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the Administration's policy owing to the incapacitation of Dulles, by Hoover and Humphrey, neither of whom had any great sympathy with Britain, dictated the severe conditions attached to American aid. In these respects, Suez was a true indication neither of Britain's ability to act as a world power, nor of the state of the Anglo-American relationship.

Perhaps John Darwin strikes the right note over Suez when stressing that its impact was not 'obvious, simple, clear-cut, or immediate', but rather 'subtle and diffuse'.⁷⁵ It highlighted the constraints on British policy, but did not lead to any fundamental shifts in this policy. What it did appear to do, however, was emphasize the importance of the American alliance in achieving its goals.

6 The Eisenhower Doctrine

One aspect of the Suez crisis which has so far gone unremarked in this study, was the Soviet attempt to capitalize on the Anglo-French action by issuing threats of nuclear retaliation against the two should they fail to halt operations. While these warnings were pieces of pure propaganda, they no doubt served to underline in the eyes of the US Administration the extent to which the Soviets might reap the dividends of the discomfiture of the old colonial powers. In fact, the Suez crisis instigated a debate within the Administration as to what US response would be appropriate to prevent the Soviet Union filling what was then perceived to be a power vacuum in the region. The 'Eisenhower Doctrine' or 'Middle East Resolution' which emerged from this process was, however, to prove to be more effective as a piece of cold war rhetoric and posturing than as any meaningful contribution to the furthering of peace or stability in the region.

In respect of its implications in the short term for Anglo-American relations in the Middle East, it is important to note that the internal debate in the US Administration over what course of action to pursue was conducted during November and the early part of December against the background of possibly the worst period of tension between Britain and America in the post-war years. As has been indicated, although Eisenhower had welcomed the British decision to call a ceasefire in the Suez campaign on the evening of 6 November, the financial aid that the British sought was certainly not immediately forthcoming. In addition, Eisenhower's initial agreement to talks with Eden in Washington in the first flush of his electoral triumph was withdrawn when he was advised that this would send the wrong signals about Washington's view of the crisis. It was to take four weeks of hard bargaining and a humiliating commitment to precipitous withdrawal from Egypt before American financial help was secured.

This period was characterized by a series of tense exchanges between the new British Ambassador in Washington, Sir Harold Caccia, and various Administration officials. For instance, when,

on 23 November, Caccia broached with Assistant Secretary Hoover the question of renewed Anglo-American consultation on Middle Eastern issues, Hoover was 'somewhat taken . . . aback. On the American side there had been a growing feeling that we wished to avoid frank discussion, particularly over the Middle East'.¹ On the financial question, Caccia commented on 28 November, that: 'we have now passed the point where we are talking to friends. We are negotiating a business deal . . . and we are dealing with an Administration of business executives who rightly or wrongly consider that they are animated by the highest principles.'² Selwyn Lloyd too was surprised by the depth of the hostility of US officials, describing the American attitude as 'quite irrational', and even 'temporarily beyond the bounds of reason'.³ Nevertheless, with terms for a withdrawal agreed between Dulles and Caccia on 3 December, the British sought to seize the opportunity to influence the direction of US policy in the region. The course for which the British pressed was, as might be expected, US adherence to the Baghdad Pact.⁴

In fact, the Administration's review of strategy had already been under way for some weeks by this point. The process appears to have begun with a memorandum circulated by William Burdett of the State Department's Near Eastern section on 13 November. This followed a call by Dulles for Department officials to contribute their thoughts on future Near Eastern policy. Burdett argued that the US needed to create and join some new broadly based organization involving the Afro-Asian countries to replace the Baghdad Pact, which was now tainted by its association with the discredited colonial power of Britain. Although objections were raised as to the effect that this would have on friendly countries which were members of the existing organization, particularly Iran and Turkey, Burdett's proposals indicated that the starting point of the debate, in the opinion of the Near Eastern section at least, was that the Baghdad Pact could never be a suitable vehicle for the promotion of US influence in the Middle East.⁵

As might be expected from the earlier debates on the question of US accession to the pact, however, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Defense Department expressed a different view. They felt that the US should now move to join the pact because

the collapse of British influence might leave the existing friends of the West in the region militarily and politically isolated. Since the pact was a going concern, it offered the best chance of checking any Soviet aggression in the area. Its collapse would be 'an irretrievable loss to the best interests of the United States in the Middle East'.⁶ Pressure was also exerted in favour of pact membership by the US Ambassadors to the respective regional members of the organization. The views of Gallman, the ambassador in Baghdad, are illustrative of the kind of sentiments which were expressed. The pact, in his opinion, was the best way to contain Soviet expansionism in the region. Nothing short of full US membership would be sufficient to stiffen the resolve of its indigenous members to resist Soviet pressure.⁷

