Contents

Preface vii

Acknowledgments ix

1. Who Was Connie Mack? 1

2. Just Like Central Park 15

3. A New Order in Asia 27

4. Fading Empires 37

5. Spies with Scissors 53

6. Don't Bother Me with World News 63

7. A New Nation 73

8. Bananas in Göteborg 93

Photo Gallery 1 103

9. Ungovernable 115

10. Tents in Blair House Garden 131

11. Unfinished Sentences 153

12. From Piracy to Petroleum 167

13. Seeds of a Coup 187

14. Only Eight Percent of the Black Vote 213

Photo Gallery 2 253

15. Halfway between Beirut and Wellington 263

16. My Cousin Needs a Visa 283

17. His Concerns Are Global 303

18. Life after Government 331

19. Reflections 355

Notes 359

Index 367

Chapter 9

UNGOVERNABLE

The first glimpse of Baghdad in December 1951 was of our hotel, the Zia, situated on the banks of the Tigris, a hotel made famous in the Agatha Christie novel *They Came to Baghdad*.[3] We awoke the next morning to a bustling city and walked out to the busy main thoroughfare, Rashid Street. We watched as Kurdish porters with extraordinary loads strapped to their backs made their way shouting "*Balik balik*" to warn the pedestrians that they were coming through. Camel and donkey carts jostled with automobiles and bicycles for space in the street. We strolled along the sidewalk, past coffee shops and kabob cafes, against a background of klick-klack noises coming from the ever-present backgammon games. Antique shops, grocery stores, and that venerable British institution, Spinney's Chemists, faced the street.

Initially, we could not relate what we saw that morning to the fabled Baghdad of T*he Arabian Nights*. As the days and weeks went by, we realized more and more, however, that we were in the land of Scheherazade and the Bible. We learned that during Ramadan, the Muslim month of fasting, storytellers still read out *Arabian Nights* tales as they sat on tall stools in the courtyard of the principal mosque. South of Baghdad lay the Old Testament cities of Ur, Nimrud, and Babylon. Babylon was a must-see antiquity for American visitors, particularly for members of Congress, and we traveled over the dusty road many times to see the mounds of Nebuchadnezzar II guarded by a solitary stork sitting on its nest on an abandoned tower.

To the north was the ruined city of Nineveh, capital of the Assyrian empire, then being excavated by Professor Max Mallowan of the British Museum, assisted by his wife, Agatha Christie. When we visited the site in 1953, she was the official photographer of the dig and guided visitors through the ruins as if the mounds of brick were alive. We recall her saying to us during one visit, "I'm sorry the throne room is a bit dusty today, but let's go there anyway."

We eventually moved into a new house in an area south of the city. The move was somewhat delayed because the contractor had mixed up the electrical circuits. When the

light switch was turned on, it rang a bell for the servants, and the bell for the servants illuminated the room. We felt a correction was necessary so that one of us would not have to stand and hold the switch while the other read.

The house also had other inhabitants—yellow scorpions, stirred up by the construction work. Jean killed thirteen within a few days. We thought of painting scorpion symbols on the gate to dramatize our battle, but we were somewhat humbled when Jean's sister in Northern California replied to our account of scorpions by writing that she had killed fifteen rattlesnakes in her yard.

Upon our arrival in Baghdad, we were greeted with an invitation from Lispinard Crocker, the wife of our ambassador, Edward S. Crocker II, to come to the Embassy for a Christmas party. Not only did a welcome await us, but so did thoughtful gifts for the children. After our tiring journey, we were most grateful not to spend Christmas Eve in our hotel.

We continued our earlier protocol lessons with Mrs. Crocker, adding to those that our first ambassador's wife, Romaine Alling, had provided in Pakistan. Veterans of traditional diplomacy, they taught us much about the protocol of their era: where and when to leave cards, which corner of the card to turn down to indicate whether the card had been delivered or presented in person, where to sit—according to rank—on a sofa or in an automobile, and the proper attire for various occasions. Riding in a taxi in Istanbul with three ambassadors during a Chiefs of Mission conference, Mrs. Crocker stopped the vehicle in midtraffic because the seating was not according to the ranks of the passenger envoys.

