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Some Notes on

THE POSITION OF NASSER SINCE THE MOSUL REBELLION

Introduction

Since the Revolution of July, 1958, we have written two papers on Iraq and one on the consequences of the Iraqi Revolution in Syria, and we have sent in numerous "spot" reports on events leading to the Mosul Rebellion, the Rebellion itself, and its aftermath. In the present breathing spell, which will probably be a short one, we herewith attempt to consolidate our thoughts into a single paper dealing with President Nasser's position and outlook as they presently obtain.

This paper follows logically our earlier reports. In the one on Syria of 19 January 1959, we observed that although Nasser recognized that events in Iraq constituted a Communist challenge to his leadership in the area, he did not yet appear to view himself as being involved in an East-West struggle. Despite the implications of the Port Said speech and the crackdown on the Communists in Syria, we at that time found no reason to expect Nasser to try other than a "trial and error" approach to the problem of Iraq, modified by a considerable regard for the sensibilities of his Soviet friends. We went on to say that if, in the interest of countering a genuine and frightening

Communist threat in Iraq, the U.S. and the West wished to enlist Nasser's all-out aid, there would be several difficulties in the way: first, "the West would have to assume a substantial part of the role the U.S.S.R. now plays in Egypt's affairs; second, "we would have to accept the fact that we would have to do this without involving Nasser in the appearance of membership in the Western Bloc, for this would handicap him in his competition with Qassem for the position of leadership of 'anti-imperialist Arabism'; finally, "more difficult still, we would have to accept the idea of the unification of the Arab World on some basis or other under Nasser, and the continued use by Nasser of Radio Cairo to keep other Arab leaders in line (with, of course, the use of propaganda methods we have so heartily been deploing)." In short, we concluded that we would have to accept - and learn to prefer to Communism in Iraq -- the conditions in the area which prevailed before the appearance of Communism on the scene.

Nasser did indeed use "trial and error" tactics, one of which was to involve himself in a number of abortive plots to overthrow the Qassem regime, the last and most calamitous being the Mosul Rebellion. Since this Rebellion Nasser's relatively cautious public campaign against Arab Communism has turned into an all-out attack against international Communism, Qassem and the Iraqi Government, and the U.S.S. R. itself. Gone have been the attempts to distinguish between "local Communism" and Soviet policy (still generally "pro-Arab"). Communism has been specifically branded as Soviet interference in the internal affairs of other states, rude public remarks have been exchanged between Nasser and Kruschev, and in the course of all this Nasser has become a target for attack by the Communist press almost everywhere in the world and the subject of critical comment in the official Soviet press and on the Soviet radio. As for Iraq, after

the Mosul Rebellion Nasser dropped all pretense of trying to "extend the hand of friendship" to Qassem, and the UAR and Iraq have found themselves in a state of almost total estrangement, with a state of near warfare on the Syro-Iraqi border.

In connection with what we have said in earlier reports, the following two observations are of interest: First, Nasser's outright hostility toward Iraq has come about without any substantial evidence available to him that the U.S. or Britain are prepared to accept anything like "terms" we said would be necessary to enlist him in an all-out battle against Communism. Second, he has adopted this posture without the active support of other anti-Communist Arab governments and without any basic improvement in the relations between the UAR and these governments. Although the explanations for these phenomena are certainly not paradoxical nor unduly mysterious, some clarity with respect to them is needed at this stage because the future conduct of Nasser is probably being born in the context of present circumstances. His choice among the alternatives open to him will have a profound bearing on the interests of the West.

So, of course, will Iraqi conduct in the area, but this is likely to remain truly mysterious and impenetrable for some time to come, since Iraqi political behavior is likely to be governed by Communist (and USSR) strategy in the general arena of world conflict. Iraqi choices among available courses of action involve new, and undoubtedly unexpected, opportunities (and problems) for the Communist camp. The actual decisions of the Iraqis are likely to be relatively unpredictable, and we have therefore considered an analysis of possible Iraqi conduct as being beyond the scope of this paper (a job, probably, for experts in Soviet and World Communist affairs).

Nasser's Basic Aims and Attitudes

It is clear that Nasser now considers himself to be fighting a war, and, like any wartime leader his present aims and policies aim at victory. Nonetheless, Nasser has certain aims and attitudes which, though they may be momentarily modified, lay at the bottom of all his thinking and set the limits of what he will and will not do in the present situation. We have already written numerous reports bearing on Nasser's motivations; here we present without apology our conclusions -- reached after years of observation and analysis -- as to Nasser's basic aims and outlook.

- a. First of all, we believe it is important to remember that Nasser is actually less "Arab" and far more "Egyptian" than is commonly supposed. He has only lately lifted himself from an amazing ignorance of the rest of the Arab world, its people and its leaders, and has never completely overcome the suspicion and hostility he has felt for Syrians, Lebanese, Iraqis, Saudis and all the others. He has always been prone -- though less so recently -- to make decisions largely from a parochial, Egyptian point of view and often with only the most elemental understanding of the area-wide implications of Egyptian action.
- b. Nasser is an "Arab" in that his ideas as to what Egypt must do to nurture political independence and economic visibility are roughly the same as his prescription for the Arabs as a whole. In his opinion, the first and absolutely essential task is to obtain freedom to direct Egyptian and Arab energies toward economic and political development in accordance with their own conceptions of national self-

interest, rather than as part of the Great Powers' formulae for world order which, he feels, are based primarily the conceptions of self-interest of the Great Powers themselves. In other words the Arabs must make national decisions on the basis of a theoretically absolute freedom of choice; limitations arising out of the self-interest and unilateral intentions of powerful states outside the area cannot be allowed to remain as a fiat in shaping Arab state policy (although, of course, mutual interests between Arab and outside states may be a fundamental consideration in formulating Arab policy).

