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PROBABLE CONSEQUENCES OF
US ADHERENCE OR NON-ADHERENCE
TO THE BAGHDAD PACT

Submitted by the

DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

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Concurred in by the

INTELLIGENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

on 14 December 1956. Concurring were the Special Assistant, Intelligence, Department of State, the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Army, the Director of Naval Intelligence, the Director of Intelligence, USAF, and the Deputy Director for Intelligence, The Joint Staff. The Atomic Energy Commission, Representative to the IAC, and the Assistant Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, abstained, the subject being outside of their jurisdiction.

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PROBABLE CONSEQUENCES OF US ADHERENCE OR NON-ADHERENCE TO THE BAGHDAD PACT

THE PROBLEM

To estimate the consequences of alternative US courses of action with respect to the Baghdad Pact.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The effects of US adherence to the Baghdad Pact would largely depend on subsequent US policies in the area. Nevertheless, we believe that US accession to the pact would be widely regarded, at least initially, as a strong indication of US intention to oppose more actively and directly the extension of Soviet influence in the Middle East and to take a firmer stand against the efforts of Nasser and others to undermine the Western position in the area. The self-confidence and prestige of the Baghdad Pact governments and of Western-oriented elements in the other Arab states would be considerably enhanced and that of their opponents reduced. US adherence would enable the US to assume leadership of coordinated military planning and training, thus remedying a weakness which has become especially apparent with the decline of UK strength in the area. It would probably also facilitate US access to bases in the pact countries. (*Paras. 9-10, 12, 19*)

2. On the other hand, US adherence to the pact would involve particular respon-

sibilities and hazards. The pact countries would almost certainly regard US adherence as acknowledgment of their claims to preferential economic, military, and especially political support. Nasser and his supporters, with Soviet encouragement, would probably try to strengthen their hold on Syria and Jordan and intimidate pro-Western elements in Iraq and Lebanon. We believe that Egypt and Syria are already going about as far in the direction of involvement with the Bloc as they now deem prudent, and that fear of losing their independence will continue to serve as a restraining influence. However, if US membership in the Baghdad Pact, and subsequent US policies in the Middle Eastern area, should later convince them that the US had turned against them and firmly aligned itself with their local rivals and that they could no longer profit by playing the US and the USSR against each other, they would probably be less prudent in their relations with the USSR than they have hitherto been while still attempting to

preserve their independence. The Asian neutrals would tend to lose the disposition they have recently shown to support the US position on Middle Eastern matters in the UN. (*Paras. 13-16, 18*)

3. The effect of a decision by the US not to join would also depend very largely on subsequent policies which the US might follow. By staying out of the pact the US would probably retain some extra room for maneuver in dealing with Arab-Asian nationalism and with the USSR. However, effective cooperation in situations in which their interests are not identical with those of the US by Nasser (Egypt), Nuwar (Jordan), and Sarraj

(Syria) is highly unlikely even if the US refrains from joining the pact. In view of the present disrepute of the UK in the Middle East and without full US participation and support, the Baghdad Pact would almost certainly lose its potential as a military component integrated with Western defense arrangements. As a political association, it would probably be kept alive by its Moslem members if they were given US support.¹ In the absence of US adherence or some effective alternative US policy, the member governments, especially Iraq, would be in an exposed position in the face of Egyptian and Soviet pressures. (*Paras. 19-22*)

DISCUSSION

4. Uncertainty about US policy in the Middle East, as exemplified particularly in the US relationship to the Baghdad Pact,² has been an important factor in the complex power struggle which has been going on in the Middle East over the last two years. Despite its failure to join, the US has shared in the opprobrium vented against the pact and its members by the USSR, by India and other Asian neutralists, and by Egypt and its Arab friends. Opponents of the pact have directly and indirectly sought to discourage US adherence. Its Middle East members, in turn, have repeatedly pressed the US to make a firm and open commitment to the pact. Although this pressure abated somewhat after the US decision in early 1956 to participate in the economic and countersubversive activities of the pact organization and to sit in

as observer on the military side, these states remained unsatisfied. Pressure for US adherence was again applied following Egypt's nationalization of the Suez Canal at the end of July 1956 and, in the wake of the Anglo-French military intervention in Egypt, has now been renewed with special urgency by the four Middle East members of the group.

