

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
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MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. G. Lewis Jones
Assistant Secretary - Near Eastern and
South Asian Affairs
Department of State

SUBJECT: Contingency Planning Regarding Iraq

1. At the last meeting of the Working Group on Iraq I undertook to submit a paper listing the various contingency situations with which we might be faced in the near future, in order that plans may be drawn for possible courses of action.

2. Before listing specific contingencies, I should like to review the current picture in Iraq, as we see it, and what we know about the plans and attitudes of other countries which are directly concerned with developments inside Iraq. The full implications of the assassination attempt on Qasim cannot be assessed as yet. Prior to this event, we had continued to believe that, despite certain evidence that he was applying a measure of control over Communist activities and was bringing to justice at least some of the perpetrators of the Kirkuk affair, other recent acts, culminating in the executions of 20 September, had probably caused an irreparable breach between Qasim and Nationalist elements within the country. If any clue can be taken from the frequent references to "imperialists" in statements during the past few days, there would seem to be a strong possibility of a further crack-down on the Nationalists. This, in turn, is likely to increase the chances that they will make a desperate attempt to remove Qasim from the scene and to install themselves in power. It is certain that the Communists, whose lives and future would be at stake, would resist any such action on the part of the Nationalists, and that a desperate struggle for power would then ensue. The outcome cannot be predicted with any confidence. According to

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imagined [redacted] the Communists feel that they would emerge on top in any such struggle. [redacted] the strength and cohesion of Nationalist elements. The preponderance [redacted], suggests that the Nationalists are likely to call for outside assistance unless, as seems highly doubtful, they can quickly and decisively consolidate their position.

temporarily

3. It is virtually certain that such a call for assistance would be to other Arab States. We know that Nationalist elements inside Iraq are in touch with the UAR, and we also know that the UAR is seriously considering intervention under certain circumstances. We believe that the UAR would prefer to conceal their hand to the maximum extent possible, intervening indirectly through the use of tribal elements, Iraqi exiles, and perhaps commandos. We do not know the extent to which the UAR would consider direct military intervention. We also know that certain Iraqi Nationalists have been in touch with the Jordanians. It appears that this group is largely representative of elements which were in authority prior to the July 14th Revolution, although they have maintained contacts inside Iraq since that time. Further evidence may temper this conclusion, but it now appears that there is no coordination of effort between the Iraqis who are in touch respectively with the UAR and with Jordan.

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4. Nor is there as yet any coordination of plans or purpose between Nasser and King Husayn. Nasser has stated that Husayn's participation in any response to a call for help from Nationalists within Iraq would be counter productive, to say the least. Husayn maintains his deep distrust of Nasser and his motives, and firmly believes that he would enjoy the support of a large majority of Iraqis if matters ever came to a showdown. A recent revival of the propaganda war between the UAR and Jordan appears to have killed, at least temporarily, the prospects for a meeting between Husayn and Nasser. If such a meeting were to occur in the near future, the outcome would be difficult to predict, but we believe it unlikely that they could ever agree on specific joint plans for an operation into Iraq. The position of the Saudi Arabs in all this is unclear, but we believe that under any circumstances their participation would be marginal.

5. It is impossible to make our own contingency plans without taking into account the likely attitudes of non-Arab countries who would be vitally interested in the event of a blowup in Iraq. As we see it, their attitudes can be summarized as follows:

a. Turkey -- The Turkish Government (even accounting for a slight difference of view between the Foreign Office and the Military) remains convinced that Qasim is a sincere Nationalist, and should be generally supported and protected against the intrigues of Nasser. Their attitude, in the event of the elimination of Qasim, would depend on the circumstances which ensue, but it is safe to say that they would look with extreme disfavor on any attempt by the UAR to intervene, even in response to a call for help from the Nationalists. We believe that the Turks are taking a completely unrealistic view as to the danger of the Communist threat to Iraq, but we see no evidence of a change in this view despite what we consider to be a rapidly deteriorating situation.

b. Iran -- The Iranians are deeply concerned about the Communist menace to Iraq, and its possible implications regarding their own internal stability. They too, however, view Nasser with the greatest distrust, and would be presently inclined to throw their support to Husayn, and perhaps get involved themselves, if outside intervention became necessary. The Shah is scheduled to meet soon with King Husayn and it is predictable that this meeting will result in firm pledges of mutual support.

c. Israel -- The Israelis would take a grave view of Arab intervention in Iraq, particularly by Nasser, whom they consider to be their number-one enemy. It is possible that they would seize upon the fact of outside Arab intervention in Iraq as an opportunity for military action against either the UAR or Jordan, or both. It should be noted that the

Israelis are developing increasingly closer contacts with Turkey and Iran, particularly the former, and there is a striking similarity between the Turkish and Israeli assessment of the situation in Iraq.

d. United Kingdom -- The U.K. shares our general assessment that a major blowup could occur in Iraq at any time. Their attitude in the event of some form of Arab intervention from outside is not clear. It is known, however, that they would consider Nasser domination of Iraq as a serious threat to the maintenance of their vital positions in the Middle East.

e. France -- The French assessment of the situation in Iraq is not known to us. We do know, however, that they maintain very close ties with the Israelis.

6. The above background is incomplete in many respects, but we believe that it is relevant to a consideration of the contingencies with which we might be faced in Iraq, and of the manner in which we should prepare to deal with them. As for the contingencies themselves, there are any number of possibilities, but most of those which would demand prompt policy decisions by the United States are permutations and combinations based on a single central fact -- the removal of Qasim.

7. If, by the time this happens, the Nationalists have become completely demoralized and the Communists take over quickly and without major incident, the interested governments would be faced with grave decisions which are beyond the scope of this paper. Alternatively, if the Nationalists take over in the same manner, and without apparent external assistance, there would appear to be no major problem. The more likely contingency, however, would be a period of prolonged disorder and confusion, with Nationalist and Communist elements each calling for help. In view of the Communist apparent strategy to date of identifying themselves as true Nationalists, there would appear to be little likelihood of Soviet intervention, in the absence of overt military intervention from other countries. In any event, Soviet intervention in Iraq directly, would present difficult logistical problems.

8. The most pressing, and at the same time most complicated problem will arise if anti-Communist elements call for help. To summarize on the basis of intelligence reported above, the United States should be prepared to deal with some or all of the following:

a. A request by Nasser for moral, political and material support for intervention from, and directed by the UAR. Although such intervention would probably be indirect initially, it might become direct under certain circumstances;

b. A similar request from Husayn, who would probably consider direct intervention more readily than Nasser;

c. From either Husayn or Nasser, a request for guarantees against invasion by Israel;

Iranians are off base

d. An Iranian request for support of their efforts to eliminate Barzani and his followers, principally through assistance to friendly Kurdish elements within Iraq. The Iranians would also exert every pressure to have us support Husayn's efforts; and

e. Strong representations from the Turks or the Israelis to the effect that Nasser should be forced to keep hands off in Iraq.

9. In the event of a favorable response to the

10. Under any contingent circumstances, it is obvious that diplomatic discussions would have to be

undertaken with interested governments in the area. In our opinion, such discussions should not be delayed. For reasons which are particularly relevant [redacted] [redacted] we also believe that discussions should be held [redacted] as promptly as possible on this problem.

