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NIE 30-55

21 June 1955

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**NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE
NUMBER 30-55**

**MIDDLE EAST DEFENSE PROBLEMS
AND PROSPECTS**

Submitted by the

DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

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Concurred in by the

INTELLIGENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

on 21 June 1955. Concurring were the Special Assistant, Intelligence, Department of State; the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, Department of the Army; the Director of Naval Intelligence; the Director of Intelligence, USAF; the Deputy Director for Intelligence, The Joint Staff. The Atomic Energy Commission Representative to the IAC and the Assistant to the Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, abstained, the subject being outside their jurisdiction.

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NEXT REVIEW DATE: 1991
AUTH: HR 70-2
DATE: 26/6/81 REVIEWER: 193001

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MIDDLE EAST DEFENSE PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

THE PROBLEM

To re-examine certain problems involved in the development of regional defense arrangements in the Middle East and to estimate: (a) probable developments in the regional defense field; (b) the effect of these developments on the states of the area; and (c) the consequences of possible US courses of action.¹

CONCLUSIONS

1. With the signature of the Turkish-Iraqi defense agreement in February 1955 and the subsequent adherence of the UK, a basis for establishing a formal regional defense organization in the Middle East now exists. Pakistan signed a similar pact with Turkey in April 1954, and will probably go through with promises to adhere to the new agreement, in which case provisions for establishment of a joint defense council will go into effect. Moreover, there is at least an even chance that Iran will in time adhere. (*Paras. 10, 20-22, 36*)

2. It is uncertain how effective such a "northern tier" grouping will be in attracting the cooperation of other Middle East states and in generally furthering US and UK politico-military aims in the area. Although Iraq's signature of a Western-supported defense agreement with Turkey broke down the wall of solid Arab opposition to defense cooperation with the West, it aggravated a sharp cleavage within the Arab world. Egypt has viewed the move both as a challenge to its leadership in the Arab League and to the concept of Arab unity. Saudi Arabia has also opposed the pact because of its dynastic rivalry with Iraq and its suspicions of US-UK intentions. The resultant crisis in Arab affairs has been further complicated by growing Israeli restiveness over the prospective increase in the military strength of Iraq and possibly of other Arab states, by French maneuvers to safeguard the "special" French position in the Levant, and by efforts of neutralist and anti-US and UK elements to block further defense progress. The

¹This estimate is supplementary to the broad discussion of Middle East defense questions in NIE 30-54, "Prospects for Creation of a Middle East Defense Grouping and Probable Consequences of Such a Development," 22 June 1954. Much of the earlier estimate remains valid, notably the general discussions of underlying political attitudes, and basic military problems and conditions. The present estimate focuses on new problems and prospects raised by the Iranian oil and Suez settlements and particularly the Turkish-Iraqi pact and its consequences. Like NIE 30-54, this estimate does not consider the problems of defense of Turkey against attack from the north, which is a NATO responsibility, nor the defense of the lines of communication into the area.

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UK, although accepting the established fact of US participation in Middle East affairs, remains concerned with protecting as much as possible of its special interests and influence in the area, particularly its strategic position and oil interests in the Persian Gulf. (*Paras. 11, 13-15, 22-23, 36-37, 45*)

3. At least for the next few months, and possibly for considerably longer, Egypt and Saudi Arabia will probably continue their efforts to check the spread of Iraqi influence and to undermine the Turkish-Iraqi pact. In practice, France will continue to resist any extension of Iraqi, UK, and US influence in Syria and Lebanon. These various efforts will tend to restrain the adherence of such states as Lebanon and Jordan and will contribute to continuing instability in Syria. Although in time even Egypt might be willing to participate in regional or related bilateral defense arrangements, if only out of fear of being left behind, the danger exists that Egypt may become a prisoner of its present policies and be unable to modify them. (*Paras. 24-30, 33-34, 45*)

4. Although further development of a "northern tier" defense grouping would provide a better geographical basis for realistic defense planning, and might serve to deter Soviet aggression, the military effectiveness of such a grouping will remain limited for some years to come. The defense of the Middle East will continue for sometime to hinge almost entirely on the willingness and ability of the US and UK to commit the necessary ground, naval, and air forces. The lack of effective indigenous forces will remain a basic handicap requiring a long and costly effort to overcome. Efforts to de-

velop a tighter and militarily more effective organization will continue to be impeded by the distracting influence of current tensions and rivalries within the area. Such efforts may in fact stimulate new differences over questions of command and subordination. Finally, any defense organization would be impeded to some extent unless Egypt and other states in the near area were associated in some fashion, and would be critically handicapped without US participation. (*Paras. 47-55*)

5. Effective Western participation in Middle East defense would depend in large part on arrangements for base and operating rights. However, regional participants in a defense grouping (other than Turkey, and possibly Pakistan) would almost certainly resist granting additional peacetime rights in the foreseeable future. They might in time agree to the construction and at least wartime use of military facilities. (*Paras. 50, 54-55*)

6. In the last analysis, the course of developments in Middle East defense will depend in large measure on the actions of the US, which is generally regarded as the prime mover in such enterprises. US military and budgetary assistance will almost certainly provide the principal incentives both to continued cooperation by present participants in Middle East defense activity and to the adherence of additional states. Moreover, there is likely to be increasing pressure for direct US participation or some other form of security guarantee. At the same time, the widespread belief will persist that in case of Soviet aggression in the Middle East, the military moves of the US and UK would be made with little regard for

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regional security commitments or the interests of local states. This feeling will contribute to continued cynicism about US-UK commitments under any defense arrangements, and will increase the tendency of each state to react to such arrangements in terms of its own maximum political advantage. US involvement in defense efforts is thus likely to increase pressures on the US to become more involved in intraregional political controversies, and in particular will sharpen the problem of Israel's position in relation to regional defense. (*Paras. 56-59*)

7. The USSR will almost certainly continue its efforts to discredit a Middle East

defense grouping and to discourage the adherence of additional states. It will continue to strengthen its position in Afghanistan, in part as a means of exerting counterpressures on Pakistan and Iran. The USSR would be particularly sensitive about Iranian adherence to a defense pact, and if such adherence appeared to be in prospect, would probably apply pressures, including threats to invoke the 1921 Irano-Soviet Treaty. We believe, however, that the USSR will not feel itself sufficiently threatened by the Middle East defense grouping to undertake major retaliatory actions such as invasion of any of the member states. (*Paras. 35, 41-44*)

