So long as al-Said maintained his present “firm controls” against sources of opposition, the NIS declared, there would be “little inclination to organize any party or movement against him.”⁹⁶⁵

The same patterns and recurrent themes in American reporting quickly reappeared when Nuri al-Said stepped down in June 1957 before reassuming the post of prime

⁹⁶² From Baghdad (Nicholas Thacher, 1st Secretary of Embassy), #437– Recent Student Political Activity, 22 January 1957, NARA, RG 84, Iraq - Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 20.

⁹⁶³ From J.E Coulson, British Embassy Washington DC to H. Beeley, Foreign Office, V1075/26, 13 May 1957, FO371-127756, BNA.

⁹⁶⁴ #458 - NIE 36.2-57 – The Outlook for Iraq, 4 June 1957, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 1052.

⁹⁶⁵ National Intelligence Survey – Iraq – NIS 30, 1 October 1957, CIA ERR, p. 31.

minister in March 1958. The two intervening cabinets headed by Ali Jaudat al-Ayyubi and Abdul Wahab Murjan were, as in past non-al-Said governments, described by observers as hopelessly adrift and lacking the necessary fortitude to clamp down on opposition. The differences in performance between Nuri al-Said's cabinets and those led by al-Ayyubi and Murjan were striking. American analysts considered al-Ayyubi's cabinet in the summer of 1957 as simply another caretaker government. Ambassador Gallman hoped the cabinet would merely be stable enough to provide al-Said the requisite time and rest away from politics.⁹⁶⁶

Gallman's hopes quickly met with disappointment. By July 1957, American officials were frantically reporting that the NDP and Istiqlal might reemerge and that al-Ayyubi was considering giving them official licenses.⁹⁶⁷ Thacher noted that al-Ayyubi's government was in a defensive position. One week later, the Iraqi Crown Prince conceded to Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and other top administration officials that al-Ayyubi was weak. The Crown Prince also indicated that he was considering inviting Nuri al-Said back to the post of prime minister.⁹⁶⁸ Al-Ayyubi soon resigned, and American observers immediately denounced the new cabinet headed by Murjan as brittle and verging on collapse.⁹⁶⁹ As Nicholas Thacher explained in January 1958, the Iraqi Crown "may be left only the alternative of returning full power to the hands of the Pasha

⁹⁶⁶ From Dulles to AmEmbassy, London, #7030, 21 June 1957, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 1.

⁹⁶⁷ From Baghdad (Nicholas Thacher, 1st Secretary of Embassy) to Department of State, #75 – Renewed Activity of NDP and Istiqlal Leaders, 18 July 1957, NARA, RG 84, Iraq - Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 21; From Baghdad (Nicholas Thacher, First Secretary of Embassy) to Department of State, 18 July 1957, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 1.

⁹⁶⁸ From Baghdad (Nicholas Thacher, First Secretary of Embassy) to Department of State, #206, 31 August 1957, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 1; Memorandum of Conversation – Dulles, Rountree, Henderson, Quarles, and Twining, 7 September 1957, DDRS.

⁹⁶⁹ From Baghdad (Fritzlan) to Department of State, #1037, 19 December 1957, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 1.

[Nuri al-Said] himself.”⁹⁷⁰ In the midst of this crisis, Italian officials asked the Americans whether Nuri al-Said’s return might ignite protests and opposition. The Americans’ response perfectly summed up their thinking on the supposed stability afforded by Nuri al-Said’s rule. David Fritzlan responded that similar predictions had been made prior to al-Said’s return to office in 1954 and that he had nevertheless managed to keep a “firm hand” on Iraqi affairs while commanding great popular respect.⁹⁷¹ Al-Said subsequently returned to the post of prime minister in March 1958, leaving in May to become the first and last leader of the moribund Arab Union.

Nuri al-Said was the dominant politician in Iraq for nearly three decades.⁹⁷² Many of his contemporaries within the old guard viewed him as the most capable of all politicians. American analysts shared this assessment before July 1958 and even afterwards.⁹⁷³ Al-Said loomed large in American reporting in this period, owing to the weakness and liabilities of his opponents and his own political strengths and assets. The vacillation and purported timidity of interim leaders like al-Madfa'i and al-Ayyubi greatly frustrated US observers. The crushing disappointments of the once-promising Fadhil Jamali government similarly soured many observers on the prospects for substantive political reforms and stable governance without Nuri al-Said’s explicit approval. Al-Said’s long history of successfully administering repression also figured heavily in

⁹⁷⁰ From Baghdad (Nicholas Thacher, First Secretary of Embassy) to Department of State, #685 – Another Cabinet Crisis?, 7 January 1958, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 1.

⁹⁷¹ Memorandum of Conversation between David Newsom and First Secretary of Italian Embassy – Nuri al-Said’s visit to US; Iraqi Internal Situation, 12 December 1957, NARA, RG 84, Iraq - Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 20.

⁹⁷² Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, p. 105; Romero, “The Iraqi Revolution of 1958 and the Search for Security in the Middle East,” p. 65.

⁹⁷³ Herman Eilts suggested in an interview years later that “Nuri Said Pasha was one of the most brilliant, articulate Arab statesmen that I have ever met...he was a tremendously able statesman who unfortunately lived in a period when the generation of Arab nationalists to which he belonged...had already become passé...Whatever one says of him, Nuri was an exceptionally strong leader.” Herman Eilts interview, *Frontline Diplomacy: The Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training*.

American calculations. US observers almost uniformly bought into the myth of Nuri al-Said's omnipotence, wisdom, and enduring strength as leader. The dominant preconception and assumption in analyses before 1958, as in estimates of the Shah's authority in Iran, was that Nuri al-Said was willing and able to wield repressive authority whenever necessary to ward off threats to the old guard's rule.⁹⁷⁴ These assessments and preconceptions further muddled and confused what first appeared to be a clear pattern of signals pointing to the eventual downfall of the Iraqi government.

Conclusion

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, one will search in vain in the relevant archival materials for reports from analysts predicting the military coup against the Iraqi regime on 14 July 1958. Analysts in the US embassy and intelligence community share equally in the blame for their failure to foresee this event. However, a judgment that suggests an obvious pattern of signals leading directly to the July 1958 coup is only possible with the clarity of hindsight and by engaging in the distorting phenomenon of creeping determinism. Policymakers in the Eisenhower administration received mixed signals on the critical question of the immediate, short-term political stability of the Iraqi government. Analysts and policymakers did not necessarily ignore all evidence predicting danger for the Iraqi regime, but they selectively applied the intelligence they received on the question of Iraq's political stability. Analysts and policymakers incorporated only that evidence which fit into their preconceptions and assumptions about the strength of the government in Baghdad.

⁹⁷⁴ Jervis, *Why Intelligence Fails*, p. 19, 25.

The intelligence cycle was certainly marked by clear problems in this case study. Both the embassy and intelligence services plainly failed to collect enough reliable intelligence on the existence of anti-government cells within the military. Along with this breakdown of the collection phase of the intelligence cycle, there was also an analytical failure for which the US embassy and intelligence agencies are equally culpable. Analysts overlooked the limited evidence that suggested the existence of dissident groups in the military in favour of the more numerous reports that argued the military was not a threat to the government. This evidence was also overlooked because it did not fit into larger American assumptions and preconceptions about the Iraqi military and its de-politicized status.

Assumptions and preconceptions similarly animated American thinking on the question of Iraq's stability under Nuri al-Said and other leaders. US officials bought into the myth of al-Said's omnipotence and his immense skill in brandishing repression as a tool of governance. Analysts never seemed to vigorously challenge their assumptions about his ability to repress potential political threats. Parallels and comparisons with the 1979 Iranian revolution are again worth drawing. In both cases, the primary assumption was that Iranian and Iraqi leaders would be able to successfully turn to repression as an essential tool for safeguarding political stability if opposition to the regimes reached critical levels.⁹⁷⁵

In seeking to understand the causes of this intelligence failure, this chapter attempted to recreate the informational environment that existed for US observers and policymakers in the period before the July 1958 coup. Intelligence rarely has a direct, immediate impact on policy, and it is difficult to discern exactly what role this

⁹⁷⁵ Jervis, *Why Intelligence Fails*, p. 19, 25.

informational environment played in the decisions taken by the Eisenhower administration in Iraq.⁹⁷⁶ What is certain is that policymakers did not have the benefit of viewing developments in Iraq through the lenses of hindsight or creeping determinism. Instead, they made their policy decisions in an environment defined by conflicting messages about the short-term political stability of the Iraqi government and strongly distorted by deeply-held assumptions about the military and Nuri al-Said's capacities as prime minister. One should not simply excuse the American intelligence failure in July 1958, nor exempt from criticism the Eisenhower administration's policies in Iraq. This chapter simply suggests that that we, as historians, should examine and understand their informational environment on Iraqi affairs in the same order they experienced it.

⁹⁷⁶ See a parallel discussion of the writings and debates of American modernization theorists and their impact on US policy in the Middle East in this period in Jacobs, *Imagining the Middle East*, p. 10.

Conclusion to Part I

The United States emerged from the destruction of World War II a superpower with burgeoning global interests. As part of this larger trend, US officials greatly expanded their relationship with the pro-Western regime in Baghdad during the early 1950s. By July 1958, the Eisenhower administration and the Iraqi government enjoyed a close strategic partnership that facilitated the continuation of American “control” and influence in Baghdad and the protection of US interests. The rise of American power in Iraq was readily apparent in a number of arenas. With Iraq’s oil production growing exponentially, the postwar petroleum order tied the Iraqi regime and the Iraq Petroleum Company [IPC] together in a mutually beneficial commercial alliance. Moreover, American government officials worked cooperatively with US oil companies and their British counterparts to defend the prosperity and strategic stability of their Iraqi petroleum assets. In the mid-1950s, the United States also created a substantive military aid program for Iraq and secured Baghdad’s participation in a regional, anti-Soviet collective defense organization. The expansion of Iraq’s defense capabilities and its membership in the Baghdad Pact helped fulfill Washington’s containment objectives for the Middle East. This period also witnessed the consolidation of Point IV’s modernization programs designed, in part, to complement the Iraqis’ ongoing development initiatives. Point IV operated a wide-ranging technical assistance program that spawned vast segments of Iraqi society by July 1958.

Beneath the broader expansion of American power in Iraq lay a number of problems and concerning trends. In the oil sector, developments ongoing in the Arab world forced IPC and US officials to extend more generous concession terms to the Iraqi

government. IPC's relationship with the Iraqi regime grew more contentious as the summer of 1958 dragged on. Most troubling of all was the reality that the Americans relied heavily on the Iraqi regime's repression of opposition elements seeking a radical reconfiguration of the oil industry to safeguard the strategic stability of their petroleum assets.

Washington's alliance with Britain complicated US policies in Iraq on the military aid question to a considerable extent. The Eisenhower administration carefully navigated its activities in the Iraqi arms arena in light of the preponderant British position in this realm. Despite the State Department's best efforts to mitigate conflict between Washington and London, tensions still erupted between the two allies over the expanding American role in the arms arena. The UK ambassador to Iraq, Sir John Troutbeck, referred to the behaviour of American military officers as a form of "empire building" and viewed them as a threat to the preponderant British position in Iraq. UK policymakers had few options other than to cooperate closely with the United States in Iraq and the Middle East. Even so, they grew resentful of the Americans' opportunistic drive for greater influence in the Iraqi military sector that necessarily involved the diminution of their own authority.

Back in Washington, divisions within the US government prevented the formulation of a consensus strategy on military assistance to Iraq. The regional decline of British power, ongoing well before the Suez War, presented US officials with opportunities to expand the American footprint in the arms arena. The allure of these potentialities grew stronger with the events of late 1956, particularly since the Iraqis regularly expressed disappointment with the quality and quantity of Western military aid.

Representatives of the US military and diplomatic corps aggressively pushed for an expansion of military aid to Baghdad. The State Department showed considerable unease with these specific proposals and the rapid expansion of American responsibilities vis-à-vis Iraq, though these inhibitions slowly dissipated in early 1958.

While the US sought to defend British influence in Iraq and the Middle East to protect Western interests, the Americans also worked carefully to distinguish themselves from the ignoble reputations of their colonial allies.⁹⁷⁷ This pattern, in turn, inspired conflict between London and Washington on the Iraqi collective defense question. The Eisenhower administration's decision to forgo official membership in the Baghdad Pact angered UK policymakers. Indeed, the Americans' policy on the Pact was designed, in part, to create an independent American position in Iraq separate from that of the British. These conflicts raged despite the fact that the broader objectives of US and UK policymakers in Iraq were fundamentally in alignment. Both powers sought the protection and enhancement of stability for the central Iraqi government and the defense of Western strategic interests. American and British diplomats sparred over the best means to achieve this common end.

In addition, inter-agency disputes in Washington and conflict with the central regime in Baghdad complicated American policy regarding the Baghdad Pact. As the debates over military assistance revealed, US policymakers did not uniformly seek the unregulated expansion of American influence in Iraq before July 1958. The State Department held firm against the military's calls for formal membership in the Baghdad

⁹⁷⁷ Roby Barrett, *The Greater Middle East and the Cold War: US Foreign Policy Under Eisenhower and Kennedy* (London: IB Tauris, 2007), 12-13; W. Taylor Fain, *American Ascendance and British Retreat in the Persian Gulf Region* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 42-43; William Stivers, "Eisenhower and the Middle East," in Richard Melanson and David Mayers (eds.) *Reevaluating Eisenhower: American Foreign Policy in the 1950s* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 193.

Pact in light of larger, complex geopolitical realities, particularly the conflicting pressures faced by US officials in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Syria, Kuwait, and elsewhere in the region. As in the military assistance sector, US policy regarding the Baghdad Pact served as part of the battleground against which various branches of government debated the definition of the doctrine of diplomatic “freedom of action.” Not surprisingly, the Iraqi leadership, like the British, was deeply distressed by Washington’s decision to abstain from Pact membership.

Tensions also erupted between the United States and its British and Iraqi partners over modernization and development practices. UK officials commented snidely on the arrogance and “naivety” of US technical aid experts operating in Iraq. Point IV and Iraqi authorities likewise argued over the shape and direction of Iraqi modernization efforts. Though these disputes did not critically threaten the foundations of the US-UK and US-Iraqi partnerships, they nevertheless complicated American policies relating to Iraqi development and modernization in the pre-revolutionary period. Most importantly, Point IV’s efforts to modernize Iraqi society and enhance the stability of the central regime ultimately failed to ameliorate popular discontent with the government before the revolutionary events of July 1958.

Beyond these specific policy initiatives lay a number of broader signs of impending trouble for US policies and wider conceptions of American control and power in Iraq on the eve of the 1958 revolution. For one, the Eisenhower administration’s strategies in Iraq damaged Washington’s relationship with the forces of Arab nationalism, neutralism, and anti-colonialism. The Americans found themselves the target of Iraqi nationalist anger and agitation in light of their decisive alliance with the British and Iraqi

governments. Iraqi opposition leaders derided IPC's concession agreements as a form of colonialism and foreign interference and argued forcefully for the nationalization of IPC's assets. Similarly, the announcement of the US-Iraqi military agreement and American support for Iraq's accession to the Baghdad Pact infuriated Iraqi nationalists. In this way, the Americans associated themselves with the conservative, monarchical form of Arabism espoused by Nuri al-Said and other Iraqi elites that battled against the more "radical" pan-Arab variety promoted by Gamal Abdel Nasser. John Lewis Gaddis notes that the Eisenhower White House was theoretically supportive of "nationalism as long as it took independent forms."⁹⁷⁸ However, when confronted with the prospect of "unrest" fomented by opposition groups, the administration decisively supported the government's repression of those nationalists, neutralists, and communists viewed as threats because of their purported links to Cairo and Moscow.⁹⁷⁹ The Americans were not willing to support Arab nationalists in Iraq given the unpredictability of the nationalist movement as a whole and the strategic importance of protecting American and British interests and influence in the country.⁹⁸⁰

As Chapter Five explains, US policymakers were not blind to the complexities of the Iraqi political arena or the unfavourable reputation the Americans developed in the country. American officials clearly identified the undercurrents of opposition that emerged to the rule of the "old guard" of politicians and landed elites among the lower and professional middle classes. However, US policy under Eisenhower, as Axelgard argues, shows few significant adjustments designed to address this opposition and ameliorate

⁹⁷⁸ John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy During the Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 175.

⁹⁷⁹ Barrett, *The Greater Middle East and the Cold War*, p. 2-3, 7, 14.

⁹⁸⁰ Stivers, "Eisenhower and the Middle East," p. 215.

their concerns.⁹⁸¹ There are a number of reasons for this. For one, American officials were not well versed in the task of monitoring and engaging wider trends in mass politics or the interests of amorphous social groups like students, professionals, and the emerging middle class. Indeed, as Matthew Jacobs has argued, the behaviour of American officials revealed “an overall discomfort with mass politics in the Middle East more generally....”⁹⁸² US observers were far more familiar with tracking clearly defined, formal political organizations like the Iraqi Communist Party [ICP]. This tendency, along with the overarching fear of Soviet involvement in Iraq, helps explain Washington’s obsession with the ICP and the residual capacities of Iraqi communists before the 1958 revolution. Assessments of the Iraqi regime’s stability were heavily influenced by the assumption that, since these amorphous groups (like students and professionals) lacked an “organized political vehicle of any importance,” then “these symptoms [of opposition and anger vis-à-vis the central regime] could be disregarded” in the short-term.⁹⁸³ US observers characterized these groups as long-term challenges facing the Iraqi government rather than immediate, existential threats to the regime’s security. US officials were much more concerned with short-term, traditional “Great Power” interests involving the protection of Western assets in Iraq than with the demands of nationalists and the Iraqi middle and lower classes. In this way, Nicholas Thacher

⁹⁸¹ Frederick Axelgard, “US Support for the British Position in Pre-Revolutionary Iraq,” in Robert Fernea and Wm. Roger Louis (eds.) *The Iraqi Revolution of 1958: The Old Social Classes Revisited* (London: IB Tauris, 1991), 86.

⁹⁸² Matthew F. Jacobs, *Imagining the Middle East: The Building of an American Foreign Policy, 1918-1967* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 137.

⁹⁸³ #120 - Memorandum From Harold W. Glidden of the Division of Research and Analysis for Near East, South Asia, and Africa to the Director of Intelligence and Research (Cumming) – Intelligence Indications of Coup in Iraq, 16 July 1958, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 322.

concludes, Nuri al-Said and members of the Iraqi political class shared the “old-fashioned thinking and the enthusiasms” of their American partners.⁹⁸⁴

America’s freedom of action in Iraq was also constrained by the fact that the Eisenhower administration found itself locked in a relationship of “inter-dependency” with the Iraqi leadership.⁹⁸⁵ The US and UK depended on the “old guard” of Iraqi politicians to maintain a stable, anti-communist government and protect Western political, economic, and strategic interests in the country, particularly their continued access to Baghdad’s military facilities and oil resources. The regime that satisfied these objectives, however, was continually facing pressure from a wide variety of opposition elements seeking a dramatic reconfiguration of economic, social, and political priorities. The old guard network of Iraqi politicians relied on Western political and military aid and support to secure the foundations of their government and protect it from internal threats and challenges. As in South Vietnam and elsewhere around the globe, the convergence of interests between Washington and Baghdad facilitated the deepening of the US-Iraqi partnership in the pre-revolutionary period.

Both the Americans and the Iraqi leadership saw continued progress in their modernization initiatives as essential to the government’s quest to earn the loyalty and support of its citizens. At the same time, many American officials remained skeptical as to whether the leading members of the “old guard,” including Prime Minister Nuri al-Said, would be willing to undertake anything more than the most “superficial kind” of

⁹⁸⁴ Nicholas Thacher, “Reflections on US Foreign Policy Toward Iraq in the 1950s,” in Robert Fernea and William Roger Louis (eds.) *The Iraqi Revolution of 1958: The Old Social Classes Revisited* (London: IB Tauris, 1991), 75.

⁹⁸⁵ The concept of “inter-dependency” was inspired by Johan Franzen, “The Failure of British Policy Towards Iraq, 1945-1958,” at the British Academy’s “Rethinking the Middle East? Values, Interests, and Security Concerns in Western Policies toward Iraq and the Wider Region, 1918-2010,” conference, March 2010, London UK.

economic and social reform, particularly regarding land and taxation matters, necessary to stabilize the shaky foundations of the government over the longer term.⁹⁸⁶ The power of old guard figures like Shakir al-Wadi presented the Americans with the “now familiar dilemma” of a pro-Western politician dependent on Washington’s support, the US ambassador to Iraq, Burton Berry, explained in January 1953, “but without sufficient insight and ability to lead constructively his country out of the current economic and social dilemmas which threaten to destroy it.” Expanding on this point, one intelligence assessment produced in June 1957 noted that “strong conservative opposition will continue to delay tax and land tenure reforms designed to spread the economic development program’s benefits.”⁹⁸⁷

Equally problematic was the fact that US officials understood and navigated complex political, economic, and social developments in Iraq in a manner consistent with traditional American conceptions of reform around the globe. As with their partners in the Iraqi government, American perceptions of and attitudes regarding reform in Hashemite Iraq reflected their traditional emphasis on gradualism, “order,” “stability,” and “moderation” in the pace and direction of political, economic, and social change. The Americans’ insistence on promoting gradual rather than radical reforms greatly limited their ability, in partnership with Iraqi authorities, to satisfy the demands of opposition forces. American attempts to reform and modernize Iraqi society fundamentally revealed the “conservative function of reform” in American strategy. To

⁹⁸⁶ From AmEmb Baghdad (Philip Ireland, Charge d’Affaires) to Department of State, #954 - Increasing Opposition to Al-Madfa'i Government as Being Reactionary, 20 June 1953, Confidential US State Department Central Files: Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954 [Hereby referred to as Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954], Reel 2; From AmEmb Baghdad (Berry) to Department of State, #364, 30 November 1953, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2.

⁹⁸⁷ From AmEmbassy Baghdad (Berry) to Department of State, #479 - Conversation with Shakir al Wadi, 14 January 1953, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Reel 2 (first quote); NIE 36.2-57 - The Outlook for Iraq, 4 June 1957, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 1051-1052 (second quote).

paraphrase Ronald Pruessen, American support for reform in Hashemite Iraq, including Point IV's development projects in the country, was a "fundamentally *preventative* device[s] designed to avoid radical alterations" and defend the larger status quo in Iraq.⁹⁸⁸

The limited range of options available to US policymakers was clearly outlined in a 7 August 1957 report. While fully cognizant of the growing political consciousness of urban and peasant Iraqis, the authors of the report emphasized the unknown perils facing Iraqi and US officials if dramatic, radical political reforms took hold. Thus, by continuing its strong support for the government led by Prime Minister Ali Jaudat al-Ayyubi, the authors reasoned, the United States would be in a "position to exert a constructive influence toward gradual reforms" in Iraq's affairs. For instance, by closely collaborating with the government, the United States could promote incremental reforms by al-Ayyubi's regime in the realm of economic development and education. These changes would theoretically bring about a gradual lessening of tensions in the country while at the same time "not diminishing at a dangerous pace the power and influence of the traditional sources of Iraqi political power."⁹⁸⁹

It was the "stabilizing influence" of the tribal sheikhs in particular that the authors feared would be adversely affected by hasty, radical, or ill-conceived political changes. Gradualism was the method by which the Americans and Iraqi leaders would bypass the fundamental crises targeting the foundations of Iraq's political, economic, and social structures.⁹⁹⁰ A State Department cable from 30 October 1957 clearly spelled out these

⁹⁸⁸ Ronald Pruessen, *John Foster Dulles: The Road to Power* (New York: Free Press, 1982), 175 (emphasis in original).

⁹⁸⁹ Operations Coordinating Board Report - Operations Plan for Iraq (NSC 5428), 7 August 1957, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 1062-1068 (all quotes).

⁹⁹⁰ Operations Coordinating Board Report - Operations Plan for Iraq (NSC 5428), 7 August 1957, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. XII, p. 1062-1068.

policy prescriptions. Dutifully aware of the absence of popular support for the Abdul Wahab Mirjan regime, the State Department nevertheless warned that any radical change in the country would be far worse for US interests than the continuation of the status quo. Thus, as Douglas Little recounts, the US would continue to “shore up” the regime while also “working behind the scenes for ‘peaceful change’ and ‘a more broadly-based, moderate, and progressive government.’”⁹⁹¹ The primary American interest in Iraq, particularly in the short-term, remained the continuation of a pro-Western government in Baghdad. US officials were unwilling to sponsor any reform in the Iraqi state that might have jeopardized this vital national security interest.

David Fritzlan of the embassy in Baghdad later described US policy in Iraq as a “race against time.” In the short term, at least, the Eisenhower administration believed the Iraqi government could maintain a firm, repressive hold over opposition elements while US officials channeled and “controlled” Iraqi political developments in pro-American directions. Indeed, intelligence assessments produced before the July 1958 revolution suggested the Iraqi military had been depoliticized and that Nuri al-Said could sustain himself in power, with the use of repressive tactics, for the immediate future at least. Over the longer-term, US officials hoped the regime could garner sufficient popular support and legitimacy to sustain its rule and fend off the emerging challenges posed by students, professionals, and the middle class.⁹⁹² David Newsom, a former US embassy staffer in Iraq, rightly notes that the Eisenhower administration’s evaluation of

⁹⁹¹ Douglas Little, *American Orientalism: The United States and the Middle East Since 1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 201.

⁹⁹² David Fritzlan interview, *Frontline Diplomacy: The Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training*.

short and long-term strategic threats and interests was not unique to US policy in Baghdad. Referring to Iraq, Newsom stated:

It was a classic situation, seen in other parts of the world, of a government in power, which was friendly to us and with which we believed we could work, but which ruled over a population and an elite which was resentful of both the government and the perceived foreign interference.⁹⁹³

In this period, Washington was eager to achieve and defend an expanding list of objectives and strategic interests in Iraq and the Middle East. The Eisenhower administration took, in the words of one US official, a “calculated risk” in its Iraq policy, opting to support the pro-Western regime in Baghdad, notwithstanding the government’s authoritarian tendencies and clear signs of public opposition to the regime.⁹⁹⁴ US policymakers considered the short-term risks of safeguarding the broader political status quo acceptable given the unknown dangers that lay beyond the ruling elite in Iraq.

The United States lost its calculated risk in Iraq, with American policymakers unable to save their ally in Baghdad from the revolutionary events of 14 July 1958. In this regard, the failures of US policy in Iraq offer evidence of another important trend in the annals of American diplomacy. Despite the rapid expansion of American power in Iraq and the extensive aid dispensed by Washington to Baghdad in this period, US officials nevertheless had less actual control and influence over Iraqi developments than they wished to believe.⁹⁹⁵ In the development realm, the Iraqis resisted Point IV’s calls

⁹⁹³ David Newsom interview, *Frontline Diplomacy: The Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training*.

⁹⁹⁴ Harry Stimson wrote that the United States engaged in a “calculated risk” in its Iraq policy, choosing to support the pro-Western regime instead of abandoning Iraq “to the Russians on a silver platter.” See Harry F. Stimson Jr. to Mr. Richard E. Byrd, Jr., 22 August 1958, Christian A. Herter: Papers, 1957-1961, Box 5, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library [DDEL].

⁹⁹⁵ See Ronald Pruessen, “John Foster Dulles and the Predicaments of Power,” in Richard Immerman (ed.) *John Foster Dulles and the Diplomacy of the Cold War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 24

for more comprehensive land reform projects. Baghdad's independent streak in foreign policy, particularly the Fertile Crescent initiatives of Iraqi leaders, proved the Iraqis wielded far more agency on the global stage than the Americans would have liked. The Iraqis, at points, cleverly manipulated the Western powers into extending large military aid packages to Baghdad. The Americans, to quote Salim Yaqub, also proved unable to win the "wholehearted support of Arab public opinion" in Iraq, despite their best efforts at creating an independent American policy on the Baghdad Pact, because of their existing ties to Britain and Baghdad. This development underscored the tendency of American officials to overstate their political capital in the Middle East.⁹⁹⁶ These trends were certainly not unique to the United States; Galia Golan argues that the Soviet Union was regularly frustrated by the unwillingness of its Arab clients to heed Soviet advice, particularly in the realm of foreign affairs.⁹⁹⁷ Even so, it is ironic, given the Eisenhower administration's careful attention to the limits of American global capabilities in the "New Look" strategy, that it failed to acknowledge that its capabilities to transform Iraq into a reasonably stable, popular, anti-communist ally were similarly finite. Despite the major expansion of US power in the Middle East and Iraq in the 1950s, US policy in Iraq before the July 1958 revolution reminds us, once again, of the tangible limits to American power on the global stage.

for a discussion of Dulles' complicated relationship with Syngman Rhee, Chiang Kai-shek, and the larger problem of the "tyrannies of the weak."

⁹⁹⁶ Salim Yaqub, *Containing Arab Nationalism: The Eisenhower Doctrine and the Middle East* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 5.

⁹⁹⁷ Thus, despite massive infusions of Soviet aid and support, Moscow regularly found itself with surprisingly finite capabilities to influence developments in the Arab Middle East. See Galia Golan, *Soviet Policies in the Middle East: From World War II to Gorbachev* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 96.

Introduction to Part II: The Revolutionary Iraqi Republic

Secret “Free Officers” cells within the Iraqi armed forces led the offensive on 14 July 1958 to topple the Hashemite monarchy and central government in Baghdad. The conspirators were afforded an opportunity to act by events beyond Iraq’s borders. In mid-July, the Iraqi government ordered several army brigades to Jordan to shore up the monarchy in Amman. Instead of continuing on to Jordan, Abdul Salam Aref and his co-conspirators, including Brigadier Abdel Karim Qasim, moved into Baghdad. They dispatched forces to the royal palace and the central radio station. The rebels murdered the royal family following a battle with defenders of the monarchy.⁹⁹⁸ Former prime minister Nuri al-Said escaped a firefight at his home, but was captured the next day attempting to flee Baghdad dressed as a woman. The bodies of Nuri al-Said and the Crown Prince were then dragged naked through the streets while military figures papered Baghdad with Nasser’s image. Iraqi citizens filled Baghdad’s streets in a show of popular disdain for the monarchy and support for the new regime.⁹⁹⁹

The Free Officers were initially united by their hatred of the former regime’s pro-Western policies, as well as its dictatorial governance. Beyond these broad principles, Peter Hahn writes, the revolutionary leadership sought to “eradicate all vestiges of the monarchy” and establish a republic that would “serve the needs of the common

⁹⁹⁸ Nathan Citino, “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), 250; Adel Darwish and Gregory Alexander, *Unholy Babylon: The Secret History of Saddam’s War* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1991), 17-18.

⁹⁹⁹ Wm. Roger Louis, “The British and the Origins of the Iraqi Revolution,” in Robert Fernea and Wm. Roger Louis (eds.) *The Iraqi Revolution of 1958: The Old Social Classes Revisited* (London: IB Tauris, 1991), 56-57; David Fritzlan interview, *Frontline Diplomacy: The Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training*; Peter Hahn, *Missions Accomplished? The United States and Iraq Since World War I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 32; Darwish and Alexander, *Unholy Babylon*, p. 18.

people....”¹⁰⁰⁰ A new constitution codified the tenets of religious pluralism and centralized legislative power within the Revolutionary Command Council [RCC]. Qasim quickly established his dominance within the RCC following disputes with Aref over Iraq’s relationship with Egypt.¹⁰⁰¹

At their core, Qasim’s subsequent policies during his five years in power demonstrated sensitivity to and concern for the masses of Iraqis disempowered under the monarchy. Juan Romero argues that the economic and social priorities of Qasim’s government “differed from Iraqi society under the old regime to such a high degree that they constituted a revolution.”¹⁰⁰² Qasim’s regime sought a “more equitable distribution of wealth” by using the state to guide economic development and assert national sovereignty over the economy.¹⁰⁰³ To this end, as Chapters Six and Seven discuss, the Iraqi leadership actively challenged American assets and Washington’s wider conceptions of “control” in the petroleum and modernization arenas. In the realm of social policy, Qasim’s cabinet introduced a series of transformative labour laws that raised the minimum wage, legalized unions, and offered variations of unemployment and accident insurance. Qasim also helped create a township on the edge of Baghdad named Al Thawra (the City of the Revolution - today’s Sadr City) to provide housing for many of Baghdad’s poor. By 1960, the government had built 25,000 new homes across the

¹⁰⁰⁰ Hahn, *Missions Accomplished?*, p. 41 (quote); 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), 766, 776; Marion Farouk-Sluglett and Peter Sluglett, *Iraq Since 1958: From Revolution to Dictatorship* (London: IB Tauris, 2001), 53.

¹⁰⁰¹ Hahn, *Missions Accomplished?*, p. 41.

¹⁰⁰² Juan Lennart Michel Romero, “The Iraqi Revolution of 1958 and the Search for Security in the Middle East,” Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of Texas at Austin, 2008, 192, 193 (quote), 199; Uriel Dann, *Iraq under Qassem: A Political History, 1958-1963* (New York: Praeger, 1969), 63-64.

¹⁰⁰³ Abbas Alnasrawi, *The Economy of Iraq: Oil, Wars, and Destruction of Development and Prospects, 1950-2010* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1994), 37; Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett, *Iraq Since 1958*, p. 77.

country.¹⁰⁰⁴ These initiatives, Wolfe-Hunnicuttt suggests, provided “a solid base of support for Qasim among the urban poor.”¹⁰⁰⁵ Legislation drafted after the revolution also transformed the status of women. The Personal Status Law of December 1959 outlawed polygamy and under-age marriage, and gave women additional rights in divorce matters.¹⁰⁰⁶

Transformative changes occurred in the countryside as well. In the monarchical period, there was little appetite amongst Iraqi government authorities to change the power dynamics between landless farmers and the tribal sheikhs since the ruling clique depended on the latter’s backing. Qasim’s regime was not nearly as reliant on large landowners and the tribal sheikhs for support as the former government. As Chapter Seven explains, the new leaders were thus free to initiate wide-ranging land reform projects that subsequently angered Point IV observers. The regime imposed progressive income taxes on the wealthy tribal sheikhs and landowners and lowered taxes for less affluent citizens. The government also abolished the tribal jurisdictions and the separate legal codes that previously governed the countryside.¹⁰⁰⁷ The most important development in this arena was the proclamation of the Agrarian Reform Law [ARL]. The ARL capped landholdings at a maximum of 2000 dunams¹⁰⁰⁸, with excess land redistributed in small parcels to peasants. It is certainly true that Qasim’s cabinets

¹⁰⁰⁴ Charles Tripp, *A History of Iraq* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 161-162; Aheed Dawisha, *Iraq: A Political History from Independence to Occupation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 181.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Brandon Wolfe-Hunnicuttt, “The End of the Concessionary Regime: Oil and American Power in Iraq, 1958-1972,” Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Stanford University, 2011, 66 (quote); Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*, p. 841.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Dawisha, *Iraq*, p. 183; Phebe Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2012), 99-100.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, p. 149-150; Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*, p. 838.

¹⁰⁰⁸ One dunam is equivalent to 0.62 of an acre.

struggled to cope with problems that emerged during the ARL's execution and the onset of a larger economic malaise. Even so, the ARL provided benefits to tenants and more generally improved life for workers in the agricultural sector.¹⁰⁰⁹ These impressive social, economic, and political achievements, Hahn argues, met with broad approval "among the masses of Iraq's rural and urban poor as well as growing middle class..."¹⁰¹⁰ Moreover, Phebe Marr contends that the government's efforts helped destroy the "grip of the landed class and the urban wealthy over the political system and placed the new middle class firmly in power."¹⁰¹¹

These important developments ran parallel with rising political tensions in the country. In the period between July 1958 and January 1961, the Iraqi Republic found itself teetering on the edge of political instability. Qasim was confronted, on the one side, by pro-Nasser nationalists and Baathists. While the Baath party was a relatively minor player before the revolution, it soon grew in popularity among youth drawn by its calls for Arab independence, unity, and socialism.¹⁰¹² On the other side of the political spectrum stood the Iraqi Communist Party [ICP]. The ICP quickly became the most powerful, best organized, and "most effective party in Iraq." It was particularly adept at mobilizing the power of the Iraqi "street" to bring its supporters out in large numbers for rallies and demonstrations.¹⁰¹³ Qasim tried to balance these two competing forces against one another, relying on the ICP to counter the challenge posed by pro-UAR nationalists

¹⁰⁰⁹ Romero, "The Iraqi Revolution of 1958 and the Search for Security in the Middle East," p. 209.

¹⁰¹⁰ Hahn, *Missions Accomplished?*, p. 41.

¹⁰¹¹ Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, p. 81 (quote); Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*, p. 806; Orit Bashkin, *The Other Iraq: Pluralism and Culture in Hashemite Iraq* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 268.

¹⁰¹² Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*, p. 733-742; Johan Franzen, *Red Star over Iraq: Iraqi Communism Before Saddam* (London: Hurst, 2011), 87.

¹⁰¹³ Dann, *Iraq under Qassem*, p. 99 (quote); Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett, *Iraq Since 1958*, p. 55.

to his regime's authority.¹⁰¹⁴ Officials in Washington certainly took notice of these rapidly shifting political dynamics; Chapter Eight discusses how the Americans' fears of the ICP's growing strength affected the Eisenhower administration's strategies for intervention in Baghdad following the revolution. Thereafter, Prime Minister Qasim regularly accused the United States of working to overthrow his government. Though Iraqi politics stabilized to a degree by early 1960, the Americans remained fearful of a revival of the ICP's fortunes.

Qasim's behaviour in the years after July 1958 also worried US officials seeking stability in Baghdad. Qasim became, as Marr argues, "increasingly erratic and unsophisticated" in his governance, in part because of repeated conspiracies launched against him.¹⁰¹⁵ At best, US officials believed Qasim remained an "enigma" whose confusing behaviour defied long-term predictions.¹⁰¹⁶ Long-range political assessments were also complicated by the reality that groups and individuals opposed to Qasim's rule had few substantive roles to play in Iraq's political arena. Only those officials identified as "Qasimites" had access to the corridors of power in Baghdad.¹⁰¹⁷ Furthermore, Marr

¹⁰¹⁴ Dawisha, *Iraq*, p. 174.

¹⁰¹⁵ Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, p. 102 (quote). As Adeed Dawisha notes, Qasim saw his survival in the failed attempt on his life in October 1959 as evidence of his "God-sanctioned good fortune" that "[c]onvinced [him] of the righteousness of his mission, even of his own infallibility..." In the aftermath, Qasim regularly forced visitors to his office at the Ministry of Defence to observe the blood-stained shirt he wore during the October 1959 assassination attempt. As Marr recounts, Qasim also worked to develop a form of personality cult in this period defined by the "Sole Leader's all-embracing concept of himself as leader of a united state." Baghdad radio programs offered "official adulation of the leader" and the appearance of statues and postage stamps devoted to Qasim suggested his "semi-deification" in Iraqi government circles. See Dawisha, *Iraq*, p. 179 (first footnote quote); Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, p. 104 (second footnote quote); Dann, *Iraq under Qassem*, p. 259, 260 (third footnote quote), 261; Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett, *Iraq Since 1958*, p. 74, 82-83.

¹⁰¹⁶ From Armin H. Meyer to G. Lewis Jones – Inter-Agency Group Meeting – March 18 1960, 16 March 1960, National Archives and Records Administration [NARA], Record Group [RG] 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs – Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Records of the Director, 1958-1953, Box 1.

¹⁰¹⁷ Iraq under Qasim also saw an unprecedented centralization of power within the government. See Dawisha, *Iraq*, p. 179-180; Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*, p. 832.

writes, Qasim's inability to "construct political institutions and processes to govern Iraq" helped "open[ed] the door to direct military participation in politics."¹⁰¹⁸

By the time the Eisenhower administration left office in January 1961, American officials were convinced Qasim's regime could fall at any moment. Indeed, his government was overthrown in a bloody Baathist coup just two short years later. The following three chapters assess how oil politics, development and modernization programs, and covert intervention strategies shaped the US-Iraqi relationship during the final years of Eisenhower's presidency. More broadly, these chapters highlight the difficulties the Americans experienced in attempting to understand, navigate, and control the complex political currents and developments unleashed by the July 1958 Iraqi Revolution.

¹⁰¹⁸ Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, p. 112. See also Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, p. 143 on the military's role in Iraqi politics under Qasim.

Chapter Six: US Oil Interests in Revolutionary Iraq

Chapter Two analyzed how US officials sought to safeguard the commercial prosperity and strategic stability of Western assets in the Iraqi oil sector before the July 1958 Iraqi Revolution. US policymakers maintained open lines of communication with American companies in the Iraq Petroleum Company [IPC] as well as their British partners. US government and IPC officials also sought positive relationships with the Iraqi regime, though this task became more difficult in the months before the July 1958 revolution. These priorities continued to influence US policy after the revolution, though with an important new factor introduced into the calculations. After July 1958, the United States was tasked with reconciling its strategic interests in Iraqi oil with the policies of the revolutionary regime in Baghdad. American and IPC officials saw the monarchical regime as a pliant, if at times frustrating, ally in the exploitation of Iraqi oil. Indeed, the Americans relied heavily on the government in Baghdad to protect the stability of US oil assets in Iraq. The United States and IPC found the new Qasim regime to be a far more difficult and assertive (and, in their view, frustrating) partner than its predecessor. As a symptom of their worsening relationship with Iraq, American officials regularly speculated about possible Iraqi moves to destabilize US oil interests and broader definitions of American control in the petroleum sector. The ties that bound Iraq and the United States together in the postwar petroleum order unraveled after the July 1958 revolution.

A wider view of Iraqi oil developments is in order first. Chapter Two noted that the sabotage of IPC lines by Syrian agents during the Suez Crisis created a major headache for company operators and Iraqi authorities. Iraq only resumed its pre-Suez oil

production levels in April 1958.¹⁰¹⁹ Over the lifespan of Qasim's regime (1958 to 1963), IPC operations continued to expand in spite of waves of political unrest. Iraq set a national record by producing 721,000 barrels of oil per day in 1958. The figure soared to 970,000 two years later.¹⁰²⁰ Oil royalties earmarked for the Iraqis increased in parallel fashion. Qasim's regime received roughly \$235 million from IPC operations in 1958. This total rose to \$242 million the following year.¹⁰²¹

These statistics belie the contentious nature of Iraqi oil matters in this period. Chapter Two referred to several approaching crises in the global petroleum market. The ancien régime in Baghdad was just beginning to feel the impact of an emerging oil glut and corresponding reductions in prices when the revolution struck. The market price of international petroleum dropped in the face of voluntary (1957), and later, mandatory (1959) American import quotas instituted to appease domestic companies. The start of large-scale exports of Soviet oil as well as those of independent Italian and Japanese firms added to the overabundance of global oil supplies.¹⁰²²

¹⁰¹⁹ Roger Owen, "The Dog that Neither Barked Nor Bit: The Fear of Oil Shortages," in William Roger Louis and Roger Owen (eds.) *A Revolutionary Year: The Middle East in 1958* (London: IB Tauris, 2002), 276.

¹⁰²⁰ CIA Office of Current Intelligence, "Current Intelligence Weekly Summary – 12 February 1959," February 27 2010. CIA-RDP79-00927A002100060001-4, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST), National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD; Abbas Alnasrawi, *The Economy of Iraq: Oil, Wars, and Destruction of Development and Prospects, 1950-2010* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1994), 11.

¹⁰²¹ CIA Office of Current Intelligence, "Current Intelligence Weekly Summary – 15 January 1959," February 27 2010. CIA-RDP79-00927A002100020001-8, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST); CIA Office of National Estimates – The Outlook for Iraq, 22 September 1960, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library [DDEL].

¹⁰²² Canada and Mexico were exempted from these quotas. See Daniel Yergin, *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money, and Power* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991), 512-515; *Report, Multinational Oil Corporations and US Foreign Policy*, US Senate Subcommittee on Multinational Corporations of the Committee on Foreign Relations (Washington, 1975), 88.

The major international oil firms tried to protect their market shares by offering substantial discounts on the posted prices of oil.¹⁰²³ These unilateral price cuts angered the Iraqi leadership since they were undertaken without their input. As will be seen, they also poisoned the atmosphere for bilateral negotiations between the two sides. Qasim's regime did not stand idly by in the face of unilateral attacks on this vital stream of national revenue.¹⁰²⁴ The Iraqi leadership joined the emergent Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries [OPEC] in September 1960 to strengthen the position of oil-producing nations in their battles with international firms.¹⁰²⁵ Each of these trends first appeared while the Iraqi monarchy still ruled Baghdad. The Iraqi Republic, however, bore the brunt of the scars in their conflicts with IPC and these larger marketplace pressures.

For their part, American policymakers carried on after July 1958 with a general strategy for protecting Western assets in Middle East oil. NSC 5820/1, drafted in 1960, emphasized the "continued availability" of sufficient Near Eastern oil to satisfy vital Western European needs. This was particularly important for American strategy since, as the National Security Council [NSC] recognized, "there is in sight no wholly adequate substitute for the vast oil reserves of the area."¹⁰²⁶ The specter of Nasserism and / or communism dominating Baghdad strengthened American resolve to protect access to

¹⁰²³ These discounts reached as high as 40 cents by 1959. See *Report, Multinational Oil Corporations and US Foreign Policy*, p. 88; Alnasrawi, *The Economy of Iraq*, p. 8.

¹⁰²⁴ By 1961, oil royalties accounted for 27% of Iraq's total national income. See Adeed Dawisha, *Iraq: A Political History from Independence to Occupation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 182.

¹⁰²⁵ Nathan Citino, "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), 260-261.

¹⁰²⁶ Kenneth Osgood, "Eisenhower and Regime Change in Iraq: The United States and the Iraqi Revolution of 1958," in David Ryan and Patrick Kiely (eds.) *America and Iraq: Policymaking, Intervention, and Regional Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 7, 8 (first quote); NSC 6011 – National Security Council – US Policy Toward the Near East, 17 June 1960, National Archives and Records Administration [NARA], Record Group [RG] 273, Policy Papers, Box 52 (second quote).

Iraqi oil. If Gamal Abdel Nasser were to gain preponderant influence in Iraq, William Rountree of the State Department warned, the Egyptian leader could also threaten the oil resources of neighbouring Kuwait and the Gulf sheikhdoms.¹⁰²⁷ Just as worrisome was the possibility that a communist Iraq would nationalize IPC and its subsidiaries. As such, US policy demanded not only continued Western access to Iraqi petroleum, but also the denial of these resources to the Nasserist and communist blocs.¹⁰²⁸

The Eisenhower Administration, IPC, and the British

The Eisenhower administration maintained an active, cooperative dialogue with American oil companies operating in the Middle East before July 1958. This partnership served its pursuit of stability in Iraqi petroleum affairs reasonably well. The two sides regularly exchanged information about regional politics to pre-empt challenges to the security of American oil interests. It comes as no surprise, given the long record of corporatism in American history, that these channels of communication functioned effectively following the Iraqi revolution. This dialogue was particularly valuable since the new Iraqi government progressively, and with greater stridency, demanded more rights and privileges from IPC management.

These connections proved their worth in the immediate aftermath of the revolution. Many of the earliest fragments of information obtained by the State Department about the situation in Baghdad arrived from IPC sources. Oil officials reassured anxious diplomats that company operations were proceeding normally in spite

¹⁰²⁷ #154 - Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (Rountree) to Acting Secretary of State Dillon, 22 December 1958, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 368.

¹⁰²⁸ SNIE 36.2 -59 – The Communist Threat to Iraq, 17 February 1959, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 387; Yergin, *The Prize*, p. 427.

of the political turbulence.¹⁰²⁹ In late August, the co-manager of IPC relayed detailed information to Washington regarding his meetings with key personalities in the new regime, including Brigadier Abdel Karim Qasim, Minister of Economics Ibrahim Kubba, and Minister of Finance Mohamad Hadid. Similar reports flowed in from IPC management following their inspection of company installations.¹⁰³⁰

Following the revolution in Baghdad, IPC officials forwarded information to Washington bureaucrats about the pace and tenor of their discussions with the Iraqis. Thanks to these information-sharing networks, the US government knew in advance of negotiation sessions that Qasim intended to push for the relinquishment of IPC concessional areas, additional company loans, and the appointment of an Iraqi executive director in IPC.¹⁰³¹ As talks between the two sides hit a wall in late 1960, the State Department continued its frequent, informal contacts with American firms in IPC and other company personnel.¹⁰³² These channels of communication worked both ways. IPC officials requested estimates from the US government about various facets of Iraqi politics. In the summer of 1959, in the aftermath of political violence at Kirkuk, the head

¹⁰²⁹ From London (Whitney) to Secretary of State, #326, 16 July 1958, NARA, RG 59, Central Decimal File [CDF] Iraq 1955-1959 –887.2553, Box 4961.

¹⁰³⁰ From American Embassy London (J. Wesley Adams, First Secretary of Embassy) to Department of State, #541 –Report on Discussions of the IPC Managing Director with top Iraqi Officials, 29 August 1958, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 –887.2553, Box 4961; From American Embassy London (J. Wesley Adams, First Secretary of Embassy) to Department of State, #876 –Report on Iraq Trip by H.W. Fisher, Joint Managing Director of IPC, 14 October 1958, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 –887.2553, Box 4961.

¹⁰³¹ Edgar L. McGinnis, Jr., First Secretary of Embassy to Department of State, #2311 –Conversation with Iraq Petroleum Company Officials, 6 April 1959, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 –887.2553, Box 4961; Memorandum of Conversation – Mr. Howard W. Fisher, Director, Standard Oil Company (N.J.), Mr. Martin Jones, Government Relations, Standard Oil Company (N.J.), NEA – G. Lewis Jones, NEA – Parker T. Hart, NE/E George Bensusky –IPC-GOI Relations and IPC Situation in South Arabia, 17 December 1959, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 –887.2553, Box 4961.

¹⁰³² From Baghdad (Davies) to Secretary of State, #524, 18 October 1960, Confidential US State Department Central Files: Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1960-January 1963 [Hereby referred to as Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1960-January 1963], Reel 9; From Herter to AmEmbassy Baghdad, 18 November 1960, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1960-January 1963, Reel 9; From Baghdad (Jernegan) to Secretary of State, #626, 22 December 1960, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1960-January 1963, Reel 9.

of Socony-Vacuum (now known as Socony Mobil) approached US government representatives for assistance. Washington, in turn, provided critical information about the prospects for political stability in Iraq.¹⁰³³ Thanks to this corporatist partnership, the American government and private companies were better positioned to grapple with the fluctuating political landscape in Iraq.

Continuity remained the dominant feature of the American corporatist partnership in Iraqi petroleum affairs. The same holds true for Washington's contacts with the preponderant foreign power in IPC. The US relationship with the British in the Iraqi oil sector was determined by the clear division of IPC ownership shares, the long tradition of British control of the company, and the relative profitability British leadership brought for London and Washington. For all these reasons, the United States showed considerable deference to their British partners in IPC before July 1958.

