

PSYCHOLOGICAL STRATEGY PLAN FOR THE MIDDLE EAST

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

I. Planning Assumptions:

1. As we are planning for a period of cold war, it is assumed that prior to January 1954 there will be no overt military actions in the area and no local hostilities such as major insurgency or civil war.
2. It is assumed that the Western influences in the area will continue to deteriorate prior to January 1954 despite the presence of whatever Western military forces may be deployed there unless major psychological and other measures are undertaken.

II. Core of the Problem:

The area under discussion is of great political and strategic importance because of its (a) geographic position, (b) natural defensive barriers, (c) actual and potential sites for military bases, (d) position with respect to transportation routes, (e) petroleum resources, (f) importance to powerful world-wide religious groups.

As stated in the Policy Statement of NSC 129/1, paragraph 3, page 2, "These political and strategic factors are so important to the overall position of the free world, that it is in the security interests of the United States to take whatever appropriate measures it can in the light of its other commitments to achieve the objectives stated above (in paragraph 2 of the same document)."

The greatest danger to this area and consequently to the security of the free world as a whole arises from the already acute and growing instability of virtually every state in the area. If this is not counteracted it could lead to internal subversion of these governments by Communist organizations. This danger which is inherent in both short and long term problems is heightened by the proximity of the Soviet Union and its

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capability of overrunning the area. Although aware of the fact that most of the area would be occupied by the USSR in the event of hostilities the states of the area are not now prepared to take many of the actions which we believe to be called for as a result of the recognition of this danger. Loss of the area to the free world, however, would not only deprive the free world of the factors listed in the first paragraph of II but as well the Turkish Anatolia Eastern anchor of NATO defense and seriously threaten our Mediterranean-Red Sea and air routes of world communications and would endanger bases and strategic resources now being developed in North Africa.

This instability is due to various internal causes including the following: (1) growing nationalism which takes an anti-Western form; (2) the inertia of Islam; (3) the resulting extension of xenophobic religious fanaticism; (4) the advanced degree of political corruption in all local governments; (5) the lack of any broadly based support for the governments now in power; (6) lack of social consciousness or a sense of public responsibility on the part of almost all officials; (7) the age-old tradition of mob violence and political assassination; (8) the embryonic stage of national cohesiveness among the population at large, many of whom still cling to group and tribal loyalties in contrast to their governments who usually for selfish reasons bespeak nationalism; (9) deep-seated dynastic rivalries and intra-area conflicts that split the region which are accentuated by the artificial fragmentation of the region; (10) abnormal disparity between rich and poor; (11) the high rate of illiteracy and generally low level of education; (12) wide-spread disease and poverty; (13) the extreme weakness of both military and internal security forces; (14) the incipient decline of the feudal land owners and the growth of dissatisfied urban groups; (15) the reluctance of the states to act in concert from a military, political and economic point of view in the solution of regional problems; (16) continuing Arab-Israeli antagonism kept alive particularly by the refugee problem.

Among external causes producing instability are: (1) the British-Egyptian dispute over the Sudan and the presence of the British in the

Canal Zone; (2) the British-Iranian dispute over the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company; (3) the decline of British and French influence without the attendant development of responsible local authority; (4) the resentment of the Arab states regarding US policy towards Israel; (5) Questions raised as to our world power position by current events such as the to them seeming stalemate in Korea; (6) Soviet activity in and toward the area.

Underlying many of the internal and external factors is the impact of Western ideas regarding political independence, economic self-determination, and the rights of man plus the effects of the Industrial Revolution.

The net result is that the area is in essence a military vacuum, an economic slum, a political anachronism, and a house divided against itself. Furthermore, the basic political, social and economic pattern of the area is undergoing a revolutionary change. There is no possibility that this change can be stopped, but it may take one of three different forms: (1) it can be channelled into evolutionary forms, (2) it can take the form of controlled revolutions favorable to the free nations or (3) it can take a revolutionary path leading to chaos, fragmentation and extension of Russian influence and control.