DISCUSSION

I. PRESENT SITUATION

8. For nearly ten years after World War II, the Western strategic position in the Middle East was deteriorating almost everywhere but in Turkey. With British power on the decline in the area, the old British system of alliances and base agreements came under challenge from rising nationalist forces and grew inadequate to meet the postwar Soviet potential. Nationalist anti-Westernism, intensified in the Arab states by the creation of Israel and by the North African problem, made difficult the development of any alternative form of politico-military cooperation between the Middle East states and the West as a whole. Between 1951 and 1952, two Middle East defense proposals sponsored by the US, UK, France, and Turkey, failed of acceptance by the states of the area.

9. Within the last year, the situation has improved in certain respects, although it has deteriorated in others. The long-drawn-out Anglo-Egyptian dispute over the Suez base has now been settled on terms which offer some hope that the base can be effectively reactivated in event of emergency, and the Anglo-

Iranian oil controversy has been resolved. Moreover the US, supported by Turkey and the UK, has made some progress in a new approach to regional defense, dispensing with French sponsorship. In April 1954, Turkey and Pakistan — occupying the anchor positions under the US-sponsored "northern tier" concept — were persuaded to join in a loose agreement providing for limited defense cooperation between the signatories, and inviting the adherence of other interested states. In February 1955, Turkey took the initiative in concluding a somewhat more binding pact with Iraq.² This agreement was subsequently adhered to by the UK, which at the same time entered into a subsidiary base agreement with Iraq to replace the outmoded Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of 1932.

10. This series of agreements has established a geographical and political framework for at least some degree of planning for area defense. Moreover, these agreements, and particularly Iraq's decision to participate, have

² The significant provisions of the Turkish-Iraqi agreement and an accompanying exchange of notes appear as Appendix A.

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exercised some psychological attraction within other Middle East states. The Shah of Iran, in some contrast to his government, has displayed growing impatience to procure greatly increased US military aid and firmer US commitments toward Iran, though even he has not changed his position that Iranian adherence to a "northern tier" grouping would now be premature. The Shah has also proposed joint staff talks with Turkey, Iraq, and Pakistan. The decision of Iraq, the second strongest Arab state, to enter into US-UK backed defense arrangements, has posed a challenge both to the prevalent Arab tendency toward inaction and neutralism, and to the politically potent dogma of solidarity against regional defense arrangements not sponsored by the Arab states.

11. On the other hand, Iraq's decision has roused the opposition of anti-Iraqi and anti-US and UK elements and brought to the surface a vast complex of intraregional rivalries and tensions. Iraq's decision to make a defense agreement with Turkey was preceded by months of tortuous maneuver and discussion designed largely to insure the acquiescence of the other Arab states. Nevertheless, announcement of the pact was taken by Egypt as a direct challenge to its dominant role in Arab League councils and as an indication that the US and UK no longer regarded Egypt as the key Arab country. Together with King Saud, who reacted at least equally strongly because of his bitter rivalry with the Hashemite dynasty in Iraq, the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) regime in Egypt has made vigorous efforts first to prevent and later to offset the Iraqi move.

12. Egypt was unsuccessful in its initial efforts to marshal the rest of the Arab League in condemnation of Iraq and to drum up effective internal opposition to the Iraqi government. Thereafter it attempted to promote a new Arab alignment based initially on Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Syria, aimed at isolating Iraq and reaffirming under Egyptian leadership a unified Arab position against defense agreements with the West except on Arab terms. The result has been a struggle for influence over government leaders and

important political elements in the uncommitted states, with Egypt and Saudi pressures and inducements ranged against those of Iraq and Turkey. The contest is most intense in Syria, where the weak and opportunistic government is under heavy pressures from both sides, but is unwilling to commit itself unequivocally against Iraq.

13. The Turkish-Iraqi pact has also intensified Israeli alarm at the developing pattern of defense arrangements. Israel is concerned that Turkey, the only Middle Eastern state with which it has enjoyed friendly relations, has now entered an agreement with one of its Arab enemies which provides for mutual assistance against aggression from any source and which, by the terms of an accompanying exchange of notes, pledges Turkish cooperation in carrying out the UN resolutions on Palestine, many of which are quite unacceptable to Israel. Israel is further alarmed lest Turkey and Iraq succeed in extending this agreement to include Israel's neighbors, Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan. Israel would be particularly alarmed if a union between Iraq and Syria resulted in a stronger hostile Arab state along its border. Finally, Israel feels endangered by any arrangement involving arms aid to Arab states which is not counterbalanced by military support and firm guarantees to Israel.

14. Generally speaking, the outlook for development of a US and UK-oriented Middle East defense grouping has improved in recent months, but moves in this direction have at the same time contributed to area instability by disturbing the precarious balance of interrelationships within the region. In particular, the Turkish-Iraqi pact has, in the eyes of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, France, and Israel, posed challenges to their prestige and their interests. This in turn has had some adverse effects on the standing of the US, which is generally regarded as the principal backer of the defense effort. Israel almost certainly regards US encouragement of Iraqi participation in Middle East defense as an indication that US concern for Israel's interests is decreasing. The RCC regime in Egypt has also become embittered against the US over recent developments in

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the defense field and has even voiced the suspicion that the US is attempting to undermine the regime's domestic position.

II. POSITIONS AND INTENTIONS OF THE STATES INVOLVED

15. *Iraq.* We believe that Iraq intends to make the agreement with Turkey an effective instrument and that it will refuse to be swayed from this course by opposition on the part of other Arab states. However, Iraqi cooperation in the regional defense sphere will continue to be influenced by a number of motives other than that of developing an effective defense arrangement. Although Iraq's signature of a defense agreement with Turkey reflected some appreciation of the Soviet military threat, it was largely motivated by such collateral factors as: (a) the desire to replace the old Anglo-Iraqi Treaty with an arrangement more acceptable to nationalist sentiment; (b) the wish to promote Syro-Iraqi union; (c) the recognition that some positive step toward area defense was necessary to obtain further US military aid; (d) the wish to increase Iraq's prestige among the Arab states at Egypt's expense; and (e) the weight of Turkish insistence. Iraq will of course welcome security guarantees and support from Turkey and the UK, and it will also continue to urge US adherence to the arrangement and to hope for additional US military aid. At the same time, it will seek to employ such support to foster its leadership aspirations in the Arab world.