It was expected by the Crockers that people would wear black tie for meals at the Residence: "dress for dinner" after six o'clock. On one occasion, a young officer stationed in Beirut joined his chief of mission, the U.S. minister in Lebanon, on a visit to Baghdad. I was at the airport to receive the party. When I returned to my office, Mrs. Crocker called and asked me to invite the young officer for dinner, "Eight o'clock, black tie."

When I called to extend the invitation, I learned that he had not brought a dinner jacket. I called Mrs. Crocker to tell her that he had accepted, and we would see if he could borrow a dinner jacket in Baghdad.

She replied, "You'll do no such thing. If he does not know how to travel properly as a Foreign Service officer, he can come and suffer."

I called the young man back and advised him to wear a dark suit. As he was leaving the Residence after dinner, he apologized to Mrs. Crocker for not having brought his dinner jacket. She looked at him coldly and said, "Well, I guess you think we don't eat dinner in Baghdad."

For the diplomatic corps and the elite Iraqis, life centered around the Alwiya club with its swimming pool and rooms for bridge and dancing. In the days before air-conditioning the pool provided welcome relief from the summer heat.

Our family found an additional way to escape the heat. We had a boat built for cruising on the Tigris River. Named by our son John, the *Peter Pan* was a story in itself.

In Oslo, I had just placed an order for a twenty-foot outboard motorboat but, sadly, had to cancel the order when we were transferred. I took the plans with me in the hope that there might be a boat builder in Baghdad. After all, there was a river.

Philip Hitti's *History of the Arabs* told of how Baghdad in the days of Harun al-Rashid was a thriving port.[4] Other books described a raft made from timber and inflated goatskins—the *guffa*, the world's oldest boat—that brought goods from Mosul to Baghdad.

When we arrived in Baghdad we discovered that the only boats on the river were the guffas, along with barges and tugboats built around tank engines salvaged from World War II—but no pleasure boats. As the winter rains subsided, I decided to see if I could have a boat built. I made contact with the builder of the tugboats. He came to my office one day, and I brought out the blueprints of the boat I had planned in Norway. Like all blueprints it had a deck view, a profile view, and a cutaway view. The builder studied the prints and then scratched his head. He turned to my interpreter and said, "Which one of these three boats do you want built?" Further conversation disclosed that his father had handed down the design for the tugboats and he had never seen a blueprint.

I ultimately resolved the problem through the cooperation of a young man in one of the oil companies, with whom I built a boat from templates in the furniture bazaar. One furniture maker moved all of his products into the narrow alley of the bazaar to make way for our construction. I spent several interesting afternoons sitting in the furniture bazaar practicing my Arabic and learning about another phase of Iraqi life. To get the boat out of his shop, the builders had to remove the entire front entrance. Thereafter, we enjoyed many pleasant evenings on the Tigris, dodging fishnets stretched across the river.

Iraq at that time was ruled by a monarchy installed by the British after World War I. The secret Sykes-Picot agreement of 1916 between Britain and France had established spheres of influence in west Asia. Faisal, the son of the ruler of the Hejaz, was initially proclaimed King of Syria. But the secret agreement had awarded that country to France, and the British thus moved Faisal to Iraq.

When we arrived, 18-year-old Faisal II, grandson of Faisal I, was on the throne, protected and guided by a Regent, his uncle Abdulillah. Faisal's father, Ghazi, had been killed in an auto accident in 1939. The core of the establishment was a group comprised mostly of Sunni Muslims, former officers in the Ottoman forces who had participated in the Arab revolt against the Turks in 1918. Some had worked directly with T. E. Lawrence (the famous Lawrence of Arabia) and, at evening parties, used to tell tales of their exploits. The most prominent was Nuri al-Said, who frequently served as prime minister when it suited him to do so, if it also suited the regent and the British advisors.

Iraq under the monarchy had the trappings of democracy without the reality: a parliament, political parties, and elections. But parties were carefully controlled reflections of ethnic and religious divisions. Elections were manifestations of the same control. In one election during my time, Nuri al-Said had all the opposition candidates arrested the night before the election and released the day after. Shortly thereafter, when I was in Kurdistan, I was invited to tea with a district officer. The Kurds who had been arrested and released sat on one side and supporters of the government on the other. The two sides would speak to each other only through the district officer.