American officials were cognizant that British economic power in Iraq in the last years of the Eisenhower administration was "being steadily whittled away."¹⁰³⁴ Even so, London exerted strong influence on Iraqi oil issues even after the revolution wiped away one of its closest allies. The Operations Coordination Board [OCB] appreciated that the UK maintained the greatest financial interest in IPC and thus needed to retain its "traditional control of management."¹⁰³⁵ US officials continued to defer to the British in light of the constellation of power within the company. They insisted after July 1958 that

¹⁰³³ Memorandum of Conversation – Mr. Charles Darlington (Socony Mobile Oil Company), Mr. Armin H. Meyer, NE, Mr. Randolph Roberts, NE/E, Mr. Alfred L. Atherton, Jr., NE – Situation in Iraq, 22 July 1959, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs - Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Office Files Relating to Middle Eastern Affairs, 1958-1959, Box 14.

¹⁰³⁴ Operations Coordinating Board – Operational Plans for Iraq, 9 March 1960, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 - Administrative and Chronological Files 1953-1961, Box 26.

¹⁰³⁵ Operations Coordinating Board – Operational Plans for Iraq, 9 March 1960, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 - Administrative and Chronological Files 1953-1961, Box 26.

the “initiative on petroleum matters [in Iraq] should continue to be left to the UK.”¹⁰³⁶

London took the lead in assisting negotiations between the company and Iraqi authorities, with US officials expressing their views to the British when necessary.

The two sides, as in the corporatist model, shared vital information to protect their overlapping economic assets. Three weeks after the revolution, the State Department forwarded information to their British counterparts outlining Gamal Abdel Nasser’s pledge to protect IPC pipelines in Syria from sabotage. Months later, William Rountree of the State Department met with the UK ambassador to Iraq, Sir Humphrey Trevelyan, to warn about Iraq’s threatening intentions vis-à-vis IPC.¹⁰³⁷ The British reciprocated in kind. The former chancellor of the exchequer promptly forwarded the summary of his discussions with top Iraqi oil administrators, including Ibrahim Kubba and Mohamad Hadid, to the Americans in November.¹⁰³⁸ UK government mandarins also solicited advice on strategies to protect Western access to the Iraqi market. In October 1959, the British Foreign Office queried the State Department regarding the advisability of pushing IPC to make concessions to the Iraqis.¹⁰³⁹ As IPC-Government of Iraq [GOI] talks dragged on through 1960, the two sides regularly shared assessments of possible Iraqi

¹⁰³⁶ Operations Coordinating Board – Operational Guidance Concerning Iraq, 18 February 1959, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 - Administrative and Chronological Files 1953-1961, Box 25.

¹⁰³⁷ From Washington (Lord Hood) to Foreign Office, #432 –VQ10345, 5 August 1958, FO371-134213, British National Archives [BNA]; From British Embassy Washington (W. Morris) to S.J. Whitwell, Eastern Department, Foreign Office, EQ1531/39, 13 November 1958, FO371-133120, BNA.

¹⁰³⁸ From Baghdad (Fritzlan) to Secretary of State, #1534, 10 November 1958, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 –887.2553, Box 4961.

¹⁰³⁹ The State Department, with an eye toward the ramifications of similar strategies for US oil companies in the Middle East, felt it best to avoid formal policy approaches to IPC. See Memorandum of Conversation – Mr. Michael Weir, First Secretary, British Embassy and NE Mr. Armin H. Meyer, NE Mr. William C. Lakeland – Possible Advice to Iraq Petroleum Company (IPC) regarding Negotiations with the Iraqi Government, 9 October 1959, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 –887.2553, Box 4961.

responses to the stalemate.¹⁰⁴⁰ These exchanges were remarkably similar to those held years earlier when a pro-Western government ruled Baghdad. The composition of the Iraqi government had changed dramatically by this point, but the pattern of close cooperation between American and British figures continued in much the same fashion.

Another indication of the vitality of the US-UK economic partnership was the continuation of Western contingency planning regarding Middle East oil reserves. Following the revolution, the NSC declared that the United States would consider the use of force, either unilaterally or in concert with the British, to protect Western Europe's access to Middle East petroleum.¹⁰⁴¹ As part of this policy, Washington produced papers in late 1958 in conjunction with the British on securing European oil supplies in the event of sabotage to or nationalization of Iraqi oil.¹⁰⁴² Similar exercises took place in the spring of 1959 in light of fears, to be discussed in Chapter Eight, that Iraq was drifting into the communist orbit. American officials debated whether they should, in conjunction with the British, institute a boycott of Iraqi oil if communist control was established in Baghdad.¹⁰⁴³ The United States did not draft a single, officially agreed-upon strategy focused on Iraqi nationalization of IPC. Moreover, the immediate threat of communist

¹⁰⁴⁰ From Baghdad (Davies) to Secretary of State, #364, 6 September 1960, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1960-January 1963, Reel 9; From Baghdad (Jernegan) to Secretary of State, #606, 1 December 1960, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1960-January 1963, Reel 9.

¹⁰⁴¹ As Chapter Two explained, Washington and London had previously engaged in contingency planning to protect Western Europe's access to Middle East oil during the Bermuda Conference of 1957 and in other instances before July 1958. The proposals considered by the two countries included the construction of additional storage capacities for oil in Europe and exploration of oil fields outside the confines of the Middle East. See Osgood, "Eisenhower and Regime Change in Iraq," p. 7-8.

¹⁰⁴² From Foreign Office to P. de Zulueta, 22 December 1958, FO371-133120, BNA.

¹⁰⁴³ State Department representatives in Iraq ultimately concluded that such a move would be counterproductive since it would only further "enrage" the Iraqis without sufficiently pressuring them to protect American oil interests. See From Herter to AmEmbassy Baghdad, 27 March 1959, White House Office, Office of the Staff Secretary: Records, 1952-1961 - International Series, Box 8, DDEL; From Baghdad (Jernegan) to Secretary of State, 3 April 1959, White House Office, Office of the Staff Secretary: Records, 1952-1961 - International Series, Box 8, DDEL; State Department Paper - The Situation in Iraq - Policy the United States Should Follow to Prevent Communism from Establishing Control of the Country, 15 April 1959, NARA, RG 273, Official Meeting Minutes, Box 23.

domination in Iraq receded by early 1960. Nevertheless, American officials continued to emphasize active dialogue with the British to consider possible steps, “including the use of force” in Baghdad, to satiate Europe’s energy requirements.¹⁰⁴⁴ As a whole, the American partnership with the British reflected an underlying appreciation of the need for unity to deter threats to Western economic interests in Iraqi petroleum.

IPC’s relationship with Qasim’s Regime

The most important means by which the United States and IPC could safeguard their assets in the Iraqi petroleum sector was by maintaining a positive relationship with the new regime in Baghdad. This proved to be a tremendously difficult task. Unlike the corporatist partnership between American government and private enterprise and the US-UK economic alliance, IPC’s relationship with the Iraqi regime after July 1958 was fraught with tension and yielded disappointing results. In fact, less than one year after President Eisenhower left office, the Iraqis took a major step that dramatically affected IPC’s assets. In December 1961, Qasim decreed Public Law [PL] 80. The legislation unilaterally revised IPC’s concessional agreement. Most importantly, it revoked all unexploited areas in the company’s concession territory. In total, the government unilaterally stripped away 99.5% of IPC’s area in Iraq without compensation. This included the massive, but as of yet underdeveloped, Rumaila field in southern Iraq previously operated by the Basra Petroleum Company [BPC].¹⁰⁴⁵ The legislation was

¹⁰⁴⁴ State Department Paper - The Situation in Iraq – Policy the United States Should Follow to Prevent Communism from Establishing Control of the Country, 15 April 1959, NARA, RG 273, Official Meeting Minutes, Box 23; NSC 6011 – National Security Council – US Policy Toward the Near East, 17 June 1960, NARA, RG 273, Policy Papers, Box 52.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Brandon Wolfe-Hunnicut, “The End of the Concessionary Regime: Oil and American Power in Iraq, 1958-1972.” Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Stanford University, 2011, 27, 31; Charles Tripp, *A History*

followed by the creation of the state-run Iraqi National Oil Company to develop sections of these newly sequestered areas. In other parts of the country, the regime planned to invite international firms to bid for these new concessions.¹⁰⁴⁶

Public Law 80 fell a few steps short of full nationalization of the oil industry. It did not affect IPC operations at Kirkuk, the most productive area thus far explored. This ensured continued expansion and prosperity for both the company and government.¹⁰⁴⁷

Historians nevertheless view PL 80 as a transformative moment in the IPC-GOI relationship. Brandon Wolfe-Hunnicuttt regards Law 80 as both a “landmark decree that would permanently alter the oil politics of the region” and a “turning point” for ties between the US and Iraq. PL 80, Adeed Dawisha writes, “constituted a significant departure from those [policies] followed by the monarchical order.” Charles Tripp believes the consequences of the legislation were nearly as radical as nationalization since IPC was “effectively frozen out of further developments in Iraq...” And Samir Saul characterizes Law 80 as the “most significant development” in the region since the Iranian nationalization crisis of 1951 to 1953. Saul, quoting the *Middle East Economic Survey*, writes that

It was ‘the first time that an Arab oil-producing country has taken legislative measures for the unilateral modification of its oil concession agreements, without having recourse to the arbitration clauses embodied in these agreements.’¹⁰⁴⁸

of Iraq (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 160-161; Phebe Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2012), 101-102; Dawisha, *Iraq*, p. 182.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, p. 101; Dawisha, *Iraq*, p. 182; Samir Saul, “Masterly Inactivity as Brinkmanship: The Iraq Petroleum Company’s Road to Nationalization, 1958-1972,” *International History Review* 29, no. 4 (December 2007), 760-761.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, p. 101-102.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Wolfe-Hunnicuttt, “The End of the Concessionary Regime,” p. 70-72; Dawisha, *Iraq*, p. 182; Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, p. 160-161; Saul, “Masterly Inactivity as Brinkmanship,” p. 761.

The Qasim regime's motivations for the proclamation of PL 80 are critical to an analysis of American oil interests in Iraq. Law 80 was designed, in part, as a remedy for Qasim's domestic troubles that worsened from July 1958 to December 1961. These included his aggressive (yet failed) claim to Kuwait in 1961, the depressed state of the economy, and the start of armed conflict with Mulla Mustafa Barzani's Kurdistan Democratic Party [KDP].¹⁰⁴⁹ Historians have also connected the legislation to the unproductive negotiations ongoing between IPC and the Iraqis in the first year of the Kennedy presidency.¹⁰⁵⁰

This chapter argues that one can only understand the emergence of PL 80 in December 1961 by examining the evolution of the troubled IPC-GOI relationship from July 1958 to January 1961. The seeds for PL 80 were sown in the final years of the Eisenhower presidency. In this period, American government and IPC officials had many signs available to them that the Iraqis were growing weary of the politics of business-as-usual in the oil sector. In some cases, brand-new problems appeared in negotiations between the company and the regime. In other instances, disputes that carried over from the monarchical period took on an added degree of complexity, tension, and emotion. By looking at this period of IPC-Iraqi relations in greater depth, one can chart the methodical hardening of relations between the two sides and the antecedents of PL 80. This chapter therefore builds on Charles Tripp's assertion that PL 80 was the product of "unsatisfactory negotiations with IPC during the previous two years over a range of issues...."¹⁰⁵¹

¹⁰⁴⁹ Wolfe-Hunnicut, "The End of the Concessionary Regime," p. 66-67.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Dawisha, for instance, writes that the Iraqi regime continued to "up the ante" with IPC over the course of 1961, ultimately leading to the proclamation of Law 80. See Dawisha, *Iraq*, p. 182.

¹⁰⁵¹ Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, p. 161.

American anxieties about the loss of Iraqi petroleum to Nasserist and / or communist forces were heightened in the first days after the revolution when information about the situation in Baghdad was scarce. As Chapter Eight will explain, officials in the Eisenhower administration first believed the Iraqi revolution was an Egyptian plot. In turn, they feared the impact of Nasser's dominion over Middle East oil on Western European economies and awaited another campaign of sabotage against IPC installations.¹⁰⁵² In the weeks following the revolution, intelligence flowed to US policymakers that revealed the coup was an indigenous rather than a Nasserist creation.¹⁰⁵³ As the new regime established control, it also became evident that it sought to preserve (for a time, at least) the relationships its predecessor established with top authorities in IPC, Washington, and London. US officials found reassurance in these early signs of continuity and normalization of oil questions. Qasim's statement on Baghdad radio on 18 July 1958 went a long way to allaying American anxieties. Qasim declared that

In view of the importance of oil to the international economy, the Government of the Iraqi Republic would like to declare its eagerness to the continuance of oil production and its supply to markets where it is sold because of its importance to national wealth, and the national and international economic and industrial interests.¹⁰⁵⁴

Qasim also proclaimed his determination to protect Iraq's oil wells, pumping stations, and pipelines from sabotage. A series of face-to-face meetings followed between

¹⁰⁵² Statement by George V. Allen, Director, US Information Agency at the National Security Council, 24 July 1958, NARA, RG 273, Official Meeting Minutes, Box 22 (quote); Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, *Khrushchev's Cold War: The Inside Story of an American Adversary* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2006), 163; Citino, "Middle East Cold Wars," p. 251.

¹⁰⁵³ Stephen Blackwell, "A Desert Squall: Anglo-American Planning for Military Intervention in Iraq, July 1958-August 1959," *Middle Eastern Studies* 35, no. 3 (July 1999), 4.

¹⁰⁵⁴ From Baghdad (Gallman) to Secretary of State, #215, 18 July 1958, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959-887.2553, Box 4961 (quote); From Baghdad Emergency HQ (Sir M. Wright) to Foreign Office, #15, 20 July 1958, DEFE 11-269, BNA.

American and Iraqi diplomats where the new leadership reiterated its commitment to honoring existing IPC contracts and maintaining the current flow of oil production, thereby “retain[ing] its [Iraq’s] markets in the Western world.”¹⁰⁵⁵ Qasim impressed company officials as “very friendly and most cordial.”¹⁰⁵⁶ By early October, the co-manager of IPC, H.W. Fisher, suggested that the company was in relatively “good standing” in Baghdad.¹⁰⁵⁷ Despite their initial worst fears, US government and IPC representatives found the new regime to be cooperative in the continuation of regular oil operations.

The Iraqi cabinet soon turned to substantive policy questions outstanding with the company. Qasim wanted to revise existing agreements with IPC to free up additional funds for government projects. He remained mindful of his government’s dependence on IPC royalties and fearful of repeating Mossadeq’s mistakes. The Egyptians and Soviets also cautioned Qasim not to give the Western powers an excuse to intervene in Iraq.¹⁰⁵⁸ As a reflection of this approach, many of the concerns Qasim raised in the first months after the revolution were ones that carried over from the monarchical period. British officials correctly predicted in early September that the regime’s oil demands would closely approximate those of Nuri al-Said’s cabinets. The US ambassador to Iraq,

¹⁰⁵⁵ From London (Whitney) to Secretary of State, #454, 21 July 1958, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 –887.2553, Box 4961; From Gallman to SecState Washington, #536, 5 August 1958, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 20 (quote); Malik Mufti, “The United States and Nasserist Pan-Arabism,” in David Lesch (ed.) *The Middle East and the United States: A Historical and Political Reassessment* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2003), 174.

¹⁰⁵⁶ From AmEmbassy Baghdad (John Miles, Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs) to Department of State, #96 –Review of GOI – IPC Relations, 25 August 1958, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 – 887.2553, Box 4961; From Baghdad (Gallman) to Secretary of State, #879, 22 August 1958, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 –887.2553, Box 4961.

¹⁰⁵⁷ From American Embassy London (J. Wesley Adams, First Secretary of Embassy) to Department of State, #876 –Report on Iraq Trip by H.W. Fisher, Joint Managing Director of IPC, 14 October 1958, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 –887.2553, Box 4961.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Uriel Dann, *Iraq Under Qassem: A Political History, 1958-1963* (New York: Praeger, 1969), 53; Ismail al-Arif, *Iraq Reborn: A Firsthand Account of the July 1958 Revolution and After* (New York: Vantage Press, 1982), 87; Fursenko and Naftali, *Khrushchev’s Cold War*, p. 170.

Waldemar Gallman, noted with relief that Iraqi authorities, led by Qasim, Kubba, and Hadid, seemingly “had picked up [the] trail exactly where [the] old regime left off.”¹⁰⁵⁹

For one, the new regime revived the previous government’s request for a four million Iraqi Dinar [ID] loan. IPC granted the loan in September 1958 to support Qasim’s administration and save his economic programs from serious disruption.¹⁰⁶⁰ The new regime’s insistence that IPC expand its production capacities, including reactivating old pipelines and building new ones, also closely mirrored the monarchical regime’s policies.¹⁰⁶¹ The Iraqis unsuccessfully pressed for the creation of a BPC pipeline running from Basra to Kuwait to expand oil production and “catch up with the level reached by other oil producing states in the Middle East in this respect.”¹⁰⁶² Company representatives were likewise not surprised when Qasim, Kubba, and Hadid requested the return of portions of IPC’s concessional areas in August. This request, company officials stated, did not represent “any departure from the policy of the previous government.” The co-manager of IPC believed the company could likely agree to the request so long as they retained sufficient territory for the expansion of facilities.¹⁰⁶³ Rather than setting off

¹⁰⁵⁹ Chiefs of Staff Committee – Confidential Annex to C.O.S. (58) 79th Meeting Held on Tuesday, 9th September 1958, DEFE 11-269, BNA; From Baghdad (Gallman) to Secretary of State, #879, 22 August 1958, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 –887.2553, Box 4961 (quote).

¹⁰⁶⁰ From Baghdad (Gallman) to Secretary of State, #743, 14 August 1958, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 –887.2553, Box 4961; From American Embassy London (J. Wesley Adams, First Secretary of Embassy) to Department of State, #876 –Report on Iraq Trip by H.W. Fisher, Joint Managing Director of IPC, 14 October 1958, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 –887.2553, Box 4961; Wolfe-Hunnicut, “The End of the Concessionary Regime,” p. 33-34.

¹⁰⁶¹ The IPC committed to expanding their pipeline loops and facilities for lines crossing Syrian territory in late 1958. Qasim also unsuccessfully tried to resuscitate the long-standing demand for the reactivation of the pipeline running to Haifa, Israel. See Dawisha, *Iraq*, p. 182; Foreign Office Minute – W.I. Combs – Iraq Petroleum Company, EQ1531/41, 1 December 1958, FO371-133120, BNA; From Baghdad (Gallman) to Secretary of State, #879, 22 August 1958, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 –887.2553, Box 4961.

¹⁰⁶² From Ministry of Economics to IPC, BPC, MPC – Iraqi Executive Director, #S/175, 23 August 1958, FO371-133120, BNA; Foreign Office Minute – W.I. Combs – Iraq Petroleum Company, EQ1531/41, 1 December 1958, FO371-133120, BNA.

¹⁰⁶³ From AmConsul Basra (David Scott, American Consul) to Department of State, #27 – Basra Petroleum Company, September, 1958, 14 October 1958, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 –887.2553, Box 4961 (quote); From American Embassy London (J. Wesley Adams, First Secretary of Embassy) to Department

alarm bells among petroleum observers, the early Iraqi requests vis-à-vis IPC seemed to indicate, as Roger Owen writes, that “the new regime had simply dusted off its predecessors’ demands....”¹⁰⁶⁴ In this sense, a strong degree of continuity existed in the oil strategies of the late monarchical cabinets and those of the new government.

The positive tenor of discussions between the two sides did not last much longer than a brief honeymoon period. Many of the “carryover” issues proved divisive and dragged on unresolved. New disputes also arose between the Iraqis and the company that seriously damaged their rapport. The IPC-GOI relationship grew extremely complicated and contentious by the end of the Eisenhower presidency, laying the groundwork for the PL 80 decree one year later.

The reasonably cordial discussions of the immediate post-revolutionary period were replaced by acrimonious, tense exchanges. In the fall of 1958, with US-Iraqi relations already on the decline because of the emergence of Iraqi communists in the political arena, Baghdad demanded “an across-the-board discussion of outstanding problems.” The Americans were concerned about Iraqi intentions vis-à-vis the company given that IPC was already “fully engaged in putting out fires in Iraq.”¹⁰⁶⁵ Mohamad Hadid, now Minister of Development, complained to UK and US officials about IPC’s obstinacy and “expressed considerable dissatisfaction with IPC’s conduct of its affairs.”¹⁰⁶⁶ In what became a pattern, IPC-Iraqi relations closely mirrored larger

of State, #541 – Report on Discussions of the IPC Managing Director with top Iraqi Officials, 29 August 1958, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 –887.2553, Box 4961.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Owen, “The Dog that Neither Barked Nor Bit,” p. 281.

¹⁰⁶⁵ From Beirut (McClintock) to Secretary of State, #2159, 29 October 1958, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 –887.2553, Box 4961 (quote); From Baghdad (Sir M. Wright) to Foreign Office, EQ1531/27, 25 September 1958, FO371-133120, BNA; The Financial Times – Iraq Pressing IPC for an Early Agreement, EQ1531/36, 17 October 1958, FO371-133120, BNA.

¹⁰⁶⁶ From Baghdad (Fritzlan) to Secretary of State, #1534, 10 November 1958, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 –887.2553, Box 4961.

political trends in the country. Tensions between opposing nationalist and communist groups percolated in December. IPC officials proceeded cautiously in talks with the Iraqis, suspecting they did not genuinely seek a resolution of outstanding problems.¹⁰⁶⁷ At the height of domestic upheaval in the spring of 1959, BPC officials complained of government interference in the company's personnel operations. They believed their relationship with Iraqi authorities was "beginning to fray."¹⁰⁶⁸ Discussions in October 1959, weeks before the attempted assassination of Qasim (to be described in Chapter Eight), similarly were "marred" by government attacks on IPC management.¹⁰⁶⁹

Government-sanctioned abuse of IPC staff became the norm in post-revolutionary Iraq for a considerable period. IPC officials complained of harassment on the part of Iraqi police, accusing them of denying Americans entry into company facilities. Vehicles carrying IPC employees and their families were routinely stopped and searched. Company personnel experienced similar treatment at airports.¹⁰⁷⁰ More disconcerting were allegations that IPC and its subsidiaries were involved in the failed Mosul coup of March 1959 (charges that are discussed in Chapter Eight). Iraqi security officials interrogated the field manager of Mosul Petroleum Company in an attempt to link the company to the rebels.¹⁰⁷¹ American and British officials were infuriated by the accusations. UK diplomats lamented that they endured "a lot of ridiculous accusations"

¹⁰⁶⁷ From Baghdad (Fritzlan) to Secretary of State, #1872, 15 December 1958, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 -887.2553, Box 4961; Foreign Office Minute - P.W. Gore-Booth -IPC Negotiations with the Iraq Government, EQ1531/56, 22 December 1958, FO371-133120, BNA.

¹⁰⁶⁸ From AmConsul Basra (David Scott, American Consul) to Department of State, #77 - Basra Petroleum Company - February, 1959, 28 March 1959, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 -887.2553, Box 4961.

¹⁰⁶⁹ From Baghdad (Jernegan) to Secretary of State, #854, 6 October 1959, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 -887.2553, Box 4961.

¹⁰⁷⁰ From Baghdad (Sir M. Wright) to Foreign Office, #1871 - EQ 10345/6, 5 November 1958, FO371-133086, BNA; From AmEmbassy Baghdad to Secretary of State, #G-71, 1 February 1959, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 -887.2553, Box 4961.

¹⁰⁷¹ From Baghdad (Sir H. Trevelyan) to Foreign Office, #311 - EQ1533/3, 4 April 1959, FO371-141061, BNA; From Jernegan to SecState Washington, #2855, 5 April 1959, NARA, RG 84, Iraq - Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 30.

against their government and IPC for their alleged role in funding the Mosul plot. American officials decried these moves as “official” government actions that added fuel to the fire of press propaganda against the company and the United States.¹⁰⁷² In October 1959, IPC officials wondered aloud to US government representatives whether the company could continue its expansion plans in the “face of harassing or indifferent GOI officialdom.”¹⁰⁷³

US and IPC officials directed their anger squarely at the top ranks of Qasim’s cabinet. Both groups regularly complained that their Iraqi counterparts were not prepared for complex petroleum negotiations. These criticisms were particularly noteworthy in light of their admiration for Nuri al-Said’s negotiating skills. Moreover, they serve as a useful window into the Americans’ frustrations with the revolutionary government’s policies and priorities that targeted US assets and wider conceptions of power and “control” in the petroleum sector. John Miles, an economic counsellor at the US embassy in Iraq, lamented that the revolution “swept away...practically every man with knowledge of oil affairs or national fiscal problems.” IPC’s contacts with the new regime, Miles wrote, were “handicapped by the muddled correspondence of the inept if not stupid Rushdi Chelabi,” one of the top Iraqi oil authorities.¹⁰⁷⁴ The sympathies of British government and IPC representatives were very much with their American partners. British officials decried the government’s suspension in September 1958 of

¹⁰⁷² From British Embassy in Baghdad (Sir H. Trevelyan) to G.F. Hiller, Eastern Department, Foreign Office, 28 October 1959, FO371-140959, BNA (first quote); From AmEmbassy Baghdad to Department of State, #657 – Weekly Economic Review April 6-12 1959, 15 April 1959, Confidential US State Department Central Files: Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959 [Hereby referred to as Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959], Reel 11 (second quote).

¹⁰⁷³ From Baghdad (Jernegan) to Secretary of State, #854, 6 October 1959, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 –887.2553, Box 4961.

¹⁰⁷⁴ From AmEmbassy Baghdad (John Miles, Counselor or Embassy for Economic Affairs) to Department of State, #96 –Review of GOI – IPC Relations, 25 August 1958, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 – 887.2553, Box 4961.

Ibrahim Aloussi, one of the few remaining personalities in the Directorate General of Oil Affairs who had previously worked with IPC.¹⁰⁷⁵ H.W. Fisher was similarly troubled by the absence of institutional knowledge of oil matters in Baghdad. He predicted that the company's upcoming negotiations with senior Iraqi leaders would be hampered by the "weak" knowledge base of the leadership on intricate oil issues. IPC leaders "will be negotiating," Fisher complained in particularly disparaging terms, "with inadequate men possessing strong and emotionally based predilections rather than knowledge, skill, and the patience necessary for an adequate understanding of these complex problems."¹⁰⁷⁶

American and IPC frustration centered on the disconcerting behaviour of a few individuals, particularly Minister of Economics Ibrahim Kubba. Western observers were first alarmed by Kubba's indifference to what IPC considered a generous decision to forgo discussion of disputed royalty payments. "Rather than being thanked..." John Miles complained, the company was instead "roundly scolded in a letter from the Minister of Economics Kubba for its 'offensive and inexcusable language' and 'imperious attitudes.'"¹⁰⁷⁷ Ambassador Gallman was likewise infuriated by Kubba's tendency to deliberately distort the company's position on important bilateral problems. The US embassy worried that Kubba's behaviour foreshadowed an Iraqi campaign to overturn the entire concessional agreement.¹⁰⁷⁸ After Kubba wrote letters to the company

¹⁰⁷⁵ From Baghdad (Sir M. Wright) to Foreign Office, EQ1531/27, 25 September 1958, FO371-133120, BNA.

¹⁰⁷⁶ From AmEmbassy Baghdad (John Miles, Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs) to Secretary of State, #212 –Petroleum Highlights, 20 October 1958, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 –887.2553, Box 4961.

¹⁰⁷⁷ From AmEmbassy Baghdad (John Miles, Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs) to Secretary of State, #212 –Petroleum Highlights, 20 October 1958, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 –887.2553, Box 4961.

¹⁰⁷⁸ From Gallman to SecState Washington, #1719, 1 November 1958, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 22; From Baghdad (Fritzlan) to Secretary of State, #1643, 21 November 1958, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 –887.2553, Box 4961.

regarding disputed payments and loans that US officials decried as aggressive and unhelpful, the US embassy concluded he was “‘stacking the deck’ against the Company” in preparation for agonizing bilateral talks. Miles similarly warned that “the suspected Communist Kubba is building a fraudulent record against the Company,” and “it is more probable that Kubba is setting the stage for a more fundamental attack on the Company’s position.”¹⁰⁷⁹ To this end, Ambassador John Jernegan forwarded a report in early 1959 to Foggy Bottom indicating that Kubba told Italian officials he planned to “force” IPC to relinquish all concessional areas not yet exploited and revise their 50/50 profit-sharing agreement.¹⁰⁸⁰

American and IPC observers found initial cause for celebration when the suspected communist Kubba was demoted in the summer of 1959 since, as one IPC official admitted, the company found “it impossible to work with him.”¹⁰⁸¹ In the longer run, IPC authorities ultimately found little relief in Kubba’s demotion since their strained association with the Iraqis was based on more than the frustrating behaviour of a single individual. Kubba merely represented the public face of the concrete, specific policy disputes that lay at the heart of the conflict between the company and the Iraqi leadership’s campaign for the “Iraqification” of national oil resources. One such example was Baghdad’s demand for the right to promote one of the two Iraqis on the IPC Board of

¹⁰⁷⁹ From AmEmbassy Baghdad (John Miles, Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs) to Secretary of State, #212 –Petroleum Highlights, 20 October 1958, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 –887.2553, Box 4961 (first quote); From AmEmbassy Baghdad (John Miles, Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs) to Department of State, #235 –GOI/IPC Relations and the Forthcoming New Negotiations, 31 October 1958, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 –887.2553, Box 4961 (second quote).

¹⁰⁸⁰ From Baghdad (Jernegan) to Secretary of State, #2259, 7 February 1959, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 –887.2553, Box 4961; From AmEmbassy Baghdad to Department of State, #657 – Weekly Economic Review April 6-12 1959, 15 April 1959, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 11.

¹⁰⁸¹ From Baghdad (Jernegan) to Secretary of State, #337, 6 August 1959, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 –887.2553, Box 4961 (quote); #199 - Telegram from the Embassy in Iraq (Jernegan) to the Department of State, 9 August 1959, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 476.

Directors to the position of executive director. This was a critical change since the executive director's authority superseded that of the company's managing director. The Iraqis first indicated their interest in the matter in a September 1958 letter to IPC management. Their request emphasized the importance of oil royalties to the government and the need for prominent Iraqi voices in the company's administration.¹⁰⁸² IPC's response greatly upset Qasim's government. The company insisted the move was not "appropriate" since the executive director post was reserved for a company employee who could offer an effective voice in management "by virtue of the knowledge and experience gained in the long course of service in the oil industry..." IPC insisted the executive director could not be a "representative of any particular interest or shareholder..."¹⁰⁸³ Company officials remained defiant in the face of repeated requests to reconsider the issue throughout 1958 and 1959.¹⁰⁸⁴ The Iraqi leadership could only secure vague company assurances that they would work to strengthen existing Iraqi positions in the firm. As Samir Saul writes, IPC treated the proposal for an Iraqi executive director as "tantamount to back-door nationalization..."¹⁰⁸⁵

In parallel with the debate over the executive directorship were contentious talks beginning in October 1958 over Iraqi demands to purchase 20% ownership stock in IPC. The historian Phebe Marr sees this dispute as part of a larger Iraqi initiative to reduce

¹⁰⁸² From Ministry of Economics to IPC, BPC, MPC – Iraqi Executive Director, #S/220, 18 September 1958, FO371-133120, BNA.

¹⁰⁸³ From IPC, BPC, MPC to Ministry of Economics –Executive Director, Undated, FO371-133120, BNA.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Saul, "Masterly Inactivity as Brinkmanship," p. 751; Foreign Office (W.I. Combs) to S. Falle, 8 December 1958, FO371-133120, BNA; Memorandum of Conversation – Mr. Charles Darlington, President of Near East Development Corporation and NE/E John P. Shaw – IPC Negotiations with Government of Iraq, 13 April 1959, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 –887.2553, Box 4961; From London (Whitney) to Secretary of State, #5496, 21 April 1959, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 –887.2553, Box 4961.

¹⁰⁸⁵ Saul, "Masterly Inactivity as Brinkmanship," p. 751 (quote); Record of Conversation between Secretary of State, Minister of State (Mr. Profumo), and Lord Monckton – Account of Lord Monckton's Visit to Iraq, EQ 1533/28, 27 April 1959, DEFE 11-270, BNA.

their reliance on Western companies and expand their control over national resources. It was also, US officials believed, the “best avenue to increase [Iraqi] revenues and other benefits” in the petroleum sector.¹⁰⁸⁶ The Iraqis found a legal basis for their arguments. They insisted that the 1920 San Remo treaty gave them the right to acquire 20% of the company’s shares if they were publicly sold. IPC’s response was relatively straightforward: the company had no plans to offer their shares to the public, and thus the provision was irrelevant.¹⁰⁸⁷ As an alternative, the Iraqis expressed interest in purchasing either 20% of the French stock in IPC, or 5% of each of the firms’ shares. IPC also rejected this initiative.¹⁰⁸⁸

While the Americans’ reaction to this debate is unclear, British officials were not impressed with the company’s obstinacy. UK diplomats, who appreciated the value Iraqi officials attached to this issue, recommended IPC adopt a more forthcoming posture. If not, they warned, it could “lead to future troubles for IPC and have a serious effect on our political relations with the new Iraq.”¹⁰⁸⁹ Despite British appeals, the matter continued unresolved in the final year of the Eisenhower administration. The UK ambassador to Iraq, Sir Humphrey Trevelyan, warned in October 1960 that the matter could not “be indefinitely refused” and that oil stability necessitated a more equitable “partnership” with authorities in Baghdad. Moreover, by making compromises on share participation,

¹⁰⁸⁶ From Baghdad (Jernegan) to Secretary of State, #2886, 8 April 1959, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 –887.2553, Box 4961 (quote); From Baghdad (Jernegan) to Secretary of State, #3039, 22 April 1959, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 –887.2553, Box 4961; Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, p. 101.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Saul, “Masterly Inactivity as Brinkmanship,” p. 751; Foreign Office Minute – W.I. Combs – Iraq Petroleum Company, EQ1531/41, 1 December 1958, FO371-133120, BNA.

¹⁰⁸⁸ From Beirut (McClintock) to Secretary of State, #4144, 15 April 1959, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 –887.2553, Box 4961.

¹⁰⁸⁹ From D.A.H. Wright – Iraq Government’s Approach about a Possible Shareholding in the Iraq Petroleum Company, EQ1531/36A, 21 October 1958, FO371-133120, BNA (quote); From J.T. Fearnley – Iraq Government’s Approach about a Possible Shareholding in the Iraq Petroleum Company, EQ1531/36A, 20 October 1958, FO371-133120, BNA.

Trevelyan believed IPC could stand its ground on fundamental matters like the relinquishment of territory and revisions to the 50/50 profit-sharing formula.¹⁰⁹⁰ IPC still showed little flexibility. One IPC representative sent to Baghdad in November was forbidden by management from discussing the matter with the Iraqis. By the summer of 1961, the most Qasim could extract from the company was an offer to create a brand-new corporation in tandem with the government to develop unexploited areas in the country.¹⁰⁹¹ The Iraqi drive for share ownership was not resolved before the proclamation of Public Law 80.

The linchpin of the conflict between IPC and the Iraqis after July 1958 was the relinquishment of unexplored concession territory. As noted above, while the monarchical regime first took the initiative on this question, it was under Qasim's watch that this dispute grew much more intense. IPC management and the Iraqi leadership remained at loggerheads over this matter straight through to the end of the Eisenhower presidency, paving the way for Qasim's proclamation of PL 80 as a way to finally resolve the conflict.

Concession relinquishment served important purposes for the Iraqis. Qasim's government wanted to exploit petroleum in these relinquished territories with the assistance of non-Western oil companies, including Japanese and Soviet firms. This, in turn, would greatly expand revenue streams for the regime and fund economic and social development projects.¹⁰⁹² The government felt their demands quite reasonable since IPC

¹⁰⁹⁰ From British Embassy Baghdad (Sir H. Trevelyan) to Sir R. Stevens, Foreign Office, EQ1531/101, 11 October 1960, FO371-149931, BNA (first quote); From British Embassy Baghdad (Sir H. Trevelyan) to Sir R. Stevens, Foreign Office, EQ1531/101A, 25 October 1960, FO371-149931, BNA.

¹⁰⁹¹ Saul, "Masterly Inactivity as Brinkmanship," p. 756-758.

¹⁰⁹² Maurice Snell-Mendoza, "In Defence of Oil: Britain's Response to the Iraqi Threat Towards Kuwait, 1961," *Contemporary British History*, 10, no. 3 (September 1996), 48; Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, p. 101.

only actively produced oil from less than 0.5% of their entire concessional area. Moreover, relinquishment had already taken place in neighbouring countries. A significant portion of ARAMCO's concession was returned to the Saudi government in 1948. Similar events took place in Iran in 1954.¹⁰⁹³ IPC objected to the Iraqi position, insisting that only the company could decide which areas it would give up. IPC management and the Iraqi regime also had significantly different conceptions of the amount of territory to be returned and the timeframe in which this was to occur. Samir Saul's characterization of the dispute is most helpful. Saul writes that

[r]elinquishment thus became one of the most intractable issues contended between IPC and Iraq: the Shareholders wished to retain as much as possible of their concessions, lest relinquishment should set a precedent for other Middle Eastern countries, while the Iraqis resented the hold a foreign monopoly had on the country's lifeblood.¹⁰⁹⁴

Saul's account has already explored the intricate specifics of the relinquishment negotiations. It is important to highlight a few of the key trends and themes that emerge from this extended, and ultimately fruitless, dialogue. For one, the new government pushed with great urgency for a resolution of this question. Qasim's cabinet, particularly the Minister of Economics, Ibrahim Kubba, raised the issue in nearly all communications with company representatives in the first months after the revolution.¹⁰⁹⁵ On the other side, American and IPC officials held a nuanced understanding of the problem. They accepted it was inevitable that the company would make some concessions given the

¹⁰⁹³ Saul, "Masterly Inactivity as Brinkmanship," p. 750.

¹⁰⁹⁴ Snell-Mendoza, "In Defence of Oil," p. 48; Saul, "Masterly Inactivity as Brinkmanship," p. 750 (quote).

¹⁰⁹⁵ From AmEmbassy Baghdad (John Miles, Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs) to Department of State, #235 –GOI/IPC Relations and the Forthcoming New Negotiations, 31 October 1958, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 –887.2553, Box 4961; The Financial Times – Iraq Pressing IPC for an Early Agreement, EQ1531/36, 17 October 1958, FO371-133120, BNA.

government's stridency in the matter.¹⁰⁹⁶ In their view, a conservative brand of reform could ultimately yield greater stability and security for Western assets in the Iraqi oil industry.

This strategic appreciation did not lead to a speedy resolution of the dispute. IPC officials kept an eye on the larger implications of their approach, fearing that an overly generous proposal would “become a stepping stone to further offers.”¹⁰⁹⁷ As in the pre-revolutionary period, regional political developments influenced how both sides approached the singular issue of concession relinquishment. A rapid abandonment of IPC territories in Iraq would not give the company adequate time to conduct surveys of their concession holdings in Oman and Aden. Ultimately, they decided that the prosperous Iraqi oil sector was more important to future company prosperity than the unexplored Arabian Peninsula concessions.¹⁰⁹⁸ IPC's prioritization of its Iraqi assets did not immediately produce a more flexible negotiating posture. In the fall of 1958, IPC management offered to return 20% of their territory immediately, and then 20% again at five and ten year intervals. The Iraqis, led by the company's nemesis Ibrahim Kubba, scoffed at this offer. They pointed to the Iranian relinquishment process as evidence that IPC should immediately surrender 50%, 25% in five years, and the remainder in another five years.¹⁰⁹⁹ IPC officials, frustrated as before by their inability to insulate Iraqi petroleum politics from the broader Middle East oil marketplace, rejected the Iranian

¹⁰⁹⁶ From AmEmbassy London (J. Wesley Adams, First Secretary of Embassy) to Department of State, #1289 –Possible Repercussions of IPC Relinquishment of Concession Areas in Iraq, 2 December 1958, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 –887.2553, Box 4961.

¹⁰⁹⁷ Foreign Office Minute – P.H. Gore-Booth –IPC Negotiations with the Iraq Government, EQ1531/56, 22 December 1958, FO371-133120, BNA.

¹⁰⁹⁸ From AmEmbassy London (J. Wesley Adams, First Secretary of Embassy) to Department of State, #1289 –Possible Repercussions of IPC Relinquishment of Concession Areas in Iraq, 2 December 1958, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 –887.2553, Box 4961.

¹⁰⁹⁹ From AmEmbassy London (Whitney) to Secretary of State, #G-539, 26 November 1958, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 –887.2553, Box 4961.

precedent. Moreover, they insisted Kubba's proposal would not leave the company with sufficient territory to pursue future expansion plans.¹¹⁰⁰

Despite the dearth of progress in talks with Baghdad, IPC, US, and UK officials remained confident about the overall stability and security of their oil assets. British and American officials held out hope in early 1959 that antagonistic personalities like Kubba would soon be replaced. This meant IPC should "take matters quietly for the present" in the belief that "negotiations should be easier after a time." Moreover, one UK diplomat admitted, "[i]f such negotiations should fail and the properties should be seized, we could get along without Iraqi oil."¹¹⁰¹ Indeed, Saul's argument that IPC and the Western powers preferred deadlock in talks with Baghdad to substantive sacrifices is borne out by the documentary record.¹¹⁰² Talks continued throughout the summer of 1959 without major progress. The two sides remained a fair degree apart in their positions, with IPC suggesting relinquishment of 54% of its territory while the Iraqis insisted on 60%. IPC negotiators believed they had approached their red lines and told the Iraqis it was their responsibility to make greater concessions. IPC managers, one British official colourfully added, felt that "they must call a halt to the current process of bazaar bargaining."¹¹⁰³ It came as no surprise to Western observers that negotiations officially adjourned in early October. IPC leaders, meeting with American officials at the end of

¹¹⁰⁰ Foreign Office (W.I. Combs) to S. Falle, 8 December 1958, FO371-133120, BNA.

¹¹⁰¹ From Baghdad (Sir H. Trevelyan) to Foreign Office, #85 –EQ1071/12, 21 January 1959, FO371-140956, BNA (first quote); Memorandum of Conversation – Mr. Charles Darlington, President of Near East Development Corporation and NE/E John P. Shaw – IPC Negotiations with Government of Iraq, 13 April 1959, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 –887.2553, Box 4961; From Ministry of Power to Prime Minister – Iraq, 1 April 1959, PREM 11-3451, BNA (second quote).

¹¹⁰² Saul, "Masterly Inactivity as Brinkmanship," p. 754-756, 791; Wilbur Crane Eveland, *Ropes of Sand: America's Failure in the Middle East* (New York: Norton, 1980), 315.

¹¹⁰³ From Baghdad (Jernegan) to Secretary of State, #601, 8 September 1959, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 –887.2553, Box 4961; From Baghdad to Department of State, #22 – Weekly Economic Review June 29-July 5 1959, 9 July 1959, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 11; Note for the Prime Minister – Iraq Petroleum Company, 15 July 1959, PREM 11-3451, BNA (quote).

the year, felt the ball was in the Iraqis' court and refused to concede to Qasim's insistence on determining which areas would be returned.¹¹⁰⁴

Discussions re-started in August 1960, but IPC, US, and UK observers were not enthusiastic about their prospects for success. One top IPC authority privately remarked to Qasim that relations between the company and government had hit rock bottom. The UK ambassador to Iraq, Sir Humphrey Trevelyan, compared IPC's talks with Qasim to "negotiating on a quick sand" given his proclivity to increase his demands when agreement appeared close.¹¹⁰⁵ Rodger Davies of the US embassy in Baghdad indicated that the suspension of talks in early September was the "almost inevitable breakoff of fortnight fruitless discussions. Under circumstances, suspension may stretch into indefinite postponement."¹¹⁰⁶ Talks were recessed yet again in November after IPC officials decried Qasim's positions as "extreme and completely unacceptable...." Company management returned to London empty-handed.¹¹⁰⁷

The relinquishment conflict, of course, lay unresolved until Qasim took legislative action in December 1961. Public Law 80 was Qasim's way of breaking the unsatisfying,

¹¹⁰⁴ From Baghdad (John Miles, Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs) to Department of State, #285 – Weekly Economic Review, September 28 – October 4 1959, 10 October 1959, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 11; Memorandum of Conversation – Mr. Howard W. Fisher, Director, Standard Oil Company (N.J.), Mr. Martin Jones, Government Relations, Standard Oil Company (N.J.), NEA – G. Lewis Jones, NEA – Parker T. Hart, NE/E George Bennis –IPC-GOI Relations and IPC Situation in South Arabia, 17 December 1959, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 –887.2553, Box 4961.

¹¹⁰⁵ From Baghdad (Sir H. Trevelyan) to Foreign Office, #1440 - EQ1531/107, 31 October 1960, FO371-149931, BNA (quote); From AmEmbassy Baghdad (Davies) to Secretary of State, #G-72, 26 August 1960, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1960-January 1963, Reel 9; From Baghdad (Davies) to Secretary of State, #281, 16 August 1960, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1960-January 1963, Reel 9.

¹¹⁰⁶ From Baghdad (Davies) to Secretary of State, #356, 2 September 1960, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1960-January 1963, Reel 9.

¹¹⁰⁷ From AmEmbassy Baghdad (Rodger Davies, Charge d'Affaires, a.i) to Department of State, #437, 6 October 1960, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1960-January 1963, Reel 4 (quote); Financial Times – Iraq Oil Talks Adjourned, EQ1531/116, 10 November 1960, FO371-149931, BNA; CIA Office of Current Intelligence, "Current Intelligence Weekly Summary – 29 September 1960," February 27 2010. CIA-RDP79-00927A002900050001-7, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST).

stalelated discussions between the company and government over concession relinquishment. However, PL 80 was not the first time one of the parties resorted to unilateral action. From July 1958 to January 1961, IPC and the Iraqi regime engaged in a back-and-forth pattern of unilateral action designed to influence the ongoing negotiations. This pattern of behaviour further poisoned the atmosphere of discussions at a time when the two parties were already at loggerheads.

The Iraqis were unable to achieve breakthroughs in meetings with the company. They turned to creative, unilateral means to bolster their revenue streams. One such method was to replace Western experts working at Iraq's Daura oil refinery with Soviet, Egyptian, and Iraqi-born technicians. The government moved quickly on this front. Iraqi engineers began to replace the 140 foreign-born technicians (many of whom were Americans) operating the refinery in October 1958. US officials expected the number of foreign-born experts to fall to eighteen by the spring of 1959.¹¹⁰⁸ At the same time, news spread that Soviet engineers would assist operations at the refinery. They were also scheduled to carry out geological surveys and drilling outside the boundaries of Western oil concessions.¹¹⁰⁹ American officials seethed at these strategic maneuvers. The State Department made it clear in December 1959 that they would terminate American training programs at the refinery so long as Soviet technicians operated the plant. "I believe that the point may not be lost on the Iraqis," William Lakeland of the State Department wrote, "that the arbitrary expulsion of US technicians from an American-built institution, and

¹¹⁰⁸ From AmEmbassy Baghdad (John Miles, Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs) to Secretary of State, #212 – Petroleum Highlights, 20 October 1958, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 –887.2553, Box 4961; From Baghdad (Gallman) to Secretary of State, #1386, 21 October 1958, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 –887.2553, Box 4961.

¹¹⁰⁹ From Philip J. Halla –Report on Iraq by Professor William Polk, 22 December 1958, NARA, RG 273, Official Meeting Minutes, Box 23; From London (Whitney), #5138, 6 April 1959, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 30.

the substitution of unqualified Soviet technicians, was a step engineered by Iraqi Communist elements for partisan or doctrinal reasons not at all in accordance with Iraqi national interests.”¹¹¹⁰ Irrespective of the Americans’ conception of Iraq’s “national interests,” Baghdad’s move fulfilled its financial objectives, adding another one million ID annually to the government’s budget.¹¹¹¹ As with PL 80 years later, the refinery initiative showed Iraq’s determination to expand its control and authority over the petroleum industry under the umbrella of Iraqification at the expense of US power.¹¹¹²

Relations between IPC and the Iraqis were equally affected by unilateral actions on the part of the major international oil firms. The major companies dramatically cut the posted prices of crude oil in February 1959 and August 1960 to combat the worldwide oil glut. One of the key players in this drama was Standard Oil of New Jersey, part of the American consortium in IPC. These unilateral cuts infuriated Qasim’s cabinet. Daniel Yergin recounts how one American oil executive who was in Baghdad “at the time of the announced cuts...later said [he was] ‘glad to get out alive.’”¹¹¹³ The cuts slashed into the

¹¹¹⁰ From NE – William C. Lakeland to NE – Request for Training of Iraqi Refinery Technicians, 14 December 1959, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs - Office of Near Eastern Affairs - Records of Iraq-Jordan Affairs Desk, 1959-1964, Box 1.

¹¹¹¹ Juan Lennart Michel Romero, “The Iraqi Revolution of 1958 and the Search for Security in the Middle East,” Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of Texas at Austin, 2008, 215; Operations Coordinating Board – Report on the Near East (NSC 5820/1), 3 February 1960, White House Office, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs: Records, 1952-1961 – OCB Series, Subject Subseries, Box 4, DDEL.

¹¹¹² IPC and British officials believed they were working as efficiently as possible to speed along this process by early 1959, though British figures derided many of the newly hired Iraqi staff as “both lazy and incompetent.” The regime was less than enthusiastic, however, about the pace of this process and decried the company’s efforts as exceedingly slow. IPC thus felt pressured to hire more unskilled Iraqi labourers than they believed necessary. See From AmConsul Basra (David Scott, American Consul) to Department of State, #61 –Basra Petroleum Company – January 1959, 20 February 1959, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 –887.2553, Box 4961; From Baghdad (Jernegan) to Secretary of State, #3039, 22 April 1959, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 –887.2553, Box 4961; Record of Conversation between Secretary of State, Minister of State (Mr. Profumo), and Lord Monckton, EQ 1533/28, 27 April 1959, DEFE 11-270, BNA; Romero, “The Iraqi Revolution of 1958 and the Search for Security in the Middle East,” p. 217.

¹¹¹³ *Report, Multinational Oil Corporations and US Foreign Policy*, p. 88; Wolfe-Hunnicut, “The End of the Concessionary Regime,” p. 68; Saul, “Masterly Inactivity as Brinkmanship,” p. 756; Yergin, *The Prize*, p. 522 (quote).

revenues of oil-producing states by upwards of 15%. These moves also directly affected ongoing talks between IPC and the Iraqis. The US embassy in Baghdad wrote with some frustration in August 1960 that the unilateralism of Standard Oil of New Jersey and other firms “raised the twin specters of reduced oil revenues and a prolonged dispute between the Government and the IPC.”¹¹¹⁴

The Iraqis responded in kind to the strong-armed moves of the international firms. In search of additional revenue, Qasim’s government raised the cargo dues imposed by the Basra Port Authority on BPC oil loaded at Fao. Cargo charges on Basra oil doubled in the fall of 1959, jumping from 75 cents to \$1.40 per metric ton. The dispute contributed to the breakdown of negotiations between IPC and Baghdad in October 1959. BPC refused to pay the additional charges. Company management claimed the export tax violated a 1955 agreement with the Basra Port Authority and that acceptance of the dues “would be tantamount to revision [of the] 50/50 formula.”¹¹¹⁵ The “test of strength” between the two sides continued. The company unilaterally reduced production in BPC’s southern fields by 40% by the summer of 1960.¹¹¹⁶ The Iraqis grew frustrated, decrying the “pressure tactics of the imperialistic oil company” that directly reduced revenue

¹¹¹⁴ From AmEmbassy Baghdad (Rodger P. Davies, Charge d’Affaires a.i.) to Department of State, #240 – Situation Estimate, August 20 1960, 22 August 1960, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 30 (quote); Saul, “Masterly Inactivity as Brinkmanship,” p. 756; CIA Office of National Estimates – The Outlook for Iraq, 22 September 1960, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL.

