

No. 239

780.5/12-2154: Telegram

*The Ambassador in Iraq (Gallman) to the Department of State*¹

SECRET

BAGDAD, December 21, 1954—4 p. m.

381. I saw Prime Minister Nuri this morning at my request. I asked him whether the time of the visit of Prime Minister Menderes had now been definitely fixed; what the prospects were of signing a defense agreement during the visit; and what the present attitude was of Egypt on Iraq's proceeding independently at this time with some form of defense agreement, bilateral or regional.

Nuri replied that Menderes had said that he would be in Baghdad on January 6. He was not prepared to sign any kind of defense agreement during the Menderes visit. He needed clarification on certain points before he could sign any agreement. He hoped to get clarification before February. Some time in the course of February when the legislative calendar will have been pretty well cleared, he wanted to make statement in Parliament on regional defense. Egypt, he said, had made her present position clear when she looked with disfavor on Iraq going ahead at this time independently on any defense arrangement.

In elaborating his statement on needed clarification, Nuri said that what he ultimately would like to have was a regional security pact based on Articles 51 and 52 of the UN Charter. But before he could make a move toward any kind of regional pact he would have to know how far the US and UK were prepared to go beyond their NATO commitments. These commitments, he observed, did cover Turkey.

At this point I reminded Nuri of our interest in seeing the northern frontier concept of defense come into being either through a step by step program, or through a single collective act. What we were concerned about was the vacuum now existing on the northern frontier between Turkey and Pakistan. If some initiative were taken by Iraq, I was sure the broader clarification he spoke of would follow in due course. It was hard for him, Nuri then went on to say, in view of Egypt's stand for example, to sign an agreement with Turkey now unless joined by the US and UK. Until the internal situation in Egypt, and for that matter in Syria too, became more stable, it was difficult for him to deal with those countries. In Iran too, a more settled situation had first to evolve. Obviously Nuri, probably in the face of Egyptian pressure, is stalling in the

¹ Repeated to Ankara, London, Cairo, Paris, Karachi, Tehran, Amman, Beirut, Damascus, Jidda, and Tel Aviv.