5. The present members of the Baghdad Pact group joined it for widely varying reasons. While Turkey and the UK, and to a lesser degree the other members, were influenced by a genuine desire to develop a more effective defensive posture vis-a-vis the USSR in the Middle East, each adherent also hoped that membership would advance its special national interests in the area. The ruling groups of Iraq, Iran, and Pakistan probably expected to gain additional external support for maintaining themselves in power. Iran also hoped for a US security commitment with increased military aid. Pakistan was primarily motivated by a desire to improve its military position vis-a-vis India, and to extend its influence in the Moslem Middle East. Iraq adhered mainly in hopes of increasing its influence in the Arab world, obtaining a politically

¹ The Deputy Director for Intelligence, The Joint Staff, believes this sentence should read as follows: "As a political association, it would probably be kept alive by its Moslem members, but only for a short time, even if they were given US support."

² See Appendix for major provisions of the Baghdad Pact and summary of the development and present status of the pact organization.

more acceptable form of defense agreement with the UK, and assuring an increase of US military aid. The differences of interest among the members and the anomalous position of the US have inhibited the development of a strong organization.

6. Nevertheless, the Middle East governments in the pact organization have for one reason or another all felt that their political and national interests would be best served by close ties with the West and with the US in particular, and that adherence to the pact was the best means of assuring increased US interest and support. Their present leaders, who are for the most part conservatives with pro-Western leanings, distrust the type of nationalism represented by Mossadeq and the RCC regime in Egypt. Their feeling that positive US action is needed has been greatly intensified in recent weeks as a result of Nasser's success in riding out the intervention storm, the increased power and influence of the USSR in the Middle East, and the intense bitterness which has been generated throughout much of the Arab-Asian world against the Baghdad Pact's sole Western member, the UK.

7. Opposition to the Baghdad Pact has been various and complex in motivation. Although the pact is only one factor among many which have caused strains and pressures in the Middle East, it has served as one of the focal points for anti-Western sentiment in the area, and as a target for propaganda attacks on the West. It has been included in Nehru's criticism of military pacts in general as tending to create discord and diminish the prospects of peace. It is also considered in India as further evidence of US support of Pakistan vis-a-vis India. Nasser has viewed the pact as a threat to his leadership in the Arab world and as a new intrusion of Western colonialism. Egypt and Syria have both regarded it as a UK-US device to build up Iraq, and have used it as one justification for looking to the Soviet Union for material aid. Many Arabs have seen the pact as a means by which the Western Powers might attempt to force a peace with Israel. The USSR has probably regarded the pact as a step toward the exten-

sion of the area of Western bases along its exposed southwestern flank.

8. On 29 November 1956 the US issued a statement reaffirming its support of the Baghdad Pact and asserting that it would view any threat to the "territorial integrity or political independence" of Middle Eastern pact members with the "utmost gravity." This statement will probably provide the Baghdad Pact governments with some added sense of security, and give them some assistance in replying to domestic criticism. However, it will almost certainly not satisfy their demands for US adherence to the pact.

Consequences of Early US Adherence to the Baghdad Pact

9. Early US adherence to the Baghdad Pact would be regarded at least initially as a strong indication of US intention to oppose more actively and directly the extension of Soviet influence in the Middle East, and to take a firmer stand against the efforts of Nasser and others to undermine the Western position in the area. As a result, such a decision would have a considerable effect in dissipating the impression of US indecision which, over the last two years, has discouraged the Baghdad Pact governments, weakened the will of friendly or uncommitted elements in other Arab states to stand up against Egyptian or Soviet-inspired anti-Western pressures, and encouraged greater boldness on the part of those seeking to undermine the Western position.

10. At least initially, the self-confidence and prestige of the Baghdad Pact governments and of Western-oriented elements in the other Arab states would be considerably enhanced. Waverers and opportunists among the Arab leaders would probably be more cautious about contracting ties with the Bloc. In time, other Middle Eastern countries might adhere to the pact. The pro-Western government in Lebanon, for example, would probably be interested in joining if convinced that it would achieve sufficient backing to protect Lebanon from probable counterpressures. Although Saudi Arabia has opposed the Baghdad Pact

in the past and has followed a generally pro-Egyptian line, King Saud is desirous of strengthening his country's ties to the US. Recently King Saud has become concerned about the revolutionary and pro-Soviet aspects of Egyptian and Syrian policy and about the financial ill-effects of Egyptian sabotage of the Suez Canal, and it is possible that this opposition to the pact may diminish. However, at present it appears unlikely that Saudi Arabia could sufficiently reconcile its conflicts of interest with the UK and the Hashemites to permit it to join the pact. It also appears unlikely on the basis of present evidence that Jordan could be induced to join.

