The Failure to Contain Communism: State Department Reaction to the 1958 Iraqi Revolution

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State Department decisions made in reaction to the 1958 Iraqi coup affected U.S. relations with the Middle East for years to come. The revolution and its aftermath tested the principles of the Baghdad Pact and the Eisenhower Doctrine. The Baghdad Pact, composed of Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Pakistan, formed a strategic line of northern states designed to forestall Soviet expansion into the Middle East.¹ The Eisenhower Doctrine reinforced the Pact by pledging U.S. military assistance to any Middle Eastern country in danger from Communist aggression. The 1958 Iraqi revolution and its aftermath revealed them to be moribund. U.S. policy had not been prepared to deal with the growth of communist power within the Baghdad Pact nations because the United States' intelligence-gathering agencies failed to provide its policy-makers with adequate information on the Middle East. The State Department's reaction to the revolution and the rise of the Communist Party of Iraq demonstrates the U.S. government's inability to pursue a viable course of action in the Middle East.

¹Secretary of State John Foster Dulles created the Baghdad Pact in 1955, but the U.S. government decided not to sign the mutual-defense treaty. Washington believed that U.S. membership in the Baghdad Pact might antagonize Egypt, Iraq's rival. Nevertheless, the United States worked closely with the Baghdad Pact to solve national security problems.
Many historians have studied the Iraqi Revolution of 1958 but few scholars have looked at what the U.S. Department of State did in reaction to the coup. Iraq's monarchy had pursued good relations with the United States and, when it fell to revolutionaries, the State Department worried whether the new republic would fall to the Communist Party of Iraq. Constrained by a lack of adequate information, the State Department tried to maintain friendly relations with Iraq until it became apparent that the Communist Party had indeed risen to power within the new regime. By then, however, it was impossible to forcefully overthrow the new government and the State Department found its hands tied by political realities. The effort to contain the

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spread of communism had failed.

By the end of President Eisenhower's administration, Iraq's opposition to Western influence in the Middle East had evolved into full-fledged revolutionary discontent. Antagonized by years of British occupation, a monarchy that behaved like the Western powers' puppet, and U.S. machinations in Israel and the Gulf region, Iraqi revolutionaries overthrew the government of Nuri al Sa'id on 14 July 1958. A republic rose in its place with both a Revolutionary Council and a Cabinet under General Abd al-Karim Qassem, the man who had led the Free Officers, a secret organization in the military, against the monarchy. Only ten days before the coup the CIA had reported that opposition to the monarchy was not organized well enough to present a serious threat. Thus, the sudden fall of the pro-western government took the United States by surprise. When the revolution broke out, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles immediately phoned President Eisenhower to inform him of the coup but he did not have enough information about the insurrection to advise the President of a firm course of action. After speaking with the President, Dulles then instructed the U.S. Embassy in Iraq not to take any action.

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that might imply that the United States recognized the new regime. As a precautionary measure, he also ordered an immediate halt of all military aid to Iraq and authorized the Embassy to evacuate all U.S. citizens who wanted to leave the country.

In an inter-departmental memorandum Frank Wisner, the Deputy Director for Plans of the CIA, argued that strong government action by the Iraqis and a well-organized police would be able to keep any opposition under control. When the revolution broke out, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles immediately phoned President Eisenhower to inform him of the coup, but Dulles did not have enough information to recommend a firm course of action: "The Sec [Dulles] has no ideas because it happened so fast but thinks we ought to have a meeting today. NSC is set but this is more important. He [Dulles] will try to accumulate info and join NSC whenever he can and then perhaps recess and have a limited meeting with Defense, CIA and JCS." The Secretary then instructed the U.S. Embassy in Iraq not to take any action that might imply that the United States recognized the new regime. He also ordered an immediate halt to all military aid to Iraq and authorized the

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5Telegram from the Embassy in Iraq to the Department of State, 15 July 1958, by Waldemar J. Gallman, Ambassador to Iraq, 319.


7Eisenhower Library, Memorandum of Telephone Conversation, by Bernau, Dulles Papers, White House Telephone Conversations, 307.