However, the Near Eastern section remained unswayed by these appeals. In his reply to Ambassador Gallman, Assistant Secretary William Rountree argued that since the US was currently engaged in attempts to stabilize the region in the wake of Anglo-French military action, the 'US joining [a] Pact in which [the] British [were] a partner would pose [an] especially difficult problem . . .'. Rountree also repeated the complaint about the British role in the organization voiced by Dulles in April 1956 on the occasion of the last British-sponsored attempt to secure US accession, namely that the 'original US concept of [the] "Northern Tier" was one of an indigenous organization. The Baghdad Pact has been regarded by non-member states . . . as Western-inspired and in large part UK-dominated'.⁸

In addition to the internal debate over US adherence to the pact, the Administration was also subject to external pressures both for and against its membership. In the wake of a statement by the State Department on 29 November underlining the US's continued willingness to extend military and economic aid to the indigenous members of the pact, Abba Eban, the Israeli Ambassador in Washington, telephoned Rountree to emphasize the concern with which his government would regard any decision to go further and formally join the organization. Although Israeli influence over the Administration was very limited at this stage, Israeli pressure provided further evidence that the pact remained hostage to the political rivalries of the region.⁹

On the other hand, the indigenous members of the pact,

Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Pakistan, exerted their influence in favour of the US joining their organization. At a meeting with the ambassadors of the four countries on 4 December, in advance of his departure to the NATO conference, Dulles cited the familiar difficulties with Congress which stood in the way of a positive decision.¹⁰ While the US still wanted to 'salvage' the Baghdad Pact, 'one of the problems involved in our adherence was that the Pact had unfortunately become involved in area politics and was not universally viewed as an instrument solely to oppose Communism and Soviet aggression'.¹¹

Although there were strong views both for and against the pact within the Administration, instanced by a dossier of documents assembled by Rountree for Dulles before his departure to Paris for the NATO summit,¹² it seems that Dulles and Eisenhower's own inclinations were against joining the pact. The President had already indicated his views in a meeting on 21 November when he had commented that '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'.¹³ A critical factor in Eisenhower's assessment appears to have been the attitude of King Saud towards the pact.¹⁴ As was shown earlier, Eisenhower had been in favour, since March 1956, of building up Saud as a rival to Nasser in the Middle East. In the aftermath of the Suez crisis, he began to push this policy forward with even greater vigour. During the meeting referred to above, he had 'reiterated his feeling that we should work toward building up King Saud as a major figure in the Middle Eastern area'. He again emphasized the importance in this respect of seeking a solution to the Buraimi Oasis dispute between Britain and Saudi Arabia.

While Dulles was away at the NATO summit discussing with Lloyd the possible shape of future US commitments in the Middle East, Eisenhower wrote to him reminding him that:

I continue to believe, as I think you do, that one of the measures that we must take is to build up an Arab rival of Nasser, and the natural choice would seem to be the man you and I have often talked about. If we could build him up as the individual to capture the imagination of the Arab world, Nasser would not last long.¹⁵

In fact, by this stage, Dulles had resolved the debate over the US's next move in the region to three broad alternatives. At a meeting with Senator William Knowland, the Senate minority leader, on 8 December, Dulles told him that the choices which faced America were to join the Baghdad Pact, to try to organize a new grouping, or to deal on a bilateral basis with some manoeuvrability. The latter choice would involve 'a Congressional resolution authorizing the President to use the Armed Forces and to spend certain sums to bolster the military defense abilities and economies of countries whose governments showed a determination to combat Communist infiltration'. Dulles told Knowland that he had come to the conclusion that this third choice would be the best.¹⁶

However, Dulles was not yet prepared to acquaint the British with his conclusion. At a meeting with Selwyn Lloyd at the NATO summit on 10 December, he claimed that the US had reached no decision on the Baghdad Pact, although he did outline to the Foreign Secretary the three alternative courses he was considering. He also took the opportunity to stress once again the US view of the importance of Saudi Arabia as a counterpoise to Egypt, and the need for a solution to the Buraimi dispute.¹⁷

The new strategy was formally agreed at a meeting between Eisenhower, Dulles, Hoover, Wilson and Radford on 20 December.¹⁸ Stressing once again the importance of Saudi objections to the pact in view of the need to build up King Saud as a counterpoise to Nasser, Dulles recommended seeking a Congressional resolution which would incorporate three elements. ^①The first would empower the President to extend economic assistance to countries in the Middle East requesting it. Suez had made Eisenhower particularly aware of the importance of the Third World to the United States.¹⁹ As far as he was concerned, if the US did not engage the Soviet Union in the battle for the hearts and minds of the 'emerging' nations, then she would in future see herself economically stifled through the denial of markets and raw materials. Although he had come to power in his first term on the slogan 'trade not aid', the theme of his second term as he saw it was almost the opposite - 'trade and aid'.