11. US adherence would be welcomed by the UK, France, and probably most other Western European countries as an indication that a forceful US policy on Middle Eastern matters was emerging. It might lead these countries to believe that, despite US disapproval of Anglo-French military intervention in Egypt, the US would cooperate in other measures to protect the special Western position and interests in the Middle East.

12. The effect of US adherence to the Baghdad Pact on the military situation in the area would depend mainly upon the concrete performance of the US under the pact. The US would from the time of joining be enabled to participate in and assume leadership in coordinated military planning and training; this would remedy a weakness which has become especially apparent with the decline of UK strength in the area. US membership in the pact would probably facilitate US access to bases in the pact countries. However, any effort to establish effective indigenous defense components in the pact area as a whole would be a difficult and lengthy, and probably costly process. If the US attempted to meet the probable demands of the individual pact countries the cost would be greatly increased.

13. US adherence to the Baghdad Pact would also involve particular responsibilities and hazards. US membership would be effective over any appreciable length of time only if it were the first step in a more positive regional policy. The Baghdad Pact countries would almost certainly regard US adherence to the

pact as acknowledgment of their claims to preferential economic, military, and especially political support. They would probably regard the US as committed to support them against their rivals in the present arms race in the area. If the US did not give broad support to the pact members, their present misgivings about the wisdom of a pro-Pact, pro-US policy probably would recur and might become intensified. There would be a growing tendency to regard the act of adherence and any minor aid received in connection with it as empty gestures designed merely to propitiate the Baghdad Pact group.

14. US adherence to the Baghdad Pact would arouse bitter opposition in Egypt, Syria, and Jordan. Nasser and his supporters would regard such a move as a threat to their interests in the area, and would probably react with efforts to strengthen their hold on Syria and Jordan and to undermine and intimidate pro-Western elements in Iraq and Lebanon. They might resort to organized sabotage of Tapline, ARAMCO, and other US properties in the Middle East. They would almost certainly consider the US move as justification for an intensified anti-Western policy. We believe that Egypt and Syria are already going about as far in the direction of involvement with the Bloc as they now deem prudent, and that fear of losing their independence will continue to serve as a restraining influence. However, if US membership in the Baghdad Pact, and subsequent US policies in the Middle Eastern area, should later convince them that the US had turned against them and firmly aligned itself with their local rivals and that they could no longer profit by playing the US and the USSR against each other, they would probably be less prudent in their relations with the USSR than they have hitherto been while still attempting to preserve their independence.

15. The USSR has long regarded elimination of the Baghdad Pact as an important goal of its Middle East policy. US adherence would probably increase Soviet fears about the extension of US military power in the area. Although it would almost certainly provide additional deterrents to direct Soviet military

intervention in the area covered by the pact, the USSR would probably intensify its activities in other Middle Eastern countries. The USSR would almost certainly encourage Egypt and Syria in their efforts to counteract the US move, and would probably furnish, or offer to furnish, increased amounts of military equipment and technical personnel. Local competition for arms would probably thus be stimulated. The USSR would almost certainly intensify its efforts to identify itself politically with the Arabs in opposition to Israel. It is possible that the USSR might seek to set up military alliances with Egypt, Syria, and Jordan, though we believe that the Soviet leaders would prefer to remain free of treaty commitments to these countries. Soviet leaders would probably issue new warnings to the West, possibly underlined by threatening military gestures. We continue to believe, however, that the USSR would seek to avoid actions involving a serious threat of a major military clash with the West.

16. US adherence to the Baghdad Pact would almost certainly be strongly condemned by the Indian government, and probably by other neutralist governments as well, such as Ceylon and Indonesia.