¹¹¹⁵ From Baghdad (Jernegan) to Secretary of State, #2061, 11 March 1960, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1960-January 1963, Reel 9 (quote); From Baghdad (John Miles, Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs) to Department of State, #285 – Weekly Economic Review, September 28 – October 4 1959, 10 October 1959, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs 1955-1959, Reel 11; From Baghdad (Jernegan) to Secretary of State, #1149, 10 November 1959, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 – 887.2553, Box 4961.

¹¹¹⁶ John Miles, Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs) to Department of State, #33 – Bi-Weekly Economic Review – June 17-30, 1960 – No. 6, 9 July 1960, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1960-January 1963, Reel 6 (quote); Synopsis of State and Intelligence Material Reported to the President, Department of State, 27 July 1960, Declassified Documents Reference System [DDRS]; John Billings, American Consul to Department of State, #5 – Oil Loading Charges, Basra Petroleum Co., 19 July 1960, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1960-January 1963, Reel 9.

streaming into the government's coffers.¹¹¹⁷ The BPC cargo dispute again highlighted the ways that unilateral actions further poisoned the atmosphere for discussions between the government and the company.

The free-fall of posted prices for international oil in 1959 and 1960 also persuaded the Iraqis to seek ways, outside the confines of their concessional arrangement with IPC, to expand their authority over petroleum resources. The formation of OPEC by Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and others in September 1960 was directly tied to these larger marketplace pressures. In addition, the Iraqis hoped to use OPEC as leverage to secure more favourable terms from IPC on the multitude of outstanding bilateral issues.¹¹¹⁸

The Iraqis laid the groundwork a year earlier for the creation of a supranational mechanism to maintain oil prices. At the Arab League Oil Conference in Cairo in April 1959, the Iraqi observer, working alongside representatives from Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Venezuela, drafted a Gentleman's Agreement to reduce petroleum output and protect prices.¹¹¹⁹ Qasim invited delegates from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Venezuela, and Iran to Baghdad in September 1960 to build on this deal. The result was the formation of OPEC, a conglomeration of oil-producing states that held control over nearly 80% of global reserves.¹¹²⁰ OPEC's objective was to expand the voices of oil-producing states in the management of Western companies and their concessions. Equally, OPEC sought to achieve a degree of control over and stability for the constantly fluctuating oil prices.

¹¹¹⁷ From AmEmbassy Baghdad (Rodger P. Davies, Charge d'Affaires a.i.) to Department of State, #240 – Situation Estimate, August 20 1960, 22 August 1960, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 30 (quote); From AmEmbassy Baghdad (Rodger Davies, Charge d'Affaires, a.i) to Department of State, #153, 4 August 1960, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1960-January 1963, Reel 4.

¹¹¹⁸ Yergin, *The Prize*, p. 522-523; Dawisha, *Iraq*, p. 182; Alnasrawi, *The Economy of Iraq*, p. 8.

¹¹¹⁹ Yergin, *The Prize*, p. 518; Citino, "Middle East Cold Wars," p. 260.

¹¹²⁰ Yergin, *The Prize*, p. 523.

The organization quickly moved to draft pricing and operational plans to ensure unity in their conflicts with Western companies.¹¹²¹

It is certainly true, as Brandon Wolfe-Hunnicuttt writes, that “OPEC’s formation was not interpreted as a particularly radical act by most Western observers.”¹¹²² For one, the Gentleman’s Agreement and OPEC actually solidified an emerging trend of Iraqi resistance to Egypt’s control over oil resources.¹¹²³ The Iraqis only sent an informal observer to the April 1959 Cairo meeting in an effort to spurn Egyptian attempts to dominate Arab oil policy. Moreover, Nathan Citino argues that the Gentleman’s Agreement helped Qasim limit Nasser’s control over regional oil politics, as “Arab oil states responded to the oil glut in a framework other than Arab nationalism, through their cooperation with non-Arab producers....”¹¹²⁴ OPEC reassured American observers that Qasim would not cede leadership of Iraqi and Middle East petroleum affairs to Nasser. The Arab League (in which Egypt played a prominent role) was only given observer

¹¹²¹ Citino, “Middle East Cold Wars,” p. 259; CIA Office of Current Intelligence, “Current Intelligence Weekly Summary – 29 September 1960,” February 27 2010. CIA-RDP79 00927A002900050001-7, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST); *Report, Multinational Oil Corporations and US Foreign Policy*, p. 88.

¹¹²² Wolfe-Hunnicuttt, “The End of the Concessionary Regime,” p. 69.

¹¹²³ The US intelligence community speculated as early as August 1958 that conflict over oil politics between Iraq and Egypt might emerge. “Many makers of the Iraqi Revolution may be unwilling to accept Cairo as the ultimate and sole source of authority in Iraqi affairs,” the Special National Intelligence Estimate [SNIE] of 12 August 1958 predicted, “and conflict between them and the Nasserites may develop.” By February 1959, those same intelligence agencies reported that the Iraqi government was exhibiting “firm resistance to any Egyptian efforts to assert dominance over oil-producing nations.” Qasim had proven to be more of an Iraqi patriot than a Nasserite, rejecting Egyptian proposals that Iraq share its oil wealth with Cairo. The Senate Committee on Foreign Relations and the Central Intelligence Agency [CIA] respectively concluded in June and September 1960 that it was highly unlikely that Iraq would join a collective of oil-producing states in which Egypt played a predominant role. See Arab Nationalism as a Factor in the Middle East Situation – SNIE 30-3-58, 12 August 1958, CIA Electronic Reading Room [ERR] (first quote); CIA Office of Current Intelligence, “Current Intelligence Weekly Summary – 12 February 1959,” February 27 2010. CIA-RDP79-00927A002100060001-4, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST) (second quote); *Staff Study, United States Foreign Policy – Middle East*, US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations (Washington, 1960), 5; CIA Office of Current Intelligence, “Current Intelligence Weekly Summary – 29 September 1960,” February 27 2010. CIA-RDP79-00927A002900050001-7, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST).

¹¹²⁴ Citino, “Middle East Cold Wars,” p. 260. See also Nathan Citino, *From Arab Nationalism to OPEC: Eisenhower, King Sa’ud and the Making of US-Saudi Relations* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 153.

status in OPEC. OPEC effectively removed Nasser's hand from directing Middle East oil developments. As Citino writes, these events "detached oil politics from pan-Arab nationalism."¹¹²⁵

American fears were also calmed in light of emerging cracks already appearing within OPEC. US observers identified a strong level of distrust between the founding states, particularly the divide between Iran and the Arab states over Tehran's ties to Israel. On a strategic level, the Central Intelligence Agency [CIA] believed Western Europe could soon turn to sources of oil in Libya and Algeria as a means of outmaneuvering OPEC.¹¹²⁶ The continuing oil glut also proved difficult for OPEC to surmount. Citino recounts how President Eisenhower confidently "told the National Security Council [that] 'anyone could break up the Organization by offering five cents more per barrel for the oil of one of the countries.'"¹¹²⁷ Though OPEC would grow into a global powerhouse in the coming years, the nascent organization had yet to find its footing in late 1960.

Notwithstanding these two important qualifications, one should not understate the significance of events in the Arab oil marketplace for the IPC-GOI bilateral relationship. Iraq's sponsorship of OPEC was another in a series of moves designed to defend their petroleum interests by unilaterally operating outside the narrow parameters of their relationship with the company. IPC and US government officials felt confident about

¹¹²⁵ CIA Office of Current Intelligence, "Current Intelligence Weekly Summary – 29 September 1960," February 27 2010. CIA-RDP79-00927A002900050001-7, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST); Yergin, *The Prize*, p. 522; Citino, "Middle East Cold Wars," p. 247 (quote), 259-260.

¹¹²⁶ Yergin, *The Prize*, p. 523-524; CIA Office of Current Intelligence, "Current Intelligence Weekly Summary – 29 September 1960," February 27 2010. CIA-RDP79-00927A002900050001-7, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST); Burton Kaufman, "Mideast Multinational Oil, US Foreign Policy, and Antitrust: The 1950s," *Journal of American History* 63 (March 1977), 958.

¹¹²⁷ Citino, "Middle East Cold Wars," p. 261 (quote); Citino, *From Arab Nationalism to OPEC*, p. 155; Alnasrawi, *The Economy of Iraq*, p. 9.

their relative strength vis-à-vis the nascent OPEC. Yet the Iraqi move to find a unilateral solution to problems affecting both the regime and the company was still critically significant in the context of their ongoing negotiations. Above all, it suggested the Iraqi leadership could find alternative means of changing the status quo in the oil sector if the company did not cooperate.

Along with these specific moves by Qasim's regime, rumors about other Iraqi oil strategies floated throughout the country. In March 1959, British diplomats rushed cables and assessments about the Iraqi situation to IPC and other branches of government. It was possible, UK policymakers warned, that Qasim would press for the nationalization of French shares in IPC as a way to appease communist demands. Ambassador Trevelyan, watching Qasim's equivocation on the matter, urged London and IPC to find a modus vivendi with Iraqi leaders.¹¹²⁸ American authorities in London were not especially alarmed by the implied threat, since, as they noted, it had "been raised on more than one occasion since Suez."¹¹²⁹ US anxieties rose as negotiations dragged on into late 1960. Qasim personally indicated in August that he might turn to unilateral legislation to achieve his desired oil objectives.¹¹³⁰

American and British officials also discussed rumors that Qasim would unilaterally revoke the majority of IPC's concessional territory. The US and UK ambassadors in Iraq forwarded their assessments in November 1960 that Qasim might

¹¹²⁸ It was also believed to be a way to retaliate against France for its Algerian policy. See From P.M. to Minister of Power, EQ1533/2, 26 March 1959, FO371-141061, BNA; From Harold Macmillan to Minister of Power – Iraq, EQ1533/2, 26 March 1959, FO371-141061, BNA; From Baghdad (Sir H. Trevelyan) to Foreign Office, #311 - EQ1533/3, 4 April 1959, FO371-141061, BNA.

¹¹²⁹ From AmEmbassy London (Edgar L. McGinnis, Jr., First Secretary of Embassy) to Department of State, #2311 – Conversation with Iraq Petroleum Company Officials, 6 April 1959, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 –887.2553, Box 4961 (quote); From London (Whitney), #5138, 6 April 1959, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 30; From London (Whitney) to Secretary of State, #5150, 7 April 1959, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 –887.2553, Box 4961.

¹¹³⁰ Saul, "Masterly Inactivity as Brinkmanship," p. 756.

expropriate 99% of IPC's concessional area if the company failed to resolve the impasse.¹¹³¹ The CIA similarly warned on 17 November that "Qasim may even go so far as to try to secure his terms by legislation, including 'nationalizing' more than 90 percent of the company's present concession area."¹¹³² Jernegan repeated his warning later that month, suggesting that the latest developments in IPC-GOI discussions foreshadowed "possible serious developments in our respective relations with Iraq as well as for future of oil company itself." If IPC did not accept Qasim's latest proposal, Jernegan believed, a complete breakdown of talks "will probably result [in] unilateral action by GOI in [the] form of legislation taking away from company all of concession area except portions currently exploited..."¹¹³³

Negotiations between Baghdad and the company broke down entirely in December. American officials complained that Qasim would not compromise on any of the outstanding problems, particularly the relinquishment question.¹¹³⁴ The chief IPC representative in Iraq explained to Ambassador Jernegan on 22 December that his recent meeting with Qasim had been "fruitless." No further meetings between the two sides were scheduled.¹¹³⁵ The Eisenhower administration ultimately departed office without resolving the multitude of outstanding problems between Qasim's government and IPC authorities.

¹¹³¹ The UK Ambassador Trevelyan explained in November 1960 that "we assume that if there is no agreement, Qasim will expropriate all unexploited territory." See From Baghdad (Sir H. Trevelyan) to Foreign Office, #1482 - EQ1531/114, 8 November 1960, FO371-149931, BNA; From Baghdad (Jernegan) to Secretary of State, #563, 4 November 1960, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1960-January 1963, Reel 9.

¹¹³² CIA Office of Current Intelligence, "Current Intelligence Weekly Summary - 17 November 1960," February 27 2010. CIA-RDP79-00927A00300010001-9, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST).

¹¹³³ From Baghdad (Jernegan) to Secretary of State, #583, 14 November 1960, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1960-January 1963, Reel 9.

¹¹³⁴ William Lakeland, First Secretary of Embassy) to Department of State, #734, 22 December 1960, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1960-January 1963, Reel 4.

¹¹³⁵ From Baghdad (Jernegan) to Secretary of State, #626, 22 December 1960, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1960-January 1963, Reel 9.

In his analysis of Iraqi oil politics and the formation of OPEC in this period, Nathan Citino concluded that the “postwar petroleum order was more secure than at any time since its creation....”¹¹³⁶ Citino largely bases his assessment on the vital trend discussed earlier whereby pan-Arab nationalism was detached from Middle East oil politics. Uriel Dann and Juan Romero agree. They suggest that relations between IPC and the Iraqi regime were generally “sound” since oil royalties and production continued to flow without major disruption.¹¹³⁷ This chapter argues that relations between the two sides were in fact much more troubled than these previous interpretations suggest. Even so, American, British, and IPC officials shared a sense of reassurance about the Iraqi petroleum sector. They each felt confident they could safeguard the stability and security of their assets in the Iraqi petroleum arena for the foreseeable future.

As in the pre-revolutionary period (described in Chapter Two), American confidence about the overall stability of their Iraqi oil assets was influenced in part by the failed Mossadeq nationalization experiment in Iran. In early October 1958, the US ambassador to Iraq, Waldemar Gallman, asserted that the reasonably “conservative” approach followed by the new regime in the production and marketing of oil was the product of the lessons of the “debacle of Mossadeq’s oil policy.”¹¹³⁸ Treasury Secretary Robert Anderson similarly concluded in mid-April 1959 that “the Iraqis would probably not make the mistake that Mossadegh had made in saying he would nationalize the oil

¹¹³⁶ Citino, *From Arab Nationalism to OPEC*, p. 160.

¹¹³⁷ Dann, *Iraq Under Qassem*, p. 186 (quote); Romero, “The Iraqi Revolution of 1958 and the Search for Security in the Middle East,” p. 217.

¹¹³⁸ From Gallman, #1389, 4 October 1958, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 20; Wolfe-Hunnicut, “The End of the Concessionary Regime,” p. 69-70; Saul, “Masterly Inactivity as Brinkmanship,” p. 752, 754.

properties.”¹¹³⁹ US officials believed the CIA coup in Iran revealed valuable lessons about the fate that awaited uncooperative oil-producing states.

More commonly, Western officials pointed to deficiencies in the technical capabilities of Iraqi officials and Baghdad’s dependence on petroleum revenues as reasons why the Iraqis would not dare attempt a nationalization venture. British officials emphasized Baghdad’s dependence on oil royalties and Western markets in their assessments of Iraqi oil politics. They confidently asserted that IPC would function as the primary source of income for the Iraqi state for the foreseeable future.¹¹⁴⁰ American and IPC figures arrived at the same conclusions. The US embassy in Baghdad concluded in April 1959 that the absence of an indigenous oil marketing organization and the “urgency of growing revenue requirements due to development plans” made nationalization of IPC resources “highly unlikely.”¹¹⁴¹ Ambassador Jernegan reassured the NSC a month later that Qasim appreciated the residual strength and prosperity of the postwar petroleum order and the ties that bound Iraq and IPC together. Further to that point, Jernegan noted, IPC itself “did not seem now greatly concerned about dangerous interference by the Iraqi government.”¹¹⁴² Indeed, Lord Monckton, chairman of IPC, reportedly suggested in late April that there was no imminent danger of nationalization.

¹¹³⁹ Memcon – NSC Discussion on Iraq on April 17 1959, 17 April 1959, NARA, RG 59, Records of the Policy Planning Council - Subject Files, 1954-1962, Box 141.

¹¹⁴⁰ From Ministry of Power to Prime Minister – Iraq, 1 April 1959, PREM 11-3451, BNA; From Baghdad (Sgd. Walter) to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd, 14 April 1959, PREM 11-2735, BNA.

¹¹⁴¹ From AmEmbassy Baghdad to Department of State, #657 – Weekly Economic Review April 6-12 1959, 15 April 1959, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs 1955-1959, Reel 11.

¹¹⁴² Discussion at the 405th Meeting of the National Security Council, 7 May 1959, Dwight D. Eisenhower: Papers as President, 1953-1961 (Ann Whitman File) – NSC Series, Box 11, DDEL.

Lord Monckton's counterparts in the upper echelons of IPC management agreed that the Iraqis relied on the company just as much as they depended on the government.¹¹⁴³

The relative optimism of Western governments and IPC observers about the stability of the petroleum order continued as a modicum of normalcy returned to Iraqi politics in late 1959 and through 1960. The UK ambassador believed in 1960 that the regime was finally taking a more "realistic view of their dependence on the company's operations."¹¹⁴⁴ The British charge Sam Falle and IPC personnel later confided to their American counterparts that if the company made significant concessions to Qasim and he was then assassinated or overthrown, his successor regime would immediately demand even greater company concessions. Therefore, Falle and the UK Foreign Office insisted (and Davies and the US embassy concurred) that "the time has come to make a stand" on Iraqi demands.¹¹⁴⁵ The British Foreign Office believed that recent crop failures in 1960 "left the government more dependent on oil revenues and disinclined to challenge IPC. Owing to the worldwide oil glut, other companies were unlikely to offer to work the relinquished territory."¹¹⁴⁶

American and IPC analyses similarly indicated that the broader GOI-IPC relationship was reasonably stable. Any serious threats to IPC positions in Iraq were, as the US embassy argued in September 1959, negated by the absence of Iraqi oil marketing

¹¹⁴³ From AmEmbassy London (Whitney) to Secretary of State, #G-937, 25 April 1959, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 -887.2553, Box 4961; From Beirut (McClintock) to Secretary of State, #4477, 15 May 1959, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 -887.2553, Box 4961.

¹¹⁴⁴ Sir Humphrey Trevelyan to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd -Iraq: Annual Review for 1959, #1 - EQ1011/1, 1 January 1960, FO481-14, BNA (quote); From Baghdad (Sir H. Trevelyan) to Foreign Office, #1469 - EQ1531/111, 4 November 1960, FO371-149931, BNA.

¹¹⁴⁵ From Foreign Office to Baghdad, #1591, 1 November 1960, FO371-149931, BNA (quote); From Baghdad (Davies) to Secretary of State, #364, 6 September 1960, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1960-January 1963, Reel 9; From AmEmbassy Baghdad (Rodger Davies, Charge d'Affaires, a.i) to Department of State, #312, 8 September 1960, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1960-January 1963, Reel 4.

¹¹⁴⁶ Saul, "Masterly Inactivity as Brinkmanship," p. 755-756.

facilities and its dependence on royalty payments. Possible challenges to the company were also offset by “flooded oil markets and soft prices,” the same factors that inhibited the effectiveness of supranational oil associations.¹¹⁴⁷ H.W. Fisher derided Iraqi positions on various issues in late 1959 as “annoying and troublesome” but not seriously threatening to IPC’s position in Iraq and American control in the petroleum arena.¹¹⁴⁸

These reassurances were repeated throughout the final year of the Eisenhower presidency. In the spring and summer of 1960, the Operations Coordinating Board, the CIA, and the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations characterized the IPC-Iraqi relationship as relatively “normal” since national oil production statistics continued to climb.¹¹⁴⁹ The company equally discounted the likelihood of Qasim taking “drastic action” like the forced relinquishment of territory in August 1960 since the pursuit would not solve the major economic crises facing the Iraqis. Moreover, IPC representatives believed that Qasim was so desperate for an agreement to shore up his regime in the wake of domestic unrest that he would “eventually be forced into negotiating seriously and ultimately signing [a] realistic accord with Company.”¹¹⁵⁰

¹¹⁴⁷ From Baghdad (Jernegan) to Secretary of State, #854, 6 October 1959, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 –887.2553, Box 4961 (quote); From Baghdad (Jernegan) to Secretary of State, #601, 8 September 1959, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 –887.2553, Box 4961.

¹¹⁴⁸ Memorandum of Conversation – Mr. Howard W. Fisher, Director, Standard Oil Company (N.J.), Mr. Martin Jones, Government Relations, Standard Oil Company (N.J.), NEA – G. Lewis Jones, NEA – Parker T. Hart, NE/E George Bennis –IPC-GOI Relations and IPC Situation in South Arabia, 17 December 1959, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959 –887.2553, Box 4961.

¹¹⁴⁹ *Staff Study, United States Foreign Policy – Middle East*, p. 27 (quote); Operations Coordinating Board – Operational Plans for Iraq, 9 March 1960, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 - Administrative and Chronological Files 1953-1961, Box 26; CIA Office of National Estimates – The Iraqi Situation, 24 May 1960, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL.

¹¹⁵⁰ From Baghdad (Davies) to Secretary of State, #288, 19 August 1960, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1960-January 1963, Reel 9 (first quote); From AmEmbassy Baghdad (Davies) to Secretary of State, #G-72, 26 August 1960, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1960-January 1963, Reel 9 (second quote).

Summing up the general state of American attitudes toward the Iraqi regime, the OCB concluded in late 1960 that Iraq still exhibited its traditional dependence on IPC for developing and exploiting oil resources.¹¹⁵¹ Ambassador Jernegan thought Qasim was playing hardball in negotiations and would back down in the face of strong pressure. The “situation at present requires [a] show of decisiveness and strength on [the] part of IPC,” Jernegan wrote in November, “if present harsh Iraqi proposals are to be moderated.”¹¹⁵² US officials were aware that Qasim could possibly take unilateral action against the company in the event of a formal breakdown of talks. Even so, Jernegan concluded on 1 December 1960 that “we do not feel it likely Qasim will undertake such rash action against company [i.e. forced relinquishment] at this juncture.”¹¹⁵³

American, British, and IPC observers proved unable to reconcile the stalemate that emerged in IPC-GOI negotiations with their underlying confidence in the stability of IPC’s assets. Despite the pace at which the IPC-Iraqi relationship soured and spiraled downwards, Western observers took the larger status quo in the Iraqi oil sector for granted. The consensus of American, British, and IPC officials remained that the Iraqis were still intimately and inextricably linked with the company and dependent on their facilities and infrastructure to market oil. US observers expected the Iraqis to wind up in an economic bind of tremendous proportions without these resources and the revenue accrued from company operations. These realities fueled a sense of reassurance and confidence among officials in the Eisenhower administration by January 1961 that the

¹¹⁵¹ #223 - Paper Prepared by the Operations Coordinating Board – Operations Plan for Iraq, 14 December 1960, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 525.

¹¹⁵² From Baghdad (Jernegan) to Secretary of State, #583, 14 November 1960, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1960-January 1963, Reel 9.

¹¹⁵³ From Baghdad (Jernegan) to Secretary of State, #606, 1 December 1960, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1960-January 1963, Reel 9 (quote); CIA Office of Current Intelligence, “Current Intelligence Weekly Summary – 17 November 1960,” February 27 2010. CIA-RDP79-00927A00300010001-9, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST).

postwar petroleum order retained its strong, powerful foundations and connections in Iraq. The Americans still believed they could control and channel the revolutionary impulses of the new regime in the oil sector in avenues favourable to US interests.

Conclusion

The American objective of maintaining an environment conducive to the exploitation of Iraqi oil by Western companies was largely achieved in the pre-revolutionary period. On the surface, the same patterns held true during the final years of the Eisenhower administration. The US government worked effectively to maintain open lines of consultation with American oil firms operating in Iraq as well as their British allies who dominated Iraq's petroleum market. IPC also found new partners in Baghdad who pursued oil policies sharing elements of continuity, for a time at least, with those of the monarchical regime. The two sides managed to keep oil pipelines and royalty payments flowing without enduring a full-blown nationalization crisis as occurred in Iran in the 1951 to 1953 period and Egypt in 1956.

There was much more going on below the surface of the IPC-Iraqi relationship than this brief summary suggests. Qasim's tenure as leader from 1958 to 1963 coincided, as one historian writes, with the "beginning of the end for the IPC" in Iraq. The stability of Western oil concessions and America's ability to control Iraqi petroleum developments were undermined, Brandon Wolfe-Hunnicuttt rightly concludes, by "developments flowing from Iraq's 1958 Revolution..."¹¹⁵⁴ These changes, of course, did not occur overnight. As Wolfe-Hunnicuttt explains, the concessionary regime in Iraq

¹¹⁵⁴ Wolfe-Hunnicuttt, "The End of the Concessionary Regime," p. 89 (first quote), 290 (second quote).

began to fall apart after July 1958 but the process took “time to work itself out.”¹¹⁵⁵ The elements of continuity between the monarchical order and the Iraqi Republic on oil questions disappeared as time went on. Discussions between IPC and the Iraqi government became much more acrimonious. Qasim’s negotiating stance “hardened” after July 1958, as he became more assertive vis-à-vis the company.¹¹⁵⁶ The two parties engaged in back-and-forth patterns of unilateral actions that poisoned ongoing discussions. Relations between the two sides deteriorated to the point where the Iraqis moved to establish a supra-national organization (OPEC) to strengthen their hand in their confrontation with the company. A year later, the Iraqi leadership unilaterally revoked nearly all of IPC’s territory.

The period from July 1958 to January 1961 laid the roots for the proclamation of PL 80. American and IPC observers were, in retrospect, overconfident and complacent about the overall stability and security of Western oil concessions in Iraq. They believed the ties that bound IPC and the Iraqis together in the postwar petroleum order would remain strong for the foreseeable future. As this chapter has demonstrated (and as Wolfe-Hunnicuttt also argues), indications of rising tension between the two sides were “brewing for quite sometime.” These signs, Wolfe-Hunnicuttt agrees, were “largely overlooked by American observers” in light of Qasim’s move to improve the broader US-Iraqi relationship and clamp down on communist groups in early 1960.¹¹⁵⁷

IPC and US government officials allowed negotiations with Qasim’s regime to languish on critical issues like the relinquishment of concessional territories throughout

¹¹⁵⁵ Wolfe-Hunnicuttt, “The End of the Concessionary Regime,” p. 24.

¹¹⁵⁶ Saul, “Masterly Inactivity as Brinkmanship,” p. 748-749; Wolfe-Hunnicuttt, “The End of the Concessionary Regime,” p. 69-70.

¹¹⁵⁷ Wolfe-Hunnicuttt, “The End of the Concessionary Regime,” p. 68 (quote); Saul, “Masterly Inactivity as Brinkmanship,” p. 753.

this period. IPC officials showed little urgency to reach a deal with Baghdad, seemingly preferring stalemate to substantive compromise. American officials found reassurance in the reality that Qasim's regime was almost entirely dependent on IPC royalties. They also remained confident the government learned its lesson from the failed Mossadeq nationalization experiment in Iran. American confidence in the stability of the postwar petroleum order in Iraq would prove misplaced by the proclamation of PL 80 only one year after President Eisenhower left office.

Chapter Seven: American Modernization Programs in Revolutionary Iraq

The July 1958 Iraqi Revolution deprived Washington of one of its closest Middle Eastern allies. The new government cut many of the formal ties linking Washington and Baghdad, withdrawing from the Baghdad Pact and terminating its military aid agreement with the United States. American officials lost their sense of “control” and authority over assets in the Iraqi petroleum arena, and Prime Minister Abdel Karim Qasim regularly accused the United States of working to overthrow his government. At the same time, Qasim’s Iraq experienced convulsive waves of political unrest. As its policy options narrowed, the Eisenhower administration relied on “soft power” tools to shape and control developments in Iraq in pro-American directions. In this vein, this chapter examines how American modernization efforts and programs from July 1958 to the end of the Eisenhower presidency in January 1961 influenced the troubled US-Iraqi relationship.

Chapter Four discussed how the collaboration of Iraqi government technocrats was essential to the functioning of Point IV’s programs (also known as the United States Operations Mission [USOM] or the International Cooperation Agency [ICA]). The new government proved far more hesitant than its predecessor to coordinate development and modernization strategies with Point IV. As in the petroleum sector, US officials grew increasingly frustrated with the republican regime in Baghdad as the convergent interests that linked Iraqis and Americans in the development realm dissipated. Following the revolution, Iraqi modernization practices and processes drifted further away from American-directed models, and the Americans’ conception of their control and authority in the Iraqi development arena gradually withered away. A fascinating trend emerged in

this sphere of US-Iraqi relations in the final years of Eisenhower's tenure in office. In many instances, the revolutionary regime in Baghdad rejected the basic principles of American-directed modernization that the monarchical order had largely embraced. Modernization as both an actual process and analytical construct became hotly contested. Iraqi and American officials had very different priorities for modernization and development projects and widely divergent understandings and definitions of the concept of modernity for the nation-state. The Eisenhower administration's attempts to positively influence the larger US-Iraqi relationship through modernization programs ultimately produced mixed results at best.

American Contractors in Iraq

One way to trace these trends is to examine the economic climate in which American contractors worked alongside Iraqis on development and modernization projects. Prime Minister Qasim insisted he was eager for American firms to bid on contracts for new projects.¹¹⁵⁸ His declarations belied the realities of the Iraqi economic sector for American firms. One of the key concerns of US contractors was the general harassment they encountered while assisting with development projects (some of which were modified Iraqi Development Board [IDB] plans drawn up before July 1958). Mirroring their treatment of Iraq Petroleum Company [IPC] staffers described in Chapter Six, some Iraqi officials left American business personnel fearing for their safety. The American consul in Basra complained about "flagrant discrimination" levied by Iraqis against US contractors. American business representatives found their mobility restricted

¹¹⁵⁸ From Fritzlan, #2328, 23 December 1958, National Archives and Records Administration [NARA], Record Group [RG] 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 19.

by local authorities through the denial of travel permits and exit visas. Conversely, those Iraqis who sought a cooperative relationship with Western contractors feared they would lose their jobs for consorting with foreigners.¹¹⁵⁹ The United States Information Service [USIS], an important player in cultural and propaganda work before July 1958, had its headquarters seized by the new regime from July 1958 until January 1960.¹¹⁶⁰ American personnel working on the construction of the Derbendi-Khan dam shared similar experiences. One company official described the attempts of police, union leaders, and engineers to prevent the firm from firing incompetent employees. He believed the government was trying to put a “slow squeeze on us to try to make us breach the contract, while they interpret the contractual terms as whatever they wish.” The problem was complicated by the fact that if contractors halted operations, the regime would interpret the move as “a political maneuver designed to embarrass the new regime, and that it may find itself in a position to claim that it has been forced to deal with the Soviet bloc.”¹¹⁶¹ Working as an American in Iraq, the former US commercial attaché, Holsey Handyside, later recounted, was equivalent to living in a “police state.”¹¹⁶²

¹¹⁵⁹ Holsey Handyside interview, *Frontline Diplomacy: The Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training*; From M.S. Weir (British Embassy in Washington) to W.I. Combs, Eastern Department, Foreign Office, EQ10345/3, 18 September 1958, FO371-133104, British National Archives [BNA]; From Jernegan to SecState Washington, #3099, 29 April 1959, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 30.

¹¹⁶⁰ Operations Coordinating Board – Operational Guidance Concerning Iraq, 18 February 1959, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 - Administrative and Chronological Files 1953-1961, Box 25; Operations Coordinating Board – Operational Plans for Iraq, 9 March 1960, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 - Administrative and Chronological Files 1953-1961, Box 26; From S/P Evan M. Wilson to Mr. Smith – Iraq, 18 March 1960, NARA, RG 59, Records of the Policy Planning Council - Subject Files, 1954-1962, Box 141.

¹¹⁶¹ Derbendi Khan, 22 April 1959, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs – Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Subject Files Relating to Near Eastern Affairs, 1956-1959, Box 25 (first quote); From M.S. Weir (British Embassy in Washington) to W.I. Combs, Eastern Department, Foreign Office, EQ10345/3, 18 September 1958, FO371-133104, BNA (second quote).

¹¹⁶² Holsey Handyside interview, *Frontline Diplomacy: The Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training*.

American contractors also complained that Qasim's government was not paying them for their work. The US embassy in Baghdad noted in August 1958 that several firms were ready to terminate their contracts if they did not soon receive outstanding payment.¹¹⁶³ The corporation Edwards and Kelcey that held a contract for the construction of a highway from Diwaniyah to Nasiriyah informed the Iraqi Ministry of Development in late August that they would suspend work if they were not immediately paid. Qasim's government responded by swiftly terminating the firm's contract, sequestering their equipment and files, and expelling company personnel. US diplomats interpreted this move against the company as a blow to their wider conceptions of economic control and authority in the country. The counselor for economic affairs, John Miles, sympathized with the company's struggles, disparagingly noting that "Arab pride, once violated, cannot be assuaged with facts."¹¹⁶⁴ Frustration with the economic climate boiled over in the spring of 1959 as Iraq moved closer to the apparent brink of communist takeover. US officials were furious about the forced seizure in March of the offices of an American firm of consulting engineers.¹¹⁶⁵ The existing climate, Ambassador John Jernegan wrote in rather understated tones, was "unfavourable to Americans working in Iraq."¹¹⁶⁶

¹¹⁶³ From Baghdad to Department of State, #99 – Weekly Economic Review August 18-24 1958, 25 August 1958, Confidential US State Department Central Files: Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959 [Hereby referred to as Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959], Reel 11; From M.S. Weir (British Embassy in Washington) to W.I. Combs, Eastern Department, Foreign Office, EQ10345/3, 18 September 1958, FO371-133104, BNA.

¹¹⁶⁴ From Baghdad (John Miles, Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs) to Department of State, #125 – Weekly Economic Review, August 25-31 1958, 3 September 1958, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 11.

¹¹⁶⁵ Ambassador John Jernegan protested that the Iraqi move was inconsistent with Iraq's professions of interest in a smooth economic relationship with Washington. See Memorandum of Conversation – Foreign Minister Jawad, Ambassador Jernegan, and John Miles – Indications of Unfriendly Iraqi Attitude Toward the US, 5 March 1959, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 29.

¹¹⁶⁶ From Baghdad (Jernegan) to Secretary of State, #2668, 17 March 1959, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 11 (quote); From Baghdad to Department of State, #585 – Weekly

The corporatist model of private-government partnership in the oil sector extended to the defense of broader American economic interests in Iraq. US policy mandated that government representatives in Iraq should “counsel” and cooperate with American firms, using the “good offices of the embassy whenever possible” to alleviate problems for contractors.¹¹⁶⁷ American officials approached the Iraqi government on behalf of firms and demanded redress for their concerns. Embassy staff regularly raised the subject of the locked USIS buildings with Qasim.¹¹⁶⁸ As part of this policy, the US government also drafted an agreement with Baghdad to more effectively protect the rights of American corporations.¹¹⁶⁹ American firms interested in exploring business opportunities in Iraq also consulted the embassy for their assessment of the local situation. Contractors working on the Derbendi-Khan dam engaged in frequent dialogue in the first year after the revolution with US diplomats to keep them fully apprised of their concerns.¹¹⁷⁰ As is the case in a corporatist partnership, these contacts benefitted

Economic Review March 9-15 1959, 18 March 1959, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 11.

¹¹⁶⁷ From Baghdad (John Miles, Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs) to Department of State, #250 – Economic Development Activities, 8 November 1958, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 11 (quote); Operations Coordinating Board – Operational Guidance Concerning Iraq, 18 February 1959, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 - Administrative and Chronological Files 1953-1961, Box 25.

¹¹⁶⁸ Ambassador Jernegan lambasted Iraqi officials in a meeting in April 1959 for their decision to charge the USIS rent for their padlocked headquarters that was, in his words, “totally useless to us.” Jernegan’s appeals had little impact, as the Iraqis continued to demur on this question until 1960. From Baghdad (Gallman) to Secretary of State, #994, 3 September 1958, NARA, RG 59, Central Decimal File [CDF] Iraq 1955-1959, Box 2257; From Jernegan to SecState Washington, #3099, 29 April 1959, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 30; Draft of Statement for Inspector, 21 September 1959, NARA, RG 84, Iraq - US Information Service, Baghdad - General Records, 1952-1963, Box 9.

¹¹⁶⁹ The initial versions of the treaty met with criticism from Iraqi quarters who derided the deal as an infringement on Iraqi neutralism. See From British Embassy Baghdad to Eastern Department, Foreign Office, EQ11345/4, 26 February 1959, FO371-140981, BNA.

¹¹⁷⁰ From NEA – G. Lewis Jones to The Under Secretary, 23 September 1959, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs - Office of Near Eastern Affairs - Records of Iraq-Jordan Affairs Desk, 1959-1964, Box 1; Memorandum of Conversation – Mr. Warren N. Riker, Vice President Raymond International Inc., Mr. Dewey Thompson, Washington Representative, Raymond International Inc., Mr. William C. Lakeland, Officer in Charge, Iraq-Jordan Affairs – Activities of Raymond International in Iraq, 7 January 1960, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs - Office of Near Eastern

not only the profit margins of private businesses, but also the wider strategic objectives of US policymakers. The Operations Coordinating Board [OCB] emphasized the importance of continued American business operations in Iraq “since the Soviets are presumed to be ready to fill any vacuums their departure would create.”¹¹⁷¹

American officials believed their representations to the Iraqis to be at least partially successful. The economic climate for American contractors improved considerably by late 1959 and through 1960.¹¹⁷² These trends mirrored the larger pattern of US-Iraqi relations discussed in Chapter Eight, as US policy toward Baghdad, in Brandon Wolfe-Hunnicuttt’s words, “swung toward increasing accommodation over the course of 1960” thanks to Qasim’s pushback against communist groups.¹¹⁷³ The embassy picked up on the first indications of this shift in August 1959. They believed they were witnessing an effort to “make amends for excesses perpetrated against foreign firms....”¹¹⁷⁴ Visas were processed more rapidly for consultants and back-owed payments were distributed. USIS officials managed to establish a “small and unostentatious” program that included distributing printed material to the Iraqi News

Affairs - Records of Iraq-Jordan Affairs Desk, 1959-1964, Box 1; Memorandum of Conversation - Problem of Derbendi-Khan Construction, 20 December 1958, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs – Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Subject Files Relating to Near Eastern Affairs, 1956-1959, Box 25.

¹¹⁷¹ Operations Coordinating Board – Operational Guidance Concerning Iraq, 18 February 1959, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 - Administrative and Chronological Files 1953-1961, Box 25.

¹¹⁷² By the spring of 1960, the NSC and CIA assessed that American contractors were “receiving much better treatment from the Iraqi government.” See From NE - Armin H. Meyer to NEA – G. Lewis Jones – Inter-Agency Group Meeting – March 18 1960, 16 March 1960, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs – Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Records of the Director, 1958-1963, Box 1 (quote); CIA NSC Briefing, “Iraq – 5 April 1960,” July 24 2009. CIA RDP79R00890A001200040034-3, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST), National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD.

¹¹⁷³ Brandon Wolfe-Hunnicuttt, “The End of the Concessionary Regime: Oil and American Power in Iraq, 1958-1972,” Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Stanford University, 2011, 56.

¹¹⁷⁴ From Baghdad to Department of State, #119 – Weekly Economic Review August 3-9 1959, 12 August 1959, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 11.

Agency and Ministry of Guidance.¹¹⁷⁵ They also assisted the American Institute of Languages in Baghdad, which had an enrollment list of close to 800 students by late 1960.¹¹⁷⁶

The Eisenhower administration still cast a suspicious eye on development efforts in the country. G. Lewis Jones of the State Department reminded his colleagues that “much remains to be done before this situation can be said to be normal from a business standpoint.” Foremost among them were efforts to get the Iraqis to guarantee the safety of American firms.¹¹⁷⁷ The US intelligence community argued in November 1960 that the favourable trend in US-Iraqi relations was “subject to sudden reversal, and while it may continue, it is not likely to be carried very far.”¹¹⁷⁸ Camille Tebsherany, the director of the American Institute of Languages, noted that his group was prepared for an outburst of political upheaval. “Jim [his co-worker] says we have a ladder ready in the backyard,” the director joked, “I note also that his legs are longer than mine.”¹¹⁷⁹ While much improved, the position of American firms operating in the Iraqi development sphere

¹¹⁷⁵ Operations Coordinating Board – Operational Plans for Iraq, 9 March 1960, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 - Administrative and Chronological Files 1953-1961, Box 26.

¹¹⁷⁶ The Institute, which specialized in English language classes, saw modest gains in registration before the July 1958 revolution. After July 1958, it became one of the hallmarks of the limited USIS work in Iraq. See Operations Coordinating Board – Operational Plans for Iraq, 9 March 1960, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 - Administrative and Chronological Files 1953-1961, Box 26; From USIS Baghdad (Nathan L. Cole, Public Affairs Officer) to USIA Washington – Country Assessment Report, 5 April 1960, NARA, RG 84, Iraq - US Information Service, Baghdad - General Records, 1952-1963, Box 4.

¹¹⁷⁷ From NEA – G. Lewis Jones to The Under Secretary, 23 September 1959, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs - Office of Near Eastern Affairs - Records of Iraq-Jordan Affairs Desk, 1959-1964, Box 1 (quote); Memorandum of Conversation – Mr. Calvin Davis, President, Harza Engineering Company, NEA – Parker T. Hart, and NE/E – George Bensusky – Harza Activities and Plans regarding Iraq’s Derbendi Khan Dam Project, 23 November 1959, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs - Office of Near Eastern Affairs - Records of Iraq-Jordan Affairs Desk, 1959-1964, Box 3.

¹¹⁷⁸ NIE 36.2-60 – The Outlook for Iraq, 1 November 1960, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 517.

¹¹⁷⁹ From Camille Tebsherany (Director of American Institute of Languages) to Mr. Edwin T. Cornelius, Jr., President, English Language Services Inc., Washington, 10 February 1959, NARA, RG 84, Iraq - US Information Service, Baghdad - General Records, 1952-1963, Box 8.

remained tenuous and dangerous. US officials understood the rapidly shifting landscape in Iraq, defined by ongoing battles between nationalist and communist forces for influence in Qasim's government, necessitated flexibility on the part of contractors and preparations for all contingencies.

Point IV's Relationship with Qasim's Regime

Point IV was the most important American government agency involved in modernization and development work before the revolution. As with IPC and American contractors, Point IV's relationship with the new Iraqi regime proved far more contentious than in the monarchical period. Point IV's shrinking budget reflects these larger trends. Funding for USOM's operations in Iraq topped out at \$2.2 million in FY 1958. Their budget dropped to \$1.7 million for FY 1959 and \$1.0 million in FY 1960 and 1961.¹¹⁸⁰

Budgetary statistics do not tell the whole story of Point IV's trials and tribulations. One must turn to the documentary record to examine how the agency navigated the revolutionary atmosphere in Iraq. As this chapter will explain, Iraqi and American officials had different priorities for development projects and divergent definitions of the concept of modernity for the state. The immediate aftermath of the revolution was especially confusing. From mid-July until the fall of 1958, Point IV technicians were left in limbo, unsure whether Qasim wanted to continue their assistance programs. The new regime came to power with little prior knowledge of Point IV's

¹¹⁸⁰ Operations Coordinating Board – Operational Plans for Iraq, 9 March 1960, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 - Administrative and Chronological Files 1953-1961, Box 26; NSC 6011 – National Security Council – US Policy Toward the Near East, 17 June 1960, NARA, RG 273, Policy Papers, Box 52.

work. Though surprised by the size of their 100 person strong staff, the Iraqis nevertheless professed their desire to maintain a cooperative partnership with Point IV. Ambassador Gallman noted that Baba Ali, the Minister of Communications and Works, “honestly seemed anxious to have them [Point IV technicians] return to work.”¹¹⁸¹ These promises of cooperation were not consistently translated on the ground. USOM technicians resumed work in some educational and agricultural programs after a short interruption caused by the revolution.¹¹⁸² Conversely, other initiatives were suspended (as with Point IV’s role in the vaunted Miri Sirf Land Development program) or cancelled outright by Iraq.¹¹⁸³

The suspension of various USOM projects was coupled with signs that foreign technicians would no longer play the foundational role they once occupied in government circles. As Juan Romero notes, “national pride and the anti-imperialist rhetoric at the time made the hiring of Westerners – a procedure which the previous regime had been sharply criticized for – a delicate matter.”¹¹⁸⁴ Iraqi leaders regularly offered “evasive” responses to questions about the future of Point IV operations. While Saddiq Shanshal, a government minister, acknowledged Iraq’s reliance on foreign technicians, he

¹¹⁸¹ From Baghdad (Gallman) to Secretary of State, #995, 3 September 1958, NARA, RG 59, CDF Iraq 1955-1959, Box 2257; From Gallman to SecState Washington, #433, 29 July 1958, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 22 (quote).

¹¹⁸² From ICA Baghdad (Ben H. Brown Jr., Mission Director) – USOM Monthly Summary Report, June 1 to July 15 1958, 12 August 1958, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 32; From Ray E. Davis, Food and Agriculture Officer – Status of Agriculture Program in Iraq, 2 October 1958, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 3; From Frank L. Holmes, Ph.D., Chief Education Advisor, United States Operations Mission to Iraq, Baghdad – Terminal Report, 1 November 1958, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 11.

¹¹⁸³ From Ray E. Davis, Food and Agriculture Officer – Status of Agriculture Program in Iraq, 2 October 1958, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 3; From Miss L. Dorothy Carroll, Acting Chief, Health and Sanitation to Director – Health Summary for July 1958, 1 August 1958, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 19.

¹¹⁸⁴ Juan Lennart Michel Romero, “The Iraqi Revolution of 1958 and the Search for Security in the Middle East,” Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of Texas at Austin, 2008, 213.

nevertheless indicated that he “wanted such aid freely given and without ulterior motives.”¹¹⁸⁵ He elaborated on this point in a meeting with American diplomats in September 1958. Shanshal explained that Iraq would hire foreign advisors but “only to the extent that firms would be hired by the Government of Iraq to execute plans conceived and dictated by Iraqis in their own self-interest.” The Iraqis would depend on their own engineers and planners for economic projects rather than relying on American experts.¹¹⁸⁶

American observers spelled out the implications of this policy for Point IV. The Central Intelligence Agency [CIA] and US embassy in Baghdad believed that “important adjustments will have to be made” in the way Point IV functioned in Iraq. John Miles was more specific, writing that “[n]o more will it be permitted for a foreign engineer to direct the operation of economic development projects.”¹¹⁸⁷ USOM agricultural experts believed the new regime might let their programs “die on the vine by not filling positions and not sending trainees to the States.”¹¹⁸⁸ “The chances,” Ray Davis of Point IV’s agricultural team suggested, “of USOM working effectively has become progressively

¹¹⁸⁵ From Baghdad (Ben H. Brown Jr., Director, USOM), #170, 19 September 1958, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 21 (quote); From AmEmbassy Baghdad (John Miles, Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs) to Department of State, #250 – Economic Development Activities, 8 November 1958, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 22.

¹¹⁸⁶ From Baghdad (John Miles), #170, Undated, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 21 (quote); From Baghdad (John Miles, Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs) to Department of State, #183 – Economic Development Policy, 4 October 1958, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 11.

¹¹⁸⁷ White House Staff Notes, White House, 27 August 1958, Declassified Documents Reference System [DDRS] (first quote); CIA Office of Current Intelligence, “Current Intelligence Weekly Summary – 7 August 1958,” February 27 2010. CIA-RDP79-00927A001800100001-3, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST); From Baghdad (John Miles, Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs) to Department of State, #183 – Economic Development Policy, 4 October 1958, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 11 (second quote).

¹¹⁸⁸ From Ray E. Davis, Food and Agriculture Officer – Status of Agriculture Program in Iraq, 2 October 1958, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 3.

more doubtful.”¹¹⁸⁹ As in the oil sector, the Iraqis were moving forward in the development arena with the Iraqification of national economic assets and programs. Point IV’s role in Iraq’s future modernization efforts was expected to decline in tandem.

The revolution’s impact on Point IV’s privileged position and Washington’s sense of control and influence over Iraqi modernization processes was felt in other ways. The limited number of working USOM technicians experienced the same challenges faced by American contractors. USOM staff regularly had their equipment and materials seized by government authorities. The Ministry of Defense confiscated two Point IV vans in March 1959 and the agency was unable to “find anyone who would admit to knowing where the vehicles were.” Agency staffers faced travel restrictions that largely confined them to Baghdad by the end of 1958.¹¹⁹⁰ Allegations that members of Point IV were serving as spies further complicated the troubled US-Iraqi modernization partnership. Press outlets accused Point IV of distributing weapons and money to anti-regime elements. One agency advisor working alongside the police was expelled in January 1959 on the charge of conducting subversive activities.¹¹⁹¹ The most prominent of these accusations came in late April. The Ministry of Defense arrested, “roughly treated,” and subsequently expelled a USOM employee named John Nash on the charge of working as

¹¹⁸⁹ From Ray E. Davis, Food and Agriculture Officer – Status of Agriculture Program in Iraq, 2 October 1958, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 3.

¹¹⁹⁰ Memorandum of Conversation – Foreign Minister Jawad, Ambassador Jernegan, and John Miles – Indications of Unfriendly Iraqi Attitude Toward the US, 5 March 1959, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 29 (quote); From ICA Baghdad (C.R. Liggitt, Acting Director) – USOM Monthly Summary Report for November 1958, 6 December 1958, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 32.

¹¹⁹¹ From Baghdad (Fritzlan) to Secretary of State, #3189, 7 May 1959, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 9; From Jernegan to SecState Washington, #3385, 26 May 1959, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 30; Handwritten notes, 27 January 1959, John Foster Dulles: Papers, 1950-61 – Gerard Smith Series, Box 2, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library [DDEL].

a spy.¹¹⁹² The effectiveness of the Point IV program in Iraq before July 1958 depended on a reservoir of good will and trust between the two sides. These accusations drained this pool and hampered Washington's efforts to support Point IV's presence in the country.

