

No. 1417

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*The Charge in Iraq (Ireland) to the Department of State*¹

SECRET

BAGHDAD, May 24, 1954--2 p. m.

714. General Harry Meyers and survey team² departed Baghdad May 23 for Washington, ETA morning May 28. Visit, including contacts with Iraqis, visit to Army installations and field trip to Kurdistan Mountains, appears to have been highly satisfactory from point of view both parties. Friendly atmosphere on all sides. No incidents or disturbances. Iraqi political and military authorities cooperated fully, competently providing required information and [garble] review installations. Team impressed by Iraqi military organization, high quality officers and potentialities of defense.

Prior to departure General Meyers read prepared statement to Foreign Minister, Minister Defense Chief of Staff and selected group Iraqi officers. He reiterated nature teams mission, method of procedure, including that of decision on priorities of equipment. Explained need for possible offshore procurement. Emphasized his report would be prepared Washington and that implementation would require time. Stated in conclusion that he would recommend:

a. That a military aid program for Iraq be initiated with the least possible delay, and

b. That a military assistance advisory group be established in Iraq at the earliest possible date in order to coordinate the initial program and make plans for the receipt and transfer of the equipment.

In short reply, Foreign Minister expressed appreciation for team's visit which he regarded as second step in US-Iraqi cooperation, first being conclusion of understanding. Stated Iraq looked forward to further steps in developing common interest between two countries.

Team subsequently received in audience by King.

General Meyers commented, prior to departure, Palestine question had not been raised by any Iraqi. Said it was his impression that military have little or no interest in Israel but are concentrating full attention on preparing defenses to east and northeast.

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

² For additional information on the visit of the survey team, see the editorial note, *supra*.