8Department of State, Telegram from the Embassy in Iraq to the Department of State, by Waldemar J. Gallman, Ambassador to Iraq, 319.
Embassy to evacuate all U.S. citizens who wanted to leave the country. 9

The loss of one member of the Baghdad Pact to revolution caused the State Department to fear that other countries in the Middle East would follow the same course unless the United States acted to suppress further insurrections. Great Britain feared the loss of western oil interests in Iraq and Kuwait. The British government urged the United States to take military action and prevent the spread of revolution to surrounding Middle Eastern states. 10 To keep this from happening, President Eisenhower ordered U.S. troops to Lebanon in response to President Camille Chamoun's request for U.S. military support. The Lebanese President feared the possibility of an Army coup against his government. The message he sent to President Eisenhower on 14 July expressed the urgency of his situation: "He [Chamoun] would interpret our [United States] intentions by our deeds. He wanted the Sixth Fleet here [Lebanon] within 48 hours, or else he would at last know where he stood so far as assurances from the West were concerned." 11 In addition, the United States sent additional troops to Jordan and built up the amount of Turkish troops


10Eisenhower Library, Memorandum of Telephone Conversation Between President Eisenhower and Secretary of State Dulles, Whitman File, Eisenhower Diaries, 317.

11Eisenhower Library, Briefing Notes by Director of Central Intelligence Dulles, by Allen W. Dulles, DCI, 309-10.
stationed close to Iraq’s borders. Secretary of State Dulles approved the decision to intervene in Lebanon because of the United States' popularity among a large portion of the Lebanese population, but thought that the United States did not enjoy enough support in the Middle East to successfully intervene in Iraq or any other country. Dulles believed that U.S. action in Lebanon and Jordan would prevent Israel from acting alone to prevent the spread of insurrection. The CIA thought that Israel might decide to take over West Jordan to the Jordan River if King Hussein’s government fell. Israel’s Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion, had already advised the United States that the best course of action would be for the Baghdad Pact, and not the United Nations, to end the revolution in Iraq. Contrary to U.S. intelligence reports, Ben-Gurion thought that there was enough opposition in Iraq for Turkey and Iran to intervene successfully, but only if the United States supported them. Israel feared that the loss of Iraq would

12 Al-Arif, Iraq Reborn, 62.

13 Eisenhower Library, Memorandum of Telephone Conversation Between President Eisenhower and Secretary of State Dulles, Whitman File, Eisenhower Diaries, 317.

14 Eisenhower Library, Memorandum, by Brigadier General Andrew J. Goodpaster, Whitman Files, Eisenhower Diaries, 308.

15 Eisenhower Library, Briefing Notes by Director of Central Intelligence Dulles, Allen W. Dulles, White House Office Files, Staff Secretary Records, 310.

16 Department of State, Telegram from the Embassy in Iraq to the Department of State, by Edward B. Lawson, Ambassador to Israel, 316.

17 Ibid.
mean the subsequent loss of the Middle East, leaving them the only democratic country in the region. 18

At the beginning of the coup, the CIA suspected that Gamel Abdel Nasser, the President of Egypt and the United Arab Republic, was behind the Iraqi revolution. The CIA questioned, however, whether or not the revolution had actually been directed by the Egyptian leader. According to the Director of Central Intelligence, Allen Dulles, "The timing seem[ed] a little out of gear with what might have been expected, as well as the manner and brutality of carrying out the coup." 19 Later on the 14 July, the U.S. Embassy reported that the revolution seemed to be run by the military, including the Air Force, and that there was no sign of a counter-movement in progress. 20 Instead, the coup seemed to enjoy considerable support from the local population and possibly from the provincial population as well. 21 Ambassador Waldemar J. Gallman advised the State Department that the coup appeared to be strongly anti-western and pro-Nasser in nature and that U.S. intervention in Lebanon would be strongly protested by the Iraqi people. 22

18Ibid.

19Eisenhower Library, Briefing Notes by Director of Central Intelligence Dulles, Allen W. Dulles, White House Office Files, Staff Secretary Records, 311.

20Department of State, Telegram from the Embassy in Iraq to the Department of State, by Gallman, 314.

21Ibid.