Iraqis are a proud, if divided, people. The divisions were apparent, even in 1950, although among the educated elite relations were generally cordial and intermarriage was not uncommon.

In the political world, candidates and parties were classified as Sunni, Shi'a, or Kurd. The Kurds in the north—inhabiting a beautiful land of mountains and rivers—were a people apart from the Arabs in customs, language, and history. One evening we were having a reception for officials of the Ministry of Education, all Arabs, in our home. Suddenly a group of Kurds with wide turbans and bandoliers appeared at the gate. I had met them in the North and welcomed them, but when they entered, the other guests all moved to another corner of the garden.

To those of us who had been in Iraq in the 1950s, the disorder following the U.S. invasion in 2003 came as no surprise. In a briefing I prepared in 1952 for visitors to Baghdad, I noted, "Beneath the current calm in Iraq there are seeds of cynicism, discontent, opportunism, and extremism which could destroy the dramatic possibilities of this country." Lord Salter, a prominent British economist who spent three months in Iraq during the period, described the country as "a seething cauldron."

Iraqis were intensely political. On one occasion, at a lunch I attended, the host said, "Today is Friday, and we do not discuss politics on Friday." There was dead silence until someone mentioned a revolution in 1922, and the conversation quickly went from past history to current history.

Iraq is the only country in which I served where I was denied a life insurance policy, and that was in 1955. Perhaps I had never raised the question of life insurance in other assignments.

The major fear of Iraqi leadership then—as now—was the disintegration of the country. In one meeting between our ambassador and Nuri at which I was present, I recall the prime minister saying, "This country consists of three major groups, Sunni, Shi'a, and Kurd. If the balance among these groups is ever destroyed, the country will become ungovernable." How prophetic.

During this time, Iraq was very much a British domain. The British exercised mandate authority through a 1922 treaty. Elite society, both expatriate and Iraqi, revolved around borrowed traditions from Britain—the hunt, the clubs, the royal protocol. British education was considered superior to any other. Under increasing Iraqi pressure for greater independence, the relationship with the British was revised in a 1930 treaty. Iraq later became a member of the League of Nations and its independence was acknowledged. Britain, however, retained a dominant position through the treaty, particularly in commerce and military sales and training; British military forces were stationed at an air base, Habbaniyah, west of Baghdad. With their long experience in the region and their language skills, the British possessed a capacity for indirect rule that others envied.

Britain was jealous of any other country that challenged its favored position, including the United States. Lucrative contracts with British firms offered opportunities for favors to Iraqi politicians and friends. The British embassy had the advantage of excellent language officers and close ties to Iraqi tribal and political leaders. Iraqi resentment of the British role, nevertheless, continued. Many Iraqi nationalists saw the monarchy as "an imperialist implant," not truly Iraqi. A commonly expressed view among the Iraqi elite was that Britain and the United States were manipulating events. When a cabinet change occurred, as it did frequently, discussions in the bazaar centered on whether the cabinet had been drafted in the American Embassy or the British Embassy.

Although I had previously served in a Muslim country, Pakistan, Iraq was my first tour in an Arab country. I was exposed for the first time to the tribes, the divisions, the complexes, the recollections of a glorious past, and the scars of humiliation that mark the Arab psyche.

I was assigned to Baghdad as public affairs officer (PAO), in charge of the United States Information Agency's work in Iraq. As a diplomatic officer I was number three in the embassy. On one occasion, when the ambassador and the deputy chief of mission were both away, I became chargé d'affaires. On this, my first time in charge of an embassy, my diplomatic duties and my information duties converged when the sergeant in charge of our

Marine security detail, in a brawl at a local bar, took a poke at Reid Anderson, the anti-American editor of the local English language newspaper. The Marine guard involved was sent home; I wrote a letter of apology to the editor.

My principal task as PAO was to explain the United States and its policies. While attitudes toward the United States were not universally positive, we could claim important American accomplishments through our assistance programs, including dramatic help to the Iraqis in resisting a locust invasion in 1952.