The experiences of the University of Arizona's advisory group embodied many of the broader challenges facing American modernization experts in this period. A small team of professors from the University of Arizona, sponsored by Point IV, worked before the revolution at the Abu Ghraib Agricultural College. The team returned for the fall 1958 semester after a brief hiatus. They were dismayed to find a chaotic working environment. Students petitioned the school to dismiss the Americans. The Arizona team complained about the lack of security on campus in light of threats made against the group by several "troublemaking student ringleaders." One USOM Food and Agricultural Officer warned agency brass that the Arizona team needed "positive encouragement...to stand up and give leadership instead of encouraging talk prematurely about plans to run."¹¹⁹³ Diplomats in Washington intervened to put the project back on track. Christian Herter warned against a precipitous withdrawal of the Arizona team. He believed quiet diplomacy designed to assuage the group's concerns and press the Iraqis to improve security could solve the problem.¹¹⁹⁴ The team ultimately returned to work in early 1959. The resumption of the Arizona team's work served larger American strategic

¹¹⁹² From Jernegan to SecState Washington, #3099, 29 April 1959, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 30; From Jernegan to SecState Washington, #3385, 26 May 1959, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 30.

¹¹⁹³ From Ray E. Davis, Food and Agriculture Officer – Status of Agriculture Program in Iraq, 2 October 1958, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 3(quote); From Baghdad (Gallman) to Secretary of State, #670, 9 August 1958, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 15.

¹¹⁹⁴ From DOS (Herter) to AmEmbassy Baghdad, #1708, 3 January 1959, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 15.

interests, Ambassador Jernegan believed, since a final termination of their contract “would open door for Soviet bloc countries [to] furnish this assistance and indicate lack of confidence in GOI.”¹¹⁹⁵

As Herter’s intervention showed, American officials were reluctant to take any precipitous, unilateral action to draw down the USOM program. The National Security Council [NSC] determined shortly after the July 1958 events that the United States, as Hahn recounts, must “maintain friendly relations with the new Iraqi regime on a reciprocal basis.”¹¹⁹⁶ US policymakers believed the Point IV program, problematic as it was, still benefitted this larger relationship to a degree. William Lakeland of the State Department felt the Point IV campaign was a valuable means of expressing “our desire to continue to be of assistance to the Iraqi nation.”¹¹⁹⁷ The Eisenhower administration worked to keep channels of communication open with the Iraqi leadership, reminding Qasim they were prepared to provide any technicians requested. Given these realities, diplomats feared a premature shutdown of Point IV operations would be misinterpreted by Qasim as a hostile maneuver.¹¹⁹⁸

¹¹⁹⁵ From Baghdad (Jernegan) to Secretary of State, #2046, 11 January 1959, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 15.

¹¹⁹⁶ Peter Hahn, *Missions Accomplished? The United States and Iraq Since World War I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 44 (quote); For a variation on this policy statement, see Operations Coordinating Board – Operational Guidance Concerning Iraq, 18 February 1959, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 - Administrative and Chronological Files 1953-1961, Box 25.

¹¹⁹⁷ From NE – William C. Lakeland to NE – Mr. Rockwell – Transmission of Iraqi Study Paper, 28 January 1959, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs – Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Subject Files Relating to Iraq and Jordan, 1956-1959, Box 13.

¹¹⁹⁸ NSC 6011 – National Security Council – US Policy Toward the Near East, 17 June 1960, NARA, RG 273, Policy Papers, Box 52; From Gallman, #1386, 3 October 1958, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 22; David Fritzlan interview, Frontline Diplomacy: The Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training.

The problem for American policymakers was that USOM technical staff remained wholly underutilized.¹¹⁹⁹ The OCB noted in February 1959 that the majority of Point IV technicians “have been given little to do....”¹²⁰⁰ Later that spring, Ambassador Jernegan reported that most technicians had been transferred by Iraqi authorities from administrative and advisory positions or expelled entirely. If this trend continued, Jernegan warned, the “effectiveness of USOM technicians in Iraq will soon be reduced to virtually nothing....”¹²⁰¹ Left with few viable alternatives, American policymakers began to gradually, quietly withdraw the majority of USOM staff. By June 1959, Point IV maintained only 25 staff members in Iraq. The figure dropped to eight in September.¹²⁰²

US-Iraqi relations soon moved to a path of greater normalization in late 1959 and through 1960 owing to Qasim’s repression of communist forces. Despite the paltry size of their staff, Point IV benefitted to a degree from this improved environment. The agency was able to continue or restart in modified fashion a limited number of initiatives. The Iraqi leadership requested a small number of technicians to assist in technical education efforts for building, welding, and sheet metal trades programs. USOM health

¹¹⁹⁹ Former US diplomat in Iraq Hume Horan later recalled that that the Point IV staff “had this suite of offices and I used to wonder what they did there for 10 hours every day. I never found the answer to that.” Hume Horan interview, *Frontline Diplomacy: The Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training*. See also Nicholas Thacher, “Reflections on US Foreign Policy Toward Iraq in the 1950s,” in Robert Fernea and William Roger Louis (eds.) *The Iraqi Revolution of 1958: The Old Social Classes Revisited* (London: IB Tauris, 1991), 72.

¹²⁰⁰ Operations Coordinating Board – Operational Guidance Concerning Iraq, 18 February 1959, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 - Administrative and Chronological Files 1953-1961, Box 25.

¹²⁰¹ From Baghdad (Jernegan) to Secretary of State, #G-186, 1 May 1959, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 9 (quote); From Baghdad (Jernegan) to Secretary of State, #2668, 17 March 1959, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 11.

¹²⁰² Operations Coordinating Board – Weekly Activity Report - OCB 319.1 Activity Report (File #4), 13 October 1958, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – OCB Secretariat Series, Box 9, DDEL; From Baghdad (Jernegan) to Secretary of State, #3446, 1 June 1959, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 10; From International Cooperation Administration (D.G MacDonald, Executive Secretary) to Mr. Albert Toner, Office of the Staff Secretary White House, International Cooperation Administration, 17 September 1959, DDRS.

advisors worked on smallpox education initiatives and organized nursing school activities.¹²⁰³ Point IV provided funds to purchase equipment for engineering and business administration classes at Al Hikma University in Baghdad.¹²⁰⁴ As a “symptom of the improved Iraqi attitude toward the United States,” the regime also urged Point IV in March 1960 to nominate candidates to fill foreign staff positions at Baghdad University.¹²⁰⁵ Finally, though Qasim ultimately cancelled Point IV’s assistance program for the police, the Americans shipped some equipment remaining in the pipeline.¹²⁰⁶

Point IV’s impact on the Iraqi modernization and development process was greatly restricted by the limited scope of its advisory programs. The main thrust of Point IV’s efforts in Iraq after July 1958 instead turned to participant training. This initiative, which started under the monarchical regime, aimed to introduce modern methods of education and agriculture to Iraqis studying at either American universities or the

¹²⁰³ From Frank L. Holmes, Chief, Education Division to Ernest Comstock, Education Division, International Cooperation Administration, Washington DC, 19 September 1958, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 11; From Jason N. Calhoun, Acting Chief, Health and Sanitation Division to Director, USOM/Iraq – Health Summary for October 1958, 27 October 1958, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 19.

¹²⁰⁴ The school was originally founded with aid from Point IV, the Ford Foundation, and other benefactors in 1955. Henry Wiens later described the university as one of the more successful Point IV projects in Iraq. See From Henry Wiens - Al Hikma University of Baghdad, 29 April 1959, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs – Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Subject Files Relating to Near Eastern Affairs, 1956-1959, Box 25.

¹²⁰⁵ A contract was eventually signed with Texas University in June 1961 to provide a team of faculty to teach at the university after a long series of bureaucratic debates about the financing for and type of contract to sign with the Iraqi regime. See From NE - Nicholas Thacher to NEA – Mr. Hart – Problems Concerning Proposed ICA Assistance to Baghdad University, 3 June 1960, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs - Office of Near Eastern Affairs - Records of Iraq-Jordan Affairs Desk, 1959-1964, Box 1; From Nicholas G. Thacher to Rodger F. Davies, Esquire, Counselor of Embassy, American Embassy, Baghdad Iraq, 11 July 1960, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs – Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Records of the Director, 1958-1963, Box 1.

¹²⁰⁶ From Gallman, #586, 6 August 1958, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 21; From G. Lewis Jones – Proposed Sale of Public Safety Equipment to Iraq, 15 October 1959, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs – Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Subject Files Relating to Iraq and Jordan, 1956-1959, Box 13; Weldon C Matthews, “The Kennedy Administration, Counterinsurgency, and Iraq’s First Ba’thist Regime,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 43 (2011), 646.

American University of Beirut.¹²⁰⁷ Nearly 170 candidates had been placed in Point IV-financed training programs in the United States and Lebanon by the summer of 1959. The majority of these participants worked on education and agriculture projects, with a limited number receiving instruction in judicial, public administration, and financial matters. The number of enrolled participants rose again in 1960 as relations improved incrementally between Washington and Baghdad.¹²⁰⁸

The overall effectiveness of the participant training initiative remained mixed at best. American officials complained about the poor quality of participants selected by the Iraqi government. One State Department official argued at the end of the Eisenhower presidency that USOM was “scraping the bottom of the barrel for Iraqi participants.” At best, one training officer later recalled, Point IV had “about a 50% batting average” with nominees.¹²⁰⁹ USOM personnel conceded that trainees often returned to Iraq “less prepared” to contribute to the country’s development than beforehand.¹²¹⁰ Part and parcel of the problem was the fact that Qasim’s administration used the nominations as a form of nepotism. Moreover, the dearth of jobs for trainees to return to meant that many

¹²⁰⁷ Students were required to give a minimum of five years of service to the Iraqi government following their training. See Operations Coordinating Board – Operational Plans for Iraq, 9 March 1960, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 - Administrative and Chronological Files 1953-1961, Box 26; From Baghdad (Holmes), Participant Program, 9 August 1959, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 10.

¹²⁰⁸ Discussion at the 405th Meeting of the National Security Council, 7 May 1959, Dwight D. Eisenhower: Papers as President, 1953-1961 (Ann Whitman File) – NSC Series, Box 11, DDEL; From Baghdad (Holmes), Participant Program, 9 August 1959, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 10; Roby Barrett, *The Greater Middle East and the Cold War: US Foreign Policy Under Eisenhower and Kennedy* (London: IB Tauris, 2007), 124.

¹²⁰⁹ From NE – Milton C. Walstrom to NE – Armin H. Meyer – Aid Assistance Level for Iraq, 25 November 1960, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs – Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Records of the Director, 1958-1963, Box (first quote); William Carson, Training Officer in Iraq – ICA Non-Technician Interview, 1 March 1961, NARA, RG 59, Records of the Policy Planning Council - Subject Files, 1954-1962, Box 141 (second quote).

¹²¹⁰ Memorandum of Conversation – ICA/NESA – William C. Ide, Chief of Near East and South Asia Program Office, ICA/NESA – Charles Wright (Training) – ICA Program in Iraq, 8 August 1960, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs - Office of Near Eastern Affairs - Records of Iraq-Jordan Affairs Desk, 1959-1964, Box 1.

of them “became misfits” who proved to be “the most troublesome to ICA/W, next to the Afghanis.”¹²¹¹ Point IV figures concluded that their participant training efforts, as a whole, contributed little to Iraq’s modernization experience.¹²¹²

Despite the obvious limitations of Point IV’s participant training efforts, the initiative was one of the few viable ways they could positively influence and shape the broader US-Iraqi relationship after July 1958.¹²¹³ By the time the Eisenhower administration left office, the Point IV mission in Iraq barely resembled the one that emerged during the president’s first term in office. The tools with which American officials believed they could significantly influence and control Iraqi modernization process were, by and large, taken out of their hands by Qasim’s government.

The Soviet Modernization Project in Iraq

Point IV’s challenges were compounded by the emergence of the Soviet Union as a major actor in the Iraqi modernization process after July 1958. Qasim’s regime actively solicited Soviet assistance in pushing forward with its economic and cultural development projects. The contest in Iraq between American and Soviet modernization programs served as a microcosm for what Odd Arne Westad described as the Cold War

¹²¹¹ Memorandum of Conversation – ICA/NESA – William C. Ide, Chief of Near East and South Asia Program Office, ICA/NESA – Charles Wright (Training) – ICA Program in Iraq, 8 August 1960, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs - Office of Near Eastern Affairs - Records of Iraq-Jordan Affairs Desk, 1959-1964, Box 1 (first quote); William Carson, Training Officer in Iraq – ICA Non-Technician Interview, 1 March 1961, NARA, RG 59, Records of the Policy Planning Council - Subject Files, 1954-1962, Box 141 (second quote).

¹²¹² Memorandum of Conversation – ICA/NESA – William C. Ide, Chief of Near East and South Asia Program Office, ICA/NESA – Charles Wright (Training) – ICA Program in Iraq, 8 August 1960, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs - Office of Near Eastern Affairs - Records of Iraq-Jordan Affairs Desk, 1959-1964, Box 1.

¹²¹³ William Carson, Training Officer in Iraq – ICA Non-Technician Interview, 1 March 1961, NARA, RG 59, Records of the Policy Planning Council - Subject Files, 1954-1962, Box 141; From American Embassy Baghdad (John D. Jernegan) to Robert C. Strong, Esquire, Director, Office of Near Eastern Affairs, 25 October 1961, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs - Office of Near Eastern Affairs - Records of Iraq-Jordan Affairs Desk, 1959-1964, Box 2.

superpower competition to prove the universality of their distinct versions of modernity.¹²¹⁴ American observers were fearful of the sudden emergence of Soviet development activities in Iraq. This anxiety mixed and overlapped with a strain of confidence that manifested itself in the tendency of American observers to emphasize the troubles the Soviets experienced in their attempts to modernize various facets of Iraqi society. The Soviets' failures in Iraq reassured the Americans that their development methods were superior to those of their rivals in Moscow, notwithstanding the relative decline of the American modernization project in Iraq after July 1958.

American officials closely monitored the Kremlin's maneuvers in the Iraqi economic arena. While Nuri al-Said ruptured relations with the Soviet Union in 1954, Qasim proclaimed he would pursue a path of non-alignment. This meant he would accept aid from "any source" so long as it came without strings attached.¹²¹⁵ US diplomats expected the Iraqis to develop closer ties with East bloc countries, but the pace and extent to which this occurred surprised and disturbed them.¹²¹⁶ The CIA had already detected the arrival of Soviet technical advisors in Iraq when the two parties signed an economic agreement on 16 March 1959. The deal, initialed by none other than Ibrahim Kubba, called for a Soviet loan to Iraq worth nearly \$140 million (roughly \$550 million rubles).¹²¹⁷ The loan would finance, among other projects, geological surveys and

¹²¹⁴ Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 4.

¹²¹⁵ Uriel Dann, *Iraq Under Qassem: A Political History, 1958-1963* (New York: Praeger, 1969), 68.

¹²¹⁶ From Jernegan to SecState Washington, #3196, 18 March 1959, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 25.

¹²¹⁷ CIA NSC Briefing, "Nasir, Iraq and the Communists – 6 January 1959," February 27 2010. CIA-RDP79R00890A001100010031-0, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST); CIA Office of Current Intelligence, "Current Intelligence Weekly Summary – 15 January 1959," February 27 2010. CIA-RDP79-00927A002100020001-8, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST); Operations Coordinating Board – Operational Guidance Concerning Iraq, 18 February 1959, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 - Administrative and Chronological Files 1953-

agricultural projects carried out with the assistance of some 80 Soviet advisors. It also facilitated the purchase of Soviet industrial equipment, marking a direct challenge to the American initiative of introducing Iraqis to what they saw as modern technology.¹²¹⁸

The details of the agreement became clear in the subsequent months ahead. In April, seventy Soviet doctors arrived to assist in hospital operations and medical schools. Moscow provided grants of medical laboratory equipment, antibiotics, and doses of smallpox vaccine to their new Iraqi allies.¹²¹⁹ Mirroring Point IV's participant training program, the Soviets also financed training for close to 800 Iraqis in Soviet and East bloc hospitals and schools.¹²²⁰ Ambassador Jernegan predicted in the fall of 1959 that the Americans could expect a “steady increase in the numbers of Soviet and Satellite technicians and advisers working for various government departments.” By February 1960, despite the marginal improvement in US-Iraqi relations, the Soviets still

1961, Box 25; Johan Franzen, *Red Star over Iraq: Iraqi Communism Before Saddam* (London: Hurst, 2011), 93; 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), 863.

¹²¹⁸ From RME/NE – Mr. Herbert Gordon to INR – Mr. Hugh S. Cumming, Jr. – Notes on the Soviet – Iraq Economic Agreement, 25 March 1959, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs - Office of Near Eastern Affairs - Records of Iraq-Jordan Affairs Desk, 1959-1964, Box 1; Sir Humphrey Trevelyan to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd – Soviet-Iraqi Economic Agreement, #53 - EQ10338/15, 29 April 1959, FO481-13, BNA; Phebe Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2012), 107.

¹²¹⁹ Discussion at the 404th Meeting of the National Security Council, 30 April 1959, Dwight D. Eisenhower: Papers as President, 1953-1961 (Ann Whitman File) – NSC Series, Box 11, DDEL; From McClintock, #7166, 2 June 1959, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 26; John A. Billings, American Consul, #40 – Russian Activities in Basra and Fao, 10 November 1959, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 33; From Baghdad (John Miles, Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs) to Department of State, #155 – Soviet Assistance for Smallpox Eradication Campaign and Mosul Medical College, 9 September 1959, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 15.

¹²²⁰ They went to schools in Poland and Czechoslovakia, for instance. From AmEmbassy Baghdad (John Miles, Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs) to Department of State, #672 – Nationalization of Health Services in Iraq, 18 April 1959, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 15; From Baghdad (John Miles, Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs) to Department of State, #58 – Soviet Medical Assistance, 27 July 1959, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 15; Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, p. 107.

maintained a contingent of 300 technicians assisting with development projects.¹²²¹ The Soviet modernization offensive in Iraq was punctuated by the arrival of Vice Premier Anastas Mikoyan in Baghdad in April 1960 in connection with the opening of the Soviet trade fair. This visit was particularly concerning for Washington since it represented the highest-level Soviet delegation to visit the Arab world. Shortly afterwards, the Soviets extended another \$45 million credit (\$180 million rubles) to oversee the construction of a railway line from Baghdad to Basra.¹²²²

The Soviets' economic program elicited two types of responses from American observers. The writings of some officials betray their anxiety about the decline of their authority and control in Iraq's development sector vis-à-vis the Soviet Union. Many American officials feared their position in Iraq was being overrun by the rapid East bloc aid initiative. The US embassy in Baghdad and the CIA believed the Soviet bloc was "making [an] all-out effort to assist in forthcoming expansion of Iraqi industrialization program."¹²²³ Ambassador Jernegan characterized the March 1959 Iraqi-Soviet agreement as a campaign to "tie Iraq economically as closely as possible to [the] Soviet

¹²²¹ From Jernegan to SecState Washington, #764, 8 September 1959, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 30 (quote); Operations Coordinating Board – Report on the Near East (NSC 5820/1), 3 February 1960, White House Office, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs: Records, 1952-1961 – OCB Series, Subject Subseries, Box 4, DDEL.

¹²²² #218 - Editorial Note, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 510; CIA Office of Current Intelligence, "Current Intelligence Weekly Summary – 2 June 1960," February 27 2010. CIA-RDP79-00927A002700100001-3, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST); From Mr. Miles to the Ambassador – The New Russian Credit and the Basra Railroad, 10 June 1960, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 28; Operations Coordinating Board – Weekly Activity Report, 2 September 1960, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – OCB Secretariat Series, Box 11, DDEL; Ismail al-Arif, *Iraq Reborn: A Firsthand Account of the July 1958 Revolution and After* (New York: Vantage Press, 1982), 73.

¹²²³ From Baghdad to Department of State, #418 – Weekly Economic Review January 5-January 11 1959, 21 January 1959, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 11 (quote); From RME/NE – Mr. Herbert Gordon to INR – Mr. Hugh S. Cumming, Jr. – Notes on the Soviet – Iraq Economic Agreement, 25 March 1959, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs - Office of Near Eastern Affairs - Records of Iraq-Jordan Affairs Desk, 1959-1964, Box 1; CIA Office of Current Intelligence, "Current Intelligence Weekly Summary – 15 January 1959," February 27 2010. CIA-RDP79-00927A002100020001-8, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST).

bloc.”¹²²⁴ The US intelligence community argued in late 1959 and 1960 that the Soviets were “rapidly implementing” their economic agreements with Baghdad.¹²²⁵

US officials worried about several specific developments. For one, the reluctance of American firms to bid on government contracts (owing to the poisonous environment they faced) gave the Soviet bloc an easily exploitable opportunity to expand their contacts with Qasim’s regime. Similarly, the Americans were frustrated by the revelation that Soviet firms offered their services for development projects at lower prices than American companies.¹²²⁶ Analysts commented disapprovingly on Iraqi government delegations leading “pilgrimages to Soviet bloc capitals.”¹²²⁷ Little consideration, quite obviously, was given to the fact that one could similarly describe Point IV’s participant training programs in the United States as “pilgrimages” for Iraqi students. The Soviets also scored, as American officials wrote, a major propaganda coup with their smallpox vaccination program. Ambassador Jernegan sorrowfully commented on the general pattern of events in Baghdad and broader decline of American political and economic power in Iraq following the revolution. He noted that “it looks as if 1959 will be the year of the Bear in Iraq.”¹²²⁸

¹²²⁴ From Baghdad (Jernegan) to Secretary of State, #2758, 26 March 1959, White House Office, Office of the Staff Secretary: Records, 1952-1961 – International Series, Box 8, DDEL.

¹²²⁵ SNIE 36.2-4-59 – Possible Developments in Iraq, 24 September 1959, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 481; #215 – Telegram from the Embassy in Iraq (Jernegan) to the Department of State, 25 February 1960, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 505.

¹²²⁶ CIA Office of Current Intelligence, “Current Intelligence Weekly Summary – 15 January 1959,” February 27 2010. CIA-RDP79-00927A002100020001-8, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST); From Baghdad to Department of State, #418 – Weekly Economic Review January 5-January 11 1959, 21 January 1959, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 11; From Baghdad to Department of State, #119 – Weekly Economic Review August 3-9 1959, 12 August 1959, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 11.

¹²²⁷ Operations Coordinating Board – Report on the Near East (NSC 5820/1), 3 February 1960, White House Office, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs: Records, 1952-1961 – OCB Series, Subject Subseries, Box 4, DDEL.

¹²²⁸ Stephen Blackwell, “A Desert Squall: Anglo-American Planning for Military Intervention in Iraq, July 1958-August 1959,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 35, no. 3 (July 1999), 9, 10 (quote); From Baghdad (John

The United States found itself in direct competition with the Kremlin in the Iraqi modernization sector. In light of this dynamic, Point IV programs took on an added degree of importance as a small, yet vital, component of the “continuing struggle between the East and West for long-term influence in the area.” The embassy insisted Point IV expedite the approval of Iraqi students nominated by the government since Washington could ill afford to forfeit this opportunity to their Soviet competitors.¹²²⁹ Point IV-trained participants were essential, the OCB argued, since they served on the front lines of the American campaign to “resist the pro-communists’ efforts to reduce and eliminate Western influence” in Iraq. American fears about the declining relevance of their modernization models were spelled out by John Miles in November 1958. Remarking on the emergent relationship between Moscow and Baghdad, he reminded his readers that “[t]he West has no monopoly on engineering or economics.”¹²³⁰

These anxieties mixed with a sense of confidence among American officials about their future role in the Iraqi development sphere. As Tripp reminds us, Qasim did not view the Soviet version of modernization as entirely applicable to Iraq’s situation. As such, as Yaqub adds, he made sure to “keep the Soviets at arm’s length.” Qasim’s disappointment with Soviet economic aid, in combination with his initiative in late 1959 to incrementally improve US-Iraqi economic ties, worked to reassure nervous

Miles, Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs) to Department of State, #155 – Soviet Assistance for Smallpox Eradication Campaign and Mosul Medical College, 9 September 1959, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 15.

¹²²⁹ Operations Coordinating Board – Weekly Activity Report, 5 December 1960, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – OCB Secretariat Series, Box 11, DDEL (quote); From Baghdad (Holmes), Participant Program, 9 August 1959, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 10.

¹²³⁰ From Baghdad (John Miles, Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs) to Department of State, #250 – Economic Development Activities, 8 November 1958, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 11.

policymakers in Washington.¹²³¹ In addition, analyses of the relative failures of Soviet development efforts revived a sense of optimism for the Americans regarding their role in Iraq's modernization project.

The Americans first predicted the troubles that lay ahead for Moscow shortly after the announcement of the March 1959 economic agreement. State Department commentary on the deal insisted there was “no convincing evidence” the proposed projects were “economically sound.” Ambassador Jernegan also reminded Foggy Bottom that the Soviets could not satisfy all Iraqi requests for assistance. In the “longer run,” Jernegan explained, the “Communists may get blame for [the] expected debacle” in Qasim's expansive program.¹²³² The Iraqi leadership also helped assuage the Americans' fears, insisting they did not intend to become a Soviet satellite.¹²³³

American predictions on this matter proved prescient. One US diplomat argued in the fall of 1959 that a “re-evaluation of East bloc economic blandishments” was underway. Disillusionment, he believed, was fueled by excessive propaganda that heightened popular expectations for Soviet aid to unrealistic levels.¹²³⁴ The British

¹²³¹ Salim Yaqub, *Containing Arab Nationalism: The Eisenhower Doctrine and the Middle East* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 262 (quote); Charles Tripp, *A History of Iraq* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 158; Wolfe-Hunnicut, “The End of the Concessionary Regime,” p. 59.

¹²³² From RME/NE – Mr. Herbert Gordon to INR – Mr. Hugh S. Cumming, Jr. – Notes on the Soviet – Iraq Economic Agreement, 25 March 1959, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs - Office of Near Eastern Affairs - Records of Iraq-Jordan Affairs Desk, 1959-1964, Box 1 (first quote); From Baghdad (Jernegan) to Secretary of State, #2668, 17 March 1959, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 11 (second quote).

¹²³³ From Thompson, #6127, 28 March 1959, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 28.

¹²³⁴ From Baghdad (John Miles, Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs) to Department of State, #182 – Weekly Economic Review, August 24-30 1959, 3 September 1959, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 11; From Baghdad (John Miles, Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs) to Department of State, #155 – Soviet Assistance for Smallpox Eradication Campaign and Mosul Medical College, 9 September 1959, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 15; From NEA – G. Lewis Jones to The Under Secretary, 23 September 1959, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs - Office of Near Eastern Affairs - Records of Iraq-Jordan Affairs Desk, 1959-1964, Box 1.

diplomatic corps detected similar trends. They believed local disappointment with East bloc assistance was on the rise since the March 1959 agreement produced few tangible results.¹²³⁵ Similarly, the American consul in Basra reported that Soviet doctors had little discernible impact on area health initiatives owing in large part to their purported incompetence. In fact, those Iraqi doctors who previously trained in Western medical methods were allegedly “very critical of the Russians.”¹²³⁶

These trends continued through the final year of the Eisenhower presidency. One embassy staffer suggested in January 1960 that Iraqi complaints about Soviet construction equipment were now commonplace. Moscow’s assistance programs, he insisted, were beginning to lose their “luster.” The OCB attributed the failings of the Soviet modernization campaign in part to the fact that it was hastily assembled and “lacking in adequate planning.”¹²³⁷ British diplomats received word in April that several Soviet professors contracted to Mosul and Baghdad medical colleges would not have their contracts renewed. US observers confidently asserted, in turn, that the “Soviet medical program in Iraq is a complete and acknowledged failure.”¹²³⁸

¹²³⁵ Sir Humphrey Trevelyan to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd – An Analysis of Iraq’s Relations with the East and West from the 1958 Revolution Up to October 7 1959, #120 – EQ1021/23, 22 October 1959, FO481-13, BNA.

¹²³⁶ From Amconsul Basra (John A. Billings, American Consul), #40 - Russian Activities in Basra and Fao, 10 November 1959, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 33.

¹²³⁷ From AmEmbassy Baghdad (James Placke, Economic Officer) to Department of State, #629 – Weekly Economic Review – January 3-9, 1960 – No. 2, 23 January 1960, Confidential US State Department Central Files: Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1960-January 1963 [Hereby referred to as Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1960-January 1963], Reel 6 (first quote); Operations Coordinating Board – Operational Plans for Iraq, 9 March 1960, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 - Administrative and Chronological Files 1953-1961, Box 26 (second quote).

¹²³⁸ From AmEmbassy Baghdad (John Miles, Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs) to Department of State, #1265 – Bi-Weekly Economic Review – June 3-16, 1960 – No. 5, 24 June 1960, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1960-January 1963, Reel 6 (quote); From Denis E. Frean, Representative, British Council in Iraq – Representative’s Annual Report 1959-1960, 30 April 1960, FO924-1358, BNA.

Even Mikoyan's much anticipated visit to Iraq in April 1960 proved disappointing in the long-term. US officials shared rumors that Mikoyan "assiduously lectured Iraqi escorts on how to manage and develop Iraq."¹²³⁹ Other elements of Mikoyan's aid package that once suggested the strengthening of Soviet-Iraqi ties, like the loan for the Baghdad-Basra railway, in retrospect indicated the opposite. The CIA believed the Soviets extended the loan in the hopes it would "arrest the slow decline in Soviet-Iraqi relations resulting from the Qasim regime's series of anti-Communist measures and signs that Baghdad would like to improve its relations with the West."¹²⁴⁰ American analyses from the summer and fall confirmed their suspicions. Reviewing the situation in June 1960, the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations concluded that the "Soviet experiment in Iraq has fared badly. Its aid program has not impressed the Iraqis."¹²⁴¹ The Operations Coordinating Board and intelligence community identified the same general trends. They noted in late 1960 that only a small percentage of Moscow's credit had been utilized. More broadly, signs were becomingly increasingly evident in Iraq of "public and official disenchantment with Soviet Bloc economic and technical assistance activities."¹²⁴²

By the time President Eisenhower departed from office, Point IV confidently asserted that the vast majority of Soviet technicians in Iraq were "very unpopular."¹²⁴³

¹²³⁹ From Jernegan to SecState Washington, #2217, 19 April 1960, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 28.

¹²⁴⁰ CIA Office of Current Intelligence, "Current Intelligence Weekly Summary – 2 June 1960," February 27 2010. CIA-RDP79-00927A002700100001-3, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST).

¹²⁴¹ *Staff Study, United States Foreign Policy – Middle East*, US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations (Washington, 1960), 49.

¹²⁴² Only seven of the twenty-five projects outlined in the March 1959 agreement were underway one full year later. See #223 - Paper Prepared by the Operations Coordinating Board – Operations Plan for Iraq, 14 December 1960, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 525 (quote); Operations Coordinating Board – Operational Plans for Iraq, 9 March 1960, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 - Administrative and Chronological Files 1953-1961, Box 26; NIE 36.2-60 – The Outlook for Iraq, 1 November 1960, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 521.

¹²⁴³ William Carson, Training Officer in Iraq – ICA Non-Technician Interview, 1 March 1961, NARA, RG 59, Records of the Policy Planning Council - Subject Files, 1954-1962, Box 141.

This did not mean the agency could reassume its former authoritative role in Baghdad. One Point IV commentator reminded the State Department that the United States would be just as unpopular as the Soviets in Iraq if they deployed the same size technical staff as Moscow.¹²⁴⁴ Even so, the Americans' worst fears about the Soviet Union's role in Iraq's development arena did not materialize. Moscow was unable to dramatically capitalize on the opportunity afforded to them by the virtual exodus of Point IV. Indeed, as the Senate Committee concluded, Soviet technicians "have not filled the vacuum left by departing Westerners."¹²⁴⁵ American officials by January 1961 could safely conclude that the superpower competition in Iraq between their respective technical assistance efforts produced a draw.

The Iraqi Development Program under Qasim

The Soviet Union was not the only competitor the United States faced in the Iraqi development sector. Qasim's government focused its modernizing energies in different directions from those of the monarchical regime and the United States. The frustration American observers felt watching their Point IV program slowly "die on the vine" was tempered by their conclusion that Iraq's development experiments were faring poorly. As with the Soviet case study, the troubles the Iraqis experienced with their programs reassured US officials that American-directed modernization was the only solution to Iraq's problems. The Iraqis, in their view, could not design and execute a rational, efficient, and successful economic development scheme without substantial American input and tutelage. For US officials, Qasim's modernization efforts were not running on

¹²⁴⁴ William Carson, Training Officer in Iraq – ICA Non-Technician Interview, 1 March 1961, NARA, RG 59, Records of the Policy Planning Council - Subject Files, 1954-1962, Box 141.

¹²⁴⁵ *Staff Study, United States Foreign Policy – Middle East*, p. 49.

a parallel track with American-style modernization processes. Rather, they were heading in the opposite direction.

The modernization programs of the monarchical order were detailed in Chapter Four. In sum, the Iraqis before July 1958 devoted large portions of their oil revenues to an expansive development program in a failed attempt to stabilize the government and ruling class. Despite the obvious limitations of these initiatives, the Americans' objective for Middle East modernization remained relatively consistent. Washington policymakers emphasized, as before the revolution, gradual, controlled reforms to safeguard the "stability" of pro-Western governments in the Middle East. US policy, as the OCB characterized it, was to facilitate the political, economic, and social development of the region to "promote stable governments...."¹²⁴⁶ The NSC likewise argued in June 1960 that Washington must work to influence the pace of societal change to ensure "orderly progress in the area."¹²⁴⁷ As before the revolution, of course, US diplomats associated "orderly" and "stable" political and economic developments specifically with American-directed and approved models of reform.

The new government in Baghdad pursued a dramatically different strategy for modernization than its predecessor. American and British officials were disappointed to learn shortly after Qasim's accession to power that the IDB would no longer resemble the institution that proved so vital to economic planning during the monarchical order.

Former members of the IDB, including the US and UK representatives, were replaced by

¹²⁴⁶ Operations Coordinating Board – Operational Guidance Concerning Iraq, 18 February 1959, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 - Administrative and Chronological Files 1953-1961, Box 25; Operations Coordinating Board – Operational Plans for Iraq, 9 March 1960, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 - Administrative and Chronological Files 1953-1961, Box 26.

¹²⁴⁷ NSC 6011 – National Security Council – US Policy Toward the Near East, 17 June 1960, NARA, RG 273, Policy Papers, Box 52.

an exclusively Iraqi Council of Ministers. The new group immediately put an emphasis on human capital programs by diverting funds originally earmarked for irrigation and capital works projects.¹²⁴⁸ As the introduction to Part II described, Qasim's cabinet recorded a number of important achievements in this realm. These included expanding legal protection for workers, vastly improving the education system, and devoting greater resources to housing for lower class citizens.

As Romero correctly notes, "it was in the field of agriculture that the new regime took the boldest action to achieve fundamental change in Iraqi society." The Agrarian Reform Law [ARL] of 30 September 1958 struck a decisive blow against large landowners and represented the triumph of radical over gradual reform in the countryside.¹²⁴⁹ The law capped landholdings at a maximum of 2000 dunams¹²⁵⁰, with excess land redistributed in small parcels to peasants. Peasants would, in turn, pay the government back at a low interest rate over twenty years. The owners of the now-sequestered lands received government bonds as compensation.¹²⁵¹ To be sure, administrative and legal delays hampered the process of land requisition and distribution. Even so, the broader move towards a "more egalitarian distribution of land"

¹²⁴⁸ From Washington (Lord Hood) to Foreign Office, #408, 27 July 1958, FO371-134225, BNA; From Foreign Office (D.A.H. Wright) to Sir Maurice Adams, Civil Engineering Chief, Admiralty, Pinner Middlesex, 30 August 1958, FO371-134225, BNA; CIA Office of Current Intelligence, "Current Intelligence Weekly Summary – 7 August 1958," February 27 2010. CIA-RDP79-00927A001800100001-3, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST); From AmEmbassy Baghdad (John Miles, Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs) to Department of State, #250 –Economic Development Activities, 8 November 1958, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 22;

¹²⁴⁹ Romero, "The Iraqi Revolution of 1958 and the Search for Security in the Middle East," p. 206 (quote); Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, p. 150; Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, p. 98.

¹²⁵⁰ One dunam is equivalent to 0.62 of an acre.

¹²⁵¹ From Baghdad (John Miles, Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs) to Department of State, #192 – Weekly Economic Review, September 29 – October 5 1958, 9 October 1958, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 11; Romero, "The Iraqi Revolution of 1958 and the Search for Security in the Middle East," p. 208; Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, p. 98; Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*, p. 837; Abbas Alnasrawi, *The Economy of Iraq: Oil, Wars, and Destruction of Development and Prospects, 1950-2010* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1994), 40.

continued.¹²⁵² Adeed Dawisha calculates that nearly three million acres of land were seized by the government, “of which by the end of 1963 over a million had been distributed to hitherto landless peasants, and the rest leased by the government to peasant families.” “For all intents and purposes,” Dawisha concludes, “the agrarian Reform Law put an end to the immense economic and political power of the tribal sheikhs that had gone virtually unchallenged under the monarchy.”¹²⁵³

The administration’s achievements in these arenas were tempered by the deterioration of economic conditions. The embassy offered an early warning in August 1958 about the approaching economic malaise. They believed the general “paralysis” in national development activities portended “possible serious economic difficulties in the future.”¹²⁵⁴ As expected, the economy limped along through late 1958 and into the new year. US analysts suggested that IPC royalty payments were the only thing saving the government from bankruptcy by the summer of 1959.¹²⁵⁵ A year later, the OCB concluded its “Operational Plans for Iraq” draft by describing the “virtual stagnation of Iraq’s economy.”¹²⁵⁶

¹²⁵² Alnasrawi, *The Economy of Iraq*, p. 42 (quote); Adeed Dawisha, *Iraq: A Political History from Independence to Occupation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 180-181.

¹²⁵³ Dawisha, *Iraq*, p. 181.

¹²⁵⁴ From Baghdad to Department of State, #99 – Weekly Economic Review August 18-24 1958, 25 August 1958, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 11.

¹²⁵⁵ From AmEmbassy Baghdad to Department of State, #657 – Weekly Economic Review April 6-12 1959, 15 April 1959, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 11; CIA Office of Current Intelligence, “Current Intelligence Weekly Summary – 3 September 1959,” February 27 2010. CIA-RDP79-00927A002400050001-2, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST); From Baghdad to Department of State, #389 – Weekly Economic Review October 26-November 1 1959, 7 November 1959, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 11.

¹²⁵⁶ Operations Coordinating Board – Operational Plans for Iraq, 9 March 1960, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 - Administrative and Chronological Files 1953-1961, Box 26; #223 - Paper Prepared by the Operations Coordinating Board – Operations Plan for Iraq, 14 December 1960, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 525.

There were multiple symptoms of Iraq's economic distress. Labour productivity quickly declined while inflation jumped dramatically in the years after the revolution.¹²⁵⁷ High unemployment rates, at times setting national records, also plagued the ruling leadership in Baghdad. Agricultural production fell alongside these trends, and projects first approved by the IDB slowed to a crawl in the years after July 1958.¹²⁵⁸ The economic crises facing the Iraqis were not entirely of their own making. In 1959 and 1960, for instance, a vicious drought hammered the already-suffering agricultural industry.¹²⁵⁹ Even so, American observers overwhelmingly blamed Qasim's government for the ongoing economic instability. Before the revolution, Point IV and US government authorities relied on modernization theory as an analytical framework with which to understand and promote their role in modernizing Iraqi society. After Qasim assumed power, those same officials redeployed the language and tenets of modernization theory to criticize Qasim's efforts. American observers were, if only implicitly, drawing comparisons between the supposedly farsighted development programs of the monarchy and the irrational, flawed plans and priorities of the Iraqi Republic. Commentary on Qasim's development efforts also offered them a way to

¹²⁵⁷ #199 - Telegram from the Embassy in Iraq (Jernegan) to the Department of State, 9 August 1959, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 476 (quote); From Baghdad (John Miles, Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs) to Department of State, #192 - Weekly Economic Review, September 29 - October 5 1958, 9 October 1958, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 11; CIA Office of Current Intelligence, "Current Intelligence Weekly Summary - 3 September 1959," February 27 2010. CIA-RDP79-00927A002400050001-2, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST).

¹²⁵⁸ From 1957 to 1963, the total output of wheat, barley, and rice crops "declined from 2.5 million tons to 1.4 million tons respectively." See Alnasrawi, *The Economy of Iraq*, p. 41 (quote); Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, p. 99; From Baghdad to Department of State, #418 - Weekly Economic Review January 5-January 11 1959, 16 January 1959, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 11; From Jernegan to SecState Washington, #764, 8 September 1959, NARA, RG 84, Iraq - Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 30.

¹²⁵⁹ Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*, p. 955; Operations Coordinating Board - Operational Plans for Iraq, 9 March 1960, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 - Administrative and Chronological Files 1953-1961, Box 26; NIE 36.2-60 - The Outlook for Iraq, 1 November 1960, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 521.

condemn the Iraqis for pursuing modernization works without significant American input. The Iraqi regime, in American assessments, pursued an incorrect form of modernity after July 1958.

The Americans were deeply concerned about the pace and tenor of changes ongoing in Iraq after the revolution. As with the emergence of the Soviet Union in Iraq's economy, the appearance of Egyptian technical experts in Baghdad frightened American observers. Though Qasim expelled many of the advisors in the spring of 1959, the period between July 1958 and April 1959 led US officials to conclude the Iraqis were pursuing a brand of modernity directly imported from Gamal Abdel Nasser. The Americans attributed the beginning of large-scale, radical land reform programs to Egyptian influence in Baghdad. The embassy was also frustrated by the news that Egyptian experts would assist the Ministry of Development in well drilling operations, a function previously served by Point IV.¹²⁶⁰ The arrival of Egyptians to help with education reforms also coincided with the departure of USOM technicians.¹²⁶¹ In this sense, it was particularly galling to US officials that Qasim had the audacity to choose Egyptian models of economic development over those promoted by the United States.

US analysts believed Iraq was encountering what was later called the problem of “rising expectations” in underdeveloped nations. Ray Davis of Point IV felt the new regime over-extended itself in its promises to improve the public's welfare. In turn, he

¹²⁶⁰ CIA Office of Current Intelligence, “Current Intelligence Weekly Summary – 7 August 1958,” February 27 2010. CIA-RDP79-00927A001800100001-3, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST); From Baghdad (John Miles, Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs) to Department of State, #169 – Weekly Economic Review, September 15-21 1958, 24 September 1958, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 11.

¹²⁶¹ From Frank L. Holmes, Ph.D., Chief Education Advisor, United States Operations Mission to Iraq, Baghdad – Terminal Report, 1 November 1958, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 11; From AmEmbassy Baghdad (John Miles, Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs) to Department of State, #250 –Economic Development Activities, 8 November 1958, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 22.

believed, citizens harbored unrealistic expectations about the benefits they would enjoy from the revolution.¹²⁶² These pressures from below required the regime to devote a great deal of energy and resources to projects American officials undervalued. One embassy official concluded that Qasim chose to whet the public's appetite for social programs to "compensate for the disruption of established patterns by ineptly-handled reforms."¹²⁶³ US officials viewed the regime's commitment to housing reforms and other social welfare projects not as a matter of principle, but rather one of "political expediency." More than that, these expensive social capital projects, in their view, seriously restricted "long term development and economic recovery."¹²⁶⁴

Analysts chastised the new regime for pandering to and coddling the labour force. Embassy staff attributed the decline in labour productivity to the purported sense of entitlement among Iraqi workers. "This drop is due mainly to labor's feeling," the embassy argued, "that the revolution ought to bring them immediate benefits – just what benefits they are not sure – and that hard work is a thing of the past."¹²⁶⁵ American diplomats likewise condemned the Ministry of Social Affairs' decision in August 1958 to essentially prevent foreign contractors from firing Iraqi employees without permission from the director general of labor. One year later, the embassy wrote scathing cables

¹²⁶² From Ray E. Davis, Food and Agriculture Officer – Status of Agriculture Program in Iraq, 2 October 1958, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 3.

¹²⁶³ From Baghdad (John Miles, Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs) to Department of State, #285 – Weekly Economic Review, September 28 – October 4 1959, 10 October 1959, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 11.

¹²⁶⁴ From Baghdad (John Miles, Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs) to Department of State, #250 – Economic Development Activities, 8 November 1958, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 11 (first quote); From Baghdad (John Miles, Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs) to Department of State, #285 – Weekly Economic Review, September 28 – October 4 1959, 10 October 1959, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 11 (second quote).

¹²⁶⁵ From Baghdad to Department of State, #99 – Weekly Economic Review August 18-24 1958, 25 August 1958, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 11.

accusing the government of “indulging labor” by maintaining a “high rate of redundancy” in government jobs to artificially inflate employment statistics.¹²⁶⁶

The Agrarian Reform Law became a popular target for American frustrations given Washington’s obsession with gradual, controlled reforms. Many US officials felt the ARL was a hastily planned scheme that fomented chaos. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee concluded that the disorganization of agriculture was intimately linked with efforts to “apply land reform too quickly and without adequate preparation.”¹²⁶⁷ The OCB criticized central authorities in Baghdad, particularly Qasim, for failing to define agricultural objectives in “terms of realizable economic programs.” The OCB also pointed to the “disruptive effects of the Agrarian Reform Law” as a critical factor underlying the stagnation of the economy.¹²⁶⁸ Observers at the US embassy shared these views. John Miles insisted that “administratively bungled agrarian reform” invited disorganization and disaster on the countryside. Another colleague characterized the ARL as “irrational,” “unwise,” and “ill-timed and uncoordinated.”¹²⁶⁹

American analysts also assessed changes ongoing in the Iraqi Republic from a macro-level perspective. Before July 1958, analysts relied on modernization theory’s large-scale, structural modes of analysis to chart Iraq’s transition along the historical

¹²⁶⁶ From Baghdad to Department of State, #99 – Weekly Economic Review August 18-24 1958, 25 August 1958, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 11; From AmEmbassy Baghdad to Department of State, #657 – Weekly Economic Review April 6-12 1959, 15 April 1959, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 11.

¹²⁶⁷ *Staff Study, United States Foreign Policy – Middle East*, p. 19.

¹²⁶⁸ #223 - Paper Prepared by the Operations Coordinating Board – Operations Plan for Iraq, 14 December 1960, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 529 (first quote); Operations Coordinating Board – Operational Plans for Iraq, 9 March 1960, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 - Administrative and Chronological Files 1953-1961, Box 26 (second quote).

¹²⁶⁹ From AmEmbassy Baghdad (John Miles, Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs) to Department of State, #954 –1960 Crop Estimates, 9 April 1960, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1960-January 1963, Reel 9 (first quote); Laurent Morin, Second Secretary of Embassy) to Department of State, #623 –Bi-Weekly Economic Review – November 19 1960 – No.7, 19 November 1960, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1960-January 1963, Reel 6 (second quote).

pendulum toward modernity.¹²⁷⁰ These ways of thinking shaped American assessments following the revolution. Observers argued that Iraq's deficiencies in various macro-level economic characteristics were partly responsible for its failure to achieve modernization through alternate modes of development.

The Americans privileged the presence of what they viewed as forward-thinking, rational planning in economic development. In their view, this had been one of the greatest assets of Nuri al-Said's cabinets and the IDB. Conversely, Ambassador Waldemar Gallman argued in October 1958 that much of the new government's legislation pertaining to labor and crop sharing was "ill-conceived and hastily drafted." Embassy staffers ridiculed the government's Four Year Development Plan in early 1960 as a "preposterous" scheme produced solely for propaganda purposes.¹²⁷¹ The Senate Foreign Relations Committee similarly derided Qasim's development program as "a mess." Deploying highly gendered language, the committee insisted that the government was "utterly lacking in drive and muscle."¹²⁷² American officials believed the Iraqis were unable to comprehend the root causes of their economic peril. Whereas Iraqi administrators blamed the paucity of government funds for their troubles, the CIA focused on the dearth of forward-thinking, rational modernization initiatives. John Miles

¹²⁷⁰ For example, see Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East* (London: The Free Press, 1958), 43-75 for an excellent example of "macro-level" structural analysis of factors like social mobility, mass media, and literacy in modernization processes.

¹²⁷¹ From Gallman, #1477, 14 October 1958, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 21 (first quote); From AmEmbassy Baghdad (James Placke, Economic Officer) to Department of State, #629 – Weekly Economic Review – January 3-9, 1960 – No. 2, 23 January 1960, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1960-January 1963, Reel 6 (second quote).

¹²⁷² *Staff Study, United States Foreign Policy – Middle East*, p. 19.

of the embassy concurred, condemning the regime for its “even more basic and tragic lack of the most rudimentary concepts of economic planning.”¹²⁷³

The general weakness and inefficiency of the Iraqi state bureaucracy further hampered development efforts. On this issue, there was certainly an element of legitimacy to American criticisms of Iraqi development plans. Historians like Brandon Wolfe-Hunnicut, Phebe Marr, and Charles Tripp have emphasized the poor performance of the Iraqi civil service in their assessments of Qasim’s economic initiatives.¹²⁷⁴ These criticisms were thus not solely a function of American arrogance. The US embassy argued at the time that the absence of effective state machinery compounded the difficulties of distributing land requisitioned under the ARL. American officials also regularly complained about the administrative confusion sown by ongoing purges of the civil service.¹²⁷⁵ The formation of a host of brand-new administrative agencies added to these problems. Embassy staffers remained bitter about the forced dissolution of the IDB. They felt the new Iraqi Council of Ministers lacked adequate decision-making authority that slowed the progress of projects.¹²⁷⁶

Scholars of Iraqi history have also viewed the paucity of trained technicians and administrators as another of the roadblocks preventing Baghdad from registering greater

¹²⁷³ From AmEmbassy Baghdad (John Miles, Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs) to Department of State, #33 – Bi-Weekly Economic Review – June 17-30, 1960 – No. 6, 9 July 1960, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1960-January 1963, Reel 6 (quote); CIA Office of National Estimates – The Outlook for Iraq, 22 September 1960, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL.

¹²⁷⁴ Wolfe-Hunnicut, “The End of the Concessionary Regime,” p. 66-67; Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, p. 83, 99; Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, p. 150.

¹²⁷⁵ From Baghdad (John Miles, Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs) to Department of State, #192 – Weekly Economic Review, September 29 – October 5 1958, 9 October 1958, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 11; From Gallman, #1477, 14 October 1958, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 21; #199 - Telegram from the Embassy in Iraq (Jernegan) to the Department of State, 9 August 1959, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 476.

¹²⁷⁶ From Baghdad to Department of State, #389 – Weekly Economic Review October 26-November 1 1959, 7 November 1959, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 11.

achievements in the economic realm.¹²⁷⁷ Even if the Americans' criticisms on this front were not entirely unreasonable, the stridency of their analyses remains striking.

American commentary on these “structural deficiencies” was inherently political. It was the product, to a great extent, of recent events in Baghdad, particularly the dismissal of Point IV advisors from positions of authority in the Iraqi government. American assessments were also heavily influenced by the precepts of modernization theory that placed a premium on trained, skilled citizens capable of leading an underdeveloped nation along the path to modernity. In their writings, American officials were directly challenging the larger process of Iraqification that underlay Qasim's policies.