22Ibid., 315.
The Soviet Union did not anticipate the revolution would occur but it quickly recognized the new Iraqi government on 16 July.\textsuperscript{23} The Soviets then initiated military exercises in the Transcaucasus and Turkistan Military Districts to counteract western military influence in Lebanon and Jordan. In doing so, the Soviets also hoped to protect the Iraqi revolution and help the new regime of General Abdul Karim Qassem to succeed.\textsuperscript{24} They protested President Eisenhower's decision to send troops to Lebanon and demanded a summit conference to discuss the Middle East. The United States chose to ignore their saber-rattling. The CIA believed that the Soviets would send only limited support to Iraq and refrain from engaging in overt actions that might instigate a general war over the Middle East.\textsuperscript{25}

On 15 July Qassem reassured Ambassador Gallman of the new government's intention to maintain friendly relations with the United States. He also assured Gallman that U.S. citizens in Iraq would not be harmed and could leave the country safely if they chose to do so.\textsuperscript{26} Such reassurances, however, did not convince the State Department that the United States should recognize the new Iraqi government. By 17 July the State Department still did not

\textsuperscript{23}Al-Arif, \textit{Iraq Reborn}, 63.

\textsuperscript{24}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{25}Eisenhower Library, \textit{Briefing Notes by Director of Central Intelligence Dulles}, by Allen Dulles, White House Office Files, Staff Secretary Records, 311.

\textsuperscript{26}Department of State, \textit{Telegram from the Embassy in Iraq to the Department of State}, by Gallman, 319.
know whether the revolution had been directed by Nasser and could not identify the true leaders of the insurrection.²⁷

The United States did decide not to intervene militarily in Iraq. Ambassador Gallman reported that the coup had been successful not only in Baghdad but in Mosul, Kirkuk, and Basra.²⁸ He reported, "that allied landings in Iraq, unless swiftly executed in overwhelming force, would very likely lead to indiscriminate killing and looting among Americans and Europeans (some 5,000, of whom 2,000 British and 2,000 Americans) by mobs whom army would be totally unable, even if willing, to control."²⁹ Great Britain agreed that military intervention was impossible if the new government had acquired control of the country.³⁰ There was no viable figure in Iraq to lead resistance against the revolutionary government following intervention.³¹

On 19 July, Ambassador Gallman expressed concern that decision to withdraw U.S. technical assistance from Iraq would induce the new government to seek closer relations with the Soviet Union. It would be wiser to continue friendly relations with Iraq. "If we are cautious," he wrote, "and find in course of time that [the]
regime's declarations of friendship are real, we may well be able gradually to develop bases of cooperation."32

The next day the Division for Research and Analysis (DRN), an intelligence bureau of the State Department, concluded that any military action against Iraq would meet with very little popular support in the Middle East and that Egypt and Syria would probably come to the aid of Iraq as promised in a Mutual Defense Agreement signed the day before.33 The DRN also warned that the Soviet Union might lend support to Iraq if the United States intervened.34 It reported that the new government wished to maintain friendly relations with the United States and other western powers and had agreed to adhere to international agreements made under the Nuri regime, to remain in the Baghdad Pact for the time being, to refrain from nationalizing Iraqi oil, and to recognize but not join the UAR.35 The DRN also observed that communist influence over the new Iraqi government was minimal and advised the State Department to approach the new government informally for reassurance of good intentions.36 Such action, they said, "would tend to give support

32Department of State, Telegram from the Embassy in Iraq to the Department of State, by Gallman, 328.

33Department of State, Memorandum from the Director of Intelligence and Research (Cumming) to the Counselor (Reinhardt), by G. Frederick Reinhardt, 329.

34Ibid.

35Department of State, Memorandum from the Director of Intelligence and Research (Cumming) to the Counselor (Reinhardt), by Reinhardt, 330.

