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Securing the Middle East: The Eisenhower Doctrine of 1957

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The Eisenhower Doctrine of 1957 declared that the United States would distribute economic and military aid and, if necessary, use military force to stop the spread of communism in the Middle East. Eisenhower found it difficult to convince leading Arab states or Israel to endorse the doctrine's purpose or usefulness. Nonetheless, he applied the doctrine in 1957-58 by dispensing economic aid to shore up the Kingdom of Jordan, by encouraging Syria's neighbors to consider military operations against it, and by sending U.S. troops into Lebanon to prevent a radical revolution from sweeping over that country. The doctrine consisted of a major commitment by the United States to the security and stability of the Middle East and signaled a new level of U.S. resolve to exert influence in international affairs. By issuing the doctrine, Eisenhower raised the prospect that the United States would fight in the Middle East and accepted responsibilities in the region that the United States would retain for decades to come.

The Eisenhower Doctrine of 1957 consisted of a major commitment by the United States to the security and stability of the Middle East. A declaration that the United States would use economic aid, military aid, and armed forces to stop the spread of communism in the region, the doctrine signaled a new level of American resolve that reflected Washington's increasing power in international affairs, growing alarm with Soviet capabilities to expand into the Third World, and rising concern with the decline of the strength of allied states. This article examines the origins and formulation of the Eisenhower Doctrine, its reception by the states of the Middle East, and its application in three situations that arose in 1957-58.

The Eisenhower Doctrine was bred in a decade of mounting American involvement in the Middle East. In the years following World War II, U.S. security experts had come to consider the Middle East vital for security, political, and economic reasons, and they monitored both the declining capabilities of Britain, the traditional protector of Western interests in the region, and the rising interest in the region of the Soviet Union,

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America's nemesis in the Cold War. Since 1950, the United States had become progressively more committed to the stability and security of the Middle East, evident in such initiatives as the Tripartite Declaration of 1950, the restoration of Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi to the throne of Iran in 1953, the Baghdad Pact of 1955, the Alpha peace plan of 1955, and various measures to sustain Western access to the oil of the region.¹

The Eisenhower Doctrine originated in the Suez-Sinai War of 1956-57. In that conflict, Britain and France colluded with Israel to attack Egypt in October 1956 in a bid to unseat the regime of Gamal Abdel Nasser, whose policies had become intolerable to the colluding powers. Eisenhower believed that the use of force against Egypt would undermine Western interests throughout the Third World, however, so he used a variety of political and economic levers to compel the attacking powers to desist. Before they complied, the Soviet Union threatened to intervene in the fighting on Egypt's behalf, briefly raising the specter of world war. The global crisis eased only after the colluding forces halted their attacks.²

The outcome of the war set the stage for the Eisenhower Doctrine. Nasser survived the onslaught and in the process gained prestige in the Arab and Muslim worlds. Britain and France were discredited in those same communities as outdated and ineffectual colonialists. The Soviet Union tried to exploit its wartime blustering to win favor among Arab leaders, raising in U.S. minds a fear that Moscow would make a bold new effort to gain political influence in the Middle East. The pro-Western rulers of the Middle East seemed vulnerable to Nasserist and Soviet influence. U.S. officials resolved, in short, to fill the vacuum of power in the Middle East before the Soviets did.³

These political dynamics convinced Eisenhower that he must accept new responsibilities for the security of the Middle East. Given the collapse of British prestige and the rise of Soviet interest, he decided to establish a new mechanism for U.S. intervention to stabilize the region against Soviet threats or internal turmoil or revolution. "We have no intention of standing idly by," the president declared in December 1956, "to see the southern flank of NATO completely collapse through Communist penetration and success in the Mid East." Secretary of State John Foster Dulles told allied leaders that "we intend to make our presence more strongly felt in the Middle East." Thus the Eisenhower Doctrine was born.⁴

In conceiving of the doctrine, Eisenhower consciously dismissed alternative schemes to stabilize the Middle East. He rejected a suggestion from Soviet Foreign Minister Dmitri Shepilov that the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain, and France jointly negotiate an Arab-Israeli peace treaty, pledge noninterference in Middle East states, curtail arms supply to the region, and evacuate their military bases and abolish security pacts there; Eisenhower reasoned that such a step would undermine Western influence in the region and betray those Middle East states that had resisted Soviet power.