- c. This proposition determined Nasser's thinking about the Arab World as a whole. No single Arab state, he feels, can arrive at complete independence as long as there are other Arab states willing to enter into arrangements with outside powers wherein they sacrifice freedom of choice and allow their well-being to become dependent on decisions and interests of outside states. It is in this sense -- and possibly only in this sense -- that Nasser feels he must "dictate" to other Arab governments: he insists that all Arab states join his lead much as a labor organizer wants a closed shop. He almost certainly has no prior design to assume administrative responsibilities for other Arab states, or to "rule" the Arab World in the sense that Hitler evidently wanted to rule Europe.
- d. It appears right and natural to Nasser, however, that Egypt should play the lead in the development of Arab political and economic freedom. Only by disposing of the instrumentalities of the most advanced Arab state can the Arab peoples be brought to the utmost

level of material development that can be supported by the area they occupy in the world. As a practical matter, moreover, Nasser knows that freedom of choice is really always relative, and consequently the problem resolves itself in his mind to the necessity of Egyptian leadership. As the leader of a "strong" state like Egypt, Nasser appears to be a truly free leader on the Arab scene. By his own self-appraisal he is in any case the only leader of an Arab government who can be trusted to bargain with the Great Powers.

- e. This brings us to an aspect of current Egyptian behavior most difficult for Westerners to accept. Nasser believes that the governments of other Arab states are too weak to withstand non-Arab influences and that he must therefore see to it that they are put in a position where they have no choice but to withstand these influences. This he does by playing on popular feelings beneath these governments to which these governments must respond, or risk political disturbances, or overthrow. His principal weapon is Radio Cairo which, supplemented as it is with other forms of propaganda and by covert political action of various kinds, has created situations in various Arab countries where leaders have had to pay dearly for their inclinations toward the West or unfriendliness with Nasser. In short, Egyptian propaganda and diplomatic activity must dictate the substantive content of "positive neutrality" -- i.e. what the foreign policies of Arab states must be in any particular circumstances.
- f. Does Nasser eventually want a single Arab state? We doubt that Nasser has any fixed ideas as to what kind of overall Arab union he would like to see come about after Arab "freedom" has been established under

Egyptian leadership. He certainly believes that the material culture of the Arabs can best be advanced by the spreading-out of Egyptian cultural institutions, and by asserting Cairo's role in economic and technical matters. Beyond that, we believe he has little idea of what Egyptian leadership may eventually mean. He seems to have no preference for, or convictions with respect to the necessity of a unitary Arab state. He probably feels that republican forms of government are inevitable in all Arab countries, and that some sort of federal unity among them will eventually be recognized as desirable, and he does have some views about the necessity for planned economic development on the basis of the pooled resources of the area with Egypt being the ^{seat} ~~heart~~ of the principal effort toward industrialization (i.e. Egypt becoming the center of manufacture for most heavy goods). On the other hand he appears to be genuinely horrified at the prospect of Cairo becoming the administrative headquarters for a highly centralized Arab state. If he has any preferences at all, they are for a loose sort of federation which would tend to formalize Cairo's influence in the following fields: 1) foreign policy (i.e. all relations with Western Powers and with the U.S.S.R.), 2) military planning and operations, and 3) area-wide economic planning. The first of these, of course, is of the most immediate importance; the last, while of greatest long-range significance, Nasser feels can be put off for some time yet.

- g. There is no way of telling how many Arabic-speaking countries Nasser feels must eventually come under the sway of Egypt. It is almost

certain, however, that he realizes that the "shape of things to come" will be determined by trial and error, and that the ultimate outcome will be profoundly influenced by the day-to-day necessities of the battle for freedom which must be led by Egypt. In his political efforts, Nasser believes in extending the battlefield in any direction where Egyptian influence can be made manifest, e.g., into all of Africa and Asia, if for no other reason than to gain leverage to use against the Great Powers he regards as challenging "Arab freedom". He is probably without any preconceived ideas about enduring Egyptian or Arab interests in non-Arabic-speaking areas. At the same time he is without any grand strategy for achieving his objectives within the specifically Arab sphere, depending as he does on day-to-day tactics in adjustments and readjustments to the changing situation he faces.

1. Finally, there is the question of Nasser's personal role in all this. Nasser regards himself as a machine, a controlled force at work in history, which has appeared at the right place at the right time to make it possible for the people of a whole area to advance rapidly in political and economic growth. His personal ambition is simply to fulfill that role. He is not "power crazy" and does not yet appear to have accumulated many of the neurotic symptoms (or worse) which have characterized other dictators of our time. On the contrary, one of his principal weaknesses as a hero-leader is that he dislikes exercising his manifest dictatorial power in general Arab affairs and since the beginning has reserved his personal influence for those situations wherein major objectives are at stake.

In our past reports we have related many other things about Nasser's motivations. The above observations with respect to his character are particularly relevant at this juncture in the affairs of the area.