The cardinal problem is how we can influence this change into lines which will further our national objectives. The long range task of the U. S. and its allies is to commit and develop adequate armed forces in the Middle East, to protect and defend that area in the event of Soviet attack. The short-range task is specifically to counter the infiltration of Communist and Soviet influence in the area by all psychological means and to endeavor to eradicate enough of the above mentioned internal and external causes for instability to permit the area to continue to stand on its own feet.

The NSC 129/1 objectives are of necessity broadly stated. They leave open a wide range of choice in the courses of action to be taken. Some guidance in narrowing the range of choice is given, however, in the accompanying staff study.

This study points out that the "imminent threat to Western interests arises not so much from the threat of direct Soviet military attack as from acute instability, anti-Western nationalism and Arab-Israeli antagonism...." The sense of the staff study is that the kind of stability needed is not a 19th century static stability, but a progressive stability which recognizes the presence of strong pressures for political change and provides effective procedures and leadership to direct those forces into constructive channels of orderly change. And it considers the settlement of disputes involving Iran, Egypt and the U.K. to be keys to the success of our Middle East Objectives, from which would flow cooperation in the Middle East Command and diminution of the danger of violent nationalism. Finally, it recognizes the psychological obstacles which the Arab-Israeli dispute has created for the pursuit of Western interests, and adopts a policy of "impartiality" in this dispute. These are the main premises on which our planning must be based.

In order to systematically spell out and effectively implement courses of action in consonance with the intent of the NSC paper we need to examine the complications introduced by divergent British and U. S. concepts concerning the pace and type of changes desired.

The key steps in the institution of a long-range program for the creation of political stability (e.g. creation of a regional defense arrangement, properly focussed economic and technical aid, the support of appropriate rising leaders) are seriously impeded by the unwillingness of Middle East governments to cooperate. And this unwillingness is based in large part upon animosity toward the British, and toward the U.S. for supporting Britain, as well as upon fear of public condemnation for cooperating with the U.S. on any projects in such a psychological climate.

If the United States, while continuing to play a role in the Middle East second to Britain's, and acting in concert with the U.K. rather than independently, is to accomplish the objectives of creating dynamic political stability and "a new relationship with the states of the area that recognizes their desire to achieve status and respect for their sovereign equality," we must work to alter British concepts of the kind of stability

needed. Dynamic (progressive) political stability is in many respects contrary to present British concepts of British interests.

In order for the U. S. and British positions to be consistent, we must work out jointly with the British a program to insure the kind of stability we want. We must concert with them in the choice of leaders, in the support of specific parties and class groups, and in the establishment of priorities for economic and technical aid.

Should we not be able to agree on philosophy, objectives or programs, we must either pursue an independent course involving major U.S. commitments or abandon the ambitious reform objectives we have set for ourselves. But before turning to an independent role we should exhaust the possibilities of winning British support.

While a bold policy of reform is beyond the capabilities of the U.K. alone, and possibly beyond ours alone as well, it is quite possible that a pooling of U.S. and U.K. resources and experience will be adequate to the purpose.

Our hesitancy at taking actions favorable to Middle East national aspirations has as its deepest motivation the suspicion that once national aspirations are "satisfied," it will not be in either our power or that of Middle East nations to prevent the forces released from degenerating into anarchy, rather than moving in the direction of constructive political, social and economic development.

The fact is that the substitution of a group of completely independent states for British-dominated administrations no longer is a solution adequate to the times. The creation of a psychological environment in the Middle East equal to solving the problem of security independent upon giving the people material evidence that security and progress are realizable. Not only do many of the boundaries constitute false separations of culturally homogeneous groups, but it is today beyond the capability of small nation-states, even those with relatively advanced political and social structures, to develop sufficiently viable economies to defend themselves. To constitute

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a political force meaningful in the same world with the U.S., the USSR, the regional grouping of Western Europe or the British Commonwealth, the strengthening of the Middle East must be approached on a regional, institutional basis. If France is not a significant power without NATO, then far more is it true that an independent Egypt is of little consequence in a free-world security structure. The arguments against Middle East regionalism, while impressive, are not of a different order from those which dispute the feasibility of integrating Western Europe. 1/

The initiation of regional solutions is essentially a psychological problem -- that of creating optimistic public expectations, a consensus among opinion leaders as to need and urgency, and proof of possibilities by demonstration.