1. Peter L. Hahn, *The United States, Great Britain, and Egypt, 1945-1956: Strategy and Diplomacy in the Early Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 14-210.

2. *Ibid.*, 211-39.

3. Peter L. Hahn, *Caught in the Middle East: U.S. Policy Toward the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1945-1961* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 200-07.

4. Eisenhower to Dulles, 12 December 1956, Whitman File: Dulles-Herter Series, box 6; Memorandum of conversation by Goodpaster, 15 December 1956, Whitman File: Diary Series, box 19.

Eisenhower also dismissed proposals to build a U.S. security apparatus on Israel, on the grounds that the Arab states would move into Moscow's camp, and to build one on the Arab states, on the reasoning that domestic opinion would not allow a break with Israel.⁵

Eisenhower asked Congress to approve the Eisenhower Doctrine in early 1957. He requested authority to dispense \$200 million in economic and military aid and to commit armed forces to defend any country seeking assistance against international communism. He pledged to avoid intraregional quarrels and to concentrate on defending the area against Communist aggression, and he portrayed the authority to dispatch troops as a deterrent that would reduce the chance of war. Pointing to "the existing vacuum that must be filled by the United States before it is filled by Russia," the president told members of Congress that the doctrine was "important . . . to the peace of the world."⁶

Skeptical of Eisenhower's proposal, some members of Congress hesitated to approve. Various senators openly criticized the doctrine on the grounds that it would dangerously inflate presidential authority, expose the country to unnecessary military risks, and waste financial resources. Senator Allen J. Ellender (D-LA) called it "unnecessary, super-superfluous, even impolitic, doubtless unwise, and wholly unjustified." "Future historians," Senator Wayne L. Morse (D-OR) added, "may have to record it as a chapter written in blood."⁷

Yet Eisenhower prevailed in the domestic debate. He mobilized allies on Capitol Hill to promote the doctrine. The *New York Times* urged lawmakers to endorse the idea as a bulwark against Soviet aggrandizement. Congress passed a resolution approving the doctrine on March 7 and Eisenhower signed it into law two days later. Former Congressman James P. Richards, appointed by Eisenhower as special assistant with the rank of ambassador, visited Middle East leaders in March-May to seek their endorsements of the doctrine by offering them economic and military aid.⁸

Reactions to the Eisenhower Doctrine varied widely. Libya, Lebanon, Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan endorsed the doctrine even before Congress approved it and warmly welcomed Ambassador Richards, who dispensed tens of millions of dollars to them. King Hussein of Jordan approved the doctrine but asked Richards to stay away from his country to avoid stimulating a nationalistic backlash against his throne. Richards allocated funds to Iraq and Saudi Arabia even though their leaders complained of U.S. support of Israel.⁹

5. NSC staff study on NSC 5801, 16 January 1958, RG 273; Paper by Dulles, 3 February 1957, Dulles Papers, Subject Series, box 5.

6. Minutes of meeting, 1 January 1957, Whitman File: Legislative Meetings Series, box 2; Memorandum of conversation by Persons, 29 January 1957, Whitman File: Diary Series, box 21. See also editorial note, *FRUS*, 1955-1957, vol. 17 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1990), 7-8.

7. Address by Ellender, 27 February 1957, address by Morse, 2 March 1957, *Congressional Record*, vol. 103, pt. 3, 2689-93, 2940-48.

8. Proceedings of debate, 25 February 1957, *Congressional Record*, vol. 103, pt. 2, 2517-44; "A Soviet Counter-Blast," *New York Times*, 14 February 1957, p. 26; Dulles to Eisenhower, 4 March 1957, Whitman File: Dulles-Herter Series, box 6; Eisenhower to Richards, 9 March 1957, White House Central File (Official), box 594; Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Abilene, Kansas; Dulles to Richards, 9 March 1957, RG 59, 120.1580.

9. Staff Notes 62, 9 January 1957, special staff note, 1 April 1957, Whitman File: Diary Series, boxes 21-22; Heath to Dulles, 8 February 1957, RG 59, 683A.86; Mallory to Dulles, 16 March 1957, RG 59, 120.1580; Rountree to Dulles, 4, 16, 17 April 1957, RG 59, Lot 57 D 616, box 14.