Nasser's Views on Qassem, the Communists, and the Soviets

We have had several lengthy discussions with Nasser on the question of Iraq, and many more with principal Egyptian officers concerned with the problem presented by that country. While our Egyptian friends have hardly been entirely frank -- for example, they are inclined to play down the extent to which Qassem has managed to rival Nasser in popular appeal -- prolonged talks have enabled us to get a good idea of how the Egyptian authorities really see the Iraq situation. In general, their estimates agree almost entirely with those of the Western powers: the Communists and the Soviets currently have gone about as far as they care to in Iraq, and the controlling factor is to be found in the Soviet strategy and time-table for advancing Communist influence elsewhere in Africa and Asia. The difference is that Nasser has been forced to adopt this position publicly whereas most Western powers have been able to pretend that they believe otherwise. (Before the Mosul fiasco, Nasser was able to do as the British are still doing -- note particularly the recent British Foreign Office release that "Iraq runs no risk of falling under the Communist yoke so long as General Qassem is in power", a line roughly identical to that of Nasser before Mosul). The apparent near-absolute consolidation of Communist power in Iraq since Mosul constitutes a categorical challenge to Nasser's basic outlook as described in paragraphs above. Qassem has committed the most heinous of all sins in allowing the leadership of Iraq to fall into a state of dependence on a political force controlled by a

Great Power -- International Communism. To this challenge Nasser had no choice but open and declared warfare, with or without the sympathy or backing of other Great Powers. Nasser sees no justifiable parallel in his relations with the Soviet Union and those of Qassem's Iraq.

Many critics of Nasser argue that he is blaming Qassem for the same thing he has been guilty of himself, arguing that Nasser's relations with the Soviets less than a year ago were as deep and far-reaching as Qassem's are now. Leaving aside what there may be to this argument on logical grounds, the fact is that Nasser really does not see it that way. He considers that his relations with the Soviets not only did no violence to his concept of "independence", but actually enhanced his freedom of action vis-a-vis the West, while leaving him uncommitted to the East. The difference of course is that Nasser believes that Qassem is not a free spirit, and is now dependent upon the Soviets.

Nasser believes there is no ruse in Qassem's relations with the Soviets and the Communist Party. Qassem has now identified himself with Communist support with Soviet military and economic aid and foreign policy lines, and is embarked on a policy towards the Arab world which cannot allow for any but tactical compromise with Nasser. Qassem, Nasser believes, is not resisting this state of affairs -- indeed, has no inclination to do so. This is not because he is incapable of acquiring other than Communist support; not because he could not contrive to replace Soviet aid with equal aid from the West; and not because he is unable to compromise with Nasser; it is simply that Qassem is not unhappy in his relations with the Communists and the Soviets. As one informed Egyptian told us, "Qassem is not a Communist, but he is certainly not anti-Communist and he has no aversion to becoming a Communist if doing so seemed to fit in with his aspirations". The Egyptians point out further that Qassem

simply likes his Communist friends, and sees no other group in Iraq who appeal to him more. The Egyptians are bewildered by the suggestions of some recent Western visitors to Iraq (e.g. Ernest Lindley of Newsweek) that Qassem may one day turn on the Communists. "From his point of view, why should he?" they ask.*

Qassem's attitude towards the Communists and Soviets, Egyptian leaders believe, is shared by key figures in the present Iraqi government (not including some of the "dummy" cabinet ministers who can hardly be called "key figures" in present circumstances) and on a more naive basis by that part of the unthinking masses in Iraq who has been taken in by government propaganda. "The number of actual Communists in the Iraqi government is small," one Egyptian official told us, "but it is steadily growing, and those who are not Communist are increasingly sympathetic to the Communist viewpoint." He went on to say that the Iraqis participating in anti-Nasser street demonstrations "cannot possibly be Communist because they are too stupid and ignorant to know what Communism is all about"; nonetheless their primitive hostilities and suspicions are such that the Communists have a greater chance of appealing to them than has any other group. The result of this, believe the Egyptians, is that "Iraq couldn't go further into the Communist camp even if every adult Iraqi allowed himself to be hypnotized by the Soviets". "The only thing that prevents Iraqis from becoming completely Communist is the fact that they cannot stop being Iraqis", for after all there is much about being a product of Iraqi culture that makes it impossible for an Iraqi to become a true Communist". (These quotes are of a senior Egyptian officer who is working full-time on the problem of Iraq.)

* [redacted] insists that Qassem does give the Communists trouble from time to time, "but only because he happens to be a difficult personality. He would be no less difficult--and no easier for any kind of associates to work with--even were he a fully indoctrinated card-carrying Communist.")

Notwithstanding the possible resistances of "Iraqi character", Egyptians are bewildered by the suggestion of some Western observers (e.g. Ernest Lindley of Newsweek) that Qassem may one day "turn on the Communists". Nor are they impressed with the evidence which can be produced in Baghdad indicating that the Communists do not control the government, but merely support it and are only one of a number of groups making "demands" on it. (In the Communist case, the current demands are for the execution of the death sentences passed by the Peoples Court, the arming of the Popular Resistance, and the appointment of some Communists to ministerial posts.) The Egyptians take these issues one by one, and argue that those on which Qassem has not acted in accordance with the publicized wishes of the Communists are only those which the Communists, in private, could not possibly be serious about, and hence must have been dragged into the open only to allow Qassem to appear to the outside world as having a degree of independence. The arming of the militia is a particular case in point: the Communist controlled militia is armed, and the Iraqi government has finally admitted publicly that this is the case. If militia members must turn in their weapons at sun-down, it is because Communist leaders want it that way as much as does anyone else. As for the question of Communist participation in the new cabinet, it is the Egyptian belief that the Soviets do not consider it in their interests to confront the world just now with a manifestly Communist government in Iraq. On the other hand the Communist press must "demand" such a thing, and the result is a general impression that the Communists are not successful in getting all they want.