16. In return for its efforts to lead the way toward Arab alignment with the US and UK, Iraq may be expected to seek outside support for its regional aspirations. Thus for some time, at least, Iraq will probably place a higher priority on bringing Syria into the existing loose arrangements than on developing firmer military ties with its present partners. Iraq will continue financial and other encouragement to Syrian elements which might work for closer ties with Iraq, either directly or through Syrian adherence to the Turkish-Iraqi pact. If confronted with a coup by anti-Iraqi elements in Syria, Iraq might seek UK, US, and

Turkish diplomatic support for, or at least acquiescence in, military intervention.

17. Iraq's ambitions will probably not inhibit the consolidation of existing defense arrangements, but may prevent the early inclusion of other Arab states. So long as the UK continues to believe that Iraqi armed intervention in Syria is contrary to British interests, Iraq will probably not undertake such a venture. Iraq will also almost certainly be sensitive to US wishes in this respect, as a result of its desire for further US military aid and for US adherence to the pact. In addition, the strong likelihood of violent Israeli reaction will tend to deter an open Iraqi move to absorb Syria. Iraq may try to prevent the other Arab states from joining a hostile group rather than actively seek their adherence to present defense arrangements at any early date.

18. *Turkey.* Turkey's primary concern is with the defense of its frontiers with the Bloc, to which end it is interested in strengthening its NATO ties and the Balkan Alliance. However, it has also shown increasing interest in protecting its exposed southern flank from a Soviet thrust through Iran and the Arab states, and it will probably continue to seek the addition of Iran, Syria, and Lebanon to a defense grouping. This policy will probably continue to involve political and propaganda conflicts with Egypt and Saudi Arabia. The Turks will be tempted to side with Iraq in advocating forceful means to end the unsatisfactory situation in Syria. The further development of Arab ties will also strain Turkey's relations with Israel. Turkey will continue, however, to hold a low opinion of Iranian and Arab military capabilities, and to seek UK and US commitments to defense arrangements.

19. *Pakistan.* Pakistan has promised to adhere to the Turkish-Iraqi pact and will probably join in the near future. Under its present leaders, Pakistan will probably continue to cooperate with the US in furthering anti-Communist defense arrangements in the Middle East. In doing so, however, it will be motivated primarily by hopes of insuring continued and, if possible, increased US aid, cul-

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tivating its prestige in the Islamic world, and strengthening its position vis-a-vis India and Afghanistan. Pakistan is not likely, therefore, to favor much more than planning and consultative arrangements. At least for some time, moreover, Pakistan's attention is likely to be diverted from Middle East defense questions by its immediate and pressing political and economic problems, its strained relations with Afghanistan, and its suspicions of India.

20. *Iran.* During the past year, prospects for open alignment of Iran with the West have been improved by a number of factors: (a) restoration of friendly relations with the UK; (b) settlement of the oil dispute and revived hopes for economic improvement; (c) suppression of Tudeh activities; (d) consolidation of political control by the Shah and generally pro-Western elements; and (e) continued reliance on US aid and guidance. Since March 1955, when the Shah returned from Europe and the US, he has shown intensified interest in entering defense arrangements which would be backed by the US. Although denying any intention to join regional defense arrangements in the near future, Iran rejected a Soviet protest that such a move would infringe its 1921 treaty with the USSR.

21. While Iran will probably be willing to cooperate with its neighbors in limited and contingent planning for defense, such as might result from the staff talks which have been proposed, its overriding defense objective will almost certainly continue to be that of securing increased military and budgetary aid and firm security commitments from the US. Without these, Iran will remain reluctant to risk the Soviet displeasure which formal adherence to anti-Communist defense arrangements would bring. Moreover, the Shah's genuine desire to join a regional defense grouping will continue to be qualified by his fear that Iran's military weakness would relegate it to a subordinate role as compared to Turkey, Iraq, and Pakistan. Iran is thus likely to continue a cautious policy involving: (a) approval in principle of defense arrangements; (b) limited cooperation, such as staff

talks, designed to demonstrate Iran's interest in defense efforts and establish its claim to US military support; and (c) reluctance to adhere formally in the absence of substantially increased US aid and guarantees. Should increased instability preoccupy the Shah's attention or actually weaken his position, or should the pressure of neutralist sentiment increase in Iran, the chances of Iranian participation in defense arrangements would decrease.

22. *The UK.* Despite some initial reservations about the "northern tier" approach, the UK now appears to have accepted it as the best available means of providing for the defense of the Middle East and of retaining rights of US and UK access to bases in event of war. Although the UK accepts the established fact of US participation in Middle East affairs, it remains deeply concerned with protecting as much as possible of its own special interests and influence in the area. The UK promptly adhered to the Turkish-Iraqi pact chiefly because it provided a framework for a new base agreement with Iraq. British views on developing the pact, as well as British policy toward associating other states in area defense arrangements, will continue to reflect the UK's over-all political and economic interests in the area as well as military concern over the Soviet threat.

23. The UK will almost certainly favor making the present agreements effective instruments for cooperation with Middle Eastern states, and will desire US aid and commitments in consolidating defense arrangements. In general, the UK will favor the expansion of such arrangements in order to increase stability and UK influence in Syria and Lebanon, and to strengthen its special position in Jordan. If Jordan joins the new defense pact, the UK might consent to a revision of the Anglo-Jordanian treaty somewhat along the lines of its new arrangement with Iraq. In seeking to retain its influence in the Fertile Crescent area, while making formal arrangements less offensive to nationalist sensibilities, the UK will also have an eye on protecting its strategic position and oil interests in the Persian Gulf which were weakened by the British

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withdrawal from India and Palestine, and by British reverses in Egypt and Iran. In the Egyptian-Iraqi controversy, the UK will probably continue to counsel moderation, in the hope of eventually bringing Egypt around and of avoiding a crisis which would imperil UK-Egyptian cooperation in Suez. So far as Iran's adherence to a defense grouping is concerned, the UK may remain relatively cool, primarily out of concern for the Soviet reaction to such a development.