There are among the nations of the Middle East cultural differences, variant levels of societal development and elements of conservatism and parochialism which impede the creation of a regional community. But the impact of modern communications and industry is rapidly eroding these obstacles. The more fundamental psychological obstacles are attitudes all related in one way or another to the stereotype of colonialism. Once the issues symbolizing colonialism are resolved the greatest psychological obstacle to the development of a regional community will wither away.

If then, a joint U.S.-U.K. policy of recognition of indigenous aspirations should be accompanied by a program of regional security, and regional political, social, economic and military development, the risks now considered attendant upon recognizing these aspirations will be greatly lessened.

What forms can regionalism take? First, economic regionalism. The selection of projects designed to knit the Middle East countries more closely together, and to benefit the vocal dynamic classes, while insuring vested interests against dramatically sudden economic or power losses,

1/ Regionalism will not only assist in the achievement of social and economic justice, it will provide Middle East leaders opportunities for learning political, administrative and economic techniques.

seems feasible. The pace of economic regionalism will depend largely on the economic assistance burdens the U.S. and the U.K. are willing to bear, as well as the degree to which oil-rich nations are willing to share their earnings with the less prosperous states.

Second, political regionalism. Loose federations of the Arab League type can be encouraged, as first steps along the slow road to a true regional grouping. The chief obstacles are Israeli opposition and inter-state competition, either for leadership in the new arrangements or out of fear that enlarged states would threaten the smaller. Political regionalism must proceed slowly, with appropriate guarantees against coercion and conflict given by the U.S. and the U.K. This pace will be closely linked as well with the pace of development of local economic strength.

Third, social regionalism. Among the Arab States this should gradually flow from the removal of political and economic barriers. Welding minorities, particularly the Israelis, into Middle East society has no easy answers. The steps proposed above, particularly actions acknowledging demands for the symbols of independence and sovereignty, should remove the more emotional aspects of Arab opposition to the Israelis. U.S.-U.K., or perhaps UN guarantees for the protection of minorities is a possibility, at least against the more flagrant forms of minority oppression. Since political regionalism would be a slow process, Israel need fear no such repression in the immediate future, but only the pressure of superior neighboring political power. For other minorities, such as the Kurds and the Armenians, the prospect of ultimate unification under a regional grouping may possibly be held out as a carrot.

Finally, military regionalism. For the present, the Middle East defense proposal seems the most significant. Its acceptance by Middle East nations is a psychological problem, contingent on prior adoption by the U.K. and the U.S. of positions favorable to the Arab States on the U.K.-Egyptian ^{2/} and

^{2/} Unresolved keys to this dispute, from the U.S. standpoint are: (1) Is the U.S. willing to share responsibility for defense of the Canal in peacetime; (2) Would Egyptian control of the Sudan be against U.S. vital interests.

Arab-Israeli disputes. It will provide opportunities for initiating under its auspices political, social and economic regional cooperation as well as improvements in defense capabilities.

The psychological climate essential to Middle East security can thus best be achieved by a regional attack.

All the above mentioned forms of regionalism can and should be knitted together by a congeries of regional institutions, both governmental and private, each linked in such ways as to support an over-all program. As a counterpart to such a U.S.-U.K. program, the Middle East nations should be encouraged to develop a plan themselves, as an exercise in cooperation. U.S.-U.K. programming should not, however, be based on this plan but should be linked to it where feasible to encourage a sense of indigenous participation.

Successful regionalism will require a very long time to bear full fruit. But even if such an attack upon the problem does no more in the short run than insure sufficient stability to prevent denial of Middle East resources to the West, and the surrender of those resources to the Soviet Union, its results will be of major importance.

For the alternatives posed by the current and growing instability are either aimless anarchy or the substitution of religious and ethnic solutions (Pan-Arabism or Pan-Islam), with their anti-modern elements, both of which eventualities would redound to the interests of the Kremlin.