All the above boils down to the following epitomization of Nasser's view of Iraq: The Soviets now have an arrangement with Qassem which has roughly the same adverse effect on Arab independence and growth as did Britain's

arrangement with Nuri before the Revolution of last July. Not only is Egyptian leadership of the Arab world seriously challenged (if not broken), but Egyptian independence is itself endangered. Nasser will now be unable to drive a hard bargain with either the West or the Soviets, and "positive neutrality" (a Nasser slogan which only means that Egypt's freedom of choice is operative) is in danger of losing its meaning.

Nasser and the West, Post-Mosul

Nasser used to say (a propos of the Soviet arms deal) that he "didn't gain independence from the British just to lose it to the Russians", and he probably professes the same view, with countries reversed, with respect to the present situation. We have already observed that Nasser launched his current propaganda attack on the Soviets without obtaining any commitments of support from the U.S. or Britain, and without any concrete reason for believing support, when needed, would be forthcoming. Such behavior, we feel, is totally consistent with Nasser's outlook as discussed earlier in this paper. Nasser is convinced that Western leaders do not understand his motivations, and that offers of assistance will be inadequate or are likely to involve cessions of new "special positions" in the Arab world to Western powers.

It is important to understand that, although Nasser's recent reversals may have caused him to be less cool to the West in official contacts, his basic outlook remains the same, and his ideas of what it takes to do business with the West have not changed. It is simply not to be expected that he will now become more "reasonable", and that his present adversity will make him fundamentally easier to bargain with. Nasser still believes -- as do most Arabs -- that Arab countries have been "used" by Western powers without

commensurate advantages to the Arabs. Nothing has happened to cause him to alter this view, and he is convinced that even now Western powers are motivated by a desire to "use" Arab Nationalism and Egypt for the purpose of settling the Western score with Russia, rather than on the basis of an alliance for genuinely mutual benefit.

Nasser's attitudes were certainly reflected accurately by an Egyptian officer who is responsible for directing current intelligence activities against Iraq: "We are not going to join you in your struggle against the Communists any more than you have joined us in our struggle against Israel. What we have done is to undertake a struggle of our own against the Communists. If the United States would like to propose some basis whereby we can coordinate our efforts, we are interested, but we are not interested in becoming your tool." To paraphrase this officer further, what the Egyptians would like the United States to do now is to decide, at some high policy level, whether or not we consider it to our advantage to have the Egyptians win their contest with Qassem; and, if we decide that it is, to give them what they need to carry on their struggle in their own way and according to their own terms. If this should mean that the Egyptians will carry their campaign against the Communists only far enough to regain lost bargaining power with the Soviets, this is a chance the West will have to take. The West must understand that the most we can expect of Nasser is that he will take his campaign only so far as is necessary to put him back in business on a basis of "positive neutrality."

The above is a matter of general principle, but we must also understand that even in his day-to-day operations Nasser considers that his position requires him to remain essentially anti-Western. Our relationship with Israel

makes us a public relations liability at the outset, and the common feeling throughout much of the area (at least partly thanks to Nasser's own propaganda for the past few years) is now so anti-Western that one requirement for success in the contest with Qassem is likely to involve Nasser's showing himself to be more anti-Western than Qassem. The current content of Cairo's propaganda, particularly such of it as is obviously a cold-blooded effort to do direct damage to Qassem, accuses Qassem of being friendly with the British rather than of being a Communist; in fact, one line used most persistently against the Communists by Cairo is that they have "teamed up with the British" whereas true Arab nationalists continue to be as anti-British as ever.

To sum up, Nasser fears that the best he can expect of the West at this juncture is something like the following: with best of intentions we will resume financial and other assistance programs (which the U.S. has), but the scale will be far from what Nasser considers sufficient to ease his economic difficulties, or help him materially in his struggle with Qassem; next, the West will begin to express annoyance at the continuing anti-Western tone of the Egyptian press and at the fact that "Nasserist" activity continues to the detriment of Western oriented political leaders and groups in other Arab countries (more about this in a later paragraph); finally, due partly to Western inability to "understand the Arabs" and partly to outright perfidy, the U. S. and Britain will "betray" the Egyptians by some action which, under future circumstances, will be similar in effect to the withdrawal a few years ago of aid for the High Asswan Dam. In short, Nasser believes that the West still does not appreciate his position, that the West does not realize that he can go no further towards us than a half-way point (i.e. "positive neutrality" as he professed it before the emergence of the Communists), and that once these

fundamentals come to the fore again, the West will back down from any commitments which may meanwhile be made.

As we indicated, the above is the best of what Nasser considers he can expect of us. Actually, he fears that Western nations, considered together, have even less of a construction^{ive} attitude towards him now than before. He ← believes that the United States may be launched on a policy line like the one suggested above, but he believes that Britain, France, Israel, certain anti-Nasser Arabs (e.g. Camille Chamaoun and King Hussein), the Turks and the Iranians (roughly in that order) will pressure the United States into a position of genuine neutrality in the Cairo-Baghdad struggle (in place of the fake neutrality he has requested of us*) or even into a position of siding with Qassem. The British, Nasser feels, are the mainstay of the anti-Nasser elements, and we have been treated to long talks, not only from Nasser himself but from various of his associates, on the question of British attitudes and their effect on the attitudes of others. The following remarks are representative of their various shades of thinking: (1) "The British hate Nasser more than they hate Communism"; (2) "The British think they can adjust themselves to dealing with a Communist country, but that they cannot reconcile themselves to Arab nationalism"; (3) "The British consider that they have no choice but to adjust to a Communist take-over of Iraq, and possibly the later take over of other Arab countries by the Communists, but they continue to think that they can thwart Arab nationalism"; (4) "At the same time, in their moments of optimism the British doubt that Iraq can really become Communist, and believe that they can let Qassem and Nasser weaken each other by their struggle, then later finish off whichever one wins." (What Nasser himself told us was,

* Nasser has privately made it clear that he considers that open U.S. support in his struggle with Qassem would do him more harm than good.