The embassy wasted little time jumping to conclusions about the capabilities of the civil service. In October 1958, embassy staffers dismissively commented on the shortage of qualified technicians capable of executing Qasim's projects. If Iraq did not quickly develop its own cadre of trained administrators, Point IV warned, their agricultural education programs would lose momentum and relevancy.¹²⁷⁸ Referring to the emerging trend of Iraqification of national economic efforts, John Miles similarly felt the government was in denial about the competence of its workforce.¹²⁷⁹ Miles again

¹²⁷⁷ Romero, “The Iraqi Revolution of 1958 and the Search for Security in the Middle East,” p. 210-211; Alnasrawi, *The Economy of Iraq*, p. 42-43.

¹²⁷⁸ From Baghdad (John Miles, Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs) to Department of State, #183 – Economic Development Policy, 4 October 1958, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 11; From J.H. Lintner – Report on Agricultural Education - Terminal Report, 1 November 1958, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 11.

¹²⁷⁹ From AmEmbassy Baghdad (John Miles, Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs) to Department of State, #250 –Economic Development Activities, 8 November 1958, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 22; From AmEmbassy Baghdad (John Miles, Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs) to Department of State, #903 –Weekly Economic Review – March 7-13, 14-20, 1960 – No.11 and 12, 26 March 1960, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1960-January 1963, Reel 6.

insisted in April 1959 that an effective medical program could not begin until Iraq produced the requisite number of trained doctors, technicians, and nurses.¹²⁸⁰

US observers believed the Iraqis were defiantly rejecting American-style modernization in favour of their own national variation. On the one hand, Iraq's drift away from American development assistance disappointed and angered them. US officials linked Iraq's rejection of American technical advice to the popular zeitgeist of anti-colonialism and anti-Americanism stirred up by the revolution. The US embassy complained that supervision of Iraqi labourers by American technicians was "impossible" in the weeks following the monarchy's overthrow.¹²⁸¹ John Miles added in November that Western technicians could no longer operate in the top echelons of the Ministry of Development due to popular suspicions of Western "meddling" in Baghdad's economic affairs.¹²⁸² US officials had trouble hiding their frustration with these realities as time went on. John Miles argued in late 1959 that the termination of Point IV's programs resulted in a "continuous attrition in technical and managerial skills..." Iraq, Miles insisted, could not "effectively carry out its own program of purchasing equipment in the international market" or even conduct the "ordinary functions of government..."¹²⁸³

¹²⁸⁰ From AmEmbassy Baghdad (John Miles, Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs) to Department of State, #672 – Nationalization of Health Services in Iraq, 18 April 1959, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 15; From Baghdad (Jernegan) to Secretary of State, #2668, 17 March 1959, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 11.

¹²⁸¹ From Baghdad to Department of State, #99 – Weekly Economic Review August 18-24 1958, 25 August 1958, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 11.

¹²⁸² From AmEmbassy Baghdad (John Miles, Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs) to Department of State, #250 – Economic Development Activities, 8 November 1958, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 22.

¹²⁸³ From Baghdad (John Miles, Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs) to Department of State, #373 – Weekly Economic Review, October 19-25 1959, 31 October 1959, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 11 (quote); From Baghdad to Department of State, #446 – Weekly Economic Review, November 9-15, 16-22 1959, 28 November 1959, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 11.

US observers were particularly frustrated since they felt confident they possessed the solution to Iraq's problems. All the Iraqis had to do was request their help. Baghdad's modernization troubles could be remedied, they believed, if Qasim crafted an "apolitical," rational development project devised along lines acceptable to American administrators. As Chapter Four explained, the powerful belief (quite obviously misguided) in the apolitical nature of US development assistance lay at the very core of American modernization theory. The US embassy argued, in the midst of revolutionary upheaval, that the Iraqis were in desperate need of an "apolitical economic planning instrumentality." Embassy officials were eager to assume an integral role in Baghdad's development programs since Iraq needed "sound impartial industrial advice." "But at the moment," staffers despaired, "nationalist enthusiasms and the desire to avoid anything that smacks of paternalism or meddling makes it impossible for it to be accepted from the West..."¹²⁸⁴ Point IV representatives similarly criticized Qasim's stubborn refusal to acknowledge that direct American technical assistance was in Iraq's best interests. William Carson, one of the USOM training officers, believed the agency could safely steer Baghdad away from Soviet models of development if only the Iraqis would seek help in devising a "non-political" and "sound economic development program."¹²⁸⁵

Though disappointed and frustrated by Iraq's obstinacy, American observers managed to find silver linings in their experiences. Forcefully sidelined by the Iraqis,

¹²⁸⁴ From Baghdad (John Miles, Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs) to Department of State, #250 – Economic Development Activities, 8 November 1958, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 11.

¹²⁸⁵ William Carson, Training Officer in Iraq – ICA Non-Technician Interview, 1 March 1961, NARA, RG 59, Records of the Policy Planning Council - Subject Files, 1954-1962, Box 141 (quote); Memorandum of Conversation – ICA/NESA – William C. Ide, Chief of Near East and South Asia Program Office, ICA/NESA – Charles Wright (Training) – ICA Program in Iraq, 8 August 1960, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs - Office of Near Eastern Affairs - Records of Iraq-Jordan Affairs Desk, 1959-1964, Box 1.

observers found reassurance and comfort in the realization that Qasim's development efforts could not succeed without substantive American participation and advice. In their view, Iraq's attempts to attain modernity through non-traditional [read: non-American] paths was doomed to failure. The relative absence of American-style development methods in Iraq after July 1958 strengthened their confidence that their processes and models of economic modernization were the only viable path to modernity.

John Miles, for his part, believed his colleagues should be sympathetic to the "legitimate aspirations of Iraqis to guide their own destiny." He also reassured his superiors at the State Department that Iraq's termination of Point IV programs would ultimately haunt the leaders in Baghdad, as "[s]trict adherence to a policy of employing a minimum of foreign engineers could greatly prolong the completion of existing and planned projects."¹²⁸⁶ Frank Holmes, Point IV's chief education advisor in Iraq, agreed that Qasim's program of technical education would be "worthless" without his agency's active participation.¹²⁸⁷ Ambassador Jernegan starkly observed in March 1959 that Baghdad's development efforts were "too large and varied to succeed without Western participation."¹²⁸⁸ Later that fall, US embassy staffers had fun at the Qasim regime's expense, commenting derisively on the leadership's naïve conviction that Iraq would shortly be "completely transformed by the new program into a modern industrial society." Qasim's statements, the embassy decided, were starkly lacking in realism since the country was "confronted by all the traditional problems of an underdeveloped

¹²⁸⁶ From Baghdad (John Miles, Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs) to Department of State, #183 – Economic Development Policy, 4 October 1958, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 11.

¹²⁸⁷ From Frank L. Holmes, Ph.D., Chief Education Advisor, United States Operations Mission to Iraq, Baghdad – Terminal Report, 1 November 1958, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 11.

¹²⁸⁸ From Baghdad (Jernegan) to Secretary of State, #2668, 17 March 1959, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 11.

country, except lack of capital.” The continuing reluctance of Iraqis to permit Western technicians to play a greater role remained the major roadblock, in their view, in addressing the country’s technical and managerial deficiencies.¹²⁸⁹ The OCB, writing with greater caution, nevertheless agreed that Qasim’s failure to “define objectives in terms of realizable economic programs,” or rather ones approved by American experts, was one of the primary factors producing chaos in the country’s economic arena.¹²⁹⁰

American observers also found reassurance in their paternalistic assessment that the Iraqi regime was in the midst of fulfilling one of the critical processes of the modernization experience: the realization that their independent development efforts were doomed to failure. In their view, Washington had to show patience while Iraq underwent this complicated learning process. Soon enough, the Iraqis would beg the Americans for help. Ray Davis wrote that “[c]ountries like this at times must make mistakes, and if by doing so a real need for US help is recognized, then a stronger foundation for effective future work will exist.”¹²⁹¹ The benefit of a limited American presence in Iraqi modernization projects, the embassy concluded, was that Baghdad could no longer rationalize all development failures as the product of imperialist intrigue.¹²⁹² No one was more confident about their reading of the situation than John Miles. He described the situation in Baghdad in terms of observable, clearly defined, procedural stages of economic growth. By October 1959, the regime was floundering in the second stage of the educational process: the introduction to the complexities of commercial

¹²⁸⁹ From Baghdad to DOS, #446 – Weekly Economic Review, November 9-15, 16-22 1959, 28 November 1959, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 11.

¹²⁹⁰ #223 - Paper Prepared by the Operations Coordinating Board – Operations Plan for Iraq, 14 December 1960, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 529.

¹²⁹¹ From Ray E. Davis, Food and Agriculture Officer – Status of Agriculture Program in Iraq, 2 October 1958, NARA, RG 469, Mission to Iraq – Office of the Director – Subject Files, 1951-1958, Box 3.

¹²⁹² From Baghdad to Department of State, #418 – Weekly Economic Review January 5-January 11 1959, 21 January 1959, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 11.

affairs. Once the regime learned its lesson about the importance of planning to the procurement of industrial technologies and equipment, Miles assured the State Department, then “a new wave of frustration and near panic can be expected to seize GOI officials.”¹²⁹³ Miles’ assessments represented the underlying paternalism of US officials charting economic developments in Iraq, as well as their consensus that active American assistance was the only solution to Baghdad’s ills.

The US ambassador to Iraq, John Jernegan, vividly captured the fascinating mixture of frustration and reassurance that animated many American officials. Jernegan drafted an impassioned cable to the State Department defending Point IV’s work shortly after President Eisenhower left office. His letter clearly showed that the US embassy and agency staff had strongly imbibed the tenets of modernization theory. Jernegan predicted disaster for the Iraqi economy if Point IV withdrew completely. As Jernegan wrote, “Iraq does not have the technical foundation or the administrative capacity to manage its current affairs properly, much less to reach the point of ‘take off’ which Professor Rostow has laid down as the objective of any economic development aid program.” Jernegan believed Point IV should continue its small assistance program in light of these depressing realities.¹²⁹⁴ Without American assistance to the Iraqis and other “backward peoples of the world,” Iraq would never “be able to produce a proper economic plan or

¹²⁹³ From Baghdad (John Miles, Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs) to Department of State, #373 – Weekly Economic Review, October 19-25 1959, 31 October 1959, Iraq - Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1955-1959, Reel 11.

¹²⁹⁴ From American Embassy Baghdad (John D. Jernegan) to Robert C. Strong, Esquire, Director, Office of Near Eastern Affairs, 25 October 1961, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs - Office of Near Eastern Affairs - Records of Iraq-Jordan Affairs Desk, 1959-1964, Box 2.

handle a significant economic development program.” “Outside help,” he assured his readers, was the only remedy for the sorry state of Iraq’s economic affairs.¹²⁹⁵

Conclusion

On a parallel track with petroleum developments, American officials grew frustrated by their tense, unproductive relationship with Iraq in the development field. American companies contracted by the regime to work on modernization projects struggled to adapt to the often hostile, volatile business environment in Iraq after July 1958. Qasim’s decision to restrict Point IV’s programs at the same time Soviet and Egyptian technical experts poured into the country proved galling to American observers. Baghdad’s development priorities, including its emphasis on social and human capital projects, also confounded US officials. The Agrarian Reform Law earned particular ire from US officials for its purportedly irrational and hastily executed plans for land redistribution.

US observers exhibited paternalistic, dismissive attitudes towards Iraq’s development models that differed from those of American practices. The tenets of modernization theory were of critical importance to shaping American attitudes. Even after the withdrawal of the vast majority of American technical assistance advisors, modernization theory continued to serve as a vital lens through which US observers understood ongoing developments in Iraq. Officials exhibited two types of responses (at times overlapping) to Iraq’s modernization schemes. In many instances, Point IV and US government officials were disappointed and angered by the diminution of American

¹²⁹⁵ From American Embassy Baghdad (John D. Jernegan) to Robert C. Strong, Esquire, Director, Office of Near Eastern Affairs, 25 October 1961, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs - Office of Near Eastern Affairs - Records of Iraq-Jordan Affairs Desk, 1959-1964, Box 2.

power and control over US assets and modernization processes in Iraq. On the other hand, they found restored confidence in their own modernization practices in light of their conclusions that Iraq's modernization programs were doomed to failure without substantive American input.

Point IV's experiences in Iraq in this period give further evidence for Nathan Citino's assertion that modernity was a contested principle between the United States and nations of the Arab Middle East. Rather than a static, "timeless abstraction," modernization as a theory and practice differed dramatically in "particular local and historical contexts." To paraphrase Citino, Qasim, as with the Arab modernizers discussed in Citino's study, "did not reject modernization so much as he imagined it with a reconfigured set of priorities from those advanced by the US."¹²⁹⁶ The Eisenhower administration collided head-on with Qasim's modernization and development programs that left little role for American technical expertise and advice.

¹²⁹⁶ Nathan Citino, "Suburbia and Modernization: Community Building and America's Post-World War II Encounter with the Arab Middle East," *Arab Studies Journal* 13, no. 2 (2005), 40 (first quote), 50 (second quote).

Chapter Eight: American Intervention in Qasim's Iraq

Washington's relationship with the revolutionary regime in Baghdad was fraught with considerable tension from July 1958 through January 1961. As Chapters Six and Seven explained, Prime Minister Abdel Karim Qasim's policies in the petroleum and modernization arenas struck at the heart of American political, economic, and broader security interests in Iraq. Qasim's policy priorities in the oil and modernization sectors were anathema to US policymakers searching for their own visions of moderation and gradualism in Iraqi political affairs.

In an attempt to regain a sense of authority and "control" over the "disorderly" revolutionary changes in Iraq, the Eisenhower administration turned to the Central Intelligence Agency [CIA] in a failed effort to overthrow Qasim's government. Indeed, Abdel Karim Qasim repeatedly accused the United States of actively working to undermine his government. In an effort to explore these allegations, this final chapter examines the ebb and flow of impulses among US policymakers for undertaking an American intervention in Iraq (by overt and / or covert means) from the revolution of July 1958 to January 1961.

To illuminate the specifics of US policies in Iraq, this chapter returns to several of the issues discussed in Part I of the dissertation. These include American strategic defense planning for the Middle East (as it shifted to an offensive mode) and the "informational environment" created by American intelligence agencies regarding Iraqi political affairs. This chapter goes beyond these pre-revolutionary questions to examine other issues relating to America's interventionist strategies, most notably the inter-

departmental agency created in April 1959 to control and redirect the Iraqi political environment in “stable,” pro-American directions.¹²⁹⁷

As will be seen, the American impulse for intervention went through three phases in this period. This chapter closely examines American policy vis-à-vis Iraq in these phases to shed light on two critical questions. First, this chapter analyzes how the “interventionist impulse”¹²⁹⁸ was shaped, at various points, by the pressures of America’s bilateral relations with regional actors, ongoing developments in Baghdad, and the tensions of inter-governmental debate in Washington over the direction of US policy in

¹²⁹⁷ As the Introduction explained, this chapter relies heavily on the partially declassified papers of Philip Halla, the NSC representative on the Special Committee on Iraq, held at the Eisenhower Library. I have made extensive use of these documents, including materials recently declassified through the Mandatory Review process. To my knowledge, I am only the third scholar to utilize these documents as part of an analysis of the American campaign for regime change in Iraq. Even so, this chapter does not claim to be the first study of American covert action efforts in Iraq after July 1958. Rather, this chapter builds on the excellent book chapters produced by Nathan Citino and Kenneth Osgood in recent years. While this chapter cites a number of the same records consulted by Citino and Osgood, as well as some of their conclusions (since our findings closely align), there are notable differences between this piece and those existing studies. For one, Citino’s chapter addresses a wide spectrum of policy issues in the US-Iraqi relationship after July 1958, including oil politics; the covert intervention campaign occupies only a small portion of Citino’s work. This chapter goes into much greater depth on this debate than Citino’s piece allows for. The same can be said for Osgood’s book chapter. In particular, this chapter gives greater attention to the pre-April 1959 period of American policy debates regarding Iraq as well as the question of “alliance politics” in US strategies in Iraq than Osgood’s work allows for. This chapter also gives greater attention to the question of intelligence “warnings” Washington possessed in advance of covert moves against Qasim’s regime than Citino and Osgood’s work. Furthermore, I have examined the most up-to-date documentary records available (some of which have been released since Citino and Osgood’s book chapters were published) to comprehensively chart how the Eisenhower administration re-defined the strategy of intervention at points after July 1958. Finally, this chapter represents one component of a much larger assessment of American policy in Iraq after July 1958 and demonstrates how covert intervention strategies proved attractive to US officials seeking a sense of control and authority over seemingly unstable Iraqi political developments. See Nathan Citino, “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) and Kenneth Osgood, “Eisenhower and Regime Change in Iraq: The United States and the Iraqi Revolution of 1958,” in David Ryan and Patrick Kiely (eds.) *America and Iraq: Policymaking, Intervention, and Regional Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2009).

¹²⁹⁸ By “interventionist impulse,” I am referring to the ongoing debate in Washington policy circles over the merits of and strategies involved in leading a covert campaign for regime change in Iraq. This impulse was given life by members of the Central Intelligence Agency, Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Department of Defense in late 1958 and early 1959. Well before the creation of the Special Committee on Iraq, these groups aggressively pushed (in National Security Council meetings and through the circulation of policy briefs within government circles) for a covert operation to topple Qasim’s regime. This impulse subsequently dissipated following the termination of the Special Committee on Iraq in March 1960.

Iraq. Second, this chapter works to ascertain, utilizing the available documentary record, the concrete ways the United States worked to engineer the downfall of Qasim's regime. The focus of this chapter turns to Central Intelligence Agency covert action programs, as well as intelligence reports on various coup and assassination attempts carried out against Qasim. It seeks to determine the extent to which American officials had prior knowledge of, and possible connections to, the various plots launched against the Iraqi government. This chapter concludes with the departure of the Eisenhower administration from office in January 1961 and the relative normalization of US-Iraqi relations, including the decline of an appetite among many US policymakers for pursuing regime change in Iraq.

Intervention or Recognition? July 1958 to August 1958

The revolutionary events in Iraq on 14 July 1958 brought the entire alliance system of the Western powers in Baghdad crashing down upon their heads. In the immediate aftermath, US officials engaged in an in-depth debate on the merits of leading an intervention to overthrow Qasim's military junta in order to restore the former regime. British and American diplomats have since insisted, in interviews conducted decades later, that the Western powers never seriously considered launching an intervention in Iraq in July 1958.¹²⁹⁹ Their claims bear little resemblance to the documentary record. In fact, British and American strategists gave serious thought to undertaking some form of

¹²⁹⁹ Sir Harold Beeley and Sir Michael Hadow, top figures in the British Foreign Office, claimed there was little serious consideration in London of undertaking a British military intervention to reverse the events in Baghdad. Morris Draper, a US embassy official in Iraq, similarly argued that the Americans' focus turned to restraining Jordan's King Hussein from leading a campaign in Iraq. On Washington's side, Draper insisted, "[t]here was never any question of intervention." See Sir Harold Beeley Interview, 23 February 1983, GB165-0124 - Granada Television Interview Transcripts, Middle East Centre Archive [MEC]; Sir Michael Hadow Interview, 15 February 1983, GB165-0124 - Granada Television Interview Transcripts, MEC; Morris Draper interview, *Frontline Diplomacy: The Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training*.

intervention to reverse the coup for a period after 14 July. A variety of factors pushed the Eisenhower administration in this direction. Foremost among them were the assessed impact of the Iraqi revolution on the strength of conservative forces in the Middle East and the insistence of America's allies that Washington respond in a vigorous manner to the events in Baghdad. The Eisenhower administration subsequently decided that the costs of leading a Western intervention outweighed the benefits they might accrue from toppling Qasim's government. This calculation was influenced by the likely responses of the Soviet Union and Gamal Abdel Nasser's United Arab Republic [UAR] to an attack on Qasim's regime, as well as the military and political problems inherent in leading an armed campaign in Baghdad. The decision to eschew formal Western intervention in the summer of 1958 was also affected by developments in Iraq that suggested Qasim's regime might prove tolerable for US interests. A careful reading of events in Iraq and the wider Middle East by members of the Eisenhower administration saved the United States from a near-certain military fiasco in Baghdad in July 1958.

US officials considered overt military action in Baghdad in the summer of 1958 in part because the coup initially seemed to portend a further expansion of Nasserist pan-Arab radicalism amid the decline of conservative, pro-American regimes. This was especially concerning since US officials feared Nasser would directly have his hand, and by extension the hands of those in Moscow, on the region's vital oil supplies. Initial assessments of the Iraqi coup leaders described them as "pro-Nasser people" who were likely taking direct instructions from Cairo. "The hand of Nasser in these developments," US officials concluded on 14 July, "is very evident."¹³⁰⁰ Analysts in the State

¹³⁰⁰ Memorandum for the Record, 14 July 1958, Bryce N. Harlow: Records, 1953-1961, Box 6, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library [DDEL] (quote); Malik Mufti, "The United States and Nasserist Pan-Arabism," in

Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research [INR] insisted that the new regime's leadership would likely push for Baghdad's inclusion in the UAR. The new regime, the CIA argued on 17 July 1958, was "basically radical, Arab nationalist, and anti-Western."¹³⁰¹ The net result of the coup, the intelligence community concluded, was "a strengthening of the radical pan-Arab position."¹³⁰²

The rising tide of Nasserist influence in the Middle East had repercussions extending beyond Iraq's borders. In yet another manifestation of the "domino theory," members of the Eisenhower administration believed the Iraqi coup could set off a chain of events leading to the fall of other pro-American regimes. If the coup succeeded, the administration lamented on 14 July, it seemed "almost inevitable that a chain reaction will set in which will doom the pro-Western governments of Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Iran." As evidence of this trend, US officials pointed to the fact that leaders in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia were forced to walk the delicate balance between popular pro-Nasserism and their ties to the West.¹³⁰³ The subsequent decisions taken by the American and British governments to land their respective forces in Lebanon and Jordan in mid-July 1958 highlighted their determination to resist the further expansion of

David Lesch (ed.) *The Middle East and the United States: A Historical and Political Reassessment* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2003), 173; Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, *Khrushchev's Cold War: The Inside Story of an American Adversary* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2006), 163.

¹³⁰¹ CIA Office of Current Intelligence, "Current Intelligence Weekly Summary – 17 July 1958," July 24 2009. CIA-RDP79-00927A001800070001-6, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST), National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD (quote); From INR – Hugh Cumming, Jr. to the Under Secretary – Intelligence Note: The Insurgent Regime in Iraq, 18 July 1958, National Archives and Records Administration [NARA], Record Group [RG] 59, Records of the Policy Planning Council - Subject Files, 1954-1962, Box 141; From DRN Richard Sanger to INR Hugh Cumming Jr. – Middle Eastern Problems and Trends Confronting the West in the Next Few Years Following Intervention in Lebanon and Jordan , 22 July 1958, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) – Subject Files, 1945-1960, Box 24.

¹³⁰² Arab Nationalism as a Factor in the Middle East Situation – SNIE 30-3-58, 12 August 1958, CIA Electronic Reading Room [ERR].

¹³⁰³ Arab Nationalism as a Factor in the Middle East Situation – SNIE 30-3-58, 12 August 1958, CIA Electronic Reading Room [ERR].

Nasserist and Soviet power. President Eisenhower publicly characterized the dispatch of American marines to Lebanon as a measure designed to stem communist expansion. The administration privately admitted that the Soviets and Egyptians were the major driving forces behind regional events.¹³⁰⁴

American allies fueled Washington's doomsday predictions about the likely impact of the revolution on US interests in the Middle East. More than that, they demanded action to counter the threat emanating from Baghdad. Saudi leaders threatened to reach an accommodation with Nasser if the Western powers did not intervene on an "urgent" basis to overthrow Qasim's regime.¹³⁰⁵ Similarly, Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion warned US diplomats that Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the Baghdad Pact powers could soon succumb to Nasser's aggression. In this scenario, the West would suffer the "worst blow" since World War II and Israel would be "virtually surrounded in mortal danger." Ben-Gurion insisted that President Eisenhower take immediate action to "remedy the situation." This meant American support for Turkey, Iran, and Jordan, who could rally counter-revolutionary forces to crush the government.¹³⁰⁶ For their part, the Jordanians were eager to consider intervention. King Hussein planned to establish contact with remaining Iraqi forces loyal to the Hashemites and Arab Union and then intervene to overturn the revolutionary regime. Equally

¹³⁰⁴ Adel Darwish and Gregory Alexander, *Unholy Babylon: The Secret History of Saddam's War* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), 19; Nigel Ashton, "A Great New Venture? Anglo-American Cooperation in the Middle East and the Response to the Iraqi Revolution, July 1958," *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 4, no. 1 (March 1993), 68-69.

¹³⁰⁵ Memorandum for the Record, 14 July 1958, Bryce N. Harlow: Records, 1953-1961, Box 6, DDEL; Nathan Citino, *From Arab Nationalism to OPEC: Eisenhower, King Sa'ud and the Making of US-Saudi Relations* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 142.

¹³⁰⁶ #114 - Telegram from the Embassy in Israel (Lawson) to the Department of State, 15 July 1958, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 316. Ben-Gurion wanted US weapons to defend Israel against Nasser's regional ambitions. See CIA Office of Current Intelligence, "Current Intelligence Weekly Summary - 17 July 1958," July 24 2009. CIA-RDP79-00927A001800070001-6, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST).

concerning was the revelation that the Jordanians wanted tangible US assistance in reviving the Iraqi monarchy.¹³⁰⁷

The Middle Eastern members of the Baghdad Pact joined the chorus of frightened allies urging decisive Western action. The Shah of Iran suggested to the US ambassador in Tehran on 20 July that Iran collaborate with dissident tribes and Iraqi Kurds to mount a counter-revolutionary offensive. In addition, the Shah felt the Jordanians should attack Iraq when the situation proved “ripe” for resolution.¹³⁰⁸ Though the Iranians did not specifically request US participation in these plans, it was clear they expected broad American support. The Turkish government similarly took several aggressive measures by 17 July to strengthen their forces bordering Iraq. The Turks also informed American officials they planned to invade Iraq and demanded US air cover for their campaign.¹³⁰⁹

The shock of the revolution was acutely felt by British policymakers. The loss of Iraq undermined, as with the United States, the very essence of the UK’s Middle East defense strategy (in the form of the Baghdad Pact) and deprived London of one of its “principal remaining assets” in the region. It seemed to suggest an impending Nasserist challenge to British assets in the Iraqi oil industry. Officials also feared the Iraqi

¹³⁰⁷ #111 - Telegram from the Embassy in Jordan (Wright) to the Department of State, 14 July 1958, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 312; From Foreign Office to Washington, #4833, 19 July 1958, PREM 11-2368, British National Archives [BNA]; King Hussein of Jordan Interview, July 1983, GB165-0124 - Granada Television Interview Transcripts, MEC. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles reported on 15 July that King Hussein demanded American and British intervention in tandem with his forces in Iraq if he deemed this step necessary. See Mid East Situation – July 1958, 15 July 1958 Telephone Call, Dwight D. Eisenhower: Papers as President, 1953-1961 (Ann Whitman File) – DDE Diary Series, Box 34, DDEL.

¹³⁰⁸ From Tehran (Wailles) to Secretary of State, Department of State, 20 July 1958, Declassified Documents Reference System [DDRS]; Memorandum for the Record, 14 July 1958, Bryce N. Harlow: Records, 1953-1961, Box 6, DDEL.

¹³⁰⁹ CIA Office of Current Intelligence, “Current Intelligence Weekly Summary – 17 July 1958,” July 24 2009. CIA-RDP79-00927A001800070001-6, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST); From Washington (Viscount Hood) to Foreign Office, #1948, 18 July 1958, PREM 11-2368, BNA; From Foreign Office to Washington, #4795, 19 July 1958, PREM 11-2368, BNA.

instability would threaten the monarchy in Kuwait, which supplied almost half of all British petroleum and sold its oil in sterling.¹³¹⁰

For all these reasons, the British forcefully recommended a combined UK-US assault in the Middle East. UK policymakers learned the “lessons of Suez” regarding the folly of pursuing an aggressive policy in the Middle East without the full support of their American allies. More than that, they were desperate to enlist American support and resources for a joint operation since they lacked the independent means of achieving their strategic aims in the region.¹³¹¹ Their campaign was punctuated by Prime Minister Harold Macmillan’s personal appeals to President Eisenhower. Macmillan vigorously pressed Eisenhower to sanction a vast, coordinated US-UK operation throughout the Middle East, including Iraq, to defend pro-Western forces. In a fascinating phone conversation between the two leaders on 14 July, the prime minister suggested that a Western intervention in Lebanon should only be undertaken as “part of a much larger operation because we shall be driven to take the thing as a whole.” Appealing to the historic ties of friendship between the two nations, Macmillan likewise argued, “[t]here is no good in being in that place and sitting there a few months and the whole rest being in flames. As soon as we start we have to face it – we have probably got to do a lot of things.”¹³¹² Summing up British entreaties on this point, Secretary of State John Foster

¹³¹⁰ Sir Harold Beeley Interview, 23 February 1983, GB165-0124 - Granada Television Interview Transcripts, MEC (quote); Lord Harlech Interview, 23 February 1983, GB165-0124 - Granada Television Interview Transcripts, MEC; CIA Office of Current Intelligence, “Current Intelligence Weekly Summary – 17 July 1958,” July 24 2009. CIA-RDP79-00927A001800070001-6, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST); Mid East Situation – July 1958, 15 July 1958 Telephone Call, Dwight D. Eisenhower: Papers as President, 1953-1961 (Ann Whitman File) – DDE Diary Series, Box 34, DDEL; Fursenko and Naftali, *Khrushchev’s Cold War*, p. 165; Juan Lennart Michel Romero, “The Iraqi Revolution of 1958 and the Search for Security in the Middle East,” Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of Texas at Austin, 2008, 221.

¹³¹¹ Ashton, “A Great New Venture?” p. 67-68, 73.

¹³¹² Report of Telephone Call Between the President and Prime Minister Macmillan, 14 July 1958, Dwight D. Eisenhower: Papers as President, 1953-1961 (Ann Whitman File) – DDE Diary Series, Box 34, DDEL.

Dulles believed the UK wanted an American commitment to joint intervention not only in Lebanon, but Jordan “and possibly Iraq.”¹³¹³

American policymakers were, at first, somewhat sympathetic to UK suggestions. Secretary of State Dulles and the Joint Chiefs of Staff [JCS] each initially anticipated that London might intervene to reverse the events in Iraq. The JCS also prepared contingency plans for leading an American invasion of Iraq after 14 July.¹³¹⁴ Even so, the compromise brokered between the two sides was far less of a coordinated Western assault on Nasserist forces than Macmillan wanted. US and UK troops landed in Lebanon and Jordan in July 1958, but Washington ultimately refused to endorse an American-led or joint attack on Iraq’s new government.¹³¹⁵ The reasons for American reticence on this question are multifaceted. The caution with which the Eisenhower administration approached the crisis was closely linked to Moscow and Cairo’s anticipated responses to a US-UK invasion. Military and political troubles associated with launching an attack, as well as several favourable developments ongoing within Iraq, helped assuage American concerns about the immediacy of the threat posed by Baghdad’s revolution.

There were important practical considerations that dampened American enthusiasm for openly collaborating with London. President Eisenhower privately insisted to Macmillan that he was sympathetic to British conceptions of a Western

¹³¹³ Mid East Situation – July 1958, 15 July 1958 Telephone Call, Dwight D. Eisenhower: Papers as President, 1953-1961 (Ann Whitman File) – DDE Diary Series, Box 34, DDEL.

¹³¹⁴ Memorandum for the Record, 14 July 1958, Bryce N. Harlow: Records, 1953-1961, Box 6, DDEL; Stephen Blackwell, “A Desert Squall: Anglo-American Planning for Military Intervention in Iraq, July 1958-August 1959,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 35, no. 3 (July 1999), 3-4.

¹³¹⁵ As Nigel Ashton has demonstrated, the Eisenhower administration carefully designed the simultaneous US intervention in Lebanon and UK intervention in Jordan as coincidental rather than joint, coordinated operations. See Ashton, “A Great New Venture?” p. 72; Roby Barrett, “Intervention in Iraq, 1958-1959,” *The Middle East Institute Policy Brief* 11 (April 2008), 5; Peter Hahn, *Missions Accomplished? The United States and Iraq Since World War I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 32.

offensive extending beyond Lebanon and Jordan. However, he repeated his concern that a joint US-UK operation in Iraq would run “far beyond anything I have the power to do constitutionally.” The president explained that it had been difficult to muster the requisite congressional support for even the limited offensive in Lebanon. Given these political challenges, it seemed unlikely he could secure congressional support for a broader plan for offensives aimed at Iraq, Syria, and various Persian Gulf targets.¹³¹⁶

The problem of Eisenhower’s limited constitutional authority was the primary explanation given to UK policymakers for Washington’s reluctance to sanction a major Iraqi operation. Beyond this legal question lay an array of political considerations that influenced American strategies. For one, an American intervention in Iraq was likely to reignite Cold War tensions with the Soviets. It is true that US policymakers did not fear a direct Soviet military response to an American invasion. State Department intelligence officials understood that a widespread Soviet intervention in Iraq was highly unlikely given the Americans’ advantage in the strategic arms race, the logistical problems involved in such an operation, and the possibility of provoking direct superpower conflict.¹³¹⁷ Even so, the broader Soviet response to the revolution still had a discernible impact on US strategy. Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev rightly understood that the revolution offered him a major strategic opportunity to destabilize Western regional influence. Fursenko and Naftali recount how, in remarking on the Iraqi coup,

¹³¹⁶ Report of Telephone Call Between the President and Prime Minister Macmillan, 14 July 1958, Dwight D. Eisenhower: Papers as President, 1953-1961 (Ann Whitman File) – DDE Diary Series, Box 34, DDEL.

¹³¹⁷ US officials believed Moscow “would have no choice but to tolerate a show of US power in the Middle East.” American officials, in retrospect, correctly assessed Soviet strategy; Khrushchev knew Moscow did not have a “viable military card to play” if the US openly intervened in Iraq. See Fursenko and Naftali, *Khrushchev’s Cold War*, p. 164 (first footnote quote), 166 (second footnote quote), 160, 163, 170; From DRS John Keppel to INR Hugh Cumming Jr.– Probable Soviet Responses to Middle Eastern Situation, 18 July 1958, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) – Subject Files, 1945-1960, Box 24; #126 - Memorandum From the Director of Intelligence and Research (Cumming) to the Counselor (Reinhardt), 20 July 1958, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 329.

Khrushchev speculated “[c]an we imagine a Baghdad Pact without Baghdad?...This consideration alone...is enough to give [John Foster] Dulles a nervous breakdown.”¹³¹⁸

American analysts worried that Soviet responses to an American intervention would involve “concrete” forms of action, including the provision of military aid, designed to consolidate Qasim’s regime. As feared, the Kremlin dispatched military aid in late July, including tanks, artillery, and machine guns, to support the new government against Western military intrigues.¹³¹⁹ Moscow’s emerging commitment to Qasim’s regime restrained, to some extent, the American interventionist impulse.

More impactful for American strategy was the problem of Egypt. Nasser gave an emotional speech in Syria supporting the leaders of the revolutionary events. He also worked to deter an American invasion, publicly proclaiming that an attack on Baghdad would be considered an attack on the UAR. He followed up these public declarations by signing a formal defense agreement with Baghdad on 18 July.¹³²⁰ US policymakers appreciated the significance of these steps. They concluded that a Western attack on Iraq would inspire an immediate UAR counter-intervention in support of the new Iraqi

¹³¹⁸ Fursenko and Naftali, *Khrushchev’s Cold War*, p. 159 (quote), 184; Romero, “The Iraqi Revolution of 1958 and the Search for Security in the Middle East,” p. 234.

¹³¹⁹ The USSR and Iraq formally re-established relations for the first time since they were cut in 1955. CIA Office of Current Intelligence, “Current Intelligence Weekly Summary – 17 July 1958,” July 24 2009. CIA-RDP79-00927A001800070001-6, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST); From DRS John Keppel to INR Hugh Cumming Jr.– Probable Soviet Responses to Middle Eastern Situation, 18 July 1958, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) – Subject Files, 1945-1960, Box 24; #126 - Memorandum From the Director of Intelligence and Research (Cumming) to the Counselor (Reinhardt), 20 July 1958, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 329.

¹³²⁰ He also dispatched two squadrons of fighter jets to Syria. CIA Office of Current Intelligence, “Current Intelligence Weekly Summary – 17 July 1958,” July 24 2009. CIA-RDP79-00927A001800070001-6, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST); Darwish and Alexander, *Unholy Babylon*, p. 19-20; James Jankowski, *Nasser’s Egypt, Arab Nationalism, and the United Arab Republic* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002), 141; Mohamed Hassanein Heikal, *The Cairo Documents: The Inside Story of Nasser and His Relationship with World Leaders, Rebels, and Statesmen* (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1973), 129.

Republic.¹³²¹ Fears of sparking a regional conflict with Arab nationalists, and Nasser specifically, did much to dampen American interest in and enthusiasm for an overt intervention.

The varied military and political problems associated with an attack were essential to restraining the American interventionist impulse in July 1958. As Peter Hahn rightly notes, while the US and UK interventions in Lebanon and Jordan were deemed militarily viable and “likely to achieve political benefits,” an invasion of Iraq was characterized as “tactically difficult and politically risky....”¹³²² Top policymakers in the Eisenhower administration were disappointed by the paucity of military options available during the crisis. Secretary of State Dulles was particularly frustrated by the absence of what was later called “flexible response” – the option of utilizing conventional military force without resorting to full-scale nuclear brinkmanship. He lamented that American military planners only thought “about dropping nuclear bombs and they don’t like it when we get off that.” Vice President Richard Nixon concurred with Dulles’ assessment, suggesting that the United States prepared for “the war we probably will never fight and not for the one which will be lost.”¹³²³

The elimination of the entire Iraqi royal family and many of the former regime’s leaders (like Nuri al-Said) placed serious restrictions on US military options. The US ambassador to Iraq, Waldemar Gallman, detected no signs after the coup of any significant activity by pro-monarchical groups. The UK Foreign Secretary, Selwyn Lloyd, and Secretary of State Dulles agreed on 17 July that there were few figures

¹³²¹ #126 - Memorandum From the Director of Intelligence and Research (Cumming) to the Counselor (Reinhardt), 20 July 1958, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 329.

¹³²² Hahn, *Missions Accomplished?*, p. 33.

¹³²³ #118 - Memorandum of Telephone Conversation between Secretary of State Dulles and Vice President Nixon, 15 July 1958, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 321.

“around whom resistance in Iraq might be rallied.”¹³²⁴ The coup leaders also worked to mitigate the threat posed by subversive elements within the armed forces. They skillfully extended their control over remaining elements of the army by promoting loyal officers within their ranks.¹³²⁵

US officials also cogently recognized that the new regime engendered far more popular support than the monarchical regime ever enjoyed. Though they disagree on the specific numbers, historians of the revolution agree that vast numbers of Iraqi citizens poured into the streets of Baghdad to celebrate the demise of the former government.¹³²⁶ The sight of thousands of Iraqis cheering the arrival of Qasim’s clique gave the coup, Hanna Batatu writes, “the irresistible character that was its surest bulwark” and turned a military coup into a popular revolution.¹³²⁷ American officials were well aware of these popular demonstrations of approval for the new government. Ambassador Gallman, a longtime defender of the *ancien régime*, acknowledged that support for the coup was “considerable” in Baghdad.¹³²⁸ Later in July, US officials admitted that the new regime enjoyed the consent of its citizens and possessed de-facto control of government machinery. Given these larger political and military realities, one official explained, “any

¹³²⁴ #112 - Telegram from the Embassy in Iraq (Gallman) to the Department of State, 14 July 1958, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 314; #122 - Memorandum of Conversation between UK and US officials –Iraq, 17 July 1958, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 326 (quote); From Washington (Lord Hood) to Foreign Office, #1975, 19 July 1958, PREM 11-2368, BNA; From Baghdad – Emergency HQ (Sir M. Wright) to Foreign Office, #15, 20 July 1958, DEFE 11-269, BNA.

¹³²⁵ CIA Office of Current Intelligence, “Current Intelligence Weekly Summary – 17 July 1958,” July 24 2009. CIA-RDP79-00927A001800070001-6, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST); #126 - Memorandum From the Director of Intelligence and Research (Cumming) to the Counselor (Reinhardt), 20 July 1958, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 329.

¹³²⁶ Marion Farouk-Sluglett and Peter Sluglett, *Iraq Since 1958: From Revolution to Dictatorship* (London: IB Tauris, 2001), 47, 51; Adeed Dawisha, *Iraq: A Political History from Independence to Occupation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 171.

¹³²⁷ 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), 805.

¹³²⁸ #112 - Telegram from the Embassy in Iraq (Gallman) to the Department of State, 14 July 1958, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 314.

move by force from the outside into Iraq would meet with very little Iraqi support and its success would be highly unlikely.”¹³²⁹

American policymakers showed a nuanced understanding of the complicated dynamics of Iraqi politics. Unlike their counterparts in 2003, American leaders in July 1958 understood that an invasion of Iraq was likely to produce a nationalist-driven, armed rebellion against US troops. It might even lead to civil war.¹³³⁰ In reference to the Lebanese situation, Dulles assured President Eisenhower that the local population would support the arrival of US forces. In Iraq, and in other areas where the British contemplated intervention, however, Dulles believed that the whole “thing might blow up” in their faces. Eisenhower and Dulles agreed to move forward with their venture in Lebanon since American planners had long studied and carefully drafted contingency strategies for intervention in Beirut. “To intervene militarily [in Iraq],” Secretary of State Dulles opined, “would introduce problems that we have not even considered.”¹³³¹ Speaking with Vice President Nixon later that day, Dulles revived the painful memories of watching Britain’s disastrous intervention to topple Nasser in the Suez Crisis of 1956. He insisted that the US and its allies lacked “assets” to overturn the new government. More than that, Dulles did not “want to get bogged down like the Br[itish] in Suez and

¹³²⁹ #126 - Memorandum From the Director of Intelligence and Research (Cumming) to the Counselor (Reinhardt), 20 July 1958, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 329 (quote); From Becker to the Secretary – Recognition of the New Iraqi Government, 24 July 1958, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs - Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Records of Iraq-Jordan Affairs Desk, 1959-1964, Box 1.

¹³³⁰ Osgood, “Eisenhower and Regime Change in Iraq,” p. 6.

¹³³¹ Mid East Situation – July 1958, 15 July 1958 Telephone Call, Dwight D. Eisenhower: Papers as President, 1953-1961 (Ann Whitman File) – DDE Diary Series, Box 34, DDEL.

have to pull out.”¹³³² In this sense, Dulles, Eisenhower, and other administration officials feared an intervention in Iraq might represent an over-extension of American power.

US officials recited the “lessons of Suez” in another way. Perhaps the most compelling of all arguments against intervention was the damaging impact it would have on America’s international reputation. As Kenneth Osgood argues, the ongoing superpower battle for “hearts and minds” in the Middle East greatly “restrained the Eisenhower administration from using military power in Iraq” in July 1958.¹³³³ As in the pre-revolutionary period, the Americans in mid-July 1958 were desperate to avoid the taint of “colonialism” in the Middle East that ruined the reputations of their European allies. Indeed, popular opinion in even pro-American states like Kuwait and Saudi Arabia was supportive of the new regime and opposed to overt Western intervention.¹³³⁴ America’s international credibility and commitment to the principles of non-intervention would be seriously threatened should they overturn the popular Qasim government. For all these reasons, Iraq was a Pandora’s box best left closed in July 1958.

Encouraging initial developments in Baghdad similarly suggested the need for caution on the part of the United States. Despite their initial worst fears, American officials soon realized that Nasser had not orchestrated the Iraqi coup. William Rountree of the State Department quickly appreciated that Qasim was not a Nasserist stooge.¹³³⁵

¹³³² #118 - Memorandum of Telephone Conversation between Secretary of State Dulles and Vice President Nixon, 15 July 1958, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 321.

¹³³³ Osgood, “Eisenhower and Regime Change in Iraq,” p. 6 (quote); Fursenko and Naftali, *Khrushchev’s Cold War*, p. 164; Romero, “The Iraqi Revolution of 1958 and the Search for Security in the Middle East,” p. 224.

¹³³⁴ Osgood, “Eisenhower and Regime Change in Iraq,” p. 10-11; Salim Yaqub, *Containing Arab Nationalism: The Eisenhower Doctrine and the Middle East* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 240.

¹³³⁵ Nasser was generally aware of the Free Officers’ intentions in Iraq. Even so, there is no evidence they directly consulted Nasser about their plans for 14 July. See From NEA – William M. Rountree to The Secretary – Recognition of New Iraqi Government, 23 July 1958, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern

By late July, British analysts learned that “old fashioned narrow Iraqi nationalism” rather than Nasserist pan-Arabism was the driving force behind the coup. Qasim similarly assured Ambassador Gallman in early August that the revolution was an indigenous affair rather than a Nasserist stalking horse.¹³³⁶

Qasim’s initial policies confirmed this general trend. US analysts were relieved to note on 20 July that the new regime did not intend, for the time being at least, to join the UAR. In addition, officials concluded that conflict might soon develop between the UAR and Iraq over the questions of oil and revenue distribution.¹³³⁷ The composition of the first revolutionary cabinet likewise confirmed the emerging consensus that Qasim was, as Marion Farouk-Sluglett and Peter Sluglett suggest, an “Iraqi patriot” rather than an “a pan-Arab nationalist.” The first cabinet was regarded as “generally moderate” in its tone, consisting of Arab nationalists, independents, and only a limited number of communist or overtly pro-Nasser supporters.¹³³⁸ Ambassador Gallman speculated the new regime might pursue an independent third policy (separate from both communism and Nasserism), guided by the principles of neutralism in foreign policy and progressivism in domestic affairs.¹³³⁹

and South Asian Affairs - Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Records of Iraq-Jordan Affairs Desk, 1959-1964, Box 1; Ashton, “A Great New Venture?” p. 69; Roby Barrett, *The Greater Middle East and the Cold War: US Foreign Policy Under Eisenhower and Kennedy* (London: IB Tauris, 2007), 72; Heikal, *The Cairo Documents*, p. 133.

¹³³⁶ From Amman (Mr. Johnston) to Foreign Office, #1034, 26 July 1958, PREM 11-2368, BNA (quote); From Gallman to SecState Washington, #536, 5 August 1958, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 20.

¹³³⁷ #127 - Memorandum From the Director of Intelligence and Research (Cumming) to the Counselor (Reinhardt), 20 July 1958, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 330; Arab Nationalism as a Factor in the Middle East Situation – SNIE 30-3-58, 12 August 1958, CIA ERR.

¹³³⁸ Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett, *Iraq Since 1958*, p. 57 (first quote), 49 (second quote); Ashton, “A Great New Venture?” p. 79; Dawisha, *Iraq*, p. 173; Phebe Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2012), 86; #127 - Memorandum From the Director of Intelligence and Research (Cumming) to the Counselor (Reinhardt), 20 July 1958, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 330.

¹³³⁹ From Gallman, #1389, 4 October 1958, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 20.

The new regime also took great pains to assure American policymakers that it sought a positive relationship with Washington. Qasim regularly summoned Gallman to his office, promising to pursue a friendly relationship with the United States.¹³⁴⁰ As Chapter Six explained, the regime's early commitment to existing petroleum contracts similarly did much to relieve anxious American policymakers about the new government's intentions. As Malik Mufti suggests, Qasim bent over backwards after 14 July to project a moderate policy on petroleum matters to dispel lingering American doubts.¹³⁴¹

Developments in the international arena, coupled with the paucity of military options and favourable political trends in Baghdad, combined to dispel the existing appetite among US observers for leading an open intervention in Iraq. The State Department played a leading role in late July and early August in pushing for early recognition of Qasim's government as a means to reward the new regime for its moderate policies and to protect American interests in Iraq.¹³⁴² As would be the case through to January 1961, the Americans' interest in leading an intervention in Iraq did not entirely disappear. US diplomats ominously suggested to their UK allies on 18 July that the two sides carefully monitor Iraqi developments with any eye toward engaging in future covert programs. Douglas Little recounts how John Foster Dulles suggested to Selwyn Lloyd that the two partners "build[ing] up assets" in Iraq "which might at some future time

¹³⁴⁰ From Gallman to SecState Washington, #536, 5 August 1958, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 20; Hahn, *Missions Accomplished?*, p. 43.

¹³⁴¹ Mufti, "The United States and Nasserist Pan-Arabism," p. 174.

¹³⁴² Ambassador Gallman believed that recognition of the Iraqi regime, extended on 1-2 August, strengthened the position of "men now in power, among whom prevails a spirit of reasonableness and a dedication to liberal political views as opposed to communist ideology." From NEA – William M. Rountree to The Secretary – Recognition of New Iraqi Government, 23 July 1958, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs - Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Records of Iraq-Jordan Affairs Desk, 1959-1964, Box 1; From Gallman to SecState Washington, #545, 4 August 1958, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 21 (footnote quote).

make it possible to bring about a change. The Mussadiq [sic] example could be quoted.”¹³⁴³ As will be seen, the approach Dulles outlined became the main strategy adopted by American officials as Iraq moved closer toward the communist bloc in late 1958 and early 1959.

Accommodation and Intervention with Nasser: August 1958 to March 1959

In the period from August 1958 to March 1959, the Iraqi Republic found itself teetering on the edge of political unrest. Qasim was confronted, on the one side, by pro-UAR nationalists and Baathists. While the Baath party was a relatively minor player before the revolution, it soon grew in popularity among youth drawn by its calls for Arab independence, unity, and socialism.¹³⁴⁴ On the other side of the political spectrum stood the resurgent Iraqi Communist Party [ICP], an important yet heavily repressed entity under the monarchical order. The ICP, which vehemently opposed union with the UAR, soon became the most powerful, best organized, and, in Uriel Dann’s words, “most effective party in Iraq.”¹³⁴⁵ Qasim was no pan-Arab nationalist and was unwilling to undermine Iraqi sovereignty by joining the UAR. He was also not a communist and had no intention of turning Iraq into a Soviet satellite. After July 1958, Qasim tried to balance these two competing political forces against one another. He relied on the ICP in

¹³⁴³ Douglas Little, “Mission Impossible: The CIA and the Cult of Covert Action in the Middle East,” *Diplomatic History* 28, no.5 (November 2004), 694.

¹³⁴⁴ Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*, p. 733-742; Hahn, *Missions Accomplished?*, p. 41; Johan Franzen, *Red Star over Iraq: Iraqi Communism Before Saddam* (London: Hurst, 2011), 87.