24. *Egypt.* Egypt, like Iraq, aspires to leadership of the Arab states. However, where Iraq sees the path to such leadership through cooperation with the US and UK in area defense, Egypt now regards such cooperation as largely inconsistent with its own aspirations. Egypt will look with disfavor on any policies that unduly favor Iraq, or that undermine the idea of Arab solidarity which is symbolized in the Egyptian dominated Arab League. At the same time, the RCC regime remains aware of its dependence on the West for economic aid, for military supplies, and for some measure of protection against Israel. Hence Iraq's agreement with Turkey and US-UK support of the move have placed Egypt in a dilemma. The RCC's strong negative reaction indicates that for some time at least Egypt will continue to place its desire for Arab leadership above the advantages of cooperation with the West. This disposition may lessen Egyptian willingness to live up to the spirit of the Suez Agreement with the UK.

25. For some time to come, Egypt, although unlikely to attempt seriously to assert a positive leadership role over the other Arab states, will probably continue to take negative measures to prevent Iraq from organizing other Arab states in line with the Turkish-Iraqi pact. Supported by Saudi Arabia, Egypt will probably continue at least to go through the motions of trying to establish a new Arab defense alliance based initially on Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Syria (the ESS pact). Even though the RCC is unlikely to develop much confidence in the military effectiveness of such a grouping, Egypt will for reasons of prestige feel obliged to support the project. Egypt itself sponsored the scheme, and it appeals to

politically influential nationalist and anti-Western elements in Egypt. Moreover, it serves as an instrument for keeping alive Egyptian pretensions to Arab leadership, and it supplies to other states, which might be tempted to follow Iraq into defense arrangements with the US and UK, a purely Arab alternative.

26. While Egypt's most urgent short run concern in its relations with other Arab states is to keep Syria out of the "northern tier" grouping, it will also regard the adherence of any other Arab state as a setback to its interests. Egypt would prefer to create an Arab alliance which prohibited members from entering arrangements with non-Arab powers without the consent of all, thus excluding Iraq unless the latter repudiates its agreement with Turkey. However, Syria has sought to have these anti-Iraqi aspects omitted from the proposed ESS agreement, and if it remains firm in this respect, Egypt may give way.

27. So long as Egypt has hopes of preventing other states from following Iraq, its vigorous opposition to defense ties along "northern tier" lines will probably continue. The danger exists that in following this course Egypt may become a prisoner of its present policies, and be unable to modify them even if the eventual success of "northern tier" arrangements were to render such policies futile and perhaps harmful to Egypt's interests. This danger would increase if the RCC continued to suspect that the US and UK are promoting the "northern tier" scheme in order to weaken and isolate Egypt. Egypt's feeling that it is entitled to an important regional role has probably been strengthened at least temporarily by the recognition given Premier Nasr at the Bandung Conference.

28. In the long run, it is possible that Egypt in its own self-interest will become more reconciled to US and UK defense efforts. Increased tension with Israel, the growing necessity for building an effective working relationship with the Sudan, and increasing internal political pressure for progress in land development schemes and for some form of normalization of political life, may compel Egypt to give more attention to problems

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closer to home at the expense of its role in Arab affairs. Under these circumstances, it might give greater heed to its continuing need for limited cooperation with the US and UK. The possibility of Egypt's following this course would be enhanced by indications that the states aligned with the US and UK were receiving tangible benefits from this association. In any event, Egyptian actions are likely to be determined less by fear of the Soviet threat than by the desire to improve the internal position and international prestige of the regime, to strengthen Egypt against Israel, and to advance its policy in the Arab world and Africa.

29. *Saudi Arabia.* The Saudis' extreme preoccupation with parochial concerns, particularly their desire to prevent strengthening the Hashemite house in Iraq, will almost certainly continue to outweigh broader considerations of strengthening the area as a whole. Saudi Arabia will probably continue to subsidize elements in Lebanon, Jordan, and especially Syria in an effort to prevent defense ties between those countries and the US and UK which might strengthen Iraqi influence. It will also continue to maintain close ties with Egypt and to favor a new anti-Iraqi alignment. However, if Egypt should abandon or fail in this project, Saudi Arabia alone would be ineffective in promoting it. In negotiations with the US over the Dhahran air base agreement, due for renewal in 1956, the Saudis' will probably cite US support of the Turkish-Iraqi pact as an instance of aiding Saudi enemies, and use this argument to seek a higher price for renewal.

30. *Syria.* In no other state have the tensions resulting from the new defense developments been so clearly felt as in Syria. After the fall of the Khuri cabinet which was favorable to the Turkish-Iraqi pact, Syria, led by the new anti-Iraqi Asali-Azm government, agreed to join Egypt and Saudi Arabia in the proposed new anti-Iraqi alignment. Under strong Turkish-Iraqi counterpressures, Syria has since adopted a temporizing policy. These vacillations reflect an unresolved struggle, with considerable participation by interested external parties, for control of the Syrian gov-

ernment. So long as this struggle continues, Syria will remain a highly unstable state and the main arena of the power contest among the other Arab states.

31. In this situation, one Syrian faction or another may attempt a forceful seizure of power, probably with outside encouragement. At present, the most likely source of such a coup is the anti-Iraqi faction. This group is composed of some influential army officers led by Chief of Staff Shawkat Shuqayr, some elements of the Nationalist Party, various opportunistic political independents, and the militantly anti-Western Arab Socialist-Resurrectionist Party of Akram Hawrani, which has been infiltrated to some extent by Communists and which exerts considerable influence both in the army and in parliament. In general, this faction is backed by Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and France. A successful coup by this faction would increase Syrian neutralist and anti-US-UK tendencies. It would also weaken Iraq's prestige in the Arab world. The pro-Iraqi and largely pro-US-UK elements in Syria, which include President Atasi, a large segment of the Populist Party, and probably some army officers, have shown little initiative. If confronted with a coup, the pro-Iraqi group might seek outright Iraqi intervention on the plea of protecting the legal government.