"The British would like to witness two evenly matched adversaries destroying each other"). In spite of the contradictions in these lines of thought, they add up in the minds of the Egyptians to the gravest ^{of} and suspicions towards the British and a fear that the British may influence the U.S. away from its (believed) present inclinations to help, and into an attitude of passivity. ←

Next after the British, Nasser believes that the Israelis are the greatest hostile influence. For reasons more obvious than those pertaining to the British, the Israelis see Arab nationalism as the real enemy, and consider that Qassem is a helpful force in that he weakens Arab nationalism (even if he is controlled by the Communists -- or, particularly because he is controlled by the Communists, as the Egyptians see it).

Nasser believes that the Israelis have tremendous influence on the Turkish and Iranian foreign ministries, and that they are flooding the Turks and the Iranians with information which supports the view that Egypt is a greater danger than Iraq. On the one hand, the Israelis provide information which exaggerates Nasser's relations with the Soviets and shows his "dependence" on them; on the other hand, they provide information (some of it in the form of totally fictitious anecdotes) which portrays Qassem as an independent leader who has been "driven to accept Communist support by Nasser's attacks upon him" but who is thoroughly capable of preventing the Communists from gaining control so long as anti-Communist nations help him stand up to them. Our Egyptian friends assert that the Israelis give similar information directly to the U.S., British and French governments (possibly with little direct effect) but their liaison with the Turks and the Iranians results in a positive influence on their overall outlook, and this, in turn, affects the Western governments.

In short, Nasser is pessimistic about improving his relations with the West materially, and in our recent talks with him he has taken the following attitude: "All I want is that you not stab me in the back by taking advantage of any vulnerabilities resulting from my conflict with Qassem. I would further hope that you would refrain from giving Qassem any aid which would increase his capabilities against Syria." We know from other sources that Nasser would like extensive economic aid, particularly for Syria, but he is not really counting on it. We expect him to react very hostilely, however, when he eventually learns--as he likely will--that his apprehensions with respect to the West have been well founded!

Nasser and the Arabs, Post Mosul

In his propaganda lines, Nasser is more "Arab" than ever these days. He is more anxious than ever to remain the symbol of Arab nationalism, and he is devoting a considerable part of his energies to snuffing out attempts on the part of his non-Communist enemies to throw doubt on his position. Nasser concluded early in the game that in coming to grips with the Iraqi problem he must establish the fact that in acting against Qassem he is doing so as leader of the Arab nationalist movement. In spite of pressures from some of his subordinates who argue that there are better bases from which to attack Qassem, Nasser appears bent on holding to this point of view, and so long as he does it appears inevitable that he will continue to look to the Ba'athists and other extremist elements in the Arab countries which have been so violently inimical to Western oriented Arabs. The Arab nationalist position fits his motivations as discussed earlier in this paper; alternative positions (discussed later in this paper) do not.

In different ways and to different degrees the governments of other Arab countries are aware of the dangers inherent in this attitude of Nasser's, and are preparing to face them. The variety of postures they assume in different circumstances is most curious: publicly they subscribe to a policy of neutrality between Nasser and Qassem; in official conversations with Western diplomats most of them recommend Western support to Nasser; among themselves and privately to Western diplomats most of them express the gravest concern over possible side-effects of Nasser's assault on Qassem.

It would not be worthwhile to attempt a break-down of public opinion in the Arab world country by country, but an idea of the mixed up emotions which currently obtain may be gained from a look at Lebanon, a country where the widest range of views is most evident. Roughly, the views of thinking Lebanese may be broken down as follows: (1) A large number of Lebanese, led by ex-President Chamaoun, are strongly opposed to any aid to Nasser. They are happy to see him in his present predicament, and believe that any attempts on the part of the West -- or, for that matter, on the part of the Arabs -- should start only after Nasser is broken. Many Lebanese who publicly proclaim that they believe otherwise secretly agree with this point of view. (2) Another considerable group are at the other extreme, believing that Nasser and Arab nationalism is the only force which can stop Qassem and the Communists, and that if they are not stopped the eventual result will be a Communist take-over of the entire Middle East. Some believe that the U.S. should make it clear to Nasser that aid will be withdrawn at the first hint of Egyptian or Syrian interference in Lebanese affairs, but most Lebanese of this view think that insistence on such a guarantee is impractical and that we must simply give aid to Nasser and take our chances. (3) Between these extremes there are yet other Lebanese,

probably the most numerous, who wish their government to utter appropriate proscriptions of Communism, at the same time pledging adherence to the causes of Arab nationalism, but to stay strictly neutral in the Nasser-Qassem conflict. (4) Beneath the views of all these lies the realization, shared even by many who were part of the pro-Nasser Opposition in the "troubles" of last summer, that any strengthening of Nasser may well raise the possibility of a recurrence of internal warfare in Lebanon at the first moment of national crisis (e.g. an election, or even the fall of a cabinet). This means that Lebanese of all shades of political opinion are uneasy. Even those who would like to see their government cooperate closely with Nasser are not anxious to have Lebanon undergo more civil strife. (This does not, of course, include these extremist "street" elements who have taken their instructions from Damascus virtually as out-and-out Syrian agents. A percentage of these elements, incidentally, are now being recruited by the Communists with some apparent success.)