36Ibid.
to moderate and secretly pro-Western elements in the new government and might aid in stabilizing the situation in Iraq in a pattern not entirely unfavorable to us."\textsuperscript{37} It seemed that Qassem was more anti-British than anti-U.S. and was not entirely sure of where Iraq stood with the Soviet Union due to an earlier rapprochement between the Soviets and the Nuri regime.\textsuperscript{38} The new government was also eager to maintain the flow of technical support from the West and therefore sought to avoid antagonizing the western powers.\textsuperscript{39}

By 23 July the new Qassem government had fulfilled U.S. requirements for official recognition by restoring the ability of the government to maintain control and by agreeing to uphold its international treaties. Assistant Secretary of State Rountree worried that Iraq would turn to the Soviet Union if the United States failed to recognize the new government soon. He noted that the Muslim members of the Baghdad Pact would like protest de jure recognition of the new government, but insisted that protecting U.S. interests in Iraq was more important.\textsuperscript{40} Dulles agreed that the United States should recognize the new government, but only after receiving approval from the other members of the Baghdad

\textsuperscript{37}Ibid.


\textsuperscript{39}Department of State, \textit{Telegram from the Embassy in Iraq to the Department of State}, by Gallman, 327.

\textsuperscript{40}Department of State, \textit{Memorandum from the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Affairs (Rountree) to Secretary of State Dulles}, by Stuart W. Rockwell, Director, Office of Near Eastern Affairs, 332.
On 30 July President Eisenhower agreed to recognize Iraq's new regime. Iran, Pakistan, Turkey, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan each gave their approval. All the countries recognized U.S. interests in Iraq and hoped that the United States would be able to influence the government in a positive way by recognizing it.

By 4 August the United States had resumed friendly relations with Iraq. The State Department decided to continue sending technical assistance to Iraq, but said that the resumption of military aid would depend upon whether Iraq remained a member of the Baghdad Pact.

The Ba'ath and Communist Parties were the only two groups to emerge from the revolution organizationally intact. The Ba'ath Party, led in part by General Mohammed Rafiq Arif, supported Nasser and sought membership with the UAR. The Communist and National Democratic Parties, on the other hand, did not. These parties inherited the new republic and began to struggle for influence in the Qassem government.

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41 Ibid., 333.

42 Department of State, Memorandum to the President, by John Foster Dulles, 334.

43 Ibid.

44 Department of State, Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in Iraq, Christian A. Herter, Under Secretary of State, 335-36.

45 Department of State, Memorandum from the Director of Intelligence and Research (Cumming) to Secretary of State Dulles, by Hugh S. Cumming, Jr., 353-54.
In late August the DNR reported increasing opposition to the United States, including several cases of mild harassment. Qassem daily stated his intentions to stop the growing hostility toward the West but seemed unable to halt the increasing antagonism against the United States and other pro-western governments in the Middle East such as Jordan and Lebanon. Al-Yaqdha, the first post-revolutionary newspaper to be printed in Iraq, published derogatory propaganda against the United States. The other newspaper, al-Jumhuriya, reported the new regime's official statements of friendship toward the United States, but its tone lacked conviction. Baghdad radio also increasingly identified the United States with the old monarchy in its condemnation of the deposed Nuri government.

On 10 September Dulles ordered Ambassador Gallman to assess whether or not the United States should reduce the amount of military personnel in Iraq without informing the Iraqi government. He instructed Gallman to inform Qassem that the United States planned to withdraw major U.S. military equipment and personnel, including F-86 aircraft, unless the government resumed

46 Department of State, Memorandum From the Director of Intelligence and Research (Cumming) to Secretary of State Dulles, by Cumming, 336.

47 Ibid., p. 337.

48 Ibid.

49 Ibid.

50 Department of State, Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in Iraq, by John Foster Dulles, 339.
use of the equipment and reaffirmed existing military agreements with the United States.\(^{51}\) In addition, Iraq would have to stop harassing officials from the U.S. Embassy, allow U.S. military personnel in Iraq greater freedom of movement, and put an end to the boarding and searching of U.S. vessels in the Shatt al-Arab.\(^{52}\)

In October Gallman wrote the State Department that the Communist Party in Iraq had potential for greater future influence through the return of a popular Kurdish leader, Mulla Mustafa Barzani, who had been in exile for eleven years in the Soviet Union, and the alarming decline of the Ba'ath Party which left a power vacuum for the Communists to fill.\(^{53}\) He also informed the State Department that Iraq had officially resumed trade relations with the Soviet Union.