In the event we cannot obtain the necessary degree of British cooperation, it would appear that we should announce and undertake simultaneously (a) an independent policy and set of actions sympathetic to Middle East national aspirations; (b) a policy of major U.S. interest and commitments in the area. The latter would eventually mean the substitution of major U.S. for British influence.

Unfortunately there is a serious obstacle to either a policy of joint participation on our terms, or a policy of independent and major U.S. commitments. Either poses tasks of a magnitude not matched by the resources pledged. The creation of dynamically stable political forces in the Middle East requires a degree of social planning and manipulation never before

undertaken by the United States. It requires a U.S. military contribution beyond what we are willing to make. Our total economic and technical assistance budget for the area is minuscule.

There is general agreement that because of the limitation of committable resources, particularly military, maximum reliance should be placed on psychological and special political measures.

These measures must be fully exploited, bearing in mind that even the organization of propaganda, cultural exchange and particularly of covert operations costs money, requires intensive training, and is not necessarily economical when measured in returns. In the Middle East, for example, covert propaganda and special political measures suffer severe operational handicaps. Propaganda, to be effective in the Middle East, must be subtle, carefully adapted to the theocratic cast of Moslem thought and the mosaic structure of Moslem society, and focussed upon local village and family interests. Concepts of a greater community linking village to "nation" and to the region can be effectively used, but pro-Western propaganda must be dealt out in very modest proportions.

There is a vital need for expanding inter-cultural contacts, particularly between the intellectuals and opinion-leaders of the Middle East and the United States. The details of such exchange cannot be formally planned, but must be developed by continuous departmental effort, and inter-departmental coordination.

The field of special political measures is a fruitful one, limited at present chiefly by inadequacy of personnel. Because of the keys they provide to unlocking the inner doors to political influence, the religious brotherhoods, "Waqfs" and many other forms of socio-religious organization, are vital targets justifying considerably increased attention.

Perhaps the most promising area for special political measures is the Soviet border area running from Turkey to Pakistan.

For the United States this area has always been a mystery land, neglected and unknown. Today, the Soviets are forcing an acculturation of non-Russian groups on their side of the border, and seeking to establish control

over kindred minority elements in Afghanistan and Iran. The Soviet intensified activity stems from two fundamental considerations. First, is the need for security for her newly developing industrial and agricultural complex, in the Kirgiz, Uzbek, and Tadzhik Republics and the atomic weapon industry in the Kazakh SSR and Chinese Turkestan. The pastoral economy of the Turkic tribes is being transformed into collective agriculture primarily to serve the growing textile industries of the USSR. Important hydroelectric developments are projected for the major streams which rise in the mountain areas on the southern border.

Second, she is exploiting the threat value which control of the border groups provides in Soviet-Iranian and Soviet-Afghan diplomacy. Azerbaijanis, Armenians, Kurds, Kirghiz, Tajiks and other groups are daggers pointed at Teheran and Kabul.

The free world enjoys potential advantages, political, geographic and religious, in approaching these tribes from the south. Awareness of Soviet sensitivity to Western activity in this area undoubtedly causes the Iranian and Afghanistan governments alarm and caution but this should not deter us from actively contesting the Soviet spill-over of influence beyond its border.

An active U.S. role among these border groups could serve at least four main purposes: First, to remove the threat these tribes now pose to the political stability of Iran and Afghanistan; second, to cause a recession of Soviet influence back to the southern border of the USSR; third, as a means of developing the intelligence and geographic knowledge necessary to incorporate this area into our political and strategic thinking; fourth, for the organization of the border groups, either as delaying forces which could be integrated into ME Strategic planning for the early stages of a general war or as nuclei of liberation forces which we could evacuate and train for later use.

But how to develop the resources for playing an active role? We can begin by pooling the knowledge and experience of the British, French, Germans, Turks, Iranians, and Afghans. Second, we can develop, perhaps unilaterally,

projects for a political future for some of these groups, particularly those with kindred elements north of the border. Third, we can utilize among them the forces of the religious faiths, particularly Islam. To play this role effectively we probably must sponsor an institute for the training of regional specialists, perhaps [REDACTED] as part of a Middle East Institute.

