

No. 1382

187.5 MSP/9-652

The Secretary of Defense (Lovett) to the Secretary of State

TOP SECRET

WASHINGTON, 6 September 1952.

DEAR MR. SECRETARY: In response to your letter of 20 June 1952,¹ concerning the Government of Iraq, the Department of Defense has considered your proposal in recommending a Presidential finding of Iraq's eligibility for reimbursable military assistance.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff have concluded, and I concur, that:

a. Iraq's ability to defend itself and to participate in the defense of the area of which it is a part, is important to the security of the United States. Accordingly, recommendation should be made to the Director for Mutual Security that Iraq be declared eligible for reimbursable aid under Section 408e of the Mutual Defense Assistance Act of 1949, as amended.

b. If Iraq is found eligible, at the time the Iraq Government is informed of this fact it should be provided information substantially as follows:

(1) The United States is prepared to assist the Government of Iraq, on a reimbursable basis, in obtaining needed military aid which cannot be furnished by the British Government within a reasonable length of time. The extent of such assistance will necessarily be limited due to previous commitments to other nations.

(2) It is probable that limited quantities of 2½-ton trucks, anti-tank mines, and 75mm tank ammunition could be made available during the first half of Fiscal Year 1954. These items are among those which the Iraqi could profitably utilize during the current calendar year. For your information, this is the opinion of the Military Attaché in Baghdad.

(3) Limited quantities of non-competitive (obsolete) items of military equipment could be made available within a period of three to twelve months, the estimated time required to recondition this equipment. For your information, these items are of the type that have been made available to Syria.

(4) Due to lack of specific information on Iraqi requirements and the various factors in the military aid program which are subject to change, it is undesirable to attempt, at this time, to

¹ Not printed; it informed Defense that the Department of State judged Iraq to clearly meet the standards of eligibility laid down in the Mutual Defense Act. Since Iraq had been outstanding in its willingness to cooperate with the West and had shown great interest in the proposed Middle East Command, finding Iraq eligible and providing a limited amount of equipment supplementary to the British supply program would demonstrate that U.S. military assistance was provided to Near East countries which cooperated with the West as well as those who did not. (787.5 MSP/6-1252)