On 3 October the CIA reported that the regime was undergoing power struggles and that Qassem had dismissed General Arif and two officials in his Cabinet who had been pressuring him to join the UAR.\(^{54}\) Qassem’s action in eliminating the Communist Party's opposition furthered U.S. fear that the Communists would gain control of the Iraqi government. A few days later Iraqi Foreign Minister Abdul Jabar Jomard informed Assistant Secretary Rountree

\(^{51}\)Ibid.

\(^{52}\)Ibid.

\(^{53}\)Department of State, Telegram from the Embassy in Iraq to the Department of State, by Gallman, 345.

\(^{54}\)National Security Council Records, Memorandum of 381st Meeting of the National Security Council, by S. Everett Gleason, Deputy Executive Secretary of the National Security Council, 341.
that the new regime suspected, and seemed to have evidence of, a U.S. plan to initiate a counter-revolution in Iraq. Qassem asked all consulates to leave Iraq in an attempt to minimize foreign machinations against his government. The United States worried that it would not be able to control the new government as they had originally thought when Qassem approached them with words of good will.

When General Arif returned from his post as ambassador to West Germany in November, Qassem had him arrested. The DNR reported this as an "open challenge" to Qassem's enemies and, most importantly, to Egypt and Nasser. The Director of Intelligence and Research wrote, "Since Arif has been the chief protagonist and symbol for the pro-UAR faction in Iraq his arrest is a public slap at Nasir which the latter can hardly overlook without serious consequences for his leadership role in the Arab World." On 11 November the Iraqi Special High Military Court sentenced Arif and two other Iraqi officials to death. In response, the State Department advised Qassem that the death sentences would reflect badly upon the regime, but otherwise refrained from intervening in what they considered an internal matter.

55Department of State, Memorandum of Conversation, by Rountree, 342-43.

56Department of State, Memorandum From the Director of Intelligence and Research (Cumming) to Secretary of State Dulles, by Cumming, 351-52.

57Ibid.

58Ibid., p. 352-353.
By the end of the month, Qassem had come to rely heavily on the Communist and National Democratic Parties for support. He seemed to believe it possible to exploit the Communists and then to dismiss them once they had outlived their usefulness.\(^59\) The Communists, however, had used this opportunity to entrench themselves in various areas of the government. In particular, they had gained control of the propaganda machine. The DNR informed the Secretary of State that, "While Communist infiltration probably has not yet got out of control, the point of no return may be reached in a few months should the Qasim regime continue on its present course."\(^60\) Director Cumming speculated that the Iraqi army might participate in a coup against Qassem, but would split internally over the issue of whether or not to join the UAR. Therefore, he believed that the removal of Qassem would only lead to further instability. On the other hand, if Qassem succeeded in putting down an army coup, he would probably owe his success to the Communists and be further dependent upon them.\(^61\)

At the beginning of December, Gallman reported that a leader of a free officers movement had approached the Embassy with a plan for overthrowing Qassem. Gallman decided to check the validity of their proposal and suggested that in the event of a coup, the United States support it in a limited fashion in the hopes that

\(^{59}\)Department of State, Memorandum from the Director of Intelligence and Research (Cumming) to Secretary of State Dulles, by Cumming, 354.

\(^{60}\)Ibid., 354.

\(^{61}\)Ibid., 354.
deposing Qassem would end Communist influence in Iraq. The State Department ordered Gallman not to deal with the free officers movement, however. It worried that Qassem was aware of the insurrectionists who had approached Gallman and therefore would be aware of any U.S. involvement in their plans to overthrow the Iraqi government. Under Secretary of State Christian A. Herter advised Gallman to treat the supposed insurrectionists with extreme caution and to tell them that the United States refused to interfere in the internal affairs of another government and could not promise to support any government that did not yet exist. The State Department had recently received troubling news that Qassem had informed British Ambassador Michael Wright of the existence of U.S. agents who had been sent to Iran to work on a plot to overthrow him. Though Ambassador Wright denied the accusation, Qassem refused to believe him, and the State Department did not want to justify his fears. Accordingly, on 11 December, Gallman met with Qassem and tried to convince him that the United States was not sending agents to Iran in an attempt to overthrow the Iraqi government, but that enemies of the United States were trying to prejudice Qassem against the United States.