I had a fine staff of Americans and Iraqis to assist in the work of the library, the film and lecture programs, exhibits, and educational exchange. Despite negative views of Washington policies, the United States had many friends among the Iraqis. Many students had been educated in the United States, and others had been educated at American institutions in the region, including the American University of Beirut and Baghdad College, a high school operated by a remarkable group of Jesuits from Boston.

However, an American education did not automatically create friends for the United States. Some students returned bitter over racial incidents and angered by what they saw as an anti-Arab tilt in American policy. The task was further complicated by cultural practices, preoccupation with the problem of Palestine, an undercurrent of sympathy with the Soviet Union, and our identification in the public mind with an unpopular Iraqi regime.

When I returned to Washington in 1955 after my service in Iraq, I wrote a paper entitled, "Elements of Political Instability in Iraq." Its focus was on the communist threat at the time, but if one substitutes the radical Islamists for the Communists, my conclusion may still be relevant: "The message of the United States has lost its appeal to an important segment of the intelligentsia in the Middle East. Many still respect our traditions, our history, and our institutions, but they reject our policies. Further, a militant minority makes any open expressions on our behalf unpopular. Paradoxically the effective intellectual leaders in these countries today admire and espouse political systems that represent the antithesis of true freedom of inquiry and freedom of thought."[5]

Differences in culture and practice required some acclimatization. We had officers fluent in Arabic, but Arabic is a language of studied ambiguity that does not always provide effective communication. Iraq, particularly in the tribal areas, was a society of frequent silences interrupted only by Arabic greetings as newcomers entered. An Iraqi once said to me, referring to one of our military attachés, "Colonel Murphy is a remarkable American. He can sit for half an hour and say nothing."

Private conversations in offices were a rarity—and looked upon with suspicion when they could be arranged. The offices of the average official, including ministers, were continuing conclaves. Men without any immediately apparent mission sat in chairs against the wall, kibitzing on the official's business and drinking glasses of tea. The minister obviously wanted to demonstrate that he was hiding nothing from the public. Little true transparency, however, existed in Iraq at that time, a circumstance that led to cynicism toward the government and assumptions of widespread corruption.

In all the developing countries in which I served, the belief in and reality of corruption were facts of political life that weakened and often undermined governments. Iraq was no exception. It was not easy for an outsider to establish the truth or falsity of claims of corruption. Few wanted to discuss the subject.

What was clear was the claim of many functionaries that they could not exist on their salaries without monetary supplements. Corruption reportedly ranged in form from bribes to the police or to nurses in hospitals to expectations of side payments or favors for contracts.

In Iraq, as in many a developing country, obligations by those in power to family, tribe, and followers led to expectations that the benefits of power would be shared. The sharing could take the form of official appointments, commissions, visits and villas abroad, or the suppression of unfavorable rumors. Controlling corruption was often inhibited by the assumptions of outsiders who believed that the only way to do business in a country was by offering extra inducements. In Iraq I encountered the rumors of corruption, Later, in Libya, I was to encounter the reality.

Iraq was then, and probably still is, a land of reciprocal obligations. Rewards were expected for favors. Editors, for example, who toned down anti-American diatribes at the request of the U.S. public affairs officer expected rewards. Other embassies were often suspected of paying to have something either printed or not printed. Payment might be in the form of supplies of paper or equipment or a full-expense trip to a foreign capital.

Even an educational exchange grant posed problems. The U.S. Fulbright program, then in its infancy, was based on the principle of grantee selection by a commission that included both American and Iraqi members. In a land where visits abroad were favors to political followers or relatives, the concept of outsiders having a say in selection was hard to sell. Nor could one always be certain of the results. We selected a popular poet who occasionally wrote anti-American verse for a U.S.-funded trip to the United States, hoping to change his views of the United States. He clearly enjoyed his visit, but the end result was a series of articles in one of Baghdad's papers on the brothels of Texas.

We did have a remarkable group of American Fulbright scholars who brought both teaching and research skills to be shared with the Iraqis. One of the more remarkable was an entomologist, Neal Weber, who would go out into the desert and kneel down in the daytime heat to determine the highest temperature at which insects still moved. When he left we had the problem of disposing of a remarkable collection of scorpions and other desert specimens.