At the same time, therefore, as he was proposing to attach

\$200 million of untargeted aid to the Eisenhower Doctrine, he was also negotiating with a largely unreceptive Congress for a much larger \$2 billion Development Loan Fund spread over three years for Third World countries. To Eisenhower's way of thinking, comparatively small sums allocated as aid could prove to be much more effective in winning over these nations than much larger sums spent on traditional methods of military defence. The Middle East Resolution drew its inspiration, therefore, on the one hand, from the President's preoccupation with the efficacy of aid as an instrument of foreign policy.

The second provision of the new proposal was to extend American arms aid to countries in the Middle East which might request it. This was intended to provide an alternative to the supply of weaponry from the Soviet Union, although in this respect the US was rather more limited in its scope for manoeuvre by the need to consider the position of the Israelis. However, because of Israel's attack on Egypt during the Suez War, and her continuing refusal to withdraw from land occupied in the Sinai, until her claims regarding the passage of Israeli ships through the Straits of Tiran had been settled, the Israeli lobby in Washington was in a comparatively weak position at this point. Still, the Administration had to tread carefully.

The final element of the new strategy, and that which gained it the greatest prominence, was the assertion that: 'if the President determines the necessity thereof, the United States is prepared to use armed forces to assist any such nation or group of nations [in the Middle East] requesting assistance against armed aggression from any country controlled by international communism.' The intention of this proposal was to serve a direct and public warning to the Soviet Union that the US intended to defend its friends in the region. It was also designed to tap a reliable well of anti-Communist sentiment at home and to 'facilitate the emergence of a new "national consensus" in foreign affairs . . .'.²⁰ It was intended to be a symbol of executive-legislative agreement over American goals in the Middle East.

Eisenhower briefed legislative leaders as to his new strategy at a meeting on 1 January 1957,²¹ the British and French having already been formally notified of American intentions on 29 December.²² In fact, the British had continued trying up to the last minute to persuade the Americans to opt for pact

membership instead.²³ The Middle East Resolution, therefore, was something of a setback for them, especially since it was accompanied by a drive to promote Saudi leadership of the Arab world in rivalry to Egypt rather than that of Iraq. Although Harold Macmillan later represented the Eisenhower Doctrine in his memoirs as 'a gallant effort to shut the stable door after the horse had bolted', and as 'welcome to us', it may be surmised that at the time he was less than pleased at the further rebuff it delivered to British attempts to secure American membership of the Baghdad Pact. Indeed, in a contemporary private letter to Anthony Eden, Macmillan referred to the Eisenhower Doctrine as 'weak . . . in many ways'.²⁴

In fact, the resolution also ran into substantial difficulties at home in the Senate in particular. Many of the problems surrounded its vagueness.²⁵ The area it covered, although referred to broadly as the 'Middle East' went undefined. Also, objections were raised as to how one could identify a country 'controlled by international Communism'. As regards the powers granted to the President under the resolution, senators of one persuasion argued that he already had the necessary authority to act, while others asserted that he had requested what amounted to a 'blank check' from Congress, expecting it to approve in advance whatever measures he decided to take. Although it was originally intended as a demonstration of 'national unity' in foreign affairs, in the end the Eisenhower Doctrine itself proved productive of intense partisan controversy.²⁶

Ultimately, the Doctrine was only ratified by the Senate on the basis of two considerations. The first, often repeated by Dulles, was that the White House was merely asking for the Congress to express its opposition to Communist expansionism, thereby reaffirming the fundamental continuity in American foreign policy. The second was that congressional repudiation of the President's diplomatic leadership could have damaging consequences for the US's international position.²⁷ These two considerations underline the extent to which the Doctrine should really be seen as a form of rhetorical deterrent directed towards the Soviet Union, 'an abstract, inflatable ideological device'.²⁸ Unfortunately, as the Administration was to discover, rhetoric was to prove to be an unsound basis for practical intervention in the region.

For instance, the operation in Lebanon in July 1958, often cited as the prime instance of the Doctrine in action, in fact served to reveal its weaknesses in application. During the course of the crisis preceding the American landings, Dulles argued that:

he did not see how we could invoke the provisions of the Middle East Doctrine relating to the use of United States forces specifically, since that would entail a finding that the United Arab Republic had attacked Lebanon and that the United Arab Republic was under the control of international Communism.²⁹

Dulles preferred to regard the Lebanese crisis as a case in which the US could act 'in accordance with the rules of the game as set forth in the Charter of the United Nations'. The Eisenhower Doctrine provided little more than ideological window-dressing for American action in this case.