17. US adherence to the Baghdad Pact would probably not of itself have any appreciable effect on Israeli courses of action. In that it would represent a strengthening of US ties with one element in the Arab world, that led by Iraq, it would cause some concern and probably some protests in Israel. However, the Israeli leaders would probably consider US adherence to the pact as a move in the direction of a harder policy toward Nasser and would therefore at least privately see some merit in it. On balance, the Israelis would probably view the US commitment as an indirect contribution to their security, particularly in view of the Soviet Union's present highly critical attitude toward Israel. However, they would probably take advantage of the situation to bring new diplomatic and propaganda pressure on the US for a security commitment to Israel.

18. The timing of US action in joining the Baghdad Pact would be of great importance. On the one hand, the leaders of the Baghdad

Pact countries are under increasing pressures; the pact is now imperilled and might collapse at an early date if the US does not join. On the other hand, by joining the Baghdad Pact at the present stage in the Middle East crisis, the efforts of the UN in the area would be at least temporarily complicated, and perhaps badly hampered. The difficulty of getting Nasser and his friends, backed by the USSR, to agree to an acceptable settlement of the Suez issue would probably be increased. The Asian neutrals would tend to lose the disposition they have recently shown to support the US position on Middle Eastern matters in the UN. Many UN members would consider that the US had introduced a disturbing factor into the midst of delicate negotiations. These adverse effects could be offset only if the US were able to convince UN members that its joining of the Baghdad Pact would contribute to the achievement of Middle Eastern stability. It would be difficult so to convince them were the US to join the Baghdad Pact in the midst of the present crisis.

Consequences of Continued US Refusal to Adhere to the Baghdad Pact

19. The consequences of continued US refusal to join the Baghdad Pact (and to support it vigorously after joining) can scarcely be estimated without some knowledge of, or assumptions concerning, the alternative US policies which would be followed in the area. We have no such knowledge or assumptions. A few points can be made, however, even without postulating US policy alternatives: The Baghdad Pact concept has shown surprising vitality in the present crisis. In view of the present disrepute of the UK in the Middle East and without full US participation and support, the pact would almost certainly lose its potential as a military component integrated with Western defense arrangements. The US would thereby lose the present opportunity to develop and organize the military strength of the pact area as a whole. As a political association, however, the Baghdad Pact would probably be kept alive by its Moslem members, if the US, without joining the association,

should nevertheless provide encouragement and support to it, and give some preferential treatment to its members.³

20. In the absence of some effective alternative US policy, the member governments, having unsuccessfully urged the US to join, and being already dissatisfied with what they have considered US unwillingness to support its friends, would be in an exposed position because of the increased pressures from Egypt and the USSR and the sharp decline in the strength and acceptability of the UK as a counterweight. Iraq's government would be in a particularly precarious position because of its relative isolation in the Arab world and its vulnerability to criticism for being tied too closely to the British. Conservative elements would probably try to retain control, but the eventual result would probably be the emergence of an unstable government, with a possible decline in Iraq's reliability as a source of oil for the West. While the problem would not be so acute for the other Baghdad Pact members, the Shah of Iran would almost certainly have increased misgivings about Iran's exposed position vis-a-vis the USSR and would probably face increased domestic criticism for having veered away from Iran's traditional neutralism. Pakistan's leaders would almost certainly face increased domestic criticism led by leftist and reactionary religious leaders. Although the pact has little popular support in Pakistan, Iraq, and Iran, elements throughout the Middle East disposed to look to the US for support would be further weakened. Failure of the US to take some positive action in the Middle East would almost certainly arouse misgivings elsewhere in the free world.

21. In staying out of the Baghdad Pact, however, the US would avoid various disadvantages

³ The Deputy Director for Intelligence, The Joint Staff, believes that this sentence should read: "As a political association, however, the Baghdad Pact would probably be kept alive by its Moslem members, but only for a short time, even if the US, without joining the association, should provide encouragement and support it by giving some preferential treatment."

tages inevitably entailed in joining. It would refrain from giving the neutralists this new ground for accusing it of preoccupation with military alliances; it would remain free of a new association with the UK in a colonial area context; it would not be aligning itself with certain Middle Eastern countries against their local rivals; and it would avoid a new source of friction with the USSR. Thus the US, staying outside the Baghdad Pact, would probably have a better chance of retaining the credit it has won in the Arab-Asian world by its stand on Israeli, British, and French military intervention in Egypt. Moreover, by refusing to make a firm treaty commitment, it would retain some extra room for maneuver in dealing with the Arab-Asian neutralists and with the USSR, and it might be in a better position to seek a comprehensive accommodation with the forces of nationalism and anticolonialism in the Arab-Asian world. It might also help preserve a more favorable atmosphere for efforts to resolve the Suez and Arab-Israeli disputes in the UN.