For the American diplomat, whether abroad or in Washington, the question of gifts was a constant problem. Regulations prohibited the acceptance of gifts of more than a certain value, and gifts over that amount had to be turned into the Office of Protocol. In countries such as Iraq, where the giving and the expectation of gifts was a part of the culture, the refusal of gifts was not always understood. What to give in return was also a problem. Outside of gifts of books or justifiable grants for educational exchange, the information officer abroad had little to give.

The exchange of gifts also represented, at times, a social hazard. One became wary of admiring jewelry or other items of value being worn or displayed by another, lest the item be suddenly thrust into your hands as "a gift." The unwritten understanding was that appreciation for the gift would be demonstrated by a reciprocal gift of comparable value. I once asked an Iraqi friend what to do if you inadvertently found yourself admiring an expensive object and realized it might be suddenly given to you. He replied, "Say, immediately, 'May it live in your family for a thousand years.'"

In Washington, the question arose frequently of how to respond to anticipated gifts from foreign rulers on official visits. The normal practice was to respond with a framed photo of the American president, not always equal in value to the foreign gift. On occasion efforts were made to discourage elaborate gifts in advance. During the Eisenhower administration, for example, a protocol official was sent to Morocco to dissuade the king of Morocco from sending the president a horse. Eisenhower, however, did accept two elephants for the National Zoo from Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru of India. As I will note, I was later involved in trying to discourage gifts of automobiles during a visit of the Saudi king to Washington.

In Iraq, no amount of gifts or favors could have eliminated the unpopularity of U.S. support for the creation of Israel, considered by the Iraqis a humiliation for all Arab peoples. References to the Balfour Declaration of 1917 that promised a home for the Jews in Palestine were frequent. We were there in 1951, only three years after the creation of the Jewish state and the prompt U.S. recognition. The unresolved conflict between Israel and the Arabs was a constant cloud over relations with the United States. Iraqi troops had been prominent in the abortive Arab efforts to invade the new state. Iraq's

diplomats were prominent in United Nations efforts to protect the rights of Palestinians. Memories of the departure of the substantial and ancient Jewish community in Iraq were still fresh.

In November 1952 I was given a very close look at the Arab-Israeli dispute. I was assigned to accompany Senator Guy Gilette of Iowa on a trip through the region. With his high starched collars and black string ties, he represented another generation of politicians. The visit began in Cairo where we met the members of the new Revolutionary Council established in the revolution of July 1952, including Gamal Abdel Nasser. We then visited Beirut, Damascus, and Amman. In each of the Arab capitals the senator confronted emotional criticisms of the United States' support for Israel. He grew increasingly tired and unsympathetic with the Arab complaints.

We arrived at the King David Hotel in Jerusalem late in the evening. The next morning when we went to breakfast, we were greeted by a young man from the Israeli Foreign Ministry who welcomed the senator and informed him that there were twelve of his constituents from Iowa staying in the hotel and arrangements would be made for him to meet with them. The Arabs lost the war at that point as far as the senator was concerned.

In 1948 the office of my predecessor as public affairs officer had been ransacked by a Baghdad mob protesting the establishment of the Jewish state. My office, a three-story building on the main street of the city, was to suffer a similar fate in the year after my arrival, but with communist rather than Palestinian overtones.

On the morning of November 22, 1952, while I was on home leave in Berkeley, California, I turned on the radio and was met with the news that my office in Baghdad had been burned by a mob. A report at the time suggests that mob violence is not a new phenomenon in Iraq.

> On November 22, 1952, a group of students were parading outside a college in Baghdad, demanding the ouster of the dean. Their grievance was a rule that those failing one course would be required to repeat all courses of the year.
>
> The pattern of that November morning was a simple and not uncommon one in the Middle East. By eleven o'clock on that morning the placards demanding the dean's ouster had been replaced. The new ones read "Down with the Imperialists," "Peace," "Stalin," "Liberate South Korea." Two Communist-front organizations, the Partisans of Peace and the Union of Democratic Youth, both familiar with the art of demonstrations, had taken charge. . . .