The hearings over the resolution were also the occasion for a series of anti-British comments by Dulles which underlined the continuing gulf between the two powers at this stage over future policy in the Middle East. Comments such as 'I cannot think of anything that would more surely turn the area over to international communism than for us to go in there hand in hand with the British and French' caused a great deal of private resentment on the British side. Although Harold Caccia pointed out that the most charitable interpretation was that Dulles was being led by his lawyer's instinct to try all means to win his case, others were not so understanding. Dulles's attitude was stigmatized by William Morris, the First Secretary at the Washington Embassy, as a 'sanctimonious, subjective moral judgement'.³⁰

All the same, from the British point of view there was little sense in trying to oppose the Doctrine. The best course seemed to be to work with it and attempt to divert any assistance it provided towards purposes favoured by Britain. As a Cabinet discussion document acknowledged:

Benefits under the doctrine are not to be limited to allies; they are also available for 'countries dedicated to the maintenance of their national independence.' But benefits, by this

definition, should not go to those who are actively collaborating in the pursuit of Soviet aims. In practice this should produce the sort of grouping of well-disposed countries which is our aim.³¹

Nevertheless, the implication of the American refusal to join the pact was that Britain would have to devote even more resources to its maintenance and support. The Baghdad Pact was 'now more than ever the lynch-pin' of Britain's position in the region.³² It should be employed as 'a means of retaining a measure of influence in the Middle East'.³³

A double blow, however, was administered at this point to British hopes of persuading the Americans to fall in with the strategy of promoting Iraqi leadership of the Arab world. In addition to its refusal to join the Baghdad Pact, the Administration seized the opportunity to grant King Saud's request for a visit to the United States at the end of January 1957, so that Eisenhower could assess face to face the possibility of advancing him as an Arab rival to Nasser. According to his own account, Eisenhower found Saud 'introspective and shy'.³⁴ He was also evidently rather shocked by what he termed the King's medievalism, epitomized by his repeated references to 'my people'. Nevertheless, he secured his grudging support for the Eisenhower Doctrine. Saud's character hardly qualified him to be a rival to Nasser, but, since the President felt there was no other suitable candidate, he decided that 'Saud would be "the person we tie to."'³⁵

In fact, a whole number of additional reasons made Saud an unsuitable choice for the role which Eisenhower sought to thrust upon him. Although Dulles had acknowledged in his discussion with Selwyn Lloyd in Paris that Saud 'was not the master in his own house',³⁶ both he and Eisenhower evidently hoped that Saud would become so in the near future. In reality, their hopes were to prove ill-founded.³⁷ Saud's rampant corruption and, more importantly, his mishandling of politics at home, made him a particularly unsuitable leader even of his own country, never mind the whole Arab world. His long-standing rivalry with his brother Feisal was far from resolved, and as Saud alienated more and more of the influential princes, his position became progressively weaker.³⁸ One

could argue that Eisenhower and Dulles could not have been expected to see the course events would take up to the palace coup in March 1958. What could have been expected, however, is that they should have seen the folly of resting such hopes on a man who was demonstrably unsuited to fulfilling them.

In fact, the whole notion of promoting Saud as Nasser's rival showed how shallow the American understanding of the Arab nationalist movement was. Simply because, as Eisenhower stressed, Saud held a position of spiritual respect in the Arab world as custodian of the Muslim Holy Places, he could not be expected to command similar esteem in a political context. Politics was much more a question of charisma, which Saud lacked and Nasser possessed. Perhaps too by suggesting that the Arab nationalist movement could be channelled into directions more favourable to the West simply by replacing one leader with another, Eisenhower neglected some of the deeper sentiments which Nasser had tapped. There was a genuine desire to cast off what was seen as the yoke of external domination which, because of the recent history of the region, was particularly associated with the Western powers.

Whatever the weaknesses of the new strategy, however, Eisenhower determined to pursue it. The promotion of Saud, together with the promulgation of the Eisenhower Doctrine, were certainly evidence of greater American activity in the Middle East. However, we should be wary of arguing that the US somehow now picked up the mantle of power cast off by the British after Suez. As has been indicated, the British were resolved to pursue the promotion of their interests through the Baghdad Pact with even greater vigour after the Suez debacle, and were certainly not ready to cast off any mantle. Moreover, while the Eisenhower Doctrine was evidence of a more systematic American desire to take on responsibilities, it did not indicate any sudden shift in the balance between the two powers in the region. Although the Americans were to act independently of the British when their interests demanded in the aftermath of its promulgation, the Anderson mission a year earlier, for instance, had shown that they had been prepared to act in this way before Suez.

Furthermore, the policy of promoting Saud which was now pursued had been conceived as early as March 1956 and,

although Suez gave it added impetus, it was not responsible for its inception. The period after the passing of the Middle East resolution early in March 1957, therefore, was to be characterized by a similar patchwork as had gone before of cooperation and conflict on the basis of perceptions of threat and of interest between Britain and America.