32. Even if one faction should gain sufficient control of the Syrian government to commit it clearly to one side or the other in the Arab power struggle, deep-seated divisions within the country itself would continue to limit its effectiveness as an ally. The emotional and political attractions which draw some elements toward the Egyptian-Saudi alignment will continue to be counterbalanced by the pro-Iraqi and pro-US and UK sympathies of other factions. Syria's trade ties with Iraq, which are far more extensive than those with Egypt, make a clear break with the Iraqis economically undesirable. And if Jordan and Lebanon were to join Turkey and Iraq, even Syria's pro-Egyptian elements might have misgivings about aligning themselves with geographically remote Egypt and Saudi Arabia at the cost of

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isolation from their immediate Arab and Turkish neighbors, and consequent exposure to Israel. By the same token, however, a formal Syrian alignment with Iraq would be weakened in practice by strong domestic opposition which would be encouraged by Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and at least covertly by France.

33. *Lebanon and Jordan.* These states also find themselves in the middle of the Egyptian-Iraqi controversy. Both are weak states, whose independence in foreign policy is extremely limited. Jordan's preoccupation with Israel, and the sentiments of the former Palestinians in Jordan, would make an open stand against Egypt appear politically hazardous. Lebanon's economic needs, and the influence of its Moslem elements, make it fearful of alienating Saudi Arabia or Egypt. Both states, however, are heavily dependent on the West — Jordan through its UK treaty ties and subsidies, Lebanon because of its trade patterns and the conviction of its Christian elements that friendly relations with the West are necessary to continued Lebanese independence and to their own survival in a Moslem world. Both states have accordingly temporized in the present controversy in the hope that a solution will be found which will preserve some degree of Arab unity while permitting beneficial relations between Arab states and the US and UK.

34. Lebanon and Jordan will almost certainly seek to prevent an open break between Iraq and Egypt. Both states would probably be inclined to side with Iraq if a choice became necessary, partly in view of Iraq's growing strength, but mainly because they cannot afford to side with an openly anti-US and UK group. However, they will continue to hope that the choice can be avoided. If Egypt persists in fostering a new Arab pact, Lebanon and Jordan will be under continuing pressure to join in the interests of Arab unity, but they will probably try to stay out so long as the pact is not open to Iraq. Jordan will continue to place its main reliance on bilateral ties with the UK. However, the UK treaty is not popular within Jordan, and Jordan would probably be willing to join the Turkish-Iraqi pact as a means of revising its

bilateral relations with the UK, even over Egypt's protests. Lebanon too would be strongly tempted to join the pact if this appeared the best way of assuring its continued independence, though it will also probably seek bilateral US guarantees for this objective as well.

35. *Afghanistan.* Afghanistan is unlikely to membership in any "northern tier" defense grouping in the foreseeable future because of its exposed and isolated position, its longstanding belief in the wisdom of remaining uncommitted to either Russia or the West, and its persistent quarrel with Pakistan over the Pushtunistan issue. Afghanistan's chief importance in Middle East defense efforts, therefore, is likely to be as a focus for Soviet counterpressures designed in part to intimidate Iran and Pakistan.

36. *Summary Outlook.* With the signature of the Turkish-Iraqi agreement, and the subsequent adherence of the UK, some form of Middle East defense organization now appears very likely. If Pakistan goes through with promises to adhere to the new agreement, provisions of the pact for establishing a joint defense council will go into effect. Moreover, there is at least an even chance that Iran will in time adhere, thus fulfilling the original "northern tier" concept. In addition, Iraq's successful defiance of Egypt on the issue of defense agreements has shaken resistance in certain other Arab states to US and UK-sponsored area defense, and has improved the prospects for eventually forming a more inclusive regional defense organization. The inclusion of additional Arab states, however, depends in part on the outcome of the struggle for Arab leadership between Egypt and Iraq. At least for the next few months, and possibly for considerably longer, Egypt and Saudi Arabia will probably continue their efforts to check Iraq and undermine the Turkish-Iraqi pact. Even though Egypt is unlikely to regain undisputed leadership of the Arab states, many of the latter may be unwilling to take any definitive step toward entering defense arrangement with the US and UK in the face of Egyptian and Saudi objections. In the short run, at least, continued US encourage-

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ment of the "northern tier" grouping would be likely further to strain US-Egyptian relations.

III. DEFENSE DEVELOPMENTS AND THE ARAB-ISRAELI SITUATION³

37. The Turkish-Iraqi pact, following on the heels of a US MDAP agreement with Iraq and Egypt's assumption of control over the Suez base, has intensified a feeling of isolation in Israel and a fear that time is working against Israel. Since David Ben-Gurion's return to the cabinet as defense minister in February 1955, Israel has adopted a tougher border policy, particularly in the Gaza area.

38. Israel will continue to make every effort, both through Zionist and diplomatic channels, to dissuade the US, the UK, and Turkey from strengthening the Arab states. It will also seek Western arms aid and security guarantees in order to counter any increases in Arab strength and to demonstrate to the Arab states that it still enjoys Western support. While it recognizes that the Tripartite Declaration of 1950 provides some deterrent to Arab aggression, Israel is likely to argue increasingly that the Declaration offers inadequate guarantees to Israel and that the US and UK are themselves violating the commitment contained in that document not to upset the military balance between Israel and the Arab states. Israel's diplomatic and propaganda activities will be aimed principally at influencing UK and US policy. In addition, it will probably seek to exploit the apprehensions of the French, who are anxious for a greater voice in the formulation of Western policy in the Middle East, and whose misgivings about Syrian and Lebanese association with Middle East defense activities give them a certain identity of interest with Israel. Falling satisfaction of its desire for arms aid and firm security guarantees from the UK and US, Israel would probably look increasingly to France for military supplies.