> Many of the people of Baghdad regard riots as acts of God. Like storms, or floods, or plagues, they are something to be accepted and avoided. By Sunday morning, the 23rd, those who sensed the unrest kept to their houses. The police were unarmed and without orders to deal with the demonstrators.
>
> The mob's leaders had the targets clearly in mind. The first was USIS, the second the pro-Western anti-Communist English-language newspaper, the *Iraq Times*. . . . With tools they carried, they smashed through the steel doors and scaled the second-floor balcony. Kerosene was poured on stocks of paper and flames did the rest. Six thousand books in the library were dumped in the center of the floor and set on fire. From the two upper floors, every bit of furniture, stocks of pamphlets, files were thrown on a bonfire in the street. Projectors were not stolen; they were systematically smashed; so were radios, tape recorders, typewriters.
>
> What the demonstrators did not do in the three hours they spent in the building, looters finished.[6]

The Iraqi government was reluctant to pay the $100,000 in compensation we were requesting until I reminded a relative of the prime minister that Secretary of State John Foster Dulles would be visiting Baghdad later in the year, saying, "When he drives down Rashid street, past the shell of our building, how can I explain that the Iraqi government has not compensated us?" We had the check well before the secretary's visit.

Donald Maitland (later Sir Donald), Oriental secretary of the British embassy, was sitting in his garden across the river when USIS leaflets, tossed up by the draft of the fire, began to descend on his garden. "You Americans," he later told me, "go to great lengths to disseminate your propaganda."

One report I heard later was that the demonstrators were initially intent on attacking the British Embassy. That embassy, however, was located on the other side of the river, and the bridges were blocked. So, why not burn the Americans? It's all the same.

Turmoil in the Arab world arose at the very moment in history when the West, and the United States in particular, was becoming increasingly concerned over Soviet designs on the region. The question of which of the Arab nations would form the core of a Middle East defense was to dominate the politics of the region for the next decade.

Despite the outward insistence on Arab unity, that world has been constantly marked by rivalries among the nations created out of the Ottoman Empire in 1918. Syria claimed a special position by virtue of the history and prominence of its capital,

Damascus. Iraq, the center of the most prominent of ancient Arab kingdoms, asserted its right to preeminence. And Egypt, the largest of the Arab countries, made its own claim. And that claim was asserted with greater force when Gamal Abdel Nasser, emerged as Egypt's leader.

During the early to mid 1950s, U.S. policy focused on enlisting Iraqi support for American efforts to contain the Soviet Union. But to approach a regime preoccupied with its own survival, the rivalry with its neighbors, and the reaction to the creation of Israel was not easy. Add to that a deep Arab resistance to treaties with the West at a time when nonalignment was becoming an increasingly popular idea in the developing world. Washington was continually frustrated that the Arab nations failed to see the ambitions of the Soviet Union in the same light.

In June 1953, dramatic events unfolded in Berlin. Berliners resisted efforts by the Soviets to put down labor demonstrations. Photos showed courageous young Germans standing in front of Soviet tanks. Believing these to be vivid, concrete evidence of the threats posed by Soviet power, I distributed the photos to local newspapers. None was used. When I inquired why, I was told that the Iraqi government had prohibited their use. They did not want any pictures that might encourage resistance to authority.

Iraq was one of those countries seen in Washington as friendly by policy makers who either ignored reality or declined to look beneath the surface. As a result they took initiatives that probably weakened the monarchy.

Against this background, the Eisenhower administration, and especially Secretary of State Dulles, conceived the idea of a pact of "northern tier" nations to oppose the Soviet Union. Dulles presented the concept in a speech after a tour of the region, including Baghdad, in the summer of 1953.[7] Britain supported the concept, seeing in it a way to revise its treaty with Iraq.

We had some indication of Iraqi attitudes when the United States signed a military assistance agreement with Iraq in April 1954. I was with our chargé d'affaires at the Foreign Office when Foreign Minister Fadhil Jamali signed the agreement and immediately announced to us that he opposed the agreement and was resigning. Our stock did not rise when the first shipment of trucks under the program arrived. The Iraqis had been promised new equipment, but the U.S. Army markings under the paint could still be distinguished.

The first step, taken in April 1954, was a pact between Turkey and Pakistan. Then in January 1955, Prime Minister Adnan Menderes of Turkey visited Iraq and in a late-night session with Nuri Said agreed to a pact with Iraq. Hermann Eilts, then political counselor at the embassy, and I were called out of a dinner party that night by our

ambassador, Waldemar Gallman, to report the decision to Washington. We expressed our concern to each other at the time, but Ambassador Gallman was very much dedicated to the project and, as far as we know, raised no concerns himself.