Syria and Egypt, by contrast, showed no support for the Eisenhower Doctrine. Richards avoided Syria because of the unfriendliness of its regime toward the United States. Nasser declined to invite Richards to visit Egypt to discuss the doctrine, and Eisenhower decided not to press the matter on the fear that Nasser might tarnish the doctrine by rejecting it. Years later, Nasser told a member of Congress that the doctrine seemed “a device to re-establish imperial control by non-military means” and that he would “have nothing to do with it and felt it was directed at Egypt as much as at any communist threat.”¹⁰

Eisenhower intended to isolate the doctrine from Israel, which actually suited Israeli leaders. The State Department opposed special aid for Israel in light of its relative security against communism and the likely reaction among Arab states to such aid. For his part, Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion disliked the doctrine because it promised to strengthen Western-Arab ties and reward Arab states that remained hostile to his country. He also feared that U.S. pressure to affirm the doctrine would imperil Israel’s budding rapprochement with the Soviet Union. Israeli officials were pleased that Nasser’s criticism of the doctrine damaged its prospects at no cost to their own interests.¹¹

Richards visited Israel only after pro-Israel members of Congress pressured Dulles to dispense some aid to Israel. Given their mutual lack of enthusiasm for any Israeli association with the doctrine, however, Richards and Israeli leaders debated the doctrine to a standstill. Richards rejected Israeli requests for economic aid and Foreign Minister Golda Meir refused to affirm the doctrine publicly.¹²

As Richards toured the Middle East, the Pentagon prepared plans to enforce the Eisenhower Doctrine if ordered to do so. Officers drew up contingency plans for intervention in an Arab-Israeli conflict, for intervention in any state that became an agent of Communist expansion, and for protection of U.S. nationals in various states in the region. In the event of an emergency, the Pentagon would depend on the Sixth Fleet, which patrolled the Mediterranean; the Middle East Task Force, which patrolled the Persian Gulf, the Arabian Sea, and the Red Sea; and Air Force units in Western Europe that could relocate quickly to Turkey. The Army earmarked a regimental combat team of 11,000 soldiers in Europe and two divisions in the United States for action in the Middle East. With such forces combat ready, atomic capable, and mobile, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) expressed confidence that the United States would prevail in any operations conducted under the Eisenhower Doctrine.¹³

10. Reinhardt to Herter, 27 May 1960, *FRUS, 1958-1960*, 13: 582-86. See also Hare to Dulles, 10 January 1957, *FRUS, 1955-1957*, 17: 16-19; Hare to Dulles, 15 February 1957, RG 59, 684A.86; Rountree to Herter, 11 April 1957, RG 59, Lot 59 D 582, box 5.

11. Lawson to Dulles, 8 January 1957, RG 59, 974.7301; Circular cable from Eytan (Hebrew), 6 January 1957, RG 130.23, 3088/3; Circular cable from IFM (Hebrew), 20 January 1957, Records of the Foreign Ministry, RG 130.23, 3089/7, Israel State Archive, Jerusalem; Wilkins to Rountree, 16 April 1957, RG 59, 674.84A.

12. Memorandum of conversation, 1 May 1957, Herter Papers, Telecon Series, box 10. See also Dulles to Richards, 18 April 1957, Richards to Dulles, 4 May 1957, *FRUS, 1955-1957*, 552-53, 597-601; Israeli memorandum of conversation, 3 May 1957, RG 130.02/2, 4330/8; Ben-Gurion Diary (Hebrew), 3, 17-18 May 1957; Rountree to Dulles, 8 May 1957, memorandum by Richards, 25 May 1957, RG 59, Lot 57 D 616, boxes 14, 16.

13. Hahn, *Caught in the Middle East*, 226-27.

Although never formally invoked, the Eisenhower Doctrine guided U.S. policy in three controversies. First, it inspired Eisenhower and Dulles to preserve the reign of Jordan's King Hussein during a political crisis in his country in early 1957. The crisis originated as an internal struggle for power. Suleiman al-Nabulsi, appointed prime minister in late 1956, encouraged a call by nationalists to overthrow King Hussein and enter a federation with Syria and Egypt. In April 1957, King Hussein asserted his authority by summoning thousands of allied Bedouin warriors to Amman and dismissing al-Nabulsi and Army Chief of Staff General Ali Abu Nuwar on charges of conspiracy and insubordination. U.S. officials promptly stabilized Hussein with tens of millions of dollars in aid.¹⁴

The crisis in Jordan also triggered an international showdown. Pