

**TURKEY
AND
HER ARAB NEIGHBOURS
1954-1958**

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Abstract

Turkey's determined attempt after 1954 to improve her relations with the Arab world should be seen in the context of a wider search for security against the perceived Soviet threat to her independence and territorial integrity. It was encouraged by Washington's proposal to set up a Middle East defence organisation based on the countries of the 'Northern Tier,' which paved the way for the creation of the Baghdad Pact with Turkish, Iraqi, British, Iranian and Pakistani membership. The USA, however, ultimately declined all invitations for full pact-membership. Her equivocal attitude encouraged Egypt and Syria not only to resist all attempts to lure them into the pact but also to embark on a determined counter-policy to block the adherence of other non-committed Arab states. The thesis argues that Turkish leaders failed in their rather high-handed bid to expand the pact's Arab membership and to isolate Egypt because they were ill-informed about the latest political trends in the Arab world and ignored any alternative and differing advice coming from their diplomatic missions and lower echelons in their Foreign Ministry. Moreover, none of Turkey's allies were fully convinced that her proposals were necessarily the best on offer. The thesis also tries to shed light on some of the alternative policies attempted by Turkey after the Suez war to stem the tide of pro-Communist and radical pan-Arab nationalist tendencies in the region. It argues that the toppling of the Iraqi monarchy, despite being a short-term setback for Turkey, proved in the long run to be a panacea to her attempts to retain her alliance with NATO and preserve in the meantime a workable relationship with her Arab neighbours. It also discusses Turkey's changing attitude towards Israel and the Palestine question as well as the changes in the official Turkish evaluation of 'Abd al-Nasir's policies.

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List of Abbreviations

| | |
|--------------|--|
| ALCSP | Arab League Collective Security Pact |
| ALM | Arab Liberation Movement (Syria) |
| AU | Arab Union |
| BBC | British Broadcasting Corporation (UK) |
| BMEO | British Middle East Office |
| CENTO | Central Treaty Organisation |
| CIA | Central Intelligence Agency (USA) |
| CGS | Chief(s) of the General Staff |
| COS | Chief(s) of Staff |
| CRO | Commonwealth Relations Office (UK) |
| <i>DDF</i> | <i>Documents Diplomatiques Français</i> |
| DP | Democrat Party (Turkey) |
| f. | folio |
| ff. | folios |
| FO | Foreign Office (UK) |
| <i>FRUS</i> | <i>Foreign Relations of the United States</i> |
| GNA | Grand National Assembly (Turkey) |
| HM | Her Majesty's |
| <i>IA</i> | <i>International Affairs (London)</i> |
| <i>IJMES</i> | <i>International Journal of Middle East Studies (New York)</i> |
| IPC | Iraq Petroleum Company |
| <i>MEA</i> | <i>Middle Eastern Affairs (New York)</i> |
| MEC | Middle East Command |
| MEDO | Middle East Defence Organisation |
| <i>MEF</i> | <i>Middle East Forum (Beirut)</i> |
| <i>MEJ</i> | <i>Middle East Journal (Washington, DC)</i> |
| <i>MES</i> | <i>Middle Eastern Studies (London)</i> |
| MI6 | Military Intelligence-6 (UK) |
| MOU | Memorandum of Understanding |
| NATO | North Atlantic Treaty Organisation |

| | |
|-------------|--|
| n.d. | no date (of writing, publication, etc.) |
| n.p. | no place (of publication) |
| p. | page |
| pp. | pages |
| RPP | Republican People's Party (Turkey) |
| SCUA | Suez Canal Users' Association |
| SEATO | South East Asia Treaty Organisation |
| SSNP | Syrian Social Nationalist Party (Syria) |
| <i>STAR</i> | <i>Studies on Turkish-Arab Relations</i> (Istanbul) |
| UAR | United Arab Republic |
| UK | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland |
| UN | United Nations Organisation |
| UNEF | United Nations Emergency Force |
| US | United States |
| USA | United States of America |
| USSR | Union of Soviet Socialist Republics |
| vol. | volume |

Preface

This dissertation studies Turkey's relations with her Arab neighbours, Syria and Iraq, and, to a lesser extent, with the other Arab states of the Middle East, in particular Egypt, Lebanon and Jordan, during the period of the formulation and the eventual collapse of the Baghdad Pact. It is a case study of the correlation between the Cold War concerns of the Great Powers in the Middle East and the national policies pursued by the lesser states in the region. This study investigates how those relations were affected by Cold War pressures at one of its tense periods and how did Turkey, Iraq and Syria try to accommodate, not to say manipulate, the prevailing global Cold War climate to pursue their own national aspirations. These relations are studied here on three different levels: (a) the international/regional level, i.e. the Cold War atmosphere and its repercussions in the area; (b) the bilateral level, including the historical legacy inherited by Turkish, Iraqi and Syrian leaders, which made their task of tackling thorny issues difficult or easy according to the prevailing different circumstances; and (c) the individual country level, i.e. the analysis of the various strategies pursued by different political forces within each of the three countries concerned, the solutions they advocated to particular problems, and the roles they played in shaping the foreign policy of their respective countries in general, and relations with individual neighbouring states in particular.

The emphasis throughout is on Turkey. The development of her foreign policy towards her Arab neighbours is analysed and the factors behind it scrutinised. Appropriate attention is paid to the study of some of the specific characteristics of the Turkish foreign policy decision-making process during the period under review. Issues concerning Turkey's Arab neighbours are touched only as far as they are crucial to an understanding of the atmosphere prevailing in the Middle East during that period, and provide us with the background against which the Turkish actions can be judged and evaluated.

In addition to some memoirs by Turkish and Arab diplomats or statesmen, which tackle, to one extent or another, the topic of Turkish-Arab political and diplomatic relations in the twentieth century, various books and monographs have also appeared on the issue during the last few decades. A substantial list of those covering the specific topic and time-span of this dissertation appears in the bibliography. Of these, the D.Phil. dissertation of Bülent Ali Rıza, dealing with the years 1951-53—and still available only on microfilm—is admirable. Its sole deficiency seems to be the author's inability to consult primary sources available only in

Arabic. However, many of the other works are less satisfactory. They often cover quite extended periods of time and they rarely make use of primary archival material. This study, which begins where Riza has stopped, seeks to redress the balance by focusing on a relatively short, albeit important, period and using a variety of source material in many languages. While this author has, unlike Riza, been unable to consult the Turkish archives, he has attempted, as much as possible, to describe and analyse the issues from both sides of the fence.

The transliteration of names into English presents problems in a study of this kind, covering two distinct languages and cultures. I have adhered to the contemporary spelling of Turkish proper names. The modern Turkish alphabet, since the introduction of Latin script, is completely phonetic. All letters are pronounced as in English except the following:

ı as *i* in *cousin*

â as *a* in *far*

û as *u* in *rule*

ü as *u* in French *tu*

ö as *eu* in French *peu*

ş as *sh* in *shuttle*

ç as *j* in *jar*

ç as *ch* in *church*

j as *s* in *measure*

g with hard vowels a guttural and barely perceptible g (*bağcı*); with soft vowels as y (*eğer=eyer*).

Arabic proper names, terms and titles have also been transliterated into English forms in a consistent and systematic manner. The extensive use of diacritical marks has been avoided, except for ('), which because of the relative unsophisticated nature of the fonts in my personal word-processor is used instead of both the *hamza* and the letter 'ayn. I have also sometimes followed a usage common in Iraq of frequently referring to individuals by their first names only, like *Nuri* and 'Ali *Jawdat*. The few Russian, Iranian and Pakistani names which appear in this study have been transcribed, in their turn, in a simple yet consistent way. Well-known geographical names of countries, capitals and main cities in the Arab world, like Damascus, Mosul and Aleppo, are spelt as they are in common usage in English. Lesser known geographical sites, however, are spelt according to the above-described criteria for transliterating Arabic proper names. Proper names mentioned in quoted passages are left as they are in the original sources. This has inevitably given rise to some inconsistencies in the spelling of some names, like 'Abd al-Nasir and Nasser, but it is extremely unlikely that this will confuse the reader and hinder in any way the easy comprehension of the text.

The dates of quoted newspaper articles and diplomatic documents are mentioned in the footnotes in a consistent manner, with 12.11.56 standing for 12 November 1956.

This study has been in the making since the autumn of 1991, when I began my three-year study period as a postgraduate student at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS),

the University of London. It was completed after my return to my home-city, Beirut. During the past four years, I have acquired a heavy indebtedness to many people, who have given advice, insight and assistance in the preparation of this study. It is a pleasure to acknowledge their kindness. To cite all their names would be impracticable, but it is impossible not to mention my two supervisors: Malcolm E. Yapp and R. Michael Burrell. Prof. Yapp, together with Dr. William Hale of SOAS, helped me in defining the aims and limits of this study and then gave the most helpful advice throughout the two long years, during which I was collecting the archival data and then preparing the first draft of this thesis. Dr. Burrell supervised my work at its later stages, reading the whole manuscript and making very useful suggestions as regards its final form and contents. I must also thank Dr. Hale, for sparing his precious time to share with me some of his vast knowledge of Turkish affairs and bringing to my attention certain primary and secondary sources which proved helpful during the preparation of this work. The same applies to Dr. Muhammad Nur al-Din of the Lebanese University and Centre for Strategic Studies, Research and Documentation (Beirut) and Mr. 'Isam al-Mahayri, the former leader of the Syrian Social Nationalist Party (Damascus). Dr. Ulrike Freitag and Mr. Anthony O'Mahony, both of SOAS, showed continuous interest in the progress of my work and were also helpful in bringing into my attention certain monographs and articles used during this research. Dr. Salih Zahr al-Din (Lebanon) was helpful during the compilation of the appendix of the biographical notes. None of them, however, should be considered responsible for any errors contained in this thesis.

Needless to say, the kind and generous assistance given by the staffs of several libraries, where I conducted most of my research, was of great help to me in the course of the preparation of this thesis. I am especially indebted to those of the Public Record Office, the Institute of Historical Research, the University of London Library at Senate House and the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, as well as the Jafet Library of the American University of Beirut, the Barsumian Library of Haigazian University College, the Centre for Arab Unity Studies, the Arab Information Centre and the "Spurk" magazine in Beirut. Mr. Kevork Mikayelian in Beirut was also very kind in putting his library of Turkish books at my disposal.

My three-year stay in London was financially supported by my uncles resident in the United States, Arsen, Harout, the late Avedis and particularly the late Hagop Sanjian, as well as by grants from the Overseas Research Students Award Scheme (UK), the Armenian Missionary Association of America, Inc. (New Jersey), the Department of Armenian Affairs at the Gulbenkian Foundation (Lisbon), the Armenian General Benevolent Union London Trust and the Benlian Trust (London). Without their generous assistance this work would have never seen the light.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the debt I owe to my parents, Garabed and Mayda Sanjian, who patiently endured and financially and morally supported my absence from home for eight long years in pursuit of successive university degrees in a discipline, with which their son was deeply in love, but which, it was apparent from the beginning, could offer more intellectual and personal, rather than material rewards.

The Setting: The Cold War, Turkey, the Arabs and the Middle East Collective Defence Project

The immediate post-World War II era is known as the "Cold War" period, when Europe was divided into two political/military alliances: the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) led by the United States of America (USA) in the West; and the Warsaw Pact led by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in the East. Both camps were imbued with sharply differing ideologies on how human society should be organised in general. Westerners cherished and wished to safeguard liberal, democratic values and the free-market economy. Communist regimes, however, accused the ruling Western bourgeoisie of manipulating those principles to exploit the working classes and hide more important inequalities in the distribution of wealth. Both sides became convinced of the mutual irreconcilability of their respective ideologies. Their sense of universal mission to extend their own values and way of life involved them in a complex strategic, political and ideological power-game, resulting in the globalisation of the Cold War.

One of the regions which soon felt the discomforting effects of this new conflict was the Middle East, an ill-defined geographic term, which, for the purposes of this study, will cover the land-mass extending from Libya in the west to Pakistan in the east and from the southern borders of the USSR in the north to the Arabian Sea in the south. Throughout recorded history, this region had been an important route for international trade and communication, and had, because of its geostrategic significance, been coveted for long periods of time by several, sometimes rival, imperial powers. In the twentieth century, the discovery there of vast reserves of oil, upon which the material well-being and progress of industrialised countries had increasingly become dependent, provided the Middle East with a new importance. In the late 1940s, it produced around 15% of the world's total oil output and was estimated to have around 60% of the world's proven oil reserves.¹

¹Wm. Roger Louis, *The British Empire in the Middle East, 1945-1951: Arab Nationalism, the United*

Britain, France and the USA in the Post-War Middle East

Generally speaking, the Middle East had very much been within the Anglo-French sphere of influence during the period between the two world wars. The large economic interests built up during that period and Cold War strategic considerations² made Britain determined to continue to exercise control over her Middle Eastern "informal empire"—a network of protectorates, League of Nations mandates and the colony of Aden,—by ensuring that, whenever and wherever she surrendered formal sovereignty to local forces, some of her former colonial or mandatory rights would survive, usually through a "treaty of alliance" imposed on the latter in return for her voluntary disengagement.

Britain, however, had inherited a heavy financial burden from World War II and felt unable to meet her pre-war commitments fully. Successive post-war British governments of the late 1940s attempted to prolong some kind of British military presence in the Arab countries in their sphere of influence. Their early efforts did not mostly bear fruit, however. If, in the past, local Arab oligarchic governments—installed during British control—had themselves been interested in seeing this, albeit unequal, British connection survive, because their continued exercise of power partly depended on those "alliances," they were no longer the only organised voice in their respective countries. Arab nationalism had now acquired its own momentum and proved intransigent toward successive British compromise proposals. Under its impact, many Arab states had ceased to share the West's perception of interests and threats and wanted to pursue their own political agendas. Some even viewed the new global East-West antagonism, into which, they suspected, the West was dragging them, as a serious distraction from their own causes. Only Transjordan agreed in 1948 to revise her existing treaty in line with the new British proposals. In Iraq, the Treaty of Portsmouth, negotiated in January 1948, had to be repudiated within a few days of its signature, as the news of its conclusion precipitated widespread hostile demonstrations in Baghdad. After 1948, therefore, Britain sought to obtain her goals through the eventual creation, with US support and involvement, of a multilateral Middle East defence organisation with Arab participation. She

States, and Post-war Imperialism (1984), 9; David R. Devereux, *The Formulation of British Defence Policy Towards the Middle East, 1948-56* (1990), 9; Alexandre DeConde, *A History of American Foreign Policy. Volume II: Global Power (1900 to Present)* (1978), 281.

²See details in *British Interests in the Mediterranean and the Middle East; A Report by a Chatham House Study Group* (1958), 28; John Marlowe, *Arab Nationalism and British Imperialism: A Study in Power Politics* (1961), 34, 64; Louis, *Empire*, 15; Anthony Adamthwaite, "Britain and the World, 1945-49: The View from the Foreign Office", *IA*, 61/2 (Spring 1985), 231; Raymond Smith and John Zametica, "The Cold Warrior: Clement Attlee Reconsidered, 1945-47", *ibid.*, 247; Nigel John Aston, "The Highjacking of a Pact: The Formation of the Baghdad Pact and Anglo-American Tensions in the Middle East, 1955-1958", *Review of International Studies*, 19/2 (April 1993), 124.

also concluded that only conservative Arab regimes were interested in such an arrangement, thus inevitably siding against all voices demanding a radical change in the Arab world.

French political influence in the Middle East during the colonial age had been, compared to that of Britain, relatively limited. It was further weakened during World War II. France granted in 1946, under strong British pressure, full independence to her two League of Nations mandates, Syria and Lebanon, without receiving any treaty concessions in return. French ability, therefore, to shape developments in the Middle East was extremely limited in the mid-1950s. She was preoccupied with issues of internal stability. Wartime Anglo-French differences in the Levant had soured prospects for future co-operation in the area. France suspected that Britain (perhaps, the USA as well) intended to wipe out completely her influence in the Arab world and hence viewed all-British supported ventures in the area with the utmost suspicion. Britain and the USA, in turn, suspected that France aimed solely at preserving her special position in Syria and Lebanon, even at the expense of progress towards a Western-inspired anti-Communist multilateral defence arrangement. Moreover, Britain did not oppose the prospect of Arab political unity in principle as long as, she argued, it was achieved legally and enjoyed in general the consent of the population of the countries concerned. She was even ready to encourage certain unity schemes if they could strengthen the Western position in the region. France, however, was categorically against any change in the *status quo* in Syria and Lebanon, which, she thought, would adversely affect her position in the region as a whole.³ She also wanted to diminish Egyptian influence by frustrating Arab solidarity because she believed, especially after 1954, that the Arabic-speaking natives, opposing French presence in North Africa, were getting aid from Egypt and would be encouraged by any advance toward Arab unity. The harsh French colonial measures in North Africa, in turn, further diminished her standing among politically-conscious Arabs.

Unlike Britain and France, pre-war American interests in the Middle East had been largely confined to missionary work, trade and oil. During World War II, however, Washington, while still not highly dependent itself on the import of Middle Eastern oil, nevertheless began to view the preservation of access to Middle Eastern oil fields, particularly in Saudi Arabia, as part of her national interest. War commitments made the USA expand her network of Middle Eastern diplomatic missions. Finally, in 1947, she decided to make full use of her political, economic and, if necessary, military power to defend the region. When Britain felt unable to meet her financial and military obligations towards Greece and Turkey at a moment when the latter were facing strong Soviet pressure, Washington stepped in to fill the resulting financial

³Elie Kedourie, "Panarabism and British Foreign Policy", *The Political Quarterly*, 28/2 (April-June 1957), 114; *Documents Diplomatiques Français* [hereafter DDF], 1954 (21 juillet-31 décembre), 119-21.

and military void. American naval presence was also strengthened in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Containment, the general American defence plan in the early years of the Cold War, assumed that Soviet hostility towards the West stemmed basically from the inability of a totalitarian system to tolerate diversity. American strategists believed that the expansion of Soviet influence, even the smallest further shift in the balance of power, could upset the entire structure of post-war international relations and imperil the USA's own security. All points along the Communist perimeter were of equal vital interest, and Washington should patiently, but firmly and vigilantly, contain Soviet expansive tendencies; lead the free world in safeguarding the international *status quo*; and create conditions under which existing free and democratic conditions could survive and prosper. Washington hoped that it could thus even foster the seeds of destruction within the Soviet system or, at least, bring Moscow to the point of modifying its behaviour to conform to acceptable international standards. Containment abstained, however, from trying to modify the *status quo* by force.⁴

Washington gave substance to its policy by a series of high-publicity initiatives. The Truman Doctrine (1947) vowed to support free nations—especially Greece and Turkey—resisting attempted subjugation by the USSR or Communist-backed armed groups. The NATO alliance (1949)—also including Canada and 10 West European states—pledged to repel collectively any armed attack against one or more of its member-states either in Europe or in North America. Military assistance was extended to like-minded governments to enable them defend themselves against external Soviet bloc or internal Communist threats, or participate in collective defence arrangements. Furthermore, based on the conviction that Communism could only prevail in conditions of widespread economic discontent, Washington pursued measures designed to improve the living standards of the peoples of the "Free World". The Marshall Plan (1947) aimed at the economic recovery of post-war Europe, while the Point Four Program (1949) offered to share American skills, knowledge, equipment and investment capital with over thirty developing nations outside Europe in the areas of industry, agriculture, public administration, health and education.

Dwight D. Eisenhower, who assumed the US presidency in January 1953, firmly believed in these foreign policy priorities. His influential Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, added a moral dimension to the East-West conflict, by claiming that, in the prevailing circumstances, neutrality was both immoral and "an obsolete conception".⁵ Both called for the further

⁴John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Post-war American National Security Policy* (1982), 25-126.

⁵David W. Lesch, *Syria and the United States: Eisenhower's Cold War in the Middle East* (1992), 7.

strengthening of the defence capabilities of the "Free World," extending, during their two terms in power, Washington's defence commitments by treaty to five more Asian countries and actively participating in the creation of new pro-Western alliance networks around the Communist perimeter, like the Southeast Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) in 1954,⁶ as well as the Baghdad Pact, the story of the establishment and eventual collapse of which will be an important part of this study.

If the USA and United Kingdom (UK) had no conflict of purpose in their shared fear of Soviet expansionism, friction arose between them in the Middle East over Washington's continuing anti-colonial sentiment and its support for Israel. After the birth of NATO, however, Washington began to see virtue in the maintenance of British influence in the Middle East and did not try to compete with or displace British responsibilities or interests there, without recognising, however, any exclusive British sphere of influence. Later, it gradually assumed Britain's position in the area, by committing itself to the maintenance of the balance of power there.

Despite the availability of nuclear warfare technology, the defence of the Middle East was thought in the West largely in conventional terms. Britain and the USA differed, however, on how the region should be defended. Washington preferred to build up its new client states, Turkey and Iran, the so-called "Outer Ring", with the "Inner Ring" only as a backdrop. The latter, centred at Suez, was advocated by Britain. Washington wished to extend military aid and to build-up local forces, whereas Britain, having little faith in the quality of Arab troops, perhaps with the exception of Jordanians, believed that her own forces (with US support) were the only pillar of Middle Eastern security.

Moreover, Washington wanted to prevent the development in the Middle East and elsewhere of regional struggles which might eventually directly involve itself and Moscow, thereby turning the Cold War into a "hot" one. This determination was reciprocated, for all practical purposes at least, by the latter, and had a sobering effect, in the next few years, on the unfolding of events in the area, whenever the situation acquired dangerous proportions.

The USSR and the Middle East

Soviet interests in the Arab Middle East, too, had not been substantial before 1939, but here again, the war proved instrumental in reviving such interest, which had existed to a certain extent in czarist times. During those years, the USSR extended her network of diplomatic representation in the Arab world.

⁶SEATO included the USA, France, Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines and Thailand.

in 1947
In the spring of 1945, the USSR unexpectedly made the automatic renewal of the 1925 Turkish-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Neutrality conditional on the return of the regions of Kars and Ardahan, that had been part of Russia in 1878-1914, and the revision of the 1936 Montreux Convention governing the rights of passage through the straits of Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, accepting Soviet participation in their defence. Turkey, however, managed, with strong Anglo-American support, to resist those demands.⁷

After this rebuff, Moscow remained relatively inactive in the Middle East until 1954. In 1947, it unexpectedly backed the idea of partitioning Palestine and, in May 1948, became the first country to recognise Israel *de jure*. As regards Turkey, Soviet hostility persisted, confining itself, however, to the occasional formal protest against, say, Ankara's entry to NATO,⁸ or its participation in the Middle East Command proposals. Moscow also attacked the Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan as disguised methods to extend Washington's sphere of influence.

After Joseph Stalin's death in 1953, Soviet policy towards the "Third World" was modified. His successor, Nikita Khrushchev relegated class struggle in the colonial world to secondary importance and identified Afro-Asian national-liberation movements with the international peace movement and neutralism. He supported anti-colonial movements, together with non-communist—and sometimes even anti-Communist—neutralist regimes in the "Third World". Local Communist parties were advised to minimise their immediate demands and co-operate with the national bourgeoisie in pursuit of national aims, under the umbrella of broad anti-colonial national fronts.

Moscow was thus far ahead of Washington in recognising the advantages of encouraging, instead of obstructing, the growth of neutralism among emerging nations. It hoped that the self-extrication of former colonies from their special politico-military ties with Western powers would weaken the latter's standing in the global balance of power. It, therefore, began to favour, to the delight of Arab governments, the latter's viewpoint on Palestine. It played up Arab pride and national sentiment, declaring on countless occasions that it stood firmly behind Arab aspirations.⁹ Soviet diplomatic representation in the Arab East was further strengthened.

The West now took the possibility of Soviet penetration to the Arab world seriously. This dissertation shows that the new Soviet strategy there forced Washington into a difficult

⁷See Alvin Z. Rubinstein, *Soviet Policy Toward Turkey, Iran, and Afghanistan: The Dynamics of Influence* (1982), 9-13; Ferenc A. Váli, *The Turkish Straits and NATO* (1972), 62-76.

⁸George C. McGhee, *The US-Turkish-NATO Middle East Connection: How the Truman Doctrine Contained the Soviets in the Middle East* (1990), 89.

⁹Moshe Leshem, "Soviet Propaganda to the Middle East", *MEA*, 4/1 (January 1953), 1-10.

corner, for the latter had, in the meantime, failed, in effect, to channel the emergent "Third World" nationalism into reliably anti-Communist directions. Earlier, the USA had assumed, based on her own dislike of traditional colonialism, that the newly-independent states would see their interests in the same terms as she did. However, nations like Iran and Egypt did not always turn their nationalism against communism in the way Washington wanted them to. Furthermore, as long as Washington gave priority to its alliance with Western European powers, its ability to tolerate Arab nationalism was limited, for the latter aimed at the diminution of European influence in the Middle East. In the mid-fifties, to prevent Moscow from taking advantage of "disorder" in the area, Washington usually supported the regional *status quo* and opposed the forces of change (i.e. nationalism). It associated itself, sometimes even unwillingly, with the policies of West European colonial powers and resisted with increasing intensity the growing neutralist sentiments.

The Soviets gave most support, however, to those Arab nationalist movements which were also socially reformist. Arab Communist parties, too, promoted alliances with forces advocating reform and neutralism. Western observers sometimes found it difficult to judge where Communist influence in a given state began and where supposedly non-communist nationalist influence ended.¹⁰ The Communist-radical nationalist alliance aroused the suspicions of dynastic families and landowning or mercantile classes. They had cause to fear social upheaval and hence moved closer to Western powers. This can be best illustrated by the differences in approach to international affairs between, say, the Iraqi establishment on the one hand and the Ba'th Party and other reform-minded Syrian politicians like Khalid al-'Azm on the other.

Turkey

Of the countries of the modern Middle East, Turkey was among the very few not to have ever come under direct colonial rule. This partly explains the absence of deep-rooted anti-Western sentiments among politically-conscious Turks. Moreover, the post-World War I Turkish republican elite had aspired after total identification with Europe. So, in 1945, when other "Third World" nationalisms were looking to the USSR for sympathy and support against the West, Turkey herself did not hesitate to forge, with the revival of Turkish-Soviet antagonism, an alliance the West, particularly Washington, to forestall Soviet expansionism.

The Turkish-American alliance remains to-date a constant feature of Middle Eastern politics. It was sustained, during the period under review, by a variety of factors. Thirteen

¹⁰FO371/115473/V10338/1, Sterndale Bennett to Ward, 29.1.55.

Russo-Turkish wars over the past 400 years had generated a full measure of Turkish hostility towards the Russians, and the vast majority of Turks now rejected Communism as a new form of Russian imperial ideology. Turkish anti-Russian attitude was described as "an ingrained prejudice, fierce, blind, and proud".¹¹ The ideological aspects of the Cold War, although not negligible, were accorded less importance in Turkey,¹² and accusations of "pursuing a neutralist policy" became "a powerful insult".¹³ Moreover, says Feroz Ahmad, "Turkey's post-war foreign policy was an extension of her internal policy, whose aim was to transform Turkey from an underdeveloped and poor country to a developed and a prosperous one... The political leadership wanted to make Turkey a 'little America' or the America of the Middle East".¹⁴ Turkey benefited from both the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan. In the immediate post-war period, she received US military aid worth more than \$1,000m, largely in the form of grants, which she mainly used to modernise her army and purchase modern equipment.¹⁵ Moreover, Turkey was herself, in relation to her national income, one of the highest-spenders on her armed forces within the Western alliance.¹⁶ The US-Turkish alliance was sealed by Turkey's formal entry to NATO in 1952. In order to secure NATO admission, however, Turkey had to make a public commitment to Britain that she would continue to play an active role in the projected Middle Eastern defence organisation.

The post-war years also witnessed Turkey's transition into full multi-party democracy. The two main political parties of this era, the ruling Republican People's Party (RPP) and the newly-established opposition Democrat Party (DP) were both committed to the above-described pro-Western policy¹⁷ and co-operated in silencing radical leftist dissidents. The DP, which later held power for ten years from May 1950, considered Turkey's defence interests to be identical with that of Western powers, officially endorsing the American view that global peace was indivisible and that trouble in any part of the world contained the seeds of a general conflagration.¹⁸ During those years, Ankara signed 31 separate military agreements with Washington, permitting the building of US military installations and bases and the stationing of Jupiter nuclear missiles in Turkey.¹⁹

Furthermore, the Democrats worked to extend the network of anti-Soviet alliances in

¹¹Lewis V. Thomas and Richard V. Frye, *The United States and Turkey and Iran* (1971), 55.

¹²Zeki Kuneralp, *Sadece Diplomat: Hatırat* (1981), 96.

¹³FO371/136456/RK1022/2, Chancery, Ankara to Southern Department, 11.2.58.

¹⁴Feroz Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment in Democracy 1950-1975* (1977), 398.

¹⁵McGhee, *Connection*, 38.

¹⁶Feroz Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey* (1993), 124.

¹⁷Mehmet Ali Birand, Can Dündar, Bülent Çaplı, *Demirkırat: Bir Demokrasinin Doğuşu* (1991), 33, 78.

¹⁸FO371/130179/RK1022/1, Bowker to Lloyd, 7.1.57.

¹⁹Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey: Modern History* (1993), 287-88.

Turkey's immediate vicinity. They formed in 1954, with Greece and Yugoslavia, the short-lived Balkan Defence Pact, binding the three countries in a mutual defence accord for twenty years,²⁰ while the story of Turkish endeavours to forge a similar alliance in the Middle East is a main theme in this thesis. This thesis shows that Turkey hoped that the extension of this network to her neighbouring Arab states would improve her own defences by securing her southern flank with like minded-governments and make Washington more committed to the defence of the area. Moreover, Turkey probably hoped to get increased aid by re-asserting her own strategic importance for the West.

Turkey's close alignment with the West, however, inversely affected her relations with the emerging independent states of Asia and Africa. Turkey preferred not to get involved--within the United Nations Organisation (UN) and outside-in conflicts between the latter and Western colonial powers. She refused to openly support anti-French independence movements in North Africa and ultimately sided with Britain against the oil nationalisation in Iran. She was also one of the few states that backed the West's point of view at the Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung in 1955.²¹

After Stalin's death, Turkey received her share of Soviet peace overtures.²² In 1953, Moscow relinquished all territorial claims and demands for participation in administering the Straits, followed by a frank private admission that Stalin's mistakes in his dealings with Turkey would not be repeated in future. Turkish leaders were left in no doubt that Moscow desired warmer relations and that Turkish membership of NATO need be no barrier.²³ Economic help was offered "on terms which no other country could or would offer" and with "no political strings attached".²⁴ Ankara, however, greeted these gestures with caution, claiming that it would judge them only by "what they cost the Russians".²⁵ It was convinced that there had been no change of heart in Moscow and hesitated to take any step which might jeopardise its relations with Washington. Ankara restricted the rapprochement to a few exchanges of economic character and even declined invitations for cultural or sporting contacts.²⁶ Moscow was told on various occasions that any improvement in bilateral

²⁰See Ferenc A. Váli, *Bridge across the Bosphorus: The Foreign Policy of Turkey* (1971), 199-200; Altemur Kilic, *Turkey and the World* (1959), 159-63; Türkkaya Ataöv, *N.A.T.O. and Turkey* (1970), 116-25.

²¹Orhan Soysal, *An Analysis of the Influence of Turkey's Alignment with the West and of the Arab-Israeli Conflict upon Turkish-Israeli and Turkish-Arab Relations, 1947-1977*, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1983, 27; Sina Akşin(ed.), *Türkiye Tarihi, 4: Çağdaş Türkiye 1908-1980* (1992), 180; Kunalalp, *Sadece*, 84-86.

²²See details in Rubinstein, *Policy*, 14-17.

²³FO371/117723/RK10338/2 & 5; FO371/121251/V1073/118, Stevens to FO, 3.4.56.

²⁴FO371/124010/RK10338/2, Chancery, Ankara to Northern Department, 17.1.57.

²⁵FO371/112927/WK10338/1, FO minute, 11.11.54.

²⁶FO371/12410/RK10338/1, Chancery, Ankara to Northern Department, 10.1.56.

relations could only result from the development of general relations between NATO and the Communist Bloc. Turkey even feared that the apparently more conciliatory Soviet line might confuse Western opinion, undermine NATO's resolve to build up its defences and lead to concessions being made to Moscow. She remained firmly convinced that any modifications in Soviet tactics had been due to the growth of Western strength. Westerners, therefore, should further consolidate their unity and power.²⁷

Turkish Foreign Policy Decision-Making and Decision-Makers

Turkish foreign policy was made and carried out in the mid-1950s by a small group of very well-educated, westernised and aristocratic personnel, who, according to Kemal Karpaz, were the "farthest removed from the country's realities among the civil service".²⁸ The decision-making process was highly centralised, "personally directed and controlled, even in matters of detail"²⁹ by Prime Minister Adnan Menderes, together with the help of a very narrow circle of confidantes. This is seen as the continuation of a trend originally set in Ottoman times and continued during the early years of the republic.³⁰

The DP advocated, based on its concept of "the national will" (*milli irade*), that any party which received the majority of the popular vote, should be left to pursue its policies free of any legal or constitutional constraints. It considered matters of foreign policy to be national, above-party concerns, not liable to public criticism. The fact that DP constantly enjoyed large majorities in the Turkish parliament, the Grand National Assembly (GNA), made easier the enforcing of its foreign policy decisions. The Turkish electorate was not, on the whole, much interested in foreign affairs, especially as regards the Arab world, and had, therefore, a negligible say in its conduct. Foreign affairs did not play any significant role in the 1954 and 1957 general election campaigns. The notable exception was perhaps the Turkish public's concern to the fate of their ethnic kin in the British colony of Cyprus, where the Greek majority was demanding the end of British rule, followed by the island's union with Greece. Some might argue, however, rightly in this author's view, that Cyprus was not for Turkey a "pure" foreign policy, rather a "national" issue. The Turkish press, too, was not greatly interested in foreign affairs. It generally, though not always, supported and justified the government line.

The opposition RPP, supported fully attempts to forge closer links with the West and, in

²⁷FO371/112921/WK1011/1, Helm to Eden, 1.1.54; FO371/124005/RK1022/2, Bowker to Lloyd, 5.3.56.

²⁸Kemal H. Karpaz(ed.), *Turkey's Foreign Policy in Transition 1950-1974* (1975), 7.

²⁹FO371/130181/RK10316/4, Bowker to Lloyd, 24.8.57.

³⁰Bülent Ali Rıza, *Turkish Participation in Middle East Defence Projects and Its Impact on Turco-Arab Relations, May 1950-June 1953*, unpublished D.Phil. dissertation, University of Oxford, 1982, viii.

broad terms, the government's policy of rapprochement with the Arab world. Disagreements were usually confined to points of application of policy. The RPP expressed certain misgivings that Turkey could overreach herself by undertaking additional military commitments to fellow Middle Eastern countries, or that the latter could try to make use of the new arrangements to acquire Turkey's backing against their own regional adversaries.³¹ It also sometimes expressed resentment, both in private and in public, at being kept without information about foreign policy matters (an accusation, which Menderes hotly denied), and claimed that it sometimes gained knowledge of political and military subjects discussed in NATO meetings only through reading the European press. It argued that it was unreasonable, in such circumstances, to expect the maintenance of a bipartisan foreign policy.³²

Adnan Menderes was "a handsome, articulate and confident leader".³³ He spoke excellent English, and many Turks argued at the time that he understood Americans better than other Turkish politicians.³⁴ He found it very hard, however, to accept criticism and was accused of appearing "sometimes to be rigid and to take insufficient account of changing circumstances".³⁵ According to the *Chef de Protocole* at the Turkish Foreign Ministry, Menderes "had insufficient time to give to foreign affairs [and] was quite arbitrary in his decisions."³⁶

Relations between Menderes and Celal Bayar, the President of Turkey at the time, have fascinated historians of modern Turkey. Bülent Ali Rıza, based on Bayar's own testimony, says that the broad outlines of Turkish foreign policy, in the beginning of the 1950s at least, were jointly determined by both. Menderes then supervised its implementation.³⁷ Metin Tamkoç, too, claims that "every important decision of the government, in the final analysis, emanated from" Bayar.³⁸ He suggests, however, that "at no time in the history of the republic was such mutual trust, close co-operation, and understanding established between a president and his prime minister".³⁹ Journalist Metin Toker, the son-in-law of RPP leader İsmet İnönü, on the other hand, claims that Bayar initially controlled Menderes. After 1954, however, the latter began to resent this and reversed the trend.⁴⁰ Based on this research, it

³¹FO371/112922/WK1013/4 & 12.

³²FO371/130179/RK1022/1, Bowker to Lloyd, 7.1.57.

³³McGhee, *Connection*, 94.

³⁴Frey, *Elite*, 106.

³⁵FO371/124001/RK1016/35, Bowker to Lloyd, 12.9.56.

³⁶FO371/130181/RK10316/3, Chancery, Istanbul to Levant Department, 10.7.57.

³⁷Rıza, *Participation*, viii-ix.

³⁸Metin Tamkoç, *The Warrior Diplomats: Guardians of the National Security and Modernization of Turkey* (1976), 40.

³⁹*Ibid.*, 243.

⁴⁰Birand, *Demirlerat*, 87, 177.

can be added safely that, throughout the period 1953-58, their views, expressed during meetings with foreign visitors, contained no striking contradiction. While Bayar was not involved in day-to-day dealings with foreign diplomats, he always appeared, to his visitors, a well-informed politician on issues of current concern.

Four different politicians held the post of Foreign Minister in the successive Menderes-led governments of the 1950s. Prof. Fuat Köprülü was the first. Appointed in 1950, he resigned that post in April 1955,⁴¹ but stayed in the cabinet as a Minister of State. Menderes then reserved to himself the portfolio of foreign affairs for the next two months. At the end of July, Fatm Rüşti Zorlu was appointed acting Foreign Minister. On 29 November 1955, however, the cabinet resigned due to allegations of corruption. A commission of inquiry was set up to investigate allegations of illegal activities by three ministers, including Zorlu. On December 12, Menderes formed a new government, with Köprülü back as Foreign Minister. The latter resigned again on 19 June 1956, owing to differences over party matters. Defence Minister Ethem Menderes (no relation to the Premier) took over the foreign affairs portfolio in an acting capacity, which, in effect, meant that the Premier was back in full control. Finally, with the 1955 commission having failed to substantiate the corruption allegations, Zorlu was re-appointed Foreign Minister in November 1957 and stayed in office until the military coup of 1960. The actual influence of the office of Foreign Minister, however, seems to have been quite limited. It has been suggested that Bayar and Menderes used the device of deliberate fluctuations in personnel and their placement within the highest levels of DP and the state apparatus to aid their control over the state of affairs and forestall the rise of opposition from within.⁴²

Köprülü, a famous scholar, reportedly possessed "a keen mind and articulate views on any important issue touching upon Turkish or Middle Eastern history and politics,"⁴³ together with "fanatical views" about Communism and neutralism.⁴⁴ The foreign affairs portfolio probably fell below his expectations, for he had been widely acknowledged as the man immediately next to Bayar prior to the latter's election to the presidency in 1950.⁴⁵ Future disagreements between Köprülü and Menderes should perhaps be traced as back as the succession struggle. Riza says the role of Köprülü and his ministry were mainly restricted to providing Bayar and Menderes "with information on which they based their decisions and to explaining and carrying out Turkish foreign policy in accordance with the guidelines set

⁴¹See Chapter 4.

⁴²Frederick W. Frey, *The Turkish Political Elite* (1965), 173.

⁴³McGhee, *Connection*, 94.

⁴⁴FO371/136456/RK1022/30, Bowker to Addis, 18.2.58.

⁴⁵Ahmad, *Experiment*, 78.

out by Bayar and Menderes".⁴⁶ This study confirms that this trend continued after 1953. Sir James Bowker, the UK ambassador in Ankara, reported that from the second half of 1953, Menderes did not allow Köprülü great authority and initiative in foreign affairs.⁴⁷ This dissertation shows, however, that even after Köprülü's resignation, some civil servants in the Foreign Ministry continued to share his opinion that every effort should be made to improve relations with the Arab states.

Ethem Menderes's tenure as acting Foreign Minister was short-lived and mostly ineffectual. Fatmâ Rüşti Zorlu, on the other hand, was Menderes's right-hand man. Their wives were first cousins. Zorlu's contemporaries admired his abilities but also underlined his arrogance and high-handed approach. According to US ambassador George McGhee, Zorlu was "confident and articulate, although he was inclined to be rather arrogant in his dealings with subordinates—and Americans of lesser rank".⁴⁸ For the British Foreign Office (FO), he was "an uncertain factor in Turkish politics" who "may have an undesirable influence over Monsieur Menderes". Bowker, while acknowledging that Zorlu was "the only effective and active Turkish Foreign Minister" in the mid-fifties and "the one man whose advice M. Menderes has constantly seemed to rely in financial, economic and foreign relations,"⁴⁹ also said he was

a Foreign Minister of the type "my country right or wrong". He has the typically Asian characteristics of a Turk in being suspicious and scrupulous and convinced of the efficacy of rough methods and shock tactics. This makes him unpleasant to deal with when things are not going to his wishes; on the other hand it makes it easier to give a tough response when the occasion calls for it. He has little standing in the country or the DP and depends entirely on the Prime Minister for his position.⁵⁰

The fact that Zorlu was the son-in-law of Tefik Rüşti Aras, Turkey's Foreign Minister during the Turkish-Soviet honeymoon of the 1920s and 30s, did not help his reputation. Zeki Kunalalp, a junior Turkish colleague of his, confirms that Zorlu was the driving spirit behind Turkey's pro-NATO foreign policy and admits his having "a hard, sometimes thorny, shell, but a soft interior".⁵¹ Menderes knew of Zorlu's unpopularity with foreign diplomats, but considered him irreplaceable, "the only member of the Grand National Assembly with the required knowledge and experience to be Foreign Minister". Shortly before re-appointing

⁴⁶Rıza, *Participation*, ix.

⁴⁷FO371/11718/RK1016/45, Bowker to Macmillan, 20.12.55.

⁴⁸McGhee, *Connection*, 99.

⁴⁹FO371/124001/RK1016/35, Bowker to Lloyd, 12.9.56.

⁵⁰FO371/136456/RK1022/1 & 3G.

⁵¹Kunalalp, *Sadece*, 72-73.

Zorlu as Foreign Minister in 1957, he asked US Ambassador Fletcher Warren if Washington would approve of his choice.⁵²

The Turkish Foreign Minister was advised by the Secretary-General, who, in turn, was aided by four assistant Secretaries-General for political, commercial, NATO and administrative affairs. Political affairs were mainly handled by the five diplomatic affairs departments or general-directorates, which represented both a geographical and functional distribution (relations with Europe and the USA; with Africa and Asia; with the UN and other international bodies; cultural relations; and protection of Turkish minorities and Turkish citizens abroad). Other departments dealt with economic and trade affairs, with press and information services, and with personnel and administrative questions. There was also a Protocol Department, a Political Planning Board, and the Office of the Legal Adviser.⁵³

The role of the Secretary-General, the Ministry's top civil servant, was crucial in running external relations and even sometimes in taking decisions. In the period under review, this post was successively occupied by Cevat Açıkalın (1952-54), Muharrem Nuri Birgi (1954-56) and Rauf Melih Esenbel (1957-60). Of these, Birgi was described as "exceedingly capable," working "very closely with the Prime Minister" and clearly enjoying "his confidence". He was also accused, however, of working "single-handed, delegating very little authority and thereby delaying the execution of routine business".⁵⁴ He reputedly disliked the Arabs in general and harboured scepticism towards co-operation with Arab radical nationalist regimes. 'Uthman 'Asal, the Egyptian chargé d'affaires in Ankara in 1955-57, writes that "this Nuri was more cursed than his namesake (Nuri al-Sa'id), and it is said that he was a *dönme*. I believe that he was the real architect of the Baghdad Pact. His loathing for Egypt was extreme".⁵⁵

Since Turkish Foreign Ministry archives are still inaccessible, except to very few select individuals, Tamkoç has likened the laborious task of putting data reported in memoirs and periodicals as regards the Turkish foreign policy decision-making process into a meaningful form and shape to working jigsaw puzzles.⁵⁶ The British FO General Correspondence papers, together with published US and French diplomatic documents, give us a good picture of how Turkish foreign policy evolved in the mid-fifties as regards the Arab world. Unfortunately, they do not allow us to uncover the details of the foreign policy debate within

⁵²*Foreign Relations of the United States* [hereafter *FRUS*] 1955-1957, vol. XXIV, 745-46.

⁵³Váli, *Bridge*, 76.

⁵⁴FO371/130232/RK1903/1, Bowker to Lloyd, 11.1.57.

⁵⁵See 'Asal's article in 'Abd al-Hamid al-Katib, *Hikayat Atatürk wa-l-islam* (n.d.), 165. The *dönme* were islamised Jews, suspected of still secretly practising their former religion.

⁵⁶Tamkoç, *Warrior*, 131.

the lower echelons of the Ministry, since the latter's structure was hierarchical, and Western diplomats were very correct in their dealings with the Turkish government, keeping their contacts limited to ministers and some of the top civil servants and making very little contact with their junior counterparts. Menderes himself was perhaps an overconfident politician and had the habit of disregarding advice coming from the lower echelons if it contradicted with his own convictions and perceptions. The British embassy was aware of certain views within the ministry which were not always in conformity with those expressed by Menderes and his confidantes. The inconsistent nature of their reporting of these differing views, however, does not enable us to trace their development. Kunalp's memoirs give us further reason to believe in the existence of differing outlooks and points of view. This is certainly a very interesting subject which someone may hopefully carry out in the future, if he/she gets unrestricted access to the Turkish Foreign Ministry archives.

Riza says that, in the period 1950-53, "strong views" were expressed on the conduct of Turkish foreign policy in the respective GNA committee and its confidential reports to the government.⁵⁷ Unfortunately, the limited nature of sources used in this study makes it impossible to discover what shape debates in the GNA Foreign Affairs Committee took after 1953.

Another important topic which is not covered adequately in this study, again because of lack of availability of relevant primary sources, is the role played by the military in the formulation of Turkish foreign policy. This author thinks that, during the period under review, there were probably no sharp disagreements between Turkish politicians and army generals on foreign policy matters. The Democrats were careful to stuff the army hierarchy with officers loyal to the government line, while the relatively junior officers, who organised the 1960 coup, do not appear to have been greatly concerned with foreign policy issues. The Yassıada trials, they organised to delegitimise the ten-year Democratic rule, did not concentrate on foreign policy matters, except probably for the case of Turkey's reaction to the 1958 revolution in Iraq, which is analysed in Chapter 10.

The Arab World⁵⁸

By 1953, there were eight sovereign Arab states in the Middle East. Of those, Yemen and Saudi Arabia had never been under Western colonial rule. Egypt, Iraq and Transjordan had

⁵⁷Riza, *Participation*, ix.

⁵⁸This chapter discusses only those aspects of the Arab political landscape which were generally common for all independent Arab states. The specificities of the balance of power in Iraq and Syria will be dealt with in chapters 2 and 4 respectively.

become independent only after conceding certain rights to British troops on their territory. Syria and Lebanon, however, had won independence from France without similar constraints. Libya, a former Italian colony, became independent in 1951. On the other hand, Palestine, was, in effect, divided in 1948 between the newly-created Jewish state of Israel and Transjordan—renamed Jordan in 1950, after the annexation of the West Bank of the river Jordan, formerly part of mandated Palestine—and more than 700,000 Arab Palestinian refugees were scattered in the Arab world.

Most Arab governments, usually old-guard oligarchies, professed to work for a total end to foreign military presence and the eventual establishment of a single, pan-Arab, powerful political and economic entity. Moreover, nearly all insisted that no common cause could be made with the West until Arab national demands as regards Palestine and the Suez Canal (where there still was a significant British armed presence) were met. These regimes were now being challenged, however, by a younger generation of pan-Arab nationalists, who rejected all kinds of alliances with foreign powers and demanded the complete withdrawal of British troops from Arab territories. They desired equal status with all other nations in the world and freedom to judge every international issue on its own merits and solely in the light of pan-Arab interests. Thanks to the spread of basic education, new means of inter-communication, and also to the wartime experience of Britain's military pregnability, their views were gaining acceptance among a wider cross-section of Arab society. For many radical, young Arab intellectuals, like those in the Ba'th Party, Arab unity became closely linked with the need to defeat internal "reactionary" forces and implement radical social reforms.⁵⁹ They turned Arab nationalism into an instrument for challenging the *status quo*, and a means by which allegiance to the rulers could be superseded by a higher form of patriotism. The power of these Arab revolutionary parties, ranging from Islamic revivalists to Communists, lay in the streets. The real basis of their organisation was popular. They had no respect for the caricature of "democracy" bequeathed to the Arab world by colonial powers. Finally, they regarded the Hashimite rulers of Iraq and Jordan as British puppets and no longer believed that the family, which led the Great Arab Revolt against Ottoman rule in 1916, could bring about Arab unification. Events in Iraq in 1941, when the Regent, Prince 'Abd al-Ilah—originally deposed by pan-Arab nationalist rebels—had been restored to power by British troops had created an irreconcilable breach between the two camps.

The advent of the Cold War was met by Arab governments with relative unconcern.⁶⁰

⁵⁹Walter Z. Laqueur(ed.), *The Middle East in Transition: Studies in Contemporary History* (1958), 341.

⁶⁰Fayez A. Sayegh(ed.), *The Dynamics of Neutralism in the Arab World: A Symposium* (1964), 127-28, 173-74.

Their attention was focused on matters closer to home, especially the loss of the larger part of Palestine in 1948. They feared that Israel would inevitably attempt to gain further territory and water resources to settle incoming Jewish immigrants. Neutralist feeling toward global Cold War issues spread in the Arab world as a reaction against the supposed Western betrayal of legitimate Arab hopes and aspirations. Arab nationalists believed that colonial powers were purposefully exaggerating the Soviet "threat" to distract Arab attention from the real issues (Palestine, full independence, etc.) they wanted to tackle. Desire for social change brought some of them closer to Communism, while the West's *ad hoc* support for conservative Arab regimes led them to believe that the West was resisting social change in the Arab world. To Western proposals urging closer regional co-operation against the USSR, Arab governments responded with the creation in 1950 of the Arab League Collective Security Pact (ALCSP) intended to co-ordinate defences against Israel. Disagreements and rivalry, however, left most of its provisions on paper.

Turkish-Arab Relations after World War II

Starting in the sixteenth century, the greater part of the Arab Middle East was continuously ruled by the Ottoman Turks. By the end of World War I, however, most of it had come under West European tutelage. Then, throughout the inter-war period, the Turkish republican elite shunned close relations with its Arab neighbours. It had not still forgiven the Arabs for their "betrayal," when the latter had sided with Britain during the war. Turkish intellectuals harboured a feeling of superiority towards their Middle Eastern neighbours and believed that the latter could prosper by only following the policies of westernisation, secularisation and co-operation with the West adopted by Kemal Atatürk, the first president of the Turkish Republic. Moreover, some Turkish Foreign Ministry officials had inherited an exaggerated Big Power complex from Ottoman times toward their former subjects.⁶¹ The short-lived Sa'dabad Pact (1937), including both Iraq and Turkey, was perhaps the sole exception to this trend.

The post-war Soviet threat made Turkey realise how isolated she had become from her Middle Eastern neighbours. She, therefore, embarked on a hurried and intensive effort to improve relations with the emerging sovereign Arab states and signed friendship treaties with Iraq (1946) and Jordan (1947). These attempts, like the rest of Turkish foreign policy initiatives of that period, were fuelled primarily by her concern to contain the perceived Soviet threat to her territorial integrity and form of government. The DP's more tolerant

⁶¹Karpat, *Transition*, 4.

attitude than the RPP towards manifestations of the Islamic faith in Turkey was, in turn, appreciated by several Arab governments.

Differences in political outlook, contrasting evaluations of threats and interests, however, obstructed further rapprochement with the Arab world. Turkey, for example, after initially opposing the creation of Israel, gradually changed her hostile attitude, when it became apparent that Israel was not particularly friendly towards Moscow. Ankara hoped that by improving relations with Tel Aviv, it could gain the sympathy of the influential Jewish communities in the West. She became the first state with a majority Muslim population to recognise Israel and establish with her diplomatic relations. She then asked the Arabs to follow her,⁶² fuelling Arab resentment towards the Turks and exacerbating the Arab stereotype of Turkey as the gendarme of the West in the Middle East.⁶³

Turkey's Relations with Syria and Iraq

Turkey preferred dealing with conservative pro-Western Arab regimes rather than those with radical anti-Western inclinations. Her bilateral relations with her immediate Arab neighbours, Iraq and Syria, best illustrate this situation.

Both Iraq and Syria had been carved, as political entities, by the victorious allies out of former Ottoman territories at the end of World War I and immediately placed, against the express wishes of the native population, under British and French mandates respectively. During the mandate years, Turkey seemed content to deal directly with the mandatory powers on matters related to Syria and Iraq, without insisting on local Arab participation in the negotiations. Some of those issues were territorial disputes and left a strong impact on the pattern of Turkey's future bilateral relations with Syria and Iraq, after they had become independent.

With Iraq, the territorial dispute centred around the largely Kurdish-inhabited region of Mosul and Kirkuk. It was ultimately resolved in favour of Iraq through the League of Nations in 1925. In return, after the discovery in the said region of vast oil reserves, Turkey received from Iraq, over a period of 25 years, a fixed annual payment of £500,000 as compensation for lost revenue. This compromise paved the way for the future establishment of relatively smooth links with Iraq, which were later reinforced by a mutual determination to co-operate in areas of defence and suppression of Kurdish aspirations on both sides of the border.

⁶²Riza, *Participation*, 63; Soysal, *Analysis*, 32.

⁶³For other examples of discord, see I. I. Ivanova, *Turetskoe-arabskie otnosheniia i ikh mesto v sisteme mezhdunarodnikh svyazei na Blizhnem Vostoke 1945-1983* (1983), 9; Riza, *Participation*, 43; Ismail Soysal, "Political Relations between Turkey and Egypt in the Last Sixtytwo Years", *STAR*, 2 (1987), 51.

Technical problems of bilateral nature were solved smoothly and without any recrimination. In addition to the above-mentioned Sa'dabad Pact, Turkey and Iraq signed, in 1946, a bilateral Treaty of Friendship and Good-Neighbourliness.

Turkish-Syrian relations, however, were more problematic. Their territorial dispute centred around the district of Alexandretta (Hatay). In the late 1930s, Ankara managed to press the mandatory power, France, for concessions over the issue and ultimately annexed the region in 1939. The indignation felt by the Arab Syrians at this loss soured—and continues to sour—bilateral links with Turkey. Syria refused to acknowledge the legality of the territorial transfer, and, hence, the dispute seriously delayed Turkey's recognition of Syrian independence in 1946, until a secret compromise was mediated whereby Ankara did not insist on formal Syrian recognition of Hatay's incorporation, while Damascus undertook not to raise the issue formally so long as she was not required to make any express renunciation.⁶⁴ This dissertation shows that, even in the mid-fifties, many Syrians feared that Turkey might eventually try to annex more Syrian territory, in particular Aleppo. The Turks made surprisingly little effort to deny such worries, and, on a few occasions, were quite happy to use them as some sort of counter-measure against well-publicised popular Syrian irredentism towards Hatay. This Syrian bitterness was exacerbated from time to time by other problems relating to minorities, the properties of Turkish and Syrian nationals in each other's territory, the division of the waters of the river Jagh-Jagh in al-Jazirah, cross-border smuggling and so on.⁶⁵ These bilateral problems, which in other circumstances could have been solved through compromise and without much ado, now attained unprecedented proportions, and the finding of common ground on issues of regional concern, like Middle East collective defence, became all the more difficult. Hence, these bilateral disputes could indeed be considered as one of the secondary, though certainly never the determinative, factor which made Syria oppose the Baghdad Pact.

Turkish and Arab Attitudes Toward Middle East Collective Defence Proposals

The ideas to set up a separate anti-Soviet Middle East collective defence structure were being circulated since the late 1940s. Finally, on 13 October 1951, the USA, UK, France and Turkey collectively asked Egypt to join them, as an equal partner, in setting up a "Middle East Command" (MEC) along with any other countries that might wish to adhere. The

⁶⁴Daniel Pipes, *Greater Syria: The History of an Ambition* (1990), 60; Ömer Kürkçüoğlu, *Türkiye'nin Arap Orta Doğusu'na Karşı Politikası 1945-1970* (1972), 16.

⁶⁵Najib al-Armanazi, *'Ashr sanawat fi-l-diblumasiyyah fi samim al-ahdath al-'arabiyyah wa-l-dawliyyah*, vol. II (1964), 69-71.

invitation emphasised Egypt's role in the "Free World," and promised that equality and partnership would be the fruits of MEC participation. New "allied" military arrangements, with headquarters in Cairo, would replace the 1936 Anglo-Egyptian Treaty. Most MEC troops would still be British, but those not assigned to the Command would leave, while Egypt would only be asked to provide base facilities. Britain expected Commonwealth countries to contribute to Middle East defence as well. Although the USA would furnish staff to the MEC and provide military assistance and missions to friendly countries, it would not commit troops to the area.⁶⁶

Britain hoped that through integrating Egypt into the MEC, she could finally establish a collective defence mechanism in the Middle East; provide a solution to the Anglo-Egyptian dispute over the presence of British troops in the Suez Canal Zone Base; and bring Turkey into the Western defence system. Since Egypt arguably had, since the mid-1940s, established herself as the focus of growing Arab opposition to Britain's regional supremacy, her adherence could also encourage other Arab states to join the MEC.

Turkey, willing to participate in a Middle Eastern defence system since February 1949, would have ideally preferred to see her allies proceed with caution. Her membership in NATO had not been finalised then, and Turkish leaders feared that if Egypt rejected the MEC proposal, Turkey would be expected to provide its military backbone, making it difficult for her to insist on the assignment of her forces to NATO's main command. Nevertheless, under direct pressure from Washington to follow a joint line, Turkey went along with the proposal.⁶⁷

Egypt, however, refused to participate in any pact as long as Britain continued to occupy the Suez Canal Zone. Her rejection destroyed the chances of acceptance by other Arab countries. The four sponsoring powers decided, therefore, to go ahead with the MEC with headquarters in Cyprus.⁶⁸ The project was pursued for another 18 months or so, mainly by Britain, but it gradually acquired a narrower scope, involving little more than allied consultation. Finally, at Washington's suggestion its name was changed to the Middle East Defence Organisation (MEDO) to make the planning organisation sound less like a military command, and hence less offensive to Arab ears. The above-described American and British disagreements over tactics prevented MEDO from reaching even the stage of having an official preliminary meeting.⁶⁹ The military coup in Egypt in July 1952 briefly appeared to

⁶⁶Devereux, *Formulation*, 109.

⁶⁷Devereux, *Formulation*, 58; Riza, *Participation*, 16, 79, 91.

⁶⁸McGhee, *Connection*, 96.

⁶⁹Devereux, *Formulation*, 66-68; Riza, *Participation*, 168.

provide MEDO with renewed hope. Ankara shared this short-lived hope that the new Egyptian leaders would seriously consider MEDO, but nothing came out of it.⁷⁰ Finally, Menderes agreed, during talks he had in London on 13-19 October 1952, that MEDO should be organised as quickly as possible through the adoption of a "set up shop" approach, i.e. Turkey and Britain should first openly assert their intention to set up a Middle East defence organisation and then proceed as occasion offered to work on individual Arab states to make them take a more "realistic" attitude. If no Arab country agreed to go along, then MEDO should be established without their support. Britain agreed that to Ankara's suggestion that Iraq should be approached first.⁷¹

Turkey embarked on a program designed to strengthen relations with the Arab countries, mainly through cultural exchanges and a series of visits by top-level officials and parliamentarians.⁷² Until the beginning of 1953, she still had illusions that she was in a better position than the other Western powers concerned to persuade the Arabs to adopt a less negative attitude to the proposals concerned. The latter, however, did not respond to Turkish overtures. Turkey steadily became disillusioned by their behaviour,⁷³ and Menderes suspended the initiative at the end of April 1953.⁷⁴

This decision was a low point in Turkey's attempts to forge close links with the Arab world. It did not last long, however. Dulles's long trip to the Middle East in May 1953—the first by an American head of diplomacy—gave, as shown in chapter 2, a new impetus to the search for ways to establish a Middle East defence organisation, out of which sprang the Baghdad Pact, with Turkey destined to play a crucial role in its creation.

Throughout the deliberations to establish MEC/MEDO, Turkey remained fully convinced of the necessity of some arrangement to fill the strategic gap on her eastern flank. She hoped that Arab involvement in MEC/MEDO would make Soviet infiltration in the Arab world very difficult. Turkish leaders were also convinced of the military necessity of a strong British presence on the Suez Canal, for they had no confidence whatsoever in the political or military competence of the Arabs. They could not convince the latter, however, that there was no relation between Turkey's membership of NATO and MEDO.

Turkey was aware of and resented British efforts to use her largely to prevent internal popular opposition against pro-British Arab regimes in Iraq and Jordan. Some Turkish politicians even feared that Britain was preventing Turkey from assisting other Arab countries

⁷⁰*The Memoirs of Sir Anthony Eden: Full Circle* (1960), 245.

⁷¹FO371/110788/V1073/54, Bowker to FO, 6.10.54; Devereux, *Formulation*, 69.

⁷²McGhee, *Connection*, 138.

⁷³FO371/112921/WK1011/1, Helm to Eden, 1.1.54.

⁷⁴Riza, *Participation*, 226.

in military matters on an individual basis.⁷⁵ Hence, Turkey wanted Washington to play a larger role in regional defence, for she knew that America wanted to incorporate Turkish forces into NATO, where they would serve as the Middle Eastern anchor to the defence of Europe and simultaneously contribute to MEDO.

This dissertation shows that Turkey's ultimate goal was to bring all Arab states into NATO. She preferred, however, at this early stage, to work separately with individual Arab countries, fearing that any proposal referred to the Arab League would go nowhere. Argued Köprülü: "Collectively, the Arab leaders displayed even less courage in making difficult decisions involving issues tainted by colonialism".⁷⁶

Of the individual Arab states, Egypt was always considered the prized possession. Ankara, too, believed that once Egypt adhered to a regional alliance, bringing in other Arab countries would be made much easier. Egypt's repeated refusals even to consider the matter infuriated the Turks. Their occasional decisions to stop wooing Egypt temporarily and try to create a regional defence organisation despite Egyptian reluctance were simply manifestations of occasional Turkish sheer frustration. In such circumstances, Iraq inevitably attained added importance for Turkish foreign policy-makers, as her leaders were known to be better-inclined towards MEC/MEDO proposals and were seen as a suitable counterweight for Egyptian influence within the Arab world.

Another constant feature of Turkey's foreign policy of the period was her desire to co-operate on defence matters with other Muslim countries solely on the basis of geographical and political realities, rather than religious affinity. Turkish leaders feared that any rapprochement based on religion might in the end endanger Turkey's secularism and pro-European aspirations.

Sources

In preparing this dissertation, the author has relied mainly on West European and US archival material, especially British FO General Correspondence (FO371) files kept at the Public Record Office in London. These files are useful as regards Turkey and Iraq, i.e. Britain's allies at the time. The strengths and weaknesses of British diplomatic reporting in relation to Turkish foreign policy have been referred to above. Moreover, British diplomats in Ankara seem to have had minimal contact with opposition figures. As regards Iraq, the British embassy had cordial links with the Palace and all main figures of the establishment, but here again contacts with radical opposition figures were almost non-existent. British records are

⁷⁵Hüseyin Bağcı, *Demokrat Parti Dönemi Dış Politikası* (1990), 51; McGhee, *Connection*, 89.

⁷⁶McGhee, *Connection*, 143.

not reliably informative on Syria, because British-Syrian relations were tense at the time and were broken off in November 1956, to be re-established (with the UAR) only on 1 December 1959. During the period, when the British embassy in Damascus was shut down, it fell to the British embassy in Beirut to report on developments in Syria, and the reliability of the reporting inevitably diminished. This author has also made limited use of the private papers of successive British Foreign Secretaries (FO800) of the time. Published US and French documents, the series *Foreign Relations of the United States* and *Documents Diplomatiques Français*, have also been consulted. Unfortunately, no first-hand archival material from Turkey, Iraq or Syria was available to me, when preparing the dissertation, which made the task of verifying certain assumptions, or even some of the more obscure facts, very difficult.

The author has also relied on the printed memoirs of some Turkish, Iraqi, Syrian, Egyptian, British and American politicians and diplomats of the time, as well as certain issues of relevant newspapers and periodicals. Some of the main statesmen figuring in this dissertation, like Menderes, Zorlu, Nuri and Gamal 'Abd al-Nasir, did not have an opportunity to write their memoirs. The memoirs of al-'Azm, Kuneralp and Muhammad Fadil al-Jamali, however, were particularly helpful. In order to put the results of this research within a broad context, the author has also endeavoured to read the relevant "background" and secondary literature in English, French, Arabic, Turkish and Russian. A full list of books quoted in this dissertation is given in the bibliography at the end of the thesis.

The "Northern Tier" Project

The Dulles Tour

John Foster Dulles's historic tour across eleven Middle Eastern countries between 11 and 29 May 1953 was an important stage in the evolution of the general Middle East defence plan. It buried MEDO and replaced it with the so-called "Northern Tier" collective defence project, based on the voluntary participation of those Middle Eastern countries lying on the southern borders of the USSR.

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The Eisenhower administration, that had just assumed office, considered the Middle East as a key area, where further efforts were needed to bolster local defences against the perceived Soviet menace. It also wished to correct the pro-Israeli bias of the previous administration, promising to take "a balanced view of the Middle East directed against neither the Arabs nor the Jews".¹ The US Secretary of State returned to Washington convinced that MEDO was clearly "a future rather than an immediate possibility". The ongoing controversy over the nationalisation of Iranian oil, the conflict between Egypt and Britain over the Suez base, and the Arab-Israeli dispute were obstructing its implementation.² The prospect of collective defence seemed more encouraging in the northernmost Middle Eastern countries bordering or near the USSR: Turkey, Pakistan, Iraq and Syria, where a natural defence barrier existed and where political leaders were perceived to be more aware of the Soviet threat. MEDO had moreover not worked because of Western predominance. Dulles proposed that any future regional pact should be based on an association of local forces under an indigenous command. The absence of Western membership in this projected pact could encourage other Middle Eastern countries to join. Outside powers could not present a "blueprint" and expect it to be accepted automatically, but as the pact developed, they could become involved in planning and organisation. Furthermore, the new scheme would delink the issues of regional defence from the intricacies of inter-Arab and Arab-Israeli politics.³ Dulles thought that, for a viable defence concept to develop, Arab participation, or at least

¹Lesch, *Syria*, 39; *FRUS 1952-1954*, IX, Part 1, 13.

²Donald James Decker, *U.S. Policy Regarding the Baghdad Pact*, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, The American University, 1975, 61-62.

³J. C. Hurewitz(ed.), *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East: A Documentary Record. Vol. II: 1914-1956* (1956), 337-42.

co-operation, was ultimately necessary. Arab participation depended on their goodwill, but their past colonial experiences, their emergent nationalism and past US and British support of Israel made this inconceivable for the immediate future. Based on these observations, Washington decided to assume greater independence and greater responsibility in the area *vis-à-vis* Britain, and drop the multilateral approach to work, for the time being, on individual states like Iraq, Pakistan and possibly Syria.⁴

The "Northern Tier" project was not a radical break with past plans. None of the countries previously involved in MEDO discussions, Britain and Turkey in particular, saw it as such. Much of Dulles's recommendations had been implicit in the policies of the previous administration.⁵ During 1952, Washington had drawn closer to Britain in all areas of defence co-operation, while Britain had gone a long way in realising the inadequacy of her "Inner Ring" strategy. Instead, she had begun planning a "Forward Strategy," based on rapid and mobile forces stationed in Cyprus, Libya and Jordan, that would eventually replace the static and expensive defence line on the "Inner Ring". Britain had made the maintenance of friendly relations with Iraq and Jordan to retain her strategically important positions there a priority. After the Dulles tour, the British FO agreed, in theory at least, that MEDO should be shelved for the time being, and that the best course to achieve collective security would be to work individually with certain Middle Eastern states.⁶

The Turkish-Pakistani Agreement

Ankara was included as a destination in Dulles's tour in the last minute and only at expressed Turkish insistence. The visit coincided with a period when the Turks had temporarily concluded that, for the time being, any hope of having the Arab countries accept MEDO should be abandoned. Dulles failed to convert Menderes and Bayar to accepting his new "Northern Tier" plan and the necessity of bringing in the Arab states in some capacity in order to make the envisaged organisation politically and strategically viable. Rather than wait any longer for the Arab states, the Turkish leaders preferred to see the four Western powers, themselves included, proceed immediately toward setting up a formal MEDO, open to accession by all Middle Eastern countries, including Pakistan. Menderes assured that Turkey remained anxious to work with the Arab states. The latter, however, were still not ready for co-operation.⁷ Hence, Turkey's official, but *not* publicised, reaction to Dulles's plan was

⁴John W. Young(ed.), *The Foreign Policy of Churchill's Peacetime Administration 1951-1955* (1988), 152.

⁵Ayesha Jalal, "Towards the Baghdad Pact: South Asia and Middle East Defence in the Cold War, 1947-1955", *The International History Review*, 11/3 (August 1989), 418, 428.

⁶Devereux, *Formulation*, 118, 156-57.

⁷*FRUS 1952-1954*, IX, Part 1, 147.

"rather negative". Turkish leaders felt that Washington, while recognising that the establishment of MEDO with Arab participation was a remote possibility, was not drawing what they considered to be the logical and necessary conclusion of going ahead *without* the Arabs.⁸

Instead, in the following few months, Turkey moved, with US and—according to Eden—UK blessing, closer to Pakistan. The latter was eager to forge close links with the West and all fellow Muslim states in order to receive Western military aid, strengthen her defences and be in a stronger bargaining position *vis-à-vis* her regional rivals, India and Afghanistan, with *whom* both she had territorial disputes. Washington showed interest in associating Pakistan with the chain of local defensive arrangements, because of her vital geographic location and relatively strong army.⁹ The Turkish-Pakistani Agreement of Friendly Co-operation, signed in Karachi on 2 April 1954, turned out to be the first step towards the projected "Northern Tier" alliance. It defined bilateral defence co-operation in flexible terms, without any definite obligations. Article 4 stated that co-operation would cover exchange of information on technical experience and progress, endeavours to meet the requirements in production of arms and ammunition, as well as co-operation against any unprovoked attack under Article 51 of the UN Charter. It was thought that further substance could be given later to these provisions, through the conclusion of additional implementation agreements.¹⁰ Washington followed by signing with Pakistan a Mutual Defence Agreement, promising to provide military equipment and training to her armed forces on condition that she "will not undertake any act of aggression against any other nation" and that the assistance provided would be used "exclusively" to maintain internal security, for legitimate self-defence, or participation in regional defence or UN collective security arrangements.¹¹

An Invitation to Iraq

Even before the Turkish-Pakistani agreement had been finalised, the Turkish position *vis-à-vis* Arab participation had undergone sufficient change to make a new *démarche* to Iraq to join the projected alliance possible.

⁸FRUS 1952-1954, IX, Part 1, 391. See also McGhee, *Connection*, 159-60; FO371/104187/E1033/22, BMEQ weekly political summary, 4.6.53.

⁹S. M. Burke and Lawrence Ziring, *Pakistan's Foreign Policy: An Historical Analysis* (1990), 22, 152, 162; Eden, *Full Circle*, 259; Devereux, *Formulation*, 157; Decker, *Policy*, 77; Jalal, "Baghdad Pact", 418-19, 422, 425, 429.

¹⁰See full text in Hurewitz, *Diplomacy*, II, 345-46. Article 51 guarantees "the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken the measures necessary to maintain international peace and security".

¹¹Burke, *Pakistan*, 163-65.

The choice of Iraq as the first Arab country to be approached was perhaps predictable. Of all the Arab countries, her leaders had felt most that the USSR threatened their independence and the established political order. They believed that since the Persian/Arab Gulf had featured high among the strategic objectives of Czarist Russia, its subsequently found rich oil reserves could now further lure Moscow to try to extend its influence there either through direct aggression, or, more probably, through local Communists and sympathisers, and the manipulation of Kurdish nationalist sentiments in Northern Iraq. In the early 1950s, Iraq was still a relatively poor country, and the establishment feared that widespread lower-class discontent could be easily manipulated by Communist propaganda. These fears were crystallised especially after the confrontation in Iran, in the summer of 1953, between the conservative forces loyal to the Shah and their radical-nationalist and left-wing opponents. Iraqi leaders were shocked in seeing the Shah being forced to leave his country temporarily and feared, for a while, that the coming to power in Iran of the radical-left *Tudeh* (Masses) Party might have serious consequences in neighbouring states. They soon began to look seriously for ways to make the repetition of such events, this time in Iraq, impossible.¹²

The oil royalties Iraq received from the Iraq Petroleum Company (IPC) formed her main source of income. Since concluding a more favourable profit-sharing agreement in 1952, the government was trying to strengthen its internal position by channelling most of the newly-acquired revenue to large-scale development programs aimed at improving, in the long run, the standard of living of the bulk of the population. The total revenue, they believed, was not enough, however, both to keep the development program going and to equip and maintain a strong army. They showed, therefore, strong interest in maintaining close relations with the former mandatory power, Britain, and in cultivating new ones with the USA.

Iraq's relations with Britain, since the termination of the mandate in 1932, had been governed by their 1930 Treaty of Preferential Alliance.¹³ Under its provisions, Iraq was bound to co-operate closely with Britain on foreign and defence policy matters; accord the UK ambassador in Baghdad "precedence" in relation to other diplomatic representatives; and resort to British military and civilian advisers, whenever foreign technical assistance was needed. Britain retained control of the air bases at al-Shu'aybah, in the vicinity of Basra, and al-Habbaniyyah, near Baghdad. She could also use local facilities to transport troops through Iraqi territory. The 25-year treaty, due to expire in 1957, had long been unpopular with large segments of educated Iraqis, and the two governments recognised that new arrangements were needed, if the alliance was to survive. Iraq was keen to sign a revised agreement—albeit

¹²Axelgard, *Policy*, 121; Devereux, *Formulation*, 144; FO371/104189/E1061/1, Mackenzie to Baker, 19.8.53.

¹³See full text in Hurewitz, *Diplomacy*, II, 178-81.

with no permanent British bases on her soil—because she considered that the British connection was necessary to maintain internal stability. Iraq first suggested to the British to terminate the existing treaty and replace it with new arrangements under the guise of regional defence co-operation stipulated by Article 51 of the UN Charter after the August 1953 events in Iran.¹⁴

American interests in Iraq were more recent than Britain's. Iraqi leaders recognised, however, that US influence in the Middle East was growing very rapidly and were ready to shift some their friendship and loyalty to Washington.¹⁵ In March 1953 and again during the Dulles tour, Iraq requested that she should receive some of her military equipment free from Washington. The high cost of her development program was draining her resources, she claimed, and she could not afford to continue to buy all her military needs from Britain.¹⁶

Iraq had always been the most enthusiastic of Arab states towards Western-backed defence plans.¹⁷ She already had the experience of entering into the Sa'dabad Pact (1937) with neighbouring non-Arab states. Furthermore, when finally adhering to the ALCSP in February 1951, Iraq had added a reservation that the obligation of members to abide by decisions taken by a two-thirds majority in the Defence Council was not "applicable to individual or collective defence preparedness to resist any military aggression," because, she argued, Article 4 of the pact recognised the right of member-states to "cooperate in consolidating and coordinating their armed forces," and "participate according to their resources and needs in preparing individual and collective means of defense to repulse" armed aggression.¹⁸ Moreover, Iraq had long enjoyed almost troublefree relations with Turkey and Pakistan.¹⁹

Finally, for the Turkish-Pakistani agreement to have any military/strategic effect, the two signatories should fill their territorial gap. The defence of the north-western Iranian province of Azerbaijan, of the passes through the Zagros mountains and of the Tigris-Euphrates valley in Iraq and Syria were essential for protecting the region, specifically Turkey's eastern flank. Beyond the Zagros there were no natural geographical obstacles to southern Iraq and the

¹⁴FO371/110986/VQ1011/1, Troutbeck to Eden, 11.1.1954; FO371/115496/V1073/463, Wright to Eden, 9.3.55.

¹⁵Robert A. Fernea and Wm. Roger Louis(eds), *The Iraqi Revolution of 1958: The Old Social Classes Revisited* (1991), 65.

¹⁶FO371/110986/VQ1011/1, Troutbeck to Eden, 11.1.54.

¹⁷Axelgard, *Policy*, 78, 95; Riza, *Participation*, 99, 151, 180.

¹⁸Abubaker M. Saad, *Iraq and Arab Politics: The Nuri as-Said Era, 1941-1958*, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Washington, 1987, 157. See full text of ALCSP in Hurewitz, *Diplomacy*, II, 311-14.

¹⁹Lord Birdwood, *Nuri as-Said: A Study in Arab Leadership* (1959), 219; Stephen Hemsley Longrigg, *Iraq, 1900 to 1950: A Political, Social, and Economic History* (1968), 358.

Mediterranean. Iraq's adherence would give the Turkish-Pakistani agreement a strategic position in depth, air bases, and lines of communication from Turkey to the Gulf, which could be used to support vital defensive positions at the said passes.²⁰

On 16 February 1954, the Turkish ambassador in Baghdad unofficially invited Iraqi Premier Fadil al-Jamali to join the projected Turkish-Pakistani agreement.²¹ Turkey's Foreign Minister, Fuat Köprülü, declared that it would be open to any friendly power that wished to join, expressing hope that "the Arab countries would also one day show interest in the pact".²²

The Iraqi answer was delayed, however. Although al-Jamali was personally anxious to improve Iraq's relations with Turkey,²³ he refused to acknowledge publicly that Iraq had been invited to join the agreement or had been acquainted with its clauses.²⁴ This go-slow approach may be explained by al-Jamali's fear of a violent internal opposition. Although Iraq's landed classes favoured the acceptance of US military aid and association with the Turkish-Pakistani agreement, opposition—led by the National Democratic, Independence and the banned Communist parties—was not negligible.²⁵ Al-Jamali also did not wish to break with Iraq's Arab partners, particularly at a time when he was pushing in the Arab League a plan for closer Arab unity, with perhaps an eye on securing a throne in Syria for Crown-Prince 'Abd al-Ilah.²⁶

The Turkish-Pakistani approach coincided with the last stages of American deliberations concerning Iraq's request for military aid. The two issues became objectively interlinked. In April, the US State Department overcame various objections from Saudi Arabia and Israel and authorised the allocation of an annual \$10m in military aid to Iraq. The deal was formalised as a bilateral "understanding," not an "agreement," because the Iraqi government was anxious, due to its special internal legal position, to avoid criticism and opposition by all means possible and preferred not to be required to submit the deal to the Chamber for approval.²⁷ Al-Jamali was left in no doubt, however, that Washington hoped that even if Iraq could not accede immediately to the Turkish-Pakistani pact, she must nonetheless at least

²⁰Decker, *Policy*, 82, 127, 207.

²¹FO371/110787/V1073/7, Mackenzie to Eden, 24.2.54.

²²Ismail Soysal, "The 1955 Baghdad Pact", *STAR*, 5 (1990), 51; FO371/112922/WK1013/5, Political Summary, Ankara, 11-24 February 1954.

²³FO371/110994/VQ1022/1, FO minute by Falla, 15.1.54.

²⁴*FRUS 1952-1954*, IX, Part 2, 2375; FO371/110787/V1073/7, Mackenzie to Eden, 24.2.54; FO371/110841/V1782/2, FO Research Department memo, 6.4.54; see full text of al-Jamali's March 21 announcement in FO371/110787/V1073/24; see also *ibid.*, -/20-21, Troutbeck to FO, 23.3.54.

²⁵FO371/110787/V1073/20, Troutbeck to FO, 23.3.54; FO371/110786/V1072/12, Troutbeck to Furlonge, 24.3.54.

²⁶For details, see Chapter 4.

²⁷*FRUS 1952-1954*, IX, Part 2, 2384.

declare publicly her support for regional defence co-operation. Furthermore, al-Jamali was warned that if Iraq's first move after signing the aid agreement was towards Israel through union with Syria, rather than toward the "Northern Tier," Washington could still revoke the signed agreement.²⁸

The question of Iraqi adherence to the Turkish-Pakistani agreement was soon put on hold because al-Jamali's government resigned after losing the support of the followers of Nuri al-Sa'id, the largest group in the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies. The Chamber was dissolved and new elections called. With Nuri abroad, undergoing an operation, 'Abd al-Ilah hoped to return a Chamber sympathetic to his Syrian ambitions.

During the June 9 elections, conservative political parties and other "unaffiliated" deputies, mostly members of the ruling elite, won the bulk of seats. Ten seats, mainly in Baghdad, Mosul and Basra, went, however, to the National Front, an electoral bloc consisting of the pan-Arab nationalist Independence Party, the left-wing reformist National Democratic Party and individual members from the banned Communist Party and other radical left-wing organisations. The Front had campaigned on a platform of neutralism and rendering assistance to Arab peoples fighting imperialism. It had demanded the abrogation of the Anglo-Iraqi treaty, the abolition in Iraq of foreign military bases and foreign monopolistic companies.

The newly-elected Chamber had some very difficult problems to tackle, especially the termination of the 1930 treaty and the negotiation of new defence arrangements for Iraq. 'Abd al-Ilah was soon convinced that only Nuri had the influence and experience to manage this tricky task. So, on 12-15 July, he flew to Paris to meet Nuri. The latter was extremely unhappy with the election results, which had reduced the numerical strength in the Chamber of his own party, and returned many prominent leftists, with whom he did not wish to work. To secure Nuri's return to the premiership, 'Abd al-Ilah was left with little choice but to promise new elections.²⁹ The new Chamber was first prorogued after holding only a single

²⁸Axelgard, *Policy*, 145, 151, 156; Soysal, "Baghdad Pact", 52-53. See text in Hurewitz, *Diplomacy*, II, 346-48. A secret Anglo-American Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed in Washington on 26 February, subordinating the projected American military assistance to already existing British plans for the expansion of Iraqi armed forces; see text in FO371/110820/V1139/39. Of this, Iraq was only told by the USA that she should continue to look to Britain as her main source of arms supply. Actually, much of the American assistance was later procured from British sources through off-shore purchases.

²⁹See details in Waldemar Gallman, *Iraq under General Nuri* (1964), ch. 1; Muhammad Fadil al-Jamali, *Mawaqif wa 'ibar fi siyasatina al-dawliyyah: safahat min tarikhina al-mu'asir* (1991), 271; idem., review of *Iraq under General Nuri*, *MEF*, XL/7 (October 1964), 13; Phebe Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq* (1985), 114-15; 'Abd al-Amir Hadi al-Akam, *Ta'rikh hizb al-istiqlal al-'iraqi 1946-1958* (1980), 78, 294-98; George Grassmuck, "The Electoral Process in Iraq, 1952-1958", *MEJ*, 14/4 (Autumn, 1960), 405, 408-12.

session and Nuri was re-appointed Premier. The King then agreed to Nuri's request to call new elections "to enable the people to pronounce on" his policy:

- (a) termination of the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of 1930 and cooperation between Iraq and other foreign states in conformity with the provisions of Article 51 of the United Nations Charter;
- (b) the strengthening of relations between the Arab countries and the removal of friction and tension between them;
- (c) strengthening of relations with neighbouring states and improvement of cooperation between them and the Arab states to repel the Zionist danger.

Then, Nuri embarked on a chain of measures to engineer the "right" climate before proceeding with new elections planned to return an entirely subservient Chamber. He dissolved all political parties, including his own; closed down many newspapers across the country; made joining some pro-Communist leftist associations an offence; amended the Penal Code to permit the deportation of and the stripping of Iraqi citizenship from persons convicted of communism, anarchism and accused of working for a foreign government; gave the Ministry of the Interior powers to close down political parties and other associations "departing from their terms of reference or provoking disorder"; and amended the Reserve Service Law, allowing the call-up of officials and students dismissed because of their political beliefs. All open political activity was effectively de-legitimised.³⁰ Through new elections held on September 12 under government intimidation, altogether 44 members of the Chamber elected in June were replaced mostly with candidates lacking any record of recent opposition to Nuri.³¹ The *de-facto* breaking-off of Iraq's diplomatic relations in early 1955 with the USSR formed the final chapter in Nuri's anti-leftist drive.³²

A Change of Heart in Turkey: The Conference of July 1954

By May 1954, Turkey was again becoming restless about possible Iraqi non-adherence to the Turkish-Pakistani agreement and was questioning the American tactics of granting seemingly unconditional military aid to Iraq, fearing that the latter would now have little incentive to join the above-mentioned agreement.³³

Menderes thoroughly discussed the question of Iraqi accession with the visiting Pakistani Premier Muhammad 'Ali on 9-15 June 1954. They were dissatisfied with Iraq's recent behaviour, as "she appeared to say different things to the Pakistanis, the Turks, the

³⁰Axelgard, *Policy*, 166.

³¹FO371/110990/VQ1015/55, Hooper to FO, 5.8.54.

³²See FO371/111051 & FO371/115803.

³³Axelgard, *Policy*, 145; FO371/110787/V1073/40, Scott Fox to Falla, 10.5.54.

Americans and the British, with the obvious intention of drawing the maximum advantage out of the present situation, whilst avoiding any commitments".³⁴ They agreed that the strongest pressure should be brought upon Iraq and that "the moment must shortly come when Iraq should be asked to say definitely whether she proposed to accede or not".³⁵ Menderes said that "Iraq indulged merely in expression of goodwill and put forward the excuse of its public opinion not being ready for not joining in the defence arrangements. He did not consider this argument valid. Public opinion in Iraq, he thought, would be only too happy to see Iraq associate herself with Pakistan and Turkey. One-third of the population of Iraq was Turkish [*sic*!]; and he knew that a major portion of the population was in fact already in favour of these arrangements". On 11 June, Menderes told the Iraqi ambassador that he thought Iraq was not "sufficiently conscious" of the communist danger and warned him that "if Turkey collapsed countries down to the Cape of Good Hope would collapse too".³⁶ A month later, Birgi, the General-Secretary of the Turkish Foreign Ministry, told UK Ambassador Sir James Bowker that Ankara was "anxious to put an end to disingenuous ambiguities of Iraq's attitude; even if Iraq gave negative reply to Turkish approach that would at least enable us to see where we stood".³⁷

The question of bringing Iraq into the Turkish-Pakistani pact, together with more wide-ranging aspects of Turkish foreign policy *vis-à-vis* the Arab world, were discussed at a special conference of Turkish diplomats held in Ankara and Istanbul on 12-17 July 1954. Chaired by Bayar and Menderes, it was also attended by Köprülü, Birgi, Deputy Premier and Minister of State Zorlu, the Head of the Second Political Department in the Foreign Ministry, Orhan Eralp, and Turkish heads of mission in Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Iraq and Syria.³⁸

The conference concluded that the Arab League was a "nefarious body" with "destructive" and "negative" aims, and had always been manipulated by Egypt to her own interest. Working through the League channels would be counter-productive. Instead, relations with Arab states should be improved on a bilateral basis. Turkey should maintain "an

³⁴FO371/110787/V1073/47, Bowker to Eden, 18.6.54.

³⁵FO371/110787/V1073/45, FO minute by Brewis, 12.7.54.

³⁶FO371/110788/V1073/51, Aide-mémoire by Pakistani Cabinet Secretary, 11-12 June 1954. Menderes was not alone in Turkey to claim that Turkey was the first and most important line of defence against the USSR. On 8 January 1954, during a particularly tense moment in Turkish-Egyptian relations, the Turkish daily *Vatan* wrote: "Even today, if there were not a strong Turkey in front of Suez, a Soviet puppet would have been sitting in General Nagib's place. Egypt's independence is preserved through Turkish honour and self-respect," quoted in Bedi N. Şehsuvaroğlu, *Hekim Bir Siyasimizin Portresi: Büyükelçi Dr. A. Hulûsi Fuad Tugay* (1972), 203.

³⁷FO371/110788/V1073/49, Bowker to FO, 15.7.55.

³⁸Soysal, "Baghdad Pact", 55; FO371/110774/V1025/1, Bowker to Eden, 3.8.55.

attitude of benevolent understanding" towards individual Arab states and hope that this attitude might help them get over their "growing pains". Although it was clear that the "generally powerless" Arab countries could not provide Turkey with anything comparable with the aid she expected from her NATO allies, it was still very important not to let the Arabs side with Turkey's enemies. The Arab countries could still offer Turkey and her Western allies some strategic facilities for the projected regional defence arrangements. After being deprived of their sovereignty for more than five centuries, the Arabs were "far from having established their national identity and sense of responsibility". This was thought to be the principal reason for their "inconsistent" policies and their "unstable" internal situation. The Arabs were susceptible to Soviet propaganda because they viewed co-operation with the West, and in particular with former mandatory powers, as "an issue of sovereignty". Their problems with Israel had pushed the Soviet threat, for most of them, to the background and had even made some "see the Soviet Union as an element of counterbalance".

The conference deduced that, for various reasons—including the long-standing feud between the Hashimites and Saudis—there was no cohesive Arab attitude towards the policy of mutual security pursued by Turkey. "The sentiments of the Arabs towards Turkey" were "basically positive" and excuses made by Arab governments, that "public opinion" did not permit co-operation with Turkey, were unacceptable. Those governments were simply using "the sensitivity of the public opinion" for internal political reasons; to avoid co-operation; and to pursue a short-sighted foreign policy. The Arab press did "not generally reflect the wishes of the people," and the circulation of newspapers in the Arab world was very small. "In fact," stated the final working paper, "there is really no such a thing as a real public opinion in these countries".

The participants agreed that the Turkish-Pakistani agreement had stimulated among Arabs some "constructive" political thinking. The argument that Turkey, by co-operating with the West, had turned her back on the Muslim world, had been proved incorrect. In order to capitalise on this positive mood, Turkey should pursue a more active policy with the Arab states. The latter, "having been administered by other powers for a long time," were "more liable to show respect to power and prestige". They would probably be impressed by friendly Turkish gestures, cultural contacts, invitations and exchange of official visits. Such measures would help erase the negative memories of the past. The conference decided to open a Turkish news agency office in Beirut; set up friendship associations and parliamentary groups; provide scholarships for training programs; and organise naval visits.

The conference also decided that this goodwill campaign must be carried on according to the individual characteristics of each country. The attitude of both Egypt and Saudi Arabia towards the Turkish-Pakistani agreement was judged negative, and it was decided that, after

having been rebuffed so many times in the past, an exception should be made for Egypt in this general policy, and this decision explained to other Arab states. The accession of Arab states to the Turkish-Pakistani agreement was deemed important to fill the geographical gap between the two signatories and thus turn the agreement into something useful and constructive. It was thought that Syria, Lebanon and Jordan would continue their "wait and see" policy, while Iraq, although willing to join, was simply lacking the courage to do so.

Finally, the conference instructed that the proposed rapprochement with the Arab world must not involve any change in Turkey's policy of friendship with Israel. It was acknowledged that "Turkey's recognition of Israel and the normalization of relations with her" had "made a negative impression in the Arab world". The conference nevertheless backed Menderes's expressed view that the Arab countries should acknowledge the reality of the existence of Israel and that a solution should be found to the Arab-Israeli conflict according to the existing realities.

This conference was a real turning point in Turkey's Middle Eastern policy. It was the first-ever dedicated entirely to Turkish-Arabic political relations, and its convening was an unmistakable sign of the importance Turkey attached to the strengthening of ties with the Arab world, hoping eventually to join forces with them against the Soviet Bloc. Its directives are a useful summary of the general mood of thinking prevalent at the Turkish Foreign Ministry in mid-1954, and rather unfortunately in that sense, cannot be praised as a major success. They make crystal-clear that the Turkish foreign policy decision-making elite was, at the time, generally ignorant about and found it extremely hard to understand and explain the latest developments in the Arab world. The Turkish attitude can be easily termed as patronising, being imbued with a deep conviction that the only way open to the Arabs to attain maximum security was through following the Turkish path. The exclusion of Egypt from the list of Arab countries to be approached shows how easily Turkish leaders felt frustrated whenever their views were cold-shouldered. Writing on the conference almost 35 years later, one of its participants, Ismail Soysal, the chargé d'affaires in Syria, admitted that, at the time, "the new trends and new leaders of recently independent Arab countries were not sufficiently known in Turkey" and, hence, "the evaluations made were in any case superficial and affected by prejudice". Soysal, to-date the only published detailed source of the proceedings of this conference, states that he and his colleague in Cairo, Mahmut Dikerdem, "said at that meeting that they could not endorse the above comment on Arab public opinion". This statement can also be interpreted that all others present, including Menderes and Bayar, shared or, at least did not object to, that opinion. Indeed, the views expressed during the conference dominated Turkish political thinking in the following four years, both during crises-management or long-term planning.

Menderes seems to have been the main source of the ideas adopted during the conference, some of which contradicted the Turkish point of view presented to Dulles in May 1953. "Dulles' desire to remain faithful to the idea of cooperation at all costs with the Arab countries," wrote Soysal, together with Menderes's determination "to do all in his power to follow the route traced by the USA" were taken into account in fixing the objective described.³⁹ This inevitably brings in the question why was there this sudden change. The Turkish archives being inaccessible, it is difficult to penetrate into the depths of their political and strategic thinking. It may be that the views expressed to Dulles had simply been a manifestation of one of the occasional troughs Turkish enthusiasm to co-operate with the Arab world on defence matters seemed to plunge into from time to time. The conclusion of the Balkan alliance with Greece and Yugoslavia might have also encouraged supporters of regional co-operation. Some contemporary observers, followed by a not negligible group of later historians, tried to find at least part of the answer in Turkey's fast deteriorating economic prospects.⁴⁰ The government hoped that additional Western aid could be a way out of the crisis, and a more determined Turkish foreign policy in pursuance of Western goals was probably thought to be very important to create the right atmosphere to gain access to foreign aid.

Another sign of the growing Turkish interest in the Arab world was that, on November 1, President Bayar devoted more of his annual speech at the opening of the regular session of the GNA to the possibilities of Middle East collaboration than to any other aspect of Turkish foreign policy, whereas, on the same occasion in the previous two years, Turkey's relations with the Arab world had received no mention at all. Bayar expressed sympathy towards Arab states and made friendly references to Jordan, Iraq and Egypt, expressing hope that the Turkish-Pakistani agreement would develop, with the full co-operation of all Turkey's neighbours, into a real defence organisation.⁴¹

Nuri and the Turkish-Iraqi Rapprochement

Nuri had long advocated close Arab co-operation with the West, and with Britain in particular. He now saw in Washington's readiness to provide arms to individual Middle Eastern states, in return for their co-operation in the "Northern Tier" project, a golden opportunity for Arab countries to improve their defence capability and influence the West to

³⁹All quotes are from Soysal, "Baghdad Pact", 53-57.

⁴⁰See details in Ergun Özbudun(ed), *Perspectives on Democracy in Turkey* (1988), 76; Ahmad, *Experiment*, 52-53, 135, 138.

⁴¹FO371/112925/WK1022/7, Bowker to Eden, 9.12.55. See texts of respective speeches in Av. Kâzım Öztürk(ed), *Cumhurbaşkanları'nın T. Büyük Millet Meclisini Açış Nutukları* (1969), 481-554, 576-78.

agree to some of their demands as regards Palestine. Nuri contended that the issue of Arab-Western co-operation had been settled, in theory at least, back in 1949, when the Arab League Political Committee had concluded that the Arabs could not co-operate with the Communist states without themselves becoming Communist and submitting to the dictates of the Communist Bloc, or remain neutral between East and West because they did not have the means to do so. They could, however, co-operate with the West provided the questions of the Suez Canal base and Palestine were settled.⁴²

Nuri greeted the Turkish-Pakistani agreement as an inadequate, but nevertheless positive, step towards eventual Arab-Western co-operation. He proposed giving more prominence in the said agreement to Article 51 of the UN Charter by widening, with US approval, the scope of its above-mentioned Article 4, particularly its sub-section (c), which covered consultation and co-operation to study and determine, should an unprovoked external attack occur against one of the signatories, the ways and extent of co-operation which might be effected between them in accordance with the said Article 51. Nuri also suggested that the situation referred to as "unprovoked aggression" should be defined in such a way so as to include any aggression by Israel on her neighbours.⁴³

After reassuming the premiership, Nuri tried to work out some new defence arrangement with the UK and USA. His high-handed measures against the Iraqi left were intended to wipe out every kind of opposition imaginable that might arise against his efforts to that effect. Soon after his Paris meeting with 'Abd al-Ilah, and even before his return to Baghdad, Nuri paid a private visit to London and had informal meetings with FO officials. He preferred, at this stage, not to join the Turkish-Pakistani agreement, but form a separate grouping with Pakistan, in which, he hoped, Britain would play a part.⁴⁴ He did not object to Iraq being associated with Turkey in a large regional grouping, but disliked the idea of signing a smaller pact with Turkey, arguing that the Turks were unpopular in Iraq and other Arab states, and

⁴²FO371/110787/V1073/11, Troutbeck to Eden, 10.3.54; FO371/110791/V1076/34, Troutbeck to Shuckburgh, 10.9.54.

⁴³Soysal, "Baghdad Pact", 54; FO371/110787/V1073/35, Hooper to Allen, 14.4.54; *ibid.*, -/37. The UK ambassador in Egypt, Sir Ralph Stevenson, reported that Nuri believed that Article 51 "provided for collective arrangements among the Arab states while Article 52 provided for the other powers"; see FO371/110786/V1072/27, Stevenson to FO, 18.9.54. Article 52 guarantees the freedom of member-states to forge regional arrangements or agencies to maintain international peace and security, provided they are consistent with the UN purposes and principles. It says that the UN members entering into such arrangements or consulting with such agencies should make every effort to achieve, through them, pacific settlement of local disputes before referring the issues to the Security Council, and that the Security Council should, in turn, encourage the development of pacific settlement of local disputes through such arrangements or agencies. The US State Department disagreed with Nuri's interpretation of Article 52 and opined that it seemed inappropriate as a legal framework for the defence arrangements they were working towards; see *FRUS 1952-1954*, IX, Part 2, 2403.

⁴⁴FO371/110788/V1073/52, Shuckburgh to Hooper, 20.7.54.

were still suspected of harbouring irredentist designs in Northern Iraq. The assurances Nuri later received personally from Menderes that Turkey did not entertain any territorial ambitions outside those stated in the 1920 Turkish National Pact, did not allay his fears, for the pact's terminology as regards Mosul and Kirkuk was too vague.⁴⁵ Nuri told the British that it had been agreed, during his private visit to Karachi in April, that, under a treaty limited to Iraq and Pakistan, "Iraq would not undertake any obligation to go to the aid of Pakistan, but if Israel were to attack Iraq or her neighbours, Pakistan would undertake to come to their aid, provided the United States saw no objection, because the Pakistanis reasoned that the success of the scheme depended on American military aid".⁴⁶ Nuri said that the projected Iraq-Pakistan pact "would be open to accession by any country interested in the peace of the area"—except France⁴⁷—and clarified that its purpose "would be to enable the United Kingdom to join at a later stage". With British participation, Iraq and Britain "could broach the question of revising the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty". A pact of this kind could develop either to (a) a regional defence organisation based on the Arab League with Egyptian participation; or (b) a more limited sub-regional alliance, whereby Syria and Lebanon would join the projected Iraqi-Pakistani treaty and thus ensure Iraq's lines of communication with the Mediterranean. Nuri had already spoken informally about his plans to American and, on matters relating to Syria and Lebanon, French officials. He also raised in London the possibility, perhaps to impress upon his hosts his determination to forge a new alliance, that Iraq might even have to leave the Arab League if Egypt refused to join the projected grouping.⁴⁸

Thus, by August 1954, the situation in the Middle East as regards a possible breakthrough in collective defence negotiations seemed to have drastically improved. Besides Turkey's renewed determination to court the Arabs and Nuri's desire to revise Iraq's treaty arrangements with Britain, a solution to the long Anglo-Egyptian dispute on the Suez base had also been reached, with Britain agreeing to have the base evacuated within two years. Some 1,200 British civilian technicians would stay behind to maintain the base for a period of seven years. Britain would also retain some of her stores, promising to return them to Egypt after seven years. Egypt, in return, conceded the right of British troops to return to the base if any ALCSP member or Turkey were attacked from outside.⁴⁹ Till this agreement, Britain had shown little enthusiasm for the "Northern Tier" scheme. She had viewed the extension of

⁴⁵FO371/110788/V1073/69, Troutbeck to Falla, 27.10.54; FO371/110791/V1076/16, 26 & 44; FO371/110991/VQ1015/83, Troutbeck to Eden, 11.9.54.

⁴⁶FO371/110788/V1073/52, Shuckburgh to Hooper, 20.7.54; FO371/110791/V1073/69, Troutbeck to Falla, 27.10.54; FO371/110787/V1073/39, Troutbeck to Allen, 27.4.54.

⁴⁷See also *infra*.

⁴⁸FO371/110788/V1073/52, Shuckburgh to Hooper, 20.7.54.

⁴⁹Jalal, "Baghdad Pact", 430-31.

US aid to Iraq with suspicion and thought that the Turkish-Pakistani agreement, with its potential damage on relations with India, would not contribute to Middle East defence. Now, the air bases Britain possessed in Iraq suddenly acquired additional strategic importance. Nuri's proposal, that a "Northern Tier" arrangement could help revise the 1930 treaty, softened British scepticism and made her go by a scheme that excluded Egypt.⁵⁰ She hoped that this projected arrangement would satisfy Iraqi nationalist opinion, while preserving the spirit of the abortive Portsmouth Treaty.⁵¹

For Nuri, the Anglo-Egyptian agreement unexpectedly opened up other prospects as well, which, for a while at least, seemed to usher a radical shift in his plans for defence co-operation with the West. On 14 August, the Egyptian Minister of National Guidance, Major Salah Salim, held meetings in Sarsank, Northern Iraq, with senior Iraqi politicians and members of the Royal Family. He claimed that previous Egyptian opposition to defence co-operation with non-Arab states had been because of her fear of isolation. Things, however, had changed since the base agreement.⁵² Although Egypt would continue to oppose the Turkish-Pakistani pact and all defence arrangements with non-Arab countries, she saw merit in and was ready to work towards co-operation with West. Salim claimed he had full powers to reach with Iraq an understanding, written or otherwise, on the "formulation of a general policy covering the relations of the Arab States with the West including the defence aspects of this policy".⁵³ Nuri, therefore, suggested an idea which had always appealed to him personally, i.e. modifying the ALCSP to meet the requirements of Article 51 of the UN Charter and permit membership of regional non-Arab and Western states. Salim seemed to like it. Although no draft agreement was drawn up in the end, both sides agreed in principle to approach individually both Britain and the USA to seek their views on the modifications required in the ALCSP text in order to expand it into an effective regional defence organisation.⁵⁴

Nuri was delighted with this preliminary agreement. He used with the US ambassador every argument he could think of to make Washington agree to the proposal. He urged its adoption because the objectives of MEDO and the Turkish-Pakistani agreement would thus be achieved more quickly and the Arabs brought into regional defence through a scheme put forward by themselves. Nuri proposed that, in the expanded pact, with US and UK

⁵⁰FO371/110788/V1073/56, CRO outward telegram, [n.d.].

⁵¹Devereux, *Formulation*, 166; Decker, *Policy*, 199-200, 222.

⁵²FO371/110996/VQ10316/2, Hooper to Falla, 28.7.54; FO371/110791/V1076/16, Troutbeck to Shuckburgh, 2.9.54.

⁵³FO371/110996/VQ10316/3, Stevenson to FO, 10.8.54.

⁵⁴Al-Armanazi, *'Ashr sanawat*, II, 126-27; FO371/110788/V1073/56, CRO outward telegram. For Nuri previously advocating a similar expansion of ALCSP, see FO371/104236/E1197/1, Troutbeck to FO, 16.2.53.

participation, the Arab members should pledge troops and military support to each other against aggression from whatever source, as well as provide general support to its non-Arab members. There would be no question of Arab troops being sent abroad. Nuri was also quietly confident that, in such circumstances, Egypt would agree to the reactivation of the Suez Canal base in the event of an external attack on Iran. Britain and the USA could provide military and technical aid to the pact's Arab members in peace-time and promise to send armed forces in case of hostilities. Nuri said that "the proposed pact had the merit of concentrating attention of Arab States on Soviet menace and diverting it from Israel," and one of its functions would be to prepare for peace with Israel in accordance with the spirit of the 1947-49 UN resolutions. UK accession would render the 1930 treaty obsolete, and new arrangements might be negotiated under which the two air bases would revert to Iraq, but agreements drafted by technical experts would regulate their use by Britain and all other signatories. Nuri preferred not to invite France because her influence in Syria and North Africa was "distasteful" to all Arabs, and because she—as he later told UK ambassador Sir John Troutbeck—"could make no contribution to Middle East defence". Nuri's proposal seemed to have the general consent of Prince 'Abd al-Ilah, who was more flexible, however, on the issue of French adherence, thinking that there would be no difficulty about including France if Britain insisted.⁵⁵ Washington was not impressed, however. Dulles was "greatly disturbed" at Iraq's apparent moving away from the Turkish-Pakistani agreement and even entertained the idea of reminding her of the aid agreement provisions.⁵⁶

In order to continue to build on the understanding reached in Sarsank, Nuri met in Cairo on September 14, with Egyptian Prime Minister Gamal 'Abd al-Nasir. The meeting—the last between the two—convinced Nuri that Salim's superiors did not share his enthusiasm in Sarsank.⁵⁷ No verbatim record of the meeting has been published and both parties seem to have left the chamber with differing perceptions of each other's position. However, from the testimonies of some of the meeting's junior participants, it can be deduced with certainty that Nuri did most of the talking. He later claimed to have told 'Abd al-Nasir that Egypt, having reached an agreement with Britain, which affected all ALCSP signatories, should now work to modify that pact so as to improve the general defence of the Middle East with Western assistance. Egypt could thus counteract Arab criticism that she reached with Britain an agreement concerning them with no prior consultation. However, if, for Egypt, the moment

⁵⁵FO371/110791/V1076/1, Shuckburgh to Kirkpatrick, 24.8.54; *ibid.*, -/3, Hooper to FO, 20.8.54; FO371/110791/V1076/7, Troutbeck to FO, 1.9.54. The UN resolutions Nuri had in mind were those calling for partition of Palestine between two, Jewish and Arab, states; internationalisation of Jerusalem; and return of Arab refugees to their homes.

⁵⁶FRUS 1952-1954, IX, Part 1, 545-46.

⁵⁷Al-Jamali, review of *Iraq*, 17.

was yet inopportune for such a move, Iraq would then feel obliged to go ahead with her separate arrangements with Turkey, Iran and Pakistan. 'Abd al-Nasir, in the end, told Nuri that he was free to do whatever he wished. What he really meant is not fully clear. Nuri took it as a somewhat reluctant green light. He thought that 'Abd al-Nasir's cautious attitude emanated from his concern that the internal situation in Egypt was not yet ripe for any advance towards organised Middle East defence and from his belief that an Iraqi-Pakistani Pact could completely side-track Egypt and other Arab states.⁵⁸ "The Egyptians for domestic reasons were unwilling for the next two years or so to consider his ideas for a regional pact," Nuri said, but they would probably leave him free to work for some form of regional grouping, which would allow Egypt to join later, if she so desired.⁵⁹ Nuri's optimism was probably not groundless, for, in an off-the-record press interview on 16 December 1954, the British embassy in Cairo reported, 'Abd al-Nasir admitted to have told Nuri that Egypt had no alternative but to be on the side of the West, but was unable to accept his arguments that Iraq should join the Turkish-Pakistani Pact. He confessed having "indicated that *if Iraq insisted on going ahead, Egypt would raise no objection*. He had promised that *there would be no attacks on Iraq in the Egyptian press* but had made it clear that *Egypt would not be able to support such a move by Iraq in the Arab League* [emphases added]". He also admitted favouring the inclusion of Iran in the base-reactivation clause of any revised Anglo-Iraqi treaty.⁶⁰ With the amended ALCSP option having reached a dead end, Nuri returned to some of his previous options. Immediately after leaving Egypt, he paid a lengthy visit to London, where, he was reportedly thinking of three possible arrangements: one, including Iraq, Turkey, Syria, Iran and Britain; a second, embracing Iraq, Turkey, Iran and Britain; and a third, limited to Iraq, Pakistan and Britain.⁶¹

It is evident that, throughout his negotiations, Nuri emphasised different aspects of his projected pact to different parties. To the Americans, he stressed the Communist threat and tried to show the projected pact as a means to overcome the Arab conflict with Israel; with Turks and Pakistanis, he sought their support *against* Israel; with Britain, he pushed forward the idea of revising the 1930 treaty. The US chargé d'affaires in Baghdad, Phillip W. Ireland, reported that Nuri was "adept [to] any tailoring [of] his argument to fit [the] listener on hand".⁶² Future developments unmistakably show, however, that, besides the strengthening of his regime's standing at home, the treaty revision and the improvement of the general Arab

⁵⁸Marr, *Iraq*, 117; FO371/110791/V1076/22, Stevenson to FO, 16.9.54.

⁵⁹FO371/110788/V1073/56, CRO outward telegram [n.d.].

⁶⁰FO371/110788/V1073/88, Murray to FO, 17.12.54.

⁶¹FO371/110791/V1076/36, Falla to Troutbeck, 24.9.54.

⁶²FRUS 1952-1954, IX, Part 2, 2390.

*Leaving nothing out
(Detailed description
etc.)*

position *vis-à-vis* Israel were primarily what concerned him.⁶³ Nuri could have, after all, simply allowed the 1930 treaty to lapse in 1957. He understood well, however, that the continuation of the British connection was essential for the survival of the Hashimite monarchy and the corresponding *status quo* in Iraq. By claiming to have terminated this unpopular treaty, he could present it as a major national achievement, but it was extremely improbable that he would be able to get any converts from the ranks of his opponents. Even after having forced the opposition underground, he was anxious, like al-Jamali before him, not to be obliged to pass the new arrangements with Britain through Parliament, probably to prevent the 1948 Portsmouth Treaty fiasco. Nuri planned to get the Iraqi Parliament ratify an initial agreement, preferably with Pakistan, and thereafter obtain the adherence of other powers, including Britain. Once the UK had joined, he would terminate the Anglo-Iraqi treaty. The military facilities which Britain required in Iraq—probably on the lines of the Portsmouth treaty—could be negotiated between general staffs and need not come up for political ratification at any stage.⁶⁴ Furthermore, a comparative analysis of his actions and various proposals show that Nuri, thus far, was consistently unwilling to enter an agreement limited regionally to Iraq and Turkey, and was against the inclusion of France in any final arrangement.

The absence of Iran from Nuri's informal soundings should be explained only in terms of timing. Nuri made no secret of his desire to involve Iran in Middle East defence.⁶⁵ The Shah, too, having reasserted effective control over Iranian foreign policy, wished to join the "Northern Tier". Both Britain and the USA, however, thought that Iran, weakened economically because of the international oil boycott against the deposed regime of Muhammad Musaddiq, could still not support a large army to contribute effectively to Middle East defence.⁶⁶

Although Nuri undeniably preferred to conclude the initial deal with Pakistan, he had overlooked that, among all his candidates to enter his projected treaty, only Turkey shared his determination to conclude an early agreement. Menderes had already sensed that Nuri was not only reluctant to join the Turkish-Pakistani pact outright, but "seemed anxious to set up a rival grouping" to the latter, thus "making a not very positive contribution to Middle East defence".⁶⁷ When Prince 'Abd al-Ilah paid a private visit to Istanbul to enquire about the health of his cousin, Talal, the ex-King of Jordan, Menderes insisted that he should stay as an

⁶³See also Muhammad Fadil al-Jamali, *Dhikrayat wa 'ibar: karithat Filastin wa-atharuha fi al-waqi' al-'arabi* (1965), 114.

⁶⁴FO371/110791/V1076/43, FO to Baghdad, 6.10.54.

⁶⁵FRUS 1952-1954, IX, Part 1, 549.

⁶⁶Young, *Foreign Policy*, 170-71.

⁶⁷FO371/110769/V1015/3, Bowker to Shuckburgh, 27.8.54.

official guest and engaged him in political discussions.⁶⁸ Menderes emphasised that it was absurd to think that the Arab states could constitute among themselves the basis of a defence system for the Middle East. No such system could be effective without Turkey and Britain. Finally, both agreed that if Nuri refused ~~not~~ adhere to the Turkish-Pakistani pact, Iraq and Turkey should instead explore the possibilities of entering into a separate bilateral arrangement which could later be combined with the Turkish-Pakistani pact.⁶⁹

Nuri himself visited Istanbul for ten days on his way home from London in October.⁷⁰ His meetings with Menderes proved decisive. According to Turkish sources, it took several days of bruising exchanges to make Nuri retreat from his preoccupation with the Israeli threat to regional security.⁷¹ It became apparent that both sides shared the same objectives to establish a grouping to include most Arab states, plus Iran and Pakistan, preferably with—but, if necessary, without—Syria, in close association with Britain and the USA. Menderes did not press Iraq to join the Turkish-Pakistani agreement and made it plain that "Turkey was quite ready to modify it, or incorporate it in something else". He also "fully accepted" the principle "that Iraqi forces should not be employed outside Iraq".⁷² Menderes suggested that Turkey and Iraq should sign a pact of mutual assistance in the event of an external attack. Nuri was not immediately pleased with this proposal because of his suspicion about Turkish irredentist designs on Mosul.⁷³ He agreed, however, that talks should continue and that both sides should also pursue contacts with other Arab countries. Menderes accepted an invitation to Baghdad, later fixed for 6 January. He encouraged Nuri that any new regional agreement should allow Britain to continue enjoying defence facilities in Iraq. Turkey, too, was most concerned that Britain should not withdraw from the Middle East. "In present circumstances," continued Menderes, "if there were a choice between Cyprus remaining in British hands or being returned to Turkey he would prefer that it should remain in British

⁶⁸FO371/112922/WK1013/20, Political Summary, Ankara, 26 August-11 September 1954. Talal had abdicated in 1952, after having been pronounced mentally unfit to reign. He stayed in a mental asylum in Istanbul until his death in 1976.

⁶⁹FRUS 1952-1954, IX, Part 1, 551; FO371/110791/V1076/20, HM Consul-General, Istanbul to FO, 14.9.54. The first source ascribes the original proposal to this effect to 'Abd al-Ilah; the second, to Menderes. When King Husayn of Jordan had also visited Istanbul privately, on August 23, to see his father, Talal, the Turkish government had again wished to receive him officially. Husayn accepted the invitation and held long, but inconclusive, discussions about regional defence matters. He abstained from any commitment claiming that, with no government ministers at his side, he was unprepared for political discussions and that the moment was inappropriate because his country was preparing for elections; see H.M. King Hussein of Jordan, *Uneasy Lies the Head: An Autobiography* (1962), 83-84; FO371/112955/WK1941/1-2; FO371/110774/V1025/1.

⁷⁰Decker, *Policy*, 84 says Nuri prolonged his stay to be meet a visiting Pakistani military delegation.

⁷¹Axelgard, *Policy*, 152.

⁷²FO371/110788/V1073/63, Bowker to FO, 21.10.54.

⁷³FO371/110788/V1073/69, Troutbeck to Falla, 27.10.54.

hands" for Britain's occupation of Cyprus was "essential for her participation in Middle East defence". In return, Nuri asked Turkey to support the principle that Israel should abide by the UN resolutions on Palestine. Zorlu thought that the talks had generally dissipated Nuri's suspicions and misapprehensions about Turkey's position and aims, and established a basis of common Turkish-Iraqi approach to the problem of Middle East defence.⁷⁴ Troutbeck thought this appraisal was over-optimistic, for, even after the visit, Nuri remained suspicious of Turkish aims in Northern Iraq and attributed Turkish opposition to any future Iraqi-Pakistani pact to "a certain jealousy".⁷⁵ Menderes, however, was not a politician⁷⁶ who gave up easily. His determination, together with the lack of any practical alternative for Nuri, ultimately proved decisive for the formulation of the Baghdad Pact.

Turkey and Syria: A Slower Pace

Turkey's task to bring Syria into a "Northern Tier" arrangement promised to be more difficult. Despite the relative thaw in Turkish-Syrian relations during the last months of Adib al-Shishakli's rule, Turkey did not regret the latter's downfall in a military coup on 25 February 1954, for his attitude toward the projected Turkish-Pakistani pact had been hostile and, probably, privately fearful as well that the eventual inclusion of his arch-enemy, Iraq, in this arrangement might not bode well for his own future.

The new regime was greeted with general approval inside Syria. Chargé d'Affaires Soysal, too, believed that "the new régime, possibly comparable with Iraq," would "be in Turkish interests".⁷⁶ The plotters asked former President Hashim al-Atasi—who had resigned in 1951 following al-Shishakli's coup—to resume his constitutional duties. Sabri al-'Asali formed an interim government, conservative in outlook, excluding radical elements like the Ba'th Party. International, including Turkish, recognition followed, when this government formally agreed to honour all international engagements entered into by al-Shishakli.

Turkey did not take seriously rumours that Iraq, who had encouraged and financed al-Shishakli's opponents, would now try to bring about a union with Syria. Baghdad was told that Turkey would adopt a "strictly neutral" attitude towards any Arab unity project, "especially whilst those projects were still only at a such very nebulous stage".⁷⁷ There was very little speculation, too, in the Turkish press on such a possibility and its implications for the Turkish-Pakistani pact.⁷⁸

⁷⁴Soysal, "Baghdad Pact", 58-61; FO371/110788/V1073/63, Bowker to FO, 21.10.54.

⁷⁵FO371/110788/V1073/67, Troutbeck to FO, 21.10.54; *ibid.*, -/69, Troutbeck to Falla, 27.10.54.

⁷⁶FO371/111140/VY1016/75, Gardener to FO, 4.3.54.

⁷⁷FO371/110785/V1071/18, Scott Fox to Boothby, 6.2.54.

⁷⁸FO371/112922/WK1013/6, Political Summary, Ankara, 25 February-10 March 1954.

The new Syrian government gave Turkey almost nothing to complain about. It was cautiously positive toward the Turkish-Pakistani pact and defended Iraq's right to conclude an aid agreement with Washington. In June, it agreed to exchange ministers with Turkey after a long interregnum during which both legations had been in the hands of *chargés d'affaires*. It also suspended the application of the controversial aliens' property law of 1952 on Turkish nationals and introduced a bill amending the restrictions that had angered Ankara. Great care was taken to solve frontier disputes quickly and amicably.⁷⁹

Turkey took an exceptional interest in the Syrian parliamentary elections, held eventually on September 24-25. Prime Minister al-Ghazzi, who was heading another interim government at the time, was told before the elections that "while Turkey did not care which right wing party won the elections she would not tolerate the formation of left wing Government in Syria". Al-Ghazzi, an advocate of closer ties with Turkey himself, decided to capitalise on these Turkish worries, telling Soysal "strictly confidentially" that he had annulled the elections in al-Qamishli on some faked technical fault so that two Kurdish Communist candidates would not be elected.⁸⁰

These favourable signs encouraged Turkey to attempt to associate herself with the Tripartite Declaration of 1950. The USA, Britain and France had jointly specified in this declaration that they would not tolerate any renewal of war to change forcibly the existing armistice lines between Arabs and Israel and would regulate the flow of arms and war material in order to prevent an arms race in the Middle East, supplying weapons only after receiving undertakings that the recipient states would not use them for aggressive purposes.⁸¹ Ankara first offered to adhere to this declaration in May to the visiting Assistant US Secretary of State for the Near East, Henry Byroade, and later officially endorsed the proposal during the above-described conference of Turkish diplomats. "This was not merely a question of prestige for Turkey," said Eralp. Turkey "considered that it was essential that she and the three Western Powers should act in common in all questions concerning the Middle East". Moreover, Turkey "being the Power concerned in the first degree with the stability and

⁷⁹Lesch, *Syria*, 48; FO371/110787/V1073/31, Chancery, Damascus to Levant Department, 27.3.54; FO371/110788/V1073/50, Chancery, Ankara to Western and Southern Departments, 6.7.54; FO371/111138/VY1013/5 & 8, Political Summary, Damascus, April & July 1954; FO371/111150/VY10344/3, Gardener to FO, 19.7.54.

⁸⁰FO371/111141/VY1016/117, Gardener to FO, 26.9.54. The Iraqi minister in Damascus thought that al-Ghazzi had somewhat edited the facts to impress Soysal, for, according to what the minister himself had heard from independent sources, the so-called Communist, whose election had been annulled, although a member of the Kurdish Nationalist Movement was not, in fact, a Communist but a local notability unacceptable to the army; see FO371/111141/VY1016/123, Gardener to Falla, 30.9.54.

⁸¹See full text in Hurewitz, *Diplomacy*, II, 308-11.

security of the area, he ought to participate in the document which guaranteed the *status quo*".⁸²

Washington, however, ultimately did not encourage the Turkish initiative. It doubted whether Turkish adherence would give the Tripartite Declaration greater weight in Arab eyes, because the latter were still looking upon Turkey as a puppet of "imperialist" powers and resented her cordial relations with Israel.⁸³ Moreover, Washington was determined not to prejudice in any way the chances of pro-Western candidates in the upcoming Syrian elections.⁸⁴

Turkey's own attempts to get a direct Syrian approval were also unsuccessful. The Syrian government, being sceptical towards the suggestion from the start, contacted Iraq and Egypt and found that both shared similar views.⁸⁵ The Syrian government first replied that, because of its purely transitional nature, the time was not suitable to raise the issue. When Turkey persisted, the government felt obliged to tell her frankly that neither itself nor the Syrian public favoured Turkish adherence,⁸⁶ unless the declaration embodied some endorsement of the 1947-49 UN resolutions on Palestine.⁸⁷ The Syrians probably added the latter condition not to make their rejection seem too categorical. By mid-August, Ankara realised that "at any rate for the time being," it had to hold its hand as regards requesting participation in the declaration.⁸⁸ The proposal never re-surfaced, for Egypt's arms deal with the Soviet Bloc in September 1955 made the entire logic behind the declaration obsolete.

Still, Soysal told the British embassy in Damascus in early December that Turkey hoped that sometime in the future, once relations had been sufficiently improved, she would be in a good position to encourage Syria to co-operate with the West and adhere to a Western-backed regional defence alliance. The present Syrian government, he thought, wanted to come to terms with Turkey and was prepared to put the question of Alexandretta on one side to achieve this aim. It could count on the support of an influential pro-Turkish element in Syria with strong backing from religious groups anxious for a rapprochement with an adjoining Muslim country. An officially inspired article on Turkish-Arab relations, published in almost all Damascus newspapers on November 24, had pictured a rosy future, emphasising the close historical ties between the two peoples and proposing some measures to improve

⁸²FO371/110773/V1024/17, Bowker to FO, 31.7.54; FO371/110774/V1025/1, Bowker to Eden, 3.8.54.

⁸³FO371/110773/V1024/10, Scott Fox to Falla, 26.5.54; FO371/110773/V1024/11, Bailey to Brewis, 9.6.54.

⁸⁴Lesch, *Syria*, 50.

⁸⁵FO371/111141/VY1016/123, Gardener to Falla, 30.9.54; FO371/110773/V1024/30, Gardener to Eden, 27.8.54.

⁸⁶FO371/110773/V1024/19, Gardener to Falla, 3.8.54.

⁸⁷FO371/110773/V1024/27, Gardener to FO, 23.8.54.

⁸⁸FO371/110773/V1024/25, Bowker to FO, 17.8.54.

Turkish-Syrian bilateral ties on matters of secondary importance.⁸⁹ The regular annual conference of governors of the provinces on either side of the Turkish-Syrian border, held in Gaziantep (Turkey), to discuss frontier incidents, water rights, smuggling and other thorny issues, had been very friendly and received a very favourable Syrian press.⁹⁰ In this optimistic mood, even the usual anti-Turkish demonstration on the anniversary of the loss of Alexandretta⁹¹ had not dampened Soysal's enthusiasm. Ankara had been encouraged by his reports to the extent that Menderes was now thinking seriously about adding Damascus to Baghdad and Beirut on his itinerary for the following January.⁹²

According to Soysal, the Turks thought it likely that Syria's future attitude would depend upon Egypt's willingness to co-operate with the West,⁹³ but even in this direction things seemed to be moving at last. Since Egypt's decision to allow British troops to return to the Suez Canal base if Turkey were attacked, 'Abd Al-Nasir had made some pleasant public remarks about Turkish friendship with Egypt and the Arab world,⁹⁴ and both countries had consented to renew the exchange ambassadors after the previous Turkish ambassador, Dr A. Hülûsi Fuad Tugay, had been stripped of his diplomatic immunity and expelled from Egypt earlier that year for criticising 'Abd al-Nasir publicly for his decision to confiscate the property of the members of the former Egyptian royal family, including that of Tugay's wife.⁹⁵ Menderes even hoped to meet 'Abd al-Nasir "at any time and place he might choose" and try to get from him some sort of statement to the effect that a bilateral agreement between Turkey and Iraq would not be at variance with the Arab League.⁹⁶ He told Bowker on December 11 that

the atmosphere in the Middle East was improving. Until recently it had been a case of trying to urge the Arab States along a road which they were reluctant to take. Now they themselves were showing willingness to follow it on their own free will... The Turkish Government considered that progress in organising regional defence, by increasing the confidence of the Arab States, would reduce their fear of aggression

⁸⁹FO371/111150/VY10344/4, Gallagher to Eden, 2.12.54.

⁹⁰FO371/111150/VY10344/1 & 5.

⁹¹FO371/111138/VY1013/12, Political Summary, Damascus, November 1954.

⁹²FO371/110788/V1073/80, Scott Fox to FO, 27.11.54.

⁹³FO371/111150/VY10344/4, Gallagher to Eden, 2.12.54.

⁹⁴Ahmad, *Experiment*, 395. According to Patrick Seale, *The Struggle for Syria: A Study of Post-War Arab Politics* (1986), 208 and Lesch, *Syria*, 55, the Turkish-Egyptian thaw was the result of a precautionary move by Egypt not to be outdone and outmanoeuvred by a Turkish-Iraqi rapprochement.

⁹⁵Şehsuvaroğlu, *Hekim*, 137-38, 147-48; FO371/112922/WK1013/2, 4 & 8. Tugay was related, through marriage, to the deposed royal family.

⁹⁶FO371/110791/V1073/27, Bowker to Eden, 14.9.54; FO371/110783/V1056/23, Bowker to Ward, 16.11.54.

from Israel and so to engender a readiness to accept the fact of Israel's permanent existence and the idea of a settlement with her.⁹⁷

The year 1955 was indeed to provide some of what Menderes hoped for, but it would hold for him some unpleasant surprises as well!

⁹⁷FO371/110783/V1056/34, Bowker to Eden, 11.12.54.

The Formulation of the Baghdad Pact

Despite the clear warming of Turkish-Iraqi relations in the last few months of 1954, the declaration of intent, made in Baghdad on January 13, 1955, that Iraq and Turkey would soon conclude a treaty on defence co-operation came still as a surprise to most outside observers. By the end of the following month, the envisaged treaty had been concluded. The "Northern Tier" scheme now seemed closer to realisation than ever before.

The January 13 Communiqué

When Menderes caught the plane for Baghdad on January 6, 1955, nobody, not even the Turkish Premier himself, was expecting him to sign an agreement during his visit, nor was he taking with him any draft. The delay over his projected visit to Egypt and the unlikelihood of any rapid progress being made as regards persuading the majority of Arab states to join any defence arrangement immediately had convinced Menderes by now that he should first focus on signing with Iraq a bilateral pact similar to the Turkish-Pakistani agreement.¹ The Turkish Premier now hoped solely that his visit to Baghdad would enable him to capitalise on his achievements in the past few months, to clarify Nuri's current intentions, to encourage the latter to make up his mind and thus inevitably take a further step towards his much desired agreement.²

Nuri, too, did not have any immediate plan to sign an agreement with Turkey during Menderes's visit. He did not underestimate the difficulties posed by the sceptical state of opinion in other Arab countries and further thought that he was not yet sufficiently informed about the commitments which the US and UK governments were prepared to accept.³ Nuri still thought that March or April would be ideal to sign a new regional pact and thus terminate the 1930 Anglo-Iraqi treaty.⁴

Nevertheless, the Iraqi government had arranged a strenuous programme of visits, banquets and receptions for their guests.⁵ No actual political talks took place until January 9.

¹FO371/110788/V1073/80, Scott Fox to FO, 27.11.54.

²FO371/110788/V1073/93, Bowker to FO, 31.12.54.

³FO371/115484/V1073/3, Beeley to Falla, 30.11.54; *ibid.*, -/4, Hooper to FO, 5.1.55.

⁴Marr, *Iraq*, 117.

⁵FO371/115486/V1073/90, Hooper to Eden, 18.1.55.

Menderes, however, was immediately greatly impressed by the strength of the shade of political opinion in Iraq that was preoccupied with Israel to the exclusion of every other problem. So, he changed his cautious plan, thinking that the time had come to press the Iraqis more strongly. If the signing of a regional pact were delayed till just before the expiration of the Anglo-Iraqi treaty, he concluded, the former would look suspiciously like a cover for the latter,⁶ and its appeal for other future potential Arab adherents would certainly diminish.

Another factor which made the Turkish delegation force the pace was their belief that Israel was increasingly trying, by indirect methods, to obstruct Turkey's attempts to improve her relations with Arab states. They feared that the effects of these efforts might become more serious if some definite progress was not made immediately.⁷ Indeed, Israel, which had been delighted at Turkey's involvement in the Balkans throughout 1953, was now showing serious misgivings about the current Turkish determination to get closer to Iraq and Pakistan. Israeli diplomats were trying to convince Turkey that any alliance with Iraq would be worthless because of the latter's military weakness. It would be safer and cheaper to occupy Iraq in the event of a Soviet aggression, rather than arm her and expect her to defend herself. Furthermore, any alliance with Iraq and Pakistan might adversely affect Turkey's secular and pro-European character; embroil Turkey in confrontation with India and Israel; and, finally, weapons delivered to Iraq could fall into the hands of Kurdish insurgents in Turkey.⁸ Turkey, who had always hoped that good relations with Israel would ensure her, through the Zionist lobby, a good press in the West and particularly the USA, now suspected that the Zionist lobby itself was behind articles, published in the West, which were critical of Turkey's domestic economy.

Menderes was the first foreign statesman ever invited to address the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies. He now refused to fulfil this engagement until Nuri agreed to publish a communiqué to the effect that a pact would be signed soon, while the assembled deputies were waiting.⁹

Nuri envisaged that any initial bilateral deal with Turkey—which could be possibly extended to the UK, USA and other friendly powers—should remain limited to the exchange of information between the two army staffs about progress each made in its respective defence arrangements and to the free transit through both countries of defence material for

⁶FO371/115484/V1073/6, Hooper to FO, 10.1.55.

⁷FO371/11584/V1073/5'A', Bowker to Falla, 7.1.55.

⁸Amikam Nachmani, *Israel, Turkey and Greece: Uneasy Relations in the East Mediterranean* (1987), 72-73.

⁹FO371/11484/V1073/90, Hooper to Eden, 18.1.55; FO371/11590/V1073/219, Bowker to Eden, 8.2.55. See full Arabic translation of speech in Major Shakir, *Tarikh al-sadaqah bayn Turkiyya wa-l-'Iraq* (1955), 179-80.

the other for a five year period.¹⁰ Under pressure from Menderes, however, he finally succumbed and put his signature under a statement much broader in scope. What also made Nuri acquiesce was the warning sounded by his Minister of the Interior, Sa'id al-Qazzaz, that from the security point of view, the best period to settle all outstanding external affairs would be the first few months of 1955, because the radical opponents of the Iraqi regime had not yet recovered from his harsh measures.¹¹

On January 13, a communiqué was published stating that both parties had decided to conclude in the immediate future a broad treaty of co-operation based on Article 51 of the UN Charter in order to safeguard the stability and security of the Middle East region and to repel any aggression committed against them "either from within the region or from outside". The communiqué expressed hope that other states "which have given proof of their determination to serve the objectives mentioned above, and are in a position to do so by virtue of their geographical position and the forces at their disposal," might sign the treaty concerned at the same time with themselves. Otherwise, the communiqué made clear, Turkey and Iraq would go on and sign a bilateral treaty "as rapidly as possible" and would only then continue their efforts to persuade powers with the above-described criteria join the treaty at a later date.¹² On January 18, Iraq issued a separate communiqué reaffirming her loyalty to the UN Charter and the ALCSP and stating that the proposed Turkish-Iraqi treaty would not conflict with either of them.¹³

British and American foreign policy-makers were pleasantly surprised at this unexpected announcement. Both, however, did not wish to appear overjoyed.¹⁴ Both understood that some of their other friends and allies in the Middle East would not share their optimism toward the projected Turkish-Iraqi alliance. Dulles only sent private congratulatory messages to both Nuri and Menderes,¹⁵ while the State Department instructed all US missions in the Middle East to say, but only if approached, that Washington supported the agreement and was ready to assist its signatories to achieve realistic and effective defence arrangements.¹⁶ Eden, in a broadcast on January 17, expressed hope that the communiqué "would create increased stability and security throughout the Middle East". He, too, sent only a private message to Nuri, fearing that "too much open applause on our [i.e. British] part might upset

¹⁰FO371/115484/V1073/11, Hooper to FO, 12.11.55.

¹¹FO371/115748/VQ1015/2, Hooper to Eden, 12.11.55.

¹²See full text of communiqué in FO371/115487/V1073/137; Soysal, "Baghdad Pact", 63.

¹³See full Arabic text of Iraqi communiqué in Shakir, *Tarikh*, 176-77; English translation, in FO371/115485/V1073/43, Hooper to FO, 19.1.55.

¹⁴FO371/115484/V1073/13, Hooper to FO, 13.1.55; FO371/115486/V1073/67, FO minute by Shuckburgh, 17.1.55.

¹⁵Soysal, "Baghdad Pact", 63; FO371/115484/V1073/13, Hooper to FO, 13.1.55.

¹⁶FO371/115486/V1073/62, Bowker to FO, 18.1.55.

the Arab countries, in particular Egypt, and bring us no compensating benefits".¹⁷ The British FO had not yet entirely discounted the possibility of eventually bringing Egypt into a regional arrangement. Cairo, while contesting the timeliness of the Turkish-Iraqi communiqué, it reasoned, had not yet committed itself definitely to oppose it.

The Egyptian Reaction and the Cairo Conference

Initial views expressed in Cairo were indeed not entirely negative. On January 17, the Egyptian Foreign Minister, Mahmud Fawzi, told the US embassy Counsellor that while Cairo disliked the method and timing of the Turkish-Iraqi pact, it had no quarrel with its ultimate objective,¹⁸ while 'Abd al-Nasir had already told two visiting American officials that he had expected to be given time to build an Arab regional organisation, "not linked openly with the West but so constructed that it could quickly fall in line with Western plans should a common danger arise".¹⁹ It appears the Egyptians had been convinced since Nuri's visit to Cairo in September that Iraq would not go alone in signing a defence pact with the West.²⁰ Cairo anticipated Iraq's next move to be an agreement with Britain, bringing in Turkey in the same way as she had been brought into the Anglo-Egyptian agreement, and now said it would have had no objection even to Iraq bringing in Iran in the same way.²¹ The Egyptians felt let down by Turkey. Their ambassador in Ankara had seen Birgi before Menderes's flight to Baghdad and, after warning him against any attempt to deal with Iraq apart from the rest of the Arab League, had received assurances that the Turkish delegation would keep in close touch with the Egyptian embassy in Baghdad.²² Hence, an editorial in the Egyptian newspaper *al-Akhbar* had welcomed the visit as a further sign of increasing friendship between Turkey and the Arabs.²³ The Turks, however, failed to keep their promise. They met Egyptian embassy officials in Baghdad only once, and that only an hour or two before the publication of the joint communiqué.²⁴

The prospect of a Turkish-Iraqi alliance left Egypt in a mood of isolation and weakened her bargaining power *vis-à-vis* the West. She feared she could not now count upon Iraqi assistance in any future Arab-Israeli conflict. There was also a distinct apprehension that the

¹⁷FO371/115484/V1073/32, FO to Washington, 18.1.55.

¹⁸FRUS 1955-1957, XII, 5-6. Fawzi, of course, should have said the MEC proposal and not MEDO.

¹⁹Miles Copeland, *The Game of Nations: The Amorality of Power Politics* (1969), 177.

²⁰Humphrey Trevelyan, *The Middle East in Revolution* (1970), 55; Gordon H. Torrey, *Syrian Politics and the Military 1945-1958* (1964), 273; Seale, *Struggle*, 211.

²¹FO371/115486/V1073/74, Stevenson to FO, 22.1.55.

²²FO371/115489/V1073/187, Stewart to Bromley, 1.2.55.

²³FO371/115750/VQ10344/1, Stevenson to FO, 11.1.55.

²⁴FO371/115489/V1073/187, Stewart to Bromley, 1.2.55.

proposed treaty might be the prelude to an eventual partition of Syria between the two signatories.²⁵

Egypt immediately embarked on a campaign to force Iraq to retreat from commitments she had made in the January 13 communiqué or, failing that, isolate her from the rest of the Arab world. The Egyptian media, and especially the radio station, "Voice of the Arabs" (*Sawt al-'Arab*), went on the attack, accusing Nuri of making a treaty with the Turks, "the allies of Israel and the enemies of Arabism". Egypt also called, for January 22, a meeting in Cairo of Arab Prime Ministers to discuss future common defence policy following the Turkish-Iraqi communiqué.²⁶

The conference, which dragged on until February 6—including a two-day visit by a high-level four-power Arab delegation to Baghdad—was attended by the Premiers of Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Libya. Nuri did not attend, fearing that the meeting would resemble a court session with Egypt sitting at the prosecutor's chair. His fortuitous illness provided him with a timely excuse not to attend.²⁷ He also told the other invitees that he saw no point in their attending if he himself did not go.²⁸ Then, persuaded by the Iraqi ambassador in Cairo, Najib al-Rawi, and a message from Eden,²⁹ he finally agreed to send al-Jamali to Cairo, but gave him no authority at all to negotiate a compromise deal. Nuri instructed al-Jamali, who arrived in Cairo on January 26, that his main task would be to keep Syria, Lebanon and Jordan away from bowing to Egyptian pressure, rather than make explanations to the latter. If Egypt became more co-operative, said Nuri, he would be willing to take a little time to help her forward, but if she persisted in opposing or remaining aloof, he would move on very quickly.³⁰ Al-Jamali explained in Cairo that the draft agreement, which Iraq would propose to the Turks, would only offer exchange of information on defence dispositions and preparations, and free passage of military supplies through either party's territory to the other.³¹ Nuri then told the visiting delegation that he had the unanimous support of his cabinet and other senior Iraqi statesmen, and that he would proceed with the proposed pact.³² The conference ended inconclusively because of the absence of consensus among the participants. Egypt and Saudi Arabia wanted to condemn the Iraqi move as contradictory to the ALCSP. 'Abd al-Nasir even threatened to leave the ALCSP and form

²⁵Evelyn Shuckburgh, *Descent to Suez: Diaries 1951-56* (1986), 249.

²⁶FO371/115484/V1073/25, Stevenson to FO, 17.1.55.

²⁷FO371/115485/V1073/59, Hooper to FO, 20.1.55.

²⁸FO371/115486/V1073/65, FO minute by Rose, 19.1.55.

²⁹FO371/115486/V1073/65, FO to Bagdad, 19.1.55; FO371/115486/V1073/86, Stevenson to FO, 24.1.55.

³⁰FO371/115487/V1073/102, Wright to FO, 26.1.55.

³¹FO371/115487/V1073/108, Stevenson to FO, 27.1.55.

³²FO371/115488/V1073/152, Wright to FO, 3.2.55.

instead an alternative alliance with Jordan and, perhaps, Saudi Arabia directed against Israel, thus leaving Lebanon and Syria susceptible to unchecked Turkish pressure.³³ Syria, Lebanon and Jordan still wavered, however. Finally, 'Abd al-Nasir suggested that the meeting should end without any resolution, provided that all present agreed that a new conference might be called in any Arab capital.³⁴

Despite its failure to produce even a final communiqué, the Cairo Conference proved significant in shaping the balance of power in the Arab world. Smaller states like Syria, Jordan and Lebanon were left in no doubt on the strength of Saudi-Egyptian feeling against the projected pact. The mood in Cairo also convinced Nuri that it would serve absolutely no purpose to postpone negotiations and the conclusion of the proposed pact with Turkey, thus bringing him in line with Menderes's thinking.

The Turkish-Iraqi Negotiations

From then on, Turkey and Iraq proceeded at full speed towards the conclusion of the promised pact. Menderes wished to see the treaty concluded by mid-February.³⁵ He was now convinced, based on his past experience, that the best way to deal with Nuri was the maintenance of constant pressure. Bowker reported on February 8 that, since leaving Baghdad, Menderes had sent to Nuri an average of two messages a day insisting on the necessity for utmost speed.³⁶ In the meantime, the Turkish ambassador in Cairo had been very active on the fringes of the Premiers' Conference trying to recruit as many Arab states as possible to adhere to the proposed treaty or at least to persuade them take a position independent of Egypt. Both Iraq and Turkey wanted to extend the provisions of the future treaty as soon as possible to the USA, UK, as well as to other Middle Eastern countries like Iran, Pakistan and possibly Syria. Both preferred to have the two Western powers as original signatories, although they would not object to them joining a little later.

Nuri had initially had a more relaxed time-table in mind. He had told the new British ambassador in Baghdad, Sir Michael Wright, that he would prefer signature to take place during President Bayar's projected official visit to Iraq at the end of March.³⁷ The Egyptian threat to withdraw from the ALCSP, however, soon encouraged him to quicken the pace. He hoped that a hasty conclusion of the treaty would put great pressure on 'Abd al-Nasir to carry

³³FO371/115489/V1073/189, Stevenson to FO, 9.2.55.

³⁴FO371/115489/V1073/177, Stevenson to FO, 7.2.55; FO371/115493/V1073/336, Chancery, Ankara to Levant Department, 21.2.55. For a detailed description of the conference, see al-Armanazi, *Ashr sanawat*, II, 133-39.

³⁵FO371/115488/V1073/166, HM Consul General, Istanbul to FO, 6.2.55.

³⁶FO371/115490/V1073/219, Bowker to Eden, 8.2.55.

³⁷FO371/115488/V1073/171, Wright to FO, 5.2.55.

out his vow to leave, thus self-inflicting a serious political damage of isolation from the rest of the Arab world.³⁸

The actual negotiations began in early February. They were conducted in complete secrecy through the embassies in Baghdad and Ankara. Both sides kept in close touch throughout with the British and American diplomats accredited in their respective capitals. Moreover, the text of the treaty was to be written in English, and both sides did not have cipher facilities in that language in their respective embassies. It is through the telegrams and reports sent to and from the Foreign Office and the British missions in Iraq and Turkey, kept at the Public Record Office in London, that we can today reconstruct the accurate stage-by-stage picture of the negotiations concerned.

Nuri had presented to Menderes, before his departure from Baghdad on January 14, a rough draft (called hereafter N1), giving him also a free hand to propose any amendment he considered necessary.³⁹ This draft consisted of a preamble and five articles and was based on Nuri's original ideas of quite limited defence co-operation between Iraq and Turkey. In the preamble, both sides stressed their conviction of the necessity to conclude a treaty based on the principles enshrined in the 1946 Turkish-Iraqi treaty, Article 51 of the UN Charter and the Anglo-Egyptian agreement of 1954, which, said the draft (N1), "considered that any attack on Turkey or any other member State of the Arab League should necessitate taking defensive measures to preserve peace and security in this region". Its main provisions, stipulated in Articles 1 and 2, stood as follows:

Article 1

Consultations and discussions shall be held between the respective competent military authorities of the two high contracting parties for the purpose of obtaining reciprocal information regarding security measures and defence plans in countries of the high contracting parties. Exchange of views and information shall also be carried out for the sake of benefiting from the technical experience and progress achieved by any of the two high contracting parties in the field of defensive armaments.

Article 2

The high contracting parties undertake to furnish all facilities and assistance for the passage of arms, military equipment, supplies and other material used for defensive purposes pertaining to their respective armies, through the territory of the other party without being subject to customs and any other duties.

³⁸FO371/115489/V1073/182, Wright to FO, 8.2.55.

³⁹The reference names N1, N2 and N3, standing for Nuri's first, second and third drafts, have been assigned by this author to make it easier to follow the narrative. The same applies to M1 (Menderes's first draft), as well as to L1 and L2 (first and second drafts of exchanged letters).

Article 3 stipulated that the treaty should be open for accession to any member state of the Arab League or any other state concerned with security and peace in the region. Article 4 set the period during which the treaty would remain in force as five years, automatically renewable to successive five-year periods unless one of the signatories notified its desire to terminate it six months before the date of expiration. The last article dealt with the conditions for ratification and exchange of ratified documents.⁴⁰ One of Nuri's reasons to propose a five-year period was his belief that it would be preferable that the first renewal of the projected pact should be made before the Anglo-Egyptian agreement expired in 1961 so as to set a pattern for renewal before the future of the latter agreement came into question.⁴¹

This draft was unsatisfactory to Ankara, which had always contemplated a treaty very much on the lines of the 1954 Turkish-Pakistani pact and perhaps even more precise, owing to the existence of a common frontier between the contracting parties.⁴² Menderes, therefore, produced an amended, stonger and more specific text and dispatched it, on February 6, to Baghdad, as well as to the UK and US governments. The British FO, on the other hand, soon after being made aware of the contents of the draft (N1), brought into the attention of both negotiating sides that it did not provide the "umbrella," under which Nuri had promised to revise the 1930 Anglo-Iraqi treaty.⁴³

The amended Turkish draft (called hereafter M1) omitted in its preamble the reference to the Anglo-Egyptian agreement and completely redrafted Article 1, inserting two additional new articles to give it the following appearance:

Article 1.

The contracting parties undertake to cooperate in accordance with the provisions of Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations in confronting any armed aggression against one of them inside or outside the Middle East region.

Article 2.

In order to ensure effective realization and application of co-operation envisaged in Article 1 above the competent authorities of the contracting parties shall establish military plans and determine the requisite measures immediately after entry into force of the present treaty. These plans and measures shall be operative as soon as they have been approved by the Governments of the contracting parties and may moreover be the subject of special agreements.

Article 3.

Exchange of views and information shall be carried out between the respective competent military authorities of the contracting parties for the purpose of benefiting

⁴⁰See full text of draft (N1) in FO371/115488/V1073/165G, Wright to FO, 6.2.55.

⁴¹FO371/115495/V1073/396, Wright to FO, 5.3.55.

⁴²FO371/115487/V1073/104, Bowker to FO, 27.1.55.

⁴³FO371/115488/V1073/166, HM Consul-General, Istanbul to FO, 6.2.55.

from the technical experience and progress achieved by either of the parties in the field of defensive armament. The contracting parties shall consult and cooperate together in order to satisfy, as far as possible, the needs of each of them in the production of arms and munitions as well as in military training and education.

Article 2 of the Iraqi draft (N1) was kept as the new Article 4. Article 5 stipulated that the provisions of the treaty did not contradict their past international engagements and that the contracting parties would undertake not to conclude any future international engagements incompatible with the proposed treaty, while Article 6 added the new provision that any new accession should take place after agreement between the contracting parties and the state applying for accession.⁴⁴

Both London and Washington preferred the Turkish text (M1). The FO was especially satisfied because it did provide the necessary "umbrella".⁴⁵ It was also at this stage that Britain definitely informed the two negotiating parties that she "would prefer to accede to the proposed treaty at a later date," after the completion of the revision of the treaty with Iraq.⁴⁶

Nuri did not consider this amended draft (M1) proper for a bilateral treaty with Turkey. He considered very important to have a reference, in the preamble, to the Anglo-Egyptian agreement, because he could thus convince all doubters that his policies did not differ in essence from those pursued by Egypt. He could not accept Article 1 in its amended form, because, the clause "in confronting any armed aggression against one of them from inside or outside the Middle East region" was a clear reference to Israel, which, Nuri thought, could not be a matter of bilateral concern between Iraq and Turkey. Article 2 of the Turkish draft (M1) was far beyond what Nuri was prepared to concede to the Turks. Also unacceptable was the newly-added provision in Article 6. With all these objections in mind, Nuri informed Menderes that he must either give more time for bilateral negotiations to continue or agree to the original Iraqi draft (N1).⁴⁷

Menderes was upset. To sign the Iraqi draft (N1) would mean a retreat for Turkey from the provisions of the January 13 communiqué. Furthermore, Nuri's draft did not contain the "umbrella" clause insisted upon by London. With London and Washington concurring that Turkey should be prepared to give more time to Iraq rather than sacrifice the chance of a workable agreement for the desirability of a quick conclusion, Ankara asked them both to instruct their representatives in Baghdad to try to soften Nuri's attitude.⁴⁸

⁴⁴See full text of amended draft (M1) in FO371/115488/V1073/167, HM Consul-General, Istanbul to FO, 6.2.55.

⁴⁵FO371/115489/V1073/209, FO to Ankara, 8.2.55; FO371/115488/V1073/166, Makins to FO, 9.2.55.

⁴⁶FO371/115489/V1073/209, FO to Ankara, 8.2.55.

⁴⁷FO371/115489/V1073/182, Wright to FO, 8.2.55; FO371/115489/V1073/192, Bowker to FO, 9.2.55.

⁴⁸FO371/115489/V1073/192, Bowker to FO, 9.2.55.

In this, Wright succeeded. Nuri backed down a little. Late on the night of February 9, he presented to his cabinet for approval a new compromise draft (N2) he had worked out with Wright that afternoon, as well as an alternative text somewhat like the compromise draft (N2) but nearer to the Turkish wording. Discussion in the cabinet was not detailed, but a general agreement was reached to send both texts to Ankara the following day.⁴⁹

The compromise draft (N2) restored the reference to the Anglo-Egyptian agreement in the preamble. New Articles 1 and 2 were inserted to replace Articles 1 and 2 of the Turkish draft (M1). They read as follows:

Article 1.

The high contracting parties will cooperate for their defence and security in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. Such measures as they agree to take to give effect to this cooperation may form the subject of special agreement with each other.

Article 2.

The measures which will be taken between Turkey and Iraq will be those contained in Articles 3 and 4 below.

The Articles 3 and 4 mentioned above were the Articles 1 and 2 of the original Iraqi draft (N1) calling only for consultations and discussions between the military authorities and free passage of military equipment. Article 5 was the same Article 5 of the Turkish draft (M1) stipulating that the treaty did not contradict the past international engagements of the contracting parties and that the latter would not conclude any future treaty incompatible with the one being negotiated. Article 6 kept only the first sentence of the corresponding article of the Turkish draft (M1), thus eliminating the provision that any new accession should first be agreed by the members of the pact.⁵⁰

It was this compromise text (N2) that was communicated eventually by Nuri to Ankara. He ultimately decided to keep the alternative draft in reserve.⁵¹ The Turkish government

⁴⁹FO371/115489/V1073/198, Wright to FO, 10.2.55.

⁵⁰FO371/115489/V1073/194, Wright to FO, 9.2.55.

⁵¹The only significant difference in the alternative text from draft (N2) was the breaking down of Article 1 of (N2) into two separate Articles 1 and 2 as follows:

Article 1.

The High Contracting Parties will cooperate for their defence and security in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter and will support each other against any aggression in violation of the United Nations Charter.

Article 2.

In order to ensure the realization and effect application of cooperation provided for in Article 1 above, the competent authorities of the High Contracting Parties will determine the measures to be taken as soon as the present treaty enters into force. These measures will become operative as soon as they have been approved by the Governments of the High Contracting Parties and may form the subject of special agreements.

received the new proposals by telephone from their ambassador in Baghdad in the morning of February 10.⁵² Nuri hoped that, provided the Turks agreed, signature could take place in Baghdad within the next few days.⁵³ It was not to be. Menderes, Birgi and their assistants found Articles 2, 3 and 4 discriminatory against Turkey, since they imposed a severe limitation on the scope of future defence co-operation between Turkey and Iraq, while granting the latter, at the same time, a free hand to negotiate broader agreements with other future members under the "umbrella" provided in Article 1. Menderes realised that Nuri's reason for inserting Article 2 was his morbid suspicions of Turkish designs on Northern Iraq. He was ready to give Iraq a fresh categorical guarantee of respect of territorial integrity, although that, he believed, would in fact be a repetition of Article 1 of the 1946 Turkish-Iraqi treaty, which stated that "*Chacune des Hautes Parties Contractantes s'engage à respecter leur intégrité territoriale et leur frontières communes telles qu'elles sont définies et tracées dans le Traité conclu en 1926*".⁵⁴

It seemed for a moment that the negotiations had reached a deadlock. The only concession Nuri was prepared to make at that stage was to omit Articles 2, 3 and 4 of the draft (N2) from the pact itself and embody the substance of its Articles 3 and 4 in a protocol or annex, but even that proposal he wanted it to be made to Ankara indirectly through the British.⁵⁵ By now, the British government had remained the only potential mediators. Washington had already indicated that while strongly supporting the pact, it would not become an original signatory or join it at an early date because that might be interpreted as suggesting that the pact had been imposed from outside the area.⁵⁶ The FO preferred not to interfere to try to patch up this latest disagreement between Turkey and Iraq, except to inform both sides that the new Article 1 proposed by Nuri in the draft (N2) was satisfactory from their point of view. And in order not to complicate matters further, it did not even inform the British embassies in Ankara and Baghdad that, during the secret UK-US-Turkish staff talks that had begun in London on 18 January, the Turkish delegation had put forward a plan whereby Turkish forces would enter Iraq on or before the outbreak of a general war with the Soviet Bloc to take over responsibility for the defence of the Rowanduz and Penjwin passes in the Zagros mountains.⁵⁷

⁵²FO371/115489/V1073/211, Bowker to FO, 10.2.55.

⁵³FO371/115489/V1073/194, Wright to FO, 9.2.55.

⁵⁴FO371/115489/V1073/211, Bowker to FO, 10.2.55.

⁵⁵FO371/115490/V1073/220, Wright to FO, 11.2.55.

⁵⁶FO371/115489/V1073/196, Makins to FO, 9.2.55.

⁵⁷Compare the draft telegram first prepared by the FO staff with the final text actually sent to the respective embassies in FO371/115490/V1073/223G, FO to Ankara, 11.2.55.

Menderes made a fresh attempt to break the deadlock. He sent Nuri a friendly message, asking whether it was really Nuri's intention that their work together over the last weeks and months should culminate in a treaty on the lines of the revised draft (N2). If it was so, Menderes continued, then there must be some thought in Nuri's mind which the latter had not expressed. Menderes said that the Turkish government would look ridiculous if it signed such an agreement, and went on to point out that "Articles 3 and 4, though inessential, were acceptable when following after the Turkish Article 2 [of the draft (M1)]". In Nuri's revised draft (N2), however, they had fixed the limit to which defence co-operation between Turkey and Iraq should go.⁵⁸

Nuri was unmoved. He was in a mood of suspicion of the Turks, nervous that the latter were trying to inveigle him into some wording which could subsequently be interpreted as permitting entry of Turkish forces into Iraq in wartime. He even spoke of abandoning the idea of a pact with Turkey altogether. Prince 'Abd al-Ilah, less suspicious of Turks than Nuri, and the Turkish ambassador, Muzaffer Göksenin, appealed to Wright to try and calm Nuri. Accordingly, Wright had a long talk with Nuri on February 15. Nuri reaffirmed that he would never agree to any clause which could be interpreted as permitting entry of Turkish forces in Iraq in any situation. He even proposed at one stage in the said meeting to write in the pact itself a provision that neither country should send forces into the opposite country in time of war. Wright tried to persuade Nuri that Turkey's main preoccupation was to avoid a wording that appeared discriminatory against or derogatory to herself. In the end, Nuri promised to propose to Göksenin the following day a revised draft (called hereafter N3) which omitted Articles 2, 3 and 4 of his previous draft (N2), thus leaving to both sides freedom to conclude a special agreement between them derived from Article 1 of the pact in the same way as any future agreement between Iraq and Britain. He stated that if Turkey could not accept his latest proposal (N3), he would have to give up the idea of a bilateral pact altogether and seek instead a pact with Britain and Pakistan.⁵⁹

Göksenin received the new Iraqi proposal (N3) in the morning of February 16.⁶⁰ The Turks found Nuri's latest draft acceptable, subject to minor points which could be settled when Menderes revisited Baghdad to sign the treaty. The points they had in mind were the references in the preamble to the Anglo-Egyptian agreement and the ALCSP. They thought it would be inappropriate that an agreement between Turkey and Iraq should refer to agreements to which Turkey was not a party or to Iraq's obligations under the ALCSP under Article 4 of Nuri's latest draft (N3). They also claimed that any reference to the Anglo-

⁵⁸FO371/115490/V1073/223, Bowker to FO, 16.2.55.

⁵⁹FO371/115491/V1073/245 and 247, Wright to FO, 16.2.55.

⁶⁰FO371/115491/V1073/250, Wright to FO, 16.2.55.

Egyptian agreement would almost certainly be seized by Egypt "to cause further trouble".⁶¹ London had also been worried by the reference to the Anglo-Egyptian agreement and had previously unsuccessfully tried to persuade Nuri to omit it.⁶² Köprülü assured Bowker that Menderes, once in Baghdad, would do his best to induce Nuri to drop these points, but he preferred not to refer to them specifically before departing for Baghdad lest it might cause further delay.⁶³

Nuri, however, had another major surprise to pull out of his hat. On February 18, the Iraqi government passed to Göksekin two further amendments to the proposed text of the pact. The first was an alternative wording of the paragraph 4 of the preamble, referring to the Anglo-Egyptian agreement. It read as follows:

And whereas the Agreement concluded between Her Britannic Majesty's Government and the Egyptian Government has considered that any armed attack or a threat on Turkey or any member State of the Treaty of Joint Defence between the Arab League States should necessitate the affording by Egypt to the United Kingdom of such facilities as may be necessary in order to place the Suez Canal base on a war footing to operate it effectively.

The second proposed amendment was an addition at the end of Article 5 of the draft (N3) specifying that any state "concerned with security and peace in this region" that wanted to accede to the treaty *must be* "fully recognised by both of the High Contracting Parties," a clear indication that Israel (which was *not* recognised by Iraq) could not accede to the treaty. In addition, Nuri proposed drafts of two letters to be exchanged between Menderes and himself in connection with the pact. In the first letter (called hereafter L1), addressed by Nuri to Menderes, the Iraqi Premier stated he had

the honour to place on record that in order to ensure the maintenance of peace and security in the Middle East region, and to eliminate the causes of friction in the said region, we have agreed to work in close cooperation for effecting the carrying out of the United Nations resolutions concerning Palestine.

The second proposed letter was to be addressed by Menderes to Nuri acknowledging the receipt of the first letter and confirming its content.⁶⁴

⁶¹FO371/115492/V1073/273, Bowker to FO, 18.2.55.

⁶²FO371/115490/V1073/234, Stevenson to FO, 14.2.55; FO371/115492/V1073/267, FO minute by Rose, 15.2.55; *ibid.*, -/269, FO to Baghdad, 17.2.55, etc.

⁶³FO371/115492/V1073/273, Bowker to FO, 18.2.55.

⁶⁴FO371/115492/V1073/276, Wright to FO, 18.2.55.

The Turkish government was not surprised. On February 19, it telegraphed to Baghdad expressing agreement with Nuri's new proposals and informing him that it too had a few amendments on some "technical points," which Menderes would be glad to discuss in Baghdad. It also asked in particular that the visit should be kept secret and not announced before Menderes's arrival.⁶⁵

The reference in the January 13 communiqué to resisting any aggression from inside the Middle East region had given rise to some disquiet in Israel.⁶⁶ Israeli leaders did not believe that any Turkish-Arab rapprochement would bring benefits to them. On the contrary, they feared that Arabs would influence Turkey away from friendship with Israel. They believed that the references concerned were undoubtedly inserted in the January 13 communiqué on Nuri's insistence in order to reinstate himself with other Arab states. They feared, however, that in the future, countries like Syria, Lebanon and Jordan, which were quite unconcerned about Soviet aggression and were obsessed by Israel, would do their best to see that the said references were given more significance than was originally intended.⁶⁷ When the Israeli minister in Ankara had communicated his fears to Menderes—before the final negotiations had got under way—and asked him if it was intended to incorporate these references in the future pact, the latter had replied that it was not his wish that they should be incorporated, but had only given a 90 percent assurance that in the event of Iraq asking that they should, he would refuse.⁶⁸

London and Washington were worried too about the future repercussions of any reference to Palestine in the pact. The FO thought that Nuri's proposal would prejudice the prospects of their ongoing efforts to secure a settlement to the Palestine question,⁶⁹ which were based on supporting the armistice regime established in 1948-49, as well as on putting forward, when possible, practical suggestions designed to reduce frontier tension, in the hope that a prolonged period of calm on the frontiers might create an atmosphere favourable to a settlement.⁷⁰ Dulles, in turn, had told the Israeli ambassador in Washington that he considered the Turkish-Iraqi pact would tend to weaken the solidarity of the Arab League against Israel and was confident that, as things developed, Israel would realise that this trend was to her benefit.⁷¹ Now, the State Department instructed American embassies in Baghdad and Ankara to inform their respective governments that, in the US view, the text of the pact

⁶⁵FO371/115492/V1073/287, Bowker to FO, 20.2.55.

⁶⁶FO371/115488/V1073/156, Nicholls to Eden, 1.2.55.

⁶⁷FRUS 1955-1957, XII, 9; FO371/115487/V1073/130, Bowker to Shuckburgh, 25.1.55.

⁶⁸FO371/115489/V1073/180, Bowker to Shuckburgh, 1.2.55.

⁶⁹FO371/115492/V1073/281, FO minute by Brewis, 19.2.55.

⁷⁰FO371/115496/V1073/418, brief prepared by Levant Department, 3.3.55.

⁷¹FRUS 1955-1957, XII, 10.

should be without any reference to Palestine; and that, if there must be some reference, it should be in a separate instrument quite distinct and without reference to the pact.⁷² An FO telegram to the British embassy in Ankara underlined that the "main value of pact, from the point of view of building up under defence arrangements, is that it turns Arab eyes away from Palestine towards the outside danger".⁷³

Menderes had expected Nuri to propose inserting some provision on the Palestine question all along and was convinced that this would be a reasonable price to pay in return for the gains to be made by establishing a regional anti-communist defence pact. He thought the letters were important to boost Nuri's position.⁷⁴ The acting Secretary-General of the Turkish Foreign Ministry, Melih Esenbel, argued to Bowker that the letters were not part of the pact; that they went no further than the Baghdad communiqué and merely repeated previous statements by the Turkish government of general support for the 1947-49 UN resolutions on Palestine.⁷⁵

Once the Turkish government had agreed to the proposed exchange of letters, however, the Iraqis began to ask that they should be included as an annex to the pact. This latest proposal made the Turks unhappy because of all its complications both for their future bilateral relations with Israel and for the prospects of UK and US accession to the pact. The FO too felt obliged at this juncture to remind the negotiating parties that if the exchange of letters in their present form should form an annex or part of the pact Britain could not accede to the pact itself in the future.⁷⁶ Under pressure, Nuri retreated to his old idea of exchanged letters referring to the pact, but quite separate and distinct from it.⁷⁷

Menderes assured Bowker, the day before his visit to Baghdad, that he would first try to defer the question of an exchange of letters for later consideration, but failing to do this, he would then put forward a revised draft letter (called hereafter L2) suggested by Bowker himself, which clearly watered down the concealed anti-Israeli wording of Nuri's text by stating only that:

Sir, I have the honour to place on record my understanding that the treaty signed between us today will enable our two countries to cooperate in resisting any aggression directed against either of our countries whether from outside or inside the Middle East area, and that the Treaty will serve to establish stability in the Middle

⁷²FO371/115493/V1073/326, FO minute by Powell, 22.2.55.

⁷³FO371/115492/V1073/281, FO to Ankara, 19.2.55.

⁷⁴Saad, *Iraq*, 409.

⁷⁵FO371/115492/V1073/287, Bowker to FO, 20.2.55.

⁷⁶FO371/115492/V1073/282, Wright to FO & FO to Ankara, 20.2.55.

⁷⁷FO371/115492/V1073/300, Bowker to FO, 22.2.55.

East in a manner in conformity with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the decisions based on those principles.⁷⁸

The FO Levant Department staff considered that the revised text was "as innocuous as we can hope for," but still wanted to try to further omit the words "and the decisions based on those principles". In that case, they reasoned, although the Israeli government would undoubtedly still see what was behind those assertions, it might take comfort from the fact that there was no direct reference to the resolutions on Palestine and not, therefore, react too violently.⁷⁹

Nuri, however, remained adamant. He told Wright that he had received the unanimous support of his cabinet and the elder statesmen in Iraq on February 21 for the final text of the pact, so he would risk losing his backing in Parliament by consenting to substantial alterations or to the postponement of the exchange of letters. Furthermore, he said, he believed that the exchange of letters might be decisive in inducing the USSR and the Arab countries to refrain from attacking the pact, and perhaps in one or two cases, induce them to join it.⁸⁰

On February 23, Menderes returned to Baghdad, accompanied by Zorlu, Köprülü and Esenbel.⁸¹ They only succeeded in convincing the Iraqi side to drop finally the reference to the Anglo-Egyptian agreement in the preamble. Nuri refused to make any further major concessions. Hence, the discussions were mainly limited to sorting out some still unresolved "technicalities" in the text. Nuri also refused categorically to consider the new version (L2) of the letters to be exchanged—without, of course, knowing that its drafter had been Bowker. Menderes finally concluded that to postpone the exchange would mean postponing the pact itself, and perhaps even losing it altogether. He was only able to make Iraq agree on a wording, which he considered to be "a slight improvement on the original text". The final version read as follows:

Sir, in connexion with the Pact signed by us today, I have the honour to place on record our understanding that the Pact will enable our two countries to cooperate effectively in resisting any aggression directed against either of them, and that, in order to ensure maintenance of peace and security in the Middle East region, we have also agreed to work in close cooperation for effecting the carrying out of the United Nations resolutions concerning Palestine.

⁷⁸FO371/115493/V1073/301, Bowker to FO, 22.2.55.

⁷⁹FO371/115492/V1073/300, Bowker to FO, 22.2.55.

⁸⁰FO371/115493/V1073/314, Wright to FO, 23.2.55.

⁸¹FO371/115493/V1073/304, Bowker to FO, 22.2.55.

The US and UK ambassadors were in agreement that, in the prevailing circumstances, Menderes could not have obtained a better deal.⁸²

Some of the discussed "technicalities" were related to the Iraqi desire to have one text of the pact to be in Arabic. Thus, difficulties were generated, because of the existence of a dual case in Arabic, in translating some of its clauses, for the agreement although negotiated originally on a bilateral level, was actually intended to serve as the basis for a future multilateral arrangement.⁸³ The Iraqi side also convinced the Turks to use the word "pact" (*mithaq*) instead of "treaty" (*mu'ahadah*), partly because the term *mu'ahadah* comes from the root 'ahd, meaning a "pledge" or "undertaking," while the word *mithaq* comes from the root wathq, meaning "trust" or "confidence," but even more importantly because both previous "unequal" and highly unpopular Anglo-Iraqi treaties of 1930 and 1948 had been styled as *mu'ahadahs*.⁸⁴ The only new provision of significance was the addition, on Turkish insistence, of a new article that a permanent council at ministerial level would be set up when the number of member-states of the pact reached four. The Iraqi side did not like a Turkish suggestion that unequivocally stated that the treaty should remain valid if one member-state (assuming there were more than two at that stage) withdrew,⁸⁵ but, in the end, a compromise was also reached on that point.

The marathon of intensive discussions and consultations ended in the evening of February 24, and the pact was signed at 11.30 p.m.⁸⁶ Menderes returned to Ankara the next morning.

In its final form, the Pact of Mutual Co-operation between Iraq and Turkey referred in the preamble to the 1946 Turkish-Iraqi treaty, Article 11 of the ALCSP and Article 51 of the UN Charter. It specified in Article 1 that the signatories would co-operate for their security and defence in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter and to conclude special agreements to that effect. Accordingly, the competent authorities of the member-states would determine the measures to be taken as soon as the pact went into force. These measures would become operative just after being approved by the respective governments. The contracting parties undertook to refrain from interfering in each other's internal affairs and to settle their disputes peacefully in accordance with the UN Charter. Article 4 declared that the pact was not in contradiction with any of the international obligations the member-states already had, and that the contracting parties had undertaken not to enter into any future obligations incompatible with the pact. Article 5 left the pact open for accession to any

⁸²FO371/115493/V1073/331-32, Wright to FO, 23.2.55.

⁸³FO371/115493/V1073/315 & 333.

⁸⁴FO371/115496/V1073/424, Hooper to Rose, 1.3.55.

⁸⁵FO371/115493/V1073/316, Wright to FO, 24.2.55.

⁸⁶FO371/115493/V1073/334, Wright to FO, 25.2.55.

member of the Arab League or any other state *actively* involved with the security and peace in the region and which was *fully recognised* by both contracting parties. A Permanent Ministerial Council would be set up as soon as at least four powers became members of the Pact. The pact was to remain in force for a five-year period, renewable for other five-year periods. Any member-state that wished to withdraw had to notify the other members in writing of her desire to do so six months before the pact was due to expire. In that case, the pact would remain valid for the other member-states. The last article, Article 8, specified the procedure of ratifying the treaty and the exchange of ratifications.⁸⁷

Both governments were anxious to ratify the pact as soon as possible. Hence, ratification took place on February 26, only two days after the signature. Both, however, had to overcome criticism from their respective parliamentary critics that the provisions of the pact dealing with the extent of co-operation were ambiguous.

In the Turkish GNA, the vote of approval was unanimous.⁸⁸ Menderes, however, had to assure members of the opposition RPP that it did not mean additional obligations for Turkey beyond her frontiers. There was no automatic obligation under the wording of the treaty to give military aid to Iraq in the event of an attack on the latter, he said. The pact was an alliance for defence and, once it had been ratified, the government would have the power to negotiate and conclude necessary measures. On the issue of the exchanged letters, the opposition contended that they were binding only to the government in power, while Menderes argued that they implied no change in Turkish policy towards Israel. Turkey, he said, had always supported, as a matter of principle, the UN, including, by implication, its resolutions on Palestine.⁸⁹

In Iraq, Nuri tried to avoid an open debate as much as possible, despite the fact that he had to deal only with a Chamber of Deputies he had almost "appointed" the previous autumn. He asked that the bill to ratify the pact should first be discussed in the Foreign Affairs Committee, which submitted a unanimous recommendation of approval. Later, in the plenary session, he stressed that the pact did not contradict Iraq's traditional policy of co-operation with other Arab states. Iraq was undertaking no obligations beyond her frontiers and would be solely responsible for her own defence. No one could dictate upon Baghdad the conditions or extent of defence co-operation as Article 1 provided that separate agreements "may" and

⁸⁷See full text of pact in Hurewitz, *Diplomacy*, II, 390-91.

⁸⁸FO371/115494/V1073/342, Bowker to FO, 26.2.55.

⁸⁹Soysal, "Baghdad Pact", 66; FO371/115495/V1073/389, Bowker to Eden, 1.3.55. Esenbel had also told the counsellor of the British embassy that in "any case the exchange of letters was of no significance, first because Turkey recognised the impossibility of the literal application of the Resolutions, and secondly because Nuri Pasha, in insisting on the letters, had made it clear that he did not expect Turkey to take further action and only required them in order to reinforce his position with the other Arab countries"; *ibid*.

not "must" be concluded between the member-states. He expressed the hope that Iran, the USA and Britain—the latter, after the termination of the 1930 treaty—would accede to the new pact in the near future. In the event of any or all Arab states acceding to the pact, co-operation between them would differ as it had already been defined in the ALCSP. Turkey's policy, he said, was not contradictory to the interests of the Arab states and Turkey was sincere and honest in pursuing this direction. Only three deputies spoke against ratification, expressing fears that Iraq was distancing herself from the Arab League. Still, the Chamber voted in favour of ratification by 112 votes against only four. The same evening, the pact was also debated in the Senate, the upper house, and received an affirmative vote of 25 against one.⁹⁰

Instruments of ratification were exchanged in Ankara on 15 April 1955 between the Turkish Foreign Minister and the Iraqi ambassador.⁹¹

The Anglo-Iraqi Special Agreement

Nuri had already embarked, even before the final signature of the Turkish-Iraqi pact, on the second stage of his pre-conceived plan, the negotiation with Britain of a new military co-operation agreement to replace the 1930 treaty. On 5 March, Eden stopped in Baghdad on his way back from a regular SEATO Council of Ministers meeting in Bangkok and was satisfied with the draft which was under discussion. He later told the House of Commons that Britain's aim was to forge a new association with Iraq which would bring British-Iraqi "relations into line with those which already exist with Turkey and our other partners in NATO".⁹² The agreement was signed on 30 March and came into effect on 5 April, the day of official UK accession to the Turkish-Iraqi pact.

According to the signed agreement, Iraq formally assumed responsibility for her own defence and took over al-Habbaniyah and al-Shu'aybah air bases. Britain agreed to withdraw fully from the bases within a year, but a unit of 850 personnel was to stay behind after the withdrawal to help in maintaining the bases and to assist in training the air crew and servicing the aircraft. The Assyrian Levies, who guarded those bases, were absorbed into the Iraqi army. In return, Nuri agreed to the continuation of so-called close defence co-operation between both countries, including planning and combined training. Iraq would continue to provide Britain all facilities agreed upon between the two governments for the declared

⁹⁰Saad, *Iraq*, 410; FO371/115494/V1073/345, Wright to FO, 27.2.55; FO371/115497/V1073/463, Wright to Eden, 1.3.55.

⁹¹FO371/115507/V1073/717, Bowker to FO, 16.4.55.

⁹²Eden, *Full Circle*, 223. Also quoted in Richard L. Jasse, "The Baghdad Pact: Cold War or Colonialism?", *MES*, 27/1 (January 1991), 141.

purpose of maintaining Iraq's armed forces in a state of efficiency and readiness. She also conceded to British military aircraft the right of landing, overflying and servicing on its territory. Finally, the agreement stipulated that, in the event of an attack on Iraq or a threat of it, Britain, at Iraq's request, would assist her ally and even provide armed forces if necessary.⁹³ Nuri could not get any British concessions as regards the Palestine question. On the contrary, Eden told the House of Commons on March 30 that the Anglo-Iraqi agreement was likely to be, from Israel's point of view, a desirable development because it was the first time an Arab state was looking in other directions than simply towards Israel.⁹⁴

Nuri had originally hoped that the "umbrella" approach would save him from putting the new agreement before Parliament and would thus greatly diminish the chances of repetition of the riots of 1948. At some late stage before the final signature, however, his legal advisers told him that the Iraqi Constitution made it binding upon him to present this agreement to parliamentary scrutiny. So, on March 30, Nuri called a joint session of both Houses of Parliament and bulldozed through a unanimous decision of approval, when, under normal procedure, he should have presented the bill to each House separately. Furthermore, he took the precaution of presenting to scrutiny the text of only the Special Agreement and not those of the accompanying two memoranda, defining the conditions of military co-operation, although the latter texts had already been made public in London.⁹⁵

The Anglo-Iraqi Special Agreement, despite having striking similarities with the 1954 Anglo-Egyptian Agreement on the Suez Canal base, went further in defining the areas of defence co-operation between the two signatories. This is understandable, as Nuri, unlike the Egyptians, was convinced of the necessity of prolonging Iraq's alliance with Britain. In real terms, the Special Agreement was only a slight improvement on the abortive Portsmouth treaty as regards safeguarding Iraq's sovereign rights to manage her foreign and defence policy, but unlike the latter, the legal basis of the Special Agreement's continued implementation was now tied completely to Iraq's wish to remain a member of the Baghdad Pact.⁹⁶

⁹³Majid Khadduri, *Independent Iraq 1932-1958: A Study in Iraqi Politics* (1960), 349-50; James Morris, *The Hashemite Kings* (1959), 185; John C. Campbell, *Defense of the Middle East: Problems of American Policy* (1960), 58; Seale, *Struggle*, 228; Devereux, *Formulation*, 166-67.

⁹⁴Eden, *Full Circle*, 223. See also Elizabeth Monroe, *Britain's Moment in the Middle East 1914-1956* (1965), 184. See also Aptülahat Akşin, *Türkiye'nin 1945den Sonraki Dış Politika Gelişmeleri: Orta Doğu Meseleleri* (1959), 102; Mamduh al-Rusan, *Al-'Iraq wa qadaya al-sharq al-'arabi al-qaumiyyah 1941-1958* (1979), 306.

⁹⁵FO371/115748/VQ1015/8, Wright to Macmillan, 7.6.55. See text of main instrument and the two subsidiary memoranda in Hurewitz, *Diplomacy*, II, 391-95.

⁹⁶The Special Agreement, replacing the 1930 Treaty, also automatically nullified the legal basis of the secret UK-US MOU (1954). Washington, however, decided to continue "to act in accordance with its spirit"; see Axelgard, *Policy*, 197-98.

Nuri had thus secured the continuation of the British alliance with the Hashimite monarchy. He did not, however, win the hearts and minds of any of his critics. Indeed, the agreement re-enforced the link in Arab eyes between the Baghdad Pact and previous "unequal" military alliances imposed by former colonial powers, thus making future Arab adherences to the pact extremely unlikely. The next chapter tells about the initial Iraqi-Turkish failure to get the adherence of further Arab members.

The Search for More Arab Allies

The signature of the Baghdad Pact established cordial bilateral Turkish-Iraqi relations and an intimate personal friendship between Nuri and Menderes. President Bayar and King Faysal II exchanged official visits that same year, followed by various parliamentary, military, trade and other delegations. Bilateral security co-operation was also reactivated against subversive activities on their common frontier under the 1946 Turkish-Iraqi treaty.¹

However, no subsidiary Turkish-Iraqi special agreements were concluded, as foreseen under the pact's provisions, proving that both countries had entered it as a tactical move and not as an end in itself. Turkey proposed to turn the Baghdad Pact eventually into an elaborate multilateral defence organisation with a Permanent Ministerial Council, meeting twice a year; a Permanent Secretariat, headed by a secretary-general, with administrative, political, economic and propaganda sections; and a Military Committee, consisting of the Chiefs of the General Staff (CGS) of the member-states, with a Permanent Military Group attached to it, to which representatives of non-member countries could also be invited. The other member-states and the USA, however, preferred to proceed more slowly. Britain feared that the Turkish proposal to set up a NATO-type organisation might not be acceptable to the other members and could even frighten some. She wished "to let the treaty machinery grow naturally out of developing collaboration and not to fix it too rigidly in advance". She also opposed, for the time being, the establishment of formal relations with NATO and SEATO, preferring to maintain liaison through those pact-members who also belonged to the two other organisations.²

Meanwhile, the recruitment of new pact-members became Turkey's primary political objective. The UK adhered on 5 April 1955, while Turkish leaders were instrumental in securing both Pakistani (23 September) and Iranian (3 November) accession.³ With five full members, it became possible to convene in Baghdad in November the first Pact Ministerial

¹FO371/115750/VQ10344/7, Chancery, Ankara to Levant Department, 24.8.55. Faysal II too was eventually engaged in 1957 to a Turkish princess, Fazilet, a descendant of the Ottoman family.

²FO371/115529/V1073/1286, Bowker to FO, 16.11.55. The Baghdad Pact did in time have its military, economic and counter-subversion committees. It also provided an umbrella for many regional development co-operation schemes in communications, agriculture and a Nuclear Centre.

³Keith Kyle, *Suez* (1991), 89; Young, *Foreign Policy*, 172; Monroe, *Moment*, 188; Decker, *Policy*, 98; Tamkoç, *Warrior*, 238.

Council meeting. Iraq did not insist on getting from Pakistan and Iran further commitments on Palestine, judging that both had generally had a pro-Arab record on the issue.

Turkey recognised that additional Arab countries must also be brought in to make the Baghdad Pact viable and frustrate Egypt's desire to isolate Iraq from the rest of the Arab world. Turkey pursued this goal rigorously throughout 1955, Syria being her main target. Baghdad was certainly not against expansion, but somehow seemed to attach less importance to it, preferring to isolate Egypt by getting declarations of approval of Iraq's conduct from uncommitted Arab states.

The Internal Situation in Syria

Syria had, since March 1949, been plagued by a series of military coups, partly as a direct consequence of unending factional fighting among the different factions within her ruling elite. Even after achieving full independence in 1946, pan-Arab nationalism continued to be the strongest ideological current in Syria. A lack of consensus persisted about Syria's identity: should she remain an independent state or become part of a larger Arab political entity? Even among the Syrian proponents of immediate Arab political unity, however, there was no consensus on *which* Arab country Syria should unite with first. In the past, the Hashimite Kingdoms of Jordan and Iraq had been the two main contenders. Prospects for "Greater Syrian" unity with Jordan under King 'Abdallah's crown had waned with the latter's assassination in 1951. "Fertile Crescent" unity between Syria and Iraq, however, was still being pursued by the early 1950s, particularly by the former Regent of Iraq, Prince 'Abd al-Ilah, who liked to occupy someday the throne in Damascus. This plan was supported by many Aleppine politicians, whose traditional trade links with Baghdad and Mosul had been hampered with the erection of state borders after the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire.

'Abd al-Ilah had politically backed some of al-Shishakli's opponents and ordered the preparation of a secret plan for the Iraqi Army to invade Syria if need be.⁴ Iraq had also proposed to the Arab League in January 1954 a plan for Arab Federation,⁵ which was immediately suspected of being a covert attempt to prepare the ground for an Iraqi annexation of Syria. Inevitably, official Iraqi circles welcomed al-Shishakli's fall, since the ensuing interim Syrian government included many traditionally pro-Iraqi politicians. The influence of anti-Hashimite Syrian politicians remained substantial, however, particularly in Damascus, with its close trade connections with Egypt and Saudi Arabia. They were reluctant to abandon Syria's republican form of government and feared that any particular union with

⁴Marr, *Iraq*, 113-14; Seale, *Struggle*, 137-38; al-Jamali, *Mawaqif*, 84-86, 264-66, 274.

⁵See full text in Yusif al-Khuri(ed.), *Al-Mashari' al-wahdawiiyyah al-'arabiyyah 1913-1989* (1990), 264-69; FO371/110785/V1071/8, Troutbeck to Eden, 16.1.54.

Iraq (and/or Jordan) would only serve to extend British influence in the Arab world. No genuine Arab unity could be achieved, they argued, until foreign influence itself was completely eliminated from the Arab lands. Thus, Syria's dependence on access for her exports to Iraqi and Saudi markets opened the door for external intervention in internal Syrian politics.⁶ Western-inspired plans to form a regional defence pact, with Baghdad playing a prominent role, became inevitably intertwined with Syria's internal troubles over possible union with Iraq.⁷

Syrian politics in the mid-1950s was volatile and unpredictable. The numerous, but generally weak, political parties in the country had to form tactical alliances to share power. Parliamentary elections returned a large number of independent deputies. Of the 141 deputies elected during the 1954 parliamentary elections, only just over half kept their party-political allegiance intact during the next four years.

The conservative National and People's parties formed the largest party blocs in parliament. They were representative of Syria's traditional political elite of landowners, urban merchants and notables, with a conservative outlook and looking favourably toward co-operation with the West. Both, however, had little discipline over their members. The National Party supported the former President Shukri al-Quwatli and was strong in Damascus, generally enjoying cordial relations with Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Pro-Iraqi sentiment was strong, however, among its Christian supporters in Aleppo. The People's Party, in turn, generally supported Iraq and was the chief advocate of "Fertile Crescent" unity. It was composed chiefly of younger landowning nationalist politicians and merchant-entrepreneurs, based in Hama and Aleppo, who had opposed al-Quwatli's autocratic tendencies in the post-independence period.

Both parties were being increasingly challenged by new, ideological parties, claiming to represent the interests of the rising educated middle, and even working, classes: the Arab Socialist Resurrection (Ba'th) Party, the Syrian Social Nationalist Party (SSNP), the Syrian Communist Party, the Arab Liberation Movement (ALM) and the Socialist Co-operative Party. All demanded the implementation of far-reaching internal political, social and economic reforms; opposed imperialist presence in the Arab world and "collective defence" alliances with non-Arab states. All won seats in the newly-elected chamber, but the largest gains were those of the Ba'th. One influential political organisation of similar social background and political outlook that did not contest the elections was the Islamic revivalist

⁶Tabitha Petran, *Syria: A Modern History* (1978), 84.

⁷Prince 'Abd al-Ilah tried to persuade Turkey to support Iraq's union with Syria, emphasising that it would end Syria's instability, which harboured dangers for Ankara; see FO371/110785/V1071/52, Gardener to Falla, 30.9.54.

Muslim Brotherhood.⁸ Some Brotherhood members, however, resigned from the organisation and were elected as independents.

The largest group of deputies in the 1954 Chamber remained, however, the unaffiliated. They, too, were grouped in a series of blocs, representing a wide range of convictions. The largest and most influential, Khalid al-'Azm's Democratic Bloc, initially had 38 deputies. Westerners disliked al-'Azm as "a skilful opportunist ... willing to co-operate with anyone furthering his interests". For British and Turkish officials, he was a Francophile, obsessed with becoming President of Syria. Al-'Azm was respected, however, by many Syrians as a true statesman. He called for modernisation of agriculture and industry and a developed social program; advocated concentrating all efforts to contain the Zionist danger to the Arab world and force a fair solution to the Palestine question, rejecting Western-inspired regional military alliances because they would help freeze the 1949 Arab-Israeli armistice lines into permanent international borders. He opposed union with Iraq and defended his maintenance of good relations with France on the grounds that in 1949-55 France was the only Western country ready to supply Syria with arms and military equipment.⁹

The political influence of the National and People's parties and the numerous parliamentary blocs representing the 100 or so landowning families in Syria was in decline also because of their lack of sufficient influence in the army. The army officer-corps had, since the days of the French mandate, been stuffed with men of rural origin and representatives of religious minorities, becoming a fertile ground for recruitment by the ideological parties.¹⁰ The SSNP, the Ba'th, the ALM and, to a lesser extent, the Communists all had their supporters among top army officers. With winning power through the ballot-box still seeming almost impossible, these parties looked at the army as an extra-parliamentary instrument of political pressure.

It should not be forgotten, however, that while the ideological parties were competing to win the support of roughly the same constituency and were all opposed to the ruling elite, every one of them proposed specific long-term solutions different from those advocated by

⁸Umar F. Abd-Allah, *The Islamic Struggle in Syria* (1983), 100. The Turkish government feared, in early 1954, that the Iraqi branch of the Muslim Brotherhood "might be sufficiently influential to deter the Iraqi Government from acceding to the Pact between Turkey and Pakistan" and that certain Turkish religious groups, "allied in some way with the Brotherhood, might cause trouble"; see FO371/110787/V1073/32, Chancery, Bagdad to Levant Department, 7.4.54; FO371/110788/V1781/3, Chancery, Damascus to Levant Department, 24.3.54.

⁹Petran, *Syria*, 107, 113; Torrey, *Syrian Politics*, 118; al-'Azm, *Mudhakkarat*, II, 363 & III, 223; *FRUS 1955-1957*, XII, 532; Nabil M. Kaylani, "The Rise of the Syrian Ba'th, 1940-1958: Political Success, Party Failure", *JMES*, 3/1 (January 1972), 19.

¹⁰Eliezer Be'eri, *Army Officers in Arab Politics and Society* (1970), 72; Patrick Seale, *Asad of Syria: The Struggle for the Middle East* (1989), 39; Laqueur, *Transition*, xviii, 326; Petran, *Syria*, 86; Pipes, *Greater Syria*, 168-69.

others. The ultimate aim of the Ba'th and the ALM was the creation of an Arab fatherland stretching from the Atlantic Ocean to the Arab/Persian Gulf. In order to achieve it, the Ba'th considered as indispensable the freeing of Arabs everywhere from colonial rule and their going through a process of radical social change. The SSNP called for the establishment of a unitary "Greater Syria," incorporating the territories of the contemporary states of Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine/Israel, even the Turkish region south of the Taurus and Anti-Taurus mountain-chains and Cyprus. It insisted that every step towards larger Arab unity must inevitably start with Syrian unity. The Communists were less interested in pursuing irredentist aims and were accused by their rivals of being subservient to foreign Communist interests. Thus, in-fighting among the ideological parties was inevitable. It was in time transferred to the army ranks, where competition was very intense in the early 1950s between the Ba'th and the SSNP.¹¹

Soon after the elections, the National and People's parties and representatives of the conservative parliamentary Tribal Bloc formed a coalition government under the premiership of the 77-year old Faris al-Khuri. The Ba'th Party and the Democratic Bloc joined forces in opposition. In order to placate the latter, al-Khuri pledged that under no circumstances would he remain in office after March 21, 1955 and would not, in the meantime, enter any alliance with non-Arab countries.¹² The future course of Syrian foreign policy was debated vigorously in the following months. The issue of participating in Western-influenced pacts became linked with the question whether Syria could afford to adopt towards defence matters an attitude different from most other Arab states. Even advocates of an alliance with Western powers conceded that at least assurances as regards Palestine should be sought as a precondition for eventual co-operation. Left-wing newspapers vociferously condemned alliances with non-Arab countries, while Nationalist and Populist newspapers usually refrained from comment.¹³ The opponents of non-Arab pacts enjoyed a slight edge in public arguments, and on 10 January 1955, the Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee unanimously concluded that the government had remained faithful to its pledge and recommended the consolidation of that policy.¹⁴

Turkey Tries to Lure Syria into the Turkish-Iraqi Pact

It was in this Syrian climate of sharp disagreement that, after months of attempting to create Arab goodwill and build confidence within Syria, Menderes decided at the end of 1954 to

¹¹Daniel Pipes, "Radical Politics and the Syrian Social Nationalist Party", *IJMES*, 20/3 (August 1988), 313-16.

¹²Al-'Azm, *Mudhakkarat*, II, 307-12, 445; FO371/111141/VY1016/137, Gardener to FO, 5.11.54.

¹³FO371/110188/V1073/91, Chancery, Damascus to Levant Department, 23.12.54

¹⁴Lesch, *Syria*, 62; FO371/115482/V1071/3, Chancery, Damascus to Levant Department, 13.1.55.

visit Damascus and try to persuade the Syrian government to join the projected Turkish-Iraqi pact. After having succeeded with Nuri, Menderes now felt that he could get the adherence of all Arab countries one by one.

After Menderes's visits to Baghdad and Beirut for early January had been arranged by mid-December, the Syrian government was asked, too, if it wished to invite him to Damascus. An invitation was ultimately extended by the Syrian cabinet but only after much hesitation, an intervention from President Hashim al-Atasi, and indirect soundings from opposition circles that they would not object publicly. A visit of a few hours' duration—the first by a Turkish Premier to independent Syria—was set for January 14.¹⁵ News of the visit was largely received unfriendly by the Syrian press, where the questions of Alexandretta and Turkish trade with Israel immediately received prominence.¹⁶ There were some demonstrations against the visit in both Damascus and Aleppo on January 13, the exaggerated accounts of which made Bayar attempt to call off Menderes's visit in the last minute, but he was dissuaded. Two days later, the Turkish embassy building in Damascus was stoned and some demonstrators arrested. Police and demonstrators also clashed in Aleppo. Turkish chargé Soysal thought that "Egyptian agents, Communists and Saudi Arabia" had been behind the disorders. On the day of the visit, however, the police took adequate security precautions and no demonstrations were allowed in Damascus.¹⁷

During the official Turkish-Syrian discussions, only Menderes and al-Atasi spoke. Menderes confirmed Turkish friendship toward the Arab states, particularly Syria, and stressed the identity of their interests in a world troubled by Communism. He complained about Egypt's response to the January 13 communiqué, but expressed hope that this misunderstanding could be corrected soon, reiterating Turkey's desire to improve relations with Egypt. Menderes did not overtly propose Syria's adherence to the projected pact, but spoke in a spirit to encourage just that. Al-Atasi, in turn, sought Turkish help in enforcing the relevant UN resolutions on Palestine and Turkish-US-UK mediation to secure a just and final settlement. Menderes replied that what had happened in Palestine was largely a matter of the past and could not be undone, although some minor modifications might still be possible. Syria could now cover herself against danger from both the USSR and Israel by joining Turkey and Iraq. Turkey was interested in regional stability and in the official Syrian attitude towards Turkey and her Western allies. Menderes added that Turkey was now happily installed within her frontiers as defined by the 1920 National Pact and followed up with a

¹⁵FO371/115953/VY10344/1, 1'A' & 2, Gardener to FO, 1, 7 & 11 January 1955.

¹⁶FO371/115953/VY10344/3, Gardener to FO, 15.1.55.

¹⁷Soysal, "Baghdad Pact", 69; Bağcı, *Demokrat*, 65; FO371/115484/V1073/20, Gardener to FO, 15.1.55; FO371/115486/V1073/91, Gardener to FO, 19.1.55.

warning that if the Syrians continued to agitate against the annexation of Alexandretta, Turkey could, if necessary, retaliate by making trouble over Aleppo. It was certainly not an encouraging start. The Syrians preferred not to respond to Menderes,¹⁸ and no official communiqué was published after the four-hour long visit. Menderes was reportedly shocked at the "unrealism" displayed by the Syrians as regards world affairs and notably the political/military dangers of Communism.¹⁹ Soysal—who was himself present—described the discussions as a "dialogue of the deaf".²⁰

In public, however, the Syrian government tried to show a brave face, telling the opposition that the invitation had been dictated by the conventions of Arab hospitality, since the Turkish delegation had been overflying Syria. Al-Khuri declared that the establishment of a Syrian-Turkish commission was agreed to study the questions of mutual property and water, and that Turkey had expressed readiness to reach an understanding with Syria on all outstanding questions. He also privately told some deputies that he had sounded Menderes over raising the question of Alexandretta, but the latter had cautioned emphatically and angrily "not to play with fire". Foreign Minister Faydi al-Atasi stressed that Syria should co-operate with all countries with whom she had common interests, including Turkey. He accused the opposition of wishing to make Syria "a sealed box cut off from the outside world" and declared that Syria should be content to have a single enemy like Israel. Some right-wing newspapers echoed his views.²¹

Menderes realised the difficulty of his task further during his official visit to Beirut on 15-19 January, where he was told that the reputedly pro-Western Lebanese leaders could not join the Turkish-Iraqi pact without consulting other Arab states and that their eventual adherence would have no practical value without the participation of the latter.²²

In this atmosphere, the Syrian delegation's refusal during the Cairo Conference to subscribe to any final communiqué condemning Iraq caught Menderes by surprise. The Syrians argued in Cairo that each Arab state was entitled to appreciate its own dangers and take its own appropriate defence measures as long as the latter did not contradict the interests of the Arab League; Iraq was the most exposed to the Soviet threat and the proposed Iraqi-

¹⁸Soysal, "Baghdad Pact", 70; FO371/115484/V1073/20, Gardener to FO, 15.1.55; FO371/115486/V1073/62, Bowker to FO, 18.1.55.

¹⁹FO371/115486/V1073/92, Gardener to Falla, 19.1.55.

²⁰Soysal, "Baghdad Pact", 70.

²¹Avedis K. Sanjian, *The Sanjak of Alexandretta (Hatay): A Study in Franco-Turco-Syrian Relations*, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1956, 246-47; Al-'Azam, *Mudhakkarat*, II, 335; FO371/115953/VY10344/3, Gardener to FO, 15.1.55; FO371/115486/V1073/91, Gardener to Eden, 19.1.55.

²²Chamoun, *Crise*, 271-72. This Lebanese position was reiterated during Lebanese President Kamil Sham'un's state visit to Turkey the following April; see *ibid.*, 276-77.

Turkish treaty could not be unfavourable to the Arab League.²³ Menderes realised that his chances of success were not so dim as he had supposed. Rather unfortunately for al-Khuri, however, an overjoyed Turkish government spokesman publicly thanked on February 2—i.e. before the end of the Cairo Conference—"the eminent Arab statesmen, and particularly to those of Syria, who assisted" Turkey "in her common cause with Iraq".²⁴ Two days later, Menderes himself publicly referred to Syrian and Lebanese friendship to Turkey.²⁵ In a country like Syria, where the sour memories of the last years of Ottoman rule and the annexation of Alexandretta were still fresh, these statements provoked a sharp reaction, caused the press to attack the government and greatly embarrassed al-Khuri.²⁶ Menderes seemed to have realised his tactical error. He asked the Syrian government to let him know if there was any action which he might take or refrain from taking to help them.²⁷ By the time his message was transmitted, however, al-Khuri had already been forced to resign.

The New Syrian Government and the Tripartite Declaration

The behind-the-scenes manoeuvres to topple al-Khuri's cabinet had been initiated a month before by the Syrian army Chief of Staff (COS), Gen. Shawkat Shuqayr. The army officer-corps had long resented the People's Party's pro-Iraqi foreign policy. Shuqayr, playing on old rivalries between Nationalists and Populists, particularly in Aleppo, lured two Nationalist leaders, Mikha'il Ilyan and Sabri al-'Asali, away from the Populists and brought them closer to al-'Azm and the Ba'th. Al-Khuri's cabinet collapsed, and the weak al-'Asali succeeded him on February 13.

The new cabinet was composed of three Nationalists, three members of the Democratic Bloc (including al-'Azm as Foreign Minister), and one member each from the Ba'th Party, the Tribal Bloc and the pro-ALM Independent Bloc. It sharply criticised al-Khuri's stand in Cairo and publicly backed the view that no Arab country should join the Iraqi-Turkish treaty. It vowed to give priority to the strengthening of defences against any possible Israeli aggression and called on other Arab states to improve Arab collective security. It promised to consider with attention the suggestion that the government should co-operate with the West, but said it preferred co-operation to be limited within the provisions of the UN Charter and be especially close with states supporting the Arab cause in Palestine.²⁸

²³FO371/115486/V1073/60, Gardener to FO, 20.1.55.

²⁴FO371/115488/V1073/151, Bowker to FO, 3.2.55.

²⁵FO371/115493/V1073/318, Gardener to FO, 18.2.55.

²⁶FO371/115488/V1073/173, Gardener to FO, 5.2.55; FO371/115491/V1073/254, Gardener to Rose, 9.2.55.

²⁷FO371/115493/V1073/311, Bowker to Shuckburgh, 14.2.55.

²⁸Lesch, *Syria*, 63; al-'Azm, *Mudhakkarat*, II, 322-24; FO371/115493/V1073/305, Gardener to FO, 22.2.55.

The new government improved relations with Egypt and revoked the former cabinet's decision to decline an invitation for Salah Salim.²⁹ Egypt's renewed emphasis on total opposition to alliances with non-Arab states had struck a chord with the now dominant neutralist feeling in Syria. Salim and Col. Mahmud Riyad, the Head of the Arab Affairs Department at the Egyptian Foreign Ministry, spent five days in Syria from February 26 and met almost all leading local politicians.³⁰ They argued that Iraq had, by signing a pact with Turkey, destroyed the ALCSP and proposed that Egypt and Syria should initiate a new pan-Arab mutual defence co-operation agreement.³¹ Salim and al-'Azm drafted a preliminary agreement to that effect which went further than the ALCSP in imposing severe limitations on the sovereign rights of prospective member-states to conduct their foreign and defence policies freely, particularly in peacetime. It stated that no Arab state should adhere to the Turkish-Iraqi pact or any other alliance with a non-Arab power and proposed the establishment of an Arab mutual defence organisation to co-operate in repulsing any external aggression. A permanent joint command and a common defence plan would be created. In the economic field, it envisaged the creation of an Arab bank of issue to issue an Arab currency (which would also have inevitably limited the freedom of future members to run their own economies), a permanent Arab economic council, Arab maritime, air, insurance, and limited liability companies to carry out large industrial and agricultural projects. But perhaps the most politically significant provision was that member-states of the organisation "must not conclude international agreements, whether military or political, without the consent of the other members".³² This provision, if applied, would have practically given Egypt a power of veto on the foreign policy of the other Arab states and perpetuated Egyptian dominance in the Arab world set in motion with the formation of the Arab League in 1945.³³

Salim's task in Syria was made easier by two almost simultaneous, but most probably unconnected, incidents. On February 26, the US ambassador in Damascus, James Moose,

²⁹ Al-'Azm, *Mudhakkarat*, II, 387.

³⁰ Riyad later became Egyptian ambassador in Syria from March 1955 to 1958.

³¹ Al-'Azm, *Mudhakkarat*, II, 388; Chamoun, *Crise*, 268; FO371/115496/V1073/415, Gardener to Eden, 3.3.55.

³² See full text in al-'Azm, *Mudhakkarat*, II, 389-90; FO371/115496/V1073/410 & FO371/115500/V1073/535.

³³ Abd al-Nasir candidly told US ambassador Henry Byroade on March 10 that the proposed pact "was of no general advantage to Egypt, but it was of utility in foiling Iraqi schemes: the 'unified command' in particular was calculated to serve this end". "He was not particularly keen to see Jordan and Lebanon join the proposed agreement, since their propinquity to Israel would merely load Egypt with additional commitment"; see FO371/115497/V1073/445, Stevenson to FO, 11.3.55. It could be argued, of course, that the said clause could, technically at least, have also imposed an "Arab" veto on future Egyptian moves, but the history of MEC/MEDO had shown that it had always been Egypt who had managed to drag the rest of the Arab world behind her, not *vice versa*.

presented to al-'Asali and al-'Azm a long note--drafted before the new government had received a parliamentary vote of confidence--explaining that Washington attached great importance to the Iraqi-Turkish treaty as a first step towards a Middle East defence pact, and lacked confidence in the ability of the ALCSP or any successor treaty to serve the area's defence needs. It expressed hope that Syria would not "associate self with any effort to make things more difficult for Iraq" and would "act so as to leave open the possibility of its future association with the developing defence organisation". It also promised American military aid if the Arabs welcomed the Turkish-Iraqi pact and Arab-Israeli relations improved.³⁴ The contents of the note leaked a few days later causing the Syrian government embarrassment and providing left-wingers with an opportunity to claim that Washington was forcing the Arabs to make peace with Israel under the threat of suspending aid.³⁵ The second incident was the ferocious Israeli "retaliatory" raid on Gaza on February 28, which left behind 38 Egyptians dead and showed how vulnerable Arab defences were.³⁶ It proved, according to David Lesch, "a seminal event in the history of postwar Middle East," making the Syrian military put pressure on its government to conclude a speedy military agreement with Egypt.³⁷ In Egypt, too, 'Abd al-Nasir had till then believed that Israel had no serious aggressive intentions and that the 1949 armistice agreements offered a guarantee for peace. After the raid, however, he took seriously the dangers posed to Egypt by Israel's aggressive and expansionist behaviour. His attempt to quickly arm and consolidate the Egyptian armed forces eventually led to the conclusion of the "Czechoslovak" arms deal later that year.³⁸

Not all Syrian politicians, however, favoured the al-'Azm-Salim draft. Cracks appeared in the National Party and, hence, in the coalition government. Ilyan and Finance Minister Leon Zamariyya absolutely opposed any separate agreement with Egypt, while the Nationalist Minister of the Economy, Fakhir al-Kayyali, sided with the Ba'th and Democratic Bloc in advocating an immediate agreement. Opposition from the People's Party, the Tribal Bloc and other conservative and pro-Iraqi elements was, of course, not unexpected, but the formation of an alternative coalition between the Populists and dissident Nationalists was out of the question. Despite various efforts to that effect made behind-the-scenes by President al-Atasi and Western diplomats, Syrian politicians remained convinced that the army would oppose

³⁴Lesch, *Syria*, 64; al-'Azm, *Mudhakkarat*, II, 239-41; *FRUS 1955-1957*, XII, 516-17.

³⁵FO371/115494/V1073/362, Gardener to FO, 1.3.55; FO371/115498/V1073/476, Chancery, Damascus to Levant Department, 10.3.55; FO371/115497/V1073/448, Gardener to FO, 11.3.55.

³⁶See details in Wm. Roger Louis and Roger Owen(eds.), *Suez 1956: The Crisis and Its Consequences* (1989), 35; Donald Neff, *Warriors at Suez: Eisenhower Takes America into the Middle East* (1981), 30-34.

³⁷Lesch, *Syria*, 64-65.

³⁸Mahmoud Riad, *The Struggle for Peace in the Middle East* (1981), 7; Mohamed H. Heikal, *Cutting the Lions Tail: Suez through Arab Eyes* (1987), 66-67.

such a government, and could then install an even more anti-Western cabinet.³⁹ The People's Party itself was split: one faction, supporting alignment with Iraq; while another, opposing all alliances except those under Arab League auspices.⁴⁰ Economic considerations further complicated the political equations. Merchants feared that if there was to be a parallel economic agreement with Egypt, the latter, being a low cost country, would capture Syrian export trade in manufactured goods, for which Iraq was an important customer.⁴¹ These disagreements paralysed the cabinet for the remainder of its time in office. President al-Atasi, despite his very limited constitutional prerogatives, resented al-'Asali's and al-'Azm's policies, and this, too, somewhat affected the smoothness of the workings of the government.⁴² Agreement with Egypt was favoured by the ideological parties, except the SSNP, which found it "unrealistic, because it bound only one part of Greater Syria and ignored Lebanon and Jordan".⁴³

It was clear that Nuri would not join the proposed organisation, and probably Cairo's implicit aim was thus to isolate Iraq from the rest of the Arab world. The Iraqi minister in Damascus, 'Abd al-Jalil al-Rawi, fought this agreement hard from its inception and was partially successful as pro-Iraqi Syrian deputies initially blocked its immediate ratification in the Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee.⁴⁴

The conclusion of the al-'Azm-Salim agreement was first reported on March 3, but its full text was made public only on March 6. Meanwhile, Salim, Riyadh and al-'Azm had been off to Amman, Riyadh and Beirut canvassing the support of the respective governments. Only the Saudi monarch gave his immediate approval. From then on, the agreement became informally known as the Tripartite Pact as a sign for Saudi co-sponsorship. The Jordanian and Lebanese attitudes amounted to polite refusals.⁴⁵

Al-'Azm also paid from March 14 a fruitless five-day visit to Baghdad. He told Iraqi leaders that the Tripartite Pact was not directed against Iraq and Syria would welcome any Iraqi proposals to amend it.⁴⁶ There was no breakthrough, however. Despite Nuri's

³⁹Al-'Azm, *Mudhakkarat*, II, 324, 388-89; FO371/115494/V1073/361-62, Gardener to FO, 1.3.55; FO371/115496/V1073/415, Gardener to Eden, 3.3.55.

⁴⁰Torrey, *Syrian Politics*, 288.

⁴¹FO371/115506/V1073/691, Gardener to FO, 13.4.55.

⁴²Al-'Azm, *Mudhakkarat*, II, 401-02.

⁴³Robert T. Waters, *A Socio-Political Analysis of Syria 1943-1958 with Particular Reference to the Analytical System of Gabriel A. Almond*, unpublished M.A. dissertation, American University of Beirut, 1962, 61.

⁴⁴Al-'Azm, *Mudhakkarat*, II, 389.

⁴⁵Al-'Azm, *Mudhakkarat*, II, 391-94; Chamoun, *Crise*, 273-74; FO371/115495/V1073/387, Duke to FO, 4.3.55; *ibid.*, -/405, Gardener to FO, 7.3.55.

⁴⁶Al-'Azm, *Mudhakkarat*, II, 394; FO371/115496/V1073/423, Gardener to FO, 8.3.55; FO371/115498/V1073/498, Gardener to FO, 12.3.55. Al-'Asali later said that al-'Azm's trip had been "a ruse". 'Abd al-Nasir had declared that the Tripartite Pact would never be open to Iraq and threatened to withdraw from

reassurances that Iraq would never agree to the entry of Turkish forces into Iraq, even in wartime, and that the pact with Turkey would be confined only to the exchange of information and providing facilities for transport of military equipment, the two sides later even disagreed on what had actually been the outcome of the discussions.⁴⁷

Turkey Puts Pressure on Syria

Turkey was unhappy with the change of government in Damascus.⁴⁸ She urged her Western allies to take a tough line with those Arab countries that opposed the establishment of a Middle East defence organisation.⁴⁹ After the Salim-al-'Azm tour of the Arab capitals had gone under way, Ankara made a tactical readjustment, seeing in the prevention of Syria's eventual adherence to the projected Tripartite Pact a necessary first step in bringing her, and other Arab states, into the Baghdad Pact. Deputy Premier Zorlu suggested that Turkey, Britain and America together should maintain, through close consultations among their diplomatic representatives, constant pressure on Damascus and Amman to frustrate Egypt's efforts.⁵⁰ On March 5, Menderes declared that Egyptian pressure on certain Arab countries "has reached a degree which is incompatible with the notion of the independence of the States" and that it was "evident that the Egyptian leaders have obliged the Syrian leaders to submit to their wishes". Turkey was worried, said Menderes, that her "neighbour and friend" Syria, by concluding the tripartite agreement, was participating in "the ill-judged and sometimes hostile actions and intentions of the Egyptian leaders against Turkey". Turkey could not accept that other states "should be deprived by force of the means of free action and of following a policy which conforms to their interests". If "this action and these intentions" went further, there would be cause for "anxiety about the future of Turco-Egyptian relations".⁵¹ A Turkish *aide-mémoire* delivered to the Syrian government a few days later warned that Ankara could not remain indifferent to or tolerate a manifestly hostile Syrian attitude.⁵²

the ALCSP unless Syria joined the proposed Tripartite Pact. In order to save their own faces, al-'Asali and al-'Azm had agreed to sign, provided that Iraq would also be invited to join, although they privately knew that Nuri would certainly decline the invitation; see Seale, *Struggle*, 316.

⁴⁷ Al-'Azm, *Mudhakkarat*, II, 395-99 speculates that the misunderstanding arose probably because the minutes taken down by the two delegations were never compared and agreed upon. This row is a good example of the informal (and somewhat haphazard) manner with which Nuri conducted his foreign policy, his reluctance to rely on written records and preference to use informal channels of communication—through friends and confidantes—rather than the official channels provided by the presence of Iraqi missions in different Arab capitals.

⁴⁸ FO371/115491/V1073/244(i), Gardener to FO, 15.2.55.

⁴⁹ FO371/115494/V1073/349, Bowker to FO, 28.2.55.

⁵⁰ FO371/115495/V1073/388 & 400, Bowker to FO, 4 & 6 March 1955.

⁵¹ FO371/115495/V1073/401, Bowker to FO, 6.3.55.

⁵² See full text of *aide-mémoire* in FO371/115500/V1073/531, Gardener to FO, 10.3.55.

Ankara had concluded that there was no point at this juncture in mincing words.⁵³ It soon targeted its attacks on al-'Azm personally. On March 13, Soysal delivered to al-'Azm a harsher *aide-mémoire*,⁵⁴ stating Turkey's belief that the proposed Tripartite Pact aimed at preventing the accession of other Arab states to the Turkish-Iraqi pact; isolating Iraq and Turkey from the Arab world; and even detaching Iraq from Turkey. Ankara, therefore, could not remain indifferent to the newly-forged Syrian-Egyptian alliance, which with its generally negative spirit and hostile sentiments toward Turkey in particular, had disturbed the regional peace. Its implementation would force Ankara revise her policy toward Syria. The Turkish-Iraqi and the Syrian-Egyptian-Saudi blocs could not coexist and, without measures like the Turkish-Iraqi pact, Syria could be wiped off geographical maps within a few days.⁵⁵

Al-'Azm studied this *aide-mémoire* "with amazement and astonishment being mixed with contempt and disgust in my soul".⁵⁶ He was extremely angry, but in order not to play into Turkish hands, he only instructed the Syrian minister in Ankara, Kazim al-Jaza'iri, to inform, after a short while, the Turkish Foreign Ministry that the *aide-mémoire* was being studied, but that it had been received "with little satisfaction" because its "spirit" and "tone" had been "incompatible with rules in usage in correspondence between independent states" and that it would affect negatively the development of bilateral relations. Ankara was promised a full reply after al-'Azm's return from his above-mentioned visit to Baghdad. On the evening of March 19, al-Jaza'iri finally presented the Syrian memorandum to Köprülü, who listened patiently and agreed that the tone had been harsh. But, at 7:00 a.m. on the following day, al-Jaza'iri was peremptorily summoned to see Menderes and Zorlu, who angrily returned the memorandum as being unacceptable and accused al-'Azm of going to Iraq to turn her against Turkey. Citing a declaration made by the latter on problems existing between Turkey and Syria on their common frontiers, they warned al-Jaza'iri that if Syria continued talking publicly about Alexandretta, Turkey would retaliate by making trouble over Aleppo, and if Syria wanted to break off diplomatic relations, Turkey was prepared to reciprocate.⁵⁷

⁵³FO371/115500/V1073/537, Chancery, Damascus to Levant Department, 15.3.55.

⁵⁴FO371/115498/V1073/470, Gardener to FO, 14.3.55.

⁵⁵See full text in FO371/115500/V1073/537, Chancery, Damascus to Levant Department, 15.3.55. Extracts are published in al-'Azm, *Mudhakkarat*, II, 469-70.

⁵⁶Al-'Azm, *Mudhakkarat*, II, 470.

⁵⁷FO371/115501/V1073/560, Gardener to FO, 23.3.55; al-'Azm, *Mudhakkarat*, II, 472-74, where he writes that the problems on borders he had referred to in the interview concerned were not about Alexandretta, but the problems arising between Syrian and Turkish landowners, who owned property on the opposing sides of the border. It is difficult to assess whether Menderes and Köprülü were in accord or not about the way to treat this memorandum. The Ankara correspondent of the *Associated Press* speculated that Köprülü's resignation the following month "must have had some relation with the Syrian incident"; see FO371/115508/V1073/733.

Al-Jaza'iri immediately returned to Damascus for consultations, suggesting rightly that Menderes's anger had probably been caused by reports emanating from Baghdad that al-'Azm had made Nuri change his mind.⁵⁸ Indeed, Turkish officials told the Iraqi leadership soon afterwards that the Syrians should not have been received in Baghdad or, when they had come, they should have been spoken to in the strongest terms. The Syrian visit to Baghdad would now reinforce al-'Azm's position—which was on the point of tottering over a few days before—and give Syria and Egypt a period of grace during which they could work out further means to frustrate the Turkish-Iraqi Pact. Most of the ground, gained in the last three weeks by Turkish, Iraqi and Western firmness, was now probably lost.⁵⁹ Turkish suspicions had also grown after receiving information that, whilst in Baghdad, al-'Azm had suggested to the Iraqis the construction of a railway from Lattakia to Iraq, which would bypass, between Aleppo and Mosul, that stretch of 250 miles of the existing Baghdad railway passing through Turkish territory.⁶⁰ Similar divergences in Turkish and Iraqi views on how to handle the Syrian situation and encourage pro-Western elements there would continue on and off for the next four years, with the Turks always advocating a stern approach, while the Iraqis, perhaps being more aware of the intricacies of intra-Arab politics, preferring to adopt a relatively subtler line.

The Syrian government officially expressed resentment on March 22 "at the wrong interpretations of Syrian policies and intentions as well as surprise and astonishment" at Menderes's attitude, reaffirming that Syria never wished to show hostility to Turkey, but "aimed at directing its relations with sister Arab States along lines required by the interests of the Arab Nation".⁶¹ Al-'Azm explained "the recent developments" in Syrian-Turkish relations to all heads of foreign missions in Damascus,⁶² but severely reprimanded the editor of a Damascus newspaper, which had quoted large sections of the *aide-mémoire* fairly accurately.⁶³ Al-'Azm says that he did not wish to see the incident turn into another telegram, which precipitated the 1870-71 Franco-Prussian War.⁶⁴ The Turkish government, however, stated further that the Syrian memorandum had been returned because of its being merely an expression of the intolerable tactics of the present Syrian government and its Foreign Minister to fight the Turkish-Iraqi treaty.⁶⁵

⁵⁸ Al-'Azm, *Mudhakkarat*, II, 473.

⁵⁹ FO371/115503/V1073/597, Bowker to Shuckburgh, 22.3.55.

⁶⁰ FO371/115513/V1073/861, Gardener to Rose, 7.6.55.

⁶¹ FO371/115503/V1073/613, Gardener to FO, 23.3.55.

⁶² FO371/115501/V1073/560, Gardener to FO, 23.3.55.

⁶³ FO371/115502/V1073/583, Gardener to FO, 26.3.55.

⁶⁴ Al-'Azm, *Mudhakkarat*, II, 476.

⁶⁵ See full text in FO371/115505/V1073/652 & FO371/115507/V1073/734.

Although Turkey's allies believed that Ankara's *démarche* had been beneficial in causing Syria to approach her proposed agreement with Egypt with caution, they were now worried that further publicised bullying could stiffen and unite Syrian public opinion behind al-'Asali's government and against Turkey and the West.⁶⁶ They were not prepared to burn all bridges with opponents of the Turkish-Iraqi pact. Washington wanted to keep the Arab-Israeli conflict and the "Northern Tier" well apart and saw merit in maintaining a working relationship with 'Abd al-Nasir. Eden even promised the latter, during a brief visit to Cairo on February 26, that Britain would not attempt to bring other Arab states into the pact, if Egypt ceased attacking it. For the moment, Britain only wished to prevent Syria, Lebanon and Jordan from committing themselves to an exclusive anti-Baghdad grouping, which would exacerbate the division of the Arab world.⁶⁷ Iraq, too, urged restraint, because too hard a Turkish line with Syria, especially any hint of troop movements near their common frontier, could revive Syrian suspicions of Turkish intentions and push her further into Egypt's arms.⁶⁸

The Turkish Foreign Ministry, however, seemed undeterred, believing that unless strong pressure were exercised against al-'Azm personally, Syria would sign with Egypt some sort of agreement which would be a constant impediment to the development of the Turkish-Iraqi pact. Birgi claimed that a Nationalist Syrian Minister and the President's son had strongly urged the continuation of the tough Turkish line. Furthermore, since Syria had done nothing whatever to meet Turkish representations, a sudden change of tone by Ankara at this stage would merely encourage al-'Azm in his present policy.⁶⁹ Throughout the diplomatic crisis, however, Syrian Military Intelligence had not monitored any noticeable change in the overall strength of Turkish troops situated near the Syrian frontier.⁷⁰ Later, the new Turkish minister in Damascus, Adnan Kural, denied to journalists the existence of troop concentrations.⁷¹

Kural's arrival was welcomed in Damascus. His predecessor, Soysal, had been depicted as the villain by the Syrian press during the crisis. Kural presented his credentials on March 26 and was immediately convinced that Turkish pressure on Syria had gone too far and could unite the opposition behind the government and against the Turkish-Iraqi pact. Encouraged by his British and American colleagues, Kural urged Köprülü to moderate Menderes's anti-

⁶⁶FO371/115501/V1073/593, Gardener to FO, 22.3.55; FO371/115469/V1023/8, FO minute by Brewis, 23.3.55; FO371/115502/V1073/569, Gardener to FO, 25.3.55.

⁶⁷Heikal, *Cutting*, 65; Devereux, *Formulation*, 165; Young, *Foreign Policy*, 152, 177.

⁶⁸FO371/115501/V1073/542, Wright to FO, 21.3.55; FO371/115502/V1073/591, FO minute by Rose, 22.3.55.

⁶⁹FO371/115502/V1073/582, Bowker to FO, 26.3.55.

⁷⁰FO371/115502/V1073/585, Gardener to FO, 26.3.55.

⁷¹FO371/115503/V1073/598, Gardener to FO, 28.3.55.

Syrian campaign.⁷² Whether as a direct result of his prompting, or through taking other factors into account, Ankara ceased making further direct and public reproaches against Syria. Its hostility towards al-'Asali's government and the Tripartite Pact, however, never waned.

The Turkish-Syrian crisis had one lasting repercussion. It gave Moscow an opportunity to impress Syria and thus make inroads in the Arab East. If previous Syrian governments had resisted similar Soviet attempts, al-'Asali's cabinet, which included many neutralist Ministers, did not feel such constraints.⁷³ It expressed gratitude for the Soviet Foreign Ministry statement of April 17 attacking the Turkish-Iraqi pact, accusing Turkey of striving to dominate the Arab world and proclaiming Moscow's readiness to defend the freedom and sovereignty of the states of the region.⁷⁴ Later, high-ranking Soviet officials privately reassured Syria on several occasions that she need not fear a Turkish invasion. Finally, when al-'Azam concluded that France would no longer supply Syria with weapons, probably, he reasoned, under British and American pressure, he, too, like 'Abd al-Nasir, turned to and received arms from Moscow.⁷⁵ It was the beginning of a long and close bilateral Soviet-Syrian relationship. The more conservative cabinet of Sa'id al-Ghazzi, which came to power in September 1955, for example, kept relations with Moscow on friendly terms.⁷⁶

Turkey, France and the Baghdad Pact

Ankara feared that France could exert a negative influence on the future of the Baghdad Pact. France indeed felt "neglected" for not having been consulted during its formulation and suspected that it was another British device to push her totally out of the Middle East.⁷⁷ She was very angry because Menderes had not co-ordinated with her beforehand his above-mentioned negotiations in Lebanon.⁷⁸ France was further anxious that if the pact succeeded,

⁷²FO371/115503/V1073/594 & 598, Gardener to FO, 28.3.55; FO371/115502/V1073/582, FO minute by Brewis, 30.3.55.

⁷³Lesch, *Syria*, 46 argues that Soviet encroachment to the Arab heartland was the inevitable consequence of Washington's attempt to delink the political problems of the Arab world from the strategic goal of regional defence. Previously, Syria and Egypt, when courted to join MEC/MEDO, had viewed Washington as a guarantor of security against Israel and tried to use those advances unsuccessfully as a leverage to secure Israeli concessions. Now, with Washington focusing on the "Northern Tier," they turned to Moscow for arms and security guarantees.

⁷⁴FO371/115509/V1073/753, Hayter to FO, 24.4.55. See full text of Russian statement in *Pravda*, 17 April 1955; Dzh. Ruindezh, *Bor'ba irakskogo naroda protiv Bagdadskogo Pakta* (1966), 110-15; FO371/115508/V1073/733.

⁷⁵Al-'Azam, *Mudhakkarat*, II, 407-8, 428-29. Syria had bought in 1954 a few old, World War II German tanks from Czechoslovakia; see Seale, *Struggle*, 213.

⁷⁶Torrey, *Syrian Politics*, 297; Lesch, *Syria*, 67.

⁷⁷DDF 1954 (21 juillet-31 décembre), 119-21, 670-71.

⁷⁸FO371/115472/V10317/1, Gardener to Falla, 24.1.55.

Egypt could feel left out, turn her back on the Arab world and devote herself to Africa, where her revolutionary rhetoric could create trouble for British/French colonial domination.⁷⁹

France was believed to have financially backed al-'Azm, and hence Ankara attributed al-'Azm's opposition to the pact to his close relations with France.⁸⁰ Turkey conceded that France's position in Syria and Lebanon gave her some claim to interest herself in any Middle East defence scheme. Nonetheless, her role was subordinate to those of the UK and USA, since she had no troops or bases in the area and could not contribute militarily to regional defence.⁸¹ Zorlu opined that French accession to the pact could only be considered after Syrian and Lebanese adherence.⁸²

Al-'Azm's Draft of the Tripartite Pact and the Syrian Presidential Elections

Weathering the Turkish storm did not signal the end of al-'Azm's problems. He was under Egyptian pressure to sign as quickly as possible a final treaty on the lines of the joint Egyptian-Syrian-Saudi communiqué, while the Nationalist ministers in the Syrian cabinet threatened to resign if he did so. So, perhaps out of genuine conviction to strengthen the Arab front against Israel—as he himself always contended—but also perhaps as an attempt to keep the coalition government intact in order not to diminish his chances of getting elected President in July, al-'Azm drafted a new and more comprehensive political, economic and military treaty, open to signature to all Arab states, including Iraq.⁸³ Some of its far-reaching proposals remained unacceptable to Egypt.⁸⁴ Riyadh was overall closer to Cairo.⁸⁵ Even some top Syrian army officers were ready to be satisfied with less. COS Shuqayr—desperate to reach a military agreement with Egypt—proposed his own separate draft, which covered only military clauses.⁸⁶ It was even rumoured that he had threatened a coup d'état if no agreement was reached. President al-Atasi secretly enquired whether Iraq could temporarily dispatching forces to protect the constitutional government in Syria in the event of a coup or, at least, warn Syrian officers that any army-installed government would not be recognised.⁸⁷ Baghdad took no such action, however. American and British governments did not like to invoke military action or even use the threat of non-recognition as a political weapon, fearing

⁷⁹FO371/115492/V1073/270, Chancery, Cairo to African Department, 15.2.55.

⁸⁰Lesch, *Syria*, 54; Soysal, "Baghdad Pact", 74.

⁸¹FO371/110788/V1073/83, Scott Fox to Falla, 29.11.54.

⁸²FO371/115498/V1073/483, Bowker to Shuckburgh, 6.3.55.

⁸³See full text in al-Khuri, *Al-Mashari'*, 294-95.

⁸⁴Al-'Azm, *Mudhakkarat*, II, 402-07; FO371/115505/V1073/663, Stevenson to FO, 6.4.55.

⁸⁵FO371/115504/V1073/645, Stevenson to FO, 4.4.55.

⁸⁶Al-'Azm, *Mudhakkarat*, II, 404.

⁸⁷FO371/115506/V1073/686, Gardener to FO, 12.4.55; FO371/115507/V1073/712, Gardener to FO, 15.4.55.

that it might be resented as intervention in internal Syrian affairs and consequently have effects directly contrary to what was intended.⁸⁸

'Abd al-Nasir was annoyed at al-'Azm's insistence on his own draft. He reportedly held al-'Azm in low esteem, considering him a pseudo-socialist, who had emerged from feudal ranks.⁸⁹ He therefore openly backed the candidacy for the Syrian presidency of al-'Azm's rival, ex-President al-Quwatli, hoping that the latter would be more flexible.⁹⁰ Al-'Azm also failed to win Shuqayr's support.⁹¹ Iraq and the Syrian Populists, too, ultimately backed al-Quwatli as the only viable candidate to keep al-'Azm out. So, the former was elected on August 18, with only the Ba'th, the Democratic Bloc and the Communists voting for al-'Azm. It can be surmised, however, that, in order to get elected, al-Quwatli had probably given various promises, sometimes contradictory, to almost everyone.⁹²

Turkey and the Projected Tripartite Pact

Baghdad did not communicate anything to the Turks on al-Atasi's above-mentioned request, fearing that it might put some unwarranted ideas into their minds. Birgi, however, heard about it through US embassy officials, and expressed disappointment at the British and American attitude. Ankara suggested that Western powers and their allies need not fear any really serious consequences from an Egyptian-Syrian agreement after the latest developments, "but such an agreement would inevitably cloud the atmosphere and produce a crop of annoyances," and for that reason they had to "make a final effort to prevent this agreement from materialising".⁹³ Such a possibility was not yet lost. The USA and UK should "take an appropriate attitude for the non-recognition of an illegitimate [Syrian] Government, should it take power" and adopt certain economic and commercial measures, "according to the special features" of their ties with Syria. "It cannot in any way be claimed that the majority of Syrian public opinion is in favour of the Pact or that it would repudiate a Government which might abstain from concluding it," and the "majority" of the Arab countries, i.e. Iraq, Lebanon and Jordan, supported "the spirit and the aims of the Baghdad Pact". Ankara proposed that the USA, UK, Turkey, Iraq and Pakistan should take "joint and coordinated action" to strengthen the Baghdad Pact and its supporters in Syria and to dissuade the promoters of the Tripartite Pact. The adherence of Lebanon and Jordan to the Baghdad Pact was "very important" for

⁸⁸FO371/115499/V1073/510, FO minute by Rose, 14.3.55 & FO to Washington, 16.3.55; FO371/115507/V1073/722, Gardener to FO, 18.4.55.

⁸⁹Salah Nasr, *'Abd al-Nasir wa-tajribat al-wahdah* (n.d.), 99.

⁹⁰FO371/115516/V1073/940, Murray to FO, 21.7.55.

⁹¹Mustafa Tlas, *Mir'at hayati: al-'aqd al-awwal 1948-1958: al-nidal* (1990?), 499-501; al-'Azm, *Mudhakkarat*, II, 444, 452; Lesch, *Syria*, 70.

⁹²Al-'Azm, *Mudhakkarat*, II, 288; FO371/128251/VY1051/2, Rose to Lamarque, 22.2.57.

⁹³FO371/115509/V1073/760, Bowker to Shuckburgh, 19.4.55.

the current moment and US/UK encouragement would be crucial to that effect. Otherwise, if the Tripartite Pact were established, the ensuing hostility in the region "would doubtless give Russia the opportunity of forming a bridgehead in the Middle East".⁹⁴

Washington considered, however, that "action on the lines of the Turkish recommendations would not be appropriate in the present circumstances".⁹⁵ The accession of Arab states bordering Israel was inadvisable, it said, but it was taking appropriate measures to try and stop the emergence of an anti-Baghdad Pact alliance.⁹⁶ Britain, too, found most of the Turkish suggestions "either unacceptable or impractical". Urging Arab neighbours of Israel to join the pact might make Israel feel threatened and create a dangerous situation in the region. The development of the Tripartite Pact was "more likely to be hindered by treating Syria gently than threats and pressure".⁹⁷

Turkey did not want the supporters of the Tripartite Pact in Syria be seen as taking any credit whatsoever. When Harold Macmillan, the new British Foreign Secretary, agreed to meet al-'Azm, Ankara asked London to withdraw the invitation, because the meeting would strengthen al-'Azm's position in Syria on the eve of the presidential elections. If al-'Azm were only received in Paris, "his dependence upon French intrigue" would be exposed.⁹⁸

The al-Ghazzi Cabinet and the Signature of the Tripartite Pact

Having failed to agree on a single candidate during the presidential race, al-'Asali's coalition government broke up. Moreover, exactly one week after al-Quwatli's election, al-'Azm suffered a serious stroke, which forced him out of politics for nearly a year.⁹⁹ Salah Salim, too, resigned his ministerial post in Cairo that month after the failure of his Sudanese policy.¹⁰⁰ It seemed that attempts to set up a smaller, but tighter, Arab bloc were buried.

On September 13, al-Quwatli named Sa'id al-Ghazzi to head a new coalition government, supported by the People's Party, the Constitutional Bloc, a few right-wing unaffiliated deputies and some former members of the Democratic Bloc. Al-Ghazzi, who also held the foreign affairs portfolio, declared that it was not in Syria's interest to join the Turkish-Iraqi pact or any foreign non-Arab pact. He promised, however, to resume discussions on the Tripartite Pact provided that they formed the foundation of a new Arab pact to include all the

⁹⁴FO371/115510/V1073/786, Bowker to Macmillan, 3.5.55.

⁹⁵FO371/115509/V1073/788'A', Chancery, Washington to Levant Department, 3.6.55.

⁹⁶FO371/115513/V1073/856, Shuckburgh to Bowker, 10.6.55.

⁹⁷FO371/115513/V1073/856, FO minute by Rose, 7.6.55 & Shuckburgh to Bowker, 10.6.55.

⁹⁸FO371/115955/VY1051/8, FO minute by Kirkpatrick, 23.5.55.

⁹⁹Al-'Azm, *Mudhakkarat*, II, 463.

¹⁰⁰Trevelyan, *Revolution*, 15-18.

Arab states who wished to join. The latter could adhere only if their obligations to foreign powers were not thereby assumed by the other members of the projected Arab pact.¹⁰¹

The Ba'thists and some Nationalists rightly interpreted this statement as an abandonment of the Tripartite Pact.¹⁰² Menderes, too, opined that it effectively ended any likelihood of it coming into being. Hence, he did not object to what al-Ghazzi had said about the Baghdad Pact.¹⁰³ Menderes apparently thought that Turkey and Iraq had won the first tactical round in their struggle against Egypt over Syria. Eventual Syrian adherence to the Baghdad Pact would certainly consume time, but would be easier under the new circumstances.

However, the pressure the Syrian military were continuously bringing upon the government finally paid off. On October 20, under the threat of being forced to resign, al-Ghazzi's cabinet concluded a ten-year bilateral military pact with Egypt, automatically renewable for further five-year terms.¹⁰⁴ The two countries pledged to assist each other against any attack by a third party. A Supreme Council, composed of the Foreign and War Ministers of both countries, would be established, as well as a War Council, composed of the two Chiefs of Staff. A permanent Joint Command would be responsible to the Supreme Council. Both sides would share equally the expenditure incurred by the Joint Command, while the expenses for the maintenance of military installations and bases for the carrying out of joint plans would be borne in the proportion of 65% by Egypt and 35% by Syria.¹⁰⁵ Shuqayr stated that, in peacetime, the Syrian Joint Command troops "would roughly be those on the South-West front. In war they would include the whole Syrian Army, with the exception of certain base installations".¹⁰⁶

Lesch surmises that the Syrian military forced the signature of the pact, because, after the so-called "Czechoslovak" arms deal, they hoped to get Soviet arms via Egypt and feared that Israel might be tempted to attack her Arab neighbours before the actual delivery of the purchased weapons. The Syria-Egypt agreement was also a means to drop al-'Azm's draft, for which the Syrian army staff had not been very enthusiastic.¹⁰⁷ The shortage of money in Syria owing to the partial failure of crops might have also played a part, for it was evident that the signature of an agreement with Egypt and Saudi Arabia would immediately be followed by financial aid from Riyadh.

¹⁰¹FO371/115947/VY1015/87, Gallagher to Macmillan, 21.9.55.

¹⁰²Al-'Azm, *Mudhakkarat*, II, 343; FO371/115947/VY1015/90, Gallagher to Macmillan, 28.9.55.

¹⁰³FO371/115521/V1073/1067, Stewart to Rose, 28.9.55.

¹⁰⁴Al-'Azm, *Mudhakkarat*, II, 313-14; FO371/115524/V1073/1138'A', Gallagher to FO, 19.10.55; *ibid.*, -/1141, Duke to FO, 20.10.55.

¹⁰⁵See full text in *MEJ*, 10/1 (Winter 1956), 77-79; FO371/115525/V1073/1168, Trevelyan to FO, 24.10.55.

¹⁰⁶FO371/115967/VY1192/4, Gardener to Rose, 14.12.55.

¹⁰⁷Lesch, *Syria*, 74.

During the secret parliamentary debate on ratification of this pact on November 5, the People's Party forced the passage of an annex declaring that the agreement was "directed solely against any aggression committed by Israel on one of the two contracting parties and against any aggression whatever its source which may result from or be connected with such aggression".¹⁰⁸ Iraq was assured that the agreement was not directed against her and that Syria would welcome Iraqi accession.¹⁰⁹ For a short period afterwards there was even talk of a separate Syrian-Iraqi military pact, probably aired by some Populists, but it came to naught.¹¹⁰

Egypt and Saudi Arabia signed their bilateral military pact on October 27, followed by a Syrian-Saudi commercial and financial agreement on November 9. Riyadh immediately loaned Syria \$10m, probably to cover Syria's share of the military installations provided for in the Syrian-Egyptian agreement.¹¹¹ Major-General 'Abd al-Hakim 'Amir headed both Egyptian-Syrian and Egyptian-Saudi joint commands with headquarters in Cairo. The Tripartite Pact, Egypt's response to the Baghdad Pact, had finally materialised on her own terms, and as Patrick Seale has put it rightly, since "even rudimentary defence planning demands the co-ordination of foreign policies," 'Abd al-Nasir had grabbed "control of Syria's foreign policy without assuming burdensome local responsibilities".¹¹² The Egyptian-Syrian-Saudi alliance culminated in a summit in Cairo on March 6, 1956, where the three Heads of State decided to co-operate fully in foreign and defence matters.¹¹³

Months of bargaining and wrangling, however, had clearly diminished the Tripartite Pact's appeal and effectiveness, especially in the eyes of its potential opponents. It was now doubtful that it could ever become an effective instrument unless it was built up through open Western and regional opposition. Britain, Iraq and Turkey, however, opposed an American proposal that the Western allies should "avoid an openly antagonistic position toward the Pact and should endeavour to live with it," on the basis that it would be impossible to reverse suddenly their policy of opposition and that any change of attitude would destroy confidence in the veracity of US and UK representatives in the Middle East.¹¹⁴ The attention of Turkey, Iraq and the Western powers had already shifted to the internal developments in Syria, where Communism was thought be going out of hand. This would become one of their main preoccupations in the next three years.

¹⁰⁸ Al-'Azm, *Mudhakkarat*, III, 95. The Turkish government was the first among the Western allies to get hold of this secret annex; see FO371/115533/V1073/1369, Gardener to Rose, 30.11.55.

¹⁰⁹ FO371/115526/V1073/1199, Chancery, Beirut to Levant Department, 25.10.55.

¹¹⁰ FO371/115528/V1073/1241, Chancery, Damascus to Levant Department, 5.11.55.

¹¹¹ FO371/115532/V1073/1329, Keamey to Macmillan, 22.11.55.

¹¹² Seale, *Struggle*, 254. See also Tlas, *Mir'at*, 512-13.

¹¹³ Walid al-Mu'allim, *Suriyya 1918-1958: al-tahaddi wa-l-muajjah* (1985), 199, 362-64.

¹¹⁴ FO371/115516/V1073/945; FO371/115517/V1073/981, FO minute by Rose, 6.8.55.

The Failure to Bring Jordan into the Baghdad Pact

In sharp contrast to the roughness she manifested against Syria, Turkish tactics towards Lebanon and Jordan were, throughout 1955, markedly different, for the latter had refrained from public condemnations of the Baghdad Pact. Turkey took care to lure them with prospects of Western military aid if they joined the pact and went even as far as making token military gifts to both.¹¹⁵

The diminishing threat from the Tripartite Pact did not break Turkey's resolve to bring new Arab members into the Baghdad Pact. This determination was strengthened after the "Czechoslovak" arms deal with Egypt, which, Ankara thought, had opened up a possibility for Soviet influence extending "the whole way along the African coast". Foreign Minister Zorlu opined on October 14 that despite some recent discouraging signs, Lebanon would follow suit if Jordan could be brought into the Baghdad Pact. "A renewed and special effort was also necessary in the case of Syria".¹¹⁶

During Bayar's official visit to Jordan on 3-8 November, the Turks made an intensive effort to encourage Jordanian accession, telling King Husayn that only by joining the Baghdad Pact could Jordan get arms and funds needed to expand and modernise her army.¹¹⁷ Köprülü, now back as Foreign Minister, also assured the Jordanians that, if necessary, Turkey could take action which could be crippling to any future left-wing Syrian government.¹¹⁸ Bayar, in an *impromptu* speech made during a visit to some Palestinian refugee camps near the Jordan-Israel armistice line, declared that "if one day the sister army of Jordan were to be the object of an unjustified attack and if then one saw the Turkish army at its side, one should not be surprised". The aggressor meant in this case could, of course, only be Israel.¹¹⁹

The first Baghdad Pact Council meeting decided to do more "to disrupt" the Egyptian-Syrian-Saudi alliance¹²⁰ and support efforts to bring Jordan into the pact. Washington, however, warned London and Ankara against any hasty attempt to that effect, for it still opposed the pact's expansion to include any country having common frontiers with Israel.¹²¹

¹¹⁵Chamoun, *Crise*, 275; FO371/115649/VJ10344/1-2; FO371/115507/V1073/705, Chapman Andrews to FO, 14.4.55.

¹¹⁶FO371/115523/V1073/1111, Stewart to FO, 14.10.55.

¹¹⁷James Lunt, *Hussein of Jordan* (1990), 32; Hussein, *Uneasy*, 89.

¹¹⁸FO371/115527/V1073/1225, Duke to FO, 6.11.55.

¹¹⁹FO371/115649/VJ10344/5, Stewart to Rose, 15.11.55. Bayar's remarks were interpreted by the Turkish opposition as an additional commitment taken by the government without authorisation from the GNA. Köprülü later contended that the statement had been absolutely in accordance with Turkey's obligations under Article 51 of the UN Charter and as a member of the Baghdad Pact, in the context of the exchanged letters on Palestine; see FO371/121481/VJ10344/1, Chancery, Ankara to Levant Department, 30.12.55.

¹²⁰FO371/121336/V1054/101"A", Brief for meeting with von Brentano, [n.d.].

¹²¹Shuckburgh, *Descent*, 308.

King Husayn, however, had already become enthusiastic at the prospect of military aid in return for accession and sent an extravagant list of military requirements to London. The British Chief of the Imperial General Staff arrived in Amman on December 6 to negotiate the details. Talks abruptly collapsed, however, when four dissenting ministers of Palestinian origin resigned, bringing down the Jordanian cabinet. Widespread rioting across the country followed, and Husayn was forced to abandon on December 19 any thought of immediate accession.¹²²

Western and Turkish sources rightly attributed this failure to Egyptian intrigue and Saudi bribery.¹²³ 'Abd al-Nasir had indeed interpreted the British mission as a breach of the above-mentioned promise given by Eden and unleashed the full force of his powerful propaganda machine against the Jordanian government.¹²⁴ A conference of Britain's serving ambassadors in the Middle East held in London on 4-5 January 1956 and presided by the new Foreign Secretary, Selwyn Lloyd, concluded that no further effort should be made, for the time being, to bring other Arab countries into the Baghdad Pact.¹²⁵ Turkey was understandably unhappy with this decision and soon clashed with her Western allies over future tactics.

Turkey and the Palestine Question

Before analysing these disagreements, however, it is important to refer to the simultaneous shift in the Turkish attitude towards the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Iraq predictably used the rapprochement with Turkey to pull her closer towards the Arab position in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Ankara was initially very careful to keep a balance.¹²⁶ During the Bandung conference in April, however, it supported the Arabs on Palestine. Behind the scenes, she went further. Menderes, in his bid to expand the Baghdad Pact, assured Lebanon in January that Turkey would consider any future Israeli aggression against any neighbouring Arab state as an aggression against Turkey herself, while Köprülü guaranteed that Turkey would enter no similar agreement with Israel.¹²⁷ In October, Köprülü promised Jordan that if she joined the pact, Turkey could exchange with her another set of letters similar to those exchanged with Iraq. All kinds of links with Israel were

¹²²See 'Ali Abu Nuwar, *Hina talashat al-'arab: mudhakkarat fi-l-siyasah al-'arabiyyah (1948-1964)* (1990), 160-62; Uriel Dann, *King Hussein and the Challenge of Arab Radicalism: Jordan, 1955-1967* (1989), 26-28; Eden, *Full Circle*, 341-44.

¹²³Dann, *King Hussein*, 27, 177-78; *FRUS 1955-1957*, XII, 214.

¹²⁴Heikal, *Cutting*, 88-89.

¹²⁵Selwyn Lloyd, *Suez 1956: A Personal Account* (1978), 35-37; FO371/121334/V1054/41, CRO outward telegram, 23.1.56.

¹²⁶See Bayar's con-committal references to Palestine during his visit to Iraq in March and King Faysal's return visit in June-July in FO371/115750/VQ10344/2, Wright to Eden, 16.3.55 & FO371/115806/VQ1941/22, Bowker to Macmillan, 6.7.55.

¹²⁷Bağcı, *Demokrat*, 65.

downgraded. Neither the Israeli Symphony Orchestra, nor any of its individual members, were permitted to come to Turkey to give concerts.¹²⁸

Later in 1955, Turkish leaders began to refer frequently to Palestine in public as well. They were encouraged perhaps by the optimistic tone of recent public proposals on the issue by Dulles and Eden.¹²⁹ On November 19, Menderes declared that Ankara would welcome any solution to the Palestine question which would satisfy the Arab countries and primarily Iraq and would, hence, support Eden's initiative *in so far as* the Arab countries were interested themselves in it.¹³⁰ Then, during the restricted session of the Baghdad Pact Council meeting in November, he urged his colleagues to settle the Palestinian dispute, "the grounds on which Egyptian-Saudi propaganda against us is based and take from the Russians the most potent weapon in their armoury". Menderes continued:

In Israel the West had created a military bridgehead on the Arab mainland which was now rapidly becoming untenable. The Arabs would not remain unarmed for ever and there was nothing to prevent the balance of strength moving against Israel.¹³¹

The gradual drift by Turkey towards accommodating the Arabs raised eyebrows in Tel-Aviv. Israeli leaders concluded that Ankara "had few scruples when any particular aspect of their policy was in danger" and were no longer sure that it would not one day "acquiesce in another Arab aggression of some kind against Israel".¹³²

9 || Turkey had indeed entered a dangerous path in so far as she had become unable to
influence events the way she desired.

¹²⁸FRUS 1955-1957, XXIV, 662.

¹²⁹See Hurewitz, *Diplomacy*, II, 395-98, 413-15.

¹³⁰FO371/117718/RK1016/37, Chancery, Ankara to Southern Department, 29.11.55.

¹³¹FO371/115532/V1073/1342.

¹³²FO371/115516/V1073/961, Stewart to Rose, 27.7.55.

Divergence in Policy

The failure to bring Jordan into the Baghdad Pact precipitated serious disagreements between the regional pact-members on one hand and Britain (supported by the USA) on the other on future tactics they should adopt. These disagreements were quite sharp up to the end of March 1956 and had not been fully resolved even when the Suez crisis erupted in July. Throughout this period, Turkey tried to play the role of regional spokesman and was more determined than any other Middle Eastern pact-member to persuade the American and British governments to change their policies as regards the future expansion of the pact's membership, as well as towards the Egyptian government.

Turkey, Iraq and the Expansion of the Baghdad Pact

The failure in Jordan did not alter Turkey's desire to see the Baghdad Pact expanded by bringing in the USA and some Arab countries besides Iraq. For Ankara, the pact was indispensable; to stop its reinforcement or progress would mean a regression and a loss. All efforts should lead towards its extension, "while reserving the choice of time and methods to be adopted" to that effect.¹

On the issue of US adherence, Turkey had the support of all existing pact-members.² Washington, after all, had itself first proposed the "Northern Tier" project and encouraged the future members of the Baghdad Pact to expect its eventual full and active participation. American membership would no doubt give the pact added prestige, increase its military and political muscle. Washington, however, now felt that it could not ignore other aspects of its Middle Eastern policy. If it had, up to the Baghdad communiqué (13 January 1955), chided Britain for her apparent lack of enthusiasm on the "Northern Tier" scheme,³ the idea of staying away from the pact, at least for the time being, had since taken firm root in Washington, because accession could damage its bilateral relations with countries like Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Israel.⁴ Moreover, Washington had gradually become unenthusiastic even

¹FO371/121248/V1073/28, Arthur to Rose, 2.2.56.

²Rouhollah K. Ramazani, *Iran's Foreign Policy 1941-1973: A Study of Foreign Policy in Modernizing Nations* (1975), 278-79; Axelgard, *Policy*, 178; Decker, *Policy*, 136.

³Axelgard, *Policy*, 177.

⁴Decker, *Policy*, 96.

to extend the pact to Arab countries bordering Israel, thus trying to prevent the entanglement of the "Northern Tier" scheme with the intricacies of the Arab-Israeli conflict.⁵ This new American attitude emanated partly from a feeling in Congress that further US adherences to anti-Soviet pacts could hamper the relative improvement in relations with Moscow in the post-Stalin era; hamper Washington's influence in the still uncommitted countries of the so-called "Third World"; and limit its manoeuvrability to meet Soviet tactics. Washington took a lukewarm attitude during Iran's adherence to the Baghdad Pact, fearing it might exacerbate tensions with Moscow.⁶ The USA wanted to support regional pacts only to help build up strength against Soviet expansionism. She tried to avoid getting involved in local, especially inter-Arab, politics, for there was a not unfounded feeling in Washington that some countries had joined the Baghdad Pact and/or SEATO only to secure American support against some neighbour with whom they had a quarrel. Moreover, it was almost impossible to get the necessary Senate approval for US accession to the Baghdad Pact due to Iraq's membership, without also giving Israel a firm security guarantee. In view of the strength of the pro-Israeli lobby in America, Eisenhower feared that a political crisis over US-Israeli relations in an election-year might seriously damage his prospects for re-election.⁷ There was, furthermore, a growing belief in Washington that Britain had, through her membership, "hijacked" the pact and turned it simply into a means of maintaining her imperial influence in the Arab world.⁸ Finally, Washington feared that US membership would further increase demands from the other Middle Eastern member-states for military and economic aid.⁹ Washington's failure to match the expectations of pact-members ultimately proved a major weakness for the alliance.

Turkey used every diplomatic channel available to convince the USA to join the pact and was, naturally, disappointed at Washington's intransigence. The Turks were further embittered because they were convinced that US accession would be crucial in encouraging at least some of the still hesitant Arab states, like Jordan and Lebanon, possibly even Syria, to adhere too. Their early accession, hoped Ankara, would isolate and weaken Egypt and Saudi Arabia.¹⁰ Otherwise, if countries like Jordan and Lebanon were abandoned, their pro-Western leaders might even fall. Ankara asked Eisenhower and Eden to declare after their summit in Washington (30 January-2 February 1956) their strong support for the Baghdad

⁵Axelgard, *Policy*, 229; Lesch, *Syria*, 82.

⁶Decker, *Policy*, 98; Aston, "Highjacking", 133.

⁷Lesch, *Syria*, 81; Decker, *Policy*, 201-05; *FRUS 1955-1957*, XII, 219-20, 235; FO371/121270/V1075/22, Arthur to Rose, 20.1.56; FO371/121271/V1075/61G, Lloyd to Eden, 7.3.56; FO371/121251/V1073/117G, Makins to FO, 6.4.56.

⁸Aston, "Highjacking", 123-37; Decker, *Policy*, 220.

⁹Decker, *Policy*, 205.

¹⁰FO371/121252/V1073/145, Bowker to FO, 11.4.56.

Pact to strengthen the position of its members. Moreover, it "earnestly" requested them "not to make a public declaration of any kind," say a statement that the West was not seeking the pact's immediate expansion, which might lead to the deterioration of the internal position of the rulers of Jordan and Lebanon.¹¹ Then on March 11-12, during Selwyn Lloyd's visit to Ankara, Turkish leaders warned him that the political situation in Iraq was not altogether stable, subversive elements were at work, and recent developments had weakened Nuri's position.¹² Menderes opined that the lack of enthusiasm in the region to accede to the pact was the consequence of the West's reluctance both to give considerable assistance to the pact-members and apply some pressure on waverers. "If the Lebanon and Jordan had acceded to the Pact a year ago," said he, "Syria would probably have followed suit. Even today, if the United States and one more Arab country would accede, Syria would probably come in".¹³

Turkey's desire to expand the pact remained a salient feature of her Middle Eastern policy throughout the next few years. Without access to first-hand Turkish diplomatic documents, discussion about some of Turkey's motives to that effect can remain confined only to certain generalities. There is a consensus among writers on modern Turkey that the policies of successive post-war Turkish governments were generally aimed at increasing Turkey's strategic value in the eyes of the Western alliance, especially the USA, both in order to have the latter remain committed to Turkey's defence and to extract from her as much military and economic aid as possible. The expansion of the pact, however, would not have necessarily benefited either. Turkey's security and territorial integrity were already guaranteed through her membership of NATO and the expansion of the Baghdad Pact would not have precipitated a substantial growth in the US economy, thus making more money available for foreign aid. On the contrary, a country like Jordan could expect, after acceding to the pact, to get a larger share of the US foreign aid budget, thus indirectly making money less available for a country like Turkey. The only long-term, albeit not negligible, benefit Turkey could get through the expansion of the Arab membership of the pact was that she could then feel more secure against the possibility of Soviet-inspired subversive efforts emanating from countries lying to her south, as the adherence of countries like Syria, Jordan and Lebanon would have virtually guaranteed the permanence in power there of like-minded pro-Western regimes.¹⁴

No other member of the Baghdad Pact, Iraq included, seemed, at that stage, as keen as Ankara to expand its Arab membership. It was no surprise, therefore, that the Washington

¹¹FO371/121248/V1073/28, Arthur to Rose, 2.2.56.

¹²For an exposé of the situation in Iraq in early 1956, see *infra*.

¹³See records of Lloyd's conversations in Ankara in FO371/124020/ RK1051/31-33.

¹⁴See also Andrew J. A. Mango, "Turkey and the Middle East", *The Political Quarterly*, 28/2 (April-June 1957), 152-53; reprinted in Laqueur, *Transition*, 186-91.

summit failed to match Turkish expectations.¹⁵ Eden and Eisenhower did not expect any quick expansion in pact membership. Instead, they preferred to strengthen the organisation as it stood "for its political and economic, no less than for its military, value," hoping that it would thereby become more attractive to other Arab states.¹⁶

Ankara was further worried that the pact was failing to deliver to its existing members the benefits it had promised. It suggested that Britain and the USA should, in view of misgivings already expressed in Iran, Pakistan and Iraq, give priority in allocating economic and military aid to those Middle Eastern countries, "who have already sided with us and who, in spite of a heap of difficulties, have shown courage to make their position clear". Providing them with aid in sufficient speed and in sufficient quantities would help "guard against creating the impression" that the pact was "of no real value" to its members and show that association with the West was more profitable than blackmail.¹⁷

Since all Middle Eastern pact-members shared this worry,¹⁸ Turkey tried to bring them together in pursuit of a co-ordinated policy to make their common grievances clear to their Western allies. On March 24, during the celebrations at the proclamation of a republic in Pakistan, Menderes initiated a two-hour meeting of the heads of the Turkish, Iranian, Iraqi and Pakistani delegations to discuss the situation. All expressed great disquiet about the West's failure "to react with sufficient vigour in face of manifestation of Communist threat involved" and at the dearth of economic and defence aid offered. Menderes was the meeting's undisputed ringleader. He even hinted that Nuri had not expressed these views to Selwyn Lloyd strongly enough during the latter's visit to Baghdad and reportedly "spoke most strongly, alluding privately to the possibility of having to revise foreign policy unless Baghdad Powers obtained satisfaction". Since the four sides did not have enough time in Karachi to produce an agreed joint memorandum, they agreed that each government should make a separate communication on the agreed lines to the US and UK representatives in their respective capitals.¹⁹ The corresponding Turkish memorandum was handed over on March 30.

¹⁵FO371/121243/V1071/83, Chapman Andrews to Shuckburgh, 18.2.56.

¹⁶FO371/121334/V1054/41, CRO memorandum, 27.2.56. See also Eden, *Full Circle*, 335.

¹⁷FO371/121248/V1073/40, Copy of instructions from Turkish Foreign Ministry to Turkish Ambassador, Washington, 25.1.56. Britain also wanted Turkey and Iran to get preference when receiving US aid.

¹⁸Eden, *Full Circle*, 421.

¹⁹FO371/121250/V1073/93, 93'A', 98 & 116.

Turkey, Iraq and Western Policy Toward Egypt

Turkey's anxiety was further enhanced by her belief that Egypt, one of the pact's most vocal opponents, was receiving better treatment.

Ankara had, since 1952, generally shared the ups and downs of Western perceptions of Egypt's revolutionary regime, including, for some considerable time, the belief that the new Egyptian leaders would be readier than their predecessors to compromise on the issues of collective defence and British military presence in the Suez Canal zone.²⁰ The new Egyptian leaders, however, were ready to reciprocate Turkish declarations of goodwill and admiration *only* as long as their own vision of a "fully independent" Egypt was not directly challenged.²¹ With no progress being achieved on matters of substance, these gestures, in time, cooled. Egypt's stand during the 1955 Cairo Conference finally quashed Menderes's hopes that he could eventually persuade 'Abd al-Nasir to join or, at least, take a quiescent attitude towards the projected regional pact.²²

After it became evident that 'Abd al-Nasir would oppose and even attempt to thwart the Baghdad Pact, the Turkish government and media began accusing him of having become a "Communist tool". Turkey's Western allies were repeatedly told that 'Abd al-Nasir could not be trusted. Turkey began opposing all offers of Western credit to Egypt.²³ The Turkish press featured prominently an *Anadolu Ajansı* report on contacts in Ankara between the Egyptian ambassador and the Soviet chargé d'affaires.²⁴ On February 8, 1955, Menderes told Bowker that "Egyptian policy had taken a basically pro-Soviet orientation which might affect the security of the Canal Zone".²⁵ It was not totally uncharacteristic of Turkish politicians or pundits of the period to accuse foreign governments or individuals of communism or of being Soviet stooges, when they were pursuing policies which, irrespective of motives, did not seem to them to conform with the Turkish world-view and objectives. In the immediate aftermath of the expulsion of Ambassador Tugay in 1954,²⁶ for example, the opposition RPP newspaper, *Yeni Ulus*, had accused Cairo of growing increasingly obstinate towards any

²⁰McGhee, *Connection*, 137; Ismail Soysal, "Turkish-Arab Diplomatic Relations after the Second World War (1945-1986)", *STAR*, 1 (1986), 253.

²¹Muhammad Hasanayn Haykal, *Ma alladhi jara fi Suriyya* (1962?), 166-67; George Emanuel Gruen, *Turkey, Israel and the Palestine Question, 1948-1960: A Study in the Diplomacy of Ambivalence*, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1970, 200; Ivanova, *Otnoshenie*, 11; Bağcı, *Demokrat*, 67; Soysal, "Political Relations", 51.

²²FO371/115486/V1073/65, FO minute by Rose, 19.1.55; *ibid.*, -/76, HM Consul-General, Istanbul to FO, 22.1.55; FO371/115500/V1073/519, Bowker to FO, 18.3.55.

²³*FRUS 1955-1957*, XXIV, 667; FO371/115469/V1023/16G, Macmillan to FO, 28.10.55; FO371/121274/V1075/130, 'Record of meeting between Representatives of Bagdad Pact Powers', 6.8.56.

²⁴FO371/115491/V1073/239, Bowker to FO, 11.2.55.

²⁵FO371/115489/V1073/193, Bowker to FO, 9.2.55.

²⁶See p. 59.

agreement with Britain over the Suez Canal base and of wanting to become totally estranged with the West and turn towards Moscow. It had claimed that the Egyptian "show of enmity" towards Turkey, i.e. Tugay's expulsion, had been within that framework.²⁷ Menderes's claim, therefore, was not taken seriously by Bowker. He replied that "the Egyptian Government's present policy could be explained by simpler and less sinister motives than His Excellency [had] suggested".²⁸ The sequence of events, however, made Menderes appear later to the same Bowker, and perhaps to other Western policy-makers as well, as a prophet, who had preceded them in recognising the villain in 'Abd al-Nasir.²⁹

Meanwhile, 'Abd al-Nasir's reputation was undergoing a change in the Arab world. Through his firm opposition to the Baghdad Pact and his espousal of Arab unity and neutralism, he overcame the suspicions previously harboured by anti-Western and neutralist forces.³⁰ His influential propaganda machine, which, before 1955, had never talked of Arab unity, began reminding the Arabs of their past glory and called for unity. He turned Arab nationalism into a protest movement against Western dominance.³¹ Egypt soon became a source for inspiration and was now hailed by wide sections throughout the Arab world as the legitimate representative of pan-Arab aspirations. 'Abd al-Nasir attempted to foster his newly-found popularity by every means possible. The Cairo-based "Voice of the Arabs" radio station broadened political participation throughout the Arab world by sending his message to Arab masses everywhere, over the heads of their respective governments. It soon found a large and receptive audience. For the Palestinian refugees, scattered throughout the Arab world, 'Abd al-Nasir appeared as a potential liberator of their homeland. Finally, when 'Abd al-Nasir, frustrated by Western slowness, not to say unwillingness, to provide his army with modern sophisticated weapons, ventured instead to buy arms from the Soviet Bloc, his act was hailed by the Arab public in general as a slap in the face to the West, whom they suspected of deliberately withholding arms from the Arabs in order to safeguard the existence of Israel.

'Abd al-Nasir had so far prevented all Fertile Crescent Arab states from joining the Baghdad Pact and had, thus, somewhat isolated Iraq from the rest of the Arab world. Egypt's role in thwarting Jordan's accession to the pact was widely suspected. Zorlu also held Egypt responsible for Libya's decision to establish diplomatic relations with Moscow without any

²⁷*Yeni Ulus*, 12.1.54, quoted in Şehsuvaroğlu, *Hekim*, 210.

²⁸FO371/115489/V1073/193, Bowker to FO, 9.2.55.

²⁹FO371/124001/RK1016/35, Bowker to Lloyd, 12.9.56.

³⁰Fadil Husayn, *Tarikh al-hizb al-watani al-dimuqrati 1946-1958* (1963), 349; al-'Akam, *Ta'rikh*, 167-77.

³¹Carl Robert Frost, *The United Arab Republic, 1958-1961: A Study in Arab Nationalism and Unity*, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Denver, 1966, 125-26.

previous intimation to the Western powers.³² By February 1956, Turkish diplomats were regularly suggesting that no progress could be made with the extension of the pact so long as 'Abd al-Nasir controlled Egypt.³³ Egypt did not want war, said Köprülü, but was interested in maintaining a state of tension in the region. "She was able to do this successfully because in addition to the open alliance with Saudi Arabia and Syria, she was still the acknowledged leader of the other uncommitted Arab countries".³⁴

For the UK and US governments, however, more than the future expansion of the Baghdad Pact was at stake. Both were extremely concerned about the continuing Arab-Israeli tension, which, they thought, was providing the USSR an excellent opportunity to penetrate into the Middle East. Both believed that 'Abd al-Nasir was the only Arab leader strong and courageous enough to make peace with Israel, and had been, since December 1954, sponsoring a highly secret set of indirect discussions between Israel and Egypt, code-named *Alpha*, to find an acceptable solution. Speeches by Dulles and then Eden referred to in the preceding chapter were some of the few public indications of these efforts.³⁵ For this reason alone, London and Washington continued to give 'Abd al-Nasir, for the time being at least, the benefit of the doubt. They could not figure out whether Egypt's arms purchase from Czechoslovakia meant a definite shift of allegiance or had just been a bargaining ploy. They intensified efforts further, suspecting that Israel might "be tempted to provoke a preventive war before the balance of power turns against her" and continued to sell 'Abd al-Nasir some arms and provide aid.³⁶ King Husayn's dismissal in early March of Lt.-Gen. John Glubb, the British Commander of Jordan's Arab Legion, after being attributed for a short time in London to Egyptian "intrigue," was quickly laid to rest.³⁷ Britain even hoped that after finding a workable arrangement between Egypt and Israel, she could eventually get Cairo to accept the reality of the Baghdad Pact.³⁸ American and British credits, offered to Egypt in December 1955, to finance the construction of the Aswan High Dam were the ultimate Western "sweetener" to influence future Egyptian policy.

As long as the West continued to pin its hopes for peace on 'Abd al-Nasir, disagreements with Turkey were inevitable. Ankara was never told officially about the secret mediation

³²FO371/115525/V1073/1152, Bowker to FO, 22.10.55.

³³FO371/121243/V1071/83, Chapman Andrews to Shuckburgh, 18.2.55.

³⁴FO371/121252/V1073/145, Bowker to FO, 11.4.55.

³⁵For details see *FRUS 1952-1954*, IX, Part 1; *FRUS 1955-1957*, XIV; Louis and Owen, *Suez 1956*, 73-100.

³⁶Monroe, *Moment*, 186.

³⁷For details see Dann, *King Hussein*, 32; Lunt, *Hussein*, 40-44. Abu Nuwar, *Hina talashat*, 162-63 suggests that fears that Glubb was plotting to forcibly merge Jordan with Iraq in the wake of her refusal to join the pact were a major motive in his dismissal. King Husayn himself has since denied repeatedly any foreign involvement in the dismissal; see Hussein de Jordanie, *Mon métier de roi* (1975), 106.

³⁸FO371/121334/V1054/41, CRO memorandum, 27.2.56.

efforts and it seems improbable that it ever found out much about them on its own. It can be safely assumed, however, that it would have been sceptical about any eventual Arab-Israeli deal achieved through 'Abd al-Nasir's co-operation. Nuri, on the other hand, having been briefed about the secret negotiations by both London and Cairo, was as keen to reach some sort of solution as his Western allies. He assured Cairo that Iraq would not object to any compromise acceptable to all Arab states bordering Israel.³⁹ This is probably why Iraq was, in general, less vocal, at the time, than Turkey in condemning Egyptian policies.

Nuri had every other reason to share Turkish apprehensions about the consequences of 'Abd al-Nasir's rising star. Iraq's bilateral relations with Egypt remained strained.⁴⁰ He was convinced that Cairo was encouraging unrest and opposition within Iraq, where 'Abd al-Nasir was fast becoming a focal point for pan-Arab nationalist and neutralist opponents of the Baghdad Pact.⁴¹ During Menderes's visit in January 1955, the police had kept some thirty college students in custody to prevent any possible anti-government agitation. The only public expressions of opposition had been a small grenade thrown at the garden of the Turkish embassy and a dog dressed in a piece of cloth with the words "Adnan Menderes" inscribed on it.⁴² Recordings of messages, critical of Nuri's foreign policy, made by the leaders of the banned Independence Party, to be broadcast on the "Voice of the Arabs" had been confiscated.⁴³ With time, however, opposition circles had become bolder. On 29 December 1955, leaders of the banned Independence and National Democratic parties stated in a petition submitted to the Palace—what was, according to Wright, "certainly widely felt" beliefs—that Iraq "has not only become isolated from the other Arab States, but has become an influential factor in opposing Arab efforts, an instrument to divide the Arab Community, and a means of pressure on certain Arab States to induce them also to desert the noble Arab cause". Nuri's policy was "dangerous to the existence and future of Iraq and harmful to her interests". The petition demanded Nuri's dismissal; the restoration of democratic freedoms; Iraq's "liberation" from the Baghdad Pact and her "pursuance of a sound Arab policy harmonious with that of other Arab countries in their progress towards liberation and unity".⁴⁴ More ominous for Nuri was discontent among certain sections of the Iraqi establishment. A year before, the Iraqi public had reportedly "received the pact without enthusiasm but despite—and perhaps because of—the virulence of Egyptian propaganda, as a

³⁹Ismat al-Sa'id, *Nuri al-Sa'id: rajul al-dawlah wa-l-insan* (1992), 199-200; Trevelyan, *Revolution*, 43; al-Jamali, *Dhikrayat*, 131; FO371/121651/VQ10316/65, Hooper to FO, 9.8.56.

⁴⁰Trevelyan, *Revolution*, 62-63; Decker, *Policy*, 92; Saad, *Iraq*, 46.

⁴¹FO371/115748/VQ1015/2, Hooper to Eden, 12.1.55.

⁴²Salman al-Takriti, *Al-Wasi 'Abd al-Ilah bin 'Ali yabthath 'an 'arsh 1939-1953* (1989), 186; FO371/110788/V1073/90, Hooper to Falla, 21.12.54.

⁴³FO371/115487/V1073/131, Hooper to Eden, 26.1.55.

⁴⁴See full text and Wright's comments in FO371/121641/VQ1015/4, Wright to Lloyd, 11.1.56.

piece of necessary foreign policy". Many had hoped that it would eventually "become a predominantly Arab affair with an Arab majority on the ministerial council, and this will place an obstacle in the way of any Turkish designs on Syria and Iraq".⁴⁵ It now appeared, however, that Iraq would remain in the foreseeable future the pact's only Arab member. Even some of Nuri's early followers began to criticise him, express doubts about the feasibility of his foreign policy and openly question the advantages of keeping him as Premier.⁴⁶ Prince 'Abd al-Ilah, however, thought that the time was inappropriate to change Nuri.⁴⁷ Certain army officers, in turn, were arguing that, compared with Egypt, the pact had brought few benefits to Iraq. Anti-British sentiment was increasing among junior officers. Complaints were being aired about alleged British slowness in delivering arms to Iraq and obstacles put by them in the way of obtaining arms from elsewhere. A small secret pro-Egyptian cell had been uncovered at junior level in the army.⁴⁸

Nuri fought hard. Instead of urging the adoption of tough measures against 'Abd al-Nasir, however, he preferred to convince his Arab audience that he was still a credible, staunch pan-Arab nationalist.⁴⁹ Still he was forced to publicly admit that the Baghdad Pact "was not connected with settlement of the Palestine question, but was directed against the Communist danger".⁵⁰ Later, he unsuccessfully tried to push the Pact Council meeting in Tehran to adopt a positive role in the solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict, arguing that it could be a catalyst to bring in new Arab members. Ironically, Menderes, countered that the pact could contribute positively to the solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict *only after* having additional Arab members.⁵¹ Delegates from other member-states were sympathetic to Nuri's case, but the overriding desirability of avoiding any reference in the final communiqué to the Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan made it impossible to include more than a passing reference to Palestine.⁵² After the meeting, Iraqi Foreign Minister Burhan al-Din Bash A'yan told Parliament that the pact was helpful to secure support for the Arab point of view on Palestine, and that it could become "an effective instrument for the settlement of the Palestine

⁴⁵FO371/115497/V1073/463, Wright to Eden, 1.3.55.

⁴⁶FRUS 1955-1957, XII, 262, 988-92; F0371/121241/V1071/9, Hooper to FO, 3.1.56; F0371/121641/VQ1015/5, Beaumont to Rose, 14.1.56; F0371/121650/V10316/7, Trevelyan to Wright, 19.1.56; F0371/121369/V1195/8, Wright to FO, 24.1.56; F0371/121641/VQ1015/10, Rose to Wright, 10.2.56; *ibid.*, -/20, Allen to Rose, 16.3.56; F0371/121641/VQ1015/19G & 21, Wright to FO, 20.3.56 & 22.3.56.

⁴⁷FRUS 1955-1957, XII, 35; F0371/121641/VQ1015/24G, Wright to FO, 26.3.56.

⁴⁸FO371/121668/VQ1201/2G, Hooper to Rose, 13.3.56; F0371/119084/JE14211/218, Hooper to FO, 2.8.56.

⁴⁹FO371/121642/VQ1015/32, Wright to FO, 13.4.56; F0371/121870/VY10393/18, Hooper to Lloyd, 18.4.56; F0371/121227/V10322/9, FO minute by Shuckburgh, 17.5.56; F0371/121281/V1078/5-6, 13, 15(A) & 16.

⁵⁰FO371/121369/V1195/8, Wright to FO, 24.1.56.

⁵¹FRUS 1955-1957, XII, 287-88; F0371/121254/V1073/181, Nuri's opening statement, 16.4.56.

⁵²FO371/121255/V1073/193, Wright to FO, 23.4.56.

or any other Arab question if the Arab States concerned should accede to it".⁵³ No other Arab country agreed with Nuri, however, or dared say that it did.

Turkey and the Situation in Syria

Ankara hoped that checking the growth of 'Abd al-Nasir's influence in the region at large would also affect the internal situation in Syria. 'Abd al-Nasir had established, during 1955, a firm hold on Syrian foreign policy. Damascus was responding positively to Soviet trade and aid overtures and establishing cordial relations with other Eastern Bloc countries. It followed Egypt in admitting publicly the conclusion of its own arms deal with Czechoslovakia.⁵⁴ The hopes of some right-wing and centrist Syrian politicians, that they could bring the Ba'th party under control and stop the swing to the left, by including its representatives in a new cabinet, had been dashed.⁵⁵ In a new national coalition government formed by Sabri al-'Asali on June 14, 1956, the important portfolios of Foreign Affairs and Economy had indeed gone to the Ba'th. The latter, however, with the assistance of some sympathetic senior army officers, had forced the new government to proclaim theoretical union with Egypt, open to adhesion by all Arab countries. A right-wing attempt to purge the top army hierarchy from leftist officers had also been unsuccessful.⁵⁶

Ankara feared that if existing trends in Syrian politics continued unchecked, Turkey's own security could soon be threatened. It suspected that thousands of leaflets in Turkish distributed among the low-paid workers in Izmir and other large cities, attacking the government's policies and calling for its downfall, were printed by the Soviets in Beirut and smuggled to Turkey via Syria.⁵⁷ In mid-February the Turks were very alarmed, albeit just for a few days, after receiving reports of an imminent Communist coup in Syria. They urgently contacted their allies, only to be assured that the information they had received was exaggerated.⁵⁸

Problems arising across the Turkish-Syrian frontier further soured bilateral relations. In early 1956, a new Syrian minister, 'Umar 'Addas, had been appointed in Ankara, and, on March 3, a bilateral trade agreement signed.⁵⁹ The Turkish government had also been

⁵³FO371/121256/V1073/219, Duke to FO, 30.4.56.

⁵⁴Pedro Ramet, *The Soviet-Syrian Relationship Since 1955: A Troubled Alliance* (1990), 16-17; Torrey, *Syrian Politics*, 339-42; Lesch, *Syria*, 97.

⁵⁵FO371/121858/VY1015/3, Gardener to FO, 17.2.56; *ibid.*, -/7, Gardener to Lloyd, 28.2.56.

⁵⁶Torrey, *Syrian Politics*, 307-08; Petran, *Syria*, 115; al-'Azm, *Mudhakkarat*, II, 314 & III, 92-98; al-Mu'allim, *Suriyya*, 202; Tlas, *Mir'at*, 544; FO371/128219/VY1011/2, Gardener to Lloyd, 15.11.57.

⁵⁷FRUS 1955-1957, XXIV, 666-67.

⁵⁸FO371/121858/VY1015/1G-2G.

⁵⁹FO371/121876/VY1134/1 & 7.

thinking of inviting a Syrian parliamentary delegation.⁶⁰ The continuing leftward drift in Syria, however, proved ominous, and a bitter row over smuggling in the border region ensued. Smuggling was profitable because of the difference between the official Turkish and black-market exchange rates. The Turks had planted mines along certain parts of the border to reduce traffic. The Syrians proposed that the mines should be removed. Kural, in turn, argued that the smugglers knew where the mines were or drove a herd of sheep or cattle before them to clear the road. The mines were, thus, only destroying harmless sheep and innocent shepherds who tried to retrieve them. Reports appearing in the Syrian press of people killed by Turkish mines while crossing the border were having an effect as anti-Turkish propaganda.⁶¹ Kural and the Turkish Foreign Ministry tried, but failed to persuade the Turkish Ministries of Defence, the Interior, and Customs to have the mines removed. The latter insisted that the mines were serving a useful purpose. One high level Foreign Ministry official even suspected that "Turkish Customs officials on the spot probably had a financial interest in the contraband traffic and found the mines useful in that they obliged the Syrian smugglers to cross the frontier at points where the toll could be effectively levied".⁶² There were frequent clashes between Syrian smugglers and the Turkish *Gendarmerie*. On June 23, one such clash resulted in the death of two Turkish soldiers and the detention of 38 Syrians, creating a minor diplomatic crisis. The detainees were released only a month later.⁶³

Bilateral relations were complicated further through Turkey's attitude towards the Syrian project of draining and reclaiming the Ghab marshlands in the Orontes valley. It was to reduce flooding and provide 100,000 acres of newly-acquired land for landless peasants. Syria asked the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development to finance the project. Ankara objected, however, that the project would reduce the waters of the Orontes in Hatay. Although the Bank was not impressed by the strength of the Turkish objection, the Syrians resented it. The Damascus newspaper *al-Nasr* said it was a manoeuvre to extort political concessions from Syria on the legal status of the disputed region.⁶⁴

Turkey and the Right-Wing Coup-Attempt in Syria

Menderes's worries about growing Egyptian and Soviet influence in Syria were shared understandably by Nuri. Their apprehension was communicated to the Baghdad Pact Council

⁶⁰FO371/121876/VY1134/2, Chancery, Ankara to Levant Department, 6.3.56.

⁶¹FO371/121878/VY1181/4, Chancery, Ankara to Levant Department, 3.4.56; FO371/121868/VY10344/1, Chancery, Damascus to Chancery, Ankara, 25.6.56.

⁶²FO371/121878/VY1181/1, Chancery, Ankara to Levant Department, 23.5.56.

⁶³See FO371/121868/VY10344/3-18 & 20.

⁶⁴Petran, *Syria*, 88, 98, 100; Sanjian, *Alexandretta*, 255-56; FO371/121876/VY11344/6, Chancery, Ankara to Levant Department, 4.6.56.

meeting (November 1955) and found attentive ears.⁶⁵ Turkey, Iraq and the Western powers, together with many prominent right-wing Syrian politicians, considered Syria's links with the USSR more dangerous than Egypt's. They acknowledged that 'Abd al-Nasir was anti-Communist and could sooner or later willingly limit his dependence on Moscow. Syria, however, had no strong leader to match 'Abd al-Nasir. Communism had already become entrenched among both civilians and the military.⁶⁶ 'Adnan al-Atasi, the son of the former Syrian President, personally warned 'Abd al-Nasir that whenever, in future, Egypt wished to cease flirting with Moscow, she might find that Syria was already too firmly committed to the Communists to be able to follow Egypt once again.⁶⁷

Nuri came under pressure both from the Crown-Prince and al-Jamali to intervene in Syria and try to halt the leftward trend. Turkish Ambassador Göksevenin promised, too, to exert some pressure on Nuri to that effect.⁶⁸ Nuri, however, initially doubted whether such a policy would work. For months, he fluctuated between interventionism and staying aloof. His attitude, during a meeting with members of the Turkish delegation on the fringes of the Baghdad Pact Council meeting (November 1955), for example, "seemed to be more or less one of indifference". He reportedly told the Turks that

all Syrians were the same and all equally useless; there really seemed to be only two possibilities; one to let the present regime continue until its leaders were utterly discredited and the system collapsed of its own accord and then take action; the other to pick the best man out of the present bunch and try and make something for him...

Nuri also doubted that any provision of economic help could strengthen the position of pro-Western elements in Syria, arguing that "the last 'bribe' had been accepted but there had been no change that he could detect".⁶⁹ He demanded firm assurances that Western powers would favour any Iraqi move to change the Syrian government by force and would restrain Israel from intervention in Syria. He thought he could "square the Turks".⁷⁰

Finally, after months of hesitation, Nuri told the visiting Selwyn Lloyd in early March, that Iraq was ready to take action but only "in response to an appeal from elements in Syria as a result of some local Syrian situation 'arising'". The objective would be "to give the non-Communist elements in Syria a chance of coming at the top. The sovereign independence of

⁶⁵FO371/115532/V1073/1342, Record of restricted session, 22.11.55.

⁶⁶FO371/115588/V1193/155, Wright to FO, 4.11.55.

⁶⁷FO371/115469/V1023/15, Jebb to FO, 26.10.55; FO371/121864/VY10316/2, Gardener to Lloyd, 17.2.56.

⁶⁸FO371/121870/VY10393/2G, Gardener to FO, 25.2.56.

⁶⁹FO371/115947/VY1015/94, Stewart to Rose, 6.10.55.

⁷⁰FO371/115954/VY10393/1G, Hooper to FO, 5.10.55. See also *FRUS 1955-1957*, XIII, 543-44.

Syria should not be touched". Turkish and Israeli restraint was necessary, however. Ankara had to promise—as he had some recent indications it would do—not to move across the frontier in Syria once the operation was under way, and Israel undertake not to take up the opportunity to attack Syria. Nuri was confident that, provided Washington would acquiesce and that "the Turks and the Israelis had been squared beforehand," he could mount the operation within "three or four weeks". Otherwise, "Arab nationalism would be roused and the possibilities of successful action by Iraq nullified".⁷¹ Lloyd—himself a believer that the Syrian situation could not be tolerated further—was encouraged by Nuri's plans and promised to discuss the matter during his tour, both in Ankara and Tel Aviv, and later with Eden. Menderes agreed with Nuri. "Turkey could not afford to have a hostile Syria on her southern frontier, he said".⁷² "Turkey's only interest in Syria is that the country should not become a Communist satellite, but should be under a Government well-disposed towards close collaboration with the Western Powers".⁷³

Soon, extremely diverse Syrian anti-government political forces were brought together to work with Iraq, Britain and the USA to topple the Damascus cabinet *in situ*. They included the People's Party; some pro-Western elements in the National Party; the conservative Constitutional Bloc; the Socialist Co-operative Party and the exiled SSNP.⁷⁴ The latter's participation—despite its lukewarm attitude toward the Baghdad Pact—was based on the feeling of revenge it harboured towards the Ba'th, Communists and Col. 'Abd al-Hamid al-Sarraj, head of army intelligence, who had exploited the assassination in 1955 of a senior pro-Ba'thist army officer by an SSNP member to ban the party and imprison—even assassinate—its leaders.⁷⁵ All conspirators had had at least some past connection with the Iraqi regime. They agreed to co-operate in pursuit of the immediate tactical objective of toppling the existing Syrian government, but they would have almost certainly fallen out among themselves had the plot succeeded, for each group had a different long-term vision of Syria.⁷⁶ It is difficult,

⁷¹FO371/121858/VY1015/13, Lloyd to Eden, 10.3.56.

⁷²FO371/124020/RK1051/32, Record of conversation between Lloyd and Menderes, 12.3.56.

⁷³FO371/121858/VY1015/11G, Lloyd to Nuri al-Sa'id, 13.3.56. It appears that Lloyd did not broach this topic later in Tel-Aviv. He did not mention anything as regards Israel's attitude in his report to Eden submitted on March 15. "I am in favour of his plan, but sceptical of its patrons," commented Eden, referring probably, to Nuri and his supporters in Syria; see FO371/121858/VY1015/15G, Zulueta to Logan, 16.3.56. It was probably at this juncture that the so-called Arab Committee at the British Cabinet or FO level began to formulate a contingency plan envisaging an Iraqi invasion of Syria at the request of a Syrian pro-Western revolutionary government; see Chapter 9.

⁷⁴Pipes, *Greater Syria*, 100; Reeva S. Simon, "The Hashemite 'Conspiracy': Hashemite Unity Attempts, 1921-1958", *IJMES*, 5/3 (April 1974), 322.

⁷⁵Ghassan Zakariyya *yata dhakkar al-sultan al-ahmar* (1991), 96-97, 169.

⁷⁶See the uncovering of this coup attempt in Chapter 6. For further details see Wilbur C. Eveland, *Ropes of Sand: America's Failure in the Middle East* (1980), 162-91; W. Scott Lucas, *Divided We Stand: Britain, the US and the Suez Crisis* (1991), 130-31, 140, 218, 276-77; Douglas Little, "Cold War and Covert Action:

for example, to discount the possibility that Prince 'Abd al-Ilah was still hoping that the planned coup could provide finally him with the Syrian throne. Nuri and his immediate circle, meanwhile, preferred—to the dismay of the Turks—to see Adib al-Shishakli back in power in Damascus.⁷⁷ The latter had not, in the past, been on friendly terms with the Hashimites, but he had been trying, since mid-1955, to arrive at some sort of understanding with Baghdad.⁷⁸

The Turkish government, subsequently, following advice they received from Nuri and most probably from London and Washington as well, did not get directly involved in the actual planning and implementation of the coup.⁷⁹ In late September, Menderes even complained to Fletcher Warren, the new US ambassador in Ankara, that Turkey was being kept in the dark about UK/US plans in Syria.⁸⁰ More ironically, Birgi complained to Lloyd, almost simultaneously, that "the Turkish Government had the impression that Nuri Said had given up the idea of doing anything about Syria for the time being, and were afraid that, though he talked a lot, if left to himself Nuri Said would do nothing".⁸¹

It can deduced, therefore, that Ankara favoured the use of unorthodox measures in Syria if it promised to bring about any change in the political climate there. Kural, however, argued consistently that the Syrians should be let to manage their own affairs and that a *modus vivendi* was possible between the pro-Western forces in the Middle East and the Ba'th Party. He admitted to Wilbur Eveland, a US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) agent in Syria, however, that he was not putting his case strongly in Ankara, because he knew nobody would listen to him.⁸²

Turkey and the Changing Anglo-American Perceptions of 'Abd al-Nasir

These ongoing preparations for a pro-Western coup attempt in Syria were, at this stage, at most a side show and did not directly affect the diplomatic row over tactics to be adopted to strengthen the Baghdad Pact.

Since the row was based largely on differing perceptions of 'Abd al-Nasir's role in the area, the British government, which began to lose faith in the pursued secret initiatives earlier than its transatlantic ally, was predictably also the first to try to reassure Ankara. During Lloyd's visit to Cairo, he was less forthcoming than Eden had been a year before in reassuring 'Abd al-Nasir that Britain would not ask any uncommitted Arab state to join the Baghdad

The United States and Syria, 1945-1958", *MEJ*, 44/1 (Winter 1990), 65-67; Seale, *Struggle*, 267-82; al-'Azam, *Mudhakkarat*, III, 92-93; Kyle, *Suez*, 338, 367; Lloyd, *Suez*, 106.

⁷⁷FO371/115947/VY1015/94, Stewart to Rose, 6.12.55.

⁷⁸FO371/115516/V1073/958, Chapman Andrews to FO, 30.7.55.

⁷⁹FO371/130186/RK10345/1, Pemberton-Pigott to Galsworthy, 29.1.57.

⁸⁰*FRUS 1955-1957*, XIII, 591.

⁸¹FO371/124021/RK1052/7G, 'Meeting between Lloyd and Birgi', 24.9.56.

⁸²Eveland, *Ropes*, 130-31, 186.

Pact.⁸³ On March 5, Eden wrote to Eisenhower that 'Abd al-Nasir's relations with the Soviets were probably much closer than he admitted to the Western powers.⁸⁴ Eisenhower refused to close the door yet on the possibility of working with 'Abd al-Nasir in order not to cancel out any prospect of obtaining an Arab-Israel settlement,⁸⁵ and Britain—according to a Commonwealth Relations Office (CRO) telegram—continued officially to harp on the old tune until April 14 at least.⁸⁶ The growing British doubts were enough, however, for Lloyd to reassure Ankara that Britain was not prepared to make a deal with 'Abd al-Nasir.⁸⁷

Modern historians of the Middle East generally agree that by the end of March 1956, the USA and UK had concluded that the *Alpha* project was going nowhere. Reports that Egypt was assisting the rebels in Algeria and her recognition of the People's Republic of China had further harmed 'Abd al-Nasir's image. Soon an altogether new policy aimed at strengthening the position of the West's conservative allies in the Arab world was adopted in Washington and, then, London. The American ambassador, Henry Byroade, a symbol of the old policy, was recalled from Cairo and ultimately American and British credits offered to finance the Aswan High Dam project were withdrawn. It has been suggested that it was at this juncture that Washington associated itself with the clandestine coup preparations in Syria.⁸⁸ The above-mentioned CRO telegram, however, is one example that it took some time for this new policy to trickle down and cover other aspects of Middle Eastern diplomacy.

The end of March and the early part of April 1956, therefore, continued to be a period of acute tension and disagreement between Ankara and its Western allies. By the time of the Baghdad Pact Council meeting in Tehran in mid-April, Menderes still believed that he, personally, had to work hard to put his view across to his Western allies. He deliberately publicised his misgivings about 'Abd al-Nasir, by attacking him during his speech in the public opening session. Menderes probably intended to escalate the so far tacit conflict and thus put his allies under some pressure to align with him publicly against 'Abd al-Nasir. The speech he made at the closed session expanded on the same theme. Menderes said 'Abd al-Nasir was using the following weapons in his policy:

1. To make use of the lenient attitude of the United States and to a certain extent of Great Britain to maintain that his policy is the best way to impose upon the West and to impose his policies upon it while he is able to extort money and aid from it.

⁸³Monroe, *Moment*, 190.

⁸⁴*FRUS 1955-1957*, XII, 249; FO371/121271/V1075/57G, Eden to Eisenhower, 5.3.56.

⁸⁵FO371/121272/V1075/71, Eisenhower to Eden, 10.3.56. See also FO371/121271/V1075/61G, Lloyd to Eden, 7.3.56.

⁸⁶FO371/121335/V1054/87, CRO outward telegram, 14.4.56.

⁸⁷FO371/121243/V1071/107, Rose to Trevelyan, 28.3.56.

⁸⁸Little, "Cold War", 65.

Thus [*sic*/] obviously enhances his prestige both at home and in some other countries of the Middle East.

2. To enter into close relations with the Russians, to receive their aid, to blackmail the West and to call for [*sic*/] a rivalry in bidding for his favours.

3. To exploit Islam, and to arrogate to himself the rôle of the protector of Islam and leader of the Moslems.

4. To try to emerge as a champion of Arab unity.

5. To exploit Western imperialism which is on its way of [*sic*/] becoming a legend.

Menderes continued:

We too cherished the hope for a long time that by being lenient towards Nasser we might induce him to the path of reason. We too were afraid to drive Nasser to the Russian embrace. But now we have lost all hope and corrected our approach. We are now convinced that the more you smile at Nasser the greater become his vanity and arrogance, and the more he is driven to drag his people to adventures... As for going over to the Russian side, he is unfortunately doing it before our very eyes with the air of diplomatic finesse and astuteness. Therefore, perhaps it will be better if we do not try to play his game of blackmail and leave him alone with his Russian friends. He might then at least be overawed by the seriousness of the situation, or perhaps the people of Egypt themselves might call him to order. We have nothing to lose and all other methods have failed, so perhaps we could try this.⁸⁹

Menderes claimed that Egyptian policy was directly inspired from Moscow. Egypt was not interested in a solution to the Palestine question, "which helped to nourish his prestige and feed his propaganda". "The only solution was an all out propaganda attack on Nasser".⁹⁰

The Egyptian government was disturbed by Menderes's public remarks and asked Ankara for an explanation.⁹¹ The semi-official newspaper, *al-Gumhuriyyah*, described Menderes's opening speech as "cheap buffoonery" and "an aggression which Egypt will not tolerate".⁹² The Turks sent "a stiff reply" to the Egyptian request, hoping that it would "lead to further uproar". They were probably disappointed when Cairo did not make further public criticism or take any retaliatory action. They still considered, however, that the angry Egyptian reaction was "a measure of the success of the [Tehran] meeting".⁹³

Nuri backed Menderes during the Tehran meeting. He had also been attributing lately most of 'Abd al-Nasir's behaviour to his supposedly ever increasing links with Moscow and

⁸⁹See full text of speech in FO371/121256/V1073/213, Chancery, Tehran to Levant Department, 24.4.56.

⁹⁰FO371/121253/V1073/174, Stevens to FO, 19.4.56.

⁹¹FO371/121243/V1071/120, Trevelyan to FO, 19.4.56.

⁹²Editorial of May 2, quoted in FO371/121243/V1071/121, Trevelyan to FO, 5.5.56.

⁹³FO371/121256/V107/231, Stewart to Rose, 30.4.56.

criticising Washington for responding so generously to Egyptian "bullying" of the West.⁹⁴ Nuri, too, claimed that the source of 80 percent of 'Abd al-Nasir's influence emanated from the unresolved status of the Arab-Israeli conflict.⁹⁵

Menderes left Tehran content that he had pushed his allies reach a consensus on 'Abd al-Nasir's role in the Middle East. While such a conviction was perhaps a little premature, he had certainly done all he could to add one further blow to 'Abd al-Nasir's already deteriorating image among Western politicians. The British FO was not totally impressed by Menderes's proposal of "an all out propaganda attack on Nasser". It preferred "to proceed resolutely, but cautiously," for if a campaign was to be openly launched against him before Western defences in various Arab territories had been put in rather better order, the Western position might even get worse and 'Abd al-Nasir end up in a stronger position than before.⁹⁶ As a result of the lack of progress as regards *Alpha*, however, the debate within the Baghdad Pact had now shifted to the timing of the eventual *volte-face* rather than its substance. The tide was unquestionably moving against 'Abd al-Nasir. Nuri and Menderes had no reason to feel personally sorry whenever the final break occurred.

Turkey did receive some satisfaction, too, from other aspects of the Tehran meeting. The USA became a full member of the pact's Economic Committee and participated full-time as an observer in the Counter-Subversion Committee. She pledged to continue her bilateral technical, military and economic assistance to individual member-states; contribute a one-sixth share to the Secretariat budget; and provide an appropriate number of its officials. She also promised to study ways of assisting joint projects undertaken by members of the Economic Committee. An American proposal to establish a military liaison group at the Permanent headquarters of the Pact was also welcomed by the Council.⁹⁷ "One could now really consider that the Americans were effectively members," said Birgi.⁹⁸ Köprülü opined that "the pessimism of the previous months had now gone" and that "the work of the Pact would go steadily forward".⁹⁹ The Turkish semi-official newspaper, *Zafer*, commented that the Council meeting had solved the weakness of the pact caused by the non-participation of the USA and echoed Menderes's words at his closing speech in Tehran that all the members of the pact sincerely desired to see the USA permanently represented among them.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁴Axelgard, *Policy*, 163.

⁹⁵FO371/121254/V1073/192, Stevens to FO, 20.4.56.

⁹⁶FO371/121256/V1073/231, Rose to Stewart, 11.5.56.

⁹⁷Soysal, "Baghdad Pact", 78-79; FO371/121253/V1073/166 & 175, Stevens to FO, 18-19 April 1956.

⁹⁸FO371/121256/V1073/231, Stewart to Rose, 30.4.56.

⁹⁹FO371/124021/RK1052/4, "Record of Lloyd-Köprülü meeting", 3.5.56.

¹⁰⁰FO371/121255/V1073/194, Stewart to FO, 23.4.56. See Menderes's full closing statement *ibid.*, -/206.

This new sense of Turkish optimism was bound to be temporary, however. Bowker observed correctly that since the ultimate Turkish objective was to expand the pact, anything short of that would, in the long run, be perceived as failure.¹⁰¹ In fact, just before the nationalisation of the Suez Canal Company on July 26, Dulles's repeated declarations that Washington did not intend to join the Baghdad Pact were once again being criticised in Turkey as attempts "to show greater concern to reassure the opponents of the Pact than to support its members". Ankara was planning to present to the pact-members, as well as to Washington, a new memorandum on the future of the pact.¹⁰² 'Abd al-Nasir's act changed the international agenda but *not* Turkey's political objectives. Moreover, it gave both Ankara and Baghdad some hope that the Egyptian leader had committed the ultimate political blunder.

¹⁰¹FO371/121255/V1073/229, Bowker to Shuckburgh, 2.5.56.

¹⁰²FO371/121261/V1073/307, extract from letter from Istanbul, 25.7.56.

The Suez Crisis: Expectations and Disappointment

'Abd al-Nasir's nationalisation of the Suez Canal Company on 26 July 1956 surprised his friends and foes alike. The USA and Britain had withdrawn, a week before, the credits they had previously offered to finance the Aswan High Dam project. 'Abd al-Nasir now said he needed the revenue from the company to finance the construction of the dam, which was vital for Egypt's future development. He promised to leave unchanged the canal's status as an international waterway; ensure freedom of navigation; and compensate the company shareholders at the prevailing market price.

France and Britain, however, immediately contended that 'Abd al-Nasir had breached the 1888 Convention guaranteeing freedom of passage through the canal and Egypt's commitment under the company's concession. Both countries had vital interests in the company, which was administratively French, with its Head Office in Paris. French private investors held more than 50 percent of the company shares traded on the Paris Bourse, while the British government was the company's largest single shareholder (44 percent). Britain was the canal's prime user to trade with the rest of the world and import most of its Middle Eastern oil. Moreover, Britain interpreted the nationalisation as just another proof of 'Abd al-Nasir's anti-Western sentiments and his determination to push them out of the Middle East. France, already alarmed by reports that Egypt was assisting the rebels in Algeria,¹ feared that the nationalisation would further erode her position in North Africa. They began to compare 'Abd al-Nasir to Hitler and Mussolini, an indication that he would not be "appeased" further. A secret Anglo-French decision was reached to seek a deliberate military confrontation in order to secure the reversal of nationalisation; place the canal under international control; and cause 'Abd al-Nasir's downfall.² British army reservists were recalled; and Anglo-French naval forces in the eastern Mediterranean, reinforced.

The nationalisation was of serious sequence to the Middle Eastern members of the Baghdad Pact. All four governments supported the Western position in general and none of

¹Eden, *Full Circle*, 435.

²Selwyn Ilan Troen and Moshe Shemesh(eds.), *The Suez-Sinai Crisis 1956: Retrospective and Reappraisal* (1990), 17, 54.

them was in any way sympathetic to 'Abd al-Nasir. They had welcomed the Anglo-American decision to withdraw the Aswan High Dam credits and now thought that 'Abd al-Nasir had this time overreached himself and would pay dearly for it. They would have been glad to see him humbled or even swept from power altogether,³ hoping that his eventual defeat could provide much-needed breathing space for pro-Western political forces in the Middle East. Throughout the ensuing international political crisis, however, and until the outbreak of hostilities, they kept the Baghdad Pact mechanism out of the diplomatic bargaining and preferred to act separately. This decision was probably taken during confidential consultations in the first few days of the crisis.⁴ One possible reason which made them opt for this course was their recognition that public opinion in the four countries concerned would react differently to the nationalisation and would make it difficult for their respective governments to subscribe to a common policy in public as regards a dispute which pitted Britain, one of their allies, against Egypt with her rich Arab and Islamic pedigree.

Turkey and the Suez Crisis

Turkey's economy was not dependent on the canal, but as the country exercising sovereignty over the straits of Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, she was expected to show interest in the judicial aspects of the conflict and dislike the prospect of seeing foreign powers re-exert political control over the Suez canal against Egypt's wishes. After all, the USSR might, in the future, use that as precedent to pursue her old desire to control the straits. Furthermore, the autumn of 1956 itself was to mark the climax of one of the five-year cycles at the end of which any of the signatories of the 1936 Montreux Convention governing passage through the straits could have asked for amendments to any of its provisions.⁵ Perhaps 'Abd al-Nasir had that in mind, when immediately after the nationalisation, he secretly approached Turkey, among others, both directly and through President Sham'un, to mediate between Egypt and the West.⁶

The Turkish government, however, viewed the Suez crisis more as a political dispute than merely a commercial and juridical one. Hence, it did not consider to be in its interests to try to help 'Abd al-Nasir. Unlike Pakistani leaders, Menderes did not need placate local public opinion, as Turks in general did not sympathise with 'Abd al-Nasir and his brand of Arab

³For views of Iranian and Pakistani leaders see Lucas, *Divided*, 183; Burke, *Pakistan*, 181-82; Kyle, *Suez*, 158.

⁴FO371/119114/JE14211/999, Menderes to Dulles, 15.8.56.

⁵FO371/130174/RK1011/1, Bowker to Lloyd, 5.2.57.

⁶Kürkçüoğlu, *Türkiye'nin Politikası*, 93; Soysal, *Analysis*, 39; Chamoun, *Crise*, 285.

nationalism.⁷ Ankara refrained from making public statements, but its initial outrage over Egypt's action, as well as the solid hostility of public opinion and the press were beyond doubt.⁸ Menderes wrote privately to Dulles that his government had, in the past, been unique in adopting a clear attitude towards 'Abd al-Nasir. He continued:

While relief is being sought for each particular symptom, if we fail to heal the focus of infection which is the source of the ailment, we must continue to expect from Egypt, in accordance with the wishes of Russia, all sorts of new blows, the outcome of which will grow in gravity and the remedies for which will ever be harder to find.⁹

Although the legality of Egypt's action was accepted by Ankara, politically it was judged to be "a further manifestation of the foolish policy of personal prestige and arbitrary action which was being pursued by Nasser". The Turkish government believed that 'Abd al-Nasir had to be forced "to accept the rule of law" and supported the imposition of some kind of international control. "Leaving Nasser in unfettered control of the Canal could hinder freedom of navigation—for example, it would leave it open to Nasser to double the dues whenever he liked".¹⁰ Although this author has not come across any direct reference in FO General Correspondence files, nor in the published French and American documents, to Ankara's attitude toward the possibility of resorting to military action against 'Abd al-Nasir or replacing him by force, it can be safely suggested that it would not have bothered about the juridical or moral aspects of such a move, so long as the eventual outcome was to the benefit of pro-Western forces in the area.

Washington, however, did not share the Anglo-French tough stance. American investment in the Canal Company was negligible and the country economically much less dependent on the free flow of Middle Eastern oil. Eisenhower opposed the use of force against Egypt. Washington, he thought, could not be party to a punitive military operation in view of its persistent declarations of support of the rule of law and the UN Charter. He rightly feared that any coercive action would inevitably increase Soviet prestige in the post-colonial world. His administration, therefore, began to devise various delaying tactics designed to avoid military intervention.¹¹ Turkey went along with all American initiatives.

⁷For exposés of popular pro-Egyptian sentiment in Pakistan see Kyle, *Suez*, 158; Burke, *Pakistan*, 181-82, 185.

⁸FO371/124001/RK1016/32G, Chancery, Istanbul to Southern Department, 14.8.57.

⁹FO371/119114/JE14211/999, Menderes to Dulles, 15.8.56.

¹⁰FO371/119083/JE14211/194A, FO to Ankara, 4.8.56; FO371/119107/JE14211/799, Lloyd to Wright, 16.8.56.

¹¹For an exposé of the American position, see Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The White House Years: Waging Peace, 1956-1961* (1966), 37-39.

At Washington's insistence, a conference of maritime powers was convened in London to devise a political solution to the crisis. Turkey, as a signatory to the 1888 Convention, was among the 24 countries invited.¹² Her delegation was led by Nuri Birgi, the Secretary-General of the Foreign Ministry. Menderes thought it was inappropriate for him to be in London when almost all other delegations present were led by Foreign Ministers. Turkey's acting Foreign Minister, Ethem Menderes, had no practical experience in foreign affairs and was unable to speak either English or French. Moreover, he had, as Minister of the Interior, other responsibilities at home. Birgi assured the delegates of allied countries that their absence did not imply any minimisation by Turkey of the importance of the gathering.¹³

Before the opening of the first London Conference (16-23 August), Menderes gave his consent to its agenda and promised the Western powers Turkey's full support.¹⁴ He further suggested that, in order to win Arab opinion, the West should make it plain that its "quarrel was not with Egypt or the Egyptians, but with Nasser on account of his arbitrary and dictatorial behaviour". Menderes also expressed Ankara's full sympathy with Anglo-French military preparations in the eastern Mediterranean, but thought that they should be explained "as precautions in the event of Nasser provoking an incident and not intended to exercise pressure on him".¹⁵

During the public sessions of the conference, Birgi tried to strike a neat balance between Egypt's "right to effect nationalisation" and "the extremely dangerous state of affairs" that act had set loose. He described the Egyptian decision as "unfortunate," "untimely" and "hardly ... in conformity with the conditions of an orderly expropriation". He called on other participants to transcend "emotional elements" like the principles of "independence," "national sovereignty," "state prestige," "antagonism between east and west" and to establish "a regime which would both conform to the rules of international law and morality to satisfy the legitimate interests of all and of Egypt foremost".¹⁶ Dulles found Birgi's presentation "particularly strong and able".¹⁷

Turkey was among the 18 states (out of the 22 present) that backed, in principle, the Dulles plan, which proposed to respect Egypt's sovereignty and increase the share of canal tolls paid to Egypt; maintain the canal as a secure international waterway, open to all states

¹²Of those, only Egypt and Greece eventually refused to attend.

¹³FO371/119107/JE14211/799, Lloyd to Wright, 16.8.56; FO371/119103/JE14211/799, HM Consul-General, Istanbul to FO, 13.8.56.

¹⁴FO371/119091/JE14211/392, HM Consul-General, Istanbul to FO, 7.8.56; FO371/119094/JE14211/467, HM Consul-General, Istanbul to FO, 8.8.56.

¹⁵FO371/119097/JE14211/695, HM Consul-General, Istanbul to FO, 13.8.56.

¹⁶See full English text of Birgi's speech in The Department of State, *The Suez Canal Problem, July 26-September, 1956: A Documentary Publication* (1956), 120-23.

¹⁷FRUS 1955-1957, XVI, 219.

with major maritime interests; isolate its operation from the politics of any one country; set up an international board of control, composed of members from user nations, to supervise its operation, maintenance and development; and compensate the expropriated company's shareholders.¹⁸ However, Turkey, together with Pakistan, Iran and Ethiopia, proposed some amendments to the draft plan to make, they claimed, "even clearer the respect for the sovereignty of Egypt, and also to increase the negotiability of the text". For Birgi, the most important amendment was "taking the question of compensation out of the body of the Treaty, and putting it into the preamble".¹⁹ Dulles discussed the subject privately with Birgi on August 20 and, in view of Soviet and Indian opposition to his own plan, was extremely forthcoming. The amendments were accepted and incorporated into the original American plan.²⁰ The Australian Prime Minister, Robert Menzies, was assigned to head a five-power delegation (including Ali Quli Ardalan, Iran's Foreign Minister) to Egypt in early September not to get engaged in negotiations but to explain the 18-power plan to 'Abd al-Nasir and discover whether it could form a basis to negotiate a settlement.

Turkey expressed satisfaction with the results of the first London Conference, thinking that the Baghdad Pact allies had been able to make some contribution to its work and shown that the pact, as an organisation, had a meaning and a reality.²¹

By the time of the second London Conference (18-21 September), however, Ankara had become more pessimistic. It had initially hoped that Egypt, in the face of determined international pressure, would back down. Although Egypt had refused to attend the first London Conference, her acceptance, in principle, of the idea of a conference to discuss the future of the canal was interpreted in Ankara as an implicit abandonment of the notion of complete Egyptian sovereignty over the waterway.²² But after 'Abd al-Nasir's rejection of the 18-power proposals, the Turkish officials reasoned with hindsight, that the terms of reference of the Menzies mission had been too rigid.²³ Ankara was even more concerned at the apparent disarray among the countries that had previously subscribed to the said proposals. Although it accepted that the weaker nations among them had their failings, it

¹⁸Louis and Owen, *Suez*, 297-98.

¹⁹*Suez Canal Problem*, 187; Kürkçüoğlu, *Türkiye'nin Politikası*, 83-84, 92-93; Kyle, *Suez*, 197. See also records of Lloyd's three meetings during the conference on August 20-21 with representatives of the three Baghdad Pact powers in FO800/739, ff. 136-37, 140.

²⁰*FRUS 1955-1957*, XVI, 245. See those amendments *ibid.*, 250-52.

²¹FO371/119133/JE14211/1505, Chancery, Ankara to African Department [n.d.]; FO371/121224/V10316/3, Stewart to Ross, 9.10.56.

²²FO371/119107/JE14211/799, Lloyd to Wright, 16.8.56.

²³FO371/119182/JE14211/203, Stewart to FO, 1.10.56. A similar view by was expressed by Ardalan; see Kyle, *Suez*, 252.

pointed its main finger of accusation towards the major Western powers, which, it thought, had lost "the sense of resolution and purpose".²⁴

During the second conference, Birgi did his best to concentrate on the bright side of events. After the idea of setting up a Suez Canal User's Association (SCUA) was in principle agreed upon, he opined that "it was essential that Iran, Pakistan, Ethiopia and Turkey all sign simultaneously" and later worked to achieve that.²⁵ But if Turkey and Iran were among the 14 states who agreed immediately to join the SCUA, Ethiopia and Pakistan hesitated.²⁶ Dulles privately appreciated Birgi's "whole-hearted and effective cooperation,"²⁷ but Ankara, it seems, was expecting to be given even more credit for its role and was unhappy for not receiving from the British press the praise it thought it deserved.²⁸

From then on, the general mood in the Turkish Foreign Ministry remained depressed. It was now feared that 'Abd al-Nasir would again "get away 100% with what he had done" and all hope was almost lost that the canal dispute would bring his downfall. It was recognised that if 'Abd al-Nasir managed to survive this crisis, it would have harmful consequences for the security of Turkey and for Western influence in the Middle East.²⁹ Birgi told the French Foreign Minister, Christian Pineau, that "experience shows that it is better to be allied with Russia than it is to be allied with France, the US and the UK".³⁰ When, on September 23, Britain and France took the issue to the UN, Turkey hesitated, arguing that the UN could do nothing to strengthen the negotiating position of the 18 powers.³¹

On the other hand, and throughout the crisis, Turkey patiently used her influence with less determined friendly governments to stiffen their attitude against 'Abd al-Nasir. Menderes's contacts to that effect with President Sham'un, Libya's Prime Minister, Mustafa Bin Halim, and even with the Pakistani government (which faced strong pressure from pro-Egyptian public opinion at home) were appreciated by, among others, Dulles and Lloyd.³²

Menderes's determination was not totally shared by the Turkish press. The latter greeted the nationalisation with strong disapproval and disquiet. It, too, hoped that 'Abd al-Nasir's

²⁴FO371/121224/V10316/3, Stewart to Ross, 9.10.56.

²⁵FRUS 1955-1957, XVI, 535, 545.

²⁶D. C. Watt(ed.), *Documents on the Suez Crisis: 26 July to 6 November 1956* (1957), 20; Kyle, *Suez*, 253; Burke, *Pakistan*, 186-87; FRUS, 1955-1957, XVI, 616.

²⁷FO371/119147/JE14211/1951, Stewart to Young, 26.9.56.

²⁸FO371/119199/JE14216/266, Stewart to FO, 1.10.56.

²⁹FO371/121224/V10316/3, Stewart to Ross, 9.10.56.

³⁰FRUS 1955-1957, XVI, 641-42.

³¹FO371/121224/V10316/3, Stewart to Ross, 9.10.56.

³²FO371/119083/JE14211/194A, FO to Ankara, 4.8.56; FO371/119100/JE14211/635, HM Consul-General, Istanbul to FO, 11.8.56; FO371/119109/JE14211/852, Bowker to FO, 18.8.56; FO371/121614/VL10344/3G, HM Consul-General, Istanbul to FO, 9.9.56; FO371/119147/JE14211/1951, Stewart to Young, 26.9.56.

irresponsible act would be swiftly punished by the West. The opposition newspaper, *Dünya*, supported the idea circulating at the time that a new canal should be dug through Israel to connect the Mediterranean and Red Seas, thus depriving Egypt of her international importance and precipitating 'Abd al-Nasir's departure in "the same way as Mosaddeq".³³ The press, too, saw a Soviet hand behind 'Abd al-Nasir's "machinations". However, it also unequivocally accepted the legality of nationalisation and later showed explicit disapproval for the Anglo-French troop concentrations in the region. The papers were in general agreement that the crisis could be settled amicably.³⁴ The British Embassy in Ankara was clearly displeased with the press's adverse criticism of France and Britain.³⁵

One historian, who studied the Turkish government's attitude during the crisis, without having access to official records, has misleadingly accepted the writings in the press as being generally representative of the official position.³⁶ Another has gone as far as suggesting that "the Turks welcomed the embarrassment of the United Kingdom in the Suez affair" and "hoped that they would be able to replace the British, perhaps not directly, but as delegates of America and the Western Powers".³⁷ This author cannot but totally disagree with these points of view. Although the danger of basing conclusions relying mainly on British records has to be acknowledged, it is still wise to expect that had Ankara ever entertained such hopes, they would not have gone unnoticed by the FO, determined to preserve Britain's privileged position in the Middle East.

Iraq and Syria during the Suez Crisis

Nuri, unlike Menderes, faced considerable trouble with public opinion at home, for despite his personal dislike of 'Abd al-Nasir, he could not be seen breaking Arab solidarity. The nationalisation was publicly endorsed by leaders of the banned opposition,³⁸ and public sympathy for 'Abd al-Nasir was widespread and genuine. Nuri, therefore, had to keep some sort of balance between his private expectations and his public posture.

³³FO371/119083/JE14211/198, Bowker to FO, 31.7.56. There were also reports that the IPC was engaged in surveying an alternative pipeline route to export Iraqi oil *via* Turkey instead of Syria; see *The Times*, 12.9.56. Washington supported this plan in principle, but feared that any tangible step in that direction before solving the Suez crisis would generate Arab opposition and re-kindle sour Arab memories of the annexation of Hatay; see *FRUS 1955-1957*, XII, 316-18, 347. For deliberations on this project after the Suez war, see George Lenczowski, *Oil and State in the Middle East* (1960), 338-43.

³⁴FO371/119121/JE14211/1199, Chancery, Istanbul to Levant Department, 20.8.56; FO371/119131/JE14211/1459, Bowker to FO, 7.9.56; FO371/119137/JE14211/1638, Stewart to FO, 14.9.56.

³⁵FO371/119151/JE14211/2049, Stewart to FO, 3 October 1956.

³⁶Kürkçüoğlu, *Türkiye'nin Politikası*, 92-96.

³⁷Ahmad, *Experiment*, 396.

³⁸Al-'Akam, *Ta'rikh*, 179-81; FO371/119080/JE14211/75, Hooper to FO, 28.7.56; FO371/119084/JE14211/218, Hooper to FO, 2.8.56; FO371/119101/JE14211/670, Wright to FO, 12.8.56; FO371/119138/JE14211/1676, Wright to FO, 18.9.56; .

Nuri first heard of the nationalisation when on a visit to London. His immediate reaction was to urge the British government and its allies to maintain a firm posture to cause 'Abd al-Nasir "to retreat to the points both of accepting adequate international control and to retract to a degree which would be a grave, and it was to be hoped, fatal setback to his prestige".³⁹ He initially believed that sending forces would not eventually be necessary to make Egypt change her mind. Egypt depended on imported fuel, and a blockade of, say, up to six weeks, would be enough to bring her to her knees.⁴⁰ "It would be in the Egyptian character for Nasser to give up and resign as soon as he realised the strength of the forces against him," said Nuri.⁴¹ He interpreted as a sign of Egyptian "nervousness" and "backing down" the Egyptian request that Nuri might mediate between London and Cairo. "He had no intention of assuming the role of mediator," however.⁴²

The Iraqi leaders saw in 'Abd al-Nasir's eventual downfall, within 6-8 weeks, the only possible solution for problems besetting the Middle East. They feared, however, that if he survived, he would continue his "subversive" activities in the Middle East on an unprecedented scale and even cause the dissolution of the Baghdad Pact. Nuri did not suggest any specific name to replace 'Abd al-Nasir, hoping that the former Egyptian leader, Muhammad al-Nagib, members of the Egyptian bourgeoisie or even 'Abd al-Nasir's opponents within the army could take the opportunity to topple him.⁴³ Prince 'Abd al-Ilah, however, advocated the restoration of monarchy in Egypt "in pursuit of the principle that monarchy, with its continuity, is best for the East" and preferred to see Prince 'Abd al-Mun'im on the throne. "The mob in Cairo," said he, was "volatile and would cheer anything new".⁴⁴

Nuri considered it important that, in case of an eventual outbreak of hostilities, Egypt should open fire first. He could then sell his anti-'Abd al-Nasir stance to his public. One way to lure 'Abd al-Nasir into an armed confrontation, said Nuri, could be the payment by user-states of canal dues in London and Paris, rather than in Egypt, thus prompting Cairo to stop

³⁹FO371/119107/JE14211/812, Wright to FO, 15.8.56; Lloyd, *Suez*, 74; Mohamed H. Heikal, *The Cairo Documents: The Inside Story of Nasser and His Relationship with World Leaders, Rebels, and Statesmen* (1973), 93-95. Heikal claims that his account is based on a leaked Iraqi report which Nuri had presented to his cabinet after his return to Baghdad.

⁴⁰FO371/119088/JE14211/327, FO minute by Dodds-Parker, 30.7.56.

⁴¹FO371/121662/VQ1051/45G, Rose to Hooper, 8.8.56.

⁴²FO371/119109/JE14211/852, Wright to FO, 16.8.56; see also Lloyd, *Suez*, 106; al-Sa'id, *Nuri*, 193. Al-Jamali, *Dhikrayat*, 133-34, however, says that Nuri, after his return to Baghdad asked him to go and meet 'Abd al-Nasir in Cairo and when he refused, al-Suwaydi was sent instead. Unfortunately, al-Jamali does not say what was discussed in Cairo.

⁴³FO371/119088/JE14211/327, FO minute by Dodds-Parker, 30.7.56.

⁴⁴FO371/121662/VQ1051/45G, Amery to Lloyd, 1.8.56. 'Abd al-Mun'im, the eldest son of Egypt's last khedive, 'Abbas Hilmi, had been a member of the three-man regency council during the brief reign of the infant Ahmad Fu'ad in 1952-53.

the traffic through the canal.⁴⁵ 'Abd al-Nasir, however, wisely ignored, for the time being at least, the Anglo-French refusal to pay the designated dues to the newly established Canal Authority and ordered undelayed passage for all ships.⁴⁶ So, Nuri and 'Abd al-Ilah suggested that the stoppage by Egyptians of a British ship carrying arms for the Iraqi army could also serve as an appropriate *casus belli*.⁴⁷

Nuri did not expect any long-lasting sharp outcry in the Arab world against any possible British military action, provided 'Abd al-Nasir was dealt with in a reasonably short time and Israel kept out of this venture.⁴⁸ He wanted, however, any military action appear to bear an international character. He acknowledged that France's special interests in the canal would, despite her unpopularity in the Arab world over Algeria, make her participation "natural". He also hoped that any Anglo-French action would include at least token participation from Australia, New Zealand, perhaps from the Netherlands, Pakistan or Italy, and even, in an extreme case, from Turkey. Nuri "naturally hoped" that Washington would join too. If not, "it would be desirable if not essential" that it should give wholehearted approval and endorsement to the action and help in keeping Israel quiet.⁴⁹ His views were largely shared by other prominent members of the Iraqi establishment, including King Faysal II.⁵⁰

The British government expected the crisis to create serious internal problems for Nuri. Nuri and 'Abd al-Ilah said, however, that they were not worried and discounted the possibility of an attempted coup.⁵¹ Still, the Iraqi government tightened its grip over public affairs and made contingency plans to declare martial law in case an armed conflict broke out.⁵² Nuri accompanied these measures, however, with a set of public declarations and initiatives designed to enhance his regime's image and Arab legitimacy both at home and in other Arab

⁴⁵FO371/119088/JE14211/327, FO minute by Dodds-Parker, 30.7.56.

⁴⁶The British and French shippers were continuing to pay the tolls into the old Company account in Paris. It has been assumed that 'Abd al-Nasir probably intended to treat such payments as credits toward the compensation he had promised for the nationalised Company's shareholders; see Louis and Owen, *Suez*, 111, 167, 204.

⁴⁷FO371/121662/VQ1051/45G, Rose to Hooper, 8.8.56.

⁴⁸FO371/119088/JE14211/327, FO minute by Dodds-Parker, 30.7.56; Anthony Nutting, *No End of a Lesson: The Story of Suez* (1967), 48; Louis and Owen, *Suez*, 398.

⁴⁹FO371/121662/VQ1051/43G, FO minute by Wright, 30.7.56. We have found no new evidence to support the statement by an unnamed British Cabinet minister, quoted in Hugh Thomas, *The Suez Affair* (1986), 91, that Nuri had told the British to make the Jews "do the job for them".

⁵⁰FO371/121274/V1075/130, Record of meeting of Representatives of Baghdad Pact Powers, 6.8.56; FO371/119131/JE14211/1451, minute by military attaché, Baghdad, 5.9.56; FO371/119142/JE14211/1805, Wright to FO, 24.9.56.

⁵¹FO371/121662/VQ1051/43G, FO minute by Wright, 30.7.56; FO371/121662/VQ1051/47, FO minute by Graham, 9.8.56; FO371/121645/VQ1015/49G, Wright to FO, 4.9.56.

⁵²Al-Takriti, *Al-Wasi*, 146-47; Saad, *Iraq*, 52; FO371/121662/VQ1051/72 & 74, Wright to FO, 14 & 16 August 1956; FO371/121646/VQ1015/87G, Wright to FO, 1.9.56; FO371/121646/VQ1015/82G, Wright to FO, 9.9.56; *ibid.*, -/86, Hooper to Rose, 12.9.56.

countries. Iraq's official line laid particular stress on Israel in order to draw attention away from the Western Powers; emphasise the risks for the Arab cause which had resulted from 'Abd al-Nasir's action; and take, as much as possible, the shine out of the latter's personal success.⁵³ An Iraqi official communiqué on August 5 failed to mention 'Abd al-Nasir by name, but was careful to state that "nationalization is the established right of a State," that Baghdad "will stand by Egypt in ensuring her dignity, sovereignty and independence" and expressed hope that "wisdom will prevail to solve this dispute". The larger part of the communiqué, however, dealt with Israel's activity "to exploit this dispute for its own ends" and stressed that "the interest shown by Arab public in this dispute should not distract them from the danger of Israel".⁵⁴ Later, Iraq officially reiterated her readiness to meet all her obligations under the ALCSP.⁵⁵

The August 5 communiqué left Menderes "puzzled". He thought that it "was at variance with the message which Nuri had sent him through the Turkish Ambassador in London, that Turkey had nothing to fear from Iraq's attitude on this issue".⁵⁶ The apparent Iraqi support for Egypt was also noted with disquiet by a handful of Turkish newspapers.⁵⁷ The British government, however, showed understanding.⁵⁸ and was later able to persuade Nuri not to put out any public statement about 'Abd al-Nasir's secret negotiations with Israel over the past year. Nuri would have liked to suggest that the Communists and the Zionists, disturbed with the prospects of a settlement in the Middle East and the subsequent delivery of massive economic aid to Egypt, had forced the withdrawal of the Anglo-American credits and, hence, precipitated the Suez crisis.⁵⁹

Nuri asked not to be invited to the London Conference "on the ground that if Iraq was invited, several other Arab states would demand invitation".⁶⁰ However, he closely followed its proceedings, asking Turkey, Iran and Pakistan to maintain a distinction "between the sovereignty and rights of Egypt and the Egyptians one the one hand and the behaviour of Nasser, who is not to be trusted, on the other hand". He hoped that all three would "at least find a way of associating themselves with the principle of international control".⁶¹ He also

⁵³FO371/119089/JE14211/350, Hooper to FO, 6.8.56.

⁵⁴See full English text of communiqué in FO371/119089/JE14211/351, Hooper to FO, 6.8.56.

⁵⁵Saad, *Iraq*, 50.

⁵⁶FO371/119107/JE14211/800, Bowker to Rose, 9.8.56.

⁵⁷FO371/119121/JE14211/1199, Chancery, Istanbul to Levant Department, 9.8.56. Nuri's daughter-in-law, 'Ismat al-Sa'id, an authoress biased towards Nuri, writes in *Nuri*, 196 that the Egyptian government thanked Iraq for the publication of the August 5 communiqué.

⁵⁸DDF, 1956, II, 202; FO371/121274/V1075/130, 'Record of meeting between Representatives of Bagdad Pact Powers', 6.8.56.

⁵⁹FO371/121651/VQ10316/65, Hooper to FO, 9.8.56. For these secret contacts, see pp. 113-14.

⁶⁰Lloyd, *Suez*, 107; DDF, 1956, II, 219; FO371/119107/JE14211/799, Lloyd to Wright, 16.8.56.

⁶¹FO371/119112/JE14211/958, Wright to FO, 20.8.56.

urged Dulles to maintain his tough stand because any US retreat from her original stand would be regarded in the Middle East as the result of Soviet pressure on America, and Soviet prestige in the area would thereby be immediately increased, while that of Washington and the West would correspondingly decline.⁶²

Nuri planned, in the case of armed hostilities, to declare martial law and publicly accuse 'Abd al-Nasir of exposing "the Arabs to an attack by the Israelis and that it must be the role of Iraq to meet this danger". He would then move some of his army westward under the guise of supporting Syria if she were attacked. Such a stand, he hoped, would "command the maximum support in the army".⁶³ It was feared that Nuri might even consider "violence against Israel to recover some of its leadership with other Arabs".⁶⁴ Indeed, when the Syrian Prime Minister and Foreign Minister (pressed by Egypt, according to Nuri) visited Baghdad to urge Iraq to endorse Egypt's actions and position, Nuri flatly replied that Egypt's decision had been reckless and could bring dangers upon Egypt and the Arab world and play into the hands of Israel.⁶⁵ Iraq also refused to support Egypt during the two special Arab League Political Committee meetings called by Syria.⁶⁶ Nuri opposed the passing there of any resolution approving the nationalisation because that would make it difficult for Egypt to back down and thus block any possibility of a compromise solution.⁶⁷ The Iraqi delegates, however, ignored his instructions because they thought the tabled compromise draft—from which a good deal of rhetoric had been eliminated—"was the best that could be obtained".⁶⁸ During the second meeting in September, Iraq was again the sole objecting voice and was on this occasion extremely dissatisfied with the final resolution.⁶⁹

Nuri endeavoured to use the escalation in tension along the Israeli-Jordanian armistice line in September and October to demonstrate his professed commitment to the Arab cause and that the Baghdad Pact was not inimical to Arab interests. When King Husayn appealed for the stationing of an Iraqi division in Jordan, Nuri suggested that Pakistan might send an infantry battalion to Baghdad as a symbol of Baghdad Pact military co-operation and thus enable Iraq to release some of her troops. Karachi, however, turned down this request, claiming that its forces were insufficient even for its own defence.⁷⁰ Iraq and Jordan later

⁶²FO371/119114/JE14211/1017, Wright to FO, 21.8.56.

⁶³FO371/121646/VQ1015/87G, Wright to FO, 1.9.56.

⁶⁴FO371/121646/VQ1015/89, FO minute by Dodds-Parker, 1.10.56.

⁶⁵FO371/119099/JE14211/623, Wright to FO, 11.8.56.

⁷⁹Elie Podeh, "The Struggle over Arab Hegemony after the Suez Crisis", *MES*, 29/1 (January, 1993), 92.

⁶⁷FO371/119089/JE14211/350, Hooper to FO, 6.8.56; FO371/119094/JE14211/461, Hooper to FO, 8.8.56.

⁶⁸FO371/119101/JE14211/687, Trevelyan to FO, 13.8.56.

⁶⁹FO371/119143/JE14211/1868, Trevelyan to FO, 22.9.56. See English text of resolution in FO371/119139/JE14211/1711, Trevelyan to FO, 19.9.56.

⁷⁰*DDF*, 1956, II, 534-35; FO371/121660/VQ10399/1G.

failed to agree on who would command the Iraqi troops stationed in Jordan. Iraqi forces thus remained stationed just within Iraq and moved into Jordan, at Husayn's renewed request, only on November 3, after the outbreak of hostilities in the Sinai-Suez area and a simultaneous Jordanian invitation to Syrian and Saudi troops as well to strengthen Jordan's defences against any potential Israeli attack.⁷¹

Nuri and other Iraqi leaders, too, gradually lost hope that the crisis would sharply reduce 'Abd al-Nasir's influence. After the second London Conference and the setting up of the SCUA, they reportedly thought that 'Abd al-Nasir had not been obliged to give way on anything and—that unless and until he finds himself compelled to do so—time was definitely on his side. If he could avoid any form of international control, then he would be seen as having won the game and could use his enhanced position to finally undermine Jordan and Syria, and perhaps Iraq and Saudi Arabia as well.⁷²

The official political climate in Syria was in total contrast to those of Turkey and Iraq. With the radical pan-Arab nationalist Ba'th party and its allies prominently represented in the national coalition cabinet in power and enjoying wide-spread support within the army officer-corps, the Syrian government followed an overtly pro-Egyptian line. It fully endorsed Egypt's legal right "in line with laws and precedents" to nationalise the Suez Canal Company and promised to "stand alongside Egypt in every respect" and lay down all its "potentialities to prevent any harm reaching her".⁷³ It also lobbied for Arab diplomatic support for Egypt.⁷⁴ Al-'Asali and Foreign Minister Salah al-Din al-Bitar made a short tour of Arab capitals to canvass for such support before the scheduled Arab League Political Committee meeting of August 12.⁷⁵ On September 22, al-Quwatli pledged with King Sa'ud support for "every attitude Egypt takes over the Suez Canal".⁷⁶ Damascus opposed the convening in London of any conference to deal with the future of the Suez Canal.⁷⁷ Al-Bitar claimed that the Dulles plan was illegal, because it denied Egypt her sovereignty and that only members of NATO, the Commonwealth and the Baghdad Pact had come out in its support. As regards the attitude of the Baghdad Pact powers, he said that the conference had shown that "adherence to military pacts means loss of freedom". Instead, Syria proposed to convene a conference of the Bandung powers⁷⁸ and later welcomed the Soviet call for an alternative conference with

⁷¹For further details see Kyle, *Suez*, 291-97; Lucas, *Divided*, 228-37; Nutting, *Lesson*, 84-95.

⁷²FO371/119142/JE14211/1805, Wright to FO, 24.9.56.

⁷³FO371/121864/VY10316/17, Chancery, Damascus to Levant Department, 30.7.56; FO371/119080/JE14211/95, Andrew to FO, 30.7.56.

⁷⁴FO371/121274/V1075/130, 'Record of meeting of Representatives of Bagdad Pact Powers', 6.8.56.

⁷⁵FO371/119097/JE14211/573 & FO371/119100/JE14211/632, Gardener to FO, 10-11 August 1956.

⁷⁶FO371/119114/JE14211/1880, Gardener to FO, 25.9.56; Watt, *Documents*, 21.

⁷⁷Louis and Owen, *Suez*, 177.

⁷⁸FO371/119119/JE14211/1144, Gardener to FO, 27.8.56.

British, French, Egyptian, American, Soviet and Indian participation.⁷⁹ Syria, Lebanon and Jordan protested at the UN Security Council against Anglo-French naval reinforcements in the Eastern Mediterranean.⁸⁰ It has also been claimed that in the days leading up to the tripartite invasion of Egypt, al-Sarraj, the head of Syrian military intelligence, passed on valuable information to Cairo, "particularly about the French pilots in uniform in Cyprus waiting with their planes to be sent to Israel".⁸¹ The Syrian armed forces were mobilised as a precautionary measure to meet any possible action against Syria or Egypt⁸² and a Popular Resistance Force was formed under the wing of the army.⁸³ The government also encouraged—or was, at least, in no position but to go along with—unofficial, non-governmental pro-Egyptian measures undertaken by individual politicians outside the cabinet, who, predictably, took a harder line against the West than the government could afford to show, even advocating the closure of the IPC pipeline.⁸⁴ The Syrian press generally remained loyal to the government line throughout the crisis.

In Syria, it was the right-wing opposition that had to somewhat conceal its real feelings, preferring not to express its reservations and pretending as if it, too, supported the government line unreservedly. The traditionally pro-Iraqi papers, for example, followed the official line and restricted their sympathies to giving prominence to rare Iraqi statements in support of Egypt. They also made very rare attempts to condemn some extreme pro-'Abd al-Nasir (and, hence, implicitly anti-Nuri) activities as measures to divide the Arabs.⁸⁵

The British FO rightly predicted that, once military operations started, and irrespective of who fired the first shot, "there would be very heavy public pressure" in Syria "to join in on Egypt's side at once," but that the government might "be sufficiently reluctant to stick out their necks to wait for 24 hours or so to see how things were going," perhaps even fearing a French or Iraqi invasion. Therefore, "an impressive initial success might be sufficient to make

⁷⁹FO371/119141/JE14211/1788, Gardener to FO, 22.9.56.

⁸⁰FO371/119119/V10716/1 & 4, Dixon to FO, 17 & 19 Sept. 1956.

⁸¹Heikal, *Cutting*, 189.

⁸²FO371/119089/JE14211/354 & FO371/119093/JE14211/430, Andrew to FO, 3 & 7 Aug. 1956.

⁸³Torrey, *Syrian Politics*, 342.

⁸⁴Al-'Azm, *Mudhakkarat*, II, 478-81; FO371/119089/JE14211/354, Andrew to FO, 6.8.56; FO371/119094/JE14211/493, Andrew to FO, 9.8.56; FO371/119098/JE14211/574, Gardener to FO, 10.8.56; FO371/121862/VY1022/6, Gardener to FO, 11.8.56; FO371/121891/VY1532/1, Gardener to FO, 11.8.56; FO371/119100/JE14211/662, Trevelyan to FO, 12.8.56; FO371/121891/VY1532/2-3, Gardener to FO, 13.8.56; FO371/119105/JE14211/776, Gardener to FO, 14.8.56; FO371/119105/JE14211/778, Gardener to FO, 15.8.56; FO371/119105/JE14211/778(A); FO371/121281/V1078/27, Chancery, Damascus to Levant Department, 19.9.56; *ibid.*, -/26, Gardener to FO, 21.9.56.

⁸⁵FO371/119085/JE14211/258, Andrew to FO, 3.8.56; FO371/119089/JE14211/354, Andrew to FO, 6.8.56; FO371/119098/JE14211/574, Gardener to FO, 10.8.56; FO371/119123/JE14211/1242, Gardener to FO, 31.8.56; FO371/119133/JE14211/1522, Gardener to FO, 11.9.56; FO371/119296/V10716/2, Gardener to FO, 17.9.56; FO371/119141/JE14211/1788, Gardener to FO, 22.9.56.

them hold their hand". On the other hand, it was almost certain that, after the outbreak of hostilities, the government would not be able to keep anti-Western demonstrations under control.⁸⁶

The Tripartite Aggression against Egypt, the Failure of the Syrian Plot and Their Repercussions for the Middle East

With Anglo-Franco military preparations completed and no sign of Egypt backing down from the nationalisation decision, France brought Britain and Israel together and fathered a secret tripartite plan to invade Egypt. A Franco-Israeli rapprochement had been going on for a few years based on shared antagonism to Arab nationalism and the Baghdad Pact. Israel joined in the plan because she felt Egypt must be defeated and Israel's free entrance to the Gulf of Aqaba secured before Soviet arms delivered to Cairo gave the latter military superiority.

According to this secret plan, Israeli forces invaded Sinai on October 29 and marched towards the Suez Canal. The next day, an Anglo-French ultimatum was delivered to both Israel and Egypt demanding that their forces should immediately stop all military operations and withdraw ten miles from the banks of the canal to guarantee freedom of transit. Egypt was also asked to agree to the temporary imposition of Anglo-French troops in the canal zone. Israel accepted the ultimatum. Egypt, understandably, rejected it. An Anglo-French air bombardment of Egyptian military installations followed and, on November 5, their troops landed in Egypt to take control of the canal by force.

Eisenhower was furious that Britain and France had broken the 1950 Tripartite Declaration. He feared that their action would be instigate throughout the developing world an anti-Western backlash and create an opportunity for Moscow to make noticeable political advances there. Washington, therefore, presented to the UN Security Council on October 30 a draft resolution condemning Israel's action against Egypt, but France and Britain vetoed it. The USA then introduced a resolution to the emergency session of the General Assembly, demanding an immediate cease-fire and the withdrawal of Egyptian and Israeli troops beyond the 1949 armistice lines. It was carried, and on November 4, the UN General Assembly further decided to send a UN Emergency Force (UNEF) to take charge of the combat zone temporarily.

Soon after the outbreak of hostilities, Egypt blocked the canal. On November 3, al-Sarraj led a group of Syrian sympathisers of 'Abd al-Nasir—probably against the wishes of al-'Asali's cabinet—to seriously damage the IPC pipeline, carrying almost two-thirds of Iraqi export oil

⁸⁶FO371/121222/V1021/1G-1G'A', FO minutes by Rose, 31 August & 10 September 1956.

to the Mediterranean and, thence, almost totally to Europe.⁸⁷ Saudi Arabia also prohibited the direct export of oil to Britain and France, thus creating an acute shortage of fuel in Western Europe. Washington denied emergency oil shipments to Britain and France, as well as access to International Monetary Fund facilities to alleviate the pressure on the UK currency as Britain's dollar reserves began to drain. Washington thus forced the three aggressors to accept on November 6 an early cease-fire and, ultimately, withdraw totally from Egyptian soil, including the Gaza strip. The only concession Israel received in return was an informal Egyptian promise that she would not, in the future, impede Israeli access to the Gulf of Aqaba.

Although the British/French/Israeli losses in men and materiel were much less than Egypt's, the Anglo-French intervention proved to be a fiasco, failing to bring down 'Abd al-Nasir or putting the Suez Canal under international supervision. The intervention simply confirmed, magnified and encouraged those political trends in the Middle East, which Britain and France were trying to arrest. 'Abd al-Nasir survived and snatched a remarkable political victory to become the unquestioned hero of the Arab masses. He scrapped the 1954 Anglo-Egyptian Agreement and a unilateral declaration to guarantee the freedom of passage through the canal was, in the end, all that he conceded. By late spring 1957, Britain and France had re-permitted their ships to use the canal but on Egypt's terms. The resumption of the oil flow through Syria was only authorised on 11 March 1957.⁸⁸ Syria and Egypt broke off diplomatic ties with both Britain and France.⁸⁹ In Jordan, the British Army training mission was dissolved and ordered to leave. The 1948 Anglo-Jordanian Treaty was abrogated and replaced by the Arab Solidarity Agreement of 13 January 1957, whereby Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia pledged to compensate Jordan for the loss of the £12.5 million annual British subsidy for the next ten years, an offer which King Husayn had in the past always politely declined.⁹⁰ Moreover, the new pan-Arab nationalist Jordanian government asked Iraq to put her forces in Jordan under Egyptian command, and when the Iraqis refused, they were politely asked to leave. From then on, Britain played second fiddle to Washington in Middle Eastern politics. France, already less influential than Britain, lost even more. By the end of

⁸⁷Muhammad Hasanayn Haykal, *Qissat al-Suways: akhir al-ma'arik fi 'asr al-'amaliqah* (1977), 241-49; Tlas, *Mir'at*, 578; Riad, *Struggle*, 10. Only Zakariyya, *al-Sultan*, 169, a source extremely critical of al-Sarraj, says that the destruction of the pipeline was carried out by Ihsan al-Shishakli, the son of the former Syrian leader. It is believed that only Washington's attitude during the crisis saved the section of the Trans-Arabian pipeline passing through Syria and carrying Saudi oil to the Lebanese coast from a similar fate; see FO371/127797/V1535/1, note by Brook, 28.8.57; FO371/128221/VY1015/25, Johnston to Watson, 20.2.57.

⁸⁸FO371/128221/VY1015/34, Scott to Watson, 14.3.57.

⁸⁹DDF, 1956, III, 172; FO371/121895/VY1891/1(B), CRO outward telegram, 7.11.56; *ibid.*, -/3, Gardener to FO, 3.11.56; *ibid.*, -/16, Middleton to FO, 21.11.56.

⁹⁰Lunt, *Hussein*, 43, 48-51.

November, she kept diplomatic relations with only Lebanon, Libya and Sudan.⁹¹ French institutions in Syria and Jordan were attacked, destroyed and set on fire.⁹²

Washington's attitude was instrumental in halting the tripartite aggression and its involvement in the uncovered Syrian plot⁹³ did not become public immediately. It, too, however, failed, in the end, to gain much politically. There was generally little appreciation among Arab nationalists for America's role in the Suez crisis. Washington had perhaps previously been too closely involved with Britain and France to be heralded now as the saviour of relatively small and weak Egypt against colonialism. Moreover, Arab suspicions were further enhanced, when, soon after the end of the hostilities, Washington refused to defreeze Egyptian assets in American banks which Egypt needed urgently for the purchase of foodstuffs and medicaments, forcing Cairo to resort once again to Moscow, which supplied Egypt's needs without delay.⁹⁴

Instead, the Arab masses enthusiastically welcomed the Soviet role in the conflict.⁹⁵ During the early stages of the war, Moscow itself was "busy" suppressing the uprising in Hungary. Soon after having the latter crushed, however, she formally threatened to use nuclear weapons against Israel, Britain and France if they failed to observe the UN cease-fire. During a pre-arranged official visit to Moscow by al-Quwatli from October 31 to November 3, the first by a Syrian President, Soviet Head of State Kliment Voroshilov pledged to assist Syria in defending her independence.⁹⁶ Western observers assumed that possible military movements in connection with the Suez war might have also been discussed during the visit, including, perhaps, the dispatch of Soviet "volunteers" to the Middle East,⁹⁷ for al-Quwatli declared on his return that "thousands of Soviet Muslims had announced their readiness to come to the Middle East to rid the Holy Land of imperialist aggressors".⁹⁸ In the next three years, Soviet trade with their Arab partners trebled.⁹⁹

⁹¹FO371/121221/V10317/2, FO minute by Faber, 21.11.56.

⁹²DDF, 1956, III, 85.

⁹³See pp. 121, 141.

⁹⁴Ersine B. Childers, *The Road to Suez: A Study of Western-Arab Relations* (1962), 313-14; Riad, *Struggle*, 10.

⁹⁵See, for example, Nutting, *Lesson*, 147; DDF, 1956, III, 295-96; FRUS, 1955-1957, XIII, 596.

⁹⁶Ramet, *Relationship*, 17.

⁹⁷Torrey, *Syrian Politics*, 341; Lesch, *Syria*, 102; FO371/121867/VY10338/20, Hayter to Lloyd, 12.11.56.

⁹⁸Seale, *Struggle*, 287-88. Egyptian sources have since claimed, however, that the Soviets were actually asked, but were reluctant to provide military help, promising only economic assistance and mobilisation of public opinion; see details in Anwar el-Sadat, *In Search of an Identity: An Autobiography* (1978), 145-46; Riyadh al-Maliki, *Dhikrayat 'ala darb al-kifah wa-l-hazimah* (1972), 231; Heikal, *Cairo*, 111-12; idem., *Sphinx*, 71-73.

⁹⁹Soysal, *Analysis*, 74.

In Syria, the outbreak of hostilities in Egypt coincided with the collapse of the attempted right-wing coup.¹⁰⁰ The Syrian conspirators—unaware, of course, of the Anglo-Franco-Israeli deal to invade Egypt—had planned to seize power on October 25. A few days before that date, however, the British counter-intelligence, MI6, informed the CIA and Syrian coup leaders that the projected date had to be postponed until October 29. Eden had opined, during his January summit with Eisenhower, that should it eventually be decided to take military action, Syria and Egypt should be hit simultaneously.¹⁰¹ The plotters, unaware of the implications of this short postponement, consented. Only on October 29 did they realise what it had meant. Some participants withdrew at the eleventh hour, refusing to be identified as collaborators with Israel.¹⁰² From then on, the Syrian intelligence easily uncovered the webs of the plot. It was already anticipating such an attempt, for the conspirators had failed to work in complete secrecy and there had been many leaks.¹⁰³ Intelligence officers seized large quantities of arms, smuggled from Iraq, and arrested numerous right-wing military officers and politicians, including 'Adnan al-Atasi and Munir al-'Ajlani, the leader of the right-wing Constitutional Bloc. Other plotters, both military and civilian, including Mikha'il Ilyan, Faysal al-'Asali, the leader of the Socialist Co-operative Party, and ex-Foreign Minister Faydi al-Atasi, fled to Lebanon and Turkey. Later, a military court tried them, under the provisions of martial law, for plotting against the state and condemned 'Adnan al-Atasi and five other politicians to death, but the then Defence Minister, Khalid al-'Azm, commuted the sentences to life imprisonment.¹⁰⁴

The attempted coup in Syria was unconnected with the attack on Suez. Only Britain was directly involved in both, and when she tried to "harmonise" them, she, probably unconsciously, assisted in the easy crumbling of the already carelessly managed plot in Syria.

The coup's failure left the Syrian right-wing completely demoralised. Late in December, the all-party government *in situ* collapsed due to serious differences between the People's Party and the other coalition partners.¹⁰⁵ Al-'Asali formed a new cabinet instead, based on the platform of the newly-established parliamentary National Gathering (*al-Tajammu' al-Watani*), which included the Ba'th, the Communists, the ALM, al-'Azm's followers, together

¹⁰⁰See pp. 117-20.

¹⁰¹Little, "Cold War", 66; *FRUS*, 1955-1957, XIII, 567.

¹⁰²Little, "Cold War", 67; Eveland, *Ropes*, 226-27.

¹⁰³See, for example, *The Jewish Observer and Middle East Report* (London), 16.3.56; FO371/115947/VY1015/95, Gardener to Rose, 5.12.55.

¹⁰⁴Torrey, *Syrian Politics*, 324-25; al-'Azm, *Mudhakkarat*, II, 344, 494-97 & III, 32-33, 45-47, 114-15. The convicted were released only in September 1960 by the President of the UAR, 'Abd al-Nasir, on condition that they lived in Cairo; see Frost, *UAR*, 276.

¹⁰⁵Torrey, *Syrian Politics*, 327; al-'Azm, *Mudhakkarat*, III, 35.

with some Nationalist and independent deputies.¹⁰⁶ Its program called for a firm anti-imperialist stand; liberation of Arab states under foreign rule; opposition to the Baghdad Pact; support for the Iraqi people in its fight against imperialism; and austerity to enable Syria to cope with the dangers it faced. At home, it pledged to overcome backwardness; introduce tax reform and legislation to protect workers and peasants.¹⁰⁷

Turkey and Iraq during the hostilities

The Turkish government kept a low profile throughout the period of military confrontation and issued no official statement. Commented *The Times* of 5 November:

This silence is typical of the embarrassing dilemma of Turkish diplomacy, torn between her friendship with Britain and her indebtedness to the United States for economic and military aid given to his country. Moreover, the position taken by two members of the Baghdad pact, Iraq and Pakistan, against the Anglo-French action in the canal zone, forces Turkey to adapt her policy to theirs if the Baghdad Pact is to be saved from disintegration.¹⁰⁸

Behind-the-scenes, however, reported Bowker:

the Turkish Government have not for a moment wavered in their approval of the Anglo-French intervention in the Israeli-Egyptian conflict. Having regretted that we did not intervene in force the moment Nasser nationalised the Canal, they have regarded our recent action as going a long way towards making good our earlier failure. This attitude has been shared by all officials and officers with whom I and members of my staff have been in touch, and I think, too, by the bulk of the public who follow international affairs. The only criticism has been that the arrival of our forces on the spot seemed slow to materialise and regret that we should have stopped before we had occupied the entire length of the Canal.

Bowker further reported that the Turkish authorities, despite the shortage of supplies of aviation fuel in the country, had promptly complied with a deluge of requests for British civil and military aircraft to overfly and refuel in Turkey.¹⁰⁹ On November 3, Birgi told him confidentially that Ankara's sympathies "lay with Her Majesty's Government in the present

¹⁰⁶Al-'Azam, *Mudhakkarat*, II, 486-88 & III, 40, 87; Petran, *Syria*, 116-17; Torrey, *Syrian Politics*, 328.

¹⁰⁷See its English translation in Muhammad Khalil(ed.), *The Arab States and the Arab League: A Documentary Record*, I (1962), 597-99.

¹⁰⁸For the situation in Pakistan during the hostilities, see Kyle, *Suez*, 395-96, 486-88; Burke, *Pakistan*, 187-88.

¹⁰⁹FO371/121801/VR1091/957, Bowker to FO, 16.11.56. See also FO371/124022/RK1071/2, Hayter to FO, 13.11.56; Tan, 13.1.57, quoted in FO371/130190/RK1051/6, Bowker to FO, 18.1.57.

situation".¹¹⁰ The next day, acting Turkish Foreign Minister Ethem Menderes, too, stressed that "the Turkish Government and the Prime Minister attached the greatest importance to the British alliance, which remained a permanent element in their foreign policy".¹¹¹ According to a biographer of Menderes, the latter intimated to him in 1960 that he thought Britain and France should have persisted with their intervention for at least two more days.¹¹² One contemporary historian has even suggested that a report on November 6 that Turkey was being overflowed by Soviet jet aircraft and that the Turkish Air Force was being alerted could have been deliberate "disinformation" spread by the Turks to push the USA into intervention against Egypt and Syria.¹¹³

At the UN, Turkey was not a member of the Security Council at the time, but during the debates in the General Assembly, she avoided publicity, voting in general, following the USA, on the majority side. Her one or two "deviations" from this pattern were always in favour of Britain and France.¹¹⁴ Her abstention during voting on the request to convene an emergency session of the UN General Assembly has been interpreted as usual Turkish reluctance to take sides in conflicts between friendly countries.¹¹⁵ It can be also treated, however, as a device to free herself from making a compromise in public between her private expectations and the image she wanted to show to the Arab world. If initially, the American opposition to the Anglo-French use of force did make taking sides difficult for Turkey, it later turned out to be, however, very useful in showing Turkey a diplomatic way out of the immediate conflict. Turkey supported the calls for an immediate cease-fire; the withdrawal of foreign forces from Egyptian territory and the establishment of UNEF. She was more restrained than her regional Baghdad Pact allies, however, when voting on strongly-worded resolutions demanding immediate Anglo-French withdrawal and spoke in favour of the Anglo-French intention to keep their troops in the Canal Zone until UNEF could take over.¹¹⁶

The attitude of the Turkish press during the war was, according to Bowker, "mixed" and "patchy". He could still, however, supply the FO with a few selections of comments favourable to France and Britain and extremely critical of 'Abd al-Nasir and the USSR.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁰FO371/121789/VR1091/624, Bowker to FO, 3.11.56; FO371/121798/VR1091/875, FO minute, 13.11.56.

¹¹¹FO371/121788/VR1091/585, Bowker to FO, 4.11.56.

¹¹²Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, *İkinci Adam (İsmet İnönü)*, Vol. III: 1950-1964 (1964), 336-37; *ibid.*, *Menderes'in Dramı (1899-1960)* (1969), 300.

¹¹³Lucas, *Divided*, 302. See also Eisenhower, *Waging*, 91.

¹¹⁴Nutting, *Lesson*, 154; FO371/121747/VR1074/472 & 496, Dixon to FO, 1 & 4 November 1956.

¹¹⁵Gruen, *Turkey*, 330-31; FO371/121801/VR1091/957, Bowker to FO, 16.11.56.

¹¹⁶Gruen, *Turkey*, 333-34; FO371/121798/VR1091/875, FO minute, 13.11.56.

¹¹⁷FO371/121789/VR1091/612, Bowker to FO, 3.11.56; FO371/121796/VR1091/816, Bowker to FO, 10.11.56; FO371/121800/VR1091/945, Bowker to FO, 17.1.56; FO371/121801/VR1091/957, Bowker to FO, 16.11.56; FO371/121802/VR1091/969, Bowker to FO, 21.11.56.

Turkey did not make during the conflict any new friends among the anti-Western forces in the area. After diplomatic relations between Britain and Syria had been broken off and the Syrian army had been had officially at least placed under Egyptian command, the British government renewed its warning that the use of Syrian airfields by Egyptian warplanes against Anglo-British targets would make Syria liable to attack by the Royal Air Force. This message was communicated to Damascus through President Sham'un, as well as the Turkish minister in Syria. Al-Bitar, while receiving this message on November 5, told Kural that "he was sorry that Turkey, with whom Syria was in friendly relations, should have agreed to transmit such an unpleasant message".¹¹⁸ Turkey's relations with Egypt also worsened sharply and their media traded venomous accusations.¹¹⁹

The increased antagonism between Egypt and Turkey was one of the manifestations of 'Abd al-Nasir's growing hostility toward the Baghdad Pact. 'Abd al-Nasir believed that some of the secret radios attacking him throughout the crisis were stationed in Turkey and Iraq.¹²⁰ On 16 December, he told the US ambassador that it was impossible to enjoy security and stability in the area unless the "other side", i.e Turkey and Iraq plays it square".¹²¹ 'Abd al-Nasir also rejected a Pakistani offer of a contingent for UNEF and cancelled an impending visit to Cairo by Pakistan's Prime Minister.¹²²

Meanwhile, the tripartite aggression had¹²³ put the Iraqi leadership in an unprecedentedly difficult situation. Nuri had in the past consistently attacked France and Israel for allegedly pursuing policies inimical to the Arabs and been an outspoken advocate of Anglo-Arab co-operation. Now, it appeared—as was later confirmed—that Britain was collaborating with both France and Israel to subdue a fellow Arab country. Immediately after the Israeli attack on Sinai, the Iraqi public believed, reported Wright, that the machinery of the Tripartite Declaration and the UN would soon be put into force to halt the aggression. Baghdad informed Cairo and other Arab capitals of its willingness to provide assistance in face of the Israeli attack and conveyed to London its deep concern at the Israeli action.¹²³ Ensuing developments were greeted, therefore, with "disbelief" and "consternation". "Our armed intervention in Egypt was looked upon as a resurgence of old-fashioned British imperialism".¹²⁴ The Iraqi cabinet decided on October 31 not to raise with the British government the question of intervention at the Suez Canal. But if Britain wanted to maintain

¹¹⁸FO371/121880/VY1223/9-10, FO to Ankara & Middleton to FO, 3.11.56; *ibid.*, -/11, Stewart to Rose, 6.11.56.

¹¹⁹Kürkçüoğlu, *Türkiye'nin Politikası*, 100; *FRUS 1955-1957*, XVI, 1314, 1321.

¹²⁰Kennett Love, *Suez: The Twice-Fought War* (1970), 409.

¹²¹*FRUS 1955-1957*, XVI, 1314, 1321.

¹²²Burke, *Pakistan*, 203.

¹²³FO371/121783/VR1091/410, Wright to FO, 31.10.56.

¹²⁴FO371/121662/VQ1051/51, Wright to Lloyd, 7.12.56.

support in the Arab world, even of her warmest friends, Nuri told Wright, then she should accompany her anti-Egyptian measures with a strong condemnation of Israel and take parallel measures to force the latter to withdraw to the armistice lines.¹²⁵ From then on, Wright bombarded the FO with an average of two to three telegrams a day requesting his government to push Israel, by force if necessary, beyond the armistice lines and for further evidence of Britain's impartiality between Egypt and Israel. He even feared that the Hashimite Family and Nuri's government might fall and a breach of Iraqi relations with Britain would follow.¹²⁶ Days of aerial bombing only against Egyptian targets without landing made matters worse, confided 'Abd al-Ilah. "Even the mere news of landings would be of some help. People would be given at least a short pause to speculate whether the Anglo-French forces would act against Egypt or Israel or both," said he.¹²⁷ Wright also reported that Washington's attitude had been privately criticised by some members of the Iraqi establishment, who would have liked to see the end of 'Abd al-Nasir.¹²⁸ The Iraqi government also tried to jam the Cairo and Damascus radio stations, who were accusing Nuri of collaborating with the aggressors.¹²⁹ Nuri told Lloyd, when they next met several months later in Karachi, that his only complaint against the British was their "mixing up" with "those beastly Jews".¹³⁰

The Suez War made 'Abd al-Nasir a "hero" and a "martyr" for all Iraqis who resented Nuri's policies for one reason or another.¹³¹ Some students were already busy demonstrating in Baghdad on November 1, when the government declared martial law.¹³² Even then, disturbances spread to other urban areas.¹³³

¹²⁵FO371/121782/VR1091/416, Wright to FO, 31.10.56.

¹²⁶For Wright's telegrams see FO371/121783-90 *passim*. See also Kyle, *Suez*, 397-98, 487; Lucas, *Divided*, 268-69.

¹²⁷FO371/121787/VR1091/552, Wright to FO, 4 November 1956.

¹²⁸FO371/121662/VQ1051/51, Wright to Lloyd, 7.12.56.

¹²⁹Al-Takriti, *Al-Wasi*, 146.

¹³⁰FO371/127828/VB1072/122, Lloyd to Macmillan, 3.6.56. Al-Jamali, the Iraqi delegate at the UN, however, officially demanded that aggression against Egypt should be stopped; see *DDF*, 1956, III, 178. Al-Jamali, *Dhikrayat*, 136, says there was no communication between Baghdad and New York during the hostilities and only his attacks against the Soviet action in Hungary, not those relating to the situation in Suez, were broadcast on Baghdad Radio. Another example of lack of co-ordination is the November 9 statement of the Iraqi Embassy, London—which went totally unreported in Baghdad—that the Iraqi government considered the Anglo-French intervention in Egypt an act of aggression and a flagrant violation of the UN Charter and expected an immediate withdrawal of British troops from Egypt; see FO371/121799/VR1091/924, FO to Bagdad, 14.11.56; *ibid.*, -/924(B), Wright to FO, 15.11.56.

¹³¹FO371/121662/VQ1051/51, Wright to Lloyd, 7.12.56.

¹³²FO371/121646/VQ1015/93, Wright to FO, 1.11.56.

¹³³For details see Hanna Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq: A Study of Iraq's Old Landed and Commercial Classes and of Its Communists, Ba'thists, and Free Officers* (1978), 751-57.

Nuri's and Menderes's expectations had thus been totally dashed and the terrible scenario they had forecast in case 'Abd al-Nasir got away with the nationalisation appeared to be close to reality. It seemed for a moment that everything they had fought for in the past two-and-a-half years was lost. Nuri faced one of the most serious internal challenges of his career. This crisis, however, gave both an opportunity to demonstrate that they were dedicated fighters, determined to pursue those objectives, which, they believed, were in the best interest of their respective peoples. This is the subject of the following chapter.

The Fightback

The Suez war had not only failed to satisfy Turkish and Iraqi aspirations, but had created for both additional problems, demanding immediate attention. Ankara acknowledged that the political damage caused by the war should be hastily limited to prevent the Baghdad Pact's collapse and help Nuri overcome the renewed vigour of his opponents in Iraq. Moreover, the left-wing government in Damascus had acquired new strength after 'Abd al-Nasir's political victory and the foiling of the pro-Western plot in Syria, thus threatening Turkey of encirclement by pro-Soviet forces both from the north and south. Hence, Turkey's sole objective at this juncture was to strengthen the position of pro-Western elements in the area.

Turkey and the Withdrawal of Anglo-French Troops from Egypt

Now that the Anglo-French intervention in Egypt had failed to dislodge 'Abd al-Nasir from power and stem the radical pan-Arab nationalist tide, Britain's Baghdad Pact allies, and Menderes in particular, realised that a total and immediate Anglo-French withdrawal from Egypt must ensue with simultaneous pressure on Israel to follow suit.¹ It was better, argued Menderes, to leave Port-Said on one's own rather than hang on to be forced out eventually. Such a decision would not compromise Britain's prestige, and might even have favourable effects.² Britain soon complied with this recommendation, realising that on it depended largely Nuri's ability to survive and the future of the Baghdad Pact. The Turkish Foreign Ministry welcomed on December 5 Selwyn Lloyd's announcement of December 3 that Britain and France would proceed immediately with the withdrawal of their forces from the Suez Canal area. Pressure from the regional members of the Baghdad Pact, claimed Ankara, had undoubtedly influenced this decision, thus showing once more the pact's value and effectiveness in establishing peace and security in the area.³

¹*DDF*, 1956, III, 171; *DDF*, 1957, I, 149-50; FO371/121266/V1073/398G, FO minute by Ross, 8.11.56; FO371/121238/V1054/142, Ionides to Jones, 24.11.56; FO371/128057/VQ1051/34, Wright to Lloyd, 11.7.7.

²*DDF*, 1956, III, 439.

³FO371/118850/JE1027/29(A), Bowker to FO, 6.12.56.

Turkey, Nuri and the Future of the Baghdad Pact

Turkey was determined to play up the importance of the Baghdad Pact, and since Turkish-Iraqi co-operation remained its cornerstone, providing firm support for Nuri was now essential.

The Suez war had come close to toppling Nuri, raising serious questions about the viability of his political strategy and giving his opponents an opportunity to accuse him of being "the friend and love" of imperialists and Zionists. The "whole" Iraqi population was reportedly "under the spell of Nasser," and saw "calamities," like the blowing up of the IPC pipeline and disturbances in urban areas, "as a just retribution on the Iraq Government for their failure to support" Egypt "to the hilt".⁴ "Almost without exception, the political figures (former Prime Ministers and Ministers) who have been out of office for the past two years" were reported to be exploiting the popular discontent to bring Nuri down.⁵ He was, immediately after the war, "on occasion in a minority of one in his own Cabinet," but, according to Ambassador Wright, "he put heart into his colleagues, into the Army, and into senior officials".⁶

An extraordinary informal meeting of the heads of government of the Middle Eastern members of the Baghdad Pact was held in Tehran to discuss the developments at Suez as hostilities were continuing. President Iskander Mirza of Pakistan, was scheduled to visit Tehran on October 31. Before leaving Karachi, he asked—without previously consulting the Shah—Menderes and Nuri to join him there.⁷ Iran ultimately went along, realising that the meeting could bolster her international image. The participants privately acknowledged that they would not have been unhappy had 'Abd al-Nasir been soundly defeated. They were angry, however, because the apparent collusion between their ally, Britain, and Israel would further harden their task of strengthening the pact.⁸

Nuri arrived in Tehran on November 4, demanding a recommendation toward the early restoration of Egypt's independence and territorial integrity; the early withdrawal of Israeli forces behind the 1949 armistice line; and the immediate release of all Egyptian prisoners of war. Moreover, he asked for an agreement to work for a definitive solution of the Palestine problem. Nuri hoped that if the participants

⁴FO371/121238/V1054/142, Ionides to Jones, 24.11.56; FO371/121662/VQ1051/51, Wright to Lloyd, 7.12.56.

⁵FO371/121647/VQ1015/103, Wright to FO, 14.11.56.

⁶FO371/128057/VQ1051/34, Wright to Lloyd, 11.7.57.

⁷Kyle, *Suez*, 398-99.

⁸FO371/121265/V1073/385, Bowker to FO, 10.11.56; FO371/121648/VQ1022/17, Wright to FO, 17.11.56; FO371/121223/V1022/2, Wright to FO, 21.11.56.

took up a solid position at once on the issues involved, if possible together with Her Majesty's Government but if not with which Her Majesty's Government would soon associate themselves, the Bagdad Pact would not only justify its continuance, but could make an important contribution to a Palestine settlement. In the process the position of Her Majesty's Government and her relations with the Arab world would be to a large extent restored.⁹

Nuri was soon irritated, however, by finding out that Menderes would not, "on doctor's orders," be able to leave Ankara immediately. He turned up in Tehran only on November 7, saying he had been recovering from an attack of erysipelas. For Sir Roger Stevens, the UK ambassador in Tehran, however, the main reason behind this delay was probably Menderes's hope that "the course of events in Egypt would cool the ardour of his colleagues and make agreement easier on a declaration of policy which would not be offensive to" Britain.¹⁰ Indeed, in Ankara, Birgi told Bowker that Menderes "had very much in mind the necessity of avoiding giving the impression that the four pact members were ganging-up against the United Kingdom".¹¹

By November 7, all warring sides at Suez had abided by the UN cease-fire, and the mood in Tehran had somewhat eased. No longer were radical ideas, like effecting a temporary separation from Britain or forming an alternative organisation including Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and the USA, being toyed with.¹² Menderes and the Shah strongly argued against excluding Britain, claiming that the pact would then become meaningless.¹³ Menderes had brought his own draft and insisted on setting up a special drafting committee to have his own draft considered and incorporated. He fought against unfriendly references to Britain in the communiqué, only to find out "with amusement" on occasions that Stevens had already accepted something less favourable to his country.¹⁴

The final communiqué—which had received Britain's prior consent—condemned, on November 8, Israel's aggression against Egypt and demanded the immediate withdrawal of her troops to the armistice line, together with the release of all Egyptian prisoners taken by her. It described the Anglo-French "intervention" as "regrettable" and called on both governments to withdraw their forces and respect fully Egypt's independence. It hoped that

⁹FO371/121790/VR1091/650, Wright to FO, 6.11.56.

¹⁰FO371/121266/V1073/405, Stevens to Lloyd, 15.11.56.

¹¹FO371/121788/VR1091/600, Bowker to FO, 3.11.56.

¹²FO371/121265/V1073/387, Stevens to FO, 10.11.56; FO371/121266/V1073/405, Stevens to Lloyd, 15.11.56; FO371/121268/V1073/453, Stewart to Rose, 11.12.56.

¹³FO371/121265/V1073/385 & 385(A), Bowker to FO, 10 & 12 November 1956.

¹⁴FO371/121266/V1073/405, Stevens to Lloyd, 15.11.56; FO371/121801/VR1091/957, Bowker to FO, 16.11.56. For a detailed description of the meeting, based on minutes taken by Ahmad Mukhtar Baban, an Iraqi minister, see Heikal, *Cutting*, 216-23.

UNEF would take up position in the fighting zone without delay, and suggested that the Suez Canal problem must be settled through negotiations with Egypt under UN auspices. Meanwhile, freedom of passage through the canal should be safeguarded, fully respecting Egyptian sovereignty. It also emphasised the urgency to solve the Palestine dispute, taking the 1947 UN partition resolution as a basis for negotiations.¹⁵

All pact-members (including Britain) were relieved at this outcome.¹⁶ Nuri had for the first time secured regional backing for the Arab position on Palestine, while Menderes probably viewed Turkey's new, more committed attitude *vis-à-vis* Palestine as a price worth paying to guarantee the pact's survival.

In the prevailing tense political atmosphere in Iraq, however, this communiqué was not enough. Hoping "to satisfy pressure for some action to be taken," Iraq broke off, on November 9, diplomatic, and, a week later, economic, relations with France for the latter's alleged "continual interference in Arab affairs".¹⁷ Iraq did not cut off diplomatic relations with Britain, but decided unilaterally to exclude her representatives temporarily from future meetings of Baghdad Pact Council Deputies. This restriction would not apply to meetings of committees and sub-committees, nor affect the position of the British staff on the Pact Secretariat.¹⁸ This decision was taken without consulting Turkey, Pakistan or Iran.¹⁹ Ankara, however, regarded it as "a concession of form rather than substance to Arab public opinion and, therefore, not to be taken too tragically" and tolerated such measures temporarily to preserve Nuri's cabinet. Baghdad was informed, however, that Turkey did not regard herself as bound by this decision with which she in no way agreed.²⁰

Turkish, Iraqi, Iranian and Pakistani leaders held a second unofficial summit in Baghdad on November 19-23. Pakistani leaders were due to arrive there on a private visit on November 17, so Nuri welcomed Menderes's suggestion that he should join them, too. Menderes hoped to use the meeting to provide Nuri with continual encouragement and

¹⁵Kyle, *Suez*, 487. See full text in Noble Frankland(ed.), *Documents on International Affairs*, 1956, (1959), 313-14.

¹⁶Kyle, *Suez*, 488; FO371/121265/V1073/385, Bowker to FO, 10.11.56. Lloyd, for example, sent confidential individual messages of thanks to Nuri, Menderes and the Shah; see FO371/121266/V1073/392, Stevens to FO, 13.11.56.

¹⁷FO371/121682/VQ1904/1 & 3, Wright to FO, 9-10 November 1956.

¹⁸FO371/121265/V1073/387, Wright to FO, 9.11.56; FO371/121682/VQ1904/2, Wright to FO, 9.11.56. Nuri also concentrated his verbal attacks on Israel and tried to show that her and Moscow's interests in the Middle East coincided. Moreover, Nuri sent a discreet message to 'Abd al-Nasir, proposing a private meeting to sort out their political differences; see Elie Podeh, "The Struggle over Arab Hegemony after the Suez Crisis", *MES*, 29/1 (January, 1993), 100. He also reportedly toyed with the idea of nationalising the IPC or at least of insisting upon the elimination of French participation; see FO371/128057/VQ1051/34, Wright to Lloyd, 11.7.57.

¹⁹FO371/121265/V1073/387, Wright to FO, 9.11.56.

²⁰Soysal, *Analysis*, 40; FO371/121266/V1073/399, Bowker to FO, 14.11.56.

support "to meet the difficulties of his present position without jettisoning the substance of his associations with the West".²¹ Iran's Foreign Minister arrived on November 19. Iraqi leaders were still under great internal pressure. Menderes and the Pakistanis tried hard to stiffen them. The Iraqis requested to go beyond the Tehran communiqué, and the new Baghdad communiqué of November 23, besides reaffirming the recommendations of Tehran, further endorsed the communiqué issued by the Arab Heads of State meeting in Beirut (13-15 November 1956), which had demanded the implementation of the UN General Assembly recommendations and the dissociation of the Suez canal question from the circumstances of the aggression against Egypt.²² The participants of the Baghdad meeting also sent President Mirza on a lightning visit to Riyadh, to win King Sa'ud's support for their declared fight against communism, and, then, to Lebanon to assure President Sham'un of their desire to provide him with any possible help and support. Menderes and Nuri also sent Sham'un separate messages of support.²³ Britain was not invited again to the Baghdad meeting, but Wright was consulted before the publication of the communiqué. He was reassured that the pact would continue intact and that its committees would work on a five-power basis. It was requested, however, that no statements about those meetings should be disseminated by London-based news agencies or the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC).²⁴

During his stay in Baghdad, Menderes held on November 17 a long meeting with 'Abd al-Ilah and emphasised the dangers of changing Nuri's cabinet. Menderes also assembled at the Turkish embassy up to forty Iraqi political figures and members of the loyal opposition and warned against the dangers of trying to exploit the situation for their own personal or party interests.²⁵

A third quadripartite meeting, scheduled for early December in Ankara, was called off in the last minute, because the governments involved thought that political tensions had somewhat eased, largely due to Washington's renewed interest in the fortunes of the Baghdad Pact.²⁶

Turkey further attempted to placate Arab public opinion by taking a more pro-Arab stand than before during the annual session of the UN General Assembly. Al-Jamali, the head of the

²¹FO371/121648/VQ1022/15, Bowker to FO, 15.11.56; *ibid.*, -/16, Wright to FO, 17.11.56; FO371/121801/VR1091/957, Bowker to FO, 16.11.56.

²²See text of Baghdad communiqué in FO371/121648/VQ1022/22, Wright to FO, 23.11.56; of Beirut communiqué, in Frankland, *Documents*, 1956, 319-20; Chamoun, *Crise*, 311-13.

²³FO371/121223/VQ1022/2-3, Wright to FO, 21.11.56.

²⁴FO371/121266/V1073/397(A), CRO outward telegram, 13.11.56; FO371/121267/V1073/411, Wright to FO, 13.11.56.

²⁵FO371/121223/V1022/11, Stewart to Young, 29.11.56; FO371/121647/VQ1015/104, Bowker to FO, 17.11.56.

²⁶FO371/121267/V1073/420, Stevens to FO, 28.11.56; *ibid.*, -/425(A) & 429, UK High Commissioner, Pakistan to CRO, 3-4 December 1956. See also *infra*.

Iraqi delegation to the session, appreciated the fact that Turkey had, "for the first time," stood by and voted with the Arabs "in connexion with the aggression against Egypt, Algeria and the Arab refugees".²⁷ Turkey's new stand toward Algeria, however, brought her into conflict with France. Birgi had to admit that Algeria had previously been an embarrassment for Turkey and that Ankara's position had been re-examined in light of the evolving situation.²⁸ In return, Nuri went out of his way during the next Pact Council meeting (Karachi, June 1957) to state Iraq's support for a settlement in Cyprus, safeguarding the constitutional and international rights of the Turkish civil population.²⁹

Moreover, since Turkey's regional allies had urged her, in Baghdad, to break off her diplomatic relations with Israel,³⁰ Ankara recalled, on 26 November, its Minister, Şefkati İstinyeli, from Tel Aviv. Turkey declared that her Minister would not return until a "just and final solution" could be found to the Palestine question. She also refused to receive any successor to the outgoing Israeli Minister in Ankara, who had already completed his tour of duty. Israel was privately told, however, that İstinyeli's recall did not mean breaking off relations with Israel. The reduction in the level of diplomatic representation was not an unfriendly gesture, but simply a device to strengthen the Baghdad Pact. Turkey would like to maintain friendly relations and commercial ties with Israel. The Turkish legation in Israel continued to function normally, with the counsellor acting as chargé d'affaires. The first secretary of the Israeli legation in Ankara, in turn, also took over as chargé.³¹ Unconfirmed news-agency reports claimed that Menderes had even considered severing formal diplomatic relations. His Minister for Trade and Economy, Zayyat Mandalinci, had pointed out, however, that this kind of rupture might adversely affect the normal development of Turkish-Israeli commercial and economic relations.³²

Another sign of Turkey's increasing reluctance to be identified with Israel was the report in the Israeli newspaper *ha-Arez* of 9 January 1957, that acting Foreign Minister Ethem Menderes had vetoed a proposed visit to Israel by Turkey's Defence Minister to increase bilateral military co-operation, for Turkish military experts had highly praised Israel's military capacity during the Sinai campaign.³³

İsmet İnönü, the leader of the main opposition RPP, had been annoyed at not being consulted by the government during the Suez war. Not wishing to see Ankara involved in the

²⁷FO371/128044/VQ1022/4, Wright to FO, 18.3.57.

²⁸DDF, 1957, I, 304, 547.

²⁹FO371/127828/VB1072/121, Lloyd to FO, 3.6.57.

³⁰FO371/121266/V1073/397(B), CRO outward telegram, 26.11.56.

³¹Reeva S. Simon(ed.), *The Middle East and North Africa: Essays in Honor of J. C. Hurewitz* (1990), 356; Soysal, *Analysis*, 40; Gruen, *Turkey*, 358-59; Kürkçüoğlu, *Türkiye'nin Politikası*, 100.

³²Gruen, *Turkey*, 342.

³³Cited *ibid.*, 369.

Arab-Israeli conflict, he disapproved of Turkey's endorsement of the Beirut communiqué and disliked Istinyeli's recall.³⁴ The RPP parliamentary group declared on December 1 that Turkey's endorsement of the Beirut communiqué represented a new commitment "which the government has no authority to undertake".³⁵ From then on, the RPP attacked the pact for contributing to regional instability. Its newspaper, *Yeni Ulus*, criticised Western powers for trying ineffectively to use it simultaneously both as a regional defence shield against Soviet expansionism and as an instrument to settle regional disputes.³⁶ The other opposition parties, the Republican Nation Party and the Freedom Party (an offshoot of the ruling DP), also criticised Istinyeli's recall. The fortnightly review, *Forum*, argued that "if a war were to break out in the Middle East tomorrow, the Israeli army would be the only serious force capable of fighting on our side; its value is greater than the combined value of the Iraqi, Jordanian, and other Arab armies". Although Turkey, suggested *Forum*, should support the Arabs wherever their claims were justified, such as in Algeria and over the nationalisation of the Suez Canal Company, "in our actions we should not try to play up to the Arabs, but to serve as an example to them. Otherwise the Baghdad Pact will never succeed in solving the problems of the Middle East".³⁷

Israel was disturbed by this apparent shift in Turkey's official attitude, fearing that the Baghdad Pact might eventually become a vehicle of anti-Israeli propaganda. She even suspected that Iraq might try to impose, through the pact, some kind of embargo on supplies to Israel.³⁸

The extent to which these measures strengthened Nuri's powerbase at home is, of course, open to conjecture. Some suggest that Nuri survived only because of Washington's "independent stand" during the Suez war.³⁹ More plausible seems the explanation that Iraq was passing then through relatively prosperous times, and there was no gross economic discontent for Nuri's opponents to exploit. The army and security forces remained loyal. Disturbances were confined within the narrow circle of students and pan-Arab nationalists, and Nuri remained sufficiently powerful to have some prominent radical opposition politicians jailed.⁴⁰ It was only in February, however, that he "felt strong enough to agree to

³⁴Metin Toker, *Demokrasimizin İsmet Paşa'lı Yılları 1944-1973*. Book III: *DP Yokuş Aşağı 1954-1957* (1991), 219-20.

³⁵Gruen, *Turkey*, 343-44.

³⁶Ivo J. Lederer and Wayne S. Vucinich, *The Soviet Union and the Middle East: The Post-World War II Era* (1974), 38; FO371/121267/V1073/410, Bowker to FO, 13.11.56.

³⁷Quoted in Laqueur, *Transition*, 190-91.

³⁸FO371/127815/VB10353/1(A), FO to Karachi, 4.6.57.

³⁹Decker, *Policy*, 213.

⁴⁰Fernea and Louis, *Revolution*, 45; Saad, *Iraq*, 56; al-'Akam, *Ta'rikh*, 185; al-Takriti, *Al-Wasi*, 147; FO371/121647/VQ1015/103, Wright to FO, 14.11.56; FO371/121662/VQ1051/51, Wright to Lloyd, 7.12.56; FO371/128057/VQ1051/34, Wright to Lloyd, 11.7.57.

the unobtrusive resumption of work in the Pact Committees with British participation,"⁴¹ while martial law was lifted only on 28 May 1957.

The Eisenhower Doctrine

The Suez *débâcle* precipitated renewed Baghdad Pact activity to secure Washington's adherence. Turkey's role in this respect was again pivotal, for the satisfaction she had received from the Tehran Pact Council meeting (April 1956) had, as anticipated, long evaporated, making her return to the familiar tune of the necessity of expanding the pact-membership and bringing in the USA.

Turkish officials had continued, throughout the summer of 1956, to emphasise informally to their allies the importance of US adherence.⁴² In August, Birgi told Dulles that American membership would best guarantee Israel against further Arab aggression, since no Arab pact-member would then dare move against Israel.⁴³ On another occasion, he claimed that "the Israeli Ambassador was known to have advocated United States membership of the Pact on two occasions recently".⁴⁴ Turkish official circles again aired complaints that the pact was "in the doldrums"; it had "no influence over vital issues"; it was being "clearly ... overshadowed by other developments" and failing to "provide an alternative policy" for Egypt's allies "if indeed they decided to detach themselves" from her.⁴⁵ Finally, on November 1, in a most significant and unprecedented gesture, Bayar frankly called in public for full US membership.⁴⁶ The American ambassador in Ankara, Fletcher Warren, formally recommended, in early October, to his government to accede immediately to the pact or, at least, grant further substantial economic and military aid to its members as evidence of continuing American support. He thought that "Turkey's confidence in America's determination to defend Western interests in the Middle East has been so much shaken during the last few weeks, that some spectacular gesture was necessary to restore it".⁴⁷

Although demands that Washington should join "at once" and also "step up economic and military aid, particularly to Iran and Pakistan" were not incorporated into the Tehran communiqué, the participants frankly told Britain that these were, in addition to solving the

⁴¹FO371/128057/VQ1051/34, Wright to Lloyd, 11.7.57.

⁴²FO371/119088/JE14211/326G, FO to Bagdad, 31.7.56; FO371/119144/JE14211/999, Menderes to Dulles, 15.8.56.

⁴³FO371/121274/V1075/153, Stewart to Beeley, 13.12.56.

⁴⁴FO371/124021/RK1052/6, FO minute by Hope, 25.8.56. Birgi's assertion seems to be totally unfounded. This author has detected no noticeable change in Israel's hostility to the pact throughout the period under discussion.

⁴⁵FO371/121263/V1073/340, FO minute by Brimelow, 27.9.56; *ibid.*, -/348G, Rose to Wright, 10.10.56.

⁴⁶FO371/124001/RK1016/43, Bowker to Lloyd, 6.11.56.

⁴⁷FO371/121274/V1075/129, Stewart to Rose, 9.10.56.

Palestine question, "essential" for the survival of pro-Western regimes in the area.⁴⁸ The Baghdad meeting went further and decided to make two formal and urgent requests for American adherence, first, through the US ambassador in Baghdad and, then, by sending Prince 'Abd al-Ilah to Washington. The Turks were not happy about the choice of 'Abd al-Ilah, but claimed that "they were faced with a *fait accompli*" on their arrival in Baghdad.⁴⁹

The Eisenhower administration realised, too, that the post-Suez situation could, if left unchecked, ultimately strengthen Soviet influence in the area and constitute a severe—possibly fatal—strategic and economic blow to Western interests. With British influence in the area having received a severe setback, Washington understood that it should now be more active in defending those interests. It soon warned Arab countries that close ties with Moscow and the flow of Soviet arms posed "the greatest threat to the Middle East".⁵⁰ Washington still desired, however, to "stay clear of Arab and Israeli politics now incident to Iraq's membership in the Baghdad Pact"⁵¹ and thought that Turkey, Iraq and Lebanon were exaggerating the existing Soviet threat.

This assumption was, of course, not entirely unfounded. On many occasions in the past, the above-mentioned powers, Turkey in particular, had used all means possible to induce Washington into a deeper involvement in the area. Now, however, the Turkish worries seemed to some observers to be more sincere than previously. Reported Bowker: "Turkish nerves are strong and there is no sign of panic. But for the first time since my arrival" in Ankara in 1954 "I sense a very real feeling of anxiety over Turkey's position and an instinctive turning to Turkey's British, and particularly American, allies for moral and material support, for once devoid of any tendency to exploit the situation for Turkey's own advantage".⁵²

With deliberations still continuing in Washington, the State Department published on November 29 a statement to demonstrate America's support to the Baghdad Pact, and especially to Iraq and Iran, with whom she had no formal treaties of alliance. It praised the role played recently by Iraq, Iran, Turkey and Pakistan, and warned that Washington would view with utmost gravity any threat to their territorial integrity or political independence.⁵³

All main Turkish newspapers greeted the statement.⁵⁴ Menderes, however, found Washington's attitude of "observation rather than action" very disappointing.⁵⁵ Birgi opined

⁴⁸FO371/121265/V1073/385, Bowker to FO, 10.11.56.

⁴⁹FO371/121282/V1079/8G, CRO outward telegram, 22.11.56; FO371/121268/V1073/445, Stewart to Rose, 7.12.56.

⁵⁰Torrey, *Syrian Politics*, 337; FO371/121869/VY10345/3-4.

⁵¹FRUS 1955-1957, XII, 331.

⁵²FO371/121801/VR1091/957, Bowker to FO, 16.11.56.

⁵³See full statement in Frankland, *Documents*, 1956, 319-20.

⁵⁴FO371/121223/V1022/9, Stewart to FO, 1.12.56.

that Washington still hoped to reach some sort of *modus vivendi* with Egypt and refrained from joining the pact not to hinder such an eventual arrangement.⁵⁶

Every US ambassador in the region, together with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, were supporting US adherence. A hard core of opposition remained, however, at the top of the State Department, still seeing Israel as an obstacle. Eisenhower was against, too, because "if the British get us into the Baghdad Pact—as the matter would appear to the Arabs—we would lose our influence with the Arabs".⁵⁷ The Congressional recess made the declining of the membership invitation easier.⁵⁸ Iraq, too, opposed US adherence if that meant a simultaneous security guarantee to Israel, while Turkey disliked the idea of a broader, alternative pact with a wider Arab membership. Dulles even suggested at some stage that Iran might join SEATO, so that "there would be a solid United States guaranteed line from Turkey to Pakistan," giving Iraq automatic protection against any Soviet invasion.⁵⁹ Finally, the administration decided to seek congressional authorisation for the President to take, if necessary, stronger action to support pro-Western forces in the area.⁶⁰ Dulles thus hoped to signal that Washington would fight to defend its interests in the Middle East and pave the way for Washington's participation in the Baghdad Pact Military Committee.⁶¹ This proposal, however, reportedly generated little enthusiasm in the State Department other than with Dulles and his confidantes.⁶² American diplomats in Arab capitals were bitter about it and opposed it almost unanimously.

This new initiative, the Eisenhower Doctrine, was presented to Congress on 5 January 1957. The President stated that a political "vacuum" had arisen in the Middle East. Washington must now make more evident its willingness to support the sovereignty of Middle Eastern states against the threat posed by "international communism". He asked for authorisation to employ, upon request and whenever necessary, American forces to secure and protect their integrity and independence against overt, armed aggression from any power controlled by "international communism," as well as to undertake programs of military aid and economic co-operation to strengthen countries, whose independence was threatened.

⁵⁵FO371/121223/V1022/11, Stewart to Young, 29.11.56.

⁵⁶FO371/121274/V1075/153, Stewart to Beeley, 13.12.56. Stewart also reports the existence of another, albeit less influential, school of thought within the Turkish Foreign Ministry, probably at its lower levels, that opposed Washington's adherence, arguing that once it joined, further Arab accessions would only weaken the pact by complicating its machinery and widening the area of its responsibility.

⁵⁷Aston, "Highjacking", 136.

⁵⁸FO371/121230/V10345/5, Caccia to FO, 1.12.56.

⁵⁹FRUS 1955-1957, XII, 331.

⁶⁰Fernea and Louis, *Revolution*, 87-88; Axelgard, *Policy*, 190-92.

⁶¹FO371/121230/V10345/10G, Caccia to FO, 29.12.56.

⁶²Copeland, *Game*, 191.

The doctrine—formulated and proclaimed without consulting London—specifically mentioned only armed aggression and said nothing about subversion. American leaders hoped, however, that it could achieve a broad "umbrella," and threats, like subversion, would also be effectively deterred. The doctrine was designed to bolster the confidence of pro-Western Middle Eastern governments by eliminating their fear of overt attack by "international communism" and offering economic assistance that would allow them to fight subversion by building up their internal security forces and improving their economies. It soon became clear, however, that the doctrine had its shortcomings, too. It was designed as merely one aspect of Washington's global Cold War strategy, ignoring crucial regional considerations, which quickly reduced its newly-acquired popularity among certain Arab nationalists, damaged its ability to deal creatively with the region's problems and exacerbated tensions at the heart of Middle Eastern instabilities. It did not touch the topic of the surge of radical pan-Arab nationalism in the region and the reasons behind the atmosphere of intense suspicion—if not outright hatred—of the West. It did not specify when and how a government, particularly in Syria and Egypt, could be branded as being under "international communist" control, and was powerless to deter the USSR from giving military and/or economic assistance to governments in the region or to supply inducements to the latter to stop seeking closer relations with Moscow. Egypt and Syria, where Soviet penetration was deepest, were unlikely to request US aid, while the main threat to pro-Western governments, like in Jordan and Lebanon, came not directly from Moscow, but from radical pan-Arab nationalists, personified by 'Abd al-Nasir. The doctrine also ignored the Arab-Israeli dispute, some say on purpose, in the vain hope of diverting the attention of Israel and conservative Arab regimes from what divided them to their presumed common enemy.⁶³ These shortcomings would seriously hamper the doctrine's smooth implementation and give rise to serious differences of interpretation between Washington and its regional friends.

Despite these inconsistencies, however, the doctrine was approved by Congress, and, in March 1957, Ambassador James P. Richards embarked on a long Middle Eastern tour, visiting, *inter alia*, Turkey, Lebanon, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, but not Egypt, Syria and Jordan. He explained that the doctrine was not intended to replace the Baghdad Pact. Washington simply believed that it was better to help the pact, and other Middle Eastern states outside it, rather than join it.⁶⁴ Moreover, Washington would now accept an invitation to join the pact's Military Committee,⁶⁵ a formality duly completed during the

⁶³Alexander L. George and Richard Smoke, *Deterrence in American Policy: Theory and Practice* (1974), 317-37; Robert A. Divine, *Eisenhower and the Cold War* (1981), 91-92; DeConde, *American Foreign Policy*, II, 292; Gaddis, *Strategies*, 180; Troen and Shemesh, *Suez-Sinai Crisis*, 251.

⁶⁴FO371/127742/V10345/105, Bowker to FO, 23.3.57.

⁶⁵FO371/127814/VB10345/23, Beeley to Stevens, 6.4.57.

Karachi Pact Council meeting in June 1957. The USA made clear, however, that its participation was "related solely to the Communist menace and carries no connotations with respect to intra-area matters".⁶⁶ A total amount of \$200m in aid was distributed to some of Washington's clients in the area, \$12.57m being earmarked towards several joint projects of regional character considered by the Baghdad Pact Economic Committee. Iraq and Turkey got further individual grants as well.⁶⁷

Both Iraq and Turkey (including the opposition RPP) welcomed the doctrine and the Richards tour.⁶⁸ Although the doctrine fell short of formal US membership, it was certainly an improvement over the previous American position insofar as it declared unequivocally her intentions *vis-à-vis* the USSR. Washington was now, they reasoned, to all intents and purposes, a pact-member. Furthermore, the American president would, henceforward, enjoy greater freedom in extending already appropriated funds for military and economic aid in the area. This attitude was publicly endorsed during yet another quadripartite summit of the regional members of the Baghdad Pact held in Ankara on 19-20 January 1957.⁶⁹ Behind-the-scenes, however, the Western powers were intimated that they "still hoped that America would join the Baghdad Pact since her failure to do so strengthened the opposition to it".⁷⁰

Besides Iraq, Libya and Lebanon were the only Arab countries officially to endorse the doctrine. Egypt, Syria and anti-Western elements in the Middle East in general interpreted it as a new American effort to ensnare the Arabs in a neo-colonialist embrace.

The exact Saudi attitude towards the doctrine remained initially unclear, although the USA was trying hard at the time to bolster King Sa'ud's pan-Arab image as a potential rival to 'Abd al-Nasir. Washington also attempted to bury the hatchet between Baghdad and Riyadh. Nuri had, in the past few years, repeatedly accused Riyadh, in private, of indulging in bribery to bolster 'Abd al-Nasir's position in the Fertile Crescent and had naively asked Washington to find some means to cut off, or threaten to cut off, the flow of American petro-dollars into Saudi Arabia.⁷¹ A certain Saudi-Iraqi rapprochement, however, had been evident since the

⁶⁶Burke, *Pakistan*, 171.

⁶⁷Axelgard, *Policy*, 218; FO371/127742/V10345/104, Bowker to FO, 23.3.57; FO371/127743/V10345/121, Bailey to Rose, 12.7.57.

⁶⁸Bağcı, *Demokrat*, 85; FO371/127739/V10345/5, Bowker to FO, 4.1.57; FO371/127814/VB10345/22, Bowker to FO, 25.3.57; *ibid.*, -/ 25, Bowker to FO, 28.3.57; FO371/128052/VQ10345/3, Bowker to FO, 9.4.57.

⁶⁹See text of Ankara communiqué in FO371/127824/VB1072/24, Bowker to FO, 21.1.57. Bayar and 'Abd al-Ilah also attended the meeting; see Mahmut Bali Aykan, *Ideology and National Interest in Turkish Foreign Policy Toward the Muslim World: 1960-1987*, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Virginia, 1988, 80; Soysal, "Baghdad Pact", 81.

⁷⁰FO371/127824/VB1072/23, Bowker to FO, 21.1.57.

⁷¹Eden, *Full Circle*, 343; *FRUS 1955-1957*, XII, 255 & XIII, 549; FO371/121280/V1077/2, FO minute by Nutting, 9.3.56; *ibid.*, -/3, Brief for Lloyd, 21.3.56; FO371/121254/V1073/192, Stevens to FO, 20.4.56; FO371/115532/V1073/1342, Record of restricted session of Baghdad Pact Council meeting, 22.11.55.

summer.⁷² Prince 'Abd al-Ilah's American visit on February 4-17 provided an opportunity to take yet another step in that direction, as it coincided with an official visit by King Sa'ud. The Americans had invited the latter to impress on him and bring him fully into the Western camp. 'Abd al-Ilah and Sa'ud had two friendly meetings in Washington on February 6-7.

'Abd al-Ilah's visit, first proposed in November, had been postponed due to initial American reluctance to receive him immediately.⁷³ The Ankara meeting recommended that he should urge in particular that the Eisenhower Doctrine should not exclude American pact-membership and that the doctrine should, as far as possible, be channelled through the pact. He was also to ask that no aid should be given to Egypt and Syria and request full American support for the pact's planned collective, large-scale counter-propaganda campaign in the Middle East.⁷⁴ In the end, however, 'Abd al-Ilah did not get any immediate promise for US adherence, nor any fresh promises of arms. He was told that Washington must keep a balance of arms deliveries not only between Israel and the Arabs, but between the Arabs themselves.⁷⁵ The Americans, however, thought that the Iraqi delegation had "sensed that there was goodwill" and "were optimistic about future prospects". Robert B. Memminger, the State Department Special Assistant for Baghdad Pact Affairs, who had attended 'Abd al-Ilah's meeting with Bill Rountree, the Assistant Secretary of State for the Near East and Africa, said that

the Crown Prince had produced a short list of subjects, but had then harped on Palestine for an hour, leaving only time for a brief and desultory discussion of other subjects, among which were Algeria and Jordan. Nothing new emerged. He had barely mentioned the Baghdad Pact, and Rountree had found himself making what running there was on this question... Although the Iraqis had inevitably brought up the question of United States membership of the Pact, he thought they now understood the United States Government's reasoning on this matter.⁷⁶

'Abd al-Ilah also asked Washington to put—with its NATO allies—political and economic pressure on Syria to force her to repair the IPC pipelines.⁷⁷ On his way back, he stopped in Turkey and Iran to brief them on his visit.⁷⁸

⁷²Podeh, "Struggle", 94-95; FO371/121264/V1073/351, 'Record of Meeting of Representatives of Bagdad Pact Powers', 4.10.56.

⁷³FO371/121282/V1079/9G, Wright to FO, 26 Nov. & 11 Dec. 1956; FO371/121274/V1075/140, UK High Commissioner, Pakistan to CRO, 26.11.56.

⁷⁴FO371/127824/VB1072/22 & 29, Bowker to FO, 21 & 23 January 1957.

⁷⁵Anthony Nutting, *I Saw for Myself: The Aftermath of Suez* (1958), 36.

⁷⁶FO371/128052/VQ10345/1, Bailey to Rose, 13.2.57. See also Saad, *Iraq*, 414; *FRUS 1955-1957*, XII, 1024-37.

⁷⁷Saad, *Iraq*, 264.

⁷⁸FO371/128051/VQ10344/1, Bowker to Lloyd, 8.3.57.

During his meetings with Sa'ud, 'Abd al-Ilah did not ask Riyadh to join the Baghdad Pact, but was at pains to explain elaborately its anti-Communist and defensive character. He hoped that Sa'ud "would henceforward view the Pact with a more benevolent eye" and that "an atmosphere had been created which could be conducive to further meetings between the members of the Royal Houses".⁷⁹ He did not expect, however, "any early and spectacular change in the King's attitude," for the latter seemed to believe that communism "had not taken substantial root in the Middle East".⁸⁰ The Iraqi-Saudi rapprochement was crowned with Sa'ud's visit to Baghdad in May.⁸¹

Ankara welcomed all efforts to woo Sa'ud away from Egypt and wanted to assist Washington and Baghdad to that effect. It did not make any direct representation to Damascus to obtain a commutation of the death sentences passed against the arrested plotters, fearing that it could be counter-productive, but believed, like Washington, that Sa'ud's intervention to that effect had proven decisive.⁸² There was talk of Bayar visiting Saudi Arabia.⁸³ Menderes, too, expressed readiness to go if it would be of use.⁸⁴ Moreover, Ankara welcomed 'Abd al-Ilah's proposal to send a Turkish delegation to Saudi Arabia under the guise of pilgrimage. It was to be headed by Ahmed Saleh Koror, the Secretary-General of the Prime Minister's office, but the visit was later cancelled by Turkey at the last moment without any explanation.⁸⁵

Turkish-Syrian Relations after the Suez War

Turkey's relations with Syria deteriorated further soon after the Suez war. The Turkish embassy in Damascus had been regularly reporting, throughout the previous months, about an alarming increase in the activities there of Eastern Bloc missions. Ankara deduced that Moscow had shifted its attention from Egypt to Syria,⁸⁶ a conviction solidified after the cease-fire at Suez. The embassy now reported that al-Quwatli had received promises of arms during his Moscow visit, and Syria was, in turn, telling other Arab states that she could now

⁷⁹FO371/128052/VQ10345/1, Bailey to Rose, 13.2.57.

⁸⁰FO371/128051/VQ10344/1, Bowker to Lloyd, 8.3.57.

⁸¹Podeh, "Struggle", 102-103.

⁸²Lesch, *Syria*, 107; FO371/128222/VY1015/37, Bowker to Watson, 15.3.57. The Palace and some individual deputies in Iraq also sent telegraphs to Arab Heads of States, particularly King Sa'ud, urging them to use their good offices to save the lives of the sentenced Syrian conspirators; see FO371/128221/VY1015/26, 32-33.

⁸³FO371/130184/RK10325/1, Scott to Hadow, 4.4.57.

⁸⁴FO371/121648/VQ1022/17(A), Wright to FO, 19.11.56.

⁸⁵FO371/130184/RK10325/2-3, Bowker to Riches, 21 June & 10 July 1957.

⁸⁶FO371/121867/VY10338/8, Chancery, Ankara to Levant Department, 26.9.56.

pass on to them Soviet arms in return for their political support.⁸⁷ Turkey told her Western allies that Moscow "might, if need be, press matters to the point of creating undeclared and local warfare in the Middle East".⁸⁸ *Cumhuriyet* reported that the amount of Soviet goods passing through the Turkish straits in the first three months of 1957 had doubled compared with the same period the previous year. Over than 70% of those Soviet ships had sailed to Middle Eastern ports, notably in Egypt and Syria.⁸⁹ The paper also reported that the Syrian government were collecting signatures in favour of the return of the sanjak of Alexandretta to Syria and that Syrian army intelligence officers were boasting that the region would be re-annexed to Syria "with the help of our great Russian ally".⁹⁰

Reports received in Ankara about the actual quantity of Soviet arms and planes delivered to Syria, and the number of Soviet technicians actually working there, were contradictory. The sense of alarm they created in Turkey was, however, extreme.⁹¹ The Turkish air attaché in Moscow, for example, believed that if the USA did not join the pact, Moscow would try and destroy it by engineering a military coup in Iraq through Syrian intervention. He alleged to his British colleague that in a secret defence treaty signed on November 9, the Soviets had undertaken to strengthen the Syrian army, particularly the air force, and support Syria's territorial claims against Lebanon, Israel, Iraq and Turkey. They had also promised to arrange, in the initial stages of a Syrian invasion of Iraq, appropriate diversions elsewhere to keep Washington occupied. British diplomats in Moscow refused to believe these allegations, but a certain degree of official Turkish panic was undeniable.⁹²

This panic had probably been exacerbated by the influx into Turkey of many Syrian right-wing politicians and officers implicated in the failed coup.⁹³ Ankara accepted them on a short-term basis on the definite understanding that they would not engage in any political subversive activities while in Turkey.⁹⁴ Menderes even intervened personally to re-establish the rights of Mikha'il Ilyan over some of his confiscated property in Hatay.⁹⁵

⁸⁷FO371/121867/VY10338/8, Chancery, Ankara to Levant Department, 30.11.56; FO371/121867/VY10338/8, Chancery, Ankara to Levant Department, 26.9.56.

⁸⁸See full text of Turkish memorandum in FO371/121220/V1015/13, Bowker to Lloyd, 16.11.56.

⁸⁹FO371/128242/VY10344/3, Bowker to Watson, 9.5.57.

⁹⁰*Cumhuriyet*, 18.6.57.

⁹¹FO371/121859/VY1015/71, Middleton to FO, 24.11.56; FO371/127789/V1198/1, Bowker to Watson, 22.2.56.

⁹²FO371/121876/VY10338/23, Chancery, Moscow to Levant Department, 15.11.56; FO371/121220/V1015/20, Hayter to FO, 5.12.56.

⁹³FO371/128221/VY1015/18, Bowker to Watson, 8.2.57; FO371/128269/VY1821/1, Bowker to Rose, 20.2.57; FO371/128222/VY1015/37, Bowker to Watson, 15.3.57.

⁹⁴FO371/128221/VY1015/21, Bowker to Watson, 15.2.57.

⁹⁵FO371/128222/VY1015/58, Bowker to Watson, 3.5.57.

"The danger presented by Egypt," claimed Menderes, "had now, as a result of the Anglo-French intervention, been delayed for a year or six months, and that the focus had now shifted to Syria, the central point of the area". Syria "was now becoming a Russian satellite". "The Russians could now build up their position" there "whenever they wished to". If left unchecked, this could have an adverse effect on pro-Western elements in Lebanon and Jordan, and Turkey could, in future, have a group of Soviet-controlled satellites on her southern borders.⁹⁶ This was a prospect Ankara dreaded most. It was specifically to avoid this that it had gone along with the "Northern Tier" scheme.

There was no unanimity, however, among Turkish leaders, on how to tackle the situation. For Bayar, "in Syria it was necessary to encourage the people against their leaders".⁹⁷ Kural, however, argued emphatically that this tactic would fail. Power in Syria was concentrated in the hands of al-Sarraj and a few other dedicated left-wingers in key positions. They controlled the army and administration and were too strong for the "increasingly anxious and discouraged" Nationalist/Populist opposition. The Syrian crowds, "which had been systematically indoctrinated through the radio," could "be whipped up at any moment". For Kural, "the long term solution was that Syria should be merged with Iraq and possibly Jordan". Unless Iraq intervened and helped in establishing a pro-Western dictatorship, any internal coup, without outside assistance, "would almost certainly be followed by a counter coup resulting in a further elimination of the more moderate elements". An Iraqi intervention, thought Kural, could count on the support of certain tribes and some army units.⁹⁸ Kural's change of heart was really significant, for he had previously categorically opposed all kinds of foreign intervention. His suggestion, however, did not excite the Turkish leadership. The USA, Britain, France, Iraq and Lebanon, too, were worried about the increasing Soviet influence in Syria.⁹⁹ But, as before, there were in disagreement on what measures to take, if any. The best the West could hope for, admitted Birgi, was to make the dangerous situation in Syria relatively harmless.¹⁰⁰

Ankara proposed that the question of Soviet penetration in Syria and the consequent threat to Lebanon might be brought before the UN. Britain, however, discouraged this suggestion, for it was "hard to see any attempt to initiate a debate on the subject could end

⁹⁶FO371/121223/V1022/11, Stewart to Young, 29.11.56; FO371/121373/V11910/17, Chancery, Ankara to Levant Department, 30.11.56.

⁹⁷FO371/130186/RK10345/1, Pemberton-Pigott to Galsworthy, 29.1.57.

⁹⁸FO371/121862/VY1022/25, Middleton to FO, 10.12.56; FO371/128222/VY1015/58, Bowker to Watson, 3.5.57.

⁹⁹FO371/121867/VY10338/8, Chancery, Ankara to Levant Department, 26.9.56; FO371/121220/V1015/18, CRO outward telegram, 2.12.56; FO371/121867/VY10338/35, brief for NATO ministerial meeting in Paris, 11-14 December 1956.

¹⁰⁰FO371/121229/V10344/1, 'Conversation at No. 1 Carlton Gardens', 30.11.56.

otherwise than failure," as it would be difficult to demonstrate that what was going on in Syria contravened the UN Charter in any way or that the UN was competent to discuss such a situation. Ankara was also discouraged by Sham'un's reluctance to take the matter to the UN. In the end, it agreed to Britain's suggestion to discuss the situation in the NATO Council. Menderes and Birgi, however, wanted to keep any such proceedings on a "call attention and for information" basis and not allow it to develop into inappropriate and premature discussions on any NATO action or into equally inappropriate juridical discussions.¹⁰¹

Addressing a NATO Council meeting on November 28, the acting Turkish Foreign Minister, Ethem Menderes, said that the Syrian government was dominated by the *Deuxième Bureau*, headed by al-Sarraj, "*version syrienne de Nasser*". He accused Damascus of engineering disturbances in Lebanon and encouraging separatism in Tripoli. Ankara was convinced, he said, that underestimating the gravity of the situation could be fatal.¹⁰² He most carefully eschewed, however, any proposals for military action. In the end, the Turkish delegation undertook to prepare, in good time, a paper on this subject for the NATO ministerial meeting. NATO's Standing Group, in turn, agreed to prepare an assessment of the threat to NATO's flank in the Middle East, as well as of the strength of Soviet arms supplied to Middle Eastern countries in excess of their normal requirements.¹⁰³ Then, during the NATO ministerial meeting of December 11, Turkey proposed that the Middle Eastern situation should be subject to continual study in the NATO Council; that NATO military organs should study its implications; and that member-countries establish a political attitude and interest in the matter. Had the Syrian situation aggravated further, Turkey's next objective would have been to pursue with moderation and discretion her long-cherished dream of establishing a suitable political/military link between NATO and the Baghdad Pact.¹⁰⁴

Ankara also directly protested to Syria, on November 15, against the activities of her Consul in Istanbul, who was allegedly putting out reports of the arrival in Syria of large quantities of Soviet arms.¹⁰⁵ Birgi also proposed that Syria should undertake to publish, as a gesture of goodwill, all Turkish denials of official Syrian statements alleging Turkish interference in Syrian affairs, and stop attacking the Baghdad Pact and its individual

¹⁰¹FO371/121867/VY10338/21G; *ibid.*, -/26G, FO to Ankara, 24.11.56.

¹⁰²See full speech in FO371/121867/VY10338/30, Steel to Lloyd, 28.11.56.

¹⁰³FO371/121867/VY10338/29, Steel to FO, 28.11.56. The Standing Group, speaking for the COS of the USA, Britain and France, and located in Washington, heads NATO's all military planning and military commands.

¹⁰⁴FO371/121220/V1015/38, Bowker to Lloyd, 28.12.56. See also Bağcı, *Demokrat*, 82.

¹⁰⁵FO371/121868/VY10344/22, Bowker to Rose, 16.11.56.

members, particularly Britain. Although Syria formally gave the assurances requested, Birgi thought that no importance could be attached to them and no change should be expected in Syrian policy.¹⁰⁶ Syria, in turn, resumed its accusations of Turkish violations of her airspace, hostile propaganda, tendentious rumours, and conspiracy—together with France, Britain, Israel and Iraq—against her security. On December 1, she complained to the UN to that effect. These charges were echoed by the radios in Cairo and Moscow.¹⁰⁷ Turkey, of course, denied them categorically.¹⁰⁸ On November 30, the Turkish Ministry of Defence stated that Turkish army manoeuvres were routine,¹⁰⁹ and later denied press allegations that Turkey had sent two battalions of troops to Iraq at Nuri's request.¹¹⁰

Tehran was so worried at the escalation of tension that the Iranian ambassador in Ankara sought and received from Menderes and Birgi assurances that Turkey would not intervene militarily in Syria. Menderes added that, as far as he knew, Iraq, too, did not have any aggressive intention.¹¹¹

In this tense atmosphere, Turkey planned to tighten up control on her border with Syria for the declared aim of preventing smuggling. Bayar believed that the contraband over Turkish frontier was being encouraged by the Syrian government and having a serious effect on the Syrian balance of payments.¹¹² Ankara wanted to establish, along the entire frontier, a security zone, 12.5-25 km wide. None of its inhabitants would be allowed to hold stocks of merchandise beyond those considered necessary for his/her own maintenance. A road would be constructed along the whole frontier to facilitate its control. In addition, Ankara would establish a 500m wide "no-man's land" on the frontier, the population of which would be moved out, their possessions expropriated and the area mined. Such measures would have further aggravated bilateral relations because a lot of the land to be expropriated belonged to Syrian citizens.¹¹³ There is no evidence, however, that they were fully implemented.

Turkey and the Events in Jordan

The Eisenhower Doctrine brought into the open cracks that already existed covertly within the post-Suez Syrian-Saudi-Egyptian-Jordanian alliance. Syria and Egypt vehemently opposed the doctrine. Jordan and Saudi Arabia joined them in early condemnation, but soon

¹⁰⁶FO371/121868/VY10344/23, Chancery, Ankara to Levant Department, 14.12.56.

¹⁰⁷FO371/121862/VY1022/21, Chancery, Ankara to Levant Department, 7.12.56; FO371/124010/RK10338/26, Chancery, Ankara to Northern Department, 14.12.56.

¹⁰⁸FO371/121868/VY10344/23, Chancery, Ankara to Levant Department, 14.12.56.

¹⁰⁹FO371/124032/RK1199/3, Stewart to FO, 1.12.56.

¹¹⁰FO371/121862/VY1022/21, Chancery, Ankara to Levant Department, 7.12.56.

¹¹¹FO371/121862/VY1022/24, Stewart to FO, 11.12.56.

¹¹²FO371/130186/RK10345/1, Pemberton-Pigott to Galsworthy, 29.1.57.

¹¹³FO371/128242/VY10344/2, Chancery, Ankara to Levant Department, 5.2.57.

changed their attitude. For King Sa'ud, his visit to Washington was a watershed. From then on, relations deteriorated between Riyadh and Damascus in particular.¹¹⁴ Riyadh closed its embassy in Damascus and cut off all economic links with Syria until all attacks on the King ceased in the Syrian press. It also pressed Damascus to repay its outstanding \$30m debt.¹¹⁵ Diplomatic relations were not severed, however.

The political crisis in Jordan in April 1957 crystallised the new divisions in the Arab world. After Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia had failed to fulfill their promise to replace the British subsidy to the Jordanian army, King Husayn seriously disagreed with the policies of Sulayman al-Nabulsi's radical pan-Arab nationalist government that had come to power in October 1956. Husayn gradually became convinced that al-Nabulsi and COS 'Ali Abu Nuwar were, in collusion with Egypt and Syria, plotting to depose him and set up a republic. Having secured the backing of his Bedouin troops, he therefore sacked al-Nabulsi, banned all political parties and proclaimed martial law. Abu Nuwar sought refuge in Syria. Husayn re-assumed full control of Jordan's foreign policy and re-established good ties with the Western camp.¹¹⁶

During those tense days, when the balance of forces in Jordan could have tilted either way, the support King Husayn received from Riyadh and Washington proved decisive. Sa'ud put his forces, stationed in Jordan, under Husayn's direct command and sent immediate financial assistance. Washington, in turn, stated that Jordan's independence and integrity were vital to its security; donated \$10m in emergency aid; and dispatched, as a gesture of public support, the Sixth Fleet into the Eastern Mediterranean, where it remained until early May, when Husayn's position seemed no longer to be in danger. Baghdad, however, blamed Husayn for having senselessly gone too far in co-operating with Egypt and Syria, refused to lend financial support and confined itself to concentrating some troops along the Jordanian border.¹¹⁷

The role, if any, played by Turkey during this crisis remains shrouded in mystery due to lack of access to first-hand documentary evidence. There were reports of considerable Turkish troop concentrations along the Syrian border and that the Fifth Armoured Brigade of the Second Turkish Army Corps had been moved there from Ankara. Some Turkish Foreign Ministry officials, the Commander of the Second Turkish Army, General Rüstü Erdelhün, and Jordan's ambassador told British diplomats in Ankara that the troop movements were related to events in Jordan and had Washington's approval. "Persons closely connected with the

¹¹⁴Petran, *Syria*, 118-19; al-'Azm, *Mudhakkarat*, II, 490-93, 506.

¹¹⁵FO371/127725/V1022/29, Johnston to FO, 24.6.57; FO371/128223/VY1015/75, Scott to Rose, 27.6.57.

¹¹⁶Lunt, *Hussein*, 50-66 and Dann, *King Hussein*, 45-65 narrate events from the King's perspective. For Abu Nuwar's interpretation, see his *Hina talashat*, 302-28.

¹¹⁷FRUS 1955-1957, XIII, 97.

[Turkish] Government" were quoted in *The New York Times* as saying that the moves were made to give "the Syrians something to think about beside Jordan". Bowker, however, tended to agree with those Turkish officials and the US military attaché in Ankara, who claimed that the movements had no political implications and that it was usual for the Turkish army to carry out regular seasonal exercises in April and May.¹¹⁸ Several Turkish newspapers had also interpreted the movements as a measure of support for Husayn against possible Syrian intervention.¹¹⁹ The Turkish government did not make any statement on this subject. Al-Bitar, however, declared, that on the basis of explanations received from Kural, his government believed that the movements were normal seasonal exercises.¹²⁰

Al-Quwatli invited the Heads of Foreign Missions in Damascus on a conducted tour along the Turkish-Syrian frontier, in company of the Syrian COS, Tawfiq Nizam al-Din. The Turkish chargé d'affaires was instructed to take part.¹²¹ According to Turkish sources,

at one point near the frontier the President said to the Chargé d'Affaires that if they could look into Turkey they might see something interesting. The Chargé d'Affaires promptly invited him to go over the border, but the President smilingly declined the invitation.¹²²

Moreover, Bowker gathered, from Turkish officials, that Ankara had even dissuaded Baghdad from making any statement about its troop concentrations on the Jordan border.¹²³

Whether Ankara ever contemplated sending troops into Syria during the crisis is uncertain. Any intention to do so was not put to the test. Syria herself made no attempt to intervene in Jordan. Whether she, together with Egypt, disregarded the signs of impending change in Amman or was persuaded by 'Abd al-Nasir personally to keep a low profile is also difficult to tell.¹²⁴ Soon, however, Jordan politely requested the withdrawal of Syrian troops from her territory and then expelled two Egyptian diplomats, accusing them of interfering in her internal affairs. Ambassadors were withdrawn from both Cairo and Amman.¹²⁵ Mutual recriminations in the officially guided media of Damascus and Amman continued in full swing throughout the summer to the extent of being labelled as "the Syrian-Jordanian crisis".

¹¹⁸FO371/127910/VJ1081/24; FO371/128242/VY10344/4, Bowker to Rose, 10.5.57; *ibid.*, -/9, Chancery, Ankara to Levant Department, 26.9.57; FO371/127896/VJ10345/11, Morris to Rose, 11.9.57.

¹¹⁹FO371/128242/VY10344/3, Bowker to Watson, 9.5.57.

¹²⁰*Ibid.*, -/5, Chancery, Ankara to Levant Department, 21.5.57.

¹²¹*Ibid.*, -/3, Bowker to Watson, 9.5.57.

¹²²*Ibid.*, -/5, Chancery, Ankara to Levant Department, 21.5.57.

¹²³*Ibid.*

¹²⁴Petran, *Syria*, 119; Dann, *King Hussein*, 62-63.

¹²⁵Dann, *King Hussein*, 74-75.

Menderes had, at the end of March, already expressed confidence that "the situation in the Middle East was steadily improving". He now probably felt even more pleased. The pro-Western Arab regimes in the area and the Baghdad Pact had, for the time being at least, survived. There was renewed co-operation between Britain and the USA, and contacts had been established with Riyadh. Moreover, it was agreed to hold the next Baghdad Pact Council meeting in Karachi in June.¹²⁶

The events in Jordan, however, had simply been a single episode in what was coming to be seen as a struggle between the conservative, pro-Western governments and their opponents—the anti-Baghdad pact coalition of radicals, pan-Arab nationalists and Communists—led by 'Abd al-Nasir. Husayn's victory had solved none of the region's existing contradictions. Kural feared that the developments in Jordan "would give another opportunity to" the present Syrian regime "to make telling use of their cry that Syria's national existence was threatened by foreign intervention" and thus try to strengthen its home base further.¹²⁷ Events in the following few months showed that the prudent Kural was right again in his cautious attitude. 'Abd al-Nasir had spent the few months following the Suez war rebuilding his forces and international standing. Soon after Israel's total withdrawal from Gaza, he began to capitalise on the political victory he had achieved.

¹²⁶FO371/127755/V1075/10, Bowker to FO, 29.3.57.

¹²⁷FO371/128222/VY1015/58, Bowker to Watson, 3.5.57.

“Perhaps the Gravest Crisis since the War...”

Developments in Syria in August 1957 ignited an acute regional political crisis, sucking in all major political powers within the Middle East and outside. Global Cold War concerns, regional particularist interests and internal political pressures within the countries involved became dramatically intertwined, perhaps, as never before. For Dulles, it was "a period of the greatest peril for us since the Korean War";¹ for Nuri, "perhaps the gravest crisis since the war, which involved the issue of the free world versus the Communist world,"² while future Turkish Foreign Minister İlder Türkmen reminisced decades later that had not Syria and Turkey respectively enjoyed Moscow's and Washington's support, without the latter, the crisis might have easily generated into an all-out war.³

George Kirk, Patrick Seale, Gordon Torrey, Ömer Kürkçüoğlu, Douglas Little, David Lesch and others have pieced together the available evidence and come out with a cohesive picture of this crisis. Their conclusions and explanations have generally passed the test of time.⁴ Many important questions, however, remain unanswered and some will probably continue to be so until the official records of all regional powers involved become fully accessible to historians. This chapter will, after briefly narrating events, deal in detail with the nature of this crisis and the attitudes of some of the individuals and states involved, seeking to add to our understanding of the nature of the regional political struggle in the late 1950s in general and just before the sudden Syrian-Egyptian merger (1958) in particular.

The Sequence of Events

On August 6, Syria's acting Defence Minister, Khalid al-'Azam, concluded in Moscow an extensive economic and technical agreement with the USSR. Then, on August 12, the Syrian government announced the discovery of another, US-backed right-wing plot. Three

¹Lesch, *Syria*, 157.

²FO371/128227/VY1015/186G, FO to Bagdad, 11.9.57.

³Bağcı, *Demokrat*, 150-51.

⁴George Kirk, "The Syrian Crisis of 1957—Fact and Fiction", *IA*, 36/1 (January 1960), 58-61; Seale, *Struggle*, 289-306; Torrey, *Syrian Politics*, 360-67; Lesch, *Syria*, 138-209; Petran, *Syria*, 121-24; Little, "Cold War", 69-75. In this narrative, footnotes are inserted only when the information mentioned is taken directly from new, primary sources.

American diplomats were expelled from Syria, pushing Washington and, then, Damascus to declare the Syrian and American ambassadors residing in their respective capitals as *personae non gratae*. Diplomatic relations were not severed, although Eisenhower had been ready to take that risk, believing that it "would at least demonstrate to the public the seriousness of the situation" in Syria.⁵ Finally, on August 15, an extensive shake-up within the Syrian officer-corps replaced many older officers, considered "moderates" in the West, with younger officers more amenable to radical reformist and pan-Arab nationalist ideals. 43-year-old radical 'Afif al-Bizri, suspected of Communist leanings, replaced Nizam al-Din as COS.

Despite repeated denials from Damascus, the West and its friends now expected an imminent, full Communist take-over in Syria, similar "to that in Czechoslovakia before the Benes and Jan Masaryk affair".⁶ Charges against the accused plotters were dismissed as fabrications to justify ensuing purges. Ankara urged Washington to prevent a complete satellisation of Syria, alleging that, under the recent economic agreement, Syria had mortgaged all her exports to the Eastern Bloc in return for armaments and some capital investment projects to be carried out with the help of Soviet experts. "Russia and the Western Powers were now face to face in the Asiatic Middle East," said Minister of State Zorlu. The Soviet objective was clear: "the whole of the Middle East from Syria to Yemen". "It was hopeless to expect that the Syrians would take action to arrest their present trend". Zorlu predicted that al-Quwatli would soon be marginalised and al-'Azam—after getting elected Speaker of the Syrian Chamber—would effectively assume the presidential prerogatives.⁷ Kural said Nizam al-Din's dismissal's was because of his opposition to the Soviet deal.⁸ Ankara agreed with its Western allies that the Syrian army remained ineffective to pose any immediate threat to Syria's neighbours, but feared that Syria could instigate subversive operations against the latter. It preferred to see the present Syrian regime brought down by a move from one or more of her Arab neighbours, for it was hoped that Iraq or Saudi Arabia, shocked by the latest developments, might take the lead to that effect. Ankara, said Menderes, was waiting for a "solid decision" from Washington "in order to be able to take appropriate measures".⁹ He warned, however, that "there should be no demonstrations (expressions) on behalf of Israel. They would only aggravate matters and give Soviets ample

⁵FRUS 1955-1957, XIII, 635.

⁶FRUS 1955-1957, XIII, 642, 713; FO371/128228/VY1015/212G, Macmillan to Nehru, 14.9.57.

⁷FO371/128227/VY1015/198G, Stewart to FO, 13.9.57.

⁸FO371/128225/VY1015/132, Bowker to Rose, 24.8.57.

⁹FRUS, 1955-1957, XIII, 643.

ground for exploitation".¹⁰ Furthermore, since Kings Husayn and Faysal, and Prince 'Abd al-Ilah, were on private visits to Istanbul at the time, Turkish leaders consulted them. Turkey could do nothing about the situation in Syria, said Menderes, but Iraq *must*.¹¹

Washington, however, soon realised that although the governments of Lebanon, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Iraq were deeply concerned with the Syrian situation, none seemed ready to take the lead in engineering either individually or collectively a change in Damascus. Washington also initially left the issue of ultimately invoking the Eisenhower Doctrine deliberately vague, preferring to keep Damascus guessing. Instead, one of Washington's prominent Middle East experts, Deputy Under-Secretary of State for Administration Loy Henderson, advanced to August 23 his pre-planned tour to the area (on other business) to report on the situation in advance of America formulating a clear position.¹²

Henderson visited Turkey and Lebanon, meeting with Turkish, Iraqi, Jordanian and Lebanese leaders. He avoided Damascus despite public and official Syrian demands for such a visit.¹³ Henderson expressed Washington's understanding and support for the concern expressed by its friends over the Syrian situation and wanted to learn their views, without suggesting any precise course of action. Any "remedial action," he said, should be taken by Syria's immediate neighbours within the framework of the UN, promising full support for any course of action which could bring about a change of regime in Syria.¹⁴ He reportedly left, generally speaking, "the impression of having been inadequately briefed and rather devoid of ideas".¹⁵ According to Iraq's acting Foreign Minister, 'Ali Mumtaz al-Daftari, Henderson pressed the Iraqis, in Istanbul, "to take action against Syria as soon as they could find a pretext which would stand up in the Security Council". "Military action," opined he, "once started, must be completed within 100 hours," suggesting that discussion should be continued through the American ambassador in Iraq. But when a meeting was arranged in Baghdad, it was found that the ambassador knew nothing of the subject and had no instructions.¹⁶

A contemporary American observer says Henderson's ten-day mission "died aborning". He himself later acknowledged that it had been a "mistake".¹⁷ He was unable to propose, on

¹⁰FRUS 1955-1957, XIII, 644; FO371/128224/VY1015/110A, HM Consul-General, Istanbul to FO, 23.8.57; FO371/128228/VY1015/220, Stewart to Watson, 13.9.57; FO371/128231/VY1015/312, Stewart to FO, 9.10.57.

¹¹FO371/128224/VY1015/102, Beaumont to FO, 21.8.57.

¹²FO371/128224/VY1015/112, Caccia to FO, 23.8.57.

¹³FRUS 1955-1957, XIII, 650-74; FO371/128225/VY1015/146, Scott to Rose, 3.9.57.

¹⁴Frost, UAR, 94-95; FO371/128225/VY1015/143, CRO outward telegram, 2.9.57; FO371/127743/V10345/127, Stewart to Rose, 6.9.57.

¹⁵FO371/128224/VY1015/121G, HM Consul General, Istanbul to FO, 25.8.57.

¹⁶FO371/128227/VY1015/195G, FO to Bagdad, 12.9.57.

¹⁷Archie Roosevelt, *For Lust for Knowing: Memoirs of an Intelligence Officer* (1988), 433-34.

his return to Washington, any concrete plan for action. He simply confirmed that Turkey was greatly concerned by the threat to her southern flank and was the only country truly disposed to take strong action against Syria. Turkey, Menderes had said, needed support in order to dissuade Israel from taking any action that might precipitate a crisis, as well as against any possible Soviet threat. Iraq, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, however, had been "wishy washy". Faysal II and 'Abd al-Ilah had been in a more spirited state of mind than the members of the new Iraqi government of 'Ali Jawdat al-Ayyubi, who had been deeply concerned, but unable to suggest anything positive that could be done. King Husayn and Menderes did not favour bringing Egypt into the deliberations at this stage, but the Iraqis had appeared to be.¹⁸ Washington, therefore, confined itself to accelerating the delivery of allocated military equipment to strengthen the resolve of Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Iran and Turkey against any possible threat from Syria.

Anti-Western forces in the Middle East, however, interpreted Henderson's visit as a prelude to an imminent coup in Syria. According to Lesch, this suspicion "really engaged the Soviets in the crisis," sharply escalating its proportions. Moscow again adopted a tough anti-Western public attitude in defence of Arab nationalist demands. This was greatly appreciated by radically-minded Arabs at large and contributed to the upsurge of Communist support in Syria. On September 19, two Soviet warships dropped anchor in Lattakia and stayed there until October 2.

Damascus itself formally asked, on September 15, Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq whether they were indeed worried, as claimed by Washington, about the situation in Syria, and understandably, all three officially denied being responsible in any way for Henderson's views. Even the Turkish Defence Ministry denied, on September 14, "as a kind of assurance" to Syria, allegations that up to 50,000 Turkish troops had been concentrated along the Syrian border. Turkish troop movements in the border region, it stated, were connected to pre-planned NATO manoeuvres.¹⁹ Damascus seemed satisfied with the outcome. Al-Bitar declared that if Syria and Turkey "were left alone, relations between them would return to normal at once... Turkey was arming herself too, but this did not make Syria apprehensive".²⁰

It would have been surprising if Turkish-Syrian mutual expressions of goodwill had lasted long, for both sides distrusted each other's intentions, and Turkish troop concentrations were,

¹⁸FRUS 1955-1957, XIII, 670, 682; FO371/128224/VY1015/121G, HM Consul General, Istanbul to FO, 25.8.57.

¹⁹FO371/128229/VY1015/248G, Stewart to Rose, 19.9.57.

²⁰FO371/128242/VY10344/10, Chancery, Ankara to Levant Department, 27.9.57.

this time, undeniable. Mutual recriminations soon resurfaced.²¹ Whether Turkey and/or Syria really expected the other to take direct military action or simply wanted to distract popular attention from their other internal problems is difficult to tell in absence of first-hand official records. The Syrian government told the people to dig trenches around their villages in preparation for an attack and distributed arms to the Popular Resistance Movement. Neighbouring states, particularly Iraq and Jordan, really feared the possibility of an armed conflict. Ankara, therefore, had to categorically assure them both that no military action against Syria was being contemplated.²²

The Turkish-Syrian crisis coincided with the annual session of the UN General Assembly, turning the latter inevitably into an arena for East-West confrontation. The American, Soviet and Syrian Foreign Ministers, together with Turkey's permanent representative at the UN, Seyfullah Esin, traded accusations on the subject in their respective speeches to the Assembly. In this phoney war of words, each camp was striving for a propaganda victory. Even some of the public remarks the protagonists made in the following weeks outside the UN were timed to have maximum effect on proceedings in New York, an attitude, which did not, of course, help alleviate tensions. Later, however, the UN provided the means to defuse the conflict peacefully.

On October 15, al-Bitar requested to inscribe urgently on the General Assembly agenda a Syrian complaint, that massive concentrations of Turkish troops, larger than those planned for the regular military manoeuvres, had been noticed along their common border. Shots had been "fired from Turkey at persons on Syrian territory" and Turkish aircraft had violated the Syrian air space on several occasions. Moreover, Syrian citizens had been abducted by the Turkish authorities. Al-Bitar asked the Assembly to set up a commission to investigate and report on the situation on the Turkish-Syrian border.²³ The Syrian complaint was immediately endorsed by the USSR.²⁴

Ankara denied all Syrian charges. It feared that a UN commission would restrict its ability to act if it judged necessary to do so, but, after informally consulting its allies, it reluctantly agreed to proceed with the debate. Nevertheless, it was ready to argue, if necessary, that any commission should also investigate Turkey's frontiers with Bulgaria and the USSR.²⁵

²¹FO371/128242/VY10344/8, Stewart to FO, 25.9.57; FO371/128230/VY1015/297, Scott to Rose, 1.10.57.

²²FO371/128242/VY10344/19, 27 & 35.

²³FO371/128242/VY10344/13 & 16, Dixon to FO, 16.10.57. See text of Syrian complaint in FO371/128243/VY10344/46, UK Delegation, UN to FO, 9.10.57.

²⁴See text of Soviet letter in FO371/128242/VY10344/16(A).

²⁵FO371/128242/VY10344/28G, Stewart to FO, 18.10.57; *ibid.*, -/32(A), Dixon to FO, 19.10.57.

The projected Assembly debate put Iraq in a dilemma about whom to back in public. 'Ali Mumtaz urged Ankara to "be as conciliatory as possible".²⁶ Even Egyptian Foreign Minister Mahmud Fawzi allegedly tried hard to persuade Syria not to proceed, pointing out that it would be difficult to confine discussions to the narrow questions of the Syrian-Turkish border situation, and that a broader debate could embarrass the Arabs in general. The Syrians, however, claimed Fawzi, "had said that for domestic reasons some action had to be taken at the United Nations, otherwise the situation might slip in Syria... Bitar had said that the Syrian idea was to produce a *détente* and get something out of the United Nations which could calm the situation".²⁷

To these hesitant countries, King Sa'ud's offer of October 20 to mediate between Turkey and Syria came as something like a heaven-sent blessing. Relations between Riyadh and Damascus had improved recently, and Sa'ud had urged Eisenhower to show moderation toward Syria. On September 25, he had even briefly visited Damascus and arranged a Syrian-Jordanian agreement to cease mutual propaganda attacks on their airwaves.²⁸

The exact reasons behind Sa'ud's new mediation effort remain unclear. Damascus, however, seemed reluctant to miss the opportunity of a highly-publicised verbal clash in New York. While praising the King's good intentions, it urged him to withdraw the offer, for there was, it claimed, no conflict between Syria and Turkey. Simply, Turkish troop concentrations and threats of aggression ought to be brought to an end.²⁹ Kural reported that although the Syrians seemed to be alarmed at the position they now found themselves in and would have liked to find a way out, they were under strong Soviet pressure "to continue attempt to create crisis atmosphere".³⁰

Ankara, although not ready itself to accept any mediation, believed that Sa'ud's initiative was well meant and, from the point of view of the forthcoming UN debate, well timed. Bayar could not leave Turkey in the last week of the general election campaign.³¹ Instead, Zorlu visited Sa'ud on October 24. He returned with the impression that the King "was favorably disposed toward the Baghdad Pact, and was irrevocably at odds with Nasser, but that he was immensely cautious because of the dangerous position brought about by having so many bad elements surrounding him".³²

²⁶FO371/128243/VY10344/46, Wright to FO, 22.10.57.

²⁷FO371/128242/VY10344/18, Dixon to FO, 16.10.57.

²⁸FO371/128230/VY1015/276G, Johnston to FO, 30.9.57.

²⁹FO371/128242/VY10344/41(A), Caccia to FO, 21.10.57; FO371/128243/VY10344/47, Middleton to FO, 22.10.57; FO371/128243/VY10344/57(A), CRO outward telegram, 24.10.57.

³⁰FO371/128243/VY10344/57(E), CRO outward telegram, 24.10.57.

³¹FO371/128242/VY10344/34 & 42, Stewart to FO, 20-21 Oct. 1957.

³²FRUS, 1958-1960, X, Part 2, 740.

Iraq, too, firmly supported the Saudi offer and urged Syrian leaders to accept it.³³ Iraq also hoped that Sa'ud would now realise Damascus's real intentions and its reluctance to make any compromise, thus consolidating the drawing together of Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia and increasing "the weakness and isolation of Nasser".³⁴ Iraq worked hard in New York to reach a consensus among Arab delegates not to support Syria in the Assembly debate if she persisted in rejecting Sa'ud's offer.³⁵

The UN debate dragged on from October 23 to November 1. The Western powers managed to have it adjourned twice allegedly to give time for Sa'ud's initiative to develop.³⁶ Meanwhile, Moscow increased tension by publicising military and naval exercises in Transcaucasia and in the Black Sea and appointing World War II hero Marshal Konstantin Rokossovski Commander of the Transcaucasian military district. On the night of October 29, however, Soviet leaders, Khrushchev, Nikolai Bulganin and Anastas Mikoyan, suddenly appeared at the Turkish Embassy reception in Moscow to mark the anniversary of the proclamation of the Turkish republic. Khrushchev said that his presence at the reception was "a gesture toward peace". He condemned warmongers and predicted that "there will be no war!"³⁷ Some of his other remarks were interpreted as an attempt to blame the recently dismissed Soviet Defence Minister, Marshal Georgiy Zhukov, for the rise in international tensions.³⁸

Khrushchev's remarks helped the protagonists to conclude the UN debate smoothly through careful stage management. Two different draft resolutions had been tabled. Syria's had called on the UN to constitute a fact-finding commission to investigate immediately on the spot the situation along the Turkish-Syrian border and submit a preliminary report within two weeks.³⁹ The second draft, expressing primarily the American point of view, had requested the Secretary-General to undertake informal discussions with Syria and Turkey; proceed, if necessary, to the countries concerned; and report on his discussions to the Assembly as soon as possible, thus carefully avoiding the idea of a commission, resented by Turkish and American military experts.⁴⁰ Now, al-Bitar was persuaded by Fawzi and other Arab delegates not to press the Syrian draft to a vote, on condition that the item itself would not be withdrawn from the agenda. Syria's opponents, in turn, convinced Iraq's representative

³³FO371/128243/VY10344/66(A), Wright to FO, 24.10.57.

³⁴FO371/128044/VQ1022/11, Wright to FO, 23.10.57.

³⁵FO371/128243/VY10344/57(E), CRO outward telegram, 24.10.57.

³⁶FO371/128243/VY10344/34, Stewart to FO, 20.10.57.

³⁷FO371/128244/VY10344/85, FO to New York, 30.10.57.

³⁸Váli, *Bridge*, 175; Lesch, *Syria*, 208-09.

³⁹See full text in FO371/128244/VY10344/86, Dixon to FO, 30.10.57.

⁴⁰FO371/128244/VY10344/87, Dixon to FO, 30.10.57.

to ignore instructions, received from Baghdad, to speak in rebuttal of Syrian accusations against the Baghdad Pact.⁴¹

The conclusion of the debate in this manner enabled the two camps to claim victory. An official Syrian spokesman said that world public opinion had been made aware that Turkey's attitude constituted a danger to world peace. Syria had proved to the whole world that she constituted no danger to Turkey and that she sought only to preserve her own independence, while Turkey had been obliged to reaffirm its peaceful intentions before the Assembly. He also claimed that Syria had been supported by "a large number" of UN members and all Arab countries,⁴² referring probably to the cable of support conveyed to Syria by 21 Afro-Asian countries on October 23⁴³ and to the unanimous resolution of the Arab League condemning all attempts to interfere in Syria's domestic affairs and committing itself to co-operation in repelling any aggression. This resolution, however, had not referred to the commission of investigation demanded by Syria.⁴⁴ Turkey and her allies, in turn, thought that the outcome had "been as favourable as we could have hoped for," believing that Syria and the USSR had evidently suffered a check in the UN. The Turks rightly observed, however, that there were absolutely no grounds for complacency about the way things were going in Syria herself: the position of the present Syrian regime had not been shaken, and the intimate character of Syrian-Soviet relations had not changed.⁴⁵

Thereafter, political tensions in the Middle East relatively eased. Mutual recriminations between Turkey and Syria dwindled. The Secretary-General of the Turkish Foreign Ministry, Melih Esenbel, met a few times with the Syrian minister in Ankara and told him that Ankara wanted to see the problem solved.⁴⁶ On November 6, the Syrians circulated a new complaint about Turkish violations of their air space, raids by Turkish soldiers into Syrian territory and abductions of Syrian civilians by Turkish authorities,⁴⁷ only to tell the UN Secretary-General a week later that now they did not want a commission of investigation under any circumstances, nor did they want him to go out to the area unless he was sure in advance of achieving something by doing so. They also asked him to sound informally if Ankara, in turn, was prepared to make some friendly move.⁴⁸

⁴¹FO371/128244/VY10344/85(C), (D) & (E), Dixon to FO, 31 Oct.-1 Nov. 1957.

⁴²FO371/128232/VY1015/352, Scott to Rose, 7.11.57.

⁴³Aykan, *Ideology*, 81-82.

⁴⁴See full text in FO371/127752/V1072/18.

⁴⁵FO371/128244/VY10344/85(E), Dixon to FO, 1.11.57; *ibid.*, -/100 Stewart to Rose, 1.11.57.

⁴⁶Bagci, *Demokrat*, 95.

⁴⁷FO371/128244/VY10344/85(H), Dixon to FO, 7.11.57.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, -/85, Dixon to FO, 15.11.57.

The apparently good meeting on November 7 between al-Bitar and Rountree also helped to ease tensions. Al-Bitar emphasised that "Syria would like to normalise the diplomatic situation with the US, and was disposed to seek to find ways and means of improving relations".⁴⁹ Washington soon appointed Charles Yost as its new ambassador in Damascus.

Washington and Riyadh suggested, therefore, "that it might be timely and appropriate now to withdraw the Turkish forces at present on the Syrian frontier on the termination of the present manoeuvres".⁵⁰ Ankara agreed, and the withdrawal was completed by November 29. King Sa'ud publicised on Saudi radio that in reaching the decision to withdraw its troops, Ankara had taken account of his advice.⁵¹

Menderes's critical remarks as regards Syria during the meeting of Heads of government of NATO countries held in Paris on December 16 briefly resurfaced tensions. The Turkish Premier claimed that the USSR dominated Syria and that Syria was under *de facto* Communist rule, but this claim had not been manifested till then for tactical purposes. Developments in Syria were very serious, menacing Turkey and the sovereignty of Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia. If the USSR continued to establish positions in Syria, he said, the Syrian problem should become a direct concern to NATO.⁵² On December 19, the Syrian government sent protest notes to Iraq, Turkey and other NATO governments against Menderes's remarks, expressing fears that they seriously aimed at dragging NATO "to serve illicit and illegitimate objectives". Damascus denied again the existence of foreign bases in Syria and said that her request for a commission of investigation was "tacit evidence" of her "good intentions".⁵³

The note addressed to Iraq contained a bitter attack on the Baghdad Pact. The Iraqi cabinet decided to return it as unacceptable.⁵⁴ Britain and the USA avoided a formal reply in order not to "dignify the Syrian charges and keep alive an issue which serves Soviet interests". Washington, however, orally communicated to Syria its confidence that Turkey did not harbour aggressive intentions against her. It also acknowledged the affirmation that there were no foreign bases in Syria and that the establishment of no such base would be permitted.⁵⁵

⁴⁹FRUS 1955-1957, XIII, 744.

⁵⁰FO371/128233/VY1015/355G, Bowker to FO, 14.11.57; FO371/127725/V1022/65, Morris to Hadow, 3.12.57.

⁵¹FO371/130181/RK10316/7, Bowker to FO, 28.11.57.

⁵²FO371/134392/VY10344/1, 'Translation of Substantive Portions of Syrian Note of December 19, 1957'.

⁵³See full text of note in FO371/134392/VY10344/1, Levant Department to Chancery, Ankara, 7.1.58.

⁵⁴FO371/134394/VY10393/1, Wright to FO, 4.1.58.

⁵⁵FO371/134392/VY10344/2, Note by US Delegation, 26.12.57.

The only formal reply was Turkey's. It described Syrian allegations as "unfounded". It was "erroneous and extremely regrettable" to qualify Menderes's views "as a cold war campaign directed against Syria". Simply, communist penetration "had assumed a universal character," while "an independent and powerful Syria" was necessary in the interests of Turkey's own national security.⁵⁶

This exchange was the last in 1957. Despite the ferocity of some of the counter-accusations, the region's political map had not changed. Syria's sudden merger with Egypt, however, would soon change that.

What Was the Crisis About?

Today, in the light of available evidence, it is generally accepted that the August events in Syria, which precipitated the crisis, were not necessarily inter-connected. Syria's agreement with Moscow did not have any secret military clauses. Syria had been in real need of new sources of revenue to strengthen her defences by expanding her industrial and agricultural base. The idea of approaching the Soviets for credits belonged to al-'Azm, who, like many other Syrian politicians, believed that the hardships faced by Syria's economy were deliberately caused by her adversaries, aiming to bring about a change of regime. They attributed Syria's loss of traditional wheat markets in Greece and Italy to deliberate dumping of American wheat. Al-'Azm had asked to visit Moscow in April and had received the Syrian cabinet's prior oral approval as regards his intentions. No written decision had been taken, however, to prevent any possible leak.⁵⁷ Syrian claims about the uncovering of an "American" plot (Operation *Wappen*) were genuine and well-founded.⁵⁸ "The American plot," aptly notes Lesch, "in many ways, resembled the British-Iraqi action in 1956 (Operation Straggle) and failed just as miserably; but whereas the British were in no position to react to the Syrian disclosure because of their preoccupation with the fall-out from the Suez crisis, the Eisenhower administration had no such burden".⁵⁹ Moreover, while Washington was directly accused of engineering the 1957 plot, the blame in 1956 had been put solely on Iraq. Whether the Syrians knew then about British involvement and preferred to keep silent or the detained plotters were able to conceal the British link is another issue.

⁵⁶See full text in FO371/134392/VY10344/4, Chancery, Ankara to Levant Department, 24.1.58.

⁵⁷Al-'Azm, *Mudhakkarat*, III, 5-9; Petran, *Syria*, 120; Lesch, *Syria*, 126. The fact that Turkey's trade volume with the Soviet Bloc had also increased nearly fourfold since 1953, and was much larger than Syria's, was conveniently ignored in the West or was, at most, rationalised. Campbell, *Defense*, 274 wrote: "The case of [Soviet trade with] Turkey is one of economic necessity for the Turks, because of their lack of foreign exchange and of credit in the West. They have taken the step with their eyes open and are on guard against an economic dependence that could give Moscow the ability to exert significant pressure".

⁵⁸See details in Eveland, *Ropes*, 230, 246, 253-54; Copeland, *Game*, 188; Little, "Cold War", 68-71.

⁵⁹Lesch, *Syria*, 138.

Washington was now under heavier pressure to react. Finally, dismissals and reshuffles in the Syrian officer-corps were regular occurrences. Nizam al-Din resigned after remaining in a clear minority in rejecting demands by other officers for a sweeping reshuffle. Al-Bizri, seen then by his fellow officers as a progressive and reliable nationalist, was chosen because of his independence and good relations with all factions competing for influence in the army.

At the time, however, Western imagination went wild. The ferocity of public recriminations and the passions that the crisis generated led many to assume that more than simple political point-scoring was at stake. Some interesting, not to say bizarre, conspiracy theories were suggested. *The Jewish Observer* reported on October 25 that Syria had planned to retake suddenly from Turkey her adjacent territory, including Alexandretta. Moscow would then intervene under the guise of stopping the fighting and put the issue before the UN, inducing the latter to acknowledge the accomplished fact of re-transfer of Alexandretta to Syria. This plan had reportedly failed only because of Syrian slowness to act. Turkey had gotten wise to their intention and taken the necessary precautions. Subsequent Soviet accusations against Turkey were simply a belated attempt to gain something after having "lost the opportunity of again showing herself as a friend of the Arabs".⁶⁰ Others professed to see a Kurdish connection, based on suspected Soviet backing for Kurdish nationalism and on the Kurdish origins of al-Sarraj and Syrian Communist leader Khalid Bakdash. They warned that a Soviet-sponsored revolt might soon be organised in the Kurdish districts of Turkey, claiming that "the Soviets have had Kurdish parachutists and propaganda cadres in training in Erevan for some time". "Kurdish officers and intellectuals in Syria," they reasoned, "can be relied on to be loyal to the Soviet connection since they will feel that they are working towards the liberation of their own country".⁶¹

Today, all accessible diplomatic records show no indication whatsoever that any such theory was based on firm ground. Any future full explanation should undoubtedly be sought in simpler terms. Many important questions remain, however, in the dark. This chapter will tackle some of them.

The Crisis and Internal Turkish Politics

The crisis aggravated partly because Ankara, which had noted with apprehension leftist gains during four Syrian parliamentary by-elections in May,⁶² now urged its allies to deal toughly

⁶⁰FO371/128244/VY10344/90, Cotton to Beeley, 27.10.57.

⁶¹FO371/130177/RK1015/33. British diplomats dismissed the Kurdish connection on the naive assumption that "the spectre of a Kurdish national rising" in Turkey was "virtually a thing of the past" and that, under DP, Kurds were peacefully assimilating.

⁶²Kürkçüoğlu, *Türkiye'nin Politikası*, 104-05.

with Damascus. This research has failed to uncover enough new evidence, however, either to confirm or reject claims that Menderes's government deliberately exploited the Syrian crisis prior to the early general election it had called for October 27, seeking a renewed mandate from the electorate, after being heavily criticised by the opposition for the failure of its economic policies and Menderes's own alleged autocratic manners.⁶³ İnönü was reported, at least on one occasion, to have publicly said that "demonstrations on the Syrian frontier were unnecessary".⁶⁴

Did Washington Encourage Turkey to Attack Syria?

Washington was certainly not keen initially to sanction a Turkish invasion of Syria, without altogether dismissing that possibility, however. Said Dulles: "Undesirable as it would be that the Turks should take any initiative perhaps it could not be prevented unless one of the Arab states was prepared".⁶⁵ A US National Intelligence Estimate, dated September 3, predicted that most Syrians would

oppose unilateral Turkish intervention and few would rally to a movement which appeared to be dominated and directed by Turkey. On the other hand, intervention by one or more Arab states would be favored by members of the opposition even though they would suspect that it had Turkish support and that some degree of overt Turkish participation would be likely at some point. The degree of Syrian support for such intervention would depend in some measure on the effectiveness with which Turkish initiative could be concealed and, more importantly, on indications of the likelihood of the success of intervention.⁶⁶

Menderes, in fact, had warned 'Abd al-Ilah in vague terms, on September 2, that if the Arabs were unable to take action themselves against Syria, Turkey would then be compelled to consult with Washington as regards what it should do.⁶⁷ So, did Washington, after having concluded that there would be no collective Arab response to the Syrian situation, tacitly give Turkey a green light to act on her own? Lesch claims it did. He sees the delivery, on September 12, of an oral message to Menderes as *the* major turning point in Washington's approach to the crisis and contends that it was not coincidental that, on September 10, the day that telegram was drafted, Dulles had publicly stated that the dangerous situation in Syria

⁶³ Ahmad, *Experiment*, 397; Lederer and Vucinich, *Soviet Union*, 41.

⁶⁴ FO371/130177/RK1015/36, Stewart to FO, 21.10.57.

⁶⁵ FRUS 1955-1957, XIII, 670.

⁶⁶ FRUS 1955-1957, XIII, 678-79. King Husayn, too, told Henderson that "Turkey should not participate in fighting"; see *ibid.*, 655.

⁶⁷ FRUS 1955-1957, XIII, 672.

could be resolved through peaceful measures. Lesch believes this was a covert message to Turkey that Washington now wanted others to make the running.⁶⁸

This author thinks that there is not enough evidence *yet* to support this view. There is, however, Dulles's own admission in July 1958 that, in the autumn of 1957, Washington "had avoided telling the Turks directly that they should not take action, since to do so would have given an excuse for putting the blame for subsequent developments on our restraining them".⁶⁹ It seems likely that this decision was taken after Arab reluctance to resort to force had become apparent.⁷⁰

Lesch seems unaware of Dulles's above-quoted statement. He curiously omits, however, other pieces of information, published in volume XIII of *Foreign Relations of the United States 1955-1957*,⁷¹ to which he obviously *had* access to. Washington's message to Menderes formed part of a series of confidential messages conveyed on September 10 to Israeli Premier David Ben Gurion, Prince 'Abd al-Ilah, King Husayn, and the Lebanese President and Foreign Minister.⁷¹ They had been compiled as a result of US/UK consultations held in Washington after Henderson's return from the Middle East. Lesch strangely ignores the other messages.

These messages, together with the US/UK memorandum on Syria, dated September 11,⁷² formulate Washington's official attitude toward the situation. Washington believed that "Syria has become, or is about to become, a base for military and subversive activities in the Middle East designed to destroy the independence of the other countries in the area and to bring them within the domination of the Soviet/Communist bloc". Reaffirming the Eisenhower Doctrine and the 1950 Tripartite Declaration, it asserted that if any country in the region was subjected to any such "aggressive action," Washington would then hold that a case existed for individual or collective self-defence under Article 51 of the UN Charter. It promised "prompt and sympathetic" consideration to any request by Syria's Arab/Muslim neighbours "for economic assistance and military supplies" if the latter "in connection with a concrete plan" wanted to protect themselves against "the threat of Syrian aggression". It promised further to support those countries in the UN Security Council or the General Assembly, and extend them, if requested, "economic assistance and military supplies" if they, "responding to provocation, should act pursuant to Article 51 of the Charter". If any of

⁶⁸Lesch, *Syria*, 156, 161, 201.

⁶⁹FO371/133823/V1078/12G, 'Record of Conversation between Lloyd and Dulles', 18.7.58

⁷⁰Eisenhower, *Waging*, 201.

⁷¹See full texts of messages in *FRUS 1955-1957*, XIII, 690-99. The message addressed to 'Abd al-Ilah was later also passed on, on further instructions from Washington, to 'Ali Jawdat as well.

⁷²FO371/128227/VY1015/185G, 'Syria: Memorandum', 11.9.57. The draft of this document was first handed to the British on September 7, who undertook not to publish it except after further consultations with Washington. Negotiations on some minor aspects of phrasing continued until early October.

Syria's Arab neighbours were attacked by the Sino-Soviet Bloc, without the intermediacy of Syria, then Washington, "upon request, would be prepared to use its own armed forces to assist any such nation or nations against such armed aggression". A Sino-Soviet attack *with* the intermediacy of Syria was not mentioned, probably because this possibility was already covered by the other commitments mentioned. Furthermore, Washington promised that if any provocative act by Syria led to hostilities between Syria and Iraq and resulted in the closure of the IPC pipelines, then it would, as a temporary emergency, help to mitigate the financial consequences of this to Iraq, and reactivate immediately the Middle East Emergency Oil Committee, formed during the Suez crisis, to organise alternative supplies of oil for Western Europe. It would also "continue to deploy the Sixth Fleet in the Eastern Mediterranean". Washington stressed that "momentous decisions" "may be taken only by [the] nation concerned" and, therefore, it cannot "assume responsibility of urging" its friends "any specific course of action or inaction". It preferred, however, that "if any action were taken in respect to armed provocation to eradicate danger represented by current Syrian situation, initiative in first instance should come from Arab state or states". Turkey "should not act other than in requested reinforcement of Arab defensive action," while "Israel should, irrespective of provocation other than large scale invasion, show restraint so as not to unite and inflame the Arab world against Israel and in support of Syria on the theory that Israel has aggressive purposes and territorial ambitions". In all cases, however, it was a *precondition* to any US support that hostilities would merely restore "Syria to the Syrians" and not impair "the political independence and the territory of Syria".

The messages were not identical. Each emphasised one aspect of US policy or another according to the nature of Washington's links with the recipient country or the latter's military/political potential. In no way, however, were they contradictory. In Turkey's case, the NATO link and Washington's commitments emanating thereof if Turkey was attacked by the Sino-Soviet Bloc "directly or by organized volunteers" were understandably underlined. The only interesting and thought-provoking point specific to Turkey was the indication that if Turkey might eventually "feel compelled to react to armed provocations which implied a serious threat to its own national integrity and independence" or if she came "to the aid of any of Syria's Arab neighbors engaged in hostilities with Syria," Washington would provide then support in the UN. Can the phrase *feel compelled to react* be taken as a hint to engineer a pretext to invade Syria? In this author's view, not. It was too vague to push the usually cautious Turks toward action. True, a few sentences in the messages conveyed to Menderes and 'Abd al-Ilah remain classified, but until they are declassified, and probably even after, there seems no reason to interpret these messages as an important departure from previous American policy. Washington probably gave too many hints to different parties, with no

motive to resort to force, and thus unwillingly discouraged even the most enthusiastic to take some action against Syria.

Today, mainly because of lack of accessibility to official Turkish records, it remains unclear whether later Turkish troop concentrations and movements were in any way related to the American message concerned and, perhaps more importantly, how did Ankara interpret that message and whether the latter had any profound effect on Turkish thinking and actions. Accessible evidence—relating to Turkish consultations with British and American leaders,—however, does not depict any profound change.

Turkey and Iraq's Attitude

Turkey, like the West, was disturbed at the new Iraqi government's attitude and its apparent reluctance to "educate" its public and world opinion about subversive Syrian activities against neighbouring Arab states.⁷³

The political climate in Iraq had changed considerably after the Palace had finally sanctioned—during the temporary lull following the events in Jordan in April 1957—the customary change in government, for Nuri had already been in office for almost three years, a period quite long by Iraqi standards. His resignation on June 8 was because of splits in his cabinet over development policy in light of losses of revenue caused by the stoppage of oil.⁷⁴ He was replaced by 71 year-old 'Ali Jawdat al-Ayyubi, while the Foreign Ministry was assigned in an acting capacity to Finance Minister 'Ali Mumtaz al-Daftari. The new Iraqi cabinet was described as "essentially of the same political complexion as Nuri Said's old cabinet," and Nuri's return as Premier was predicted after a brief rest.⁷⁵ The choice of 'Ali Jawdat, some believed, was an attempt "to show that it is possible to be a Nationalist and a pro-Baghdad Pact politician at the same time". The new Premier, despite being considered "a weak and vacillating character of small intelligence," enjoyed more respect among pan-Arab nationalists than Nuri.⁷⁶

Ankara had expressed anxiety at Nuri's departure and asked the new government for a clear, public commitment to continue supporting the pact. Indeed, "high quarters" in Iraq categorically assured that "the general lines of foreign policy, including support for the Baghdad Pact, will remain unaltered".⁷⁷ No immediate public statement was made to that effect, however, and leaving aside a single communiqué issued after an official Iraqi visit to

⁷³Lesch, *Syria*, 151; FO371/128228/VY1015/234G, FO to Istanbul, 25.12.57.

⁷⁴Michael Ionides, *Divide and Lose: The Arab Revolt of 1955-1958* (1960), 197.

⁷⁵FRUS 1955-1957, XII, 1058.

⁷⁶FO371/128040/VQ1015/25(B), FO minute by Hadow [n.d.].

⁷⁷FO371/128040/VQ1015/26-27, Wright to FO, 18 & 21 June 1957.

Tehran, the new government did not officially mention the pact by name in public until November 9, i.e. four months after taking office and well after the Turkish-Syrian crisis had somewhat subsided.⁷⁸

Instead, 'Ali Jawdat was busy "clear[ing] the clouds in the Arab atmosphere," removing "artificial differences" and strengthening "fraternal ties among all Arab States,"⁷⁹ a relatively popular policy both at home and across the Arab world.⁸⁰ Informed that 'Abd al-Nasir would cease hostile propaganda against and was anxious to improve relations with all Arab governments, he ceased the jamming of Egyptian, Syrian and Soviet broadcasts.⁸¹ Syria and Egypt were assured that Iraqi foreign policy "contained no hidden designs antagonistic to the interests of any of the other Arab countries".⁸²

Throughout the Syrian crisis, too, 'Ali Jawdat turned down all suggestions that Iraq should take military action against Syria. Iraq's oil revenues had sunk sharply because of the closure of the IPC pipeline,⁸³ and he did "not wish to give the Syrians an excuse to cut the pipeline". The Iraqis, suggested one diplomat, "have no intention of being sucked in by the apparent readiness of Syria to be friends, but they want a quiet life at home and abroad".⁸⁴ 'Ali Jawdat was admittedly worried by the leftward drive in Syria as the a latter "lay athwart Iraq's lifelines with the Mediterranean". He was prepared to tighten the grip at home, if necessary, but had only received "vague and temporising" answers from his personal friends in Syria—al-Quwatli, and Populist leaders Rushdi al-Kikhya and Nazim al-Qudsi—to his enquiry about what kind of help Iraq could provide to strengthen their position against the leftists.⁸⁵ 'Ali Jawdat further feared that Israel could take the opportunity and provoke some kind of military conflict, thus tempting Syria and Jordan to seek their ultimate salvation in friendship with the USSR.⁸⁶ In contrast to Turkey, Iraq withdrew its troops from H3, a disused oil pumping station just inside Iraq, "because of the strong propaganda insinuations about the reasons why Iraq was maintaining troops so near the Syrian border".⁸⁷ Iraq (supported, in this case, by Turkey) also opposed Iranian and Pakistani suggestions that the Baghdad Pact should get involved in the Syrian crisis, arguing that even secret discussions to

⁷⁸FO371/127819/VB10393/1, Wright to FO, 15.11.57.

⁷⁹FO371/128040/VQ1015/33, Wright to FO, 8.7.57.

⁸⁰FO371/134197/VQ1015/1, Wright to Lloyd, 27.12.57.

⁸¹FO371/127801/V1671/4, Beaumont to Rose, 30.7.57.

⁸²FO371/128249/VY10393/6, Beaumont to FO, 13.8.57.

⁸³Campbell, *Defense*, 259.

⁸⁴FO371/128249/VY10393/5, Beaumont to FO, 12.8.57.

⁸⁵FO371/128249/VY10393/6, Beaumont to FO, 13.8.57; FO371/128249/VY10393/21G, Wright to FO, 16.10.57.

⁸⁶FO371/128224/VY1015/102, Beaumont to FO, 21.8.57.

⁸⁷FO371/128229/VY1015/247G, Beaumont to FO, 24.9.57.

that effect were "bound to leak and arouse resistance from Arab opinions," enabling Syria and Egypt "to stigmatize the Pact as engaged in interfering in Syrian internal affairs".⁸⁸

Moreover, 'Ali Jawdat's envoy, Jamil al-Madfa'i, stated in Damascus that Iraq, as a member of the Arab League and ALCSP, would "rally to Syria like a brother in case of aggression" even if the USA and the Baghdad Pact were among the attackers.⁸⁹ On September 26, 'Ali Jawdat himself briefly visited Damascus and met with Syrian leaders. He refused to be party to a joint communiqué—not to cause dismay among Syria's other neighbours—but declared satisfaction with his talks and hoped that Iraqi-Syrian relations would soon revert to their past cordiality.⁹⁰ Following 'Ali Jawdat's return to Baghdad, the Iraqi Minister in Damascus, believing to have his authorisation, stated in a note to the Syrian government on September 28 that "any aggression against Syria or any other Arab country, will be considered as aggression against Iraq and all Arab countries".⁹¹ The government-guided Syrian media, in turn, never attacked 'Ali Jawdat's government.⁹²

'Ali Jawdat's "lack of grip" and "his weak attitude over Syria" were resented by the Palace and Nuri. Nuri warned, however, that any Turkish intervention in Syria could be disastrous and should not be considered. Iraq could intervene to change the regime in Syria only (a) as an ally of Jordan, if the latter took action under the pretext of demanding the return from Syria of Jordanian political refugees accused of plotting against King Husayn, or (b) to assist a fomented tribal uprising in Eastern Syria, whenever the Syrian army was called out to suppress the rebellion. Turkey could, in these cases, "immobilise as many Syrian units as possible by a show of force on the frontier".⁹³

The Iraqi press was also divided between pro-Westerners and pan-Arabists over its treatment of the Syrian situation,⁹⁴ while the Iraqi public at large reportedly considered

the changes in Syria to be the business of the Syrians and all the 'flap' in the Western and particularly the American press as designed to prepare the ground for American intervention in the internal affairs of Syria. Their sympathies lie largely with the Syrian Government faced, as it is, by the danger of Israel (supported by the West) and standing, as it does, for Arab nationalism and unity.⁹⁵

⁸⁸FO371/127818/VB10389/1, Beaumont to FO, 26.8.57; FO371/128224/VY1015/116, Beaumont to FO, 25.8.57; FO371/128241/VY10388/18G, Chancery, Ankara to Levant Department, 11.10.57.

⁸⁹FO371/128228/VY1015/242(A), Beaumont to FO, 25.9.57.

⁹⁰FO371/128230/VY1015/281G, Beaumont to Hayter, 27.9.57; *ibid.*, -/297, Scott to Rose, 1.10.57.

⁹¹FO371/128249/VY10393/14, Beaumont to FO, 30.9.57.

⁹²FO371/128230/VY1015/282G, Beaumont to FO, 1.10.57.

⁹³FO371/128225/VY1015/155G, FO to Bagdad, 6.9.57; FO371/128227/VY1015/186G, FO to Bagdad, 11.9.57.

⁹⁴FO371/128234/VY1016/4 & 7, Beaumont to FO, 21 & 29 August 1957.

⁹⁵FO371/128227/VY1015/187, Beaumont to Rose, 6.9.57.

These divisions among politically-conscious Iraqis soured relations between Baghdad and Ankara. Iraq's attitude was criticised by the Turkish press and caused indignation in Turkish diplomatic circles.⁹⁶ Turkish officials were aware of the state of public opinion in Iraq, but still blamed 'Ali Jawdat for his "lack of will" to act or see the dangers of the Syrian situation. Their sole consolation was the belief that the Palace was "fully alive to the dangers and determined to act if necessary,"⁹⁷ for they held, that during the informal Turkish-Iraqi discussions in Istanbul in August, Faysal II and 'Abd al-Ilah had agreed, that any possible action taken against Syria should be initiated by Arab states under Iraq's leadership.⁹⁸ Ankara was, therefore, extremely angered by 'Ali Jawdat's Damascus visit and considered his remarks "extremely dangerous and directly contrary" to decisions taken in Istanbul. Ankara was also puzzled by (the correct) reports that the visit had indeed been suggested by Nuri.⁹⁹ It feared that if Jordan failed to raise any support from Iraq or other pro-Western Arab countries, she would feel obliged to fall back on a policy of solidarity with Egypt and Syria.¹⁰⁰ The Turkish ambassador in Baghdad was immediately summoned to Ankara for consultations and instructed to deliver a long written message to the King and Crown-Prince.¹⁰¹ Menderes was convinced that both "enjoyed such position in Iraq that if they should make firm decision any Iraq Government would follow it".¹⁰² Therefore, according to Michael Stewart, the British chargé d'affaires in Ankara, he

reminded the King that he and the Crown Prince had agreed in Istanbul (a) on the Syrian threat and (b) on the need to demonstrate Arab disapproval of the present Syrian regime with the Iraqis as the leading spokesmen. He went on to say that recent Iraqi action ... were profoundly disquieting and contrary to the decisions taken jointly in Istanbul. They also nullified the efforts of the Turkish Government, which had brought the United States Government and "even the United Kingdom" to support their point of view, to put Syria on notice and to warn Arab and world public opinion of the present dangers. Menderes then said that the excuse offered by the Iraqis that the public statements made by Ali Jawdat and other Iraqi spokesmen were necessary for the purpose of Arab and internal Iraqi politics was invalid. In any case, these statements and acts were being exploited by Soviet and Syrian propaganda to the disadvantage of the Arab countries themselves and to Western interests. They had in fact "pulled the rug from under the feet of Turkey" and those who were trying to meet the Syrian danger, including King Hussein. Menderes then ... ventured to

⁹⁶Ivanova, *Otnoshenie*, 24; Aksin, *Türkiye'nin 1945den Sonraki*, 105-06.

⁹⁷FO371/128229/VY1015/248G, Stewart to Rose, 19.9.57.

⁹⁸FO371/128231/VY1015/304G, Stewart to Rose, 4.10.57.

⁹⁹FO371/128249/VY10393/17G, Beaumont to FO, 2.10.57.

¹⁰⁰FO371/128231/VY1015/312, Stewart to FO, 9.10.57.

¹⁰¹FO371/128230/VY1015/286G, Stewart to FO, 2.10.57.

¹⁰²*FRUS 1955-1957*, XIII, 672.

suggest that further measures were necessary [to give substance to decisions allegedly taken in Istanbul], including bringing the Iraqi press and radio under proper control. Finally, there was a clear hint ... that amongst the measures necessary was the early replacement of Ali Jawdat by Nuri.

Stewart gathered that this last point "was made clearer still orally by the Turkish ambassador".¹⁰³

Faysal II and 'Abd al-Ilah told the Turkish ambassador, however, that they had not changed their views and remained faithful to decisions taken in Istanbul. But since the measures contemplated there did not have an aggressive character, consequently, there was "no contradiction between them and Ali Jawdat's statement that Iraq will not approve aggression against Syria". 'Ali Jawdat had visited Damascus "on his own responsibility" and without their knowledge. The Palace did not know anything about the September 28 note before its delivery and it, too, represented only 'Ali Jawdat's own views. Finally, Faysal said that the statement "approving Syria's acceptance of Soviet arms was aimed at 'distracting' Mid East and Iraqi public opinion. Nuri had made similar statements in the past about Egypt's acceptance of Soviet arms". Ankara found the explanation only fairly convincing. It implied that either the Palace had lost control of the Iraqi government or was subservient to it. Commented 'Abd al-Ilah: "The Turks do not seem to understand the constitutional situation". "While he and the King stand by the views they expressed in Istanbul, it is for the Prime Minister and Government to decide on action".¹⁰⁴

'Ali Jawdat thus showed how dependent Ankara was on Nuri to maintain the functioning of the Baghdad Pact. Understandably, there was some Turkish relief when 'Ali Jawdat resigned in mid-December after having failed to call new elections, which, he felt, were needed to introduce certain internal reforms.¹⁰⁵ He was succeeded by the weak, but staunchly Pro-Nuri, former Minister of Communications and Works, 'Abd al-Wahhab Mirjan, who formed "essentially a Cabinet of Nuri's supporters without Nuri". Mirjan re-appointed Burhan al-Din Bash A'yan as Foreign Minister and endorsed the Baghdad Pact in his first Prime Ministerial statement.¹⁰⁶ Opposition remained strong, however, and during his government's first parliamentary debate on December 17, Mirjan had to concede that if the interests of Baghdad Pact members were to clash with those of Arabs, "the Arab interest would take priority".¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³FO371/128231/VY1015/304G, Stewart to Rose, 4.10.57.

¹⁰⁴FO371/128230/VY1015/286G, Stewart to FO, 2.10.57.

¹⁰⁵Marr, *Iraq*, 121; Simon, "Hashimite", 318; FO371/134197/VQ1015/1, Wright to Lloyd, 27.12.57.

¹⁰⁶FO371/128041/VQ1015/54-55, Wright to FO, 15.12.57; FO371/134197/VQ1015/2, Wright to Lloyd, 28.12.57.

¹⁰⁷FO371/133912/VB10393/1(A), Kellas to Chancery, Ankara, 13.1.58.

UN⁷

Even after Mirjan's appointment, the Turks were gravely annoyed when Iraq's permanent representative at the UN voted, in the Political Committee, in favour of a Greek draft resolution proposing to grant the majority of the population in Cyprus (i.e. the Greeks) the right of self-determination, while in the Plenary, Iraq's ambassador in Washington, in clear disregard of further specific instructions from Baghdad to vote with Turkey, only abstained. Iraqi government officials were furious, and, in order to placate Ankara's anger, showed the Turkish ambassador in Baghdad the text of their instructions to New York. Although the latter was satisfied with the explanation he received, Turkish-Iraqi relations had evidently suffered additional damage.¹⁰⁸

Turkish-Egyptian Relations during the Crisis

Egypt's adversaries noted her attitude during the crisis with interest. They had long predicted that while Syria would initially willingly follow Egypt in cultivating better relations with the Eastern Bloc, 'Abd al-Nasir would eventually find it hard to make her follow an opposite course if he ever judged that his ties with the Communist world had begun to jeopardise Egypt's freedom to act. They now believed that this was actually taking place, having received reports that 'Abd al-Nasir had had no foreknowledge of the Syrian-Soviet agreement and was now feeling uncomfortable with the increasing Syrian-Soviet rapprochement and advances made in Syria by local Communists and fellow-travellers.¹⁰⁹ Hence, Iraq had proposed, during the Istanbul discussions, to incorporate Egypt into the secret talks among neighbouring governments concerned about what action to take as regards Syria.¹¹⁰ When 'Abd al-Nasir dispatched, on October 13, around 2,000 Egyptian troops to Lattakia allegedly to defend Syria against any "Turkish aggression," Westerners interpreted this as a sign of Egypt's conviction that any possibility of an armed conflict was remote. Otherwise, Egypt would not have committed troops. Egypt's attitude during the UN debate was also interpreted as a sign of Egyptian anxiety.

Ankara, too, reacted to the dispatch of the Egyptian contingent with equanimity. Esenbel opined that its arrival "might have been to try and prevent the present Syrian regime from slipping further into the Russian grip".¹¹¹

Turkey's attitude had its origins in her steadily improving relations with Egypt since the beginning of 1957. Both sides, however, had till then accorded this rapprochement a low profile. Since late May 1957, British diplomats in Ankara had reported "a falling off during

¹⁰⁸FO371/127829/VB1072/176(C), Wright to FO, 22.12.57.

¹⁰⁹FRUS 1955-1957, XVII, 785.

¹¹⁰FO371/128224/VY1015/114, Beaumont to FO, 25.8.57.

¹¹¹FO371/128242/VY10344/28G, Stewart to FO, 18.10.57.

recent months in Egyptian propaganda specifically directed against 'Turkey'; the presence of Menderes at a football match in Istanbul on May 20 between two Egyptian and Turkish teams, where he presented a cup to the defeated Egyptians; and favourable comments by Cairo Radio and the Egyptian chargé d'affaires, 'Uthman 'Asal, on the interest shown by Menderes in improving Turco-Egyptian relations.¹¹² Later, the Turkish and Egyptian Ministers of Commerce exchanged official visits, and new ambassadors were appointed in both capitals. The attendance of Menderes and two other Turkish Ministers at the Egyptian embassy's reception to mark Egypt's National Day on June 18 was a unique event, commented upon favourably by Cairo Radio and accorded front-page headline treatment in *Zafer*.¹¹³

This rapprochement worried the Western powers and, for entirely different reasons, Moscow. Recent Turkish moves, argued Lloyd, "can hardly be said to accord with our policy of going very slowly with Nasser and of giving him as little help as possible". Bowker was in no doubt that the rapprochement was, as always, "personally directed and controlled" by Menderes, although the latter was "evidently under no illusions about Colonel Nasser's equivocal attitude to the Baghdad Pact".¹¹⁴ The *Chef de Protocole* at the Turkish Foreign Ministry explained that Turkey's anti-Egyptian policy since 1955

was actually the work of Monsieur Birgi who was both anti-Nasser and anti-Arab. Since Birgi had gone [as Turkish ambassador] to London the pro-Arab group in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had been working on the Prime Minister. Their advocacy of closer relations with the Arab countries in addition to Iraq was also in accordance with Monsieur Menderes's natural inclinations. The influence of the ex-Minister of Foreign Affairs, Professor Köprülü could also be discerned there.¹¹⁵

'Asal confirms that Menderes was instrumental in changing Turkey's attitude *vis-à-vis* Egypt and that Birgi's departure was crucial to that effect.¹¹⁶

Ankara seems to have become apprised of above-mentioned Western apprehension and immediately embarked upon a consistent effort to play down the significance of steps already taken. Menderes raised the subject of future relations with Egypt during the Karachi Pact Council meeting (3-6 June), but facing a unanimous desire to go very slowly with 'Abd al-Nasir, retreated immediately and expressed full agreement with the rest.¹¹⁷

¹¹²FO371/128242/VY10344/6, Stewart to Watson, 23.5.57.

¹¹³FO371/130181/RK10316/1, Bowker to Ross, 31 May & 21 June 1957; *The Times*, 19.8.57.

¹¹⁴FO371/130181/RK10316/3, Lloyd to Bowker, 1.8.57; *ibid.*, -/4, Bowker to Lloyd, 24.8.57.