The pact was announced in February 1955. Britain adhered to the treaty in April, Pakistan in September, and Iran in October. The Baghdad Pact, the northern tier alliance, was born. The United States strongly supported it, but never formally joined. Secretary Dulles was concerned over possible problems in securing Senate ratification. At each meeting of the pact, Washington sought alternatives to joining through other agreements and financial and military assistance. We used to say, "We were members of the social committee, the greens committee, and the finance committee, but not of the club."

The pact generated strong antagonism not only in Iraq but also in the rest of the Arab world. Washington hoped, naively, that an Arab focus on the Soviet threat would turn Iraqis away from their preoccupation with Israel. The Iraqis hoped, with equal naiveté, that signing the treaty would gain greater American support for the Arab cause. Scholars of Middle East history generally see the Baghdad Pact as a major factor in the ultimate overthrow of the monarchy.[8]

In 1956 Prime Minister Nuri visited Washington and met with Secretary Dulles. Nuri pleaded with him for the United States to take a more positive position on Palestine. When I accompanied the prime minister to Union Station, I noticed that he had a .45 automatic pistol in the pocket of his overcoat. He was clearly not confident of the future.[9] Two years later, the Baghdad Pact would collapse in the revolution of July 1958, and Nuri would be dragged to his death through the streets of Baghdad.

One positive gift of the Iraqi monarchy to the nation came through the development program. In what was considered a model for developing countries, primarily outside Iraq, the Iraqi government established a Development Board that included two eminent foreign engineers, one British and one American. The American was Wesley Nelson, who had worked on the Hoover Dam.

The development program concentrated on the taming of Iraq's two great rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates, for flood control and irrigation. The centerpieces were three major dams in the north. Aerial photos revealed the outlines of canals constructed by the Abbasid dynasty in the thirteenth century. Those outlines, with their perfect gradients, became the routes of modern canals. But many Iraqis were skeptical of the program.

One newspaper editor wrote a series of anti-British and anti-American articles claiming that no dams were being built in the north and that the so-called development program was a cover for the construction of barracks to house British soldiers. I went to the editor

and offered to fly him up north to show him what was happening. After hemming and hawing for a bit, he said, "I do not really want to know what is going on up there. My job as a journalist is to embarrass the government. I can't attack them directly so I attack those who are supporting them."

The need for flood control was demonstrated in the spring of 1954, when heavy rains and melting snows in the Kurdish mountains brought the rivers to flood levels that had not been seen since 626 A.D. The raging Tigris threatened Baghdad. Levees north of the city were hastily blasted and water diverted. Levees protected Baghdad, but the city became virtually isolated, and residents held their breath, hoping that the levees would hold. While it was still possible to cross the bridges to the western banks, many residents were evacuated.

Fortunately, the waters receded and Baghdad was saved. I wrote home at the time, "Two years from now, a new diversion channel being constructed by the Iraq Government Development Board will end the flood threat to Baghdad. But, not to be so challenged, this old river, which probably carried Noah, made one last effort to show its power."

In a demonstration of the tragic irony of Iraqi society, the offices of the Development Board were among the first targets of the mobs that took over the streets in the revolution of 1958. The young king, the regent, and Nuri were killed, and Iraq's long nightmare of military dictatorship began. In my paper "Elements of Political Instability in Iraq," I wrote prophetically: "Beneath this surface activity, there is discontent, frustration and impatience which provides easy opportunities for political extremists.…With any weakening of the central authority, this discontent could erupt and threaten the present fabric of Iraq's internal organization and international friendships." That was in 1955.

It is not within the scope of this memoir to relate the sad and tangled history of American relations with Iraq after 1958. In retirement in 2003, I viewed with dismay and some anger the U.S. decision to invade Iraq, a country about which we knew so little and about which, in the hubris of the Bush administration, we assumed so much.

In March 1955, I received orders to return to Washington to become officer-in-charge, Arabian Peninsula Affairs. My association with the Arab world was to continue.