39. In the short run, at least, US-UK defense efforts in the Arab states area are likely to

³ This question will be examined in greater detail in the forthcoming NIE 30-2-55, "Probable Developments in the Arab-Israeli Situation," scheduled for early completion.

exacerbate Arab-Israeli tensions. In Israel, such efforts will lend considerable support to the view of the "activists" that diplomacy has failed and that Israel's interests call for a more forceful line toward the Arab states. It appears that present Israeli efforts are directed toward forcing a settlement with the Arabs based generally on the territorial *status quo*, either through direct negotiations or through Western or UN mediation, while Israel still enjoys military superiority and the Arab states are divided and quarreling. Accordingly, Israel is unlikely to moderate its policy of organized border reprisals, which could expand into wider hostilities, and some military and even civilian elements may become increasingly tempted to risk a second round of hostilities with the Arab states rather than permit what they consider unfavorable trends to continue. However, deterrents to major military aggression by Israel will continue to be: (a) the risk of losing the moral and financial support of the US and of US Jewry; (b) the UK treaties with Iraq, and particularly with Jordan; and (c) the Tripartite Declaration of 1950.

40. On the part of the Arabs, a desire to strengthen themselves vis-a-vis Israel will continue to be a major motivation for accepting US-UK defense ties and military aid. Arab states which cooperate in defense arrangements are likely to bargain for greater US-UK diplomatic support vis-a-vis Israel. Moreover, with any increases in their own military strength, they may feel even less inclined to reach a peaceful settlement on the basis of the *status quo*. Arab leaders who favor ties with the US and UK may also be intimidated from pursuing a more conciliatory policy toward Israel by the charges of their opponents that US-UK-backed defense efforts are in reality devious moves to divide the Arab states and bring about a settlement between them and Israel. Nevertheless, in the long run it is possible that Arab states which accept defense arrangements with the US and UK may, as a result of US-UK influence, be induced to become less intransigent toward Israel, provided Israel itself becomes less intransigent.

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IV. PROBABLE REACTIONS OF OTHER INTERESTED COUNTRIES

41. *The USSR.* The Soviet Union will almost certainly continue its efforts to discredit a Middle East defense grouping and to discourage the adherence of additional states, particularly those adjacent to the USSR. Soviet propaganda in the area will probably continue to argue that Western-backed defense arrangements represent a disguised form of imperialism which involves Middle East countries in provocations against the Soviet Union. It will probably stress the advantages of a neutralist course, and will point to its own efforts at "coexistence" in Europe. It will probably continue its efforts to demonstrate support of the Arab states *vis-a-vis* Israel, and will oppose any Western guarantees to Israel.

42. Soviet attempts to prevent individual states from joining Western-backed defense arrangements will probably involve both inducements and threats. In Syria, local Communists will continue to associate themselves with the anti-Iraqi element. The USSR will encourage Syrian adherence to an anti-Iraq Arab grouping; official Soviet policy will probably be expressed in terms of support for Syrian independence. Forceful Iraqi intervention in Syria would call forth a strong Soviet reaction, which would probably include raising the issue in the UN. The Soviets will encourage Egypt's resistance to its own and other Arab states' defense ties with the West, and may supplement their diplomatic efforts with offers to barter Bloc military supplies for Egyptian cotton.

43. The USSR would be particularly sensitive about Iranian adherence to a defense pact. Iran's exposed position and its special treaty relations with the USSR give the Soviets considerable leverage for efforts to prevent such adherence. In the diplomatic field, the USSR has recently been courting Iran by settling long-standing border and financial disputes, but it has also shown that it is prepared to apply diplomatic pressures to prevent Iranian participation in a "northern tier" grouping. Such pressures probably would include threats to invoke the 1921 Irano-Soviet Treaty, which

the USSR construes as permitting it to introduce troops into Iran in case of threatened invasion from Iranian territory; they might also include the creating of difficulties over recently ratified border and financial agreements between Iran and the USSR, and the instigation of incidents or a show of force along the borders. The extensive uncovering and suppression of Tudeh infiltration in the Iranian government and armed forces during the past year have reduced Soviet ability to promote internal disorders.

44. Soviet inroads in Afghanistan through the provision of economic aid and the introduction of Soviet personnel during the past year reflect the growing importance attached by the USSR to the maintenance of a favorable position in Afghanistan. Any Afghan tendency to align with other nations in a Middle East defense arrangement would almost certainly result in strong Soviet pressures on Afghanistan.

45. *France.* Although France insists that it approves strengthening the Middle East against Soviet aggression, its attitude toward the Turkish-Iraqi pact in practice continues to be negative. The French were offended at being left out of the preparations for the arrangement, and have been even more concerned that a British plot was being hatched to establish Iraqi hegemony over Syria and Lebanon, where France maintains claims to "special interests." France reacted by giving covert support to anti-Iraqi elements in Syria, and by drawing closer to Israel and Egypt. France has assured the US and UK that it does not oppose the pact, and at higher policy levels it will probably support, at least in theory, the development of a "northern tier" defense grouping. However, France will urge that it should participate in the planning and leadership of such an organization. At the same time, concern for the maintenance of French influence in the Levant states will probably be reflected in continuing French covert activity designed to hold Iraqi, UK, and US influence in check.

46. *India.* India's opposition to regional defense groupings will almost certainly continue, particularly so long as Nehru believes

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that "power blocs" constitute a threat to peace. Pakistan's ties with the "northern tier" grouping, and accompanying US military aid to Pakistan, will continue to be especially distasteful to India. India will oppose Arab and Iranian adherence to Western-backed defense arrangements, and in particular will encourage Egypt to take a neutralist position. Nevertheless, a critical rift between India and the US over the issue of Middle East defense arrangements remains unlikely, and it is highly improbable that disagreements with the US over this issue would cause India to move significantly closer to the Bloc.

47. *Greece and Yugoslavia.* Greece is piqued at what it regards as excessive Turkish initiative, and uneasy at British "encirclement." Yugoslavia has opposed the Turkish-Pakistani and the Turkish-Iraqi pacts as running counter to Yugoslav efforts to decrease tensions between East and West. These reactions may in some measure weaken the Balkan Alliance and strengthen Egypt's position.