¹³⁴⁵ Uriel Dann, *Iraq Under Qassem: A Political History, 1958-1963* (New York: Praeger, 1969), 99 (quote); Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett, *Iraq Since 1958*, p. 55; Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, p. 89.

what Aaded Dawisha called a “marriage of convenience” to counter the challenge posed by pro-UAR nationalists.¹³⁴⁶

As the ICP flexed its political muscles, US officials grew concerned that Iraq was moving toward the brink of an ultimate communist takeover. They insisted that a communist Iraq was inimical in all ways to “important US interests” in the Middle East. The extension of Soviet power in the Middle East could, in their view, endanger key allies like Turkey, Iran, and Kuwait, as well as critical “swing states” like Syria.¹³⁴⁷ Reliable access to the region’s oil resources, the second pillar of US strategy in the Middle East, could also be threatened.¹³⁴⁸ US policymakers accepted that Qasim himself was likely not a communist. Nevertheless, as in the Iranian and Guatemalan case studies of 1953 and 1954, analysts believed the Iraqi leader might become a tool of the communists and a vehicle through which they could take effective power. US officials were determined not to repeat their experiences in witnessing what they saw as the rapid consolidation of communist power in Czechoslovakia, Eastern Europe, Iran, and Guatemala.¹³⁴⁹

Washington thereafter moved to an indirect, covert form of intervention in the Iraqi political sphere in late 1958 and early 1959. America’s concerns about the political

¹³⁴⁶ Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett, *Iraq Since 1958*, p. 57; Jankowski, *Nasser’s Egypt, Arab Nationalism, and the United Arab Republic*, p. 151; Dawisha, *Iraq*, p. 174 (quote).

¹³⁴⁷ SNIE 36.2 -59 – The Communist Threat to Iraq, 17 February 1959, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 382 (quote); Summary of Conclusions of the Anglo-United States Working Group - May 1959, CAB21-5595, BNA; State Department Paper - Situation in Iraq: Policy the United States Should Follow to Prevent Communism from Establishing Control of the Country, 15 April 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL.

¹³⁴⁸ An Iraq led by the ICP (and by extension, the Soviets) might demand substantial modifications to (if not outright nationalization of) the existing IPC concession agreement. Operations Coordinating Board – Operational Guidance Concerning Iraq, 18 February 1959, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 - Administrative and Chronological Files 1953-1961, Box 25; SNIE 36.2 -59 – The Communist Threat to Iraq, 17 February 1959, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 387 (quote).

¹³⁴⁹ From Gallman, #1477, 14 October 1958, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 21; Barrett, *The Greater Middle East and the Cold War*, p. 73.

environment in Baghdad led them to an unexpected ally: Gamal Abdel Nasser. The second phase of their interventionist strategy was defined by Washington's knowledge of and support for Nasser's covert operations in Baghdad. The Americans carefully monitored, and remained silent about, the development of Nasserist plots designed to topple Qasim's regime. This policy shift was the product of the Americans' concerns about the communists' drive to power, a general warming of relations between Washington and Cairo, and vigorous debates within Washington policy circles about the appropriate policy to follow vis-à-vis Nasser's subversive campaign.

American officials pointed to a variety of developments in Iraq in late 1958 and early 1959 as evidence of the powerful communist offensive. In many instances, the Iraqi government directly facilitated the communists' rising profile. All communist prisoners held by the former regime were released within two months of the revolution. Qasim also permitted the assembly of auxiliary groups like the People's Resistance Militia, the Peace Partisans, and the Federation of Democratic Youth that had links to Iraqi communists.¹³⁵⁰ Conversely, Qasim adopted repressive policies vis-à-vis supporters of union with the UAR. Qasim demoted, exiled, and later sentenced his co-conspirator Abdul Salam Aref to death after he began a public campaign supporting unification with the UAR. The arrests and demotions of many Baathists and Nasserists left Qasim reliant

¹³⁵⁰ Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*, p. 849; Franzen, *Red Star over Iraq*, p. 90; Charles Tripp, *A History of Iraq* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 148. Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett, Franzen, and Tripp each refer to the Peace Partisans of the pre-revolutionary period as a communist "front organization." However, Tripp argues that these groups, in the aftermath of the revolution, were no longer "simply fronts for political parties, but represented attempts by a wide variety of Iraqis to establish a voice for hitherto neglected sections of society." See Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett, *Iraq Since 1958*, p. 43; Franzen, *Red Star over Iraq*, p. 58-59; Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, p. 126, 148 (quote). The People's Resistance Militia was rumored to have over 20,000 members, some of whom were armed, by mid-January 1959. See Bureau of Intelligence and Research Intelligence Report – Iraq: The Crisis in Leadership and the Communist Advance, 16 January 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL.

almost exclusively on the ICP for support.¹³⁵¹ As Chapter Seven explained, Iraqi foreign policies also did much to unnerve US policymakers. Along with their newly inked technical and economic assistance agreement, the Iraqi leadership signed a military assistance deal with Moscow. Soviet trucks and armed reconnaissance vehicles arrived in large quantities at Basra in November 1958. Soviet MiG-15 fighters were delivered later that year, and more than 100 Soviet tanks appeared in Iraq in 1959.¹³⁵²

The months of December 1958 and January 1959 were formative moments in shaping American assessments of communist strength in Baghdad. The Assistant Secretary of State, William Rountree, visited the Middle East in December to speak with regional leaders. His trip to Iraq was a debacle. Lax security left Rountree's escort swarmed by angry protestors throwing food and chanting "Rountree go home."¹³⁵³ Qasim showed little remorse for Rountree's hostile reception. Discussions between the two men were icy throughout the delegation's visit due, in part, to Qasim's accusations that the Americans were aiding anti-government rebels based in Iran.¹³⁵⁴ US assessments of the situation grew increasingly worrisome following Rountree's visit. UK observers

¹³⁵¹ From Gallman, #1477, 14 October 1958, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 21; Current Intelligence Weekly Review – Situation in Iraq, 6 November 1958, CIA ERR; Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*, p. 831; Franzen, *Red Star over Iraq*, p. 86.

¹³⁵² Department of State Telegram, 25 November 1958, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 17; Sir Humphrey Trevelyan to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd – An Analysis of Iraq's Relations with the East and West from the 1958 Revolution Up to October 7 1959, #120 – EQ1021/23, 22 October 1959, FO481-13, BNA; Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, p. 107; Dann, *Iraq Under Qassem*, p. 151.

¹³⁵³ Hahn, *Missions Accomplished?*, p. 38-39 (quote); From Fritzlan, #2273, 16 December 1958, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 19; From AmEmbassy Baghdad (Lee Dinsmore, Second Secretary of Embassy) to Department of State, #370 – Communists and the Revolution, 6 January 1959, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 29.

¹³⁵⁴ From Fritzlan, #2273, 16 December 1958, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 19; #151 - Memorandum of Discussion at the 391st Meeting of the National Security Council, 18 December 1958, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 363; David Fritzlan interview, Frontline Diplomacy: The Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training.

detected this shift, noting that “there is no doubt that the treatment of Rountree has hardened opinion here [in Washington] against Qasim.”¹³⁵⁵

On the American side, the CIA argued on 17 December that a communist takeover in Baghdad was now a “matter for most serious consideration.” Their study pointed to Qasim’s hostility to pro-UAR groups, his dependence on the ICP for support, and the privileged government posts doled out to alleged communists as signs of impending disaster.¹³⁵⁶ While CIA and State Department analyses and recommendations differed later in 1959, the two agencies agreed at this point on the emerging threat. Embassy staffers feared the ICP’s impressive discipline, organization, and leadership, particularly within post-secondary schools and professional associations.¹³⁵⁷ Their concerns reached the highest levels of government in Washington. The Acting Secretary of State, Christian Herter, warned President Eisenhower on 12 December that the Iraqi situation was “as critical at present as that of any country in the troubled Middle East.” The communists, he stressed, “currently exercise unprecedented influence in that country and particularly on Prime Minister Qassim [sic].”¹³⁵⁸

American analysts were particularly frustrated by the fact that opposition forces appeared unable or unwilling to resist communist encroachments. Lee Dinsmore of the

¹³⁵⁵ From Washington (Sir H. Caccia) to Foreign Office, #3378 –EQ 10345/8, 18 December 1958, FO371-133086, BNA.

¹³⁵⁶ CIA Office of National Estimates – Likelihood of a Communist Takeover in Iraq, 17 December 1958, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL.

¹³⁵⁷ From NE – William Lakeland to Ambassador Jernegan – Political Parties in Iraq, 18 December 1958, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 21; From AmEmbassy Baghdad (Lee Dinsmore, Second Secretary of Embassy) to Department of State, #370 – Communists and the Revolution, 6 January 1959, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 29; Bureau of Intelligence and Research Intelligence Report – Iraq: The Crisis in Leadership and the Communist Advance, 16 January 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL.

¹³⁵⁸ From Acting Secretary - Memorandum for the President: Call by Ambassador John D. Jernegan, 12 December 1958, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs - Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Subject Files Relating to Iraq and Jordan, 1956-1959, Box 13.

US embassy suggested that anti-communist elements in the Iraqi armed forces and Arab nationalist groups (including the Baath party) were either “spellbound or frightened” by the ICP. Other analysts claimed that Iraq needed a strong, charismatic opposition figurehead to unify anti-Qasim elements. Unfortunately, they noted, the Baath party was utterly lacking capable leaders.¹³⁵⁹ The CIA likewise chided the “failure of moderate military commanders to exert themselves to [a] greater extent.” “Unless action is taken to curb Communism,” the CIA warned on 7 January 1959, “or unless the Communists make a major tactical error, Iraq will probably be transformed into a Communist controlled state.”¹³⁶⁰

Developments in February and March fueled the pessimism of American observers. Iraq formally withdrew from the Baghdad Pact in March 1959 under the rubric of Qasim’s neutralist foreign policy.¹³⁶¹ The anti-communist defense pact, carefully organized by the Eisenhower administration years earlier, was now missing the country from which the organization derived its name. More importantly, the remaining nationalist supporters in Qasim’s cabinet, including Fuad al-Rikabi, the Baath party Minister without Portfolio, resigned in February to protest Qasim’s alliance with communist groups. Reviewing these changes, the Special National Intelligence Estimate

¹³⁵⁹ From AmEmbassy Baghdad (Lee Dinsmore, Second Secretary of Embassy) to Department of State, #370 – Communists and the Revolution, 6 January 1959, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 29 (quote); From DRN Richard Sanger to INR Mr. Hugh Cumming Jr. – Debriefing of Professor Wm. Polk, 9 January 1959, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) – Subject Files, 1945-1960, Box 24; From NEA, William Lakeland – Briefing Paper for General Lemnitzer – Iraq, 15 January 1959, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs - Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Office Files Relating to Middle Eastern Affairs, 1958-1959, Box 14.

¹³⁶⁰ CIA NSC Briefing, “Nasir, Iraq and the Communists – 6 January 1959,” February 27 2010. CIA-RDP79R00890A001100010031-0, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST) (first quote); The Situation in Iraq, Central Intelligence Agency, 7 January 1959, DDRS (second quote).

¹³⁶¹ Ismail al-Arif, *Iraq Reborn: A Firsthand Account of the July 1958 Revolution and After* (New York: Vantage Press, 1982), 70-71; Dann, *Iraq Under Qassem*, p. 185. As Iraqi officials explained, their decision to join the group in 1955 had been “taken by a small clique, totally unrepresentative of Iraqi public opinion.” See From Washington (Lord Hood) to Foreign Office, #432 –VQ10345, 5 August 1958, FO371-134213, BNA (footnote quote).

[SNIE] of February 1959 determined that Qasim was rapidly losing his independence from the ICP in the face of their “determined and so far effective...drive toward power.”¹³⁶² Even the new ambassador to Iraq, John Jernegan, later one of the most cautious and pragmatic observers of Iraqi affairs, agreed with this assessment. He wrote, as Osgood recounts, in late March that the “Iron Curtain” was descending across Baghdad and that Iraq very well could transform into “the first Soviet satellite in [the] Arab world.”¹³⁶³

By this point, American policy showed signs of adapting to the changing political realities of the region. The July 1958 revolution revealed to US policymakers the weakness of the Eisenhower Doctrine, which proved unable to prevent the spread of Arab nationalism or the fall of conservative monarchies. The ICP’s rising fortunes similarly suggested the need for a more flexible strategy vis-à-vis pro-Nasserist groups. A reassessment of Middle East policy began in August 1958 with an eye toward developing a constructive relationship with the forces of Arab nationalism (as personified by Nasser).¹³⁶⁴ Several factors worked in Nasser’s favour. For one, the August 1958 SNIE recognized that Nasser was not sympathetic to communist doctrine and would even oppose communist groups if they challenged his authority. The NSC also recognized that “genuine” Arab neutralism was not “incompatible with primary US objectives” regarding

¹³⁶² CIA Office of Current Intelligence, “Current Intelligence Weekly Summary - 12 February 1959,” February 27 2010. CIA-RDP79-00927A002100060001-4, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST); SNIE 36.2 -59 – The Communist Threat to Iraq, 17 February 1959, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 381 (quote); Darwish and Alexander, *Unholy Babylon*, p. 21; Dawisha, *Iraq*, p. 175.

¹³⁶³ Osgood, “Eisenhower and Regime Change in Iraq,” p. 14.

¹³⁶⁴ NSC Meeting of August 21 1958, 21 August 1958, NARA, RG 273, Records of the NSC - Official Meeting Minutes, Box 22; Matthew F. Jacobs, *Imagining the Middle East: The Building of an American Foreign Policy, 1918-1967* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 135; Matthew Holland, *America and Egypt: From Roosevelt to Eisenhower* (Westport: Praeger, 1996), 163; Yaqub, *Containing Arab Nationalism*, p. 237.

communism and Middle East oil.¹³⁶⁵ These insights were formally incorporated in the November 1958 strategy known as NSC 5820/1. NSC 5820/1 established as US policy that Washington would seek, as Citino writes, an “effective working relationship with Arab nationalism...” Believing the United States had few alternatives to NSC 5820/1, President Eisenhower famously remarked that “we might as well believe in Arab nationalism.”¹³⁶⁶

US analysts had “no illusions” about Nasser’s underlying motivations. They understood the two sides would never form a true alliance given Nasser’s emphasis on populism, anti-colonialism, and pan-Arabism.¹³⁶⁷ Even so, the Americans were eager to exploit the fissures emerging between the Egyptians and their Soviet sponsors. The UAR and USSR had already experienced their fair share of public squabbles by this time. Nasser was further angered by Soviet support for Qasim’s resistance to charting a pro-UAR policy. The UAR press responded by launching attacks on communism in the Arab world; Nasser personally lambasted Khrushchev and the Soviets as “Mongol hordes.” The UAR followed this step by arresting hundreds of communists in Syria and Egypt.¹³⁶⁸ The warming of relations between the United States and Egypt was also fueled by the decline of Iraqi-Egyptian relations. Qasim’s repression of pro-UAR Iraqi groups struck

¹³⁶⁵ Arab Nationalism as a Factor in the Middle East Situation – SNIE 30-3-58, 12 August 1958, CIA ERR. Eisenhower recognized that Nasser would be more effective at resisting communist expansion in the region than US policymakers. See Memorandum of Conference with the President with Vice President Nixon, Secretary Herter, Secretary Rountree, White House, 23 December 1958, DDRS; NSC Meeting of August 21 1958, 21 August 1958, NARA, RG 273, Records of the NSC - Official Meeting Minutes, Box 22.

¹³⁶⁶ Citino, “Middle East Cold Wars,” p. 252 (first quote); Mufti, “The United States and Nasserist Pan-Arabism,” p. 174 (second quote); Holland, *America and Egypt*, p. 168.

¹³⁶⁷ Barrett, *The Greater Middle East and the Cold War*, p. 77 (quote); Jacobs, *Imagining the Middle East*, p. 137; From Hare, #6251, 4 April 1959, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 26.

¹³⁶⁸ Barrett, “Intervention in Iraq, 1958-1959,” p. 7 (quote); #154 - Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (Rountree) to Acting Secretary of State Dillon, 22 December 1958, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 368; From Hare, #6251, 4 April 1959, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 26; Jankowski, *Nasser’s Egypt, Arab Nationalism, and the United Arab Republic*, p. 152.

deeply at Nasser's leadership of the pan-Arab movement. Nasser was also angered by Qasim's independent streak in foreign affairs and his alignment with communist forces.¹³⁶⁹

Given their convergence of interests, the two sides began to cultivate contacts in late 1958 to reverse the course of events in Baghdad. This development was seen as particularly valuable for US officials since, as is discussed below, none of Washington's regional partners shared its acute sense of anxiety about the march of communism in Baghdad. The Egyptians opened this process by dropping subtle hints to their American counterparts that the two countries collaborate to resolve the Iraqi crisis. In a meeting on 19 November 1958, Egyptian diplomat Ali Sabry indicated to William Lakeland of the State Department that the UAR could not risk a showdown with the ICP and the USSR without a more forthcoming American attitude toward Cairo. The Egyptian delegation added that the "UAR could not challenge the Soviets in Iraq without [the] kind of tangible support [the] US gave Tito, which enabled his stand up against Moscow."¹³⁷⁰ Reporting these exchanges to the NSC in December 1958, William Rountree referred to them as a "scarcely-veiled invitation to collaborate on Iraq."¹³⁷¹

Rountree, along with Christian Herter and several CIA staffers, made an aggressive pitch to President Eisenhower to collaborate with Nasser to change the

¹³⁶⁹ *Staff Study, United States Foreign Policy – Middle East*, US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations (Washington, 1960), 11; Barrett, *The Greater Middle East and the Cold War*, p. 78, 109-111; Jankowski, *Nasser's Egypt, Arab Nationalism, and the United Arab Republic*, p. 152. Nasser complained in December 1958 that Qasim would not speak with him. See Memorandum of Conference with the President with Vice President Nixon, Secretary Herter, Secretary Rountree, White House, 23 December 1958, DDRS.

¹³⁷⁰ From American Embassy, Cairo (Hare), 21 November 1958, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 20.

¹³⁷¹ #154 - Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (Rountree) to Acting Secretary of State Dillon, 22 December 1958, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 370.

political situation in Baghdad.¹³⁷² Their enthusiasm was not universally shared. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles had long been skeptical that Washington could substantively improve its relations with Cairo; he bore the scars of the Suez Crisis and other flashpoints to support his case. Malik Mufti notes that the secretary of state felt, along these lines, that NSC 5820/1 went “too far in appeasing Nasser at the expense of more important allies such as Britain.”¹³⁷³ However, President Eisenhower was convinced of the value of extending the US-UAR rapprochement to the Iraqi theatre. Eisenhower agonized over the decision; he compared the choice between Nasser and Qasim to picking between John Dillinger and Al Capone. Nevertheless, the president went so far as to suggest on 18 December that Washington should “help the UAR take over in Iraq.”¹³⁷⁴ At the end of the day, Nasser was clearly preferable for most officials in Washington to the left-leaning and perpetually weak Qasim. As Roby Barrett colourfully adds, “[c]ompared to the ICP in Iraq, Nasserism looked ideologically benign.”¹³⁷⁵

One early form of American-Egyptian collaboration and intervention in Iraq in late 1958 and early 1959 was the support US diplomats offered for Nasser’s propaganda offensive. Nasser’s concerns about the rising tide of communism led to a heated war of words between Iraq and the UAR. Nasser’s propaganda accused Qasim of consorting with a foreign power, in this case international communism, to repress the forces of Arab

¹³⁷² #151 - Memorandum of Discussion at the 391st Meeting of the National Security Council, 18 December 1958, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 363; Memorandum of Conference with the President with Vice President Nixon, Secretary Herter, Secretary Rountree, White House, 23 December 1958, DDRS.

¹³⁷³ Mufti, “The United States and Nasserist Pan-Arabism,” p. 175 (quote); Stephen Blackwell, *British Military Intervention and the Struggle for Jordan: King Hussein, Nasser, and the Middle East Crisis 1955-1958* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 183-184.

¹³⁷⁴ #151 - Memorandum of Discussion at the 391st Meeting of the National Security Council, 18 December 1958, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 363.

¹³⁷⁵ Barrett, *The Greater Middle East and the Cold War*, p. 77.

nationalism.¹³⁷⁶ In February 1959, UAR press outlets criticized the death sentence imposed on Colonel Aref and organized student protests against the regime. Nasser's propaganda also suggested the Iraqi armed forces were "near 'rebellion'" over the recent resignation of nationalist elements from Qasim's cabinet. Qasim fired back at Cairo, suggesting he would rescue Syrian communists from Nasser's iron fisted rule.¹³⁷⁷

American officials saw potential risks in supporting Nasser's sweeping broadsides. They recognized these measures might drive Qasim into greater dependence on the ICP and Moscow for support. On the other hand, as Christian Herter explained, Nasser's characterization of Iraqi communists as "agents [of] Soviet imperialism [is] unquestionably [a] political boon to us and serious damaging to [the Soviet position] in the Near East."¹³⁷⁸ As a partial solution, the Americans maneuvered Nasser to attack the broader communist movement in Iraq and the Middle East rather than Qasim specifically. They also let Nasser know they supported his propaganda campaign, offering PL 480 wheat and a loan to expand the Suez Canal to Cairo.¹³⁷⁹

¹³⁷⁶ Synopsis of State and Intelligence Material Reported to the President, White House, 16 December 1958, DDRS; CIA NSC Briefing, "Nasir, Iraq and the Communists – 6 January 1959," February 27 2010. CIA-RDP79R00890A001100010031-0, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST); CIA Office of National Estimates – Implications of the Contest for Iraq, 26 January 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL; From Copeland and Eichelberger – The Position of Nasser Since the Mosul Rebellion, 11 May 1959, Robert B. Anderson: Papers, 1933-89, Box 311, DDEL.

¹³⁷⁷ CIA Office of Current Intelligence, "Current Intelligence Weekly Summary – 12 February 1959," February 27 2010. CIA-RDP79-00927A002100060001-4, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST) (quote); *Staff Study, United States Foreign Policy – Middle East*, p. 11; Barrett, *The Greater Middle East and the Cold War*, p. 111.

¹³⁷⁸ From Herter to Baghdad, #6142, 29 March 1959, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 25.

¹³⁷⁹ #154 - Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (Rountree) to Acting Secretary of State Dillon, 22 December 1958, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 368; Memorandum of Conference with the President with Vice President Nixon, Secretary Herter, Secretary Rountree, White House, 23 December 1958, DDRS; Mufti, "The United States and Nasserist Pan-Arabism," p. 177; Yaqub, *Containing Arab Nationalism*, p. 257-258; Holland, *America and Egypt*, p. 168.

Support for Nasser's propaganda efforts served as a subsidiary component of a larger program of indirect American intervention in Iraqi politics. American authorities cultivated contacts with Nasser and his subversive operations campaign designed to topple Qasim's regime in late 1958. There is no evidence that the United States directly aided anti-Qasim rebels in late 1958 and early 1959. Even so, the Americans were closely plugged into the details of Nasser's subversive efforts and maintained a watchful eye over covert operations targeting Qasim. US observers compiled biographical information on figures likely to inherit power in the event of a coup. They monitored these covert programs closely enough to recognize that an assassination attempt could come at any moment.

In fact, American officials were provided with advance warnings about an impending coup in December 1958, but chose not to warn Qasim's government. US policymakers recognized as early as the fall of 1958 that Nasser was engaged in subversive activities against Qasim. The CIA recounted on 6 November that Nasser was actively supporting pro-UAR Iraqi groups "clandestinely, to the extent of promoting agitation among junior army officers...." By 25 November, the State Department's INR branch identified the "most likely focus of a coup against Qasim."¹³⁸⁰ Rashid Ali al-Gailani was the former Iraqi prime minister whose pro-Axis regime was toppled by the British during World War II. He returned after 17 years of exile to promote Iraq's accession to the UAR and to lead a coup against Qasim alongside other nationalist army

¹³⁸⁰ Current Intelligence Weekly Review – Situation in Iraq, 6 November 1958, CIA ERR (first quote); #144 - Memorandum From the Director of Intelligence and Research (Cumming) to the Secretary of State Dulles, 25 November 1958, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 353 (second quote). INR was not particularly optimistic about Ali's prospects. They recognized that the most important factor in a successful coup remained the response of the army, which, at the present moment, was likely to split over the issue of union with Nasser.

officers.¹³⁸¹ A few days later, US officials informed their Canadian counterparts that they were aware of rumors of a plot against Qasim's regime, though they felt they had no way to substantiate them.¹³⁸²

US observers did not have to wait long for advance, reliable warnings of the approaching crisis. Diplomat Charlotte Morehouse wrote to the State Department on 3 December with the broad outline of the Rashid Ali conspiracy. Morehouse reported being contacted by a group of conspirators who were likely linked to Nasser. As Morehouse described it, their approach was "very likely a probing operation" designed to gauge US interest in supporting the plot. The materials forwarded by Morehouse to the State Department contained biographical details (albeit sketchy at times) of the rumored conspirators. Along with Rashid Ali, this list included known names like Muhammad Madhi Kubba of the Istiqlal party and General Daghestani, an imprisoned member of the UAR-backed Iraqi Free Officers.¹³⁸³ Another member of the plot, known only as Capt. Janabi, was believed to be the same man whom the CIA identified in 1957 as an important link to Syrian groups attempting to kidnap Iraqi government authorities.¹³⁸⁴

The US officials who made initial contact with the group "were impressed by his [the contact's] sincerity...." If the coup plot proved authentic, they believed it "could prove a crucial turning point in Iraq's history and perhaps a watershed in stopping

¹³⁸¹ Dann, *Iraq Under Qassem*, p. 128; Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, p. 90.

¹³⁸² Memorandum of Conversation – Mr. Jack R. Maybee, Counselor Canadian Embassy, NE – Mr. Armin H. Meyer – Iraq, 1 December 1958, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs - Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Subject Files Relating to Iraq and Jordan, 1956-1959, Box 13.

¹³⁸³ From DRN Charlotte Morehouse to INR Hugh Cumming Jr.– Recent Conspiracy to Overthrow the Iraqi Government, 3 December 1958, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) – Subject Files, 1945-1960, Box 24.

¹³⁸⁴ From DRN Charlotte Morehouse to INR Hugh Cumming Jr.– Recent Conspiracy to Overthrow the Iraqi Government, 3 December 1958, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) – Subject Files, 1945-1960, Box 24.

Communist advances in the Arab world.”¹³⁸⁵ The top ranks of the State Department put a stop to formal participation in the plot for fear that the United States could not safeguard plausible deniability. Christian Herter suggested that embassy staffers approach the situation with “extreme caution and reserve” since there was a good chance that the approach was a government provocation. On the other hand, if it were genuine, Herter feared Qasim’s regime was already aware of the group’s existence. Thus, US involvement would become public knowledge immediately.¹³⁸⁶

The Rashid Ali plot ultimately moved forward on 10 December 1958. Nasser offered support for the conspiracy, promising weapons for the rebels (which never arrived). True to the Americans’ predictions, security forces quickly uncovered the coup.¹³⁸⁷ The plotters did a poor job of maintaining operational security; Rashid Ali openly bragged about his plan to members of the secret police. He was quickly arrested and sentenced to death.¹³⁸⁸ In addition to these operational weaknesses, the British likely played a role in helping Qasim uncover the operation. Like the Americans, UK officials were provided in advance with information about a secret cell working to topple Qasim. Rather than remaining silent like the Americans, British diplomats passed along details of the plot to Qasim’s administration. Dulles openly admitted in an NSC meeting on 15 January 1959 that the Eisenhower administration had “the same information about the plot that the British had but we did not pass this information to Iraq.” Dulles believed that the Americans’ silence at least kept their channels of communication open with

¹³⁸⁵ #145 - Telegram from the Department of State (Herter) to the Embassy in Iraq , 4 December 1958, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 355.

¹³⁸⁶ #145 - Telegram from the Department of State (Herter) to the Embassy in Iraq , 4 December 1958, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 355.

¹³⁸⁷ Sir Humphrey Trevelyan to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd – Iraq: The December Plot Against the Qassem Regime, #186 –EQ1015/415, 22 December 1958, FO481-12, BNA; Dann, *Iraq Under Qassem*, p. 130-134; Jankowski, *Nasser’s Egypt, Arab Nationalism, and the United Arab Republic*, p. 152.

¹³⁸⁸ Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett, *Iraq Since 1958*, p. 61; Darwish and Alexander, *Unholy Babylon*, p. 20.

Nasser.¹³⁸⁹ American behaviour on the eve of the Rashid Ali plot had the opposite effect on US-Iraqi relations. Thereafter, Qasim regularly accused the United States of actively conspiring against his government.

The Americans maintained a close eye on Nasser's subversive operations in the months following the failed Rashid Ali scheme. They continued to receive reports of rumored plots against Qasim's government and devoted considerable time and energy to assessing the prospects for a successful coup. Intelligence provided to the White House on 16 December 1958 indicated that at least four anti-communist military commanders were preparing to overthrow Qasim "in the near future." A month later, Director of Central Intelligence [DCI] Allen Dulles reported that a new coup attempt, likely "influenced" by Nasser, might soon begin.¹³⁹⁰ The State Department was pessimistic about the prospects for these moves, arguing in late January 1959 that a takeover by pro-Nasser groups was "unlikely in the near future." More than that, a poorly organized move might inspire civil war.¹³⁹¹ The CIA was also cautious in its assessments. The agency believed the various nationalist plots (which Nasser clearly backed) had, at best, an even chance of success.¹³⁹² State Department and CIA analysts acknowledged that they were unsure whether Nasser actually had the capability to stimulate the disorganized, anti-communist forces within the army into action. Given that the army

¹³⁸⁹ #157 - Memorandum of Discussion at the 393rd Meeting of the National Security Council, 15 January 1959, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 376.

¹³⁹⁰ Synopsis of State and Intelligence Material Reported to the President, White House, 16 December 1958, DDRS (first quote); #157 - Memorandum of Discussion at the 393rd Meeting of the National Security Council, 15 January 1959, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 375 (second quote).

¹³⁹¹ From NE – William C. Lakeland to NE – Mr. Rockwell – Transmission of Iraqi Study Paper, 28 January 1959, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs - Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Subject Files Relating to Iraq and Jordan, 1956-1959, Box 13.

¹³⁹² CIA Office of National Estimates – Likelihood of a Communist Takeover in Iraq, 17 December 1958, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL.

was now a prime target of communist subversion, the CIA assessed, “if any Army coup to block Communism is to have a reasonable chance of success, it must be effected soon.”¹³⁹³

American policymakers actively debated the appropriate policies to follow vis-à-vis Nasser’s increasingly active and dangerous secret intervention. William Rountree felt confident that Nasser would “work with us in Iraq.” Rountree understood the implications of cooperation with Nasser for US relations with Israel, Jordan, and other allies. Even so, he believed that American collaboration with Egypt’s covert intervention could “be in the nature of a limited experiment” that entailed a flexible policy in the Iraqi theatre and minimal commitments to Cairo.¹³⁹⁴ On the other side of the debate stood, as before, Secretary of State Dulles. Dulles continued to advise the president to avoid entanglement with Nasser in this “uncertain” time. Dulles exhibited an impressive and thoughtful understanding of the limits of American power in Baghdad. He suggested to the NSC “it was essential to keep our hands off Iraq” since Washington was “not sufficiently sophisticated to mix into this complicated situation as yet....”¹³⁹⁵

Conversely, in a pattern repeated throughout the year, there were pressures on the president to adopt a more aggressive policy vis-à-vis Nasser’s covert program. In a

¹³⁹³ The Situation in Iraq, Central Intelligence Agency, 7 January 1959, DDRS (quote); From NE – William C. Lakeland to NE – Mr. Rockwell – Transmission of Iraqi Study Paper, 28 January 1959, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs - Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Subject Files Relating to Iraq and Jordan, 1956-1959, Box 13; SNIE 36.2 -59 – The Communist Threat to Iraq, 17 February 1959, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 385.

¹³⁹⁴ #151 - Memorandum of Discussion at the 391st Meeting of the National Security Council, 18 December 1958, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 363 (first quote); #154 - Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (Rountree) to Acting Secretary of State Dillon, 22 December 1958, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 368 (second quote).

¹³⁹⁵ As proof of the danger of consorting with Nasser, Dulles pointed to Nasser’s policies in Africa, which seemed, in his view, to be toeing the typical communist line. See #157 - Memorandum of Discussion at the 393rd Meeting of the National Security Council, 15 January 1959, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 376 (quote); #151 - Memorandum of Discussion at the 391st Meeting of the National Security Council, 18 December 1958, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 363.

vague summary of departmental views from 13 February 1959, it was noted that the Pentagon felt the State Department's policies were "too restrictive in providing only for responses to Iraqi initiatives and for little initiative on our own part."¹³⁹⁶ The president's views were critical to breaking the deadlock. On 18 December 1958, while Dulles urged caution, President Eisenhower offered his rather infamous remark about helping Nasser "take over in Iraq." Eisenhower continually asked his staff whether the Americans could provide greater encouragement or financial support for Nasser vis-à-vis Iraqi developments.¹³⁹⁷ The meeting concluded without a firm decision on this point. Instead, the Americans' policy in December 1958 and January 1959 simply called for regular communication with Nasser.¹³⁹⁸

Information soon found its way into American hands that suggested a major Nasserist operation was approaching. The American consulate at Basra relayed intelligence on 18 February provided by a "reliable British source" serving as a courier between dissident Iraqis and the Egyptians. During a tour of northern Iraq, the source learned that a coup would be launched by pro-Nasser Baathists, including Brigadier Majaid Ali, commander of the Basra garrison and Director of Security, Basair Ahmad, within several weeks or "whenever Nasser pushes [the] button." An unidentified

¹³⁹⁶ From NEA – William Rountree to the Acting Secretary – OCB Consideration of Guidance Papers for Iraq and the United Arab Republic, 13 February 1959, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 - Administrative and Chronological Files 1953-1961, Box 25.

¹³⁹⁷ #151 - Memorandum of Discussion at the 391st Meeting of the National Security Council, 18 December 1958, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 363 (quote); #157 - Memorandum of Discussion at the 393rd Meeting of the National Security Council, 15 January 1959, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 376.

¹³⁹⁸ #157 - Memorandum of Discussion at the 393rd Meeting of the National Security Council, 15 January 1959, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 377; From NE – William C. Lakeland to NE – Mr. Rockwell – Transmission of Iraqi Study Paper, 28 January 1959, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs - Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Subject Files Relating to Iraq and Jordan, 1956-1959, Box 13.

“Bodyguard” would “take care” of Qasim.¹³⁹⁹ A synopsis of intelligence delivered to the White House on 27 February explicitly noted that “a coup by Iraqi army elements backed by Nasir [sic] is scheduled between 2-5 March. Plotters plan to assassinate Qasim.”¹⁴⁰⁰ American officials in Basra confirmed the details of the impending coup on 7 March. Their cable explained that the revolt would begin the next day. Ambassador Jernegan, travelling in Basra at the time, was scheduled for an early return to Baghdad if disturbances broke out.¹⁴⁰¹ The summaries of NSC meetings offer no concrete evidence of American involvement in the plot, though the 5 March meeting transcripts noted “the situation in Iraq requires the closest attention of the US and perhaps dictates some US contact with Nasser in the face of the likely eventualities.” Allen Dulles added that the impending coup forced the Americans to choose between Nasserism and communism, of which Nasser was surely the “lesser of two evils.”¹⁴⁰²

Intelligence yet again proved reliable about an impending plot. This second failed coup d'état was led in March 1959 by the pro-UAR Abd-al-Wahhab al-Shawwaf, commander of the military garrison in Mosul. It was also carried out with the assistance of Nasserist agents in Syria, particularly Colonel Abd-al Hamid al-Sarraj.¹⁴⁰³ One historian concludes that Egyptian “complicity in the coup was undeniable.” The UAR provided radio transmitters and light arms to rebel forces in Mosul, though some of the

¹³⁹⁹ From Basra (Scott), #79, 18 February 1959, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 29.

¹⁴⁰⁰ Synopsis of State and Intelligence Material Reported to the President, White House, 27 February 1959, DDRS. The synopsis added that the revolt would likely fail unless army units in Baghdad joined the revolt.

¹⁴⁰¹ From Basra (Scott), #104, 7 March 1959, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 29.

¹⁴⁰² Discussion at the 398th Meeting of the National Security Council, Thursday March 5 1959, National Security Council, 5 March 1959, DDRS.

¹⁴⁰³ Barrett, “Intervention in Iraq, 1958-1959,” p. 8; Dawisha, *Iraq*, p. 175.

aid arrived too late to be of operational use.¹⁴⁰⁴ American officials were well aware at the time of the UAR's important role in provoking and supporting the uprising. Handwritten notes from one US diplomat on 9 March described how the UAR was providing "active support" through Syria. US officials also explained to their Australian counterparts that the revolt had Nasser's blessing and overt assistance.¹⁴⁰⁵

As with the Rashid Ali plot, Qasim's regime learned in advance of the Mosul uprising.¹⁴⁰⁶ In response, the ICP and communist supporters planned a Peace Partisans rally for 6 March in Mosul. Tens of thousands of people poured into the town to intimidate nationalist groups and scare off the conspirators. At the same time, Qasim went on the offensive and bombarded Shawwaf's forces. The plot failed to inspire support outside Mosul, and the army crushed the rebels.¹⁴⁰⁷ Handwritten notes from 10 March from the Gerard Smith series of John Foster Dulles' papers record the following observation: "No doubt coup has failed. No support outside Mosul." Additional records indicate that American observers knew the Mosul uprising was finished by 10 March.¹⁴⁰⁸ The historian Uriel Dann concluded that the Mosul plot was poorly organized. The small number of nationalist conspirators were facing the full onslaught of communist

¹⁴⁰⁴ Barrett, *The Greater Middle East and the Cold War*, p. 112 (quote); Citino, "Middle East Cold Wars," p. 254; Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, p. 91.

¹⁴⁰⁵ Handwritten notes, 9 March 1959, John Foster Dulles: Papers, 1950-1961 – Gerard Smith Series, Box 2, DDEL (quote); Memorandum of Conversation – Mr. R.R. Fernandez, Second Secretary, Embassy of Australia, Mr. Armin H. Meyer – NE – Shawwaf Revolt in Iraq; Iraq-UAR Relations, 12 March 1959, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs - Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Office Files Relating to Middle Eastern Affairs, 1958-1959, Box 14.

¹⁴⁰⁶ Mosul was a hotbed of nationalist, anti-Qasim sentiment.

¹⁴⁰⁷ From AmEmbassy Baghdad (David C. Wilson Jr., First Secretary of Embassy) to Department of State, #76 – The Mosul Uprising Against Qasim, 16 March 1959, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 29; From Cairo (Anschuetz), #2578, 9 March 1959, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 29; Franzen, *Red Star over Iraq*, p. 90; Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*, p. 873, 879-880; Dawisha, *Iraq*, p. 175.

¹⁴⁰⁸ Handwritten notes, 10 March 1959, John Foster Dulles: Papers, 1950-1961 – Gerard Smith Series, Box 2, DDEL (quote); Telephone Call from Secretary to Mr. Greene, 10 March 1959, John Foster Dulles: Papers, 1950-1961 - Telephone Conversation Series, Box 9, DDEL.

supporters. In addition, the coup was centered in a remote, provincial area rather than Baghdad. These factors, added together, portended disaster for the conspirators.¹⁴⁰⁹

For the second time in less than a year, the Eisenhower administration kept silent about reliable, advance warnings they received of an impending plan to oust Qasim. They did so, as before, to keep their options open vis-à-vis Nasser and Iraq. This approach allowed them to provide indirect support for Nasser's covert intervention while, at the same time, avoiding direct connections with and commitments to the plotters. The doctrine of plausible deniability, an essential feature of covert operations in the Cold War, was thereby protected. There is no evidence of direct American participation in or assistance for the Mosul coup. Even so, the Americans' manipulation of and interference in the Iraqi political arena, through support for Nasser's covert machinations, is disturbing. Had the coup succeeded, the Eisenhower administration would stand complicit in the violent overthrow of Qasim's regime.

The failed Mosul plot worsened the trend of rising communist influence. Qasim carried out further purges of nationalist cells in the army in the aftermath. Simultaneously, the Popular Resistance Force [PRF] and the other communist groups within the labour and student movements saw their power grow exponentially. Communist supporters went on a killing spree against nationalists in Mosul. The PRF also stockpiled weapons in preparation for the next wave of violence.¹⁴¹⁰ Ambassador Jernegan suggested shortly after the Mosul debacle that the communists were quickly

¹⁴⁰⁹ Dann, *Iraq Under Qassem*, p. 108, 177.

¹⁴¹⁰ Dann, *Iraq Under Qassem*, p. 181. Close to 200 people were killed in these battles. See Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett, *Iraq Since 1958*, p. 68; From C.M. Morehouse to INR – Mr. Hugh S. Cumming, Jr. – Communist Controlled Popular Resistance Force (PRF) Gains in Aftermath of Mosul Revolt, 27 March 1959, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs - Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Records of Iraq-Jordan Affairs Desk, 1959-1964, Box 1.

approaching a position of preponderant control. The State Department also worried the failed plot had discouraged anti-Qasim elements in the army. Jernegan solemnly suggested that “[i]t appears that Mosul attempt was almost last gasp of nationalist, anti-communist forces in Iraq.”¹⁴¹¹

The failed Mosul coup of March 1959 had an important effect on American interventionist strategies. As the next section discusses, the Mosul disaster and the resultant communist surge led the Eisenhower administration to contemplate more active methods of intervention. Philip Halla, a member of the NSC staff, adeptly summarized the attitudes of those elements in Washington frustrated by the relative complacency of US policy. He wrote on 27 March 1959 that “the government should continue to look for ways to take constructive action. In the midst of the Berlin crisis, we may wake up some day with another China situation on our hands.”¹⁴¹² Treasury Secretary Robert Anderson drew parallels with another deflating moment in the annals of American containment policy. Anderson warned that “[m]uch of Indo-China was lost to the Communists while we were here talking and planning about saving it. We must not now repeat this error in the Middle East. How long are we expected to wait before we take action or make plans? ... We do not want another Dienbienphu.”¹⁴¹³ The policies adopted by the Eisenhower

¹⁴¹¹ From Baghdad (Jernegan) to Secretary of State, #2758, 26 March 1959, White House Office, Office of the Staff Secretary: Records, 1952-1961 – International Series, Box 8, DDEL (quote); Memorandum of Conversation – Mr. R.R. Fernandez, Second Secretary, Embassy of Australia, Mr. Armin H. Meyer – NE – Shawwaf Revolt in Iraq; Iraq-UAR Relations, 12 March 1959, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs - Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Office Files Relating to Middle Eastern Affairs, 1958-1959, Box 14. The disaster at Mosul convinced nationalists and Baathists that the only means of reversing the push towards communist domination in Iraq was to kill Qasim. See Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, p. 92; Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett, *Iraq Since 1958*, p. 72.

¹⁴¹² Memorandum from Philip Halla to Dr. Gleason – Situation in Iraq, 27 March 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL.

¹⁴¹³ Discussion at the 402nd Meeting of the National Security Council, 17 April 1959, Dwight D. Eisenhower: Papers as President, 1953-1961 (Ann Whitman File) – NSC Series, Box 11, DDEL.

administration in April 1959 and beyond began to reflect this desire among many US officials for a more aggressive approach to covert intervention in the Iraqi political arena.

Covert Intervention and the SCOI: April 1959 to March 1960

Washington's strategies for Iraq shifted yet again following the collapse of the Mosul coup. American activities moved closer to an active form of covert intervention. Their interventionist policy in this third and final phase was defined by the creation of an inter-departmental agency in April 1959 with the mandate to overturn the political situation in Baghdad and reassert American control over Iraqi developments. The Special Committee on Iraq [SCOI], chaired first by William Rountree and later by G. Lewis Jones of the State Department, met on a consistent basis between April 1959 and March 1960. As Douglas Little acknowledges, the activities of the SCOI, and of American covert action programs in Iraq, are perhaps the most secretive of all CIA activities in the Middle East in this period of the Cold War. "[E]vidence about covert activity in Iraq," Nathan Citino agrees, "remains heavily censored."¹⁴¹⁴

Even so, documents recently declassified by the Eisenhower Library from the files of the NSC representative on the SCOI (Philip Halla) give a broad outline (notwithstanding the countless redactions) of activities considered by US officials. These documents provide the most revealing evidence thus far available of American connections to various covert action programs targeting Qasim. Washington's willingness to incur greater risks in its intervention strategy was the product of three interconnected trends in this period. For one, the rapidly fluctuating Iraqi political environment saw the power of local communists hit impressive new peaks, though they

¹⁴¹⁴ Citino, "Middle East Cold Wars," p. 255 (quote); Little, "Mission Impossible," p. 694.

were often followed by equally rapid periods of decline. American emotions and anxieties followed this roller coaster pattern, as policymakers struggled to keep pace with the chaotic political trends. Aggressive intervention strategies appeared more promising for many US policymakers as Iraq moved closer to the brink of communist domination and US officials lost their sense of control and influence over Iraqi developments. Second, while America's regional allies showed little enthusiasm for collaborating with the United States on intervention programs, Nasser continued to work aggressively to overthrow Qasim's regime. The Americans, as before, closely monitored and broadly supported Nasser's subversive efforts in the search for a stable, non-communist Iraqi leadership. Finally, this period witnessed the ascendancy of activist elements in Washington, particularly the CIA, JCS, and Department of Defense [DOD], seeking to dictate US policy priorities in Baghdad. Those agencies in Washington urging caution and restraint in Iraq found themselves increasingly on the defensive for much of the April 1959 to March 1960 period. Just as the SCOI debated the most aggressive covert strategies yet considered in early 1960, however, Qasim made a startling turnaround by re-establishing a political equilibrium between nationalists and communists. This final phase would conclude with the uneasy stabilization of Iraqi politics and the shuttering of the SCOI.

American strategists grew progressively more fearful of the rising tide of communist power in the weeks following the failed Mosul coup. Intelligence analyses produced in April 1959 pointed to "widespread arrests" of nationalist army figures and the arming of the communist-dominated Popular Resistance Front as evidence that the ICP was "near masters of the 'street.'" Indeed, on 1 May, more than 300,000 communist

supporters marched through Baghdad proclaiming their support for Qasim. At the same, ICP press organs, including the newspaper “Voice of the Independents,” began to demand cabinet portfolios while decrying the evils of American imperialism.¹⁴¹⁵ In early June, as well, Qasim’s regime formally terminated the 1954 US-Iraqi military aid agreement. In some ways, this was only a formality. The Eisenhower administration had only provided minor shipments of spare parts and ammunition to Iraq following the revolution. Even so, this move still openly severed one of the important strategic links between Washington and Baghdad from the pre-revolutionary period, thereby highlighting the general diminution of American power after July 1958 in Iraq.¹⁴¹⁶

The Americans blamed Qasim for aiding and abetting the communists’ drive to power. The intelligence branch of the State Department suggested that Qasim commanded sufficient loyalty to restrain the communists, but there was “no indication that he has any intention of doing so.” “To the contrary,” INR analysts concluded, Qasim’s behaviour “indicates that he is willing to accept the gains the controlling leftist elements have made for him.” Nathan Twining of the JCS wrote in late April that Qasim’s personal politics were proving “increasingly less important in view of his failure or unwillingness to control communist influence.”¹⁴¹⁷ The CIA similarly argued in mid-

¹⁴¹⁵ Talking Paper – The Iraqi Situation, 15 April 1959, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) – Subject Files, 1945-1960, Box 24 (first quote); SNIE 36.2/1-59 – The Communist Threat to Iraq, 21 April 1959, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 440 (second quote); Memorandum of Conversation – Mr. N.S. Shaikh, Counselor, Embassy of Pakistan, NEA – Mr. Parker T. Hart, and NE – Mr. William C. Lakeland – Situation in Iraq, 5 May 1959, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs - Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Records of Iraq-Jordan Affairs Desk, 1959-1964, Box 3; Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*, p. 900; Franzen, *Red Star over Iraq*, p. 105.

¹⁴¹⁶ From Baghdad (Jernegan) to Secretary of State, #2837, 3 April 1959, White House Office, Office of the Staff Secretary: Records, 1952-1961 – International Series, Box 8, DDEL; United States European Command Report to the President’s Committee to Study the US MAP – North Africa and the Middle East, 26 January 1959, US President’s Committee to Study the US Military Assistance Program (Draper Committee): Records, 1958-1959, Box 18, DDEL.

¹⁴¹⁷ Talking Paper – The Iraqi Situation, 15 April 1959, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) – Subject Files, 1945-1960, Box 24 (first quote); From Nathan Twining, Chairman of JCS

April that it was “highly unlikely that Qasim will strike at them [the ICP].” Summing up the situation in mid-April, the State Department argued that the Iraqi problem was “cause for grave concern on the part of the United States.”¹⁴¹⁸

Important elements within the government resented the purported complacency of US policy vis-à-vis Iraq. On 1 April, Gordon Gray, the president’s special assistant for national security affairs, wrote an impassioned cable to the NSC planning board. Gray was frustrated by the inability or unwillingness of the government (particularly the State Department) to engage with events in Iraq in a proactive manner. “It is almost like watching a movie,” Gray complained, “whose end we will not like but which we are committed to see.”¹⁴¹⁹ This trend continued the following day when DCI Dulles presented another gloomy report to the NSC on Iraqi developments. At that time, President Eisenhower remarked that the US was “facing the complete loss of Iraq to the Communists.”¹⁴²⁰

Gray and his supporters soon witnessed a minor breakthrough. President Eisenhower decided to form an inter-departmental committee to monitor the Iraqi crisis following the 2 April NSC discussions. The new group, dubbed the Special Committee on Iraq, included representatives from the Pentagon, State Department, CIA, JCS, NSC, and other agencies. Their task, as dictated by the president, was to determine what the

– Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense – Iraq, Joint Chiefs of Staff, 22 April 1959, DDRS (second quote).

¹⁴¹⁸ SNIE 36.2-2-59 – Implications of the Communist Threat in Iraq, 17 April 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL (first quote); State Department Paper - Situation in Iraq: Policy the United States Should Follow to Prevent Communism from Establishing Control of the Country, 15 April 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL (second quote).

¹⁴¹⁹ From Gordon Gray, Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, 1 April 1959, White House Office, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs: Records, 1952-1961 – Special Assistant Series, Presidential Subseries, Box 4, DDEL.

¹⁴²⁰ Discussion at the 401st Meeting of the National Security Council, 2 April 1959, Dwight D. Eisenhower: Papers as President, 1953-1961 (Ann Whitman File) – NSC Series, Box 11, DDEL.