62 Department of State, Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in Iraq, by Herter, 355.

63 Ibid., 355-56.

64 Ibid.

65 Ibid.

66 Department of State, Telegram from the Embassy in Iraq to the Department of State, by Gallman, 357.
The State Department sent Assistant Secretary Rountree to Baghdad to explain U.S. policy and improve relations. Upon his arrival, despite Qassem’s promise to protect the assistant secretary from harm, Rountree met a mob instigated by the Communist Party. Rountree escaped the mob safely and met with Qassem, whereupon he tried to convince the Iraqi leader that the United States was not involved in any insurrectionist activities against the Iraqi government. Qassem appeared unconvinced even though he reassured Rountree of his desire to remain friends with the United States.

On 18 December, at a meeting of the National Security Council, President Eisenhower suggested that the United States help the UAR overthrow Qassem in order to push the Communists out of Iraq. The secretary of state commented that Nasser would not allow the Soviets to control him and agreed that it would be possible to work with the UAR if Israel would not protest. Nasser seemed to be the only viable option. Rountree had reported that any action taken by Turkey, Jordan, or Iran would result in antagonizing the Iraqi people, who would consider the action to be prompted by the United States. On top of angering the United Nations, he said, such a move might actually foster the growth of communism in Iraq and increase anti-western sentiment. Rountree warned that Qassem’s awareness of UAR counter-coup activity against him would probably

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67Eisenhower Library, Memorandum of Discussion at the 391st Meeting of the National Security Council, by Marion Boggs, Executive Director, National Security Council Secretariat, 364.

68Ibid., 364.
prevent him from throwing out the Communists any time soon as they are strongly anti-UAR. He expressed uncertainty over whether Qassem was a Communist puppet or whether he was afraid of requesting help from the military or other nationalists in throwing out the Communists and being forced to share power with them. Routree speculated that Nasser would be more likely to cooperate with the United States because the Soviet Union was no longer willing to achieve its objectives in the Middle East through Nasser and were instead going through other channels. Routree believed that Iraq would not become more open to the UAR than at the present time. They might not wish to join the UAR, but might at least cooperate and mirror UAR policy.\textsuperscript{69}

By the new year no dissidents in the Army had made themselves known, but the State Department believed that a majority of the senior officers were anti-Communist and willing to oust Qassem.\textsuperscript{70} The Director of Near Eastern Affairs, Stuart W. Rockwell, reported that six anti-communist ministers had resigned from the Iraqi Cabinet. He suspected that a new technical aid agreement between Iraq and the Soviets had prompted their resignations in hopes of removing Qassem's support base and causing the regime to topple.\textsuperscript{71}

\textsuperscript{69}Department of State, Memorandum from the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (Rountree) to Acting Secretary of State Dillon, by Rountree, 368-371.

\textsuperscript{70}Department of State, Memorandum from the Director of the Office of Near Eastern Affairs (Rockwell) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (Rountree), by Rockwell, 380.

\textsuperscript{71}Ibid., 378-379.
The National Democratic Party, however, had chosen to continue support of Qassem and their ministers had remained in position. The new ministers were more likely to be anti-U.S. and pro-Communist. 

In February 1959 a Special National Intelligence Estimate reported that they still did not have any evidence to suggest that Qassem himself was a member of the Communist Party, but said he has resisted repeated demands by senior army officers for a crackdown on local Communists. He continues to countenance the presence in a number of key positions of men who are probably Communists. . . . Iraqi representatives at inter-Arab and Afro-Asian conferences have consistently advocated actions beneficial to the USSR and opposed to the interests of both Pan-Arabism and the West. Kassim has done little about the manifest ability of the Communists to use 'the street' in organized mob demonstrations and mass pressure tactics. And when confronted in early February with the group resignation of six anti-Communist civilian cabinet ministers--some of them recognized opposition figures of long standing--he replaced them with men less friendly toward Nasser and no more likely than their predecessors to pose effective resistance to the Communists.

The State Department believed that the Soviet Union would not respond militarily to a coup against the Qassem government because they did not have many interests at stake in Iraq. However, the longer Qassem remained in power, the more likely it was that the Soviet Union would increase its involvement in Iraq.