V. THE MILITARY OUTLOOK

48. From the military standpoint, recent developments have done little to reduce the area's vulnerability to Soviet aggression. Turkey's agreements with Pakistan and Iraq involve little more than general provisions for limited cooperation which may eventually develop into more effective joint military arrangements. Except for Turkey, and possibly Israel, the states of the Middle East still have almost no ability to withstand a Soviet attack, and their political and military weaknesses continue to constitute a strategic liability for US and its allies. The UK-Egyptian agreement on Suez ended a troublesome political conflict between the two countries, but at the military cost of dispersing the only powerful concentration of British military power in the Middle East, and of breaking up the organization and part of the facilities of the great military base on which Western defense plans for the area have long hinged. And while Egypt is pledged to grant base re-entry rights to the UK in case the Arab states or Turkey are attacked, effective West-

ern use of the base in event of emergency is now subject not only to Egyptian agreement that such an emergency indeed threatens, but also to the delays involved in restoring the base to operations once Egyptian agreement is secured.

49. Except for Turkey, Israel has the most effective military force in the area. However, present political circumstances preclude integration of Israeli forces into area defense arrangements. Israel is anxious to secure US military aid, and in event of war would be disposed to side with the West if it were convinced that an effective effort to defend the area could be made. However, its willingness to resist a Soviet invasion would depend in part on timely action by the US and UK demonstrating their readiness to provide prompt military assistance.

50. The defense of the Middle East will continue for some time to hinge almost entirely on the willingness and ability of the US and UK to commit the necessary ground, naval, and air forces.⁴ Recent defense agreements are of military value to the West because in some measure they improve the long-range prospects for: (a) building up indigenous defense forces; (b) developing a coordinated command structure; and (c) facilitating the development of Western bases and Western access to the area in event of war.

51. *Prospects for Improving Indigenous Forces.* US-UK military aid and support will continue to be necessary to effect any significant improvement in the defense capabilities of Middle Eastern states. And even if such support is forthcoming, its effective utilization would be a slow, costly, and arduous process, requiring close US or UK supervision and budgetary support. Even if the Middle East countries cooperated to the fullest extent with US training and planning groups, and if the US provided the materiel and budgetary support necessary, it would take at least three to five years to correct current deficiencies

⁴ The Union of South Africa has made a commitment to supply an expeditionary force, possibly consisting of two small armored divisions, for the defense of the Middle East in the event of war.

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even in existing Middle East ground forces. Given the conditions that are likely to prevail, it is probable that the process actually would take considerably longer in most cases. Moreover, such an effort would require a far higher level of military aid than is now being provided Iran, Pakistan, and Iraq. The development of effective naval and air forces would be even more expensive, difficult, and time-consuming.

52. *Prospects for Developing a United Command Structure.* The Turkish-Pakistani and Turkish-Iraqi agreements represent little more than expressions of willingness to cooperate, and many problems remain to be solved before even these states are likely to participate in effective joint defense planning, force deployment in accordance with over-all regional requirements, or the establishment of a unified command. Nevertheless, the Turkish-Iraqi pact provides at least the basis on which Turkey and Iraq can begin to coordinate policies for defense of their eastern flank in cooperation with the UK. Once a joint defense council has been established following the adherence of a fourth state, the UK will probably work to develop a tighter, more formal defense organization.

53. The "northern tier" states which enter a defense grouping will almost certainly be willing to support at least the principle of military cooperation. However, the extent to which they are likely to engage in serious joint defense planning, and eventually to make commitments to an over-all defense plan, will depend in large measure on US and UK policies and on the degree of US participation and support. Any real or apparent conflict of aims between the US and UK with respect to defense efforts would almost certainly impair cooperation among the Middle East states.

54. *Outlook for Western Military Access to the Area.* Although timely and effective Western participation in defense of the Middle East depends in large part on some form of arrangements for base and operating rights, the idea of such rights or of the presence of Western troops in peacetime remains offensive to most states of the area. The Suez agreement and the termination of the Anglo-Iraqi treaty have

served to confirm nationalist feeling that vestiges of Western military occupation are outmoded. Overt British control of bases in Iraq has been exchanged for less open working arrangements. Even Jordan's extreme dependence on UK subsidies and military support has not prevented the growth of considerable domestic discontent over the military rights which the UK enjoys in Jordan. In Iran, widespread opposition to granting military rights to the Western Powers in peacetime would be re-enforced by fear of the probable Soviet reaction.

55. Given this pervasive feeling, Middle East states (other than Turkey, and possibly Pakistan⁵) which have or may become members of a Western-backed regional defense grouping would almost certainly resist granting additional peacetime base or operating rights to Western forces in the foreseeable future. However, having accepted the idea of a defense grouping, they might permit construction of militarily useful roads and other communications facilities with Western assistance, and might in time agree to the construction of purely military facilities. While they would seek to have such facilities remain under their own control, their association in area defense would offer the West greater opportunities to effect some form of working arrangements for wartime use of these facilities, and in most cases also for limited peacetime access, such as Iraq affords the UK.

VI. CONSEQUENCES OF POSSIBLE US COURSES OF ACTION

56. While the US has thus far refrained from open participation in current regional defense arrangements in the Middle East, the belief

⁵ We have estimated that Pakistan's present leadership would probably be favorably inclined toward US peacetime developments of bases for US use in Pakistan, but that its actual agreement to such development, and the extent of rights which Pakistan would give the US for use of bases in peace or in war, might depend on such factors as its current relations with India, the state of public opinion, the probable Soviet response, and the extent of US aid and guarantees it might expect to receive. NIE 52-55, "Probable Developments in Pakistan," 15 March 1955.

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that the US was a principal though silent partner in the enterprise has figured importantly in the calculations of the other interested parties. The attitude and actions of the US will continue to have an important bearing on future developments.

57. The character and amount of military aid, including budgetary support, made available by the US will almost certainly remain the principal factor by which the advantages of participating in Middle East defense activities are judged. It is also likely to have a determining influence both on the willingness of present members of the pact to move ahead in the field of defense cooperation and on the desire of other Middle East states to participate. As progress is made toward a more effective regional defense grouping, there is likely to be increasing pressure for some more direct form of US commitment, since it is recognized that the area cannot be effectively defended without active US participation. Turkey has already called on the US to take a more active role in developing defense arrangements, and the Pakistanis, before committing themselves, have attempted to get assurances that the US will adhere. The present signatories are also likely to seek open US diplomatic support in their efforts to win additional adherents among the Arab states.