Opinion in other Arab states is divided on much the same lines: some have special worries of their own in connection with the struggle, and some may place the emphasis a little differently with respect to the comparative dangers of "Nasserism" and Communism, but the leaders of all share a common tendency in that they cannot help but derive some satisfaction from Nasser's present plight, and their fear of Communism has not developed to a point where they can totally resist the temptation to leave Nasser to his own devices. Saudi, Sudanese, Jordanian and other leaders are, for the most part, stoutly anti-Communist, but they believe that Nasser, particularly if given substantial backing by themselves and/or by the West could still represent a more immediate danger than do the Communists of Iraq.

The prevailing attitude of Arab governments was well demonstrated at the recent meeting of Arab foreign ministers in Beirut. At this meeting, which was virtually dominated by Prince Feisal of Saudi Arabia, representatives of Arab League states made it clear that they deplored Communism but that they had no intention of accepting Nasser's leadership in a campaign to combat it. Moreover, they took lines which implied that they considered Nasser something of a problem himself and that they wanted satisfaction from him on a number of points before they would even enter substantive discussions on the problem of Iraq. At the same time, Nasser's representative at the conference (Farid Zein-ed-Din, the former Syrian Ambassador to the U.S.) behaved characteristically throughout, and, if anything, actually increased the concern of Arab government leaders with regard to Nasser's intentions. We wondered at Nasser's shortsightedness in sending a poor diplomat to this meeting until we later discussed the matter with some senior Egyptian Foreign Ministry officials: we found that the Egyptians hadn't taken seriously the prospect of winning other Arab governments to their side, and that if they had miscalculated the outcome of the conference it was only in that they hadn't gained from it as much as they thought they would in the way of propaganda material to aim at the Arab peoples (and against their governments) on some future occasion.

Nasser's attitude towards other Arab states in the face of his current problems can be summarized as follows:

- (1) He sees no chance of effecting a reconciliation with leaders of Jordan, Sudan, Tunisia, and Morocco, and believes that anything more than a token attempt to do so would be taken as a sign of weakness.

- (2) He believes he can maintain satisfactory relations with the Saudi government, but that these will be strictly on a highly uneasy basis of expedience. The Saudis, Nasser knows, remain in a mood for compromise only because they do not dare risk serious trouble with Nasser under present circumstances and not because they have developed any sincere feelings of friendship for him. At the same time, of course, Nasser has no love for Saudi royalty and has grave doubts, which he probably will never overcome, that royalty can have any place in his long-range scheme of things.
- (3) He will maintain somewhat better relations with the Ruler of Kuwait. Nasser apparently believes that although the Kuwaiti royal family will be just as incompatible to a future Arab world as will the Saudi royal family, the Kuwaitis will survive longer -- and be less of an inconvenience to him -- because they are seriously interested in avoiding trouble with him, and have a keen idea what it takes to do so. In dealing with the Kuwaitis, Nasser is currently showing that he understands their problem as a neighbor of Iraq, and recognizes the necessity for appearing neutral in the Cairo-Baghdad conflict. His present relations with the Kuwaitis are satisfactory both from his point of view (and apparently theirs) and Nasser would probably like to keep them that way -- at least so long as his troubles with Baghdad continue.
- (4) With regard to Lebanon, Nasser is in the peculiar position of having a President and Prime Minister more or less of his choice,

neither would willfully go against his wishes, but are limited on positive action because of the restrictions which the internal situation of the Lebanon imposes on the Lebanese government. (Neither side won a clear victory last summer.) Nasser realizes that the key personalities of Lebanon include many figures besides President Shihab and Prime Minister Rashid Karami. At the same time, he has no particular feelings of friendship towards Shihab and Karami. Shihab was a choice of expediency; Karami simply happened to be a convenient choice among pro-Nasser alternatives ("We didn't choose him; he chose us," Nasser once told us). Accordingly, Nasser is not likely to have particularly good relations with the Government of Lebanon, and there is a fair possibility that he will shortly again find himself backing trouble-makers in that country.

- (5) With regard to the Arab world as a whole, Nasser is almost certain to continue his policy of appealing to the masses rather than to the governments, and to back Arab nationalist movements of the extremist sort, even though it may mean that here and there he will be passing up opportunities to obtain the support of more stable and conservative elements who would like to cooperate with him if he would rid himself of the extremists.

How Nasser sees his changes in Iraq itself

Before and immediately following the coup d'etat in Iraq, Nasser was convinced that the majority of Iraqi people were "Arab nationalists" and consequently pro-Nasser. In spite of all recent evidence to the contrary, Nasser

still apparently believes that the people are at heart his sympathizers and that they are behaving otherwise only because they are being skillfully and overwhelmingly misled by Qassem and his Communist propaganda machinery and because outspoken Arab nationalists are being ruthlessly suppressed by Qassem's Communist-dominated security forces. In other words, Nasser considers that winning over the Iraqi people is not his big problem -- all he has to do with respect to the Iraqi people is to keep them reminded of the fundamental invincibility of Arab nationalism and informed on the current iniquities of their own government. The big question in Nasser's mind with respect to Iraq itself is whether or not he can develop a capability to overthrow the Qassem regime in a manner similar to that in which Qassem and Aref overthrew the Nuri regime -- i.e. by a quick and decisive blow at strategic points -- and he believes that popular support will follow as a matter of course.