United States “either alone or in concert with others, can do [redacted] to avoid a Communist takeover in Iraq.”¹⁴²¹

It will come as no surprise to scholars of the Eisenhower presidency that his administration sought a covert solution to the Iraqi instability. James Callanan argues that CIA covert programs were “elevated to a position of unprecedented prominence as a tool of American foreign and defense policy” with the arrival of Eisenhower in office. Many of the most infamous CIA operations in the Cold War date from the Eisenhower presidency, an era termed the “golden age of covert operations.”¹⁴²² These included the initial CIA “successes” in Iran and Guatemala in 1953 and 1954, efforts to topple the Indonesian regime in 1958, and preparations for Operation Zapata, the disastrous plot to overthrow Fidel Castro at the Bay of Pigs in 1961.¹⁴²³

¹⁴²¹ From Gordon Gray, Special Assistant to the President – Memorandum for Acting Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense – Iraq , 3 April 1959, White House Office, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs: Records, 1952-1961 – Special Assistant Series, Chronological Series, Box 6, DDEL. Following the establishment of the SCOI in early April 1959, President Eisenhower very much “disappears” from the archival record regarding discussions of covert activities in Iraq. This occurs for several different reasons. For one, Eisenhower had taken the decision in April 1959 to delegate authority for specific covert action contingency planning to the SCOI. His instructions were explicit, and Eisenhower clearly expected his delegates on the SCOI to work out the details of potential covert action programs within the confines of the SCOI’s meetings rather than exporting these complicated debates to the NSC. This strategy very much fit with Eisenhower’s managerial style in which he delegated authority and considerable latitude on some policy issues to deputies he trusted. Second, his disappearance from the debates over covert strategies in Baghdad can be understood by noting that the SCOI itself had a hard time coming to a consensus about actions to pursue; the committee would not debate the specifics of strategies in the NSC setting without the SCOI first having reached agreement on policy options (which did not occur very frequently). Moreover, his absence from the historical record after April 1959 also makes sense given the administration’s emphasis on the strategic doctrine of plausible deniability, which insulated the president from the intricate details and planning of covert operations. As in the Iraqi case, President Eisenhower had very little formal input or role to play in the development of CIA covert plans in the Iranian and Guatemalan case studies after he provided his “green light.” Any specific direction offered by the president on CIA operations in Iraq after April 1959 could have easily been passed informally to advisers to keep his remarks “off the record.”

¹⁴²² James Callanan, *Covert Action in the Cold War: US Policy, Intelligence, and CIA Operations* (London: IB Tauris, 2010), 86 (quote); 87, 109; Gregory Treverton, *Covert Action: The Limits of Intervention in the Postwar World* (New York: Basic Books, 1987), 44-83. The term “golden age of covert operations” is also borrowed from Professor Wesley Wark.

¹⁴²³ Stephen Kinzer, *All the Shah’s Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2003); Mark Gasiorowski and Malcolm Byrne (eds.) *Mohammad Mosaddeq and the 1953 Coup in Iran* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2004); Nick Cullather, *Secret*

The benefits of drawing on the CIA's covert capabilities seemed obvious at the time. CIA covert operations offered a seemingly quick, relatively cheap, reasonably bloodless, and plausibly deniable method of controlling and effecting political change in the Third World. Indeed, the administration believed it could adapt its Iranian and Guatemalan success model to fit any political environment in the developing world.¹⁴²⁴ Covert operations also avoided the perils of direct confrontation with the Soviet Union in an age of nuclear mutually assured destruction. True to Eisenhower's economic conservatism, covert action initiatives also fit safely within the confines of the New Look policy, which prioritized the execution of foreign policy on the cheap.¹⁴²⁵ For all these reasons, covert action programs became an essential, if not the preferred, diplomatic tool for the Eisenhower administration during its high point of anxiety about Iraqi developments.

The SCOI considered a wide range of strategies to reverse the communist offensive during the first crisis period lasting from April to June 1959. It is important to first outline the options that were ultimately rejected by US officials, since they illuminate more clearly why other policies were selected. Diplomatic approaches to Qasim's regime, including encouraging the prime minister to stand up to the communists to drive a wedge between himself and the ICP, were pursued in regular official meetings but were nonetheless viewed as unlikely to produce significant changes in the Iraqi arena.¹⁴²⁶ Strategists considered harsh economic measures to redress the political

History: The CIA's Classified Account of Its Operations in Guatemala, 1952-1954 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006); Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, *One Hell of a Gamble: Khrushchev, Castro, and Kennedy, 1958-1964* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997).

¹⁴²⁴ Treverton, *Covert Action*, p. 45, 82-83; Callanan, *Covert Action in the Cold War*, p. 103, 111, 129.

¹⁴²⁵ Callanan, *Covert Action in the Cold War*, p. 86, 93.

¹⁴²⁶ State Department Paper - Situation in Iraq: Policy the United States Should Follow to Prevent Communism from Establishing Control of the Country, 15 April 1959, White House Office, National

balance. The NSC debated implementing a gradual boycott of Iraqi oil and building up Western oil reserves in neighbouring Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Nathan Twining, head of the JCS, viewed this strategy with some favour, believing it could put the regime in serious “financial difficulties.”¹⁴²⁷ An Anglo-American working group convened in May to discuss contingency plans in the event of a communist takeover also spoke in support of this option. If Qasim became “irretrievably committed to or controlled by the Communists,” the group declared, a Western-led boycott of Iraqi oil might turn the tide against the communists.¹⁴²⁸

The problems with the imposition of an oil boycott were immediately obvious to the State Department. First, there was no guarantee the United States could secure French and British support for this scheme; UK policies differed at points from their American counterparts regarding the Iraqi situation, notwithstanding the conclusions of the working group. More than that, a Western-led boycott of Iraqi oil would “enrage the Iraqi population and thus enhance the Communist position, and would cause the Iraqis to turn even more to the Russians.”¹⁴²⁹ Analysts at Foggy Bottom drew parallels with events in Egypt years earlier. In Iraq, as in Egypt, the department insisted, the Soviets

Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL; From Baghdad (Jernegan) to Secretary of State, #2837, 3 April 1959, White House Office, Office of the Staff Secretary: Records, 1952-1961 – International Series, Box 8, DDEL.

¹⁴²⁷ Memcon – NSC Discussion on Iraq, 17 April 1959, NARA, RG 59, Records of the Policy Planning Council - Subject Files, 1954-1962, Box 141; From Nathan Twining, Chairman of JCS – Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense – Iraq, Joint Chiefs of Staff, 22 April 1959, DDRS (quote).

¹⁴²⁸ Summary of Conclusions of the Anglo-United States Working Group – May 1959, CAB21-5595, BNA.

¹⁴²⁹ State Department Paper - Situation in Iraq: Policy the United States Should Follow to Prevent Communism from Establishing Control of the Country, 15 April 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL.

would simply step up support for Baghdad, exacerbating rather than curbing the growth of communist influence.¹⁴³⁰

As in July 1958, an overt American or combined allied military assault was wisely left on the cutting room floor. The NSC discussed the option of military intervention on 17 April 1959.¹⁴³¹ From that point forward, the Americans regularly updated their contingency plans for launching an invasion of Iraq. Admiral Grantham confirmed on 24 April that planning for an American or combined US-UK attack was underway “in case it is needed later.” Given the complicated logistics of transporting marines to the region for a “major force deployment,” American officials in late April and early May emphasized that “we should begin to ready our forces now in case we exhaust all other alternatives.”¹⁴³² The Eisenhower administration’s contingency plan for military intervention called for a naval blockade and the deployment of three divisions of ground forces to seize Baghdad, Basra, and Habbaniya.¹⁴³³

American officials were concerned less with the capability of their military to topple Qasim’s government than with the political repercussions of an open

¹⁴³⁰ State Department Paper - Situation in Iraq: Policy the United States Should Follow to Prevent Communism from Establishing Control of the Country, 15 April 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL.

¹⁴³¹ Memcon – NSC Discussion on Iraq, 17 April 1959, NARA, RG 59, Records of the Policy Planning Council - Subject Files, 1954-1962, Box 141.

¹⁴³² Interagency Draft – Outline of Planning for Iraq Situation, State Department, 6 May 1959, DDRS (second quote); Memorandum from Philip Halla – Meeting of Special Committee on Iraq on April 24 1959, 27 April 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL (first and third quotes); Discussion at the 404th Meeting of the National Security Council, 30 April 1959, Dwight D. Eisenhower: Papers as President, 1953-1961 (Ann Whitman File) – NSC Series, Box 11, DDEL; Department of Defense - Suggested Courses of US Action, Iraq, Undated, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL.

¹⁴³³ From Nathan Twining, Chairman of JCS – Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense – Iraq, Joint Chiefs of Staff, 22 April 1959, DDRS; Memorandum from Philip Halla – Meeting of Special Committee on Iraq on April 24 1959, 27 April 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL.

intervention.¹⁴³⁴ William Rountree believed the public disclosure of Washington's military plans "would be disastrous." Ambassador Jernegan added that he would "deeply deplore military intervention in Iraq." Even Nathan Twining agreed in his memorandum to the Pentagon in late April that "overt military intervention in Iraq should be considered only as a last resort," and only with the participation of London and Ankara at "a minimum."¹⁴³⁵

The Eisenhower administration again conducted a thoughtful, prudent, cost-benefit analysis of an overt campaign for regime change. British and American strategists, summarizing the conclusions of their working group, decided that open intervention would be opposed by non-communist and neutralist states.¹⁴³⁶ The State Department's assessment of this question brilliantly reveals the tangible limits to American power at the time. Policymakers in Washington were greatly concerned by their inability to win the peace in Iraq rather than the war itself. The authors concluded that "as soon as US forces left Iraq the revulsion against any government set up under the aegis would be so great that it would probably be swept away." Any successor cabinet would inevitably be more closely aligned with the Soviet Union than Qasim's regime. Department representatives also worried about the long-term political damage incurred by an invasion of Iraq. An attack would be characterized by people in the Middle East and the developing world as an example of "unprovoked United States aggression,"

¹⁴³⁴ Secretary McElroy promised that the Americans could "do the job militarily." See Memcon – NSC Discussion on Iraq, 17 April 1959, NARA, RG 59, Records of the Policy Planning Council - Subject Files, 1954-1962, Box 141.

¹⁴³⁵ Memorandum from Philip Halla – Meeting of Special Committee on Iraq on April 24 1959, 27 April 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL (first quote); Memorandum from Philip Halla – Meeting of Special Committee on Iraq on May 19 1959, 20 May 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL (second quote); From Nathan Twining, Chairman of JCS – Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense – Iraq, Joint Chiefs of Staff, 22 April 1959, DDRS (third quote).

¹⁴³⁶ Summary of Conclusions of the Anglo-United States Working Group – May 1959, CAB21-5595, BNA.

whose leaders were even “worse aggressors than the Communists.”¹⁴³⁷ The State Department thus viewed the prospects for an American invasion through the lens of the larger propaganda struggle with the Soviet bloc for the “hearts and minds” of the developing world. Analysts at Foggy Bottom thoughtfully considered the wider regional and international repercussions of an American assault when weighing the advice of hawkish, activist elements of the military.

Ruling out overt intervention, the NSC suggested it would be better for American interests if “the Arab world could settle the Iraq problem....”¹⁴³⁸ US officials were enthusiastic about “internationalizing” the Iraqi crisis and strategized about translating their regional partners’ capacities and energies into offensive action. The Americans thought they could build on their allies’ pre-existing fears about Iraqi developments and direct them toward pro-American ends. Officials suggested that Turkey would be the “logical state to provide the troops” necessary for Qasim’s deposal. Nathan Twining wrote to the Pentagon on 22 April about the potentialities afforded by Turkish and Jordanian intervention. The Turks, Twining reasoned, could quickly occupy Iraq while Jordanian participation would mollify Arab world anger.¹⁴³⁹

The enthusiasm of some in Washington for an overt regional intervention was overshadowed by the complexities of the situation. For one, William Rountree believed an invasion led by any combination of Iran, Jordan, or Turkey would be opposed by the

¹⁴³⁷ State Department Paper - Situation in Iraq: Policy the United States Should Follow to Prevent Communism from Establishing Control of the Country, 15 April 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL (all quotes).

¹⁴³⁸ Memcon – NSC Discussion on Iraq, 17 April 1959, NARA, RG 59, Records of the Policy Planning Council - Subject Files, 1954-1962, Box 141.

¹⁴³⁹ The Situation in Iraq – Comments and Questions, 16 April 1959, NARA, RG 273, Records of the NSC - Official Meeting Minutes, Box 23 (quote); From Nathan Twining, Chairman of JCS – Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense – Iraq, Joint Chiefs of Staff, 22 April 1959, DDRS.

majority of Iraqis and characterized as an act of Western aggression.¹⁴⁴⁰ Turkish and Iranian intervention to “save Iraq,” Rountree insisted in a late April SCOI meeting, would “be bad from an Arab Nationalist point of view.” More than that, he felt this strategy would not offer a permanent solution to their concerns about communism in Baghdad.¹⁴⁴¹ Nathan Twining even acknowledged in late April that a Turkish intervention could inspire “probable immediate and strong Soviet military reaction” in the area.¹⁴⁴²

There was also the larger problem of aligning allied views of the Iraqi situation with those of American policymakers. Leaders in Ankara, Amman, and Tehran often vacillated on the question of whether Qasim was a barrier to, or a conduit for, the expansion of communism. More than that, these leaders were particularly concerned that Eisenhower was giving too much active encouragement to Nasser’s campaign of subversion against Qasim. While their respective attitudes shifted to some degree over the following months, Turkey, Jordan, and Iran remained strongly suspicious of Nasser’s activities in the region, and by extension, of suspected American collaboration with Egyptian efforts to topple Qasim’s government.¹⁴⁴³

Turkey took a different view of Qasim’s regime than officials in Washington based on intelligence that suggested the communist threat was not as serious as the Americans feared. Expanding on this point, the State Department and CIA noted in mid-

¹⁴⁴⁰ #154 - Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (Rountree) to Acting Secretary of State Dillon, 22 December 1958, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 369.

¹⁴⁴¹ Memorandum from Philip Halla – Meeting of Special Committee on Iraq on April 20 1959, 21 April 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL. This document is newly released from the Eisenhower Library and has not been cited by other scholars as of yet. See also #154 - Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (Rountree) to Acting Secretary of State Dillon, 22 December 1958, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 369.

¹⁴⁴² From Nathan Twining, Chairman of JCS – Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense – Iraq, Joint Chiefs of Staff, 22 April 1959, DDRS.

¹⁴⁴³ Discussion at the 401st Meeting of the National Security Council, 2 April 1959, Dwight D. Eisenhower: Papers as President, 1953-1961 (Ann Whitman File) – NSC Series, Box 11, DDEL.

April that Turkish leaders felt Qasim still had the capacity to keep Iraq on a neutralist path, independent of communist and Nasserist control.¹⁴⁴⁴ CIA reports in mid-May suggested that Turkish concerns about the threat of communism in Iraq were on the rise. Even so, this slight shift in attitudes did not mean that Ankara would associate itself with a joint American-Egyptian campaign of subversion. Turkey was especially concerned about Egyptian attempts to unite Iraq with the UAR. Ankara went so far as to move troops to its border with Iraq following the Mosul revolt as part of its “strong pro-Iraqi position in the Iraqi-UAR contest.”¹⁴⁴⁵ Nathan Twining, in his examination of policy options in late April, wrote that the “Turks still regard a pro-Nasser Iraq as a major danger.” Stuart Rockwell likewise complained to his colleagues, in reference to Turkey, that some of America’s allies “would rather go against Nasser than cooperate with him in controlling Communism in Iraq.”¹⁴⁴⁶

Leaders in Jordan and Iran shared much of the Turkish government’s skepticism. In mid-April, the State Department noted that Jordan felt Qasim could continue a policy

¹⁴⁴⁴ From R.V. Mrozinski to Mr. James Gostin – Turkey Supports Qasim in Struggle with UAR, 20 March 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL; State Department Paper - Situation in Iraq: Policy the United States Should Follow to Prevent Communism from Establishing Control of the Country, 15 April 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL; SNIE 36.2-2-59 – Implications of the Communist Threat in Iraq , 17 April 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL.

¹⁴⁴⁵ Operational Guidance for Iraq: Intelligence Items, 5 May 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL; From R.V. Mrozinski to Mr. James Gostin – Turkey Supports Qasim in Struggle with UAR, 20 March 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL (quote); State Department Paper - Situation in Iraq: Policy the United States Should Follow to Prevent Communism from Establishing Control of the Country, 15 April 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL.

¹⁴⁴⁶ From Nathan Twining, Chairman of JCS – Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense – Iraq, Joint Chiefs of Staff, 22 April 1959, DDRS (first quote); Memorandum from Philip Halla – Meeting of Special Committee on Iraq on April 24 1959, 27 April 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL (second quote).

line independent of the ICP.¹⁴⁴⁷ More than that, Jordan's foreign minister believed a Nasserist campaign against Qasim would drive him further into the arms of the communists. King Hussein also worried that Nasser would set his sights on his government after toppling Qasim's regime.¹⁴⁴⁸ Similarly, though their attitudes regarding Iraq hardened to an extent in the fall of 1959, the Iranians showed little inclination in the April to June period for launching an intervention in support of US policy objectives.¹⁴⁴⁹ Intelligence suggested that Iran was more sensitive than Turkey about the growth of Iraqi communist groups because of the residual strength of the Tudeh party in Iran. Even so, Iranian leaders nevertheless were supportive of Qasim's attempts to avoid both the communist and Nasserist camps. They calculated, as did those in Ankara and Amman, that a "Nasser-dominated regime in Iraq would be extremely dangerous to Iran" and would represent "almost as much a danger to his [the Shah] regime as a Communist Iraq."¹⁴⁵⁰ As such, by late May, the UK ambassador in Washington noted that American

¹⁴⁴⁷ State Department Paper - Situation in Iraq: Policy the United States Should Follow to Prevent Communism from Establishing Control of the Country, 15 April 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL.

¹⁴⁴⁸ Discussion at the 401st Meeting of the National Security Council, 2 April 1959, Dwight D. Eisenhower: Papers as President, 1953-1961 (Ann Whitman File) – NSC Series, Box 11, DDEL; SNIE 36.2-2-59 – Implications of the Communist Threat in Iraq, 17 April 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL; From Nathan Twining, Chairman of JCS – Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense – Iraq, Joint Chiefs of Staff, 22 April 1959, DDRS.

¹⁴⁴⁹ Roland Popp, "Accommodating to a Working Relationship: Arab Nationalism and US Cold War Policies in the Middle East, 1958-1960," *Cold War History* 10, no. 3 (August 2010), 410. This shift was mostly due to the Shatt al-Arab territorial dispute between the two sides.

¹⁴⁵⁰ Synopsis of State and Intelligence Material Reported to the President, Department of State, 25 March 1959, DDRS; From Wailes, #3656, 9 November 1958, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 19 (first quote); From AmConsulate Khorramshahr (John M. Bowie, American Consul), #44 – US Support of Nasser in Iraq as a Basis for Further Iranian Demands on the US, 21 January 1959, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 29; From Nathan Twining, Chairman of JCS – Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense – Iraq, Joint Chiefs of Staff, 22 April 1959, DDRS (second quote).

enthusiasm for engaging in contingency planning with Turkey, Jordan, or Iran on Iraqi affairs had dwindled significantly.¹⁴⁵¹

Options for challenging Qasim narrowed yet again with the divergence that appeared between US and UK analyses of and recommendations for Iraq. UK assessments from the fall of 1958 through the spring of 1959 indicated that Qasim could safely steer a neutralist path, independent of communist and Nasserist pressures. The fact that his regime still enjoyed the support of “moderates,” the Foreign Office believed, bolstered his chances of survival. The British held out great hope that Qasim could skillfully play off contending political factions against one another. The UK ambassador to Iraq, Sir Humphrey Trevelyan, believed there was a sizable grouping within the army that would “exert a restraining influence on Qasim’s dependence on the Communists.”¹⁴⁵²

British officials permitted Qasim to flirt with the ICP in an attempt to contain Nasser’s influence. UK policies vis-à-vis Iraq were heavily coloured by their intense distrust of Nasser. A UAR puppet regime in Baghdad, among other dangers, could lead to the revival of threats to Jordan and Kuwait. One UK official added, “I cannot see us being publicly very friendly with Nasser yet awhile.”¹⁴⁵³ The Foreign Office insisted they had no illusions about the dangers posed by a communist Iraqi regime. Even so, a Qasim government influenced to a degree by communist elements was the “lesser evil”

¹⁴⁵¹ From Washington (Sir H. Caccia) to Foreign Office, #1307 –EQ1071/37, 30 May 1959, FO371-140958, BNA.

¹⁴⁵² From Foreign Office to Washington, #1739, 31 March 1959, PREM 11-2735, BNA (quote); From Foreign Office to Washington, #8516, 30 November 1958, PREM 11-2735, BNA; Synopsis of State and Intelligence Material Reported to the President, White House, 16 December 1958, DDRS; #157 - Memorandum of Discussion at the 393rd Meeting of the National Security Council, 15 January 1959, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 375.

¹⁴⁵³ From British Embassy Baghdad (Sir H. Trevelyan) to Sir Roger Stevens, Foreign Office, EQ1071/9, 9 January 1959, FO371-140956, BNA (quote); Citino, “Middle East Cold Wars,” p. 258.

compared to a pro-Nasser regime.¹⁴⁵⁴ The protection and survival of Qasim's regime became a key component of London's policy vis-à-vis Baghdad.

To be sure, British anxieties about the pace of communist encroachments in Iraq rose in the April to June period.¹⁴⁵⁵ UK estimates again more closely mirrored those of their partners later in 1959 following the revival of the ICP's fortunes.¹⁴⁵⁶ Nevertheless, their prescriptions for remedying the situation were far different from the Americans. British officials anxiously insisted that the Americans tell Nasser to ease up on his propaganda and subversion campaign. Trevelyan contended that further Nasserist pressures on Qasim would pave the way for an eventual communist victory. He argued in late April 1959 "if Nasser does not stop we shall be Communist in a year."¹⁴⁵⁷

Trevelyan also greatly feared the Americans' close association with the Egyptians and various subversive plots targeting Qasim. Reflecting on the popular suspicions of many Iraqis, he wrote that "if the impression gets around that the Americans are really going to adopt Nasser as their champion in the Middle East against 'Communist Iraq' then we are going to get nowhere."¹⁴⁵⁸ UK officials believed they had only one option available:

¹⁴⁵⁴ From Foreign Office to Washington, #8516, 30 November 1958, PREM 11-2735, BNA (quote); Sir Michael Wright to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd – The Present Situation in Iraq and Future Outlook, #151 - EQ1015/270, 30 September 1958, FO481-12, BNA.

¹⁴⁵⁵ Sir Humphrey Trevelyan to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd –Deterioration in the Internal Security Situation in Iraq after the Abortive Mosul Revolt, #36 – EQ1015/239, 26 March 1959, FO481-13, BNA; From Baghdad (Sir H. Trevelyan) to Foreign Office, #320, 10 April 1959, PREM 11-2735, BNA.

¹⁴⁵⁶ Even before the assassination attempt on Qasim, UK officials were suggesting that Qasim's chances of remaining in power were declining. Assessing the situation on 1 January 1960, Trevelyan acknowledged that "Qasim's position is now shaky." See CIA NSC Briefing, "Iraq – 30 September 1959," February 27 2010. CIA-RDP79R00890A001100090006-0, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST); Sir Humphrey Trevelyan to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd – Iraq: Annual Review for 1959, #1 – EQ1011/1, 1 January 1960, FO481-14, BNA (quote); Blackwell, "A Desert Squall," p. 7-8; Yaqub, *Containing Arab Nationalism*, p. 262.

¹⁴⁵⁷ Sir Humphrey Trevelyan to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd –Iraq: Internal Situation, #428 –EQ1015/292, 27 April 1959, FO481-13, BNA (quote); Sir Humphrey Trevelyan to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd –Deterioration in the Internal Security Situation in Iraq after the Abortive Mosul Revolt, #36 – EQ1015/239, 26 March 1959, FO481-13, BNA; From Foreign Office to Washington, #1814, 4 April 1959, PREM 11-2735, BNA.

¹⁴⁵⁸ From British embassy in Baghdad (Sir H. Trevelyan) to Sir Roger Stevens, Foreign Office, EQ1071/28, 7 May 1959, FO371-140957, BNA.

return to the trusted politics of “divide and rule” to keep communist and nationalist elements off balance and preserve an uneasy equilibrium between them. Non-intervention and support for Qasim’s regime, Trevelyan insisted, was the only way to protect London’s interests in Iraq and the region.¹⁴⁵⁹

The two powers engaged in a series of noisy arguments over Iraq in the spring of 1959. In a 22 March meeting between top UK and US diplomats, Selwyn Lloyd repeated his government’s distaste for what Roby Barrett called the Americans’ “aggravating infatuation with Nasser.” He reminded his American counterparts that “[d]ining with the devil...called for a long spoon.”¹⁴⁶⁰ William Rountree, in turn, insisted they reward Nasser for his anti-communist initiatives. More importantly, in laying out possible scenarios that might emerge in the months ahead, Rountree argued that communist control in Baghdad would undoubtedly be the worst situation for the Western powers. Selwyn Lloyd took exception to this characterization, arguing that “the worst thing would be for the oil of the Middle East to get into the hands of one man.”¹⁴⁶¹

American diplomats roundly resented the thesis that a communist Iraq was less threatening for Western interests than a pro-Nasser regime. The British again tried to convince the Americans in April that Nasser’s campaign of subversion was strengthening Qasim’s dependence on local communists. Nasser’s actions, and by extension those of US policymakers, the UK secretary of state argued, were “promoting the interests of

¹⁴⁵⁹ Blackwell, “A Desert Squall,” p. 11 (quote); From Baghdad (Sir H. Trevelyan) to Foreign Office, #320, 10 April 1959, PREM 11-2735, BNA; From British embassy in Baghdad (Sir H. Trevelyan) to Sir Roger Stevens, Foreign Office, EQ1071/28, 7 May 1959, FO371-140957, BNA; Maurice Snell-Mendoza, “In Defence of Oil: Britain’s Response to the Iraqi Threat Towards Kuwait, 1961,” *Contemporary British History*, 10, no. 3 (September 1996), 45.

¹⁴⁶⁰ Barrett, *The Greater Middle East and the Cold War*, p. 105 (first quote); Citino, “Middle East Cold Wars,” p. 258 (second quote).

¹⁴⁶¹ Memorandum of Conversation between US and UK officials – Middle East, Department of State, 22 March 1959, DDRS.

Communism in Iraq.” He pleaded for American officials to “get Nasser to ‘lay off’ Iraq.”¹⁴⁶² State Department representatives rejected these criticisms. Stuart Rockwell insisted to the British delegation that “[t]he risk of pushing Qasim further towards Communism was a serious one, but it was worth taking in order to keep Nasser attacking Communism.”¹⁴⁶³ Similar appeals from the UK secretary of state in late April confirmed the developing consensus in Washington that the British were being “pathological about Nasser.”¹⁴⁶⁴ American officials privately fumed about London’s naiveté vis-à-vis Iraq. Vice President Nixon was infuriated by London’s suggestion that it could “make a deal with the Iraqi Communists.”¹⁴⁶⁵

The Eisenhower administration listened carefully to their allies’ concerns and appreciated the dangers that came with collaboration with Nasser. Yet these risks did not stop them from working with Cairo. In spite of their allies’ opposition, or perhaps because of the paucity of other options available, the Americans continued to encourage and collude with Nasser on his covert intervention campaign against communism and Qasim. As in the second phase, the United States supported Nasser’s propaganda offensive. Nasser personally attacked Qasim as the “divider” who was delivering Iraq into the hands of Soviet imperialism and producing a “red dictatorship and bloodshed.”

¹⁴⁶² Record of Conversation between the Secretary of State and Mr. Christian Herter at the British embassy, Washington, 4 April 1959, FO371-141841, BNA (first quote); Memorandum of Conversation – The Acting Secretary, NE – Mr. Stuart Rockwell, Mr. Selwyn Lloyd, Sir Harold Caccia, Lord Hood, Mr. Willie Morris, Mr. Dennis Laskey – The Situation in Iraq, 4 April 1959, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs - Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Office Files Relating to Middle Eastern Affairs, 1958-1959, Box 14 (second quote).

¹⁴⁶³ Record of Conversation between the Secretary of State and Mr. Christian Herter at the British embassy, Washington, 4 April 1959, FO371-141841, BNA.

¹⁴⁶⁴ Record of Conversation between the Secretary of State and Mr. Herter at the American embassy in Paris, 29 April 1959, FO371-141841, BNA.

¹⁴⁶⁵ Discussion at the 403rd Meeting of the National Security Council, 23 April 1959, Dwight D. Eisenhower: Papers as President, 1953-1961 (Ann Whitman File) – NSC Series, Box 11, DDEL; Discussion at the 404th Meeting of the National Security Council, 30 April 1959, Dwight D. Eisenhower: Papers as President, 1953-1961 (Ann Whitman File) – NSC Series, Box 11, DDEL (quote).

Nasser also continued his crusade to engineer Qasim's downfall, making contact with and giving exile to anti-Qasim groups.¹⁴⁶⁶ The Special Committee on Iraq was under no illusions about the types of activities they were associating themselves with. The intelligence community openly acknowledged in mid-April 1959 that Nasser would "encourage and support military action by dissident Iraqis and to foster uprisings by tribal elements."¹⁴⁶⁷

The committee convened regularly in the April 1959 to March 1960 period to debate ways to channel developments in Baghdad in anti-communist directions and reassert a sense of American "control" over Iraqi events. A major divide emerged within the SCOI between "hardline elements" in the CIA, DOD, and other agencies that wished to actively pursue regime change and the "accommodationist" bloc in the State Department that preferred restraint and patience.¹⁴⁶⁸ Though the State Department's caution seems to have carried the day in the April to June period, Osgood and Citino rightly remind us that the "precise nature of US connivance with Nasser and Iraqi opposition elements" still "remains a mystery shrouded in classified documents...."¹⁴⁶⁹ The broad contours of the SCOI's proposals and policies in this period are discernible from the documentary record and deserve close attention.

¹⁴⁶⁶ Blackwell, "A Desert Squall," p. 9-10 (quote); Jankowski, *Nasser's Egypt, Arab Nationalism, and the United Arab Republic*, p.153-154. A Cairo-based propaganda radio campaign tried to incite Iraqis to revolt against Qasim's regime. See Talking Paper – The Iraqi Situation, 15 April 1959, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) – Subject Files, 1945-1960, Box 24.

¹⁴⁶⁷ SNIE 36.2-2-59 – Implications of the Communist Threat in Iraq, 17 April 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL.

¹⁴⁶⁸ Popp, "Accommodating to a Working Relationship," p. 404; Brandon Wolfe-Hunnicut, "The End of the Concessionary Regime: Oil and American Power in Iraq, 1958-1972," Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Stanford University, 2011, 30, 40 (quotes).

¹⁴⁶⁹ Osgood, "Eisenhower and Regime Change in Iraq," p. 20 (first quote); Citino, "Middle East Cold Wars," p. 255 (second quote).

The subject of American assistance for Nasser's intervention was debated by the NSC on 2 April as a prelude to the SCOI's creation. Following Allen Dulles' briefing on the Iraqi situation, the president inquired whether it might be a good idea to "provide [redacted] support to Nasser [rest of sentence redacted.]" If US policy was designed to save Iraq, the president asked, shouldn't Washington start those efforts now?¹⁴⁷⁰ Though some State Department representatives had previously suggested limited collaboration with Cairo before April, opinions by this point were strongly against direct planning with Nasser. US participation, they felt, would certainly become public knowledge, particularly if plans went awry as they did at Mosul.¹⁴⁷¹ For the present time, Ambassador Jernegan insisted, there was no option available other than to support Qasim. This involved US diplomats expressing their frustrations to the prime minister with the extent of communist influence in government in an effort to drive a wedge between himself and the ICP, though this option was still not expected to produce significant changes. Stuart Rockwell agreed that the risks of collaboration with Nasser (in the form of public exposure, among others) outweighed the potential benefits.¹⁴⁷² A policy paper drafted by the State Department on 15 April summed up their general approach. The study defiantly rejected direct, covert intervention in Iraq in light of the paucity of assets

¹⁴⁷⁰ Discussion at the 401st Meeting of the National Security Council, 2 April 1959, Dwight D. Eisenhower: Papers as President, 1953-1961 (Ann Whitman File) – NSC Series, Box 11, DDEL.

¹⁴⁷¹ From Jernegan to SecState Washington, #3408, 7 April 1959, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 26; State Department Paper - Situation in Iraq: Policy the United States Should Follow to Prevent Communism from Establishing Control of the Country, 15 April 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL; Discussion at the 401st Meeting of the National Security Council, 2 April 1959, Dwight D. Eisenhower: Papers as President, 1953-1961 (Ann Whitman File) – NSC Series, Box 11, DDEL.

¹⁴⁷² From Baghdad (Jernegan) to Secretary of State, #2837, 3 April 1959, White House Office, Office of the Staff Secretary: Records, 1952-1961 – International Series, Box 8, DDEL; Record of Conversation between the Secretary of State and Mr. Christian Herter at the British embassy, Washington, 4 April 1959, FO371-141841, BNA.

in the country, the residual popularity of Qasim's regime, and the strength of Iraqi security forces.¹⁴⁷³

The State Department's policy guidelines met a great deal of resistance. An NSC Planning Board document from mid-April indicated that the CIA and JCS favoured "a more forward policy" vis-à-vis Iraq. Challenging State's assessments, it also suggested the Americans had contacts with unnamed Iraqi elements that would cooperate in a move against Qasim if there appeared a reasonable "chance of success."¹⁴⁷⁴ Vice President Nixon also led the charge to outflank the cautious State Department. He challenged their assertion that the US could do little to prevent Iraq's drift into the communist orbit. Treasury Secretary Anderson similarly argued that the US should do more to counter the "most serious threat that the United States has faced since 1953." Otherwise, as in Vietnam, Iraq would turn communist while the Americans debated how best to engage the threat.¹⁴⁷⁵

Newly released documents not yet cited by other scholars from the 20 April and 24 April SCOI meetings enhance our understanding of the intensity of debate between the accommodationist and activist blocs. The State Department's approach in these meetings revealed their preference, as they said, for a "hands-off policy by both the US and Nasser, at least for a brief period, in which indigenous anti-Communist elements in Iraq can assert themselves." Rountree, with the backing of other State Department representatives, took exception with the tenor of intelligence reports that offered a "more

¹⁴⁷³ State Department Paper - Situation in Iraq: Policy the United States Should Follow to Prevent Communism from Establishing Control of the Country, 15 April 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL.

¹⁴⁷⁴ The Situation in Iraq – Comments and Questions, 16 April 1959, NARA, RG 273, Records of the NSC - Official Meeting Minutes, Box 23.

¹⁴⁷⁵ Memcon – NSC Discussion on Iraq, 17 April 1959, NARA, RG 59, Records of the Policy Planning Council - Subject Files, 1954-1962, Box 141 (quote); Barrett, *The Greater Middle East and the Cold War*, p. 113, 118.

alarmist picture than is justified.” He counseled his colleagues at the Pentagon and CIA not to “push the alarm button unless it would help.”¹⁴⁷⁶

Conversely, the Pentagon and CIA suggested on 20 April the Americans had reached the “point of ‘now or never.’”¹⁴⁷⁷ The CIA, DOD, and the NSC representative Philip Halla wanted to reach a specific understanding with Nasser about “further joint planning and action...aimed at reversing the trend in Iraq.” Though heavily redacted, the minutes of these two meetings outline some of their specific ideas. Assistant Secretary of Defense John Irwin argued that “we could help out Nasser if it came to another Mosul-type uprising.” He later added that “we had to take a chance [rest of line redacted].” The CIA’s suggestions included assistance for Radio Cairo’s propaganda and possible “assurances concerning money and arms to be used in mounting operations against Kassem [sic].” The paragraph that follows this recommendation remains censored.¹⁴⁷⁸ Irwin also acknowledged that “anything we do is risky. The question is one of timing and judgment.” He ominously added that “some things can be done, while for political reasons other[s] cannot be undertaken.” The 24 April meeting concluded with the CIA

¹⁴⁷⁶ Memorandum from Philip Halla – Meeting of Special Committee on Iraq on April 20 1959, 21 April 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL.

¹⁴⁷⁷ Memorandum from Philip Halla – Meeting of Special Committee on Iraq on April 20 1959, 21 April 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL.

¹⁴⁷⁸ Memorandum from Philip Halla – Meeting of Special Committee on Iraq on April 20 1959, 21 April 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL (first quote); Memorandum from Philip Halla – Meeting of Special Committee on Iraq on April 24 1959, 27 April 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL (second quote). This second document, as with the first, is newly released from the Eisenhower Library.

agreeing to prepare an outline for use in talks with Nasser, though only in the event the Americans decided to open covert discussions with him.¹⁴⁷⁹

Outside the confines of the SCOI, the JCS, DOD, and CIA each produced their own set of recommendations in an attempt to move the ball forward with covert planning. JCS head Nathan Twining outlined his views regarding contingency planning and covert intervention in late April. Twining argued that secret assistance for Nasser's campaign against Iraq "should be explored in detail and on an urgent basis." His analysis recognized the paucity of viable anti-communist leaders. Even so, he believed "the opposing elements present in the Iraqi population offer possibilities for exploitation at a propitious time."¹⁴⁸⁰ He recommended the development of "assets in coordination with US allies which could be used to promote revolts." Twining's study concluded by emphasizing that time was of the essence. "The accelerated rate of the communist takeover in Iraq," he argued, "and the stake at issue do not allow delay."¹⁴⁸¹

The Pentagon's undated contingency plan insisted, as a main premise, that Qasim was committed to a policy of friendship with the Soviet bloc and antagonism toward the West. It vigorously argued that the United States "should decide now to initiate action...to thwart a Communist seizure of control of the Iraq Government...Effective US

¹⁴⁷⁹ Memorandum from Philip Halla – Meeting of Special Committee on Iraq on April 24 1959, 27 April 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL.

¹⁴⁸⁰ From Nathan Twining, Chairman of JCS – Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense – Iraq, Joint Chiefs of Staff, 22 April 1959, DDRS. See also Summary of Conclusions of the Anglo-United States Working Group – May 1959, CAB21-5595, BNA.

¹⁴⁸¹ Memorandum from N.F. Twining, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff to Secretary of Defense – Iraq, 22 April 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL. This document includes extra content not included in the DDRS version. Similar contingency planning documents produced the following day by the Deputy Director of the OCDM asked whether the US should be "encouraging a plot to overthrow Kassim [sic]" in the event that American analysts concluded that Qasim reached the "point of no return" in his drift toward communism. See Memorandum from Mr. Patterson, Deputy Director of OCDM – What are We Doing About Iraq?, 23 April 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL (footnote quote).

action will require close collaboration with other governments, including the UAR.” In addition to a variety of other tactics, it recommended the CIA and State Department pursue the following measures: “A) Support anti-Communist clandestine operations in Iraq. B) Covertly support Nasser’s anti-Communist efforts aimed at Iraq. C) Covertly support an intensified propaganda offensive against Iraqi Communists.” The authors also demanded Washington “[i]dentify acceptable replacement leaders” to prepare for their accession to power.¹⁴⁸²

CIA proposals, drafted in May 1959, were similarly bellicose. The agency argued that a meager covert “campaign of minor pin-pricks and harassments” that would only “infuriate the enemy” but not “eliminate him” was unacceptable given the urgency of the crisis.¹⁴⁸³ The authors at Langley added that American leaders should be “prepared to accept some exposures, some losses, and consequent political tension and hostile propaganda attacks. The Soviets and the Communists regularly accept these risks and continue to work despite official protests and unfavourable publicity when their efforts are exposed. We must become thick skinned.” Though the document remains heavily redacted, it seems likely that the agency wished to build on the limited intelligence and psychological warfare programs that the president had recently authorized.¹⁴⁸⁴ As Osgood adeptly concludes, these policy suggestions, among others cited above, “leave

¹⁴⁸² Department of Defense - Suggested Courses of US Action, Iraq, Undated, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL.

¹⁴⁸³ NSC Memo regarding Overt Measures by the US Government, Undated, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL.

¹⁴⁸⁴ NSC Memo regarding Overt Measures by the US Government, Undated, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL; Memorandum from Philip Halla – Meeting of Special Committee on Iraq on May 6 1959, 8 May 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL.

little doubt that the CIA's preferred course of action involved decisive measures to remove Qasim from power."¹⁴⁸⁵

These agencies continued to battle over the direction of US policy in SCOI and NSC meetings. State Department officials vigorously restated their case for a policy of restraint. Rockwell and Rountree argued in the 6 May SCOI session that "extreme caution" was necessary in order to avoid a situation where the US would "kill off our only hope" in the figure of Qasim. Ambassador Jernegan briefed the NSC one day later. He acknowledged that while US policy produced mixed results, more aggressive policies would drive Qasim further into Moscow's arms.¹⁴⁸⁶ Jernegan's cautious optimism figured heavily in Rountree's assessment in the 19 May SCOI meeting. Rountree identified a "possible favourable trend" among signs that Qasim was beginning to stand up to the communists. Given these realities, while "[c]ontingency planning should go ahead on the CIA and military side," he argued, "we should do nothing now which would upset" the situation.¹⁴⁸⁷

Philip Halla, an NSC representative on the SCOI, was one of several committee members infuriated by Foggy Bottom's positions. Halla felt the State Department's resistance to initiating more active covert policies was, as Citino recounts,

¹⁴⁸⁵ Osgood, "Eisenhower and Regime Change in Iraq," p. 18.

¹⁴⁸⁶ Memorandum from Philip Halla – Meeting of Special Committee on Iraq on May 6 1959, 8 May 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL (quote); Discussion at the 405th Meeting of the National Security Council, 7 May 1959, Dwight D. Eisenhower: Papers as President, 1953-1961 (Ann Whitman File) – NSC Series, Box 11, DDEL.

¹⁴⁸⁷ Memorandum from Philip Halla – Meeting of Special Committee on Iraq on May 19 1959, 20 May 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL (quote); #192 - Memorandum from the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (Rountree) to Acting Secretary of State Dillon, 3 June 1959, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 464; Discussion at the 409th Meeting of the National Security Council, 4 June 1959, Dwight D. Eisenhower: Papers as President, 1953-1961 (Ann Whitman File) – NSC Series, Box 11, DDEL.

“deplorable.”¹⁴⁸⁸ His assessment offered a thoughtful characterization of the major divide within the SCOI among its constituent members. At the 6 May meeting, a paper exploring contingency plans prepared by a joint CIA-Defense-JCS-State working group was read aloud. It did not find a receptive audience among many State Department figures. Ambassador Jernegan was “‘horrified’ by parts of the paper.” Further sparks flew when Armin Meyer of State colourfully asked whether they were discussing the “‘brief outline or the ‘longer paper in which the Admiral is sailing his ships up the river.’” Military representatives fired back, insisting the longer study merely presented a variety of activities that could be undertaken in conjunction with Nasser “‘if the green light is turned on for such an operation.’”¹⁴⁸⁹

This divide grew more pronounced as May and June wore on. Admiral Grantham pressed Rountree on 19 May whether there was “‘anything more that we can do now and whether we could now begin to work more closely with Nasser.’” Rountree replied in the negative. The CIA was distinctly non-plussed by this answer. The agency’s representative in the SCOI argued that “‘we should move with all dispatch to throw the Communists out of Iraq, working with the UK, Egypt, Turkey, Iran, and Jordan all in different degrees.’” The rest of the CIA’s recommendations remain redacted.¹⁴⁹⁰ By early June, the CIA was convinced the State Department was “‘being excessively cautious regarding Kassem [sic].’”¹⁴⁹¹ The activist bloc within the SCOI realized, however, that

¹⁴⁸⁸ Citino, “Middle East Cold Wars,” p. 257.

¹⁴⁸⁹ Memorandum from Philip Halla – Meeting of Special Committee on Iraq on May 6 1959, 8 May 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL (all quotes).

¹⁴⁹⁰ Memorandum from Philip Halla – Meeting of Special Committee on Iraq on May 19 1959, 20 May 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL (all quotes).

¹⁴⁹¹ Memorandum from Philip Halla to Mr. Gray – CIA Views on Iraq, 3 June 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL.

the State Department held the upper hand in directing the committee's decisions for the time being. The 19 May SCOI session concluded with the State Department promising to distribute a copy of their recommendations vis-à-vis Iraq. Admiral Grantham, speaking for the disenchanted hawks in the room, snidely commented "What do you want the paper for anyway? The report won't say anything."¹⁴⁹²

The State Department's aversion to aggressive covert programs was fueled, in part, by important political shifts appearing in Iraq in the summer of 1959. Though officials remained concerned about the situation in Baghdad, the threat of an immediate communist takeover suddenly waned. Qasim began to limit the activities of the once-powerful PRFs. In June, in an olive branch to pro-UAR elements, he offered amnesty to a number of imprisoned and exiled nationalists. Cabinet changes implemented in mid-July strengthened the reformist NDP rather than the ICP.¹⁴⁹³ The Soviet Union also played a role in dampening tensions; Soviet leaders reportedly encouraged the ICP to moderate its calls for representation in Qasim's cabinet in an effort to improve relations with Cairo and Washington.¹⁴⁹⁴

¹⁴⁹² Memorandum from Philip Halla – Meeting of Special Committee on Iraq on May 19 1959, 20 May 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL. By 8 June, Knight of the DOD stated that the group probably did not need to continue weekly meetings. The "wait and see" policy had already been decided, Knight complained, and committee members were not "prepared to introduce alternatives." See Memorandum from Philip Halla – Meeting of Special Committee on Iraq on June 8 1959, 8 June 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL (footnote quote).

¹⁴⁹³ From NE – Armin H. Meyer to NEA Mr. G. Lewis Jones – Preventing a Communist Takeover in Iraq, 24 September 1959, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs - Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Office Files Relating to Middle Eastern Affairs, 1958-1959, Box 14; Summary of Events in Iraq Since Late June, Undated, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs - Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Records of the Director, 1958-1963, Box 3; From Baghdad (Sir H. Trevelyan) to Foreign Office, #752, 13 June 1959, PREM 11-4317, BNA; From Secretary of State, 23 July 1959, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 34; Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*, p. 905-906; Dawisha, *Iraq*, p. 178.

¹⁴⁹⁴ Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*, p. 903; Citino, "Middle East Cold Wars," p. 258-259; Wolfe-Hunnicut, "The End of the Concessionary Regime," p. 55.

The most dramatic event in the turning of the tide came in July 1959. A communist rally held in Kirkuk from 14 to 16 July to commemorate the revolution turned into a bloodbath. Some Kurdish communists used the rally as an opportunity to assault local ethnic Turkmen. Several dozen were killed, and another hundred were wounded. The ICP, Brandon Wolfe-Hunnicuttt recounts, “responded to the events in Kirkuk by embarking on a period of critical self-reflection.”¹⁴⁹⁵ The ICP moderated its demands for cabinet positions. Qasim went aggressively after the communists, arresting scores of party activists. Branches of the Democratic Youth Foundation and the General Federation of Trade Unions, organizations linked to the ICP, had their offices shuttered.¹⁴⁹⁶

By the summer of 1959, Ambassador Jernegan claimed with confidence that the official American policy of friendly engagement with Baghdad was “at last beginning to pay dividends.” Even the State Department’s opponents in Washington saw the writing on the wall. DCI Dulles conceded on 28 May that Qasim was “taking a reasonably firm stand against the Communists.” The wider intelligence community, in an SNIE produced on 30 June, took the bold step of admitting that their recent estimates had been “too gloomy.” “There are signs of growing resolve on Qassim’s [sic] part,” the SNIE contended, “to move with increasing determination against the Iraqi Communists.”¹⁴⁹⁷ In

¹⁴⁹⁵ Citino, “Middle East Cold Wars,” p. 258; Franzen, *Red Star over Iraq*, p. 109; Hahn, *Missions Accomplished?*, p. 42-43; Wolfe-Hunnicuttt, “The End of the Concessionary Regime,” p. 54 (quote); *Staff Study, United States Foreign Policy – Middle East*, p. 26-27.

¹⁴⁹⁶ From Jernegan to SecState Washington, #764, 8 September 1959, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 30; Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*, p. 922; Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, p. 152.

¹⁴⁹⁷ #199 - Telegram from the Embassy in Iraq (Jernegan) to the Department of State, 9 August 1959, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 477 (first quote); Discussion at the 408th Meeting of the National Security Council, 28 May 1959, Dwight D. Eisenhower: Papers as President, 1953-1961 (Ann Whitman File) – NSC Series, Box 11, DDEL (second quote); SNIE 36.2/2-59 – Short Term Outlook in Iraq, 30 June 1959, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 471 (third quote).

light of these promising changes, the SCOI membership decided to discontinue regular meetings in June.¹⁴⁹⁸ Like the Americans, Nasser appeared more optimistic that Qasim was capable of resisting further communist encroachments. In response, he toned down his propaganda tracts and put existing plans for covert intervention on the shelf.

American strategists were grateful for Nasser's decision, since a premature covert plot would eliminate any capacities Nasser might have "before they can be used in connection with a central move in Baghdad" at a future date.¹⁴⁹⁹

This welcome respite from crisis did not last long. The political pendulum rapidly swung back in the communists' favour by the late summer and early fall of 1959. The nationalists' resurgence in the summer actually had the unintended consequence of redirecting Qasim toward the communists as a counterweight. Wolfe-Hunnicuttt notes that tensions between opposing forces were exacerbated in August and September when the regime executed nearly two dozen high profile nationalists, including the popular Brigadier Nadim Tabaqchali, who had participated in the Mosul revolt. At the same time, US officials picked up rumors that the PRF would be reactivated. The Americans were also angered by the ongoing release of suspected communists from prisons.¹⁵⁰⁰

¹⁴⁹⁸ Memorandum from Philip Halla – Meeting of Special Committee on Iraq on June 8 1959, 8 June 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL.

¹⁴⁹⁹ From Anschuetz, #3822, 23 June 1959, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 27; From Copeland and Eichelberger – The Position of Nasser Since the Mosul Rebellion, 11 May 1959, Robert B. Anderson: Papers, 1933-89, Box 311, DDEL (quote); Memorandum of Conversation – Mr. M.R. Booker, Minister, Embassy of Australia, NE – Mr. Armin H. Meyer, NE – Mr. William C. Lakeland – Situation in Iraq, 15 July 1959, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs - Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Subject Files Relating to Iraq and Jordan, 1956-1959, Box 13.

¹⁵⁰⁰ Wolfe-Hunnicuttt, "The End of the Concessionary Regime," p. 41; Mufti, "The United States and Nasserist Pan-Arabism," p. 176. See also From Jernegan to SecState Washington, #446, 21 August 1959, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 30; Memorandum from Philip Halla – Meeting of the Special Committee on Iraq on September 24 1959, 24 September 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL; From NE – Armin H. Meyer to NEA Mr. G. Lewis Jones – Preventing a Communist Takeover in Iraq, 24

Intelligence researchers insisted the situation had grown “considerably more tense” due to the popular perception in Iraq that Qasim would not take “forthright action” against the ICP and its supporters.¹⁵⁰¹ By 30 September, the CIA concluded that Qasim’s relationship with the nationalists had reached “a new low.” Even Ambassador Jernegan admitted to his superiors that the “momentum of anti-Communist trend has slowed.”¹⁵⁰²

This contentious period in Iraqi politics was highlighted by the failed assassination attempt against Qasim on 7 October 1959 by Baathist elements. One of the assailants was a twenty two year old Saddam Hussein. In recent years, the journalist Richard Sale, on the basis of interviews conducted with anonymous sources, alleged that the United States actively assisted the assassination attempt on 7 October. As Citino correctly points out, however, Sale’s report confuses details of the 1959 assassination attempt with the overthrow of Qasim’s regime in February 1963.¹⁵⁰³ The findings of this study closely align with those of Citino and Osgood, the two historians who have examined the confusing, fragmentary documentary record in substantive depth.