58. The extent of US aid to states participating in defense arrangements will also be

closely watched by the uncommitted states. A demonstrable build-up of Iraqi forces, for example, would help to convince other Arab states that material benefits were to be derived from cooperation with the US. Eventually, it might even draw Egypt toward a more cooperative attitude, if only through fear of being left behind. Conversely, long delays in implementing arms promises, or the provision of clearly obsolete or only token quantities of materiel might persuade the undecided states that association with defense arrangements was not worthwhile, and would provide opponents of the idea with additional propaganda weapons.

59. On the other hand, the belief is widespread in the Middle East that in case of Soviet aggression in the area, the military moves of the US and UK would be made with little regard for regional security commitments or the interests of local states. This feeling will contribute to continued cynicism about Western commitments under any defense arrangements and to the tendency of each state to view such arrangements primarily in terms of maximum political advantage. US unwillingness to participate or to make commitments would probably retard expansion of a defense grouping and would almost certainly increase the emphasis on parochial interests among participating states.

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APPENDIX A

SUMMARY OF THE TURKISH-IRAQI PACT

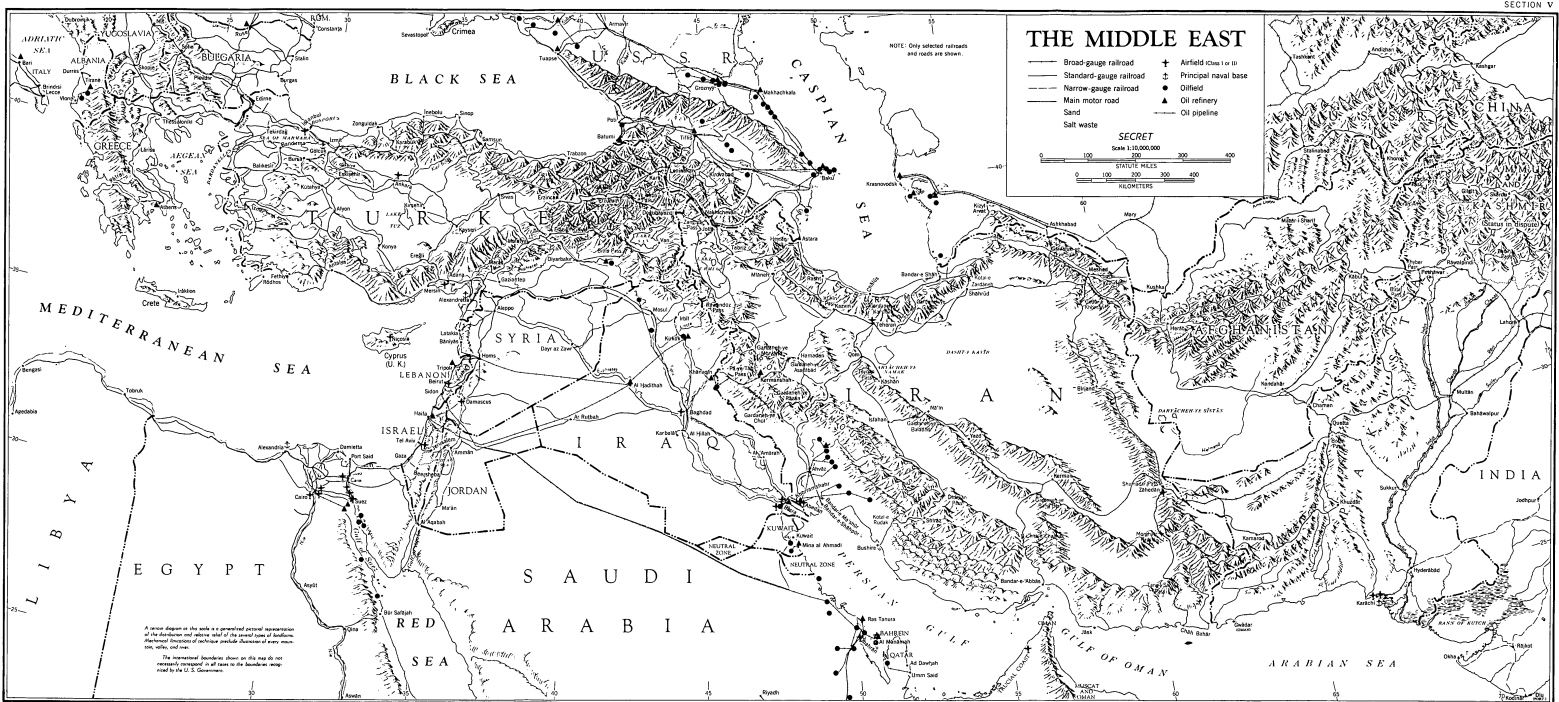
The stated aim of the Pact of Mutual Cooperation between Iraq and Turkey, which was signed February 24, 1955, at Baghdad, is the further improvement of good relations between the two countries in order to contribute to world peace and security, particularly in the Middle East. Specifically, the parties pledge themselves to "cooperate for their security and defense consistent with . . . the UN Charter." They agree to determine specific measures to realize this aim as soon as the pact enters into force.

A permanent council at the ministerial level is to be set up to implement the pact when at least four powers have become parties to it. The pact is open for accession to any member of the Arab League or any other state actively concerned with the security and peace of the Middle East. Accessing states may conclude special agreements with other parties to the pact.

The pact remains in force for five years and is renewable for five year periods. Any signatory may withdraw, after giving notice, at the end of a five year period, in which case the agreement remains in force for the other members. The document contains such standard phraseology as an undertaking not to interfere in each other's internal affairs, and a pledge to settle disputes in accordance with the UN Charter.

An exchange of letters between the Iraqi and Turkish Prime Ministers at the time of signing the pact recorded their understanding that the pact would enable their countries "to cooperate effectively in resisting any aggression directed against either of them" and "to work in close cooperation for effecting the carrying out of the UN resolutions concerning Palestine."

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