It is with this preconception in mind that Nasser looks at the Iraqi situation and estimates whether he does or does not have a potential capability for remedying it. Judging by demands he makes on his experts on Iraq, we gather that he is preoccupied with questions such as the following: Is there just one unit in the Baghdad area (i.e. a commander with officers and soldiers who are loyal to him), or who can get itself moved to the Baghdad area, which can be defected and induced, under the proper conditions, to take decisive action against Qassem and other senior officials in the chain of command and take control of strategic installations in Baghdad? Are there other units in Baghdad which can be neutralized (by bribery, promises of later reward, or intimidation) in to doing nothing, or into offering only token resistance

in the event of a coup d'etat attempt by pro-Nasser forces? Are there available ex-officers who still enjoy a following among soldiers they once commanded and who might somehow be capable of inciting a military uprising in the Baghdad area? Such questions as these appear foremost in Nasser's mind, and only secondarily (with one exception to be mentioned later) does he worry about questions concerning the position of various political factions, the minorities, the tribes, and other possible participants in another revolution.

The Iraqi army has been the element of greatest interest to Nasser, and up until the Mosul rebellion he was pinning all his hopes on the ability of the Iraqi army to pull itself together and take over the government. Even before the abortive Mosul rebellion he was beginning to lose these hopes, and reports he has since received of the behavior of ^{leading} ~~leading~~ Iraqi officers during the revolt destroyed them altogether. Moreover, Nasser is witnessing with dismay the thoroughness with which Qassem is ridding the officers' corps of potential dissidents, those who are not favorably disposed to friendship towards the Communists, and those who simply possess a capacity for turning effectively against him. He also sees that Qassem has become a popular figure to most enlisted men and that this, plus the fact that the Communists have been successful in penetrating the non-commissioned officer ranks, places serious difficulties in the path of any officer who would dare give orders to go against the government. Nasser gets highly discouraging answers to the most important questions in his mind. He has apparently not yet become so discouraged that he is ready to alter his conception of how Qassem's overthrow can best be accomplished, but if his current probing for exploitable contacts with the Iraqi army (including officers and enlisted men recently discharged from the army) do not soon yield results he may be forced to make

some basic changes in his approach, changes which could conceivably effect his attitude on the question of cooperation with the United States -- or with the USSR.

Nasser's thinking with regard to minorities, tribes, and other segments of the populace removed from those city areas which under sway of the Communists is largely defensive. Nasser strongly agrees with a view which we once reported as being held by Qassem: that the Iraqi army, possibly uniquely among armies of the Middle East, is unable to control civil uprisings on the scale which could possibly occur in Iraq. After considerable probing, Nasser has by now decided that he cannot himself make use of minority, tribal and other such elements, but he is worried about the possibility that the Soviets could use these elements to counteract any army move in the capital -- i.e. by creating civil disturbances beyond the capability of the army to subdue. Nasser's Syrian subordinates have been attempting to stir the Shammar tribe into activity (and have furnished them small weapons of various sorts, machine guns, bazookas, etc.) but it now appears that Nasser has decided to stop this: in the first place, UAR use of tribes has enabled Qassem to gain the support of the Assyrians and other anti-tribal minorities; in the second place, Nasser believes that premature use of the tribes will result only in their being wiped out by the Iraqi authorities before they can be used in connection with a central move in Baghdad.*

The Kurds are the big puzzle to Nasser. Before the Mosul rebellion Nasser appeared to believe genuinely that a large proportion of the Kurds

* It has just been reported to use that the Iraqi authorities have sent Syrian fifth column organizers a warning to the effect that if the Syrians continue their support and stimulation of the tribes of North Syria and Iraq the Iraqis would retaliate completely and ruthlessly -- to the extent, if necessary, of wiping out the tribes entirely, every man, woman, and child of them.

were anti-Qassem and pro-Nasser, and that they would immediately join any coup d'etat attempt simply upon hearing about it. Nasser was disappointed in this, and he has since had sufficient intelligence to convince him that he had earlier been seriously misled as to his standing with the Kurds. His present views seem to be as follows: The Kurds are a primitive people who understand little or nothing of the issues involved in the Qassem-Nasser conflict, but who know that they can exploit the conflict to simple ends of their own by creating incidents of various kinds. The one thing which could make the Kurds a real threat, Nasser believes, would be the creation of an autonomous or semi-autonomous Kurdish state in Northern Iraq. Nasser appears to have had conversations with Soviet officials which convince him that this is a real possibility. Whereas he at one time seemed reconciled to this possibility, even professing to believe that the creation of a Kurdish state would "free" the rest of Iraq to become manifestly Arab nationalist, he is now greatly concerned because he thinks that such a move would give Soviet and Communist prestige a boost throughout the area which Arab nationalism, at its best, could not counteract.

Nasser's Probable Actions

As he sees his own position, Nasser has a formidable area of problems across the whole range of his interests: with the West, with the USSR, with the rest of the Arab world and at home. Our talks with him and senior Egyptian officials leave little doubt in our minds but what the problem of Iraq is the first not only in order of importance but chronologically: in other words, instead of getting the help of the West in order to defeat Qassem, Nasser considers that he must defeat Qassem before he can turn to the West in any substantial fashion. In his present strategy, defeat of

Qassem is the first step for Nasser in working his way out of his difficulties. Once he sees that he cannot defeat Qassem he may change this outlook, but for present purposes we can assume that he will stubbornly hold onto it.