¹¹⁵FO371/130181/RK10316/3, Chancery, Istanbul to Levant Department, 10.7.57. Köprülü was well-known for his strong desire to keep on good terms with the Arab world as much as possible.

¹¹⁶Al-Katib, *Hikayat*, 167-68.

¹¹⁷See FO371/130181/RK10316/1 & 3'C'.

In the autumn, British diplomats detected a slowing down in the rapprochement, caused probably by "Nasser's uncompromising stand in favour of the present régime in Syria," and delaying the actual exchange of ambassadors until the end of October.¹¹⁸ This assessment, however, should be dealt with some caution, for Ankara remained as tight-lipped as possible on its dealings with 'Abd al-Nasir.

Turkey, the Baghdad Pact and Israel

The crisis made Turkey—striving, as before, to expand and consolidate the Baghdad Pact—come very close to breaking diplomatic relations with Israel. Not long after Zorlu's departure from Riyadh, the Turkish Ambassador at Jedda was informed by a close associate of King Sa'ud that the latter was ready to consider joining the pact on condition that its name was changed to something like the Middle East Pact—thus dropping the name of Baghdad, which Sa'ud allegedly disliked for its implications of Iraqi leadership—and Turkey broke off relations with Israel.¹¹⁹ Moreover, reported Bowker, Bayar had received, in October, a letter from Sa'ud

to the effect that cooperation between Saudi-Arabia and Turkey would depend on Turkey's aligning herself with Iraq, Iran, Pakistan and other Muslim States over Israel. Esenbel said this meant breaking off all relations with Israel, both political and commercial. No reply had been sent to that message. Since then the Turkish President had received a message from the President of Pakistan conveying a further message from King Saud on the same subject and I gathered on the same lines.¹²⁰

The Turkish government might have also been influenced by Najdat Safwat, the First Secretary of the Iraqi embassy in Ankara, who had told British diplomats back on July 31 that the Arabs could understand the special position of Britain and the USA, but "could not understand, or forgive a purely Middle Eastern state like Turkey declining to break off relations with Israel... It was Turkey's persistence, in this, rather than anything else that was keeping King Saud out of the Pact, and making him so opposed to Turkey".¹²¹ Given his reputedly outspoken character, Safwat could have also shared his views directly with influential Turkish politicians.

¹¹⁸FO371/130181/RK10316/5(B), FO minute by Watson, 31.7.57.

¹¹⁹FO371/130181/RK10316/7, Bowker to FO, 28.11.57.

¹²⁰FO371/127725/V1022/61, Bowker to FO, 9.12.57. The issue of replacing the Baghdad Pact with an alternative Middle Eastern Islamic pact seems to have been informally discussed among Iraqi politicians as well. Al-Suwaydi says he favoured such an option; Nuri, did not; see Tawfiq al-Suwaydi, *Mudhakkarati: nisf qarn-in min tarikh al-'Iraq wa-l-qadiyyah al-'arabiyyah* (1969), 568-69.

¹²¹FO371/127725/V1022/38, Chancery, Ankara to Chancery, Bagdad, 10.8.57.

Britain and the USA opposed Ankara's suggestion to break off diplomatic relations with Israel. When the Turks specifically solicited Washington's advice, the latter strongly discouraged them, while Britain warned that "the Turks should be very careful in dealing with King Saud, since we have information which suggests that he may be thinking not so much of joining the Baghdad Pact as of joining in a pro-Western Arab alliance on condition that Iraq leaves the Baghdad Pact and joins this body".¹²² Turkey soon dropped the suggestion.

This simple thought, however, that Turkey could unilaterally break off relations with Israel shows that Israeli fears, expressed since 1955, that the Turkish-Iraqi pact would gradually cool Turkish-Israeli relations, were not unfounded. It also sheds doubt on the correctness of theories propagated by some Western historians on the existence of a "special attraction" and "political empathy" between Turkey and Israel, from which Turkey has allegedly always resisted to depart even when under strong Arab pressure.¹²³

It is improbable that Ankara sincerely believed that the Palestine question was the *real* cause of all the current turmoil in the Middle East. Soon after the Syrian crisis had abated, however, Turkey came under pressure from Iraq and Pakistan to agree to a meeting of the regional members of the Baghdad Pact in Istanbul on December 10-11 and promised there that Menderes would explain their views on Palestine and other aspects of the Middle Eastern situation at the meeting of Heads of government of NATO countries in Paris on December 16. 'Ali Mumtaz stated in Ankara that Arab states unanimously rejected any partial settlement of the Palestine problem, and any solution should encompass a settlement of boundaries based on the 1947 UN partition resolution.¹²⁴

Menderes duly carried out his promise, stating publicly that the unresolved nature of the Palestine question was creating an atmosphere which facilitated the infiltration of Communism into the area. He called for a swift solution based on the UN partition resolution, but did not make any direct criticism of Israel.¹²⁵

¹²²FO371/127810/VB10325/1, FO to Ankara, 12.12.57.

¹²³See Philip Robins, *Turkey and the Middle East* (1991), 82; Simon, *Middle East*, 354; and Ihsan Gürkan, "Turkish-Israeli Relations and the Middle East Peace Process", *Turkish Review of Middle East Studies*, 7 (1993), 108-09, 112.

¹²⁴FO371/136450/RK101/1, Bowker to Lloyd, 4.2.58; Saad, *Iraq*, 418-19; Ivanova, *Otnoshenie*, 20, 73-74. There seems to be no independent evidence to corroborate al-Suwaydi's assertion in *Mudhakkarati*, 556 that the Ankara meeting also assigned "Iraq to overthrow the Syrian regime, giving the government to civilians and keeping the Syrian army out of politics". Al-Suwaydi is not usually reliable as far as dates and specific events are concerned, and he has perhaps confused this Ankara meeting with a previous, similar informal gathering held to discuss the abortive 1956 coup in Syria.

¹²⁵FO371/133923/VB1075/1, Bowker to FO, 1.1.58. Menderes repeated this view when presenting his new government program to the GNA on December 4; see Ismail Arar(ed.), *Hükümet Programları 1920-1965* (1968), 303.

Baghdad, however, was unable to make full use of Menderes's speech for internal propaganda purposes. The Iraqi propaganda machine had been alerted to concentrate on his remarks on Palestine. Unfortunately, on the day, none of the major international news agencies reported the passage on Palestine. The Iraqi government was extremely bitter both against the agencies and the British embassy, which, it assumed, should have alerted them. In the end, Iraqi officials had to monitor Ankara Radio to find out what exactly Menderes had said and publicised his remarks on Radio Baghdad. This exercise could not be undertaken by the local press, however, and the latter did not cover the issue.¹²⁶

Even when in Paris, the thought of expanding the pact was not off Menderes's mind. During separate meetings with Eisenhower and Dulles on December 18-19, he emphasised again that formal US accession would have a favourable effect on "undecided" Arab states such as Lebanon, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, and would take the heat out of the Palestine question by reducing the possibility of an Israeli threat to the Arab states. The Americans, however, repeated that this "good effect" would be outbalanced by their need to enter into a balancing agreement with Israel. Eisenhower only promised to instruct to have the question specified further.¹²⁷ Dulles, however, promised to take a new look at the problem if Turkey could convince Israel not to press for a security arrangement whenever Washington joined the pact. Menderes, who, had, only a few weeks ago, been thinking of breaking off relations with Israel, surprisingly replied that Turkey was already doing this.¹²⁸

The Internal Power Struggle in Syria

It can be safely contended that Damascus did not entertain any immediate plan to attack any of its neighbours. Worries, however, that Syria might, in time, turn into a base to de-stabilise neighbouring pro-Western Arab regimes were not entirely illusory. The crisis would certainly not have attained such proportions had, first, Washington and, then, Ankara, not taken an aggressive stance. Washington's strong reaction to the expulsion of the diplomats, together with accumulated Syrian worries about the ultimate intentions of her pro-Western neighbours, elevated the originally bilateral American-Syrian problem into an international crisis. It did not stop, however, the Syrians from ratifying the accord with Moscow and helped pave the way for the Syrian-Egyptian merger. Syria's official attitude during the crisis remained generally one of simple reaction. She tried hard not to antagonise Egypt, Iraq or Saudi Arabia and dispel worries of Soviet infiltration. Internal popular support for the regime

¹²⁶FO371/133885/V1671/2, Wright to Hadow, 10.1.58.

¹²⁷FO371/127814/VB10345/34, Bowker to FO, 24.12.57.

¹²⁸FRUS 1955-1957, XIII, 673-75.

remained strong. Even what was left of the People's Party and, more amazingly, the banned SSNP in exile declared their full support.

Behind-the-scenes, however, the alliance of pan-Arab nationalists, radicals and Communists was already cracking. With their right-wing, pro-Iraqi adversaries comprehensively defeated in December 1956, differences among the victors had, by the summer of 1957, deepened. Pan-Arab nationalists, being also dedicated neutralists, feared that the Communists were trying to pull Syria and the Arab world away from the West and closer to the Eastern Camp. Al-Bitar opposed al-'Azm's mission to Moscow, preferring to get financial and economic assistance from Yugoslavia instead. His Ba'thist colleagues were later more conciliatory to the West and Turkey. Al-'Azm and the Communists, however, sensing that Syria's adversaries were really after their own skin, took a tougher stand against Ankara and Washington and gave little prominence to Saudi mediation attempts. Internal divisions within the Syrian Army General Staff were of no less importance, for top army officers had the habit of acting independently of Syria's political leadership, and the landing of Egyptian troops in Lattakia took place, in all probability, without the prior approval of the constitutional, civilian government.¹²⁹

During the crisis, however, not enough attention was paid by foreigners to this increasing cleavage, and the exact lines of division became clear to the outside world only during Syria's merger with Egypt in early 1958.

¹²⁹Lesch, *Syria*, 105-06, 192; al-'Azm, *Mudhakkarat*, III, 10; FO371/128230/VY1015/297, Scott to Rose, 1.10.57.

The Era of the Two Arab Unions

The formation, in February 1958, of the United Arab Republic (UAR), through the merger of Syria and Egypt, and that of the Arab Union (AU) between Iraq and Jordan were most dramatic events in modern Middle Eastern history. This chapter analyses the Turkish reaction to their emergence.

Turkey, the Baghdad Pact and the Formation of the UAR

Discussing in detail the reasons behind and events leading to the emergence of the UAR is beyond the scope of this study.¹ Briefly stated, demands for union with Egypt had been growing within pan-Arab nationalist circles in Syria in general, and among Ba'thists in particular, since 1955, in parallel with the political rapprochement between the two states. These demands intensified in late 1957 as the sense of panic and insecurity caused by the Turkish-Syrian crisis pushed many Syrians to consider seriously a union with larger, stronger and internally stable Egypt. Within the ruling coalition, the Ba'thists were opposing the desire of the Communists and followers of al-'Azam to keep Syrian foreign policy independent of Egypt through further improvement of relations with the Eastern Bloc. The Ba'thists feared that, through their better organisation and grass-roots support, the Communists and their allies could outscore them in forthcoming parliamentary and presidential elections. The Ba'th, therefore, supported the Syrian Army General Staff's demand for an immediate and total union with Egypt as a way out of Syria's international insecurity and internal political wrangling. 'Abd al-Nasir felt he had to agree to the request. Rejecting it could have harmed his prestige in the Arab world indefinitely and pushed Syria away from his direct influence into either the pro-Soviet or pro-Western camps. He also probably saw in the proposed union a springboard to obtain a further foothold in the region in his struggle for supremacy against the Hashimites. Prior to giving his agreement, however, 'Abd al-Nasir secured the withdrawal of Syrian army officers from political life and the dissolution of all Syrian political parties, to be replaced, on the Egyptian pattern, by a National Union. Ba'thist leaders believed that 'Abd

¹See details in Frost, *UAR*, 14-150; Seale, *Struggle*, 307-26; Torrey, *Syrian Politics*, 347-83; Petran, *Syria*, 124-27; al-'Azam, *Mudhakkarat*, III, 77-183; Haykal, *Ma alladhi*, 6ff; Tlas, *Mir'at*, 724-51.

al-Nasir's policies were modelled along their own notions of radical social reform at home and neutralism in foreign policy and, therefore, hoped that, through such reorganisation of party-political life in Syria, they could dominate the new unified state ideologically. President al-Quwatli and al-'Asali's cabinet, facing a *fait accompli*, accepted the agreement immediately. The only minister to oppose it plainly was al-'Azm. His relations with Cairo had been soured since 1955 and he now rightly realised that the union would end his political aspirations. The union was first announced in the Egyptian press on 27 January 1958. No political organisation in Syria dared to speak in public against either the principle or form of the union. Nationalists, Populists and even the Muslim Brotherhood greeted it and dissolved themselves, hoping that they could thus get rid of the Communists. The latter, caught completely unaware by the flow of events, were, of course, unhappy, but felt that they, too, had to support the union in public. Bakdash, however, did not attend the February 5 meeting of the Syrian Parliament, which unanimously approved the agreement and nominated 'Abd al-Nasir for the office of President of the UAR. Bakdash left Syria the same day and was not to return officially until 1966. The union was formalised through referenda held in both Syria and Egypt on February 21, which also approved 'Abd al-Nasir's candidacy as president. Soon, diplomatic missions in Damascus were formally terminated and asked to present their new credentials to 'Abd al-Nasir.² On March 8, Yemen established with the UAR a looser Union of Arab States, which was left open to other Arab states that might agree to participate in the future.

Western officials had, in the past, disliked the possibility of a Syrian-Egyptian union, fearing that it "would harden the present divisions in the Arab world and tend to consolidate the foothold which the Russians had already obtained". They had also dismissed the various Syrian calls to that effect, however, as propaganda.³ It is not surprising, therefore, considering the speed with which the merger came into existence, and the reticence shown in

²FO371/134382/VY1015/16, Scott to Rose, 13.2.58. Prior to the UAR's formal establishment, Syria announced the discovery of another plot and the arrest of unnamed agents, who, allegedly financed by Washington at the cost of \$1m and controlled by Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey, had reportedly infiltrated into Syria to cause disturbances and start trouble on the Syrian frontier on February 21 to give Turkey and Israel an excuse to intervene; see FO371/134382/VY1015/15-15(A). Subsequent historical research has failed to uncover any hard evidence related to these allegations. The Turkish legation in Damascus thought at the time that the reports had probably been deliberately inspired by the Syrian government to give it a valid excuse for concentrating extra security forces in certain areas to make sure that there was no trouble during the plebiscite; see FO371/134382/VY1015/21, Chancery, Ankara to Levant Department, 25.2.58.

³For official British views, see FO371/121864/VY10316/5; *ibid.*, -/9, Graham to Zulueta, 11.7.57; FO371/128237/VY10316/1, Middleton to Hayter, 25.7.57. FO371/128251/VY1051/17, FO minute by Hadow, 6.12.57.

the past by Egyptian leaders on this subject,⁴ that all foreign countries concerned were caught by surprise and did not earnestly discuss that possibility until at least January 23. Moreover, this subject seems not to have come up during preparatory contacts leading to the January 28 Baghdad Pact Council meeting in Ankara.

By then, the serious differences among the various components of the ruling coalition in Syria were being increasingly noted abroad. The initial Western response was that nothing should be done to prevent the developing of a formal split. Public attacks and other measures, which could look "like overt hostility to Syria," were avoided. Westerners sympathised with the Ba'th, but recognised that, even if the latter came on top, it would still pursue a policy of close alignment (aimed towards actual union) with Egypt, which "would command more sympathy from public opinion in neighbouring countries than the present one" and presumably be no less dangerous to the security of Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon. Dulles thought, therefore, that the West "should not take too discouraging a line with Nuri" if he attempted to change the political balance in Syria through Iraqi-inspired action.⁵

Ankara, too, was aware of the internal differences within the Syrian leadership. Kural reported on 24 December 1957 that there was a conflict between the Ba'th and Communist parties below the surface. The Ba'th had opposed al-'Azm's visit to Moscow in July, fearing that it could enhance Communist prestige. After receiving the results of that visit in a chilly fashion, however, it had subsequently been attracted by Soviet promises of assistance. Nevertheless, the Populists and, then, the Ba'th had later decided not to participate in and ultimately managed to postpone indefinitely the scheduled local elections, fearing that the Communists might win "a large number of seats in several Municipal Councils and thus make fairly sure of winning the National elections". Egypt, too, had been anxious about al-'Azm's increasing influence and her own dwindling prestige in Syria. 'Abd al-Nasir had, therefore, sent troops to Syria to re-strengthen his influence and attempted to establish co-operation with al-'Asali and his National Party, assuring the latter of his "support in the internal struggle against the Communists in Syria". Kural, too, seemed to believe that Ankara should, for the time being at least, refrain from publicly attacking the Syrian regime and let matters there take their own course. He reported that al-Bitar had, following his return from New York, told his Ba'thist colleagues of his conviction "that the Turks would not have attacked Syria during the period of Turco-Syrian tension". The anti-Turkish campaign of the Syrian press had subsequently dwindled away and had only been briefly revived following Menderes's

⁴Al-'Azm, *Mudhakkarat*, III, 106-07; Torrey, *Syrian Politics*, 332-33; FO371/121864/VY10316/5, Trevelyan to FO, 1.7.56.

⁵FO371/133915/V1072/25, Caccia to FO, 19.1.58; FO371/134382/VY1015/8, Brief for Baghdad Pact Council meeting, 20.1.58.

Paris speech, which had put al-Bitar in a precarious position. He had come under heavy fire from leftists in the Syrian leadership. "If Khalid-el-Azm had not been in Moscow at the time" to exchange the ratifications of the Soviet-Syrian agreement of August 1957, Kural continued, "he would probably have been able to force Bittar's resignation". There was no mention of an impending Syrian-Egyptian union in Kural's detailed report. "The internal struggle is a straight fight for power and not to any marked degree an ideological conflict," he said, but the Ba'thists could still "give up the struggle and decide to co-operate with the Communists if they estimate that the latter are too strong in the country".⁶

Thus, Ankara, too, did not take Syrian calls for an immediate union with Egypt seriously. On the night of January 24, Menderes unexpectedly paid a brief visit to Baghdad, but during his high-level negotiations there, the issue of the Egyptian-Syrian union remained off the agenda. Dulles, to assure regional pact-members of Washington's firm support, was going to head the US observer delegation during the forthcoming Pact Council meeting for the first time. Menderes asked Prince 'Abd al-Ilah to attend the meeting, too, because, with his presence, additional pressure could be put on Dulles to agree to

- (a) United States full membership of the Pact;
- (b) development of United States policy on Palestine towards the Arab point of view;
- (c) additional United States economic and military support of the Pact.⁷

Menderes's main goal was undoubtedly the first. He probably included the other points to make his invitation to 'Abd al-Ilah more attractive. For Iraqis, the prospect of US adherence seemed to be of no great importance. Nuri did not even mention it when giving Selwyn Lloyd a résumé on what had been agreed with Menderes in Baghdad.⁸ The Crown-Prince preferred, in the end, to stay away, and requested Nuri to head the Iraqi delegation, despite the fact that the latter was not even a cabinet minister at the time. Nuri was accompanied by Foreign Minister Bash A'yan, al-Jamali and al-Suwaydi.⁹

Menderes also raised in Baghdad the question of expediting the establishment of a link between the Baghdad Pact and NATO. The Iraqis responded that any legal link with NATO would create great difficulties for them, especially because of France's relations with Israel. An informal link designed for propaganda purposes would be of no use and would only attract further Arab criticism. However, it would be all to the good if there were anything of real value to be gained, say, in the military or economic field, by establishing practical

⁶FO371/134382/VY1015/2, Chancery, Ankara to Levant Department, 3.1.58.

⁷FO371/133908/VB10345/12, Crawford to FO, 25.1.58

⁸FO371/134219/VQ1015/3, 'Record of conversation between Lloyd and Nuri', 26.1.58.

⁹FO371/133914/VB1072/8, Wright to FO, 11.1.58.

relations with NATO. The Iraqis requested, however, that, in this last case, and for the reasons mentioned, there should be no publicity on the subject.¹⁰

Finally, Menderes urged the Palace to re-appoint Nuri as Premier. Menderes returned "fairly satisfied with the result of his mission". He "had been badly shaken by Ali Jaudet's behaviour in the summer and did not think that the present Iraqi Government was much stronger. He felt that the internal situation was deteriorating and it was vital that Nuri should be brought back". King Faysal and 'Abd al-Ilah told him that new elections were indeed being planned, probably in May, to pave Nuri's way back to the premiership.¹¹

Once the Ankara Council meeting got off officially, however, it was the impending Egyptian-Syrian union that received most attention behind-the-scenes. At the suggestion of Dulles, two specially restricted sessions were held on January 28-29 to discuss the issue.¹² All delegations present thought that the Syrian people was somewhat dragged by its leftist leaders into this hasty union, which, they agreed, would also bring about a critical situation in Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Saudi Arabia. "The majority of the Syrian people, if they had free choice, would prefer union with Iraq rather than with Egypt," said Nuri and asked whether the participants "would encourage Iraq, if there were elements in Syria which wished to get rid of the Egyptians and the Russians" and "work for union between Iraq and Syria". He also "alluded to the Iraqi frontier dispute with Syria, saying that the districts of the Mosul Vilayet which were allocated to Syria would in fact much prefer to be united with Iraq and he was sure that if they had a free choice that was the way they would go".¹³ Menderes, however, believed "that Iraq was not now strong enough to take any effective action on its own against Syria, even with the help of Jordan". He, together with Ali Quli Ardalan, Iran's Foreign

¹⁰FO371/133908/VB10345/12, Crawford to FO, 25.1.58.

¹¹FO371/134197/VQ1015/13, 'Record of conversation between Lloyd and Menderes', 25.1.58.

¹²See details in *FRUS 1958-1960*, X, Part 2, 33-38; FO371/134386/VY10316/10G, Lloyd to Butler, 28.1.58; FO371/134389/VY10316/115G, 'Record of specially restricted meeting', 29.1.58.

¹³It should be remembered that Nuri had never considered post-World War I boundaries in the Middle East as sacrosanct. In addition to his famous proposal to the British government in 1943 to establish a "Fertile Crescent" unity, he reportedly offered Turkish Foreign Minister Şükrü Saracoğlu in June 1940—without having raised the issue beforehand with the Iraqi cabinet—the possibility of Iraq ceding her Kurdish-populated territories to Turkey, in return for Turkish support for an Iraqi-Syrian union; see Naji Shawkat, *Sirah wa dhikrayat thamanin 'am-an* (1977), 391-92, 405-06. Finally, on 8 January 1957, Nuri told the US chargé in Baghdad that no step should be taken towards a federal Egyptian-Syrian union "without the Syrian people being given the opportunity to express their views". Nuri asked "whether it would be consonant" with the Eisenhower Doctrine "for Iraq to request the United Nations to send a mission of three or more representatives of neutral countries, such as the Scandinavian countries or Switzerland, (he did not consider India as a neutral) to ascertain the wishes of the people on the borders of Syria and Iraq by means of a plebiscite or free vote". He "believed that the tribal areas in Syria west of the Iraqi frontier and south of the Turkish frontier as far as perhaps a line from say, Jerablus southwards, would prefer to join Iraq," claiming that "he would be willing for a free vote to be taken in the corresponding tribal areas on the Iraq side of the frontier as well"; see FO371/128249/VY10393/1, Wright to FO, 8.1.57.

Minister, criticised Iraq for "maintaining that nothing could be done because the Arabs were in favour of Arab unity". "If the Iraqis thought that their union was more important than resisting Soviet Imperialism," warned Menderes, "then other countries would have to revise their policy" and "take steps to defend themselves". "Turkey was in danger of being encircled, and some action must be taken". "The Syrians were very different from the Hungarians," and "Communism could easily gain a firm hold in Syria without the necessity of the Russians putting in any forces". Iraq needed the help of other Arab states, said Menderes, and called on participants to co-ordinate a common policy to persuade other Arab states to join forces with Iraq. Dulles and Lloyd made clear that their governments would not themselves take any initiative against the union, but promised to support any Arab initiative to that effect, preferring some sort of co-ordinated action taken by Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq. Dulles opined that the Baghdad Pact, too, should not take any concerted action before knowing the views of the Arab countries. He was doubtful, however, "that any Arab state seemed prepared to act on the strength of United States backing". "In fact," concluded he sarcastically, "the only people who were prepared to take effective action in the area were Nasser and Ben Gurion". Dulles then called on Iraq to "bring the Arab countries to express disapproval of Egyptian-Syrian union and say that it was not true Arab unity at all". "There should be rapid exploration under Iraqi auspices (with the help of Saudi Arabia, Jordan and the Lebanon) to discern what opportunities existed to bring to light opposition elements in Syria" and any emerging internal opposition there "should receive the recognition and support of the other members of the Pact". Otherwise, any "action by Iraq alone would be [still] better than nothing". Washington, said Dulles, could not give Moscow any kind of ultimatum to keep off, since it was not overtly involved in the matter.¹⁴ The British FO staff, following developments from London, in turn, notified the UK delegation in Ankara that any Iraqi attempt to incorporate parts of Northeast Syria would surely consolidate the Syrian-Egyptian alignment and "provide an admirable opportunity for further Soviet penetration". They suggested that, in the prevailing circumstances, existing contingency plans formulated by the Arab Committee might have more chances of success to halt the leftward drift in Syria. The plans referred to assumed an "Iraqi (and Jordanian) military intervention at the request of a Syrian revolutionary government" that would preserve Syria's independence.¹⁵

Esenbel rightly remarked later that "everybody [in Ankara] seemed to be waiting for someone else to make the first move and that there was a lamentable lack of leadership".¹⁶

¹⁴See also *FRUS 1958-1960*, XIII, 412-13.

¹⁵FO371/134386/VY10316/10G, Dean to Lloyd, 29.1.58. For the Arab Committee, see p. 119, note 73.

¹⁶FO371/134388/VY10316/74, Chancery, Ankara to Levant Department, 11.2.58.

Hence, the meeting only concluded that "the initial reaction [to the announcement of the union] should be cautious, that no move should be made which might have the effect of cementing the Union, and that the first positive reaction should come from the other Arab states and not from the Western powers".¹⁷ It also agreed to encourage resistant and dissident elements inside Syria; give prominence, in Arab countries, to public expressions of opposition to the extinction of an independent Arab state as a national entity and its absorption under the military dictatorship of 'Abd al-Nasir; and, finally, help Iraq in trying to associate itself with Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Lebanon, but also with Sudan, Libya, Tunisia and Morocco, in opposing or acting against the union.¹⁸

The impending Egyptian-Syrian union did not, of course, push all original items off the Ankara meeting agenda. It softened, however, the criticism that Britain and the USA were accustomed to hear from regional members concerning the amount of aid given.¹⁹ The question of US membership, too, was put on the back-burner and, as far as this author has been able to gather, not raised again until the July 14 revolution in Iraq.

Nuri pleaded again for an early solution of the Palestine problem in accordance with past UN resolutions and called for the reactivation of the 1949 UN Palestine Conciliation Commission, which had consisted of American, French and Turkish membership. Iraqi delegates asked for a direct reference in the final communiqué to Palestine and, preferably, to the relevant UN resolutions as well, which, they said, "would take the wind out of" the "sails" of Iraqi opponents of the pact. Iraq could do nothing as regards the UAR, argued Nuri, unless she got moral support over Palestine. His suggestion was received very coolly, however. Other regional members "made it quite clear that, if a specific mention to Palestine were to be included, they would have to ask that questions of special interest to them should also be mentioned". They, especially Feroze Khan Noon, the Pakistani Premier, "pressed the Iraqis to accept that the Communist threat was an issue on its own and would have to be dealt with even if the Arab-Israel dispute did not exist". Dulles, in turn, opined that attempts to reactivate the commission were certainly not what the situation demanded, stressing that the degree to which Washington could co-operate with the pact would largely depend on whether Americans were convinced that it was an organisation designed to defend the area against international Communism rather than an instrument for prosecuting the Arab cause over Palestine. The Iraqis ultimately gave in—reportedly "not very gracefully"—and accepted

¹⁷FO371/133915/VB1072/59(A), FO minute by Hadow, 5.2.58.

¹⁸FO371/134386/VY10316/12G, Lloyd to FO, 29.1.58.

¹⁹FO371/133915/VB1072/47, Lloyd to FO, 30.1.58.

to drop any reference to the UN resolutions on Palestine.²⁰ Both al-Jamali and al-Suwaydi claim, however, that Dulles later visited the Iraqi embassy in Ankara and promised to re-open discussions on the future of Palestine, including the possibility of reactivating the Conciliation Commission, during the next annual UN General Assembly session the following September. Al-Suwaydi adds that Dulles also agreed to review Nuri's proposal to exclude France from that commission.²¹

Iraq's request that the USA and UK should put pressure on France to hold elections in Algeria was also turned down.²² Iraqi leaders still tried to keep a brave face in public, however. Bash A'yan stated that Palestine and Algeria had been discussed in Ankara, and that Iraqis had "found more response" from the other delegations. "All agree that a quick solution of the Palestine question according to the United Nations resolutions is necessary".²³

Turkey, of course, had her own quarrel with Britain over Cyprus. Lloyd had brought to Ankara new British proposals to solve the problem, but the Turks continued to insist on partition.²⁴ Turkey, however, did not push the Cyprus issue into the meeting agenda and its absence seemed not to diminish Turkish "warmth and friendliness" towards their British guests.²⁵

With no firm decision taken in Ankara on how to oppose the UAR, Western powers and their regional allies inevitably drifted toward a more resigned and somewhat philosophical attitude. There were no indications of organised opposition within Syria. Instead, talk of a union had apparently aroused considerable spontaneous enthusiasm among the Damascene masses. Western observers hoped that the union would reduce Communist influence in Syria and represent a real set-back for Soviet influence in the area. They estimated that the union could survive for a number of years until opposition would develop, in the long run, amongst conservative elements in Aleppo, as well as ethnic and religious minorities throughout Syria,

²⁰FO371/134386/VY10316/10G, Lloyd to Butler, 28.1.58; FO371/133915/VB1072/47, Lloyd to FO, 30.1.58; FO371/133915/VB1072/51, 'Summary record of part of discussion at restricted session', 30.1.58.

²¹Al-Jamali, *Dhikrayat*, 115-16; idem., *Mawaqif*, 146, 167-68; al-Suwaydi, *Mudhakkarati*, 556.

²²FO371/133915/VB1072/59(A), FO minute by Hadow, 5.2.58.

²³FO371/133916/VB1072/68, Wright to FO, 19.2.58.

²⁴Bağcı, *Demokrat*, 116.

²⁵FO371/133916/VB1072/70, Wright to Lloyd, 12.2.58. Moreover, when Nuri stopped off in Ankara in early June 1958, on his way to London, he volunteered during conversations with Menderes, to take up, while in London, the Cyprus question in an attempt to gain British support for the Turkish position. The Turkish authorities, however, having no great confidence in Nuri as an intermediary, feared that any such intervention might eventually even harm their cause and immediately asked Ambassador Birgi in London to urge restraint on Nuri; see FO371/134219/VQ1051/19, FO minute by Hoyer-Millar, 25.6.58. Turkey did accept, however, NATO mediation in the Cyprus dispute; see Karpat, *Transition*, 143-44; Bağcı, *Demokrat*, 118, 162.

who would probably lose their quasi-constitutional right to participate in running the Syrian government.²⁶

Among Syria's neighbours, it was only in Turkey that the growing belief about Soviet unhappiness made some difference to the official attitude. For conservative Arab governments, whether a check against communism in Syria or not, 'Abd al-Nasir would, as head of the UAR, become an even more formidable ideological enemy and a rallying point for their internal radical opponents. Turkey, however, had been improving her relations with Egypt for over a year. In this new atmosphere, Kural's views, on coming to terms with the Ba'th Party and other radical nationalist, but anti-Communist, elements in Syria, had finally found some attentive ears in Ankara. Kural had already been trying, within the limits of his jurisdiction, to strengthen the position of all anti-Communist forces in Syria. He, in parallel with the attempts of the Egyptian ambassador, Mahmud Riyad, had persuaded the 65 right-wing Syrian deputies, who had resigned their seats in early June 1957 with the intention of forcing new legislative elections, to return to the Chamber. Argued Kural: "They would have even less influence outside Parliament than they had inside it".²⁷ Later, when al-Quwatli attempted, for personal reasons, to transfer al-Sarraj to a diplomatic post abroad, Kural thought it would be against the interests of the Baghdad Pact powers for al-Sarraj "to go at this stage, since he was potential opponent of Soviet influence".²⁸

Turkish diplomats privately admitted that information they received about the factors behind the union and the Soviet attitude towards the latter was contradictory. Menderes told Dulles on January 26 that "the main pressure for union came from Syria, that the Soviet Union and Syrian Communists were behind the pressure. Nevertheless, the willingness of the Egyptian regime to go along with the idea demonstrated that Egypt was collaborating with the Communists".²⁹ Kural, in the meantime, had rightly informed Ankara in early February that al-Quwatli's "departure for Cairo [to finalise the union agreement] had been preceded by violent disagreement in the Syrian Cabinet and Parliament (*sic!*). Khalid El Azm in particular was known to have been strongly opposed to the Union".³⁰ Sources emanating from Beirut, however, had claimed that the union had actually been engineered by al-Bizri, implementing decisions made in Moscow, which had reportedly realised the impossibility of establishing a

²⁶FRUS 1958-1960, XII, 39-42; FO371/134386/VY10316/4, Noble to Lloyd, 28.1.58; *ibid.*, -/8, FO to Beirut, 28.1.58; FO371/134386/VY10316/32G, Caccia to FO, 4.2.58; FO371/134381/VY1011/1, Middleton to Lloyd, 6.2.58; FO371/134388/VY10316/69, Chancery, Ankara to Levant Department, 12.2.58; FO371/134382/VY1015/19, Scott to Rose, 20.2.58.

²⁷FO371/128222/VY1015/64, Middleton to FO, 5.6.57; *ibid.*, -/68, Stewart to Watson, 7.6.57.

²⁸FO371/128232/VY1015/346, Johnston to FO, 29.10.57.

²⁹FRUS 1958-1960, X, Part 2, 737.

³⁰FO371/134388/VY10316/74, Chancery, Ankara to Levant Department, 11.2.58.

Communist stronghold in Syria and had therefore taken the initiative in forming the UAR.³¹ The Assistant Secretary-General of the Turkish Foreign Ministry, Zeki Kuneralp, was still undecided, on February 10, whether Bakdash's departure from Syria was a sign "that Communists were not pleased" or simply a "manoeuvre".³² Turkish officials admitted, however, that even if the advance of Communism had been checked as a result of the Syrian-Egyptian merger, the UAR would still "militate against the interests of Middle Eastern countries in general and especially those of Arab kingdoms. It would also threaten the independence of Arab States in North Africa and not contribute to the re-establishment of peace in the area".³³ Ankara dismissed any lingering hopes that Egypt could still be won over with offers of economic help. 'Abd al-Nasir's aims went beyond what the West could provide and could be gained only at the West's expense. He wanted to gain control of the oil fields in Saudi Arabia and, possibly, Iraq, and, to achieve that objective, he still needed Moscow's co-operation.³⁴ Iraq, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, and not Turkey or Israel, should be worried by the formation of the UAR, emphasised one Turkish political commentator, because 'Abd al-Nasir was exploiting the idea of a great Arab state to acquire their natural resources and their thinly-populated agricultural land.³⁵

All these Turkish reservations, however, were kept strictly off official statements. Ankara wished to avoid a position of strong opposition to the UAR, in particular since there had been no resistance within Syria, even among the tribes.³⁶ Hence, beginning with a press conference given on January 27 by Turkey's new Foreign Minister, Zorlu, Ankara regularly underlined that "Turkey's attitude towards the Union would depend on its orientation". If it would remove Syria from the Soviet axis, Turkey would be particularly pleased, as she did not like to see any of her neighbours or fellow nations "become tools of the aggressive aims of international Communism".³⁷ Zorlu told the GNA on February 25 that Turkey "hoped that Egypt would be able to exercise a positive influence on Syria and that she should succeed in protecting Syria, as she had already done for herself, against Communist infiltration and in safeguarding the policy of the United Arab Republic from Communist influence". "Turkey had made efforts to improve relations with Egypt," and "at present friendly relations existed

³¹FO371/134387/VY10316/65, Roberts to FO, 12.2.58; FO371/133798/V10344/2G, Bowker to Rose, 9.4.58.

³²FO371/134388/VY10316/74, Chancery, Ankara to Levant Department, 11.2.58.

³³FO371/134387/VY10316/65, Roberts to FO, 12.2.58.

³⁴FO371/133798/V10344/2G, Bowker to Rose, 9.4.58.

³⁵*Dünya*, 11.2.58.

³⁶FO371/133798/V10344/1, Chancery, Ankara to Levant Department, 2.4.58.

³⁷Kürkçüoğlu, *Türkiye'nin Politikası*, 113-14; FO371/134387/VY10316/58, Chancery, Ankara to Levant Department, 7.2.58; FO371/136456/RK1022/4, Bowker to Lloyd, 25.2.58.

between the two countries". "Turkey felt no enmity against Nasser and there are no problems between him and Turkey".³⁸

'Abd al-Nasir appeared satisfied with the public Turkish reaction and thanked the Turkish ambassador in Cairo for Zorlu's friendly references to the UAR and himself, repeating that he "was fighting and determined to fight the Communists".³⁹ 'Abd al-Nasir also told US Ambassador Raymond Hare, on March 20, that he had been trying to keep the USA and Turkey entirely out of his speeches when attacking "imperialism" in general.⁴⁰

The Turkish opposition RPP advocated a policy of "wait and see without being hostile" until, it said, the general policy of the union became clear. The party hoped that the UAR's policy "would be governed with a mentality of peace and friendship," because its ultimate survival "would largely depend on its policy towards its neighbours".⁴¹

The official recognition of the UAR by Turkey was delayed, however, due to Iraqi reluctance to do the same.⁴²

Turkey and the Formation of the AU

Iraq could not publicly condemn the principle of Arab unity, which she had always staunchly advocated. Mirjan stated in Parliament that "the question of unity concerned the Egyptian and Syrian peoples" and that "he wished them success". His only expressed regret was "that Iraq and other Arab countries had not been asked for their views on the projected union before it had been announced, as it was expected in accordance with the ties of Arab brotherhood". Behind-the-scenes, however, the Iraqi cabinet formally concluded on February 4 that the Syrian-Egyptian merger "constituted a threat to the structure and régime of Iraq," by bringing to her doorstep the Egyptian revolution, which many Iraqi leaders now believed, was "not intended to be for domestic consumption only but to be followed by a similar form of revolution in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and ultimately in Saudi Arabia". Moreover, the emphasis on the "Republican" form of the union could hinder Iraq's future expansion; the future of the free flow of Iraqi oil to the Mediterranean was now at 'Abd al-Nasir's mercy; and Soviet-Syrian co-operation in the development of the upper waters of the Euphrates could also in the long-term hinder Iraq's irrigation schemes. The establishment doubted the loyalty of certain junior army officers and feared that spontaneous manifestations of joy among opposition nationalist circles and students—who had, almost without exception, welcomed the

³⁸FO371/136456/RK1022/4, Bowker to Lloyd, 28.2.58.

³⁹FO371/133798/V10344/1, Chancery, Ankara to Levant Department, 2.4.58.

⁴⁰FRUS 1958-1960, XIII, 435.

⁴¹FO371/136456/RK1022/2, Chancery, Ankara to Southern Department, 11.2.58.

⁴²See *infra*.

UAR very enthusiastically as an important step towards full Arab unity—could create an uncontrollable situation. Mirjan was empowered, therefore, to introduce, whenever necessary, martial law (or lesser emergency powers) to maintain internal security.⁴³

In the long-term, however, it was imperative for the Hashimite monarchies of Iraq and Jordan to take some drastic counter-measure in order not to concede all the laurels of Arab unity to 'Abd al-Nasir. Attempts to forge some sort of alternative union, between Iraq, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, had already been launched by King Husayn on January 27.⁴⁴ Many Iraqis, including Nuri, were initially worried that Jordan would be an economic burden on Iraq and that the standard of living in Iraq would be adversely affected. Prince 'Abd al-Ilah, in turn, feared that a counter-alignment of monarchies against Egypt and Syria might be unpopular.⁴⁵ Ultimately, however, he went along with the Iraqi cabinet's unanimous decision of February 4 to work for a closer association between Iraq, Jordan and Saudi Arabia. The cabinet had decided further that Iraq and Jordan should go it alone if Saudi Arabia proved reluctant to participate, and that the tiny, but oil-rich, sheikhdom of Kuwait should also be asked to join, for "the best chance for the oil producing Arab countries was to stand together in a confederation. Otherwise they would be swallowed one by one".⁴⁶ Iraqi leaders also thought that Kuwait's riches could be useful to consolidate economically any union with Jordan, without any reliance on outside assistance in the future. The setting up of a confederation, said 'Abd al-Ilah, should be followed by the active encouragement of dissidence in Syria. Syria, too, should ultimately be brought into the projected confederation, "by the use of force if there was no way," for "if the present trend of events, both inside Iraq and in the neighbouring countries, continued without further check, the situation would crumble irretrievably within a period of months and certainly before the end of the year. The impact of Nasser's success and propaganda would prove too strong". 'Abd al-Ilah emphasised, however, that "rather than succumb it would be better for the Hashemites to go down fighting honourably".⁴⁷

These attempts received general approval during the Ankara meeting. Noon "kept pressing Nuri, sometimes in rather insulting terms, to take some action including union with

⁴³FO371/134197/VQ1015/2, Wright to Lloyd, 28.12.57; *ibid.*, -/11, Wright to FO, 11.2.58; FO371/134386/VY10316/28(A) & 31, Wright to FO, 4-5 February 1958; FO371/134387/VY10316/41G, Wright to FO, 6.2.58.

⁴⁴FRUS 1958-1960, XI, 268.

⁴⁵FO371/134036/VJ1071/17G, Crawford to FO, 31.1.58.

⁴⁶FO371/134386/VY10316/37G, Wright to FO, 5.2.58.

⁴⁷FO371/134198/VQ1015/18G, Wright to FO, 26.2.58. See also FO371/133814/V1072/81G, Wright to Lloyd, 21.3.58.

Jordan (with or without Saudi Arabia)"⁴⁸ and urged "the Iraqis to get on rapidly with a federation," commending "to them the solution in Malaya [inaugurated in 1948 and continued after the country's independence in 1957], where the Sultans had agreed among themselves a system of rotation as Heads of State". Lloyd backed Noon, saying that "a coordinated Arab reaction" was needed, "leading to a new pattern of Arab association, another grouping of Arab states".⁴⁹ Warning that Jordan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Lebanon may otherwise succumb one by one, Lloyd assured that any such initiative would enjoy the pact's and Washington's support.⁵⁰

With King Sa'ud ultimately preferring to stay aloof, it fell to Iraq and Jordan to go it alone. An alternative association between Iraq and Jordan, the Arab Union, was established on February 14. The two countries agreed to establish, within three months, a single federal government with each entity retaining its own political system and sovereignty over its territories. Foreign policy, diplomatic service, military affairs, customs and educational systems would be unified first, followed by work on unifying the currencies and co-ordinating financial and economic policies. Husayn conceded the office of the Head of the Union to Faysal and agreed to become his deputy, in return for Jordan being, despite its smaller population, equally represented with Iraq in the projected joint legislative assembly. The flag used by the Hashimites during the Great Arab Revolt of 1916 was symbolically adopted as the flag of the AU.⁵¹ Faysal and Husayn also agreed privately that whenever King Sa'ud decided to join the AU, he should automatically be asked to head it.⁵² Iraq undertook to meet 80% of the federal budget in the first year, thus adding an annual burden of £17m on the Iraqi treasury. Later, however, Washington promised to contribute \$25m and Britain, \$4m annually for the next three years to cover some of the union's budgetary expenses.⁵³

Within Iraq, the Palace considered the situation too grave for trifling. Mirjan, considered "too irresolute and vague," especially in trying to challenge 'Abd al-Nasir on the airwaves, was forced to resign on March 2, and Nuri immediately formed the next cabinet. To show "that Iraq has firmly taken up the challenge delivered by Colonel Nasser," the new government included heavyweights like al-Jamali (Foreign Affairs), al-Qazzaz (Interior) and Bash A'yan (Information and AU Affairs).⁵⁴

⁴⁸FO371/134386/VY10316/10G, Lloyd to Butler, 28.1.58.

⁴⁹FO371/134389/VY10316/115G, 'Record of specially restricted meeting', 29.1.58.

⁵⁰FO371/134386/VY10316/12G, Lloyd to FO, 29.1.58.

⁵¹Hussein, *Métier*, 153-54; Saad, *Iraq*, 195-96; *FRUS 1958-1960*, XII, 293-94.

⁵²FO371/134025/VJ10393/47, Johnston to FO, 20.2.58.

⁵³Saad, *Iraq*, 205; FO371/134219/VQ1051/14, 'Conversation between Lloyd and 'Abd al-Ilah', 6.6.58; FO371/140896/EQ1011/1, Crawford to Lloyd, 29.1.59.

⁵⁴FO371/134198/VQ1015/19, 22 & 27.

New, rigged legislative elections followed on May 5, during which reportedly "no Deputy was elected who did not have the blessing of the Government". Opposition leaders did not bother to run and publicly called for a boycott, while newspapers reported the results only in their inside pages as a perfunctory matter.⁵⁵ The new Parliament amended the Iraqi constitution to conform with the new constitution of the AU. On May 19, an AU government, headed by Nuri and having an equal number of Iraqi and Jordanian ministers, based in Baghdad, was formed to deal with matters of defence, finance and foreign affairs. It assumed its duties on July 1. The foreign affairs portfolio went to al-Suwaydi. The regional Iraqi cabinet was, therefore, duly reconstructed with Ahmad Mukhtar Baban appointed as Prime Minister.⁵⁶

Menderes and Zorlu publicly welcomed this closer association between two friendly, pro-Western Arab governments. Bayar and Menderes sent on February 16 messages of congratulation to Kings Faysal and Husayn, and official recognition followed on February 20.⁵⁷ Privately, however, the Turkish line was more realistic. A meeting of Turkish diplomatic representatives in the Middle East, held in Ankara in late March, under the chairmanship of Zorlu, concluded that the AU was "perhaps the last and only hope in the Middle East area itself of effective opposition to Colonel Nasser," and "therefore deserved every support that Turkey and other well-disposed Governments could give it".⁵⁸

The only question that Turkey wished to see clarified before the AU came into existence was the issue of Jordan's future relations with the Baghdad Pact. The Turkish ambassador offered King Husayn, in early February, "an unconditional Turkish guarantee of military aid against Israel attack if Jordan would enter the Baghdad Pact". The King and his Foreign Minister replied, however, that "this was not practical politics at present" and "seemed to doubt the tactical wisdom of the Turks in pressing so keenly for it".⁵⁹

The Western powers, however, were not so enthusiastic to have Jordan in the pact. Rumours that Jordan had raised the possibility of Iraq leaving the pact received mixed reactions in the State Department. Some staff members argued that it would be better if Iraq left, for her position in the Arab world had been weakened by her membership in the pact. "With Iraq out," they argued, Washington "would no longer be inhibited by fear of trouble with the Israelis from joining the Pact, which could revert to the original 'northern tier'

⁵⁵Al-'Akam, *Ta'rikh*, 337; Grassmuck, "Process", 400, 414-15; FO371/134198/VQ1015/37, Falle to Hadow, 21.4.58; *ibid.*, -/46, Wright to Lloyd, 10.5.58.

⁵⁶FO371/134028/VJ10393/134, Wright to FO, 19.5.58.

⁵⁷FO371/133912/VB10393/5, Bowker to FO, 17.2.58; FO371/134025/VJ10393/50, Bowker to FO, 21.2.58; FO371/136456/RK1022/4, Bowker to Lloyd, 28.2.58.

⁵⁸FO371/133798/V10344/1, Chancery, Ankara to Levant Department, 2.4.58.

⁵⁹FO371/133813/V1072/5, Johnston to FO, 6.2.58.

concept". Furthermore, after Iraq's withdrawal from the pact, a new and wider Arab grouping could be formed instead, and Saudi Arabia might then even agree to join the AU. Other State Department officials, however, wanted Iraq to stay, arguing "that the effect of Iraq's withdrawal on the Baghdad Pact would be disastrous" for the preservation of Western influence in the Middle East and that it "was not necessary to the success of union between Iraq and Jordan". Sa'ud, they claimed, "would not join the new Union; and that it would be of doubtful advantage if he did". They wanted to discourage Jordan "from pressing the point" of Iraq's withdrawal and urge Iraq "to resist". The Department eventually said "that Iraq should decide for herself". Britain, too, wanted Iraq to stay the pact, motivated probably by the desire not to lose the military facilities, that she enjoyed under the 1955 Special Agreement, which was tied to Iraq's membership in the Baghdad Pact.⁶⁰

In the end, Iraq and Jordan agreed that each side would abide by the international agreements it had entered before the establishment of the AU, without there being any corresponding obligation on the other, i.e. Jordan would remain outside the pact, while Iraq would stay in.⁶¹ Jordan did not try to persuade the Iraqis "to break their obligations under the Baghdad Pact. All she wanted was that they should be fully aware of her views when the time came for them to consider their position under the Pact, and i.e., at the end of five year period".⁶² Britain was pleased with this arrangement as she would not have to extend her present obligations to Iraq to cover Jordan as well.⁶³

Iraqi Ambassador Najib al-Rawi assured Menderes on February 17 that "there was absolutely no foundation to the reports that Iraq's withdrawal from the Baghdad Pact had been put forward as a condition of the Arab Union".⁶⁴ Ankara accepted the explanation. According to Kumeralp, "for the time being at any rate the Turkish Government thought it would be unprofitable to try and peer more deeply into the future".⁶⁵

It seems probable, however, that Ankara gave some kind of informal assurance to Jordan to come to her assistance in case of an unprovoked Israeli attack. Al-Jamali told a Turkish journalist that Turkish politicians had accepted in principle to intervene if Jordan were attacked by Israel. The RPP, therefore, claimed again, based on this report, that the government was giving away too many commitments without consulting the GNA. Kumeralp, however, said on March 14 that "it was quite untrue that the Turkish Government had

⁶⁰FO371/133908/VB10345/18, Morris to Hadow, 24.2.58.

⁶¹FO371/133911/VB10380/1, FO minute by Hadow, 18.2.58.

⁶²FO371/134024/VJ10393/24, Johnston to FO, 17.2.58.

⁶³FO371/133911/VB10380/2, Rose to Johnston, 29.5.58.

⁶⁴FO371/133912/VB10393/5, Bowker to FO, 17.2.58.

⁶⁵FO371/133912/VJ10393/7, Chancery, Ankara to Levant Department, 25.2.58.

recognised any specific obligation," adding ambiguously that if Jordan were actually attacked by Israel, "the Turkish Government might have to consider their position".⁶⁶

The "practical demonstration of Iraqi loyalty to the Pact" reportedly gave Turkey "much satisfaction" and recovered in Turkish eyes much of the ground that Iraq had lost during the Syrian crisis and the UN debate on Cyprus in autumn 1957. On the whole, the tendency in Ankara reportedly was "to assume that it is Jordan which has been brought nearer practical co-operation with the Baghdad Pact rather than that the Iraqi connexion with it had been weakened".⁶⁷

Turkey and the Recognition of the UAR

With no real reasons to justify delaying recognition to a new state that had been formed observing, in outward appearances at least, all the criteria needed of a voluntary union, Ankara would have probably preferred to grant early recognition to the UAR, especially in view of its relatively improved relations with 'Abd al-Nasir. The Middle Eastern members of the Baghdad Pact had agreed in Ankara, however, that they would take a common line on the issue of recognition, and Iraq's reluctance to recognise the UAR later caused Turkey problems.

Iraqi leaders had been disinclined to recognise the UAR even before their agreement with Jordan. They had not congratulated its formation officially and had barred the post office from transmitting to Cairo and Damascus individual cables of appreciation.⁶⁸ Iraqi diplomats in both Morocco and Libya, and, possibly, in other like-minded Arab states as well, were instructed to consult with their Baghdad Pact colleagues and try to urge their host governments jointly to act in concert with other Arab states and not recognise the UAR precipitately.⁶⁹ After the decision to establish the AU, Iraq and Jordan agreed that neither government should recognise the UAR *de jure* until the formation of the first AU government, so as not to prejudice in advance the decision of the latter when the time came.⁷⁰

On February 21, Bash A'yan asked the heads of mission in Baghdad of Iran, Pakistan, Turkey, Britain and the USA to withhold recognition for the time being. The decision, he said, "had been taken first and foremost because Jordan wished it," but also because both Iraq

⁶⁶FO371/133940/VB1193/1, Chancery, Ankara to Levant Department, 17.3.58.

⁶⁷FO371/134025/VJ10393/48, Chancery, Ankara to Levant Department, 18.2.58.

⁶⁸Saad, *Iraq*, 267, 273-74; FO371/134386/VY10316/28, Wright to FO, 4.2.58.

⁶⁹FO371/134387/VY10316/45(A), Graham to FO, 10.2.58; FO371/134388/VY10316/91, Chancery, Rabat to African Department, 12.2.58.

⁷⁰FO371/134388/VY10316/98, Wright to FO, 20.2.58.

and Jordan believed the UAR was "against the wishes of the majority of the Syrian people who were being given no free opportunity to express their views". "Immediate *de jure* recognition would be discouraging to such elements in Syria as might wish to dissent from, or oppose, virtual annexation by Egypt". Moreover, Iraq still did not know the UAR's attitude towards the security of the IPC pipeline. Bash A'yan thought that Egypt, too, "was not in any particular hurry for full recognition, for at any rate perhaps a month or two ... provided this were on a basis of reciprocity". The Iraqi government would not query the credentials of representatives of the UAR at international conferences, but would also wish not to serve on a credentials committee.⁷¹ On the same day, the Iraqi government issued an official internal circular explaining, in the same terms, the reasons behind its decision not to recognise the UAR, and, two days later, cabled to that effect to fellow conservative Arab governments.⁷²

Iran and Pakistan were considerably disturbed by Iraq's request and postponed recognition only with the greatest reluctance.⁷³ Ankara, however, was more forthcoming. Zorlu thought that, in this specific case, "Turkey's decision should be subordinated to the over-riding necessity of supporting Iraq at the moment when she is inclined to feel isolated and that the tide is running against her".⁷⁴ He informed the American and Baghdad Pact embassies that Turkey did not intend to recognise the UAR in the immediate future and thought that the rest should follow a common line. An Egyptian-Sudanese border dispute, prominent at the time, on the region of al-Halayib, added Zorlu, could provide another reason for delay.⁷⁵ For Ankara, the presence of its ambassador in Cairo amounted to *de facto* recognition, and it hoped that the eventual transition to *de jure* recognition would be achieved, without the need of a public statement, when the ambassador would present his new credentials to 'Abd al-Nasir.⁷⁶

The Iraqi request was impractical and destined from the start to failure. It was always clear that it would be very difficult for Iraq's friends and allies to keep their word and delay recognition. Lebanon recognised the UAR and AU simultaneously on February 17, followed by Saudi Arabia, Morocco and Tunisia. The USA recognised the UAR on February 25, while Iran was the first to break ranks within the Baghdad Pact, extending recognition on February 27. Sudan followed on March 2.

⁷¹FO371/134389/VY10316/104, Wright to FO, 21.2.58.

⁷²Saad, *Iraq*, 271-72.

⁷³FO371/134389/VY10316/105(A), Stevens to FO, 22.2.58.

⁷⁴FO371/134390/VY10316/178, Bowker to Rose, 11.3.58.

⁷⁵FO371/134389/VY10316/105, Bowker to FO, 21.2.58.

⁷⁶FO371/134389/VY10316/133, Bowker to FO, 27.2.58.

Turkey and Pakistan now realised that recognition could no longer be delayed, fearing that if it was put off further, Cairo could either apply pressure or ultimately claim that both had recognised the UAR under pressure. Zorlu told US ambassador Fletcher Warren on March 8 that both countries would recognise the UAR on March 12. The Iraqi government was told in advance of their intention, and had to acquiesce with good grace.⁷⁷ The Turkish mission in Damascus was withdrawn. Agreement was secured, however, to establish a Consulate-General in Damascus instead. The Turkish Embassy in Cairo, the Consulates-General in Cairo and Alexandria, and the Consulate in Aleppo continued to function as before.⁷⁸

Turkey and the Confrontation between the UAR and AU

The two Arab unions were established in an atmosphere of mutual animosity and remained adversaries throughout their brief period of coexistence. Neither accorded the other diplomatic recognition. They disagreed on almost all major political issues, and their radios waged a relentless war of mutual accusations.

During these few months, the Turkish government never concealed its sympathy for the AU, despite the prevalence of a different opinion among certain Turkish Foreign Ministry officials. Kunalp, for example, likened, in an internal memo, the emergence of two unions in the Arab world to the process of Italian and German unification in the 19th century. He forecast that, through the grass-roots support it enjoyed, its appeal to the youth, and various other reasons, the UAR was more likely to succeed than the AU. He proposed that Turkey should further improve relations with Egypt. Kunalp now attributes Turkey's continued suspicious attitude towards Egypt to the latter's support for the Greek-Cypriot cause.⁷⁹

Turkey's posture ensured that tensions along the former Turkish-Syrian border and mutual recriminations between Turkey and the UAR would not die down. There were repeated reports of border incidents.⁸⁰ The Turkish Foreign Ministry denied Syrian press reports that seven Turkish jet aircraft had flown over Syria on February 27 and that, on March 4, large numbers of Turkish troops, tanks and motorised vehicles had been concentrated at the approaches of Akçakale station near the border on the Turkish side.⁸¹ Syria continued, however, to accuse Turkey of mine-laying and diverting the waters of the

⁷⁷FO371/134390/VY10316/178, Bowker to Rose, 11.3.58; *ibid.*, -/176(A), Bowker to FO, 15.3.58.

⁷⁸FO371/133896/V1091/9, Chancery, Ankara to Levant Department, 12.5.58.

⁷⁹Kunalp, *Sadece*, 101-02.

⁸⁰Suwaydan Nasir al-Din(ed.), *Yawmiyyat wa watha'iq al-wahdah al-misriyyah-al-suriyyah*, Vol. II: 1 May-31 August 1958 (1988), 19, 98.

⁸¹FO371/134392/VY10344/5, BBC monitoring, 6.3.58.

river Jagh-Jagh in al-Jazirah, and thus depriving of water for a three-week period 10,000 hectares of land used to cultivate cotton. She protested that Turkish citizens holding transit permits to facilitate their work on land near the frontier had been entering Syria without good reason. The two countries agreed, therefore, to cancel existing permits and asked holders to submit new applications in order to be investigated by the Syrian authorities.⁸² Later, Turkey tightened up control of movement over the frontier allegedly to deal more effectively with the problem of smuggling.⁸³ Turks, and even Syrians with special permits, were denied permission to enter Syria. Turkey's decision, in early July, to close the frontier altogether was particularly painful for owners of land living on both sides of the frontier. The UAR authorities protested against this decision and, in turn, forbade their own citizens to enter Turkey. These Turkish measures were seen in Damascus as part of a new Turkish-Iraqi-British co-ordinated plan to put pressure on Syria to desert Egypt and join the AU instead. The frontier was re-opened on July 13.⁸⁴

Turkey believed that provided King Sa'ud did not openly oppose the AU, his approval was "not a matter of immediate consequence". She agreed that Kuwait's accession would strengthen the AU.⁸⁵ On both counts, however, Iraq failed. Riyadh blessed the AU, but was too frightened of Egypt to think of joining it.⁸⁶ Iraq also failed to obtain Kuwaiti accession to the AU. Her Ruler, Shaykh 'Abdallah al-Salim al-Sabah, suspected that, in view of Iraq's historic claims over the territory of Kuwait, such a step could be suicidal to the sheikhdom and its ruling family.

A major issue of controversy between the two Arab unions was the unrest in Lebanon, where, in early May, a broad coalition of left-wing and pan-Arab nationalist opponents of President Sham'un had risen against his supposed wish to amend the constitution in order to be able to run for a second six-year term. Sham'un accused the UAR of aiding the rebels and interfering in Lebanon's internal affairs

Turkish officials had been expecting disturbances to flare up in Lebanon for some time. 'Abd al-Nasir, they reasoned, had been "temporarily balked of his prey in the shape of Jordan by the Iraqi-Jordanian union" and was "likely to turn the heat on Lebanon".⁸⁷ Americans believed that Turkey had been solicited by Sham'un and had actually promised his

⁸²FO371/134384/VY1015/58, 66 & 68, Scott to Rose, 4 & 27 June & 3 July 1958.

⁸³FO371/134392/VY10344/7, Chancery, Ankara to Southern Department, 9.4.58.

⁸⁴FO371/134384/VY1015/69 & 71, Scott to Rose, 9 & 18 July 1958.

⁸⁵FO371/134025/VJ10393/48, Chancery, Ankara to Levant Department, 18.2.58; FO371/133798/V10344/1, Chancery, Ankara to Levant Department, 2.4.58.

⁸⁶Saad, *Iraq*, 199; FO371/140896/EQ1011/1, Crawford to Lloyd, 29.1.59.

⁸⁷FO371/133798/V10344/1, Chancery, Ankara to Levant Department, 2.4.58.

government active sympathy and support.⁸⁸ Lebanon's ambassador in Washington told Dulles on June 15 that "the Turks might also contribute to pacification of the situation in Lebanon by massing forces on the Syrian frontier".⁸⁹ On May 25, the Turkish ambassador in Washington, Ali S. H. Ürgüplü, declared his country's readiness to send troops to Lebanon at the UN's request.⁹⁰ There were reports that Ankara had actually offered Sham'un's troops some minor items of equipment.⁹¹ Turkey strongly urged her Western partners to support Sham'un.⁹² Washington, however, was not prepared to risk a confrontation with the UAR over Lebanon. The Turkish ambassador in Lebanon, Cevdet Dülger, was shocked to hear that Sham'un was hesitating to invoke immediately the authority he had received from his cabinet to call on friendly Western governments to intervene and that Western diplomats were strongly discouraging him from doing so.⁹³ Washington was confident that Ankara would almost certainly support any possible US/UK intervention in Lebanon and even help Lebanon if fighting began with the UAR. Menderes's government, however, was not included in any way in Washington's preliminary discussions with its allies as regards possible intervention "because they are very leaky in security matters".⁹⁴

Iraq, together with Jordan, openly backed Sham'un, too. She favoured military intervention to back him and reportedly offered to conclude a defensive or political agreement with Lebanon.⁹⁵ Al-Jamali said if Sham'un's opponents invited UAR forces to Lebanon, as a response to a possible similar invitation by Sham'un himself to Iraqi and Jordanian troops, that would be "an additional advantage," "since it would justify an Iraqi attack on Syria".⁹⁶ In the end, no troops were sent until July 14 either to Lebanon or Syria. Iraqi expectations that an anti-Egyptian uprising in Syria also failed to materialise. Nuri admitted on July 2 that Iraq was not taking direct action in Syria only because her lack of adequate air cover. "Iraqi ground forces could deal effectively with anything the Syrians or Egyptians could put against them", but "the Egyptian air forces were too strong for them".⁹⁷

⁸⁸FRUS 1958-1960, XI, 29.

⁸⁹Ibid., 132.

⁹⁰Nasir al-Din, *Yawmiyyat*, II, 45.

⁹¹Lederer and Vucinich, *Soviet Union*, 41.

⁹²FO371/133798/V10344/1, Bowker to Rose, 9.4.58.

⁹³FO371/133820/V1076/5, Roberts to FO, 17.7.58.

⁹⁴FRUS 1958-1960, XI, 59, 97, 122, 136, 173, 201, 204.

⁹⁵Chamoun, *Crise*, 415-16; Fawaz A. Gerges, "The Lebanese Crisis of 1958: The Risks of Inflated Self-Importance", *The Beirut Review*, 5 (Spring 1993), 97.

⁹⁶FO371/134144/VL10344/1, Stewart to FO, 19.5.58; FO371/134220/VQ1051/23, Beeley to Hayter, 30.1.58; FO371/133798/V10344/4G, FO to Ankara, 15.7.59.

⁹⁷FO371/134220/VQ1051/21, Lloyd to Wright, 4.7.58.

Ironically, it was Nuri's decision on July 1 to send an additional Iraqi brigade to Jordan, that provided rebel Iraqi army officers with the opportunity to move their brigade (loaded with live ammunition) through Baghdad on July 14 and topple the monarchy by re-directing their fire-power against the Palace. Some of Nuri's opponents have claimed that the brigade was really destined to proceed eventually to Lebanon to assist Sham'un.⁹⁸ Turkey's response to that revolution will be analysed in the following chapter.

⁹⁸Majid Khadduri, *Republican Iraq: A Study in Iraqi Politics Since the Revolution of 1958* (1969), 57.

The End of the Road: Revolution in Iraq

In the early morning of 14 July 1958, rebel military units toppled the Iraqi monarchy. The King, the Crown-Prince and Nuri were killed during the takeover. A revolutionary government, led by Brigadier 'Abd al-Karim Qasim, was formed, consisting of a mixture of army officers, former opposition politicians and representatives of banned political parties. It announced its adherence to the principles of the Bandung Conference. The Baghdad Pact headquarters were closed and padlocked, and members of its secretariat debarred from access to their offices. The AU was unilaterally dissolved, and all measures taken and laws passed in accordance with its constitution were immediately considered null and void.¹

The July 14 coup immediately altered the nature of Egyptian-Iraqi relations. 'Abd al-Nasir had known for some time that a group of Iraqi "Free Officers" had been preparing a coup. The latter, in turn, had expected Cairo to support their new regime and had agreed that they would immediately join the UAR, if they encountered stiff opposition from monarchists. News of the coup were received jubilantly in Cairo and Damascus. Later that day, the UAR became the first state to recognise the new regime. 'Abd al-Nasir pledged to defend Iraq against any external attack and, on July 19, signed in Damascus an agreement to that effect with a visiting high-level Iraqi delegation. A UAR military mission arrived in Baghdad the next week, followed by shipments of arms and ammunition.²

The USSR recognised Qasim's government on July 16 and agreed immediately to the latter's proposal to resume full diplomatic relations. Recognitions by other Communist states followed.

¹Khalil, *Arab States*, I, 91-92.

²Peter Sluglett and Marion Farouk-Sluglett, *Iraq Since 1958: From Revolution to Dictatorship* (1987), 28, 58; Mohamed Heikal, *The Sphinx and the Commissar: The Rise and Fall of Soviet Influence in the Middle East* (1978), 93; idem., *Cairo*, 133; el-Sadat, *Search*, 153; Khadduri, *Republican 'Iraq*, 36, 57, 59-60, 66; Be'eri, *Army Officers*, 179-80.

Turkey, the 14 July Coup and the US/UK Intervention in Lebanon and Jordan

For Western powers and their friends in the Middle East, the change of regime in Iraq was not welcome. The brutalities committed by the Baghdad mob during the military take-over, including an attack against the Turkish cemetery in Baghdad and the Turkish Information Office, added to their distaste.³

Over the years, Western observers had been aware of the widespread popular discontent in Iraq. Britain had continually urged her friends in Baghdad, particularly after 1955, to undertake serious measures of reform to keep up with the expectations of the public, forge a wider social base and, hence, diminish internal opposition to Iraq's foreign policy.⁴ American diplomats resident in Iraq, too, had regularly reported on the widening gap between the government policies and the rising middle-class and urban aspirations. Washington, however, had abstained from taking any radical step to strengthen Iraq politically and/or militarily for it did not wish to make Britain suspicious that it was attempting to replace her influence in Iraq.⁵

Without free access to first-hand Turkish documents, it is difficult to form an adequate picture of official Turkish perceptions as regards the durability of the monarchy in Iraq. Furthermore, the Turks seem to have never discussed this issue thoroughly with their British allies. Some casual remarks made by high-ranking Turkish politicians and civil servants during their meetings over the years with their British counterparts make this author assume that Turkish officials, too, recognised that their alliance with Iraq was based almost entirely on Nuri's firmness and might come to a halt overnight if he died, was assassinated or toppled.⁶ Zorlu told Macmillan as ^{back} as 24 October 1955 that "a few riots could overthrow General Nuri".⁷

Nuri, however, had clung to the belief that the growth and prosperity generated by the increase in Iraqi oil revenue in the 1950s would gradually spread more widely and immensely strengthen the whole fabric of the national life, and that once his countrymen realised how prosperous and contented they would be in a decade, when his reconstruction schemes were carried out, they would no longer listen to "a handful of troublemakers".⁸ Despite intelligence

³See details in Robert Murphy, *Diplomat Among Warriors* (1964), 502; Trevelyan, *Revolution*, 137-38; Fernea and Louis, *Revolution*, 56, 71; Lunt, *Hussein*, 73-74; FO371/133912/VB10393/15, Bowker to FO, 18.7.58.

⁴Shuckburgh, *Descent*, 238; Fernea and Louis, *Revolution*, 35, 38, 40; Khadduri, *Republican 'Iraq*, 36-37; Louis, *Empire*, 309, 591.

⁵Axelgard, *Policy*, 220-21, 228; Decker, *Policy*, 128.

⁶FRUS 1952-1954, IX, Part 1, 447.

⁷FO800/678, f. 53.

⁸Majid Khadduri, *Arab Contemporaries: The Role of Personalities in Politics* (1973), 34; Fernea and Louis, *Iraqi Revolution*, 45; FO371/121641/VQ1015/12, Wright to Rose, 15.2.56.

reports concerning the activities of the "Free Officers," and Turkish and Jordanian warnings that an Egyptian-inspired army plot was possible, Iraqi leaders had stubbornly contended that no attempt to force a violent change of government from within was probable.⁹

Curiously, the regional members of the Baghdad Pact had previously agreed to hold another informal summit in Istanbul on July 14 to discuss the situation in Lebanon and the Middle East in general. King Faysal and Nuri had planned to attend the meeting.¹⁰ But, instead of the plane carrying the Iraqi delegation to Istanbul, news came from Baghdad of the coup, just as the other participants were also arriving. Menderes was reportedly shocked at the news.¹¹

The participants at once decided to change the venue of the meeting to Ankara, where they could, through the wireless and cipher facilities of the Turkish Foreign Ministry, follow events in Iraq more closely. Initial talks in Ankara were largely incoherent and conducted in an atmosphere bordering on panic. The grave effects events in Iraq might have on the pact's future, together with perceived UAR and Soviet plans to exploit the Kurds were discussed. There was widespread, general dissatisfaction over American policy, especially her unwillingness to support President Sham'un firmly. The participants communicated their general disapproval of the idea of a UN Security Council meeting to discuss recent events in Iraq to the US chargé d'affaires, Carlos C. Hall. They also agreed that a paper should be drafted the next day, setting out in the firmest terms the necessity for prompt and resolute action both in Lebanon and elsewhere in the area.¹²

In the meantime, the Eisenhower administration, fearing that the dramatic events in Iraq could destroy the whole Western security structure in the Middle East, felt that it now ought to agree to Sham'un's request to intervene in Lebanon. Within 24 hours, US marines were disembarking near Beirut.¹³ Washington's move was received in Ankara with great satisfaction. Turkey permitted the Americans to use the Incirlik air-base near Adana, connected to the Strategic Air Forces Command of NATO, for the purposes of the said operation.¹⁴ The projected message to Eisenhower was substantially diluted. It now urged

⁹Tawfiq al-Suwaydi, *Wujuh 'iraqiyyah 'abr al-tarikh* (1987), 152-53; idem., *Mudhakkarati*, 594-97; Hussein, *Uneasy*, 159-61; Trevelyan, *Revolution*, 136.

¹⁰FO371/133918/VB1072/144, BBC monitoring, 9.7.58. Bayar had also invited King Husayn, but the latter had declined, judging that his presence in Istanbul would be a great mistake; see FO371/133911/VB10380/6, Mason to FO, 12.7.58.

¹¹Birand, *Demirkirat*, 148.

¹²Toker, *Demokrasimizin*, IV, 122; FO371/133918/VB1072/169, Bowker to Lloyd, 18.7.58.

¹³Chamoun, *Crise*, 420-25. By August 13, American shore forces in Lebanon numbered 14,000. They left on October 25; see Murphy, *Diplomat*, 497.

¹⁴Ambassador Dülger in Beirut was also delighted. He jocularly told Robert Murphy, Eisenhower's envoy to Lebanon, that Washington "should have bought off the Lebanese—it would have been much cheaper than sending in the fleet"; see Murphy, *Diplomat*, 497.

the application of the Eisenhower Doctrine (meaning, probably, in this case, the extension of US military action) to preserve the independence and integrity of the AU as well. Zorlu told Hall that they hoped to get a reply within the next two days.¹⁵ He later told Bowker that Ankara welcomed Britain's support for the US action in Lebanon and asked Britain to support the Ankara meeting's appeal to Washington. Ankara, said Zorlu, had received a report—unfounded as it turned out—from its embassy in London to the effect that Britain was considering sending troops to Kuwait and Bahrain. The Turkish government and the Heads of State of Iran and Pakistan "welcomed this intimation and hoped that such action would be taken forthwith".¹⁶ The Turks, reported Bowker, who had previously thought that the weakness of American policy had been largely responsible for recent developments in the region, had now probably concluded that it had been Turkish pressure alone which had brought about the US military initiative in Lebanon and were suggesting to have it extended to Jordan and even to Iraq.¹⁷ American military intervention in Lebanon, however, was simply a signal to Cairo and Moscow that Washington would use force, if necessary, to arrest the further crumbling of the Arab conservative order. Washington had already realised that trying to restore the Iraqi monarchy would be almost impossible without risking a global confrontation with Moscow. This and subsequent Turkish requests for the extension of military action, therefore, fell on deaf ears.

Meanwhile, King Husayn had taken over, on July 14, the responsibilities of Head of State of the AU and asked all AU embassies and friendly governments to ignore instructions emanating from the new Baghdad government.¹⁸ He had further asked Turkish Ambassador Mahmut Dikerdem, that same day, not to recognise Qasim and to pass on to the Ankara meeting his suggestion to attack the revolutionary regime in Iraq. Bayar sent the King a personal message of encouragement and full support. Subsequently, the three heads of state advised him, in a separate message, to request the application of the Eisenhower Doctrine in the AU.¹⁹

In the morning of July 16, the participants in the Ankara meeting returned to Istanbul.²⁰ That night, the three heads of state re-affirmed in a new message to Eisenhower their agreement with the American decision "to safeguard the independence of Lebanon" and re-urged prompt US action in Iraq, Syria and Jordan to forestall the possibility of Soviet

¹⁵FO371/133918/VB1072/146, Bowker to FO, 15.7.58; *ibid.*, -/169, Bowker to Lloyd, 18.7.58.

¹⁶FO371/133791/V1022/12G, Bowker to FO, 16.7.58.

¹⁷FO371/133919/VB1072/176, Bowker to Lloyd, 25.7.58.

¹⁸FO371/134030/VJ10393/195, Johnston to FO, 18.7.58; FO371/134258/VQ1903/12, Bowker to FO, 22.7.58.

¹⁹Birand, *Demirkarat*, 148; FO371/133918/VB1072/146, Bowker to FO, 15.7.58.

²⁰FO371/133918/VB1072/152, Bowker to FO, 16.7.58.

landings there. Zorlu told Hall that information about such a possibility had been received from the Egyptian Consulate-General and the Syrian Consulate in Istanbul, as well as from an unnamed source in Egypt. For those present in Istanbul, said he, the AU continued to exist and any military action in Iraq would be for the purpose of restoring it. Furthermore, Zorlu told Bowker that Ankara thought that it would be much better if Britain could also take similar action. "The quicker the action was taken the easier it would be," for "it would be infinitely more difficult to counteract" any Soviet action "once it had been taken". "Time was past for worrying about Arab reactions. It was certain that if no action was taken the whole of the Western position in the Middle East was lost". Turkey would not act unilaterally, continued Zorlu, but would be prepared to provide wholehearted moral support and/or consider any appropriate supporting action she could furnish. He emphasised, however, that "it must be clearly demonstrated that the initiative came from the leading Western Power". The second message, handed both to Hall and Bowker, demanded an emergency meeting of the Baghdad Pact powers as soon as possible, in the presence of Dulles, to discuss recent developments and "demonstrate forthwith that the Baghdad Pact was alive and functioning". A third message suggested that the "council deputies as well as the secretariat and other organs of the Baghdad Pact should provisionally be transferred to Ankara and that the Ambassadors in Ankara should be nominated as deputies on the Baghdad Pact Council". Zorlu also expressed fear that the 200,000 Iraqis of Turkic origin might come under "the brutal attack of revolutionaries".²¹

On the night of July 16, encouraged by the stand taken by the three-power summit and the US intervention in Lebanon, King Husayn invited the US and UK governments to send troops "for a limited time only" to Jordan, to be used only in the case of an anticipated external aggression from the UAR.²² With the USA already involved in Lebanon, it fell to Britain—with US consent, of course—to fill the void in Jordan. Early in the morning of July 17, the 2,500-strong Parachute Brigade stationed in Cyprus was ordered to Amman.²³ The British government, however, defined the task assigned to its forces in Jordan more broadly: "to provide assistance in the face of an imminent attempt by U.A.R. to create internal disorder and to overthrow the lawful Jordanian Government and of a threat to the territorial integrity of Jordan proposed by the movement of Syrian forces towards her northern frontiers and by infiltration of arms across it".²⁴

²¹FRUS 1958-1960, XI, 306-08 & XII, 78; FO371/133791/V1022/13G, Bowker to FO, 17.7.58; FO371/133918/VB1072/153 & 155, Bowker to FO, 17.7.58; *ibid.*, -/169, Bowker to Lloyd, 18.7.58.

²²Lunt, *Hussein*, 76; Dann, *King Hussein*, 92.

²³FO371/133817/V1073/3G, 'Record of conversation between Lloyd, Alphand, and Lucet', 17.7.58.

²⁴FO371/134200/VQ1015/115(G), CRO outward telegram, 25.7.58. The British contingent stayed in Jordan until November 2; see Lunt, *Hussein*, 76-78; Dann, *King Hussein*, 89.

In the morning of July 17, Esenbel was delighted to hear from Bowker that Britain would send forces to Jordan.²⁵ During a press-conference later that day, Zorlu confirmed that, for Ankara, King Husayn was now heading the AU. He said that the Turkish ambassador in Baghdad, Behcet Türkmen, had, on instructions from Ankara, been in touch with the revolutionary authorities in order to investigate the position in Mosul and the attack on the Turkish military cemetery there, requesting that such actions should not be repeated and that the employees of the Baghdad Pact Secretariat should be allowed their freedom. Zorlu again expressed concern about the security of the lives and property of the large "Turkish," i.e. Turkoman, community in Iraq. He stated that Turkey had taken "necessary" measures along the Syrian frontier some time ago. The frontier, which had been closed for a few days, was now open again. Only certain new "precautions had been taken" as a result of the Iraqi crisis.²⁶

The Eisenhower administration ultimately decided to assign, together with Britain, "first priority to increased military and economic aid for Turkey and Iran. They should have all the assistance they can absorb". Dulles, however, "did not feel we could send our troops further than Lebanon".²⁷ So, the American answer on July 17 to the three heads of state was phrased in "non-committal" terms to the effect Washington intended to take all necessary measures to safeguard the independence of the small states in the Middle East regardless of the consequences, and that it had already declared its support for King Husayn.²⁸ There was no promise of sending troops to Iraq to overturn the revolutionary regime.²⁹

Did Turkey Intend to Invade Iraq?

Turkey thus hawkishly advocated, during the three-power summit, Western-led military action to forestall possible advances by anti-Western forces in the Middle East.³⁰ She suggested to her allies that the "rebel Baghdad régime" should not be recognised and that

²⁵FO371/133918/VB1072/169, Bowker to Lloyd, 18.7.58.

²⁶Kürkçüoğlu, *Türkiye'nin Politikası*, 133; FO371/133918/VB1072/154(A), Chancery, Istanbul to Levant Department, 18.7.58. On the Turkish-Syrian border closure, see p. 213.

²⁷FRUS 1958-1960, XII, 72-75, 77.

²⁸FO371/133919/VB1072/176, Bowker to Lloyd, 25.7.58.

²⁹Washington (and London) also politely declined Jordan's request, on July 18, for the extension of US/UK "military, economic and political assistance" to enable the AU government "to crush the insurrection and to restore affairs to their normal form in the Iraqi sector". American officials reasoned that King Husayn could not provide from his own army "an effective and politically dependable force for the invasion of Iraq ... even if he were supplied with the necessary [etr]ol[eum] and if enough Western troops were moved into Jordan to relieve the army entirely of public security responsibilities in Jordan"; see FRUS 1958-1960, XI, 344-45 & XII, 86, 89; FO371/134200/VQ1015/115(G), CRO outward telegram, 25.7.58.

³⁰See also FO371/133820/V1076/5, Roberts to FO, 17.7.58.

foreign envoys should now be accredited to King Husayn as the new head of the AU.³¹ But did Turkey ever *really* plan to invade Iraq on her own as a last attempt to re-establish the old order? Political analysts and historians have expressed many differing, sometimes even contradictory, opinions over this subject. Metin Toker, Orhan Soysal and Richard Robinson contend that Menderes, Zorlu and some of their close associates did propose such an intervention, but it failed to materialise largely because of Washington's disapproval.³² On the other hand, Ismail Soysal, who, in 1958, was the spokesman of the Turkish Foreign Ministry, George Harris and others deny that any Turkish intervention in Iraq was a real possibility.³³ To provide a fully justifiable answer is impossible to-date and will perhaps remain so till all relevant data become accessible to researchers. Some further light can now be shed, however, based on US and UK archival material.

Menderes reportedly suggested, during the three-power summit, "that Turkey should invade Iraq with four divisions which could be made available at short notice," but was eventually persuaded by Pakistani President Iskander Mirza "to see the folly of such action".³⁴ Menderes's enthusiasm can be partly explained by the information he received from Turkish diplomats in Iraq. On July 14, Ambassador Behcet Türkmen reported widespread opposition to the Iraqi plotters, and as the Turkish embassy wireless in Baghdad was then one of the very few channels of communication available with the outside world, the three leaders had no means to verify the reports. The Istanbul press of July 15 was also full of reports—emanating probably from same source—of counter-action, among Kurds, tribesmen and certain army units loyal to the monarchy, against the revolutionary regime in various locations throughout Iraq.³⁵ Later, Iran's Foreign Minister, Ali Asghar Hikmat, also complained that Türkmen had gravely misled the meeting.³⁶

How and why the Turkish embassy obtained such reports remains unclear. It can only be surmised that wishful thinking might have played an important part in creating or, at least, exaggerating news received concerning minor incidents of disobedience to the new regime. Turkish officials had always dreaded the prospect of having their country encircled by the USSR and pro-Soviet Arab regimes. The July 14 coup, thought initially to be the work of local Communists and supporters of 'Abd al-Nasir, held forth such a prospect. It should not

³¹FO371/134199/VQ1015/78, Roberts to FO, 15.7.58.

³²Richard D. Robinson, *The First Turkish Republic: A Case Study in National Development* (1963), 187; Toker, *Demokrasimizin*, IV, 125-28; Soysal, *Analysis*, 78. See also Akşin, *Türkiye Tarihi*, IV, 185.

³³George S. Harris, *Troubled Alliance: Turkish-American Problems in Historical Perspective, 1945-1971* (1972), 65-66; Soysal, "Baghdad Pact", 83.

³⁴FO371/134212/VQ10344/4, Symon to Laithwaite, 5.8.58.

³⁵FO371/134199/VQ1015/68 & 68(A), HM Consul-General, Istanbul to FO, 15.7.58.

³⁶FO371/133919/VB1072/176, FO minute by West, 5.8.58.

sound strange, then, that the Turks rushed to believe every reported counter-revolutionary activity. The part attributed to the Kurds in this alleged revolt can, in turn, be partly explained by the widely-held belief in Western capitals that Muslim Kurds would acquiesce in remaining within an integral Iraqi state only as long as the latter was ruled by the Hashimites, the direct descendants of Prophet Muhammad.

Menderes had also other, albeit at the time less discernible, internal reasons to dislike a military coup toppling the legitimate government of a friendly neighbour. The Turkish economy was passing then through a crisis. Furthermore, the Turkish military, which had played a vital part in modern Turkish politics, was recently showing certain signs of dissatisfaction with Menderes's record and methods. There had been talk of a military intervention before the October 1957 legislative elections. Then, in December, nine officers had been arrested in Istanbul and accused of fomenting rebellion in the army. All, except the informer, had eventually been released because the long investigation, including torture, had failed to uncover anything illegal. Suspicions, however, had, needless to say, persisted.³⁷

During the first few days after the coup in Iraq, Ankara left its allies in no doubt that it might eventually take unilateral action not only in Iraq, but perhaps also in Syria. Ian Scott, a senior British diplomat in Beirut, had from Sham'un on July 17 "the distinct impression that he had received unofficial or private word that Turkey intended to intervene in Syria".³⁸ Dulles believed, on July 14, that "there is a good chance, whatever we do, the Turks will move" into Iraq.³⁹ Two days later, he considered the "silence" from Turkey during the last few days disturbing. The Turks had put two divisions on the alert in the Far East of the country, and Robert Murphy thought "that Turkish operations in northern Iraq are entirely possible".⁴⁰ The British reasoned that while a Turkish intervention "might have a deterrent effect on the Iraqi rebels, it might, on the other hand, encourage the Russians to make trouble, all the more so since they have a common frontier with Turkey".⁴¹ For CIA chief Allen Dulles, however, the Turks, "in view of their position vis-à-vis the USSR," were "unlikely to move [against Iraq] without 'guarantees' from the U.S.A."⁴²

From July 17 on, however, Turkish hints of a desire to invade Iraq assumed a more overt tone. The reasons of this change in language are not fully clear, but the possibility of a sense of Turkish desperation with perceived American inaction should not be ruled out. Zorlu told

³⁷ Ahmad, *Experiment*, 58-59, 155; idem., *Making*, 10, 125; Bağcı, *Demokrat*, 97; Birand, *Demirkırat*, 140-48.

³⁸ FO371/134392/VY10344/8, Scott to FO, 18.7.58.

³⁹ FRUS 1958-1960, XII, 307.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 75.

⁴¹ FO371/133798/V10344/4G, FO to Washington, 15.7.58.

⁴² FRUS 1958-1960, XII, 311.

Hall directly that morning that Turkey wished to invade Iraq and would be glad to know what support and guarantees she would receive in that event from Washington.⁴³ Almost simultaneously, Menderes told the US head of mission in Istanbul that in view of a request "received from King Hussein that Turkey should intervene militarily in Iraq and Syria" and

the information that the Russians intended to put forces into Iraq, the Turkish Government had decided to move forces into Iraq, believing that whoever got there first was unlikely to be dislodged. They expected support in Northern Iraq. They would not involve Americans in any militaristic adventure, but they would want their moral and material support, and help with air cover.⁴⁴

Two days later, Zorlu told *The Daily Mail* of London that the British action in Jordan should be extended to Iraq.⁴⁵ Interestingly, however, Ankara did not approach Bowker directly with such a request.⁴⁶

The Turkish proposal to invade Iraq was discussed at a high-level US/UK meeting in Washington on July 18. Lloyd had flown there on July 16 to conduct urgent discussions on the current situation. Again, there was not much backing for the Turkish suggestion, the main fear being yet again that it might precipitate a stronger Soviet reaction. Rountree opined that whilst the Turkish decision was probably not a firm one, "it was probably more than bluff. It fitted with the military thinking of Menderes and Zorlu". The Soviets "would almost certainly know of Turkish planning and this knowledge alone might lead to a Russian decision to send volunteers to Iraq". Dulles, in turn, said that, if Moscow sent in so-called volunteers, it could only be checked by a major attack on the USSR, leading to general nuclear war. Air Chief Marshal Sir William Dickson, the Chief of the British Defence Staff, and Gen. Nathan Twining, the Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, stated that "the Turks were unlikely to be able to mount the operation successfully," pointing out to the existence of an intense Iraqi suspicion and hostility towards the Turks as demonstrated during Baghdad Pact military planning. The Iraqi people, therefore, would probably immediately unite to repel any Turkish invasion. Furthermore, there was no evidence of any organised opposition to the coup within Iraq. The participants decided to strongly discourage Ankara from invading Iraq. During the Turkish-Syrian crisis of 1957, pointed out Dulles, Washington "had avoided telling the Turks directly that they should not take action, since to do so would have given an excuse for putting the blame for subsequent developments on our restraining them," but the prevailing

⁴³FO371/133919/VB1072/176, Bowker to Lloyd, 25.7.58.

⁴⁴FO371/133823/V1078/12G, 'Record of a Conversation between Lloyd and Dulles', 18.7.58.

⁴⁵Kürkçüoğlu, *Türkiye'nin Politikası*, 131. According to Bağcı, *Demokrat*, 97, Zorlu said that Turkey would reciprocate by sending units to Jordan if the Soviets sent "volunteers" to the Middle East.

⁴⁶FO371/134212/VQ10344/2G(B), Hood to FO, 19.7.58.

situation was perhaps too dangerous for Washington "to risk playing the hand in the same way on this occasion". Americans were generally confident that Turkey would not take any unilateral action without promises of US support. Dulles admitted, however, that it would be dangerous to use "the Soviet argument" with the Turkish government, as it would give the impression that US policies were in the last analysis dictated by the Russians". It "would be contrary to the whole deterrent policy" and "anything of this kind said to the Turks would, owing to Turkish insecurity, certainly leak back to the Russians". The two sides agreed, therefore, that suitable political arguments to be used with Ankara should be:

- (a) The impossibility of defending Turkish action before world opinion. This would in turn make it difficult to respond to Russian intervention to help the Iraqi régime;
- (b) the fact that a Turkish invasion would unite the Iraqis in support of the new régime;
- (c) the best way to handle the Iraqi situation was to wait and watch developments, building up assets within the country which might at some future time make it possible to bring about a change. The Musaddiq example could be quoted.⁴⁷

Hall, however, reportedly used, for some unknown reason, when delivering Washington's reply, arguments of both political and military nature, that were slightly different from those mentioned above. He told Zorlu that Washington thought that the proposed action, given the military difficulties involved and the situation prevailing in Iraq, was of doubtful feasibility. It could not encourage the Turkish action until, at least, it received further information on Turkish plans and estimates of the situation in Iraq.⁴⁸ Furthermore, US Ambassador Warren interrupted his holiday and returned to Turkey on July 19. He met immediately with and probably actively dissuaded both Menderes and Bayar from taking any military action.⁴⁹

The Americans kept up their pressure in the next few days "to restrain any rash Turkish action," until the latter's enthusiasm appeared to have subsided. Soon, the Turkish government issued a correction as regards Zorlu's interview with *The Daily Mail*, stressing that in the event of any discrepancy between that interview and a somewhat more restrained statement which Zorlu had given to the press shortly before, it was the press statement which should be regarded as authoritative.⁵⁰ Then, on July 26, the acting Turkish Foreign Minister, Namık Gedik, told the GNA that Ankara did not wish to comment on the internal affairs of

⁴⁷Lloyd, *Suez*, 258; FO371/133823/V1078/12G, 'Record of Conversation between Lloyd and Dulles', 18.7.58; FO371/134212/VQ10344/2G & 2G(A), Hood to FO, 19.7.58.

⁴⁸FO371/133919/VB1072/176, Bowker to Lloyd, 25.7.58.

⁴⁹Toker, *Demokrasimizin*, IV, 129-30.

⁵⁰FO371/133919/VB1072/176, Bowker to Lloyd, 25.7.58.

any country and wanted to continue its harmonious relations with the brotherly Iraqi people.⁵¹

Today it looks bizarre that the main reason which made Washington restrain Turkey from taking military action was the fear that it might precipitate a wider conflict involving the USSR, for historians now know, based on information emanating from Egyptian sources, that Moscow itself was unwilling to get involved in any direct military confrontation.⁵² Khrushchev refused 'Abd al-Nasir's request to put out a statement committing Moscow to the defence of Qasim's regime against possible Western pressures and only agreed to declare manoeuvres for 24 Soviet Army divisions on the Bulgarian-Turkish border in the hope of keeping Ankara in check. 'Abd al-Nasir was extremely saddened. He still publicly declared, however, reportedly as an attempt "to cover up for the Soviet Union and at the same time make the West think that the Iraqi Revolution was being backed," that Moscow stood by the Iraqi Revolution.⁵³ As Fawaz Gerges rightly puts it, "the balance of terror had served to influence the superpowers against precipitate acts". Iraq was not too important, in the prevailing circumstances, for either superpower to risk a global war. They would sooner neglect their local allies than endanger the international balance of power.⁵⁴

Moscow's reluctance to defend Qasim was not apparent at the time, however. Moscow did not disclaim 'Abd al-Nasir's remark and warned Turkey against any attack on Iraq.⁵⁵ But more than any Western fear of precipitating an eventual Soviet military involvement, it was the fact that the revolution in Iraq was accomplished with the most minimal of resistance that pulled the rug from under the feet of advocates of military intervention. Qasim was determined to show an image of moderate nationalism. He made every effort to curb the excesses of the mob and reassure Western governments of Iraq's friendly intentions, in hope of getting quick recognition and denying the external friends of the old regime a chance to intervene.⁵⁶ He pledged to honour the existing contracts of foreign oil companies investing in Iraq and tried to gain the confidence of the Kurds.⁵⁷ The Turkish embassy in Baghdad, too, in time began to report "on the control established by the Iraqi Government over the whole country and their general popularity". Furthermore the Turkish press and, still less, the

⁵¹Kürkçüoğlu, *Türkiye'nin Politikası*, 133; FO371/133798/V10344/7, Bowker to FO, 28.7.58.

⁵²Dann, *King Hussein*, 90, 189.

⁵³El-Sadat, *Search*, 153; Heikal, *Sphinx*, 93-100; idem, *Cairo*, 134-36; Nasr, *'Abd al-Nasir*, 164.

⁵⁴Gerges, "Lebanese Crisis", 100.

⁵⁵Kürkçüoğlu, *Türkiye'nin Politikası*, 131-32; FO371/133796/V10338/56, Bowker to FO, 23.7.58.

⁵⁶Khadduri, *Republican Iraq*, 56; Fernea and Louis, *Revolution*, 71, 78; Lunt, *Hussein*, 74; Dann, *King Hussein*, 88; Türkçüoğlu, *Türkiye'nin Politikası*, 125-26; FO371/133199/VQ1015/93(A), CRO outward telegram, 23.7.58.

⁵⁷Sluglett, *Iraq*, 78; Khalil, *Arab States*, I, 29-30; C. J. Edmonds, "The Kurds and the Revolution in Iraq", *MEJ*, 13/1 (Winter 1959), 53.

general public, did not show "any enthusiasm for Turkey to become involved in military adventures against Iraq".⁵⁸

That Turkish politicians told their friends and allies they wanted to intervene in Iraq is evident beyond doubt. Whether they were serious in their assertions or if they made any real preparations to that effect is an entirely different issue, however. In view of the lack of access to Turkish diplomatic and military records, it is impossible, at this juncture, to give a clear-cut affirmative or negative answer to these two questions.

During the Yassıada trials after the 1960 military coup in Turkey, evidence was produced that, according to the private papers of then Minister of Labour, Hayrettin Erkmen, Zorlu had formally proposed to intervene militarily in Iraq in July 1958 with the aim of crushing the insurgents. Bayar and Menderes, after short deliberations, had approved the suggestion, while the cabinet, as a whole, was kept in the dark during this crucial process. Erkmen had noted that only American objections had eventually prevented such a step from being taken.⁵⁹ The court, however, did not pursue this charge, because, says Harris, it evidently regarded it as insubstantial.⁶⁰ Erkmen's notes are seconded, however, by what al-Suwaydi reports in his memoirs from Najib al-Rawi, Iraq's ambassador in Ankara.⁶¹ The allegation, meanwhile, that not all Turkish cabinet ministers were aware of or agreed with Zorlu's plans can perhaps be corroborated by the remarks of Turkey's Defence Minister, then visiting Washington. He told Allen Dulles on July 20 that "any entry by the Turks into Iraq would be folly".⁶²

Revolutionary Iraq and the Baghdad Pact

As regards the Baghdad Pact, the official Iraqi attitude, after initial outright condemnation, began to show signs of moderation, too. When Türkmen saw Qasim and Minister of Information Siddiq Shanshal in connection with the attacks on the Turkish cemetery and Information Office, both were profuse in apologies and added that Iraq wished to remain an active member of the Baghdad Pact.⁶³ A few days later, the new Iraqi ministers of Foreign Affairs and Information enquired Türkmen whether Turkey would recognise their new regime and support Iraq if she wished to remain in the Baghdad Pact.⁶⁴ Wright also reported that "the rebel régime might be prepared to continue Iraqi participation" in the Baghdad Pact.⁶⁵

⁵⁸FO371/133919/VB1072/176, Bowker to Lloyd, 25.7.58.

⁵⁹Kürkçüoğlu, *Türkiye'nin Politikası*, 132.

⁶⁰Harris, *Alliance*, 66.

⁶¹Al-Suwaydi, *Mudhakkarati*, 592.

⁶²FRUS 1958-1960, XII, 85-86.

⁶³FO371/133912/VB10393/15, Bowker to FO, 18.7.58.

⁶⁴FO371/134210/VQ10344/4, FO minute by Gore-Booth, 21.7.58.

⁶⁵FO371/133918/VB1072/157, Lloyd to FO, 17.7.58.

Macmillan took this possibility seriously.⁶⁶ Britain wanted "to hold the door open for eventual Iraqi participation in some form".⁶⁷ Washington, however, saw little prospect of Iraq remaining in the pact.⁶⁸ It was further worried that the Iraqi revolutionaries might lay hands on and publish certain Baghdad Pact documents. There was a lot of material, it feared, which, "if quoted out of context," would cause America and the pact-members "considerable embarrassment".⁶⁹ Qasim, however, immediately sent the seized pact archives to Cairo. The Egyptians, in turn, refused a Soviet demand for copies of those documents and told them simply that they would be informed of anything in the documents which was felt to be of vital concern to Moscow.⁷⁰

The Baghdad Pact Council Meeting and Recognition of the Iraqi Republic

Despite the continuing doubts about Iraq's eventual position *vis-à-vis* the Baghdad Pact, Qasim had done enough in his first two weeks in power to convince the world that he effectively controlled Iraq and enjoyed enough popular support to force the issue of *de jure* recognition onto the international agenda.

Sudan, Tunisia, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, India and Afghanistan recognised the new regime. Soon, some NATO members and Iran made their impatience clear as regards the undue delay in recognition.⁷¹ The Turkish attitude softened, too. If on July 17 and 21, Selim Sarper, Turkey's representative at the NATO council, had argued against early recognition, even suggesting that "no word of it should leak out as it would do great harm if it were known we were considering recognition,"⁷² on July 24, Zorlu simply declared, in a non-committal manner, that Ankara had not yet taken a decision on recognition.⁷³ Gedik's above-quoted statement followed two days later.

The regular Baghdad Pact Council meeting, scheduled for London, took place on July 28-29. No Iraqi representative was present.⁷⁴ The issue of recognition of the new Iraqi regime was discussed on the first day. The participants noted the new government's "solemn assurances of their desire for friendly relations and for the continuation of political, commercial and other relationships on their previous basis" and agreed, without much dissent, that "political arguments are on balance in favour of recognition". They decided that

⁶⁶FO371/133808/V1051/44G, Macmillan to Lloyd, 18.7.58.

⁶⁷FO371/133918/VB1072/165, FO to Washington, 23.7.58.

⁶⁸FO371/133908/VB10345/19G, Hood to FO, 21.7.58.

⁶⁹FO371/133912/VB10393/19, Wiggin to Hadow, 21.7.58. See also Decker, *Policy*, 192.

⁷⁰Heikal, *Cairo*, 96; *idem.*, *Cutting*, 223-28.

⁷¹FO371/133919/VB1072/184, FO minute by Wright, 27.7.58.

⁷²FO371/133820/V1076/6, 8 & 11, Roberts to FO, 17, 21 & 22 July 1958.

⁷³FO371/133919/VB1072/176, Bowker to Lloyd, 25.7.58.

⁷⁴FO371/133918/VB1072/157, Lloyd to FO, 17.7.58.

Middle Eastern members should take the lead to that effect within the next few days, closely followed by the USA and Britain.⁷⁵ A policy of wait-and-see would be adopted as regards Iraqi membership of the pact, with member-states conducting further consultations if the new government expressly wished to continue membership. Moreover, "if and when it became appropriate to establish new Headquarters, this should be located in Ankara".

On behalf of the three Middle Eastern members, Zorlu again appealed to Dulles—who was heading the US observer delegation—to join the Baghdad Pact in order to give it "new life". Dulles again declined the invitation, claiming "that the pact was a 'very loose' obligation requiring only consultation". Instead, he promised that Washington would increase military aid to regional pact-members and would promptly enter with them into agreements designed to boost mutual co-operation.⁷⁶

Iran, Turkey and Pakistan recognised the new regime on July 31. Turkey's decision was communicated simultaneously to the Iraqi embassy in Ankara and through the Turkish ambassador in Baghdad.⁷⁷ Later that month, Zorlu conferred in New York with Iraq's Foreign Minister, 'Abd al-Jabbar Jumard, who reportedly spoke of his government's intention "to establish friendly relations with Turkey and that the bonds between the Turkish and Iraqi peoples were brotherly".⁷⁸ Britain recognised Qasim's government on August 1; Washington, on August 2, following a brief visit to Baghdad by Murphy.⁷⁹ Meanwhile, King Husayn officially recognised, also on August 2, the break-up of the AU.⁸⁰

Iraq formally quit the Baghdad Pact on 24 March 1959. This decision was probably reached after leftist pressure on Qasim. Her withdrawal meant the end of almost forty years of close relationship with Britain, for the Anglo-Iraqi Special Agreement of 1955 thus lost the legal basis upon which it had been operating. The last British officers stationed in al-Habbaniyyah and al-Shu'aybah left Iraq on 30 May 1959.⁸¹

After Iraq's withdrawal, the Baghdad Pact was renamed the Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO) with its new headquarters in Ankara. The text of the pact, i.e. the 1955 Turkish-Iraqi treaty, remained unchanged. The USA did not formally join CENTO, but participated as an observer in all its committees and provided financial support for economic projects undertaken under its auspices. Her forces took part in CENTO military exercises.

⁷⁵FO371/134216/VQ1041/23, FO to Amman, 29.7.58.

⁷⁶Burke, *Pakistan*, 194; *FRUS 1958-1960*, XII, 111; FO371/133919/VB1072/178 & 182.

⁷⁷Soysal, "Baghdad Pact", 83; FO371/134216/VQ1041/23(B), Bowker to FO, 30.7.58; *ibid.*, -/23(D), Roberts to FO, 31.7.58.

⁷⁸FO371/134212/VQ10344/5, BBC monitoring, 20.8.58.

⁷⁹Murphy, *Diplomat*, 501-04.

⁸⁰FO371/134030/VJ10393/203(D), CRO outward telegram, 4.8.58.

⁸¹Ruindezh, *Bor'ba*, 93.

Furthermore, on 5 March 1959, Washington signed three identical bilateral defence co-operation agreements with CENTO's regional members.

Disagreements among Turkish Political Parties

The revolution in Iraq had profound implications for the future of Turkey's Arab policy. The opposition RPP had for some time been raising doubts in public about its viability. İnönü reportedly believed that "Menderes had blurred the distinction between Turkey's alignment with the West based on ideological considerations from those based on national security considerations" and had consequently "overextended Turkey's commitments to the United States, and was following a policy contrary to Turkey's interests in the Middle East".⁸² The new, vigorous tone of RPP criticism was consonant with the increasingly tense and hostile government-opposition relations in Turkey. RPP leaders claimed that Turkey had failed in the Middle East, antagonising the Arabs and pursuing an unrealistic policy towards Israel. The Baghdad Pact had drifted away from its original aims. With the exception of agreeing as regards showing solidarity against cold war pressures, its members

had been in conflict in regard to their individual conceptions of the Pact. There had been a tendency to regard it as an organisation for producing loans and aid, but this was disregarded by those who were in a position to extend aid. Efforts had also been made to present the Pact as an organisation mainly concerned with the Arab-Israeli problem. These efforts were unjustified and had been rejected by the Pact Council. If the Baghdad Pact remained faithful to its true aims, accusations directed against it in the Middle East would decrease.⁸³

Moreover, in a book published in 1959, but completed before the July 14 coup, Aptülahat Akşin, a former Turkish ambassador in Damascus, argued that it had been wrong to try to build a sound foreign policy based on friendship with unstable Arab governments, rightly suggesting that Iraq's membership of the pact was unpopular with her public and dependent solely on the survival of Nuri and the monarchy. Because of the pact, most Arabs were seeing Turkey as an enemy. Akşin called on the government to concentrate in the future on the Turkey-Iran-Pakistan axis; minimise contacts with Israel; stay aloof from inter-Arab disagreements; and avoid antagonising Egypt and Syria.⁸⁴ Ankara University professor Fahr

⁸²Soysal, *Analysis*, 54.

⁸³FO371/136456/RK1022/2, Chancery, Ankara to Southern Department, 11.2.58. See also *ibid.*, -/4, Bowker to Lloyd, 28.2.58.

⁸⁴Akşin, *Türkiye'nin 1945 den Sonraki*, 100, 106, 108, 111, 122, 125-26.

Armaoğlu also claimed that the pact had not established security in the Middle East. Instead, it had actually provided Moscow with an opportunity to infiltrate into the area.⁸⁵

The RPP's first reaction to events on July 14 was to call for national solidarity. However, besides a few supportive newspapers, it was almost alone on the Turkish political scene in disapproving the Western intervention in Lebanon and Jordan and criticising the facilities provided to US marines in Incirlik as an abuse of Turkish sovereignty. American troops were transported out of Incirlik on notification, rather than consultation with Turkish authorities. Western correspondents were brought to cover their arrival, while Turkish journalists arriving at the base over land, were stopped by Turkish perimeter guards and refused entrance to the base, forcing the Turkish media to get news of the operation from foreign sources.⁸⁶

On July 26, the RPP called a special session of the GNA to discuss the situation in the region. It listened to Gedik's statement, but was unable to force a debate. Hence, İnönü convened a press conference to outline his party's position. Claiming that the RPP was trying to achieve national unity in face of external dangers, he accused the government of suppressing opposition views and even collecting opposition newspapers from news stands. The opposition had wanted a GNA meeting on July 17 or 18, when Washington and London were doing their utmost to prevent a Turkish military intervention against Iraq. The RPP opposed Western intervention in Lebanon and Jordan and called on the West to recognise the new Iraqi regime. İnönü stated that Turkey should take no sides in the internal conflicts in the Middle East and accused the government for being party for the last two months "to the internal politics of Lebanon," which, he claimed, "was detrimental to Turkey's interests". "The interventions in Lebanon and Jordan were no concern of Turkey. There were no Turkish subjects to protect there and there was no reason for Turkey to involve herself as a third party in the great political struggles in the Middle East". "It was wrong to adopt a vindictive attitude towards the new Iraqi administration which could become a normal and friendly neighbour in the future. Military and restrictive measures against Iraq would have been harmful and unjust," concluded İnönü.⁸⁷ The newspapers *Ulus* and *Yeni Gün* published İnönü's declaration on July 27, but their issues were confiscated by the government as "inflammatory".⁸⁸

The smaller opposition Freedom Party also published, in *Yeni Gün* of July 28, the statement it had been unable to make in the GNA, opposing, too, Turkish intervention in Iraq and the delay in recognising the new government. Its attitude towards pan-Arab nationalist

⁸⁵Quoted in Bağcı, *Demokrat*, 99.

⁸⁶Harris, *Alliance*, 67; FO371/133786/V1014/80, Bowker to FO, 23.7.58.

⁸⁷FO371/133798/V10344/7-8, Bowker to FO, 28.7.58.

⁸⁸Lederer and Vucinich, *Soviet Union*, 235.

regimes, however, was more reserved than that of the RPP.⁸⁹ *Hürriyet* and *Cumhuriyet* called on Britain to leave the pact, suggesting that it could become more useful if restricted to countries of the region.⁹⁰

Gedik rejected İnönü's accusations in *Zafer* of July 28. He denied that allied Western governments had ever "warned Turkey not to follow an adventurous course". To accuse the Turkish government, he said, of being adventurist was a provocation in itself. "Such accusations against Turkey were harmful to the country's national interests" and "aimed at destroying national unity".⁹¹

Disagreements between government and opposition continued during the debate on foreign and economic affairs at the extraordinary session of the GNA in August. Zorlu stated that "while Turkey sympathized with the trend of Arab nationalism, his Government was not prepared to countenance any subversive infiltration of international Communism which might threaten the general peace and security of the Middle East". Turkey approved of the US action in Lebanon because it was directed at forestalling any such infiltration. There had been no previous agreement between Turkey and the USA for the use of the Incirlik air-base, nor any arrangement through NATO channels. "What Turkey had done in allowing the use of Adana airport was to help the helper in accordance with United Nations principles. The United States had sent troops to Lebanon at Lebanon's request; the aeroplanes had already flown over Germany, Italy and Greece; Turkey was merely another link in the chain". Zorlu said that allegations that Turkey had been prepared to send troops into Iraq and that she had only been restrained by US/UK pressure "were based on unreliable Press reports". Opposition spokesmen, in turn, tried to capitalise on "the glaring inconsistency" between Zorlu's original statements about the revolutionary regime in Iraq and his statement after Turkey had decided to recognise the new regime.⁹²

These public disagreements soon degenerated into serious accusations of misconduct. The RPP Secretary-General, Kasım Gülek, rashly stated in public that he hoped that the government had learnt a lesson from the fate of the monarchy in Iraq and that it would, in the future, reconsider its attitude towards political and press freedoms.⁹³ Menderes, in turn,

⁸⁹FO371/133798/V10344/10, Bowker to FO, 31.7.58.

⁹⁰FO371/133947/VB1673/7, Bowker to FO, 31.7.58.

⁹¹FO371/136456/RK1022/6, Chancery, Ankara to Southern Department, 31.7.58.

⁹²FO371/136456/RK1022/7, Bowker to FO, 23.8.58.

⁹³Bağcı, *Demokrat*, 99; FO371/136452/RK1015/24, Chancery, Ankara to Southern Department, 15.8.58.

publicly accused the RPP, on September 6, of trying to provoke in Turkey a revolution of the Iraqi type.⁹⁴

For Kürkçüoğlu, the Turkish opposition's stand against any military action in Iraq was as important as official Western attempts to restrain Menderes eventually and make him soften his attitude towards Qasim.⁹⁵ Bağcı sees it as the first crack in Turkey's traditionally bi-partisan foreign policy.⁹⁶ This author shall suggest, however, that, despite the apparently unchanging line taken in public, the Turkish government itself was, by then, having serious doubts about the viability of its foreign policy towards the Arab world. It was clear by late 1957 that, despite all Turkish efforts since 1954, Communism and anti-Western pan-Arab nationalism were gaining ground in the Middle East. Bayar acknowledged to Dulles, on 26 January 1958, that, since May 1953, "there had been a marked deterioration of the situation in the area".⁹⁷ Ankara had been searching desperately for some time for further opportunities and/or alternatives to stem the pro-Moscow, pan-Arab nationalist tide. The attempted limited rapprochement with 'Abd al-Nasir; the proposal to break off diplomatic links with Israel in the hope of luring Riyadh into the Baghdad Pact; the assurances given at the same time to Eisenhower that Turkey was working to soften Israeli opposition to US adherence to the pact; the promise to extend a Turkish security guarantee to Jordan in return for the latter's accession to the pact, if taken together, do not leave the impression of a coherent Turkish strategy in the Middle East, to say the least. Both government and opposition had, therefore, realised that the current policy was not providing the results they hoped for. It was simply more difficult for a ruling party to acknowledge the fact, than for an opposition which had been out of power for eight years and, hence, did not carry any responsibility for the friendships forged and the enemies made during that period.

The continuing confirmation in public of Turkey's alliance with Nuri did not prevent Menderes from looking for alternatives to oppose the rise of Soviet and/or Egyptian power in

⁹⁴ Ahmad, *Experiment*, 158; Birand, *Demirkırat*, 149. A good indicator of the mood of mutual suspicion prevailing at the time between the two main Turkish political parties is the following rather curious incident: shortly after July 26, Gülek called on Ambassador Warren to say that whatever opposition speakers might have said, or might yet say, on the use of the Incirlik base by Americans during the intervention in Lebanon, it should not be interpreted as criticism of US policy in the Middle East or as lessening of the RPP's views on the importance of the Turco-American alliance within NATO. Within 20 minutes of this meeting, however, Warren received a telephone call from the Deputy Secretary-General of the Turkish Foreign Ministry, who, and subsequently the Minister of the Interior, pressed him to say what had been discussed with Gülek. The US embassy staff suspected that their telephone lines were bugged. Otherwise, they reasoned, Turkish government officials could have never known that Gülek had visited the embassy compound to meet specifically with Warren; see FO371/136453/RK1015/29, Chancery, Ankara to Southern Department, 5.9.58.

⁹⁵ Kürkçüoğlu, *Türkiye'nin Politikası*, 132.

⁹⁶ Bağcı, *Demokrat*, 96-97.

⁹⁷ *FRUS 1958-1960*, X, Part 2, 739.

the area. One such alternative was the secret renewal of close contacts with Israel, despite the fact that it would, if known, have been extremely unpalatable to Nuri and contrary to the latter's own conception of the Baghdad Pact. Sometime in late 1957 or early 1958, i.e. just a few weeks after Turkey had been suggesting breaking off diplomatic ties with Israel, Menderes and the former Israeli minister in Ankara, Eliyahu Sasson, agreed during a secret meeting to co-operate over developments in Syria and set down a timetable and an agenda for further secret high-level bilateral meetings. In June, delegations representing the intelligence services of Turkey and Israel also had a secret round of talks.⁹⁸ For Israel, this rapprochement was only another chain in her attempt to forge a anti-Arab "Periphery Pact" with Ethiopia, Iran and Turkey.⁹⁹ In view of the total absence of original Turkish material on the issue, either published or available in archival form, it is impossible to know what were the ultimate objectives pursued by Menderes at that juncture.

Ismail Soysal records that "the disappointment following the coup d'état [in Iraq] was so great that the Turkish rulers admitted with bitterness in their inner circles the impossibility of any political cooperation with the Arabs for a collective defence of the Middle East".¹⁰⁰ This bitterness was manifested in a more committed Turkish overture towards Israel, even at a time when plans for invading Iraq and trying to restore the old regime were still being argued for and against. Only five days after the coup, Zorlu proposed to the Israeli emissary in Ankara to hold a meeting between the two Premiers to seek full co-operation in political action. After receiving encouragement from Washington, Ben-Gurion paid a secret visit to Ankara on August 28-29. The two sides discussed ways to co-operate in Western capitals in explaining the dangers of 'Abd al-Nasir's expansionist politics; Turkish assistance to Israel in the USA to help Israel get more arms; Israeli backing for Turkey over Cyprus; how to assist Ethiopia and Iran against Nasserist and Communist subversion; Israeli assistance to Turkey in industrialisation and in laying a pipeline from Iran to Turkey; joint scientific research; and the extension of trade between the two countries.¹⁰¹

It has been claimed that this secret meeting laid the basis for a long-term secret intelligence co-operation between Israel, Iran and Turkey, which, some say, continues vigorously even today between Turks and Israelis. Suspicion has increased because both Israel and Turkey have always tried to play down the cordiality of these links. Documents related to this issue in Israeli archives remain classified. In the political field, however,

⁹⁸Michael Bar-Zohar, *Ben-Gurion* (1978), 261; Dan Raviv and Yossi Melman, *Every Spy a Prince: The Complete History of Israel's Intelligence Community* (1990), 83.

⁹⁹Murphy, *Diplomat*, 505. For further information on the "Periphery Pact" see Bar-Zohar, *Ben-Gurion*, 260-65; Nachmani, *Israel*, 74-76; Ivanova, *Otnoshenie*, 24-25.

¹⁰⁰Soysal, "Baghdad Pact", 83.

¹⁰¹Bar-Zohar, *Ben-Gurion*, 263-64; Raviv and Melman, *Spy*, p. 83; Nachmani, *Israel*, 74-75.

Turkish-Israeli diplomatic relations were stagnant throughout the Cold War years, while Turkey's links with the Arab world in general steadily improved in the 1960s and after as Turkey gradually adopted a new set of relatively limited, but ultimately more achievable, goals in her dealings with individual Arab states, based on the principle of non-interference in inter-Arab affairs and on improvement of bilateral ties. Consequently, Turkey publicly supported the political rights of Palestinian Arabs, in return for seeking Arab backing over the Cyprus issue. The Turkish-Arab rapprochement of the early 1960s might have been encouraged initially by Washington's major reappraisal of its strategy in the Middle East, after the 1958 Iraqi coup, when it became more flexible towards radical pan-Arab nationalist ideals as an "essential element in the prevention of the extension of Soviet influence in the area".¹⁰² In the end, however, it persisted even after Washington's attitude toward 'Abd al-Nasir and his ideological allies had cooled.

Can this new official Turkish approach be seen as the continuation of the policies advocated by the RPP in 1958? Experts in modern Turkish affairs have noted, for example, that the Turkish constitution of 1961, drawn up by the military, had a striking resemblance to the political program adopted by the 14th RPP Congress in 1959.¹⁰³ A similar link, therefore, between the RPP's new approach towards the Arab world in 1958 and the official policies adopted after 1960 should not be immediately discounted as improbable. It ultimately remains, however, for future historians to investigate.

¹⁰²George and Smoke, *Deterrence*, 358; Gerges, "Lebanese Crisis", 105.

¹⁰³Akşin, *Türkiye Tarihi*, IV, 185; Birand, *Demirkırat*, 149-50.

Conclusion

Turkey's attempted rapprochement with her Arab neighbours soon after World War II, like the rest of her foreign policy initiatives of that period, was fuelled primarily by her concern to contain the perceived Soviet threat to her territorial integrity and form of government. Even after having joined NATO, Turkey considered herself under a real threat of being encircled by the USSR and her satellites both from the north and the south. She, therefore, restricted her relations with Moscow, throughout the 1950s, to a few exchanges of economic character and did not even accept invitations for cultural or sporting contacts. Reliance on the Western alliance, particularly the USA, to prevent Soviet expansionism became the pillar of Turkey's foreign policy. She aimed consistently at the strengthening of the position of pro-Western elements in her vicinity and told Moscow on various occasions that any improvement in bilateral ties could only result from the development of general relations between NATO and the Communist Bloc.

Turkey fully endorsed the official American view that global peace was indivisible and that trouble in any part of the world contained the seeds of a general conflagration. She supported, therefore, Washington's plans to contain the USSR by establishing a chain of regional collective self-defence networks along the latter's long border both in Europe and Asia. This Turkish stand did not emanate solely from pure security considerations. Turkish leaders assumed that American aid to Turkey and Turkey's role in the foreign policy calculations of the West were intimately linked. They assumed, therefore, that a full-hearted Turkish participation in the projected anti-Communist Middle Eastern pact would increase Turkey's strategic value in the eyes of the West, especially Washington; keep the latter remain committed to Turkey's defence; and result in as much American military and economic aid as possible. Turkish leaders regularly claimed in the mid-fifties that Turkey was the bulwark of the defence of the Middle East and had, up to that point, saved the entire region from Communist aggression. Her collapse, therefore, could have a detrimental effect on countries down to the Cape of Good Hope. If Turkey was to continue to play that vital role, however, it was necessary to strengthen her economically.

Turkey embarked on a determined effort to improve relations with the Arab world only after the conclusion of the Balkan Pact in 1954. Her ultimate aim was undoubtedly to bring

all Arab countries eventually into NATO. In the short run, however, Turkish goals were more modest. She realised that the Arab countries could not provide her with anything comparable with the aid she expected from her NATO allies, but still thought ^{it} important not to let the Arabs side with her own enemies. The development of close ties between the Arabs, Turkey and the West would virtually guarantee the permanence in power in the neighbouring Arab countries of like-minded pro-Western regimes and could thus make Turkey feel more secure against the possibility of Soviet-inspired subversive efforts emanating from countries lying to her south. The Arab countries could also offer Turkey and her Western allies some strategic facilities for the projected regional defence arrangements.

Turkey preferred, initially at least, to work with individual Arab countries on a bilateral basis, carrying out a campaign of goodwill and sympathetic behaviour according to their own individual characteristics and maintaining an attitude of benevolent understanding towards them. She hoped that this campaign might help the Arabs get over their mistrust of the Turks, emanating from the late Ottoman period. Turkey distrusted the Arab League and feared that if any proposal was referred to the latter, it would fail to produce any tangible result.

Of individual Arab states, Turkey always considered Egypt to be the prized possession, believing, like the British, that if Egypt could be convinced to adhere to any regional defence alliance, bringing in other Arab countries would be made much easier. Egypt's repeated refusals even to consider this subject made Ankara furious, however. Turkey's occasional decisions to stop wooing Egypt temporarily and try to create a Middle East defence organisation in spite of Egyptian reluctance, were, initially at least, simple manifestations of sheer frustration at being cold-shouldered by the Egyptians and carried more tactical than strategic significance. During these episodes, Iraq inevitably attained added importance for Turkish foreign policy-makers, as her leaders were known to be better-inclined towards MEC/MEDO proposals and were seen as a suitable counterweight for Egyptian influence within the Arab world. Iraqi leaders were the most concerned in the Arab world that the USSR posed a real threat to their country's independence and political order. Nuri al-Sa'id, the strongman of Iraqi politics, was an advocate of close Arab-Western (and especially Arab-British) co-operation, contending that the Arabs could not co-operate with the Communist states without themselves becoming Communist, nor could they remain neutral between East and West because they lacked the appropriate means.

The Turkish-Pakistani choice of Iraq early in 1954 as the first Arab country to be approached to join them in a regional self-defence arrangement coincided with one of those periods of temporary Turkish disillusion toward Egypt's perceived obduracy. Strategically, however, Iraq was not unimportant. Her adherence would have somewhat filled the territorial gap between Turkey and Pakistan, given their agreement a strategic position in depth, air

bases, lines of communication from Turkey to the Persian/Arab Gulf and thus contributed to the protection of Turkey's eastern flank. Iraq responded favourably because she realised that Washington, the sponsor of the Turkish-Pakistani agreement, was now ready to provide arms to those Middle Eastern states, who would co-operate with the "Northern Tier" project. Iraq hoped that this would be a golden opportunity for all Arabs to improve their defence capability and exert considerable political influence on the West to make the latter agree to some of the Arab demands and ask for some concessions from Israel in the quest for a lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict .

Ideally, Nuri would have wished not to join the Turkish-Pakistani Agreement, but to establish either a pro-Western regional defence organisation based on the Arab League with Egyptian participation or a more limited sub-regional organisation, whereby Syria and Lebanon would join a projected Iraqi-Pakistani treaty thus ensuring Iraq's lines of communication with the Mediterranean. Besides being categorically against the inclusion of France in any final arrangement, Nuri disliked the idea of signing a smaller pact with Turkey—not objecting to Iraq's association with Turkey in a large regional grouping—arguing that the Turks were unpopular in Iraq and other Arab states and were still suspected of harbouring irredentist designs in Northern Iraq. Nuri had overlooked the fact, however, that among all his candidates to enter the regional treaty he envisaged, only Turkey shared his determination to conclude an early agreement. He finally succumbed to the continuous pressure exercised by Menderes, but only after having made clear that Iraq would undertake no obligations beyond her own borders. He was forced, however, to concede more than his initial plan to keep the agreement with Turkey restricted to exchange of information on defence dispositions and preparations and free passage of military supplies through either party's territory to the other. Neither Nuri nor Menderes did push later for the conclusion of any subsidiary special agreement between the two governments as foreseen by the Baghdad Pact signed and ratified in February 1955. The pact proved, however, to be a starting point for the gradual establishment of cordial bilateral relations between Iraq and Turkey and a close personal friendship between the two leaders.

Nuri had always hoped that Britain would play a part in any regional defence scheme. British participation could provide an "umbrella," under which the 1930 Anglo-Iraqi Treaty, due to expire in 1957, could be revised, thus bypassing any possibility of the repetition of widespread opposition among the Iraqi educated classes, which prevented in 1948 the ratification of the very similar Portsmouth Treaty. A treaty revision, hoped Nuri, would strengthen the Hashimite regime at home and might improve the general Arab position *vis-à-vis* Israel. Menderes went along with Nuri's plan, because he, too, was most concerned that Britain should not withdraw from the Middle East. In the end, the only real difference of the

1955 Anglo-Iraqi Special Agreement from the abortive Portsmouth Treaty was that Iraq could now, in effect, unilaterally terminate it whenever in the future she decided to withdraw from the Baghdad Pact.

Turkey wanted to see the Baghdad Pact eventually become an elaborate NATO-type multilateral defence organisation¹ and wished to embark on that road by first establishing a link between the two organisations. Her difficulties began, however, with the first necessary step to expand the Baghdad Pact membership into the Arab heartland. The desire to expand the pact remained one of the most salient features of Turkey's Middle Eastern policy all through the end of 1957 at least. The accession of new Arab states was deemed important to give the "Northern Tier" sufficient depth and thus turn the pact into a viable regional defence organisation. Syria, Jordan and Lebanon figured prominently on the Turkish list of prospective pact-members. After his success with Nuri, Menderes was initially confident that he could convince all Arab countries one by one to join. He still hoped that even Egypt could eventually be brought in.

In the aftermath of the Turkish-Iraqi pact, however, Egypt felt isolated and weakened and was interested no more in any accommodation with Turkey and the West. Her attitude made the recruitment of new Arab members very problematic. It soon became evident for Turkey that to most Arab nationalists, the threat of Soviet imperialism appeared only as a new "colonialist" invention designed to distract their attention from the evil purposes of its inventors. The Baghdad Pact was similarly interpreted as a ruse to perpetuate the resented British military presence in the Middle East. Arab nationalists were also resentful of Turkey's taking sides in the past with Western colonial powers in the latter's disputes with the newly emerging Arab countries, as well as her cordial links with Israel. In the case of Syria, Turkey's task was made even harder due the bitter historic legacy of the Hatay dispute.

Turkey was confident in the correctness of her belief that the only way open to the Arabs to attain maximum security was through following the Turkish path. She judged that the survival and reinforcement of the Baghdad Pact were indispensable and was the most determined Middle Eastern pact-member to pursue that cause. To put a break on the process of expansion, thought the Turks, would only mean a regression and a loss. Turkey, therefore, reviewed her political agenda soon and made the isolation of Egypt a priority. She tried hard to persuade the American and British governments to support actively the idea of the future expansion of the pact's membership and take a tough line with those Arab countries that opposed its establishment and expansion. For a year beginning in mid-1955, Turkish diplomats were alone in suggesting regularly to their Western colleagues that no progress

¹This vision was shared, initially at least, by Anthony Eden; see Eden, *Full Circle*, 220.

could be made with the extension of the Baghdad Pact so long as Gamal 'Abd al-Nasir remained in control of Egypt. Since it had become apparent that only conservative forces in the Arab world had any interest in joining the pact eventually, the Democrat administration in Ankara, which had done so much to improve Turkey's economic infrastructure and broaden political participation in the country, thus curiously found itself allied with conservative regimes and such social forces in the Arab world which were the least interested in reforming their economy and/or society.

The extension of the pact, thought the Turkish leaders, should be an indispensable goal towards which the efforts of all Baghdad Pact members should lead while reserving the choice of time and methods to be adopted. Turkey herself did not shun the use of unorthodox measures, during the preparation of the abortive 1956 coup in Syria for example, if they promised to bring about any substantial change in the regional political climate. Menderes sympathised with Britain and France during the Suez crisis, approaching the latter solely from a political, and never a legal, viewpoint. He would have probably liked to see them persist with their intervention in Egypt until the total defeat of 'Abd al-Nasir. Turkey consistently urged Washington to prevent a complete satellisation of Syria and later pushed her Western partners to do everything possible in support of the pro-Western Lebanese government in 1958. She received Washington's decision to land forces in Lebanon with great satisfaction and permitted the American marines to use the Incirlik air-base during that operation. Moreover, she made an unambiguous request to Eisenhower to extend this military operation to restore Hashimite rule in Iraq, even threatening a little later to take unilateral military action herself in this respect.

Turkey moreover used every diplomatic channel available to convince the USA, too, to join the Baghdad Pact. She was convinced that Washington's accession would be crucial in encouraging at least some of the still hesitant Arab states to adhere to the pact as well, which, in turn, would correspondingly reduce Egypt's ability to oppose Western policies in the Middle East. Without full US membership, thought the Turkish leaders, conservative regimes like Jordan and Lebanon might even fall under pressure from radical anti-Western elements. Washington, that had indicated early on that it strongly supported the pact, refused to join the pact as a full-member, however, putting forward various pretexts. Actually, it assumed that pro-Western powers in the Middle East were exaggerating the extent of Soviet influence there and believed that each of the pact's regional members only wanted to strengthen their position in regional disputes through the pact mechanism. It did not want to break its links with countries in the region who, for a variety of reasons, were unhappy with the pact. The USA gradually became a member of all the pact committees, was the largest contributor to its budget and supported each area member with significant military and economic aid. Her

failure, however, to join the pact as a full-member and/or show unambiguous active involvement proved ultimately to be one of the pact's main weaknesses. The lack of NATO interest in establishing a liaison with the Baghdad Pact, a fact which McGhee considers to be one of the main reasons of the failure of the latter,² should perhaps be also attributed to Washington's hesitant attitude.

It was perhaps fortunate, however, that both the Americans and the Soviets suspected that their respective friends in the region were purposefully over-dramatising events there in order to draw them deeper in Middle East politics. The reluctance of the two superpowers to risk any direct nuclear confrontation proved crucial in avoiding an all-out war in the area in the late 1950s.

The Iraqi leadership, on the other hand, was more interested in receiving economic and military aid from the West and in Western diplomatic support over Palestine, rather than with the prospect of the pact's expansion and US membership. Iraq was certainly not against the expansion of pact into the Arab heartland, but she seemed somehow to attach much less importance to it, preferring to capitalise on getting declarations of approval of her conduct from uncommitted Arab states and thus isolating Egypt. Nuri believed that a decisive stand on behalf of the Baghdad Pact toward the Arab cause in Palestine might induce his internal opponents and radical Arab governments to refrain from attacking the pact, and perhaps in one or two cases, encourage them to join it. The linking of the 1955 Anglo-Iraqi Special Agreement with the Turkish-Iraqi treaty re-enforced, however, the relationship in Arab eyes between the Baghdad Pact and previous "unequal" military alliances imposed by former colonial powers and made future Arab adherences to the pact extremely unlikely. Turkish and Iraqi views also diverged almost constantly on how to handle the Syrian situation and how to encourage pro-Western elements there. The Turks advocated a stern approach, while the Iraqis, perhaps being more aware of the intricacies of intra-Arab politics, preferred to adopt a relatively subtler line.

Turkey, nevertheless, was determined to play up the importance of the Baghdad Pact, and since Turkish-Iraqi co-operation was the cornerstone of that alliance, the provision of firm support for Nuri's government became very important for Menderes. He soon realised that the continuing friendship with Iraq was based almost entirely on Nuri's firmness and recognised that the alliance might come to a halt overnight if Nuri died, was assassinated or toppled. After being badly shaken by 'Ali Jawdat al-Ayyubi's behaviour in the summer of 1957 and being also unhappy with 'Abd al-Wahhab Mirjan, Menderes pushed the Iraqi Palace hard in late 1957 and early 1958 to have Nuri reinstated as premier.

²McGhee, *Connection*, 160.

The change in Turkey's position toward the Palestine question was also motivated by her desire to strengthen Nuri's position. The Turks were initially determined that the proposed rapprochement with the Arab world must not involve any change in Turkey's policy of friendship with Israel. Menderes believed that the Arab countries should, and inevitably would, acknowledge the reality of the existence of Israel and then a solution could be found to the Arab-Israeli conflict according to the existing realities. He argued that the exchanged letters on Palestine during the formulation of the Baghdad Pact were a reasonable price to pay in return for the gains to be made by the establishment of the pact, which, he hoped, would ultimately turn Arab eyes away from Israel into the "real" enemy, Moscow. Israeli diplomats, however, were never convinced by this argument and rightly feared that, on the contrary, the Arabs would influence Turkey away from her friendship with Israel. Indeed, there was a noticeable shift in the following four years in the Turkish attitude towards the Arab-Israeli conflict. With Nuri failing to make the pact popular outside his immediate circle, Menderes adopted a new, more committed attitude *vis-à-vis* the Palestine question thus hoping to secure the pact's survival. Turkey gradually distanced herself from Israel and tried to appear, at least in public, as a champion of Arab rights in Palestine. In 1956, she lowered the level of her diplomatic representation in Tel-Aviv and a year later came very close to breaking all diplomatic links with Israel.

Turkey, for all these efforts, however, had in the end little to show in the way of tangible political gains. Bayar frankly acknowledged to Dulles on 26 January 1958 that since the latter's last visit to the Middle East in May 1953 "there had been a marked deterioration of the situation in the area".³ Turkey had failed to make any new friends among the anti-Western forces in the region. The tensions between Turkey and Syria had given the USSR an opportunity to make inroads in the Arab East. Egypt had taken control first of Syria's foreign policy and then practically of the whole country. Turkish leaders, however, did not think that they themselves were solely responsible for the failure of their policy. Menderes confided to Anthony Nutting early in 1957 that "America's performance since the Baghdad Pact was signed in 1955 had done nothing but confuse and depress our best friends in the Arab and Moslem world".⁴ The limited change in Turkish foreign policy toward Egypt after the Suez war and Turkey's wish to avoid a position of strong opposition to the formation of the UAR could be explained, therefore, as an attempt by Ankara to devise an alternative policy *vis-à-vis* radical, but non-Communist Arab nationalism. This new policy was initially developed somewhat independently of Washington. It was based on the hope that the growth 'Abd al-Nasir's influence in the region could "improve" the internal situation in Syria to the benefit of

³FRUS 1958-1960, X, Part 2, 739.

⁴Nutting, *Myself*, 34-35.

Turkey and keep the Syrians away from the USSR. Turkey's initiative to secretly restore cordial relations with Israel early in 1958 can also be judged as an attempt to devise an alternative policy to her commitment to the Baghdad Pact. But these policies remained for the most part hesitant and inconsistent. In public, Turkey remained attached to her alliance with Iraq; delayed the official recognition of the UAR in deference to Iraqi wishes; and strongly supported the AU during its brief existence. Turkish diplomats admitted privately that even if the advance of communism had been checked as a result of the Syrian-Egyptian merger, the UAR would still militate against the interests of pro-Western Middle Eastern countries. They dismissed any lingering hopes that it might still be possible to win Egypt over with offers of economic help, for, they thought, 'Abd al-Nasir wanted to gain control of oilfields in Saudi Arabia and, possibly, Iraq, aims, which went beyond what the West could offer and could be gained only at the West's expense.

The July 14 revolution in Iraq, therefore, coincided with a juncture, when despite the continuing unequivocal pro-Iraqi stand of the Menderes government, there were already signs, albeit yet very dim, that doubts had arisen within the Turkish establishment about the long-term viability of Turkey's regional alignment with Nuri's regime. Besides being a short-term setback for Turkish policy in the Arab world, the Iraqi revolution actually helped Turkey to solve, in the long-run, the dilemma of being both strongly committed to NATO and wanting to be seen, simultaneously, as a friend of the whole Arab world. The loss of Iraq, together with her key passes through the Zagros, the essential lines of communication from the Gulf to the Elburz and Zagros mountains and her vital air bases, doomed the potential effectiveness of the "Northern Tier" concept for defence of the Middle East as envisaged by military planners of the Baghdad Pact. For Turkey and her other allies, however, Iraq's continued association with the pact had already become politically untenable. Dulles, for example, opined that "the Iraqi Government fell because Iraq was in unnatural association with Turkey and the United Kingdom in the Baghdad Pact".⁵ Even if the coup had not taken place, wrote Zeki Kuneralp in retrospect, Iraq would have left the pact sooner or later.⁶

Indeed, Turkey's links with the Arab world in general steadily improved in the 1960s and after as Turkey gradually developed a new general policy, more limited in its aims, yet ultimately much more successful in accomplishing its set goals, based on the principle of non-interference in inter-Arab affairs and on improvement of bilateral ties. Consequently, Turkey also began to support publicly the political rights of Palestinian Arabs, in return for seeking Arab backing over the Cyprus issue. The first tentative steps of this new policy were taken

⁵Aston, "Highjacking", 136.

⁶Kuneralp, *Sadece*, 97.

during the military regime of 1960-61, but the policy was first pursued vigorously during the premiership of Süleyman Demirel, considered a disciple of Menderes.

But could things have gone better for Turkey in the 1950s? Probably yes, if only Bayar and Menderes had been of somewhat different character. It can be safely argued now that they and their trusted lieutenants were generally ignorant at the time about the latest developments in the Arab world and found it extremely hard to understand and explain them. The foreign-policy making apparatus in Turkey was centralised. Menderes, according to one of his biographers, had inherited from Ottoman times a belief that he and Turkey were destined to play a leading role in a new Middle East.⁷ He was an extremely overconfident politician and had the habit of disregarding advice coming from the lower echelons if it contradicted his own convictions and perceptions. He faced no internal pressures as regards Turkey's relations with Arab states, his party enjoying a large majority in the GNA and having to deal with a local public opinion, which did not harbour in general any sympathy towards 'Abd al-Nasir and his brand of radical Arab nationalism. All these factors made Menderes feel secure that he could guide the Arab world toward the path he desired as he used to do in internal Turkish politics, and he showed an unfortunate lack of imagination when things did not turn out the way he desired.

The opposition RPP did eventually raise doubts in public about the viability of Menderes's policies towards the Arab world and some of the alternatives it suggested might have been instrumental in shaping Turkish foreign policy in the next decade. There were already unmistakable signs at the time, however, of a not so negligible dichotomy between the senior and some of the relatively junior civil servants in the Turkish Foreign Ministry. The Turkish Minister in Damascus, Adnan Kural, for example, consistently argued that the Syrians should be let to manage their own affairs and thought that a *modus vivendi* could eventually be reached between the pro-Western forces in the Middle East and followers of the radical nationalist Ba'th Party. He felt, however, that there was nobody in Ankara ready to listen to him, and it was only as a result of the limited rapprochement with Egypt after 1957, that his views did finally find some attentive ears in Turkey. There are moreover indications that some of the career diplomats within the Turkish Foreign Ministry had views different from Menderes and Zorlu on how to treat the UAR and AU. A careful study plotting the trajectory of the development of this alternative approach will certainly be most useful, but it may prove elusive until full access is accorded to all interested historians to the Turkish Foreign Ministry archives.

⁷ Aydemir, *Menderes'in Dramı*, 300.

Appendix: Biographical Notes on Some of the Prominent Personalities Appearing in the Dissertation

These biographical notes make no claim to be exhaustive and fully comprehensive. Details of the lives and actions of many of the major figures referred to in the thesis, such as Adnan Menderes, Gamal 'Abd al-Nasir or John Foster Dulles, have already been described in many books and are usually found in standard encyclopaedias. They have, therefore, been omitted here. The purpose of the list is, rather, to provide brief biographical details of those individuals who are less well known but who—as the thesis has shown—had an important role to play in the events which have been discussed. In some cases it has not been possible to provide the date of an individual's decease.

Al-'Asali, Sabri

Born in Damascus in 1903. Received a law degree on the eve of the 1925 insurrection against the French, in which he took part. Practised as a lawyer in the late 1920s and 1930s. Was the Secretary-General of the League of National Action in the early 1930s. Joined the National Bloc in 1936. Sided with the Vichy in 1940-41 and was interned by the Allies on their invasion of Syria in 1941. Elected to Parliament in 1943. Became the Secretary-General of the National Party. Was Minister of the Interior (1948) and Prime Minister in 1954, 1955 and 1956-58. Appointed Vice-President of the UAR in 1958, but resigned after a few months when his clandestine links with the Iraqi monarchy in the early 1950s became public as a result of the post-revolutionary trials of the leaders of the deposed regime in Baghdad. Arrested for political reasons by the Syrian authorities in July 1966.

Al-Ayyubi, 'Ali Jawdat

Born in Mosul in 1885 or 1886. Educated at Istanbul Military College (1903-6). Deserted the Ottoman army in 1915 during World War I and later served in Faysal's Arab army. During and immediately after the latter's brief reign in Syria, became Governor of Aleppo (1919) and Director-General for Security. Returned to Iraq with Faysal in 1921 and held between 1921 and 1930 a number of governorships in al-Hillah, al-Karbala', al-Muntafiq, Diyali and Basra. Minister of the Interior (1923-24), Finance (1930-33) and Foreign Affairs (1939-41). Chief of the Royal *Diwan* and private secretary to King Ghazi I (1933). Prime Minister on three

occasions (1934-35, 1949-50, 1957) and President of the Chamber of Deputies (1935). Represented Iraq in Britain (1935-37), France (1937-38) and was Iraq's first ambassador in the USA (1942-48). Died in Beirut in 1969.

Al-'Azm, Khalid

Born in 1900. A western-educated businessman and large landowner and the descendant of a family that governed Damascus in the eighteenth century. Never joined the National Bloc during the French mandate. Was director of the National Cement Factory in the 1930s. Held the office of Syrian Prime Minister during the Vichy rule, when he was also nominally "Head of State" (1941); during the presidency of al-Quwatli (1948-49) and twice under al-Shishakli (1949-50 and 1951), when he refused Point Four aid and broke off Syria's customs union with Lebanon. In addition, was Minister of Finance in 1949; of Foreign Affairs, in 1955; of State in 1956-58; and Defence, in 1957-58. Opposed the formation of the UAR and held aloof from politics throughout the the latter's three-and-a-half year existence. Re-elected a deputy in 1961 and was Prime Minister again in 1962-63. Evaded arrest during the 1963 Ba'thist coup in Syria by seeking refuge in the Turkish embassy. Lived his last days in Beirut, where he died in 1965.

Baban, Ahmad Mukhtar

Born in Baghdad in 1900. A lawyer by profession. Taught in the Law Faculty of the University of Baghdad and was a magistrate. Held governorships in Mosul (1926), al-Kut (1928) and al-Karbala' (1941). Held various ministerial posts in Iraqi cabinets: social affairs, in 1942 and 1946; communications and public works, in 1942; justice, in 1943-44 and 1953; defence, in 1955-57; and education, in 1957. Chief of the Royal *Diwan* in 1946 and 1953. Was Vice-Premier in 1954-55 and briefly held the office of Prime Minister in 1958. Sentenced to death by the revolutionary military court in 1958, he was pardoned and set free in 1961. Lived thereafter in Lebanon, but returned to Baghdad in 1975. Died when undergoing medical treatment in Bonn, West Germany, in 1975.

Birgi, Muharrem Nuri

Born in Istanbul in 1908. Educated at the Galatasaray Lyceum; the School of Political Science in Paris; and the Faculty of Law in the University of Geneva. Began his diplomatic career in 1932. Served in Turkish embassies in Warsaw, Paris (under the Vichy government) and Madrid. Within the Foreign Ministry, successively occupied the positions of head of Co-ordination, Consular, First and Second Political Departments. Appointed Deputy Secretary-

General in 1953 and Secretary-General in October 1954. Ambassador in London in 1957-60. Permanent Representative to NATO in 1960-72.

Al-Bizri, Major-General 'Afif

Born in Sidon (Lebanon) in 1914. Joined the Syrian army in 1937. Is said to have come under Marxist influence during his student days in Paris. Fought in the 1948 war against Israel and earned a reputation for gallantry. Joined in the mid-fifties an influential group of army officers which together with the Ba'th was largely instrumental in giving a radical orientation to Syrian politics. Presided over the military court trying the accused in the "Iraqi" plot of 1956. Led the Syrian military team, in January 1958, to negotiate union with Egypt. Appointed Commander of the Syrian wing of the UAR army, now called the First Army. Soon resented Cairo's overriding control on postings and transfers and resigned in protest. Accepted, however, an assignment connected with economic planning carrying a minister's salary. Lived in Iraq during the Qasim era. Reappeared on the political scene, after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, as a spokesman of national Marxism. Died in 1993.

Bowker, Sir Reginald James

Born 1901. Educated at Charterhouse and Oriel College, Oxford. Entered the British Foreign Office in 1925. Served as a diplomat in Paris, Berlin, Ankara (1933-36), Oslo, Madrid and Cairo. Was UK High Commissioner (later Ambassador) in Burma (1947-50); Assistant Under-Secretary of State at the FO (1950-54); and, finally, Ambassador in Ankara (1954-58) and Vienna (1958-61). Retired in 1961. Died in 1983.

Eralp, Orhan

Born in Izmir in 1915. Educated in Robert College, Istanbul and received his Ph.D. from the London School of Economics and Political Science. Served in the Turkish air force in the early 1940s. Joined the Turkish Foreign Ministry in 1942. Was Turkey's delegate at the UN Conciliation Commission on Palestine (1949-51) and a counsellor in London (1952). Director-General of the Second Department of the Foreign Ministry in 1953-57. Ambassador in Stockholm (1956-59) and Belgrade (1959-64). Permanent Representative at the UN (1964-69). Secretary-General of the Foreign Ministry (1969-71). Permanent Representative at NATO (1969-72). Ambassador in Paris (1972-76). Permanent Representative at the UN again (1964-69). Retired in 1980. Died in 1994.

Esenbel, Rauf Melih

Born in Istanbul in 1915. Graduated from the Galatasaray Lyceum and the Faculty of Law at Istanbul University. Entered the Foreign Ministry in 1936. Served in the Turkish embassies in Paris (1939-43) and Washington (1945-52). Director-General of International Economic relations, 1952-54. Was assistant to Birgi and Secretary-General for Economic Co-operation in 1954-57. Secretary-General of Foreign Ministry in 1957-60. Ambassador in Washington (1960 and 1967-79) and Tokyo (1963-66). Foreign Minister, 1974-75.

Esin, Seyfullah

Born in 1902. Educated at the School of Political Sciences, Berlin and George Washington University. Entered the Turkish diplomatic service in 1925. Served in Athens, Palermo, Berlin, Washington, DC, Buenos Aires, Tokyo and Stockholm. Director-General of the International Organisations and Political Affairs Departments in the Foreign Ministry in 1945 and 1946 respectively. Represented Turkey in Israel (1949), Austria (1952), the USSR (1954-56), the Federal Republic of Germany (1956-57) and the UAR (from November 1960). Turkey's Permanent Representative at the UN (1957-60).

Gallman, Waldemar John

Born in 1889. Educated in Cornell University and Georgetown Law School. Briefly instructed at Cornell University in 1921-22. Joined the US diplomatic service in 1922. Served in Habana, San Jose, Quito, Riga, Warsaw and Danzig. Minister to London (1945). Ambassador to Poland (1948), the Union of South Africa (1951) and Iraq (1954). Retired from the State Department in 1961 and immediately became a member of faculty at the Graduate School, Georgetown University.

Gardener, Sir Alfred John

Born in 1897. Served in World War I. Posted to a number of British consular offices in the Middle East and North Africa between 1920 and 1944, including Damascus (1940-43). UK ambassador in Kabul (1949-53) and Damascus (1953-56). Retired from diplomatic service in March 1957. Died in 1985.

Al-Ghazzi, Sa'id

Educated in the Law Institute of Constantinople, Beirut and Damascus. Practised as a barrister in 1919-27 and 1939-42. Elected deputy to the Syrian Constituent Assembly in 1928. Re-elected as a deputy in 1943 and 1947. Minister of Justice (1936, 1945 and 1948) and Finance (1946-48). Prime Minister and Minister of Defence in 1954. Prime Minister

again and Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1955-56. Speaker of the Syrian Parliament in 1962-63. Disappeared from the active political scene after the 1963 Ba'thist coup in Syria.

Henderson, Loy Wesley

Born in 1892. Educated at Northwestern University and Denver University Law School. Joined the State Department in 1920. A career US diplomat, and initially an expert on the USSR and Eastern Europe. After 1943, dealt largely with Middle Eastern matters. Headed the American legation in Baghdad in 1943-45. As Director of Near Eastern Affairs at the State Department in 1945-48, his role was pivotal during the formulation of the Truman Doctrine. US Ambassador to India and Nepal (1948-51) and in Tehran (1951-54), where helped to engineer the 1953 coup against Musaddiq and later worked hard to reach a new oil agreement with Iran in 1954. Under-Secretary State for Administration in 1954-61. Left the diplomatic service to become Director of Center for Diplomacy and Foreign Policy at the American University (1961-68) and President of the Washington Institute for Foreign Affairs (1961-73).

Al-Jamali, Dr. Muhammad Fadil

Born in al-Kazimiyyah in 1903. Studied in Baghdad to become an elementary school teacher. Taught for four years in a Baghdad elementary school prior to his studies at the American University of Beirut, from which he graduated in 1927. After briefly teaching at the Teachers Training College of Baghdad (1928), went to the USA in 1929 and received his M.A. and Ph.D. from the Teachers College, Columbia University in 1930 and 1932 respectively. Worked in the Iraqi Ministry of Education between 1932-1942. Appointed Director-General of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and promoted to the rank of Minister in 1944. Member of the Iraqi Parliament and later President of the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies. Iraqi Minister to Egypt (1949) and Permanent Representative to the UN (1950). Became cabinet member on several occasions and Prime Minister in 1954. Imprisoned in 1958-61 by the revolutionary regime in Iraq. Currently lives in Tunisia.

Al-Khuri, Faris

A Protestant Christian lawyer, born in 1873. Educated in the American University of Beirut. Deputy in the Ottoman Empire in 1914-18. Professor of Law in the University of Damascus in 1919-40. Minister of Finance (1920) and Education (1926). Joined the nationalist People's Party of Dr. 'Abd al-Rahman Shahbandar in 1925. President of the Syrian Parliament in 1936-39, 1943, 1946 and 1947-49. Prime Minister in 1944-45 and 1954-55. Led the Syrian delegation to the UN on various occasions. Died in 1962.

Kuneralp, Zeki

Born in Istanbul in 1914. Lived most of his formative years away from Turkey. Graduated as lawyer from the University of Berne. Entered diplomatic service in 1940, after having accomplished his military service. Served in the Turkish embassies in Bucharest, Prague and Paris. Assistant Secretary-General of the Foreign Ministry in 1957-60 and Secretary-General in 1960 and 1966-69. Ambassador in Berne (Sept. 1960), London (1964-66 and 1969-72) and Madrid (1972-79). Retired in 1979.

Kural, Adnan

Born in 1910. Educated in Ankara University. Entered the Turkish diplomatic service in 1935. Served in Rome, Moscow and at the UN. Minister to Syria (1955-58). Ambassador to Greece (1958-60), Switzerland (1964-65), Italy (1965-66) and Spain (from 1967). Turkey's Permanent Representative at the UN in 1962-64.

Menderes, Ethem

Born in Izmir in 1899. Graduated from the Faculty of Law, University of Ankara. Was member of the executive council of Aydın Province (1933-38) and mayor of the city of Aydın (1938-45). Sat as member of the GNA for Aydın (1950-57) and Afyonkarahisar (1957-60). Held a number of ministerial portfolios, like Internal Affairs (1954), Defence and Public Works (1957-60). His tenure as acting Foreign Minister in 1956-57 was short-lived and mostly ineffectual. Detained in Yassıada after the May 1960 coup. Was released from prison in 1966.

Mirjan, 'Abd al-Wahhab

A rich Shiite landowner from al-Hillah, born in 1907. Graduated from the Baghdad Law College in 1933. A member from al-Hillah of the Iraqi Chamber of Deputies between 1947 and 1958. Was Speaker of the Chamber in 1948-50, 1951-52, 1953-57 and 1958. Minister of the Economy in 1948; Communication and Public Works, 1950, 1953 and 1957; Finance, 1950; and Agriculture, 1954. Prime Minister in 1957-58. Was briefly imprisoned after the 1958 revolution. Died in Baghdad in 1964.

Moose, James

Born in 1903. Educated in the Kentucky Military Institute, University of Missouri, National University of Mexico and in Ecole Nationale des Langues Vivantes in Paris. Served in US diplomatic missions in Salonika, Paris, Beirut, Baghdad, Damascus and Jeddah. Minister to Saudi Arabia (1943-44); Ambassador to Syria (1952-57) and Sudan (from 1958).

Riyad, Mahmud

Born in 1917. Studied and then taught in the Military College. Graduated from Military Staff College in 1943. A military man, was appointed head of Egyptian military intelligence office in Gaza during the 1948-49 Arab-Israeli war and was involved in early negotiations with the Israelis. Entered politics after the 1952 revolution. Head of the Directorate of Arab Affairs in the Egyptian Foreign Ministry in 1954-55. Served as ambassador to Syria in 1955-58. He later became presidential adviser on foreign affairs (1958-62); permanent representative to the UN (1962); Foreign Minister (1964-72); and Secretary-General of the Arab League (1972-79). Died in 1992.

Salim, Major Salah al-Din

Born in 1920. Graduated from the Military College in 1939. Participated in the 1952 revolution in Egypt. Became Minister for National Guidance and Minister of State for Sudan Affairs in 1954-55 and editor of the daily, *al-Sha'b*, in 1955-56. Dismissed after the Suez war. Later fell ill and died in 1962.

Al-Sarraj, Col. 'Abd al-Hamid

Entered the Military Academy in 1947, but did not get an opportunity to fight in the Arab-Israeli war of 1948. Advanced his military training in France in 1952 and was Assistant Syrian Military Attaché there in 1954. Chief of Army Intelligence in 1954-58. Held very influential positions in the Syrian region of the UAR in 1958-61. Detained in October 1961 in the aftermath of Syria's secession from the UAR. Fled to Egypt in May 1962.

Shuqayr, Gen. Shawkat

Born in Lebanon in 1912. Entered military service in Syria. Graduated from the French military staff college. Appointed Syrian Army COS in 1953. Resigned that post in 1956 and returned to his village, al-Qar'awn (Lebanon). Died in Lebanon in 1982.

Soysal, Ismail

Turkish Chargé d'Affaires in Damascus in 1953-55. General-Director of Information at the Turkish Foreign Ministry in 1958-59. Ambassador to Algiers (1965) and Lisbon (1983). He is currently the director of the Institute of Middle Eastern and Balkan Studies in Istanbul.

Troutbeck, Sir John Monro

Born 1894. Educated at Westminster and Christ Church, Oxford. Entered the British FO in 1920. Served in Istanbul (1927-30), Addis Ababa, Rio de Janeiro and Prague; Assistant

Under-Secretary of State, FO (1946-47); Head of BMEO, Cairo (1947-50); and, finally, Ambassador in Baghdad (1951-54). Retired in 1955. Died in 1971.

Warren, Fletcher

Born in 1896. Educated in the University of Texas. Served as a US diplomat in Havana, Baranquilla, Budapest, Managua, Riga and Bogota. US ambassador in Nicaragua (1945-47), Paraguay (1947-50), Venezuela (1951-56) and Turkey (1956-60).

Wright, Sir Michael Robert

Born 1901. Educated at Winchester and Balliol College, Oxford. Entered the British FO in 1926. Served at Washington, Paris, Cairo (1940-43); Assistant Under-Secretary of State, FO (1947-51); Ambassador in Oslo (1951-55) and Baghdad (1955-58); and, finally, Head of the Permanent UK Delegation on Disarmament and Nuclear Tests in Geneva from 1960. Retired in 1964. Died in 1976.

Zorlu, Fatih Rüştü

Born in Istanbul in 1910. A scion of a distinguished Turkish family, and later the son-in-law of the former Turkish Foreign Minister, Tevfik Rüştü Aras. Studied in the Faculty of Political Science in Paris and in the Faculty of Law in Geneva before entering the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1932. Specialising in economic subjects, was head of the department dealing with commercial negotiations in 1937 and headed the Turkish permanent delegation to the League of Nations in 1938. After appointments in Paris and Moscow, became the head of the Economic Section of the Ministry in 1946 and was promoted to Assistant Secretary-General in 1950. In the spring of 1952, was appointed permanent Turkish representative on the North Atlantic Council with the rank of Ambassador. A deputy in the GNA in 1954-60. Minister of State and Deputy Prime Minister in general supervision of all economic, OEEC and NATO affairs (1954-55) and of Foreign Affairs (1957-60). Was Menderes's right-hand man and related to him by marriage. Their wives were first cousins. Hanged in 1961 in the aftermath of the Yassıada trials.

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(*) This dissertation has many extraordinary similarities both in form and content with Mamduh al-Rusan's *Al-'Iraq wa qadaya al-sharq al-'arabi al-qawmiyyah 1941-1958* (Beirut, 1979) and it was written nearly a decade later than the latter.

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