22. Abstention of the United States from formal membership in the Baghdad Pact would not contribute materially to a general detente between the US and the USSR regarding the Middle East; adherence would probably worsen US-Soviet relations and would adversely affect our relations with India and other neutralist states in Southeast Asia. Achievement of effective cooperation in situations in which their interests are not identical with those of the US by Nasser (Egypt), Nuwar (Jordan), and Sarraj (Syria) is highly unlikely even if the US refrains from joining the pact. Adherence at this time — because of its effect on Nasser — might complicate pending negotiations respecting the Suez Canal. Neither joining nor refraining from joining the Baghdad Pact would in itself help materially toward solving the important Middle Eastern problems, but a decision as to the timing of adherence might have important significance depending upon the nature of the US program for dealing with the issues among the Arab states and between the Arab states and Israel.

APPENDIX

THE BAGHDAD PACT ORGANIZATION

1. The Baghdad Pact organization is an outgrowth of the "northern tier" concept of regional defense advanced by the US in 1953 following the failure of previous Western efforts to develop a regional defense grouping based on Egypt and the Arab states. The "northern tier" concept first materialized in April 1954 when Turkey and Pakistan, the two "anchor" states, joined in a loose agreement providing for limited defense cooperation. This was superseded on 24 February 1955, when Turkey succeeded in persuading Iraq to sign the present Baghdad Pact agreement. The UK adhered to the pact on 30 March 1955, Pakistan joined the new grouping in September, and Iran, after much hesitation, adhered in November 1955. British efforts to secure Jordanian adherence in December 1955 backfired badly, and the strength of the organization has remained at five members.
2. The "Pact of Mutual Cooperation" concluded at Baghdad between Turkey and Iraq is essentially a declaration of intent and contains no binding commitments. However, the parties do pledge themselves to "cooperate for their security and defense consistent with the UN Charter" and to determine what specific measures should be taken as soon as the pact enters into effect. The pact, which remains in effect for five years and is renewable for additional five-year periods, permits accession by any member of the Arab League or any other state (Israel implicitly excluded) actively concerned with the security and peace of the Middle East. The pact provides for the formation of a permanent council at the ministerial level. It also contains the usual undertakings not to interfere in another signatory's internal affairs and a pledge to settle disputes in accordance with the UN charter.
3. 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."
4. At the time of its adherence, the UK entered into a subsidiary base agreement with Iraq to replace the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of 1930. This special agreement ended Britain's preferential alliance with Iraq, specifically exempting Iraq from obligations outside its own territory, and providing for Iraqi assumption of command over the existing British bases in Iraq. However, the agreement obligates the UK to come to Iraq's aid in the event of attack or threatened attack and provides for close and continuous collaboration between the armed forces of the two countries, including assignment of British instructors to the Iraqi armed forces, joint military planning and exercises, and technical assistance in the installation of an anti-aircraft warning system. The agreement also gives the UK the right to store military supplies in Iraq and permits overflights, landing, and servicing of British military aircraft in Iraq. British maintenance personnel are stationed in the country and visiting squadrons of aircraft are permitted in Iraq under the agreement.
5. Following Pakistan's accession to the pact the permanent council was convened in Baghdad in November 1955, with the US Ambassador and other ranking US officials present as observers. The session decided that minis-

[REDACTED]

terial meetings would be held at least once a year. The members appointed deputy representatives with ambassadorial rank to meet more frequently. The organization's seat is at Baghdad, where a permanent secretariat has been established. Military, economic, and countersubversive committees have been set up. Following an offer of assistance by the UK, plans to establish an atomic energy training center were announced at the second meeting.

6. Although the US is not formally a member of the pact organization, it has participated in its activities since April 1956, when a delegation headed by Deputy Under Secretary of State Loy Henderson attended the second Council meeting in Tehran. The US is represented on the economic and counter-subversion committees of the pact, has established a military liaison group at the pact headquarters, and has contributed financial support and personnel for maintenance of the permanent secretariat.

[REDACTED]