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So much for psychological and special political measures. Such measures must be looked upon as partial measures, bridging the period until the U.S. can budget for, train and commit military forces in sufficient number to assure the military security of the Middle East. In time, when the psychological climate is propitious, it may be possible to shift military forces from Western Europe to the Middle East. But should Western Europe not be able to replace these forces, the U.S. must be prepared to provide them by an increased rate of mobilization.

The stationing of adequate military forces in the Middle East should not be looked upon as a mere defensive security measure. It will serve also to assist in the creation of political stability and orderly progress. And above all, such a force will exert strong political pressure upon the Soviet Union in all its global planning and activities, because of the vulnerability of her southern border.

Meanwhile, the presence of U.S. naval forces in the surrounding waters should be exploited to show the leaders and peoples of the Middle East visible symbols of U. S. power; not only fleet visits, but flights of carrier-based jet aircraft over the chief cities of the area should be systematically scheduled and executed.

III. SUMMARY

The above analysis seems to imply two alternative choices: To reduce the U.S. objectives to more modest proportions, or to greatly augment U.S. resources. Additionally, the latter choice implies a further choice as to obtaining British full-fledged cooperation in achieving our objectives, or undertaking the major commitment ourselves.

The over-all objectives are basically sound, and should be changed only

if an augmentation of resources is entirely unfeasible.

To modify the objectives is to lose another cold-war battle. It has been effectively stated that: "...The influence of both communism and democracy in shaping the future of mankind is likely to depend to a great extent on their respective abilities to determine the changes which will occur among a majority of the population of the world in the second half of the twentieth century." 3/

The Middle East is an area where this lesson can be applied under relatively favorable circumstances; the undertaking of a major psychological program at this time would still not be subject to the impediments, contradictions and costs of an emergency reactive intervention such as have characterized our actions in the Far East. If we can possibly afford it, we should meet the 20th century challenge here by bold measures of sufficient scope to make a real difference in the cold war struggle.

Assuming for the moment that we can mobilize adequate resources and are willing to, and that [REDACTED]

25X6 [REDACTED] the chief problem is to harmonize and render complementary the five NSC objectives, choosing all concrete actions so that they converge in the sense of reflecting and buttressing the interrelated character of these objectives.

An attempt to do this, leading to choices of concrete undertakings follows.

IV. STRATEGIC CONCEPT

The five NSC objectives, viewed in the light of the objective factors listed in paragraph II, the long-range historical character of the cold war struggle, and the means available mean that:

We must create conditions of dynamic political stability, by first satisfying the indigenous aspirations for status and respect for their sovereign equality; specifically identifying and supporting potentially strong indigenous leaders who understand or can be shown how to use and

3/ p. 104 - The Rise of Modern Communism by Massimo Salvadori.

manipulate modern social, political and economic forces to develop indigenous power oriented toward the free world; by developing the psychological climate and institutions necessary to regional cooperation and security; and to accomplish these, by employing psychological and special political measures, U.S. economic and technical aid; the devices of British experience, and U.S.-U.K. military tutelage, skills and material assistance.

The chief elements of our psychological approach should be to create an expectation of an early increase in personal well-being; to stimulate the desire to work toward a regional community; and to eliminate as a fundamental obstacle to these preoccupation with the question and the symbols of colonialism. Propaganda skillfully conducted is of modest utility. More important, perhaps, is an intensive development of inter-cultural contacts, and the encouragement of institutions, conclaves and other forms of community enterprise.

Current special political measures should be continued and increasing attention should be given to (1) socio-religious organizations, (2) the tribal groups along the Soviet-Middle East border.

Each of the above means and ends must be so focussed as to support the others. Hence, the concrete tasks depend upon the formulation of specific criteria which serve to relate them. For example, economic aid, besides being viable in purely economic terms, should be so allocated as to strengthen specific leaders and their potential followings, to reduce Arab-Israeli tensions, to foster regionalism, etc.

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(Following section will list short-range objectives, basic undertakings and tasks).

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