Nasser and his principal advisors are now working virtually full-time on the problem of Iraq, and Nasser himself is coordinating the overall effort. Although we can scarcely expect them to be frank in discussing such plans and problems with us, we have been able to infer that they will likely place the emphasis as follows:

- (1) First priority goes on acquiring intelligence on the Iraqi army and its personnel (including those who have been recently discharged) with a view to developing contacts which can eventually be exploited for the purposes of a lightning attack on Qassem, key officers of the Iraqi government, and key installations in the Baghdad area.
- (2) At the same time, but of much lower priority, will be the development of small guerilla units, some composed of military deserters and some of tribal elements, to conduct only the simplest harrassment operations at present and stay relatively "on ice" until Nasser is ready to spring the coup d'etat referred to above. (This part of Nasser's planning, incidentally, is one with which he seems to be having trouble. His Syrian officers are pushing ahead with this kind of operation, and Nasser is finding it difficult to hold them in check.
- (3) A considerable amount of effort will be exerted by Nasser's most skilled intelligence subordinates to develop fifth column operations at the top levels of the Iraqi government, particularly at

the top levels of the army. Nasser believes that Qassem could not possibly have been successful, Iraq and Iraqis being what they are, in eliminating the vulnerabilities which are bound to exist at these levels.

- (4) Large scale propaganda from Radio Cairo, associated clandestine radios and other means. There is some evidence that Nasser's present attacks are having excellent results, and Nasser believes they should be kept up at maximum pace.
- (5) Indirect appeal (i.e. appeals ostensibly coming from other than Egyptian sources) to religious and minority groups. Already Nasser is making a strong indirect appeal to Iraqi Moslem leaders, both Sumi and Shia, and we are informed that he has given orders for his political actionists to start working on other religious groups.

Nasser will feel his way slowly with respect to the above types of operations, and his rate of speed will be determined largely by the success he has in another area of concern: Syria. Nasser was reluctant to take over Syria in the first place (see our earlier report on this subject), and he now feels more strongly than ever that the political problems of that country may be insoluble. In the face of the Iraqi crisis, which involves a constant threat to his control over Syria, Nasser appears to believe he has no choice but to hold Syria under maximum security control, while working desperately to build the economy of the country to such a point that strongest grievances will be minimized below the danger point. He has in mind a large scale development program, as yet unformulated, which may depend in part on American aid, but he has been very timid in asking for this aid (all his conversations

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thus far with our officials have been "off the record") for reasons indicated earlier in the paper. Also, he has in mind the development of a truly popular political base which will give satisfaction to the political inclinations of the Syrian people, but will not result in reactivating the old political parties. In this his approach is restricted by his commitment to Arab nationalism of the "Nasserist" variety, and is therefore the one aspect of his approach to the problem of Syria which is likely to lead him into trouble.

This is also a danger for Nasser elsewhere in the Arab world. Some of his more courageous subordinates have been suggesting strongly that he should divest himself of his extremist supporters (mainly the Ba'athists -- Arabic for "Resurrectionists"), begin to live down the fact that "Nasserism" has become synonymous with "terrorism", and begin to collect some respectable supporters. Some have even gone so far as to suggest that Arab nationalism is no longer a sufficiently compelling movement to counteract the appeal of Communism to the Arab masses, and that Nasser should begin to appeal to the peoples of danger areas as a Moslem or an Afro-Asian leader. Nasser seems to be almost totally unmoved by these entreaties; he considers that Arab nationalism provides the only rallying point consistent with his basic motivations, and that the alternatives being suggested by his advisors can do no more for him than provide bases for propaganda lines -- and even then only for use in specified areas and within specified limitations. Thus, we are likely to find Nasser, after a brief period of seeming to ignore "Nasserist" followers in various Arab countries, reverting to the support of the anti-Western Arab nationalist extremists who caused the West to consider Nasser such a danger in the first place. He may try to curb their activities in some instances (in Lebanon, for example), but, as in the past, he will not be able to bring himself to do so entirely. The total result will be about the same mixture

of gain and loss for Egypt as has resulted from such behavior of Nasser in the past, and a considerable amount of distress for Arab political leaders who are normal targets for the extremists.

Finally, there is the question of Nasser's probable relations with the West -- so long, at least, as his plans are built around continuing hostility to Iraq and a concentrated effort to keep Qassem in trouble, if not actually overthrow him. There appears to be some hope in Western circles that Nasser, in defeat, will accept a status of one among equals, i.e., a defensive posture accepting, like other Arab states, such support and assistance as is likely to be offered by the West. According to such a theory, Nasser would remain technically Arab nationalist, and do his best to appear to be the spokesman of "true Arab nationalism", but he would for all practical purposes behave according to "Egypt first" policies. We happen to believe that this is virtually impossible for Nasser -- temperamentally, politically, and ideologically, -- and that even were this not the case the following probabilities would prevent his maintaining such an attitude for long: First, he is almost certain to be disappointed with any U.S. or British offers to support him (economically or otherwise) in his anti-Communist, anti-Qassem efforts. Second, it is probable that the Soviets will continue to be willing to underwrite Nasser, even though he remains anti-Communist, so long as he continues his propaganda and subversive actions against "Western imperialism". (We consider it highly possible that the Soviets may even accept some sort of pan-Arab entity under Nasser, should Nasser somehow manage to bring it about, and await until later chances to exploit it after they have fully consolidated their gains in Iraq and the Communists in Iraq -- or whatever they decided to call themselves -- are successfully in competition with other Arab nationalist claimants.)

In short, we believe that in attempting to decide whether or not it can "do business with Nasser" our government had better do so only on the understanding that it will not be dealing with a reformed Nasser, but one whose motivations are the same as they have always been. He may, for some immediate purpose, show himself to be otherwise, but it would be unrealistic to depend on it. To put it another way, if we find Nasser's behavior as a "positive neutralist" to be preferable to the dangers of Iraqi Communism, we should by all means support him; if we do not, we should abandon any thought of substantial aid to him (without which he may well go under) and prepare ourselves to live with a Communist Iraq. In any event, our government should not delude itself into thinking that it can make some deal with Nasser which will involve him abandoning the very courses of action which took him to his position of leadership.