The British were less open to working with Nasser because

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72Ibid.

73Department of State, Special National Intelligence Estimate, 382-83.

74Ibid, 382.

75Ibid.
their relations with Iraq had been better than those of the United States. The State Department felt confident, however, that "further rapid consolidation of leftist forces in Iraq would probably increase UK sentiment in favor of a Nasser effort to stop the Iraqi Communists." In March Nasser instigated a coup against Qassem that failed to bring down the Iraqi government. State Department documents remain classified and unavailable to the general public and it is unknown whether or not it supported the coup. The Mosul coup, as it became know, was probably the last possible attempt to overthrow Qassem. In a telegram to the State Department, the new Ambassador to Iraq, John D. Jernegan, wrote, "Now [it] seems to us that control could be wrested from Qassim only by assassination and even that would not automatically result in government of different orientation from present one." After the Mosul coup, the Communist Party of Iraq gained control of the press and various organizations such as the Trade Union Movement, the Student Union, and the Popular Resistance Force. U.S. officials no longer had freedom of movement in Iraq and were often subjected to searches. Their number of Iraqi

76Ibid, 387.
77Ibid.
78Due to Qassem’s reports of U.S. involvement in covert activities along Iraq’s borders, it is possible that the United States helped Nasser instigate the Mosul coup with or without the State Department’s knowledge.
79Department of State, Telegram from the Embassy in Iraq to the Department of State, by Jernegan, 395.
contacts had severely diminished.\textsuperscript{80}

Nasser's failure to overthrow Qassem meant that the United States' influence in Iraq had come to end. As predicted, Qassem now owed his survival to the Communist Party and showed no signs of throwing it out of power. The one good sign was that Qassem had agreed to only two of the Communist Party's eight demands: withdrawal from the Baghdad Pact and the purging of government and army officials. Qassem purged every ministry except the Foreign Office, but the Communists did not gain any Cabinet positions and one minister openly espoused the Communist Party doctrine.\textsuperscript{81}

The State Department decided not to sell Iraq any more arms and to limit supplies to spare parts and ammunition for U.S. military equipment that had already been sold to Iraq.\textsuperscript{82} Ambassador John D. Jernegan recommended that the United States refrain from making any official statements about the current situation in Iraq out of fear that a statement would increase Iraqi fear of U.S. intervention, give substance to the charge that the western powers were pulling Nasser's strings as though he were a puppet, and weaken any effect that Nasser's anti-Communist campaign might possibly have on the Iraqi people.\textsuperscript{83}

Jernegan received permission to instruct special envoys to

\textsuperscript{80}Ibid., 395-397.

\textsuperscript{81}Ibid., 396-397.

\textsuperscript{82}Department of State, Telegram from the Embassy to the Department of State, by Jernegan, 407.

\textsuperscript{83}Ibid.
Iraq from other countries such as Sudan, Morocco, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Belgium, Denmark, Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland, Yugoslavia, India, Indonesia, and Japan. The State Department felt that these countries might have more influence over Qassem than Turkey or Pakistan in persuading him to do something about the Communist Party.  

Jernegan also recommended that propaganda attacks be focused on significant Iraqi Communists who did not hold official government positions and to decrease the attacks against Qassem. Instead he thought that the propaganda system should make Qassem look like a staunch Arab nationalist who had fallen victim to Communist control. And in accordance with his report, the State Department dismissed the idea of boycotting Iraqi oil because sanctions would serve only to anger the Iraqi people against the United States and other western powers who might have a chance of influencing Qassem against the Communists.

When Iraq left the Baghdad Pact, its members reformed into the Central Treaty Organization. Though U.S. influence in the Middle East remained strong, the Baghdad Pact and the Eisenhower Doctrine had lost any power it might once have had. U.S.-Iraqi relations spiraled increasingly downward until, a decade later, they would cease to have any formal association with each other. The Ba'ath Party, which had supported Nasser and the UAR, would eventually

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84 Ibid.
85 Ibid., 408.
86 Ibid.
replace both Qassem and the Communist Party in 1963, but not before U.S.-Iraqi relations could be saved.
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