American diplomats and intelligence analysts were well informed about rumors of an impending coup and assassination attempt in September and October, as well as linkages formed between Iraqi dissidents and the UAR. US observers also continued to assess

September 1959, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs - Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Office Files Relating to Middle Eastern Affairs, 1958-1959, Box 14.

¹⁵⁰¹ #200 - Editorial Note, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 478 (quote); CIA Office of National Estimates, “Memorandum for the Director of Central Intelligence – Possible Developments in Iraq – 23 September 1959,” July 24 2009. CIA-RDP79R00904A000500010030-5, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST).

¹⁵⁰² CIA NSC Briefing, “Iraq – 30 September 1959,” February 27 2010. CIA-RDP79R00890A001100090006-0, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST) (first quote); From Jernegan to SecState Washington, #764, 8 September 1959, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 30 (second quote).

¹⁵⁰³ Citino, “Middle East Cold Wars,” p. 256, fn 23 on 267; Richard Sale, “Exclusive: Saddam Key in Early CIA Plot,” *United Press International*, 10 April 2003. It is also alleged that Hussein’s escape to exile in Cairo was followed by contact with US intelligence officers. See Osgood, “Eisenhower and Regime Change in Iraq,” p. 22-23.

various personalities who might lead a post-Qasim regime.¹⁵⁰⁴ There is no conclusive evidence linking the US to the 7 October assassination attempt; the records of US activities are incomplete and circumstantial. Even so, to quote Citino, “[t]he possibility cannot be ruled out that the United States encouraged the plot....”¹⁵⁰⁵

The documentary record clearly shows that CIA officers openly discussed efforts to expand their covert capacities in Iraq before 7 October. Indeed, the DOD, JCS, and CIA revived their campaign to devise aggressive contingency measures in light of the renewed political tensions. The reconvening of the SCOI on 24 September gave these groups a forum in which to voice their concerns and policy prescriptions. The State Department was forced on the defensive, desperate to restrain the interventionist impulses of the other committee members.

As before, observers regularly speculated about the most likely personalities to lead a plot against Qasim. On 10 September, DCI Dulles referred to the person of General Ahmed Saleh al-Abdi, a military governor general and close aide of Qasim.¹⁵⁰⁶ Al-Abdi’s name reappeared with some frequency in studies as the possible leader of an alternative, anti-communist regime. A cable authored by Armin Meyer of the State Department in mid-September was drafted specifically to assess the “chances of a coup on behalf of Gen. Saleh al-Abdi.” Meyer added in the 24 September SCOI meeting that an assassination attempt against Qasim was “likely” and that Abdi might “take over” in

¹⁵⁰⁴ Citino, “Middle East Cold Wars,” p. 256

¹⁵⁰⁵ Ibid, p. 256 (quote); Osgood, “Eisenhower and Regime Change in Iraq,” p. 21-22.

¹⁵⁰⁶ #200 - Editorial Note, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 478.

Baghdad.¹⁵⁰⁷ A briefing note prepared for the NSC one week later concluded with a reference to al-Abdi yet again as the likely inheritor of power.¹⁵⁰⁸

Moreover, indications began to flow to US officials of the approaching crisis, with the threats growing more specific as time went on. The CIA confirmed on 23 September that reports of coup plans, “including the assassination of Qassim [sic],” had been on the rise in recent weeks. Two hand-written notes from the Gerard Smith series documents from the Eisenhower Library from 28 and 30 September mention a coup attempt, with the 30 September minute suggesting a move was “imminent.”¹⁵⁰⁹ A briefing note drafted for the NSC on the same day confirmed the spate of incoming reports “of a possible impending assassination or coup.” The most revealing of all intelligence reports arrived on the president’s desk on 1 October. This material specifically mentioned that a “new coup, to start with the assassination of Qasim, is scheduled ‘within a week.’”¹⁵¹⁰

¹⁵⁰⁷ From NEA – Mr. Armin H. Meyer via NE – Mr. William C. Lakeland and NE – H.W. Glidden – Salah al-Abdi and the Recent Iraqi Coup Rumors, 14 September 1959, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs - Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Office Files Relating to Middle Eastern Affairs, 1958-1959, Box 14 (first quote); Memorandum from Philip Halla – Meeting of the Special Committee on Iraq on September 24 1959, 24 September 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL (second quote). US officials believed that al-Abdi would make “a dignified, orderly, sane and common sense, but not conspicuously able or effective, head of government... [who] would take immediate and strong measures to discipline if not suppress the Communist Party.” On US assessments of al-Abdi, see From NE – Armin H. Meyer – Preventing a Communist Takeover in Iraq, 24 September 1959, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs - Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Records of the Director, 1958-1963, Box 3.

¹⁵⁰⁸ Briefing Note for NSC 10/1/59 – The Situation in Iraq, 30 September 1959, NARA, RG 273, Records of the NSC - Official Meeting Minutes, Box 23.

¹⁵⁰⁹ CIA Office of National Estimates, “Memorandum for the Director of Central Intelligence – Possible Developments in Iraq – 23 September 1959,” July 24 2009. CIA-RDP79R00904A000500010030-5, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST) (first quote); Handwritten notes, 28 September 1959, John Foster Dulles: Papers, 1950-61 – Gerard Smith Series, Box 3, DDEL; Handwritten notes, 30 September 1959, John Foster Dulles: Papers, 1950-61 – Gerard Smith Series, Box 3, DDEL (second quote).

¹⁵¹⁰ Briefing Note for NSC 10/1/59 – The Situation in Iraq, 30 September 1959, NARA, RG 273, Records of the NSC - Official Meeting Minutes, Box 23 (first quote); Synopsis of Intelligence Items Reported to the President, Department of State, 1 October 1959, DDRS (second quote); From Armin H. Meyer - NSC Meeting Concerning Iraq, 1 October 1959, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs - Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Office Files Relating to Middle Eastern Affairs, 1958-1959, Box 14.

American analysts again carefully charted the connections forming between their new ally in Cairo and active anti-Qasim groups. DCI Dulles acknowledged on 10 September that Nasser was dispatching weapons and money to pro-UAR elements.¹⁵¹¹ The view from a US diplomat stationed in Syria told a similar story. He noted on 23 September that an unnamed “private organization” was recruiting members for Iraqi operations in Aleppo. Moreover, weapons were being transferred to Iraqi Shammar tribesmen based in Syria.¹⁵¹² Nasser’s support for these conspiratorial moves was confirmed through other reports. Another US official stationed in Syria argued that “Nasser’s blessing for free Iraqi enterprise is obvious.”¹⁵¹³ DCI Dulles specifically mentioned on 1 October that Nasser “had urged the assassination plotters not to move too fast.” He added that Cairo had recently made contact with the Americans to gauge their likely response to a battle between nationalists and communists in Baghdad. The rest of this conversation unfortunately remains redacted.¹⁵¹⁴

The policy prescriptions offered by various members of the SCOI are instructive in revealing the extent to which the State Department’s cautious approach was under assault. The Assistant Secretary of Defense, John Irwin, requested an urgent reconvening of the SCOI on 18 September. Rising political instability, he said, points “to the possibility of an attempt to overthrow the Qassim [sic] government by violence.” Irwin added that these rumors “do draw attention to possibilities that merit serious

¹⁵¹¹ #200 - Editorial Note, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 478.

¹⁵¹² From Aleppo (Ireland), #2, 23 September 1959, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 27.

¹⁵¹³ Memorandum from Philip Halla for Mr. Boggs –Special Committee on Iraq, 21 September 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL; From Damascus (Reams), #19, 23 September 1959, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 27.

¹⁵¹⁴ Discussion at the 420th Meeting of the National Security Council, 1 October 1959, Dwight D. Eisenhower: Papers as President, 1953-1961 (Ann Whitman File) – NSC Series, Box 11, DDEL.

consideration.”¹⁵¹⁵ At the end of September, the State Department agreed to consider diplomatic contingencies in the event of a successful coup, including extending “prompt recognition and other steps to bolster an anti-communist regime, should one seize power.”¹⁵¹⁶

The 24 September SCOI meeting provides a fascinating glimpse into the policies considered by Washington on the eve of the assassination. In the meeting, the CIA and DOD made a “strong pitch for a more active policy towards Iraq.” This would include wider “contingency planning to cover situations in which Kassem [sic] might be removed from the scene through a coup or assassination.”¹⁵¹⁷ One CIA member speculated about steps the Americans could take to “assist” the nationalists, including encouraging the UAR and Jordan to work in tandem. Another CIA representative agreed that the “only way to do anything is through the people in the area.” William Lakeland broke with his State Department colleagues to adopt an equally aggressive view. He felt the US “ought to be looking for alternatives” to Qasim as a way of stabilizing the Iraqi environment in pro-American directions.¹⁵¹⁸ The meeting was punctuated by a revealing, if limited, statement from the CIA regarding the impending coup plots. Agency representatives noted that “we have done all we can operationally to get ready. There is a small stockpile

¹⁵¹⁵ Memorandum from John Irwin for G. Lewis Jones, 18 September 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL.

¹⁵¹⁶ Briefing Note for NSC 10/1/59 – The Situation in Iraq, 30 September 1959, NARA, RG 273, Records of the NSC - Official Meeting Minutes, Box 23.

¹⁵¹⁷ Memorandum from Philip Halla for Mr. Boggs – Meeting of the Special Committee on Iraq, 24 September 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL.

¹⁵¹⁸ Memorandum from Philip Halla for Mr. Boggs – Meeting of the Special Committee on Iraq, 24 September 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL. Kenneth Osgood astutely notes that this was an “ominous assertion from a man some believe later masterminded Qasim’s removal in 1963.” See Osgood, “Eisenhower and Regime Change in Iraq,” p. 22.

in the area. We could support elements in Jordan and the UAR to help Iraqis filter back to Iraq.”¹⁵¹⁹

The activist elements clearly came out on top of the 24 September SCOI discussion. Months before, the State Department had circulated policy briefs to the group that reflected their specific priorities and recommendations. This time, it was the CIA’s turn to set the committee’s agenda. The agency agreed on 24 September to circulate a working paper outlining actions they could take in “certain contingencies.” This sales pitch was not well received by the chairman, G. Lewis Jones, or his colleagues at Foggy Bottom. Jones complained to Philip Halla afterwards about the “pressure which he seemed to think certain members of the committee had attempted to exert for a change in policy.”¹⁵²⁰

The eventual plot to assassinate Qasim unfolded soon after this tense discussion. The Egyptians were deeply involved in the move, having made contact with the conspirators in June. In preparation, Baath party members rented a house across from the Defence Ministry to monitor Qasim’s movements.¹⁵²¹ On 7 October 1959, Baathist gunmen, including Saddam Hussein, attacked the prime minister’s car. The attack turned into a farce. Their weapons jammed and the assassins opened fire in all directions, unloading more than 200 rounds at the car. Qasim’s bodyguard was killed, but the Iraqi leader survived the brazen attempt on his life. The Egyptians allegedly then facilitated

¹⁵¹⁹ Memorandum from Philip Halla – Meeting of the Special Committee on Iraq on September 24 1959, 24 September 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL.

¹⁵²⁰ Memorandum from Philip Halla – Meeting of the Special Committee on Iraq on September 24 1959, 24 September 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL.

¹⁵²¹ Dann, *Iraq Under Qassem*, p. 254; Darwish and Alexander, *Unholy Babylon*, p. 22.

the attackers' safe exit from Baghdad to Cairo.¹⁵²² The Americans, for their part, quickly recognized the significance of the attack; after-action reports noted that the move might have represented the "implementation of coup plans, reported over the past few weeks" that planned for Qasim's assassination.¹⁵²³

The attempt on Qasim's life did nothing to stop the communists' rising profile. If anything, it exacerbated the trends apparent in the late summer and early fall. Between the dramatic events of October and the final SCOI meeting in March 1960, Iraqi politics rapidly shifted back and forth along the political spectrum. The ICP's fortunes continued to improve after October with the arrests and purges of Baath Party members and their supporters.¹⁵²⁴ The regime's public behaviour also suggested that Qasim was again becoming more dependent on ICP support. The trials of several alleged Baathist conspirators began in December, providing the regime with an opportunity to denounce the excesses of the nationalists. The Americans' concerns about Qasim's connections to the ICP shot up yet again.¹⁵²⁵ The CIA believed the regime's actions, including Qasim's regular anti-nationalist and anti-American public diatribes, were interpreted in Baghdad

¹⁵²² Handwritten notes, 12 October 1959, John Foster Dulles: Papers, 1950-61 – Gerard Smith Series, Box 3, DDEL; Darwish and Alexander, *Unholy Babylon*, p. 22-23; Hahn, *Missions Accomplished?*, p. 43; al-Arif, *Iraq Reborn*, p. 84; Citino, "Middle East Cold Wars," p. 256.

¹⁵²³ From INR – Hugh S. Cumming Jr. to the Secretary – Intelligence Note: The Attempted Assassination of Iraqi Prime Minister Qasim, 7 October 1959, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs - Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Office Files Relating to Middle Eastern Affairs, 1958-1959, Box 14.

¹⁵²⁴ Discussion at the 432nd Meeting of the National Security Council, 14 January 1960, Dwight D. Eisenhower: Papers as President, 1953-1961 (Ann Whitman File) – NSC Series, Box 12, DDEL; Memorandum from CIA for Mr. G. Lewis Jones, Assistant Secretary – Contingency Planning Regarding Iraq, 13 October 1959, CIA ERR; Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*, p. 931; Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, p. 153; Citino, "Middle East Cold Wars," p. 259.

¹⁵²⁵ Dann, *Iraq Under Qassem*, p. 257; SNIE 36.2-5-59 – Short Term Prospects for Iraq, 15 December 1959, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 497. Following his release from hospital on 10 December, Qasim publicly denounced the nationalists in an extended press conference. See Memorandum for the Record from Philip Halla: Meeting of Special Committee on Iraq on December 4 1959, 8 December 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL.

as “an open declaration of war” against anti-communist Iraqis.¹⁵²⁶ The embassy’s review of the situation on 1 December was, not surprisingly, much gloomier than past assessments. Richard Bissell of the CIA agreed, arguing in mid-December that the “Communists were organized and disciplined while the Nationalists were divided and discouraged.”¹⁵²⁷

Given the continued resistance of American allies to participation in Nasserist subversion,¹⁵²⁸ the Egyptians remained the only viable regional partner for collusion on covert intervention in late 1959. Following the failed October plot, Nasser worked to rebuild his assets to prepare for another move against Qasim, though he now took greater care to safeguard plausible deniability in his plotting.¹⁵²⁹ The CIA asserted with confidence, less than a week after the assassination attempt, that Nasser was

¹⁵²⁶ CIA NSC Briefing, “Iraq – 9 December 1959,” July 24 2009. CIA-RDP79R00890A001100120002-0, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST).

¹⁵²⁷ Discussion at the 426th Meeting of the National Security Council, 1 December 1959, Dwight D. Eisenhower: Papers as President, 1953-1961 (Ann Whitman File) – NSC Series, Box 12, DDEL; Discussion at the 428th Meeting of the National Security Council, 10 December 1959, Dwight D. Eisenhower: Papers as President, 1953-1961 (Ann Whitman File) – NSC Series, Box 12, DDEL (quote).

¹⁵²⁸ Following the October plot, the CIA reported that Ankara believed Qasim could hold off the communists and should “be generally supported and protected against the intrigues of Nasser.” US officials complained that Turkish leaders were “running the danger of burying their heads in the sand.” While the Iranians grew more concerned about the ICP’s position after the coup attempt, they were extremely suspicious of Nasser’s intentions vis-à-vis Iraq. The Jordanians appeared more promising as regional collaborators for covert intervention. However, as with other American allies, Jordan would not coordinate with Nasser’s subversive campaign. Moreover, it was plainly evident that the Jordanians intended to run their own, independent line of subversive operations in Iraq in the pursuit of a Hashemite restoration in Baghdad. The Americans had no time for a campaign of Hashemite aggrandizement and took a “firm line” to discourage King Hussein’s plans. See Memorandum from CIA for Mr. G. Lewis Jones, Assistant Secretary – Contingency Planning Regarding Iraq, 13 October 1959, CIA ERR (quote); From British embassy in Ankara (F.D.W. Brown) to G.F. Hiller, Eastern Department, Foreign Office, 30 October 1959, FO371-140959, BNA (quote); Proposed Report to the National Security Council by the Inter-Agency Group on Iraq, Undated, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs - Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Records of the Director, 1958-1963, Box 3; From NE – Armin H. Meyer to NEA – Mr. G. Lewis Jones – Procedure for Meeting of Iraq Inter-Agency Group, 3pm, October 16, in your office, 15 October 1959, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs - Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Records of the Director, 1958-1963, Box 3 (quote).

¹⁵²⁹ SNIE 36.2-5-59 – Short Term Prospects for Iraq, 15 December 1959, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 499. See also Memorandum for the Record: Meeting of Special Committee on Iraq on January 12 1960, 13 January 1960, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL.

concentrating his energies on “tribal elements, Iraqi exiles, and perhaps commandos.” Christian Herter acknowledged in mid-December that Nasser “was still active in stirring up trouble in Iraq.”¹⁵³⁰

American officials remained fully in the informational loop regarding Egypt’s covert efforts. Intelligence regularly reached US policymakers about possible upcoming schemes that necessitated, as the CIA acknowledged, “the removal of Qasim.” The CIA argued that the situation remained “explosive,” with anti-Qasim plots developing among multiple groups. By early November, DCI Dulles noted that the US was engaged in specific contingency planning with an unnamed partner in the event of Qasim’s death.¹⁵³¹ Reports from G. Lewis Jones, Richard Bissell of the CIA, Ambassador Jernegan, and others in December 1959 and early 1960 likewise indicated that another assassination attempt was “likely.”¹⁵³² One CIA representative suggested in early December that the “nationalists will act now or never.”¹⁵³³ General al-Abdi’s name reappeared in intelligence reports yet again in December as the likely leader of an upcoming move.¹⁵³⁴

¹⁵³⁰ Memorandum from CIA for Mr. G. Lewis Jones, Assistant Secretary – Contingency Planning Regarding Iraq, 13 October 1959, CIA ERR (first quote); Discussion at the 428th Meeting of the National Security Council, 10 December 1959, Dwight D. Eisenhower: Papers as President, 1953-1961 (Ann Whitman File) – NSC Series, Box 12, DDEL (second quote).

¹⁵³¹ Memorandum from CIA for Mr. G. Lewis Jones, Assistant Secretary – Contingency Planning Regarding Iraq, 13 October 1959, CIA ERR (first quote); CIA NSC Briefing, “Iraq – 28 October 1959,” July 24 2009. CIA-RDP79R00890A001100100005-9, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST) (second quote); Discussion at the 423rd Meeting of the National Security Council, 5 November 1959, Dwight D. Eisenhower: Papers as President, 1953-1961 (Ann Whitman File) – NSC Series, Box 11, DDEL.

¹⁵³² Memorandum for the Record from Philip Halla: Meeting of Special Committee on Iraq on December 4 1959, 8 December 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL (quote); Discussion at the 428th Meeting of the National Security Council, 10 December 1959, Dwight D. Eisenhower: Papers as President, 1953-1961 (Ann Whitman File) – NSC Series, Box 12, DDEL.

¹⁵³³ Memorandum for the Record from Philip Halla: Meeting of Special Committee on Iraq on December 4 1959, 8 December 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL.

¹⁵³⁴ From USARMA Baghdad Iraq to ONI Wash DC, 22 December 1959, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs - Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Records of the Director, 1958-1963, Box 3; From NE – Armin H. Meyer to NEA – Mr. G. Lewis Jones – Procedure for Meeting of Iraq Inter-

The heated debate resumed once more between the State Department and elements in the CIA and military in late 1959. Armin Meyer articulated the larger State Department view in mid-October. Meyer insisted that an “Iraqi solution” was necessary to resolve the crisis and that outside intervention would do more harm than good. Given these realities, he and Ambassador Jernegan insisted that no immediate change in US policy was necessary.¹⁵³⁵ State’s representatives tried their best to resist the covert contingency strategies drafted by their counterparts in Washington. In response to CIA entreaties on 16 October for more aggressive contingency planning, G. Lewis Jones insisted the US could “work closely with [redacted] but not to the extent of stockpiling arms in the area.” DOD and CIA representatives were not impressed; they felt the State Department’s recommendations in mid-October were “meaningless.”¹⁵³⁶

These inter-departmental tensions boiled over in November and December 1959. A meeting scheduled on 23 November between Philip Halla and several military representatives turned into an airing of grievances against the State Department. One member complained that the UAR was busy making its own independent contingency plans. “When the balloon went up in Iraq,” he lamented, “the US was going to be caught short by its failure in this regard.” He felt the State Department’s chairmanship of the SCOI had been “very high-handed.” Another observer complained the State Department

Agency Group, 3pm, October 16, in your office, 15 October 1959, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs - Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Records of the Director, 1958-1963, Box 3.

¹⁵³⁵ From NE – Armin H. Meyer to NEA – Mr. G. Lewis Jones – Procedure for Meeting of Iraq Inter-Agency Group, 3pm, October 16, in your office, 15 October 1959, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs - Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Records of the Director, 1958-1963, Box 3 (quote); From Jernegan to SecState Washington, #947, 15 October 1959, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 30.

¹⁵³⁶ Memorandum for the Record from Philip Halla: Meeting of Special Committee on Iraq on October 16 1959, 22 October 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL.

was “basically opposed to covert activities.”¹⁵³⁷ Admiral Grantham chimed in a few days later, arguing that if Iraq fell to the communists, the SCOI would stand “to be accused of failing to carry out the presidential directive to make every effort to keep Iraq out of the communist camp.”¹⁵³⁸

The course of events in Iraq soon forced a reappraisal of the State Department’s official positions. As the winter of 1959 dragged on, State Department representatives found it increasingly difficult to defend their policy of inaction in light of the ongoing communist offensive. “By January 1960,” Osgood concurs, “even the cautious Ambassador Jernegan was open to extreme measures.”¹⁵³⁹ Department reports drafted in January 1960 conceded that Qasim might not control the communist movement any longer. State Department representatives slowly came to accept the positions of their SCOI colleagues. Jernegan personally acknowledged in early January that “while there were risks involved, the possibilities of developments adverse to US interest as such as to justify a more active [redacted] program within Iraq [rest of document redacted.]”¹⁵⁴⁰

Unfortunately, the records of the SCOI’s meetings from the first months of 1960 remain heavily censored.¹⁵⁴¹ It is clear from the available documents that the committee, by this time, was engaged in the most substantive contingency planning thus far. As one

¹⁵³⁷ Memorandum from Philip Halla to Mr. Boggs – Iraq, 23 November 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL (all quotes).

¹⁵³⁸ Memorandum for the Record from Philip Halla: Meeting of Special Committee on Iraq on December 4 1959, 8 December 1959, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL.

¹⁵³⁹ Osgood, “Eisenhower and Regime Change in Iraq,” p. 24.

¹⁵⁴⁰ Proposed Report to the National Security Council by the Inter-Agency Group on Iraq, Undated, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs - Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Records of the Director, 1958-1963, Box 3; Memorandum for the Record: Meeting of Special Committee on Iraq on January 12 1960, 13 January 1960, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL (quote). This is the most up-to-date version of this document released, even though redacted portions remain from a Mandatory Review I requested in 2011.

¹⁵⁴¹ See, for instance, the redacted version of Memorandum for the Record – Meeting of Special Committee on Iraq, 13 January 1960, NARA, RG 273, Records of the NSC - Official Meeting Minutes, Box 24.

report vaguely explained, it was agreed at the 12 January 1960 session to pursue “additional United States action suggested by the CIA.”¹⁵⁴² The SCOI authorized the CIA in early 1960 to broaden its contacts with opposition groups and communicate with military officers, nationalists, and former members of the *ancien régime* to prepare, as one analysis said, “for a possible change of regime.”¹⁵⁴³ The DOD insisted in mid-January that they needed better intelligence on the ground in Baghdad “in order to appraise the various Iraqi groups and our chances of success in working through them.”¹⁵⁴⁴ US officials also used coded language which, when compared with similar CIA contingency plans from this period of the Cold War, strongly hint at the possibility of American policymakers directly authorizing assassination plots. In the most ominous remark found in the SCOI documents, Robert Knight of DOD noted on 28 December that “he was worried about pushing the button. The basic thing that concerned him was attempting to do something for the sake of doing something.” Though the rest of the document is classified, the minutes of this meeting strongly imply that Knight was referring to a possible assassination or coup d’état.¹⁵⁴⁵ By this point, the debate within the SCOI was no longer about the merits of contingency planning. Rather, the discussion shifted to whether the United States should implement covert measures already prepared.

¹⁵⁴² Proposed Report to the National Security Council by the Inter-Agency Group on Iraq, Undated, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs - Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Records of the Director, 1958-1963, Box 3.

¹⁵⁴³ Proposed Report to the National Security Council by the Inter-Agency Group on Iraq, Undated, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs - Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Records of the Director, 1958-1963, Box 3 (quote); From G. Lewis Jones to The Acting Secretary – NSC Briefing on Iraq, 13 January 1960, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs - Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Records of the Director, 1958-1963, Box 3.

¹⁵⁴⁴ Memorandum for the Record: Meeting of Special Committee on Iraq on January 12 1960, 13 January 1960, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL.

¹⁵⁴⁵ Memorandum for the Record: Meeting of Special Committee on Iraq on December 28 1959, 4 January 1960, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL (quote). See Osgood, “Eisenhower and Regime Change in Iraq,” p. 24, fn 92 for a discussion of CIA references to assassination as the “magic button.”

The most infamous of the schemes crafted by US officials, and one which closely mirrored simultaneous attempts to kill Fidel Castro, involved a CIA plot to mail tampered items to Qasim. The Church Committee of the mid-1970s discovered that the CIA created a “Health Alteration Committee” for Iraq in early 1960 to draft a program to “incapacitate Qasim.” The scheme called for the delivery of a poisoned handkerchief to Qasim. As agency officials confided on 25 February, “[w]e do not consciously seek subject’s permanent removal from the scene...[but] we also do not object should this complication develop.”¹⁵⁴⁶ Richard Bissell apparently approved the plan on 1 April 1960, but the poisoned handkerchief was evidently never delivered.¹⁵⁴⁷ There is no reference to the “Health Alteration Committee” in the SCOI documents or any other archival records I have seen.

Kenneth Osgood recognized an interesting trend in the chronology of these events. If the poisoned handkerchief plot was approved, it “came at a peculiar time” given that US-Iraqi relations were just beginning to improve.¹⁵⁴⁸ Just as quickly as the State Department’s reports took on a pessimistic tone in early 1960, so too did developments in Iraq swing back in more pro-American, anti-communist directions. Yet again, the pace of Iraqi political developments outstripped the abilities of US policymakers to monitor and control them.

It is important to note that the tenuous political equilibrium re-established in Iraq in early 1960 was not the product of Washington’s covert operations. Instead, it was the result of a deliberate maneuver pursued by a leader whom the Americans had already

¹⁵⁴⁶ Little, “Mission Impossible,” p. 695 (quote); Osgood, “Eisenhower and Regime Change in Iraq,” p. 24.

¹⁵⁴⁷ Little, “Mission Impossible,” p. 695; Osgood, “Eisenhower and Regime Change in Iraq,” p. 24; Wolfe-Hunnicut, “The End of the Concessionary Regime,” p. 51.

¹⁵⁴⁸ Osgood, “Eisenhower and Regime Change in Iraq,” p. 25.

written off as a communist tool. For instance, Qasim had previously promised to permit the revival of legal political parties and activities. He took an important step in this direction in January 1960 when he passed the Law of Associations, which legalized the return of political party activities. The ICP saw this as their best opportunity to concretize their status as the most popular and best-organized political group.¹⁵⁴⁹ However, political parties still required the formal approval of government authorities to resume their open activities. In a clever move designed to limit the ICP's formal capacities, Qasim chose to recognize a miniscule, splinter party of the ICP as the legitimate representative of the communist movement.

This bold step permitted Qasim to claim he had fulfilled his pledge to restore normal political life.¹⁵⁵⁰ At the same time, the maneuver was a decisive political strike targeting the ICP. The Americans were, quite obviously, pleased with Qasim's strategy. Ambassador Jernegan, along with other US officials, recognized that the move was clearly designed to redress the balance and "weaken [the] Communist monolith."¹⁵⁵¹ Qasim took other measures against the communists, removing notable ICP supporters from press outlets and rejecting official licenses for the Peace Partisans and other associations linked to the communists. In the aftermath, the ICP began to decline, with

¹⁵⁴⁹ Barrett, "Intervention in Iraq, 1958-1959," p. 10-11; CIA Office of Current Intelligence, "Current Intelligence Weekly Summary – 17 December 1959," February 27 2010. CIA-RDP79-00927A002500090001-7, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST); Dann, *Iraq Under Qassem*, p. 251; Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*, p. 936.

¹⁵⁵⁰ Barrett, "Intervention in Iraq, 1958-1959," p. 10-11; Citino, "Middle East Cold Wars," p. 259; Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, p. 153. The NDP, among other groups, received licenses for their activities.

¹⁵⁵¹ #215 - Telegram from the Embassy in Iraq (Jernegan) to the Department of State, 25 February 1960, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 503 (quote); From Jernegan, #1896, 27 February 1960, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 33; From AmEmbassy Baghdad (David G. Wilson Jr., First Secretary of Embassy) to the Department of State, #810 – Program of the Communist Party of Iraq (Da'ud al-Sayegh Faction), 7 March 1960, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 32.

its influence slowly fading, its membership ranks shrinking, and its structures and affiliates disrupted by government repression.¹⁵⁵²

By 25 February, Jernegan confidently asserted that the recent upswing in US-Iraqi relations confirmed the “basic soundness” of US policy. The ambassador felt his assurance that Qasim could and would reverse the communists’ gains had proven correct.¹⁵⁵³ Nowhere did he mention his department’s shift to the aggressive line pushed by the CIA and other agencies in early 1960. On 18 March 1960, the SCOI discussed other encouraging signs that Qasim was limiting the power of communists as well as the improved economic arena in Baghdad. For the first time in a considerable period, US officials believed that a degree of normalcy and political stability had returned to Iraq. The SCOI decided, with the agreement of DOD and CIA representatives, that existing US policy vis-à-vis Iraq was basically “sound.” The SCOI was thereafter officially disbanded.¹⁵⁵⁴ The debate over formalized covert intervention in Iraq under President Eisenhower had abruptly come to an end.

Conclusion

The SCOI’s termination in mid-March 1960 marked the end of the third phase of the American strategy for intervention. The reemergence of a fragile political equilibrium in Baghdad continued in force from March 1960 to the end of the

¹⁵⁵² #215 - Telegram from the Embassy in Iraq (Jernegan) to the Department of State, 25 February 1960, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 505; Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*, p. 942.

¹⁵⁵³ #215 - Telegram from the Embassy in Iraq (Jernegan) to the Department of State, 25 February 1960, *FRUS 1958-1960*, vol. XII, p. 505.

¹⁵⁵⁴ Memorandum for the Record: Meeting of Special Committee on Iraq on March 18 1960, 25 March 1960, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL; From S/P Evan M. Wilson to Mr. Smith – Iraq, 18 March 1960, NARA, RG 59, Records of the Policy Planning Council - Subject Files, 1954-1962, Box 141 (quote).

Eisenhower presidency. By January 1961, the ICP no longer represented an existential threat to Qasim's power or his regime's stability.¹⁵⁵⁵ At the same time, Qasim maintained a watchful eye over those preaching union with the UAR. The byproduct of these developments was the relative normalization of US-Iraqi relations from March 1960 through January 1961.¹⁵⁵⁶ Qasim's political maneuverings, Roland Popp astutely notes, "saved US policymakers from making difficult decisions with respect to Iraq for the remainder of the Eisenhower administration." Relative patience and accommodation, long the hallmarks of the State Department's preferred approach, became the official line of US diplomacy in Baghdad through the end of 1960.¹⁵⁵⁷

Having witnessed convulsive waves of political unrest over the past two years, American strategists were loath to let their guard down. They still harbored great anxieties about the future of Iraqi politics and their impact on American designs for regional stability and control; the tide of anti-communism in Baghdad might still come to a sudden stop. Officials shared the consensus view that Qasim could be felled at any

¹⁵⁵⁵ Qasim showed more signs that he recognized the urgency of the communists' political challenge. Suspected communists were dismissed from government organizations and union committees while he employed repressive measures against the Peace Partisans and the Democratic Youth Federation. See CIA NSC Briefing, "Iraq – 5 April 1960," July 24 2009. CIA-RDP79R00890A001200040034-3, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST); CIA Office of Current Intelligence, "Current Intelligence Weekly Summary – 17 November 1960," February 27 2010. CIA-RDP79-00927A00300010001-9, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST); From AmEmbassy Baghdad (Davies) SecStateWashington, #G-76, 5 September 1960, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 29; Barrett, *The Greater Middle East and the Cold War*, p. 122; Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*, p. 942, 945-47; Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, p. 155.

¹⁵⁵⁶ From Secretary of State – Weekly Summary of Events, NE Area, For the Week Ending June 30, 1960, 1 July 1960, NARA, RG 84, Iraq – Classified General Records, 1936-1961, Box 27; CIA Office of Current Intelligence, "Current Intelligence Weekly Summary – 12 May 1960," February 27 2010. CIA-RDP79-00927A002700070001-7, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST); Memorandum of Conversation – Mr. E.R. Rettie, Counselor Canadian Embassy, Mr. Gordon Riddell, Canadian Department of External Affairs, NE – Mr. Armin H. Meyer, Director and NE – Mr. Alfred L. Atherton Desk Office, Iraq-Jordan Affairs – Middle East Situation, 5 May 1960, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs - Office of Near Eastern Affairs – Records of Iraq-Jordan Affairs Desk, 1959-1964, Box 1.

¹⁵⁵⁷ Popp, "Accommodating to a Working Relationship," p. 406 (quote); Wolfe-Hunnicut, "The End of the Concessionary Regime," p. 56.

moment by either an assassination or coup d'état. Summing up the general sense of anticipation about Qasim's eventual demise, Hume Horan later recounted in an interview:

“You always had to watch out for someone making a move against Abdul Kareem [sic]. If you were in the vicinity, people thought that would be really bad news...our marvelous DCM Roger Davies and our wonderful Ambassador, John Jernegan, passed the word that if Qassem [sic] came, and if we heard any funny popping noises, don't worry about protocol. Fall flat on the ground or dive into an irrigation ditch.”¹⁵⁵⁸

In its final months, the Eisenhower administration therefore prepared for a scenario where an anti-communist military junta might emerge. The “Operational Plans for Iraq” document of March 1960 treaded carefully, arguing that Washington should maintain a flexible policy to “take advantage of any opportunities for closer relations which present themselves.” Should a new regime more favourable to US interests appear, the administration should “be prepared to accord recognition promptly and to render appropriate assistance to ensure its continuance in office.”¹⁵⁵⁹ While the Americans may have desisted from encouraging active plots against the Iraqi government, they continued to debate larger strategies to defend American interests in a post-Qasim environment.

The strategy of “intervention” remained at the forefront of the minds of American officials charged with monitoring developments in Iraq after July 1958. The specific definitions of intervention differed dramatically for policymakers depending on political circumstances and interests in Iraq, Washington, and the wider Middle East. In the immediate post-revolutionary period, the United States actively considered leading an

¹⁵⁵⁸ CIA Office of National Estimates – The Outlook for Iraq, 22 September 1960, White House Office, National Security Council Staff: Papers, 1948-1961 – Special Staff File Series, Box 4, DDEL; Hume Horan interview, *Frontline Diplomacy: The Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training* (quote).

¹⁵⁵⁹ Operations Coordinating Board – Operational Plans for Iraq, 9 March 1960, NARA, RG 59, State Department Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and NSC, 1947-1963 - Administrative and Chronological Files 1953-1961, Box 26 (first quote); NSC Staff Suggestion – US Policy Toward the Near East, National Security Council, 2 June 1960, DDRS (second quote).

overt military intervention to overturn the new government. Initial deliberations were affected by the aggressive demands of allies for American action, as well as the presumed impact of the coup on the stability of conservative allies. Favourable trends and developments within Iraq helped diminish the urgency of the July crisis. Equally relevant for America's strategy were the analyses produced by officials regarding the likely outcome of an American invasion. Unlike their counterparts in the George W. Bush government in 2003, members of the Eisenhower administration in July 1958 engaged in nuanced, careful consideration of the unintended consequences of a military intervention in Baghdad, evincing a thoughtful appreciation for the limits of American power on the international stage.

The concept of intervention was revived and redefined following the consolidation of Qasim's government. From August 1958 to March 1960, specific elements within the Eisenhower administration argued for a covert intervention to undermine the communist-leaning regime in Baghdad. Yet again, developments ongoing in Baghdad mixed with the nuances and pressures of America's bilateral relations with regional actors to shape US strategies. Popular anxieties about the rising tide of communism in Iraq, particularly after the spring of 1959, made aggressive forms of covert intervention more appealing to some SCOI members. Washington's pursuit of these strategies was facilitated by the willing collaboration extended by Nasser's government, which served in some ways as a surrogate for US intervention initiatives to safeguard the doctrine of plausible deniability.

Phases two and three of the American interventionist strategy saw the persistence of divisions within the government regarding appropriate policies to pursue vis-à-vis Iraq

and Nasser. As with the pre-revolutionary debates over military aid and the Baghdad Pact, the Eisenhower administration did not speak with a single voice on the question of covert intervention. The CIA, DOD, and JCS proved aggressive in their policy suggestions, regularly calling for greater American involvement in and collusion with Nasser's covert initiatives. The State Department remained the voice of restraint and pragmatism, though even its strategy began to buckle in early 1960 under the weight of deteriorating conditions in Iraq. For the vast majority of the August 1958 to January 1961 period, however, the State Department worked actively to dampen the enthusiasm of those members seeking a more extensive program of covert collaboration with Cairo. As Osgood astutely notes, the "force with which State Department officials made their arguments was one indication of how the department was swimming against the tide" by late 1959 and early 1960.¹⁵⁶⁰ It was the reemergence of anti-communist elements in Iraq in the first months of 1960, rather than the successful conclusion of the CIA's covert efforts or the State Department's concerns about the wisdom of their secret strategies, that prevented the intelligence and military branches of the government from gaining further control over the direction of US policy in Iraq.

This chapter offers no conclusive evidence of direct American participation in various covert attempts to topple Qasim's regime. The question of whether such evidence exists is one that cannot be fully answered until relevant documents from this period are declassified *in toto*. It is without doubt that the Americans were deeply involved in monitoring Egypt's covert plots. They gave moral support for Nasser's secret machinations and were well aware of the details of various plots targeting Qasim. They were thus a willing and complicit partner in these subversive actions, choosing to remain

¹⁵⁶⁰ Osgood, "Eisenhower and Regime Change in Iraq," p. 23-24.

silent on several occasions despite the possession of reliable, advance warnings that Qasim and his regime were targeted for imminent destruction. Moreover, the final high points of anxiety about communism in Iraq in late 1959 and early 1960 coincide with the most far-reaching discussions within the SCOI about covert measures to undermine Qasim's regime. Only additional declassification processes can shed light on the specific steps and decisions taken by US officials in these crucial moments of the secret war against Baghdad. As in Iran, Guatemala, Indonesia, Cuba, and elsewhere around the globe, the Eisenhower administration proved willing to engage in subversive activities against a vulnerable regime in an effort to control and channel political developments along pro-American lines.

Conclusion to Part II

The revolutionary events of July 1958 in Iraq cost the Americans an important ally in the Cold War struggle in the Middle East against the Soviet Union and in the Arab Cold War confrontation with anti-Western Arab nationalisms. The revolution of July 1958 also fit the larger trends of decolonization sweeping across the Middle East after 1945.¹⁵⁶¹ American observers of Iraqi affairs were not entirely shocked by the revolutionary events in Baghdad. Before July 1958, US officials were well informed about the Iraqi public's discontent with the central regime and its authoritarian governance. More than that, analysts appreciated that Iraqi nationalists and opposition leaders detested many of the key pillars of US power in Iraq, including their military assistance to the Iraqi government. Even so, the strategic necessity of protecting the pro-Western Iraqi government and larger American interests in the country persuaded the Eisenhower administration to deepen its partnership with the authoritarian regime in the years preceding the 1958 revolution.

The revolution and subsequent emergence of Prime Minister Abdel Karim Qasim's government in Baghdad struck at the very core of American political, economic, and broader security interests and objectives in Iraq. Qasim's government, particularly the anti-colonial spirit that animated many of its domestic and foreign policies, greatly frustrated American observers. US officials were angered by the bellicose speeches and articles produced by Iraqi government representatives and leftist press outlets decrying the evils of US policies. In the petroleum sector, notwithstanding the confidence of US observers, the deteriorating relationship between Iraq Petroleum Company [IPC] and

¹⁵⁶¹ Peter Hahn, *Missions Accomplished? The United States and Iraq Since World War I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 41.

Iraqi government officials undermined the strategic stability of American assets. Less than one year after Eisenhower left office, PL 80 struck a significant blow against American oil interests in Iraq. Qasim's drift away from American-directed modernization methods angered and disappointed Point IV authorities who had closely collaborated with the *ancien régime*. The Iraqis also terminated their military aid agreement with Washington and formally withdrew from the Baghdad Pact, thereby severing two critical strategic links between the United States and Iraq from the pre-revolutionary era. While US-Iraqi relations stabilized to a degree in the final months of Eisenhower's presidency, their bilateral relationship was still fraught with considerable tension and conflict through to January 1961.

The Eisenhower administration worked energetically before July 1958 to insulate the Iraqi government from the related challenges posed by local communist groups and Soviet-directed pressures. Following the revolution, US officials believed the communist threat in Iraq had reached imminent, critical levels. Analysts complained about the behaviour of Iraqi oil negotiators who were allegedly motivated by communist ideologies. Soviet development experts arrived in Iraq to assist Qasim's regime with its modernization plans, edging out many of Point IV's technical advisers in the process. The Soviets also challenged the pre-eminent American position in the military aid arena. Moscow's military hardware reached Baghdad at the same time US aid shipments ground to a halt. Most importantly, Prime Minister Qasim's flirtation with the Iraqi Communist Party [ICP] terrified American analysts. The Eisenhower administration longed for the days when the United States could rely on Iraqi government authorities to take repressive measures against the local communist party to keep Iraqi politics on a "stable," pro-

Western path. Even the generally even-keeled US ambassador to Iraq, John Jernegan, feared the worst in early 1960, believing Iraq was teetering on the brink of communist, and by extension Soviet, domination. In desperation, American officials turned to the Central Intelligence Agency [CIA] in a failed effort to overthrow Qasim's government after they determined the prime minister had become a conduit for, rather than a barrier to, the expansion of communism in Iraq.

Equally impactful for the direction of Iraqi politics after July 1958 were the related ideologies of Arab nationalism and neutralism that integrated mass politics with government policy. Washington's unease with mass politics dramatically affected US policy in Iraq in the years before July 1958. In the pre-revolutionary period, US officials greatly feared the rule of Arab nationalists and neutralists since they represented an "unknown" factor whose revolutionary impulses would necessarily threaten American interests in Baghdad.¹⁵⁶² As such, the Eisenhower administration, in the long traditions of American diplomacy, privileged the pursuit of stability, order, and the implementation of gradual reforms in the Iraqi political, economic, and social arenas as bulwarks against revolutionary, radical changes.

The Americans' obsession with controlling the direction of Iraqi politics, and with promoting incremental rather than radical reforms, proved vital to diplomacy in Iraq in the final years of the Eisenhower administration. The United States had great difficulty navigating the process of Iraqification set in motion by Qasim's regime. Iraq moved after the revolution to assert greater authority over its oil resources and development and modernization projects. Qasim's policies conflicted with Washington's strategic

¹⁵⁶² William Stivers, "Eisenhower and the Middle East," in Richard Melanson and David Mayers (eds.) *Reevaluating Eisenhower: American Foreign Policy in the 1950s* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 215.

priorities that sought to maintain a sizable American role in these arenas to channel Iraqi developments along orderly, pro-American lines. In a broad sense, the IPC-Iraqi conflict, Samir Saul suggests, represented an essential clash between “foreign tutelage and independence...and the loosening, if not breaking, of Iraq’s ties with the Western economy.”¹⁵⁶³ Iraqification demanded fundamental changes to the structure of Iraqi government and society. In the case of the oil sector, as Phebe Marr adeptly notes, IPC and US government officials proved “not yet ready to compromise on the fundamental changes demanded by the Iraqis....”¹⁵⁶⁴ The frustration and disappointment US observers expressed with Qasim’s development schemes similarly suggested they were not comfortable handing responsibility for national development over to the new regime. Nor were analysts prepared to compromise on what they saw as core truths of American modernization models and practices. The fundamental changes Qasim pursued in the oil and modernization sectors were anathema to US policymakers searching for their own, distinct visions of moderation and gradualism in Iraqi politics and the preservation of a modicum of American power and control in revolutionary Iraq.

To be fair, the Eisenhower administration, and Point IV specifically, deserve some credit for pursuing a relatively “hands-off” strategy in the modernization arena after July 1958. The agency did not engage, in any regular way, in open confrontation with Qasim’s regime and compliantly withdrew the vast majority of its staff when it became clear they were no longer welcome. The small number of programs Point IV resumed in

¹⁵⁶³ Samir Saul, “Masterly Inactivity as Brinkmanship: The Iraq Petroleum Company's Road to Nationalization, 1958-1972,” *International History Review* 29, no. 4 (December 2007), 749.

¹⁵⁶⁴ Phebe Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2012), 101. This process is also referred to as Iraqization. See Juan Lennart Michel Romero, “The Iraqi Revolution of 1958 and the Search for Security in the Middle East.” Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of Texas at Austin, 2008, 217.

Iraq, with Qasim's blessing, after July 1958 was a testament to the wisdom of this pragmatic approach. American analysts privately, of course, harbored great prejudices about Qasim's modernization initiatives and the Iraqis' capabilities to execute successful reform projects. Even so, Point IV's limited modernization initiatives in Iraq helped to incrementally improve US-Iraqi relations in late 1959 and early 1960, particularly when conflict publicly emerged between Soviet and Iraqi development experts.

American petroleum policies vis-à-vis the new Iraqi Republic earns fewer accolades. The Eisenhower administration, along with top IPC personnel and UK officials, took the larger status quo in the Iraqi oil sector for granted. In turn, they allowed negotiations with the Iraqis on critical policy disputes like territory relinquishment to languish. Moreover, the two parties engaged in back-and-forth patterns of unilateral actions that poisoned ongoing discussions. These developments undoubtedly helped accelerate the proclamation of Public Law 80 shortly after Eisenhower left office. The Iraqification of national oil resources proved too difficult to accept for those US officials seeking to control Iraqi petroleum developments in pro-American directions.

The administration's decision to initiate CIA covert action programs in Iraq similarly revealed its willingness to privilege its strategic objectives over the anti-colonial spirit that animated the revolution and the new regime's policies. The Americans, fearful that Qasim's regime would move further in anti-American directions, saw their covert manipulation of and interference in the Iraqi political arena as another small "price" to "pay" for the protection of US interests. As in Iran, Guatemala, Indonesia, and Cuba, the Eisenhower administration permitted the CIA to engage in subversive activities against a

vulnerable regime. The general deterioration of US-Iraqi relations in the 1958 to 1961 period can be attributed, in part, to Qasim's repeated accusations that the United States was actively working to topple his government. It is not clear exactly what intelligence Qasim's regime collected regarding US participation in the various covert plots against his administration. Even so, it is clear that the CIA's subversive activities did nothing to improve US-Iraqi relations in this period, and in some ways exacerbated their overall decline.

It is noteworthy that the tenuous political equilibrium re-established in Iraq in the first months of 1960 was not the product of Washington's covert machinations, but was, instead, a deliberate maneuver pursued by a leader whom the Americans had already written off as a communist tool. In this sense, the final years of US-Iraqi relations under Eisenhower revealed, as in the pre-revolutionary period, the tangible limits to Washington's capabilities to shape and control Iraqi political developments in ways favourable to US interests. The Eisenhower administration, despite its expanding global military and political resources, was relatively powerless to prevent the diminution of American power in the oil and modernization sectors. The Americans could not dissuade the Iraqi leadership from terminating the US military aid agreement or withdrawing from the Baghdad Pact. Similarly, covert operations failed to restore a pro-American regime in Baghdad that would, like the monarchical government before July 1958, safeguard and advance US interests. In a broad sense, the Eisenhower administration proved unable to control the "disorderly" nature of revolutionary rule in Iraq after July 1958.

This study of American policies in Iraq from 1953 to 1961 offers important insights into how US officials navigated complex political developments in Iraq, the Middle East, and other arenas of the globe in this period. The Eisenhower administration took the strategic decision in January 1953 to support the ruling government in Baghdad. If the United States could cement the pro-Western Iraqi regime in power, the Eisenhower administration would enjoy a privileged position in the country and secure the protection of its economic, political, and military assets. The general formula for US policy in Iraq in the pre-revolutionary period was consistent. When confronted with the prospect of “unrest” in Iraq, the Eisenhower administration decisively supported its Iraqi allies’ moves to clamp down on opposition and dissent in the search for “order” and “stability” in domestic affairs.

American officials fully appreciated they were taking a “calculated risk” in supporting a conservative, pro-Western regime facing substantive domestic opposition and unrest. This strategic calculation was not unique to the Iraqi theatre. In Vietnam, Laos, and elsewhere around the globe, American policymakers seeking stability, control, and the defense of US interests chose to support authoritarian, unstable regimes.¹⁵⁶⁵ In some instances (like Jordan and Saudi Arabia), this gamble paid off, and the United States enjoyed decades-long strategic partnerships with those pro-Western governments. In the Iraqi case, the Eisenhower administration’s strategic gambit succeeded only for a time. After July 1958, the Americans struggled mightily to regain a sense of control they once enjoyed in Baghdad.

¹⁵⁶⁵ On the complicated US relationship with Diem in South Vietnam, see George Herring, *America’s Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1950-1975* (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2002).

Douglas Little recounts how the former US ambassador to Iraq, Waldemar Gallman, once suggested that Iraq's authoritarian, anti-democratic governance was a "small price to pay" for the defense and promotion of US interests in Baghdad in the pre-revolutionary period.¹⁵⁶⁶ The frustrations and disappointments US officials experienced in Qasim's Iraq were, in turn, the "price" the Americans had to "pay" for their history of partnership with the repressive regime in Baghdad and the privileged strategic position the United States enjoyed in Iraq before July 1958. They were, in short, one of the expected outcomes of the calculated risk the Eisenhower administration accepted in Iraq in this decade. In this way, the history of American policies in Hashemite Iraq and the revolutionary Iraqi Republic from 1953 to 1961 offers a revealing window into the numerous other calculated risks taken by US policymakers throughout the Middle East in an era defined by the emergence of the American superpower.

¹⁵⁶⁶ Douglas Little, *American Orientalism: The United States and the Middle East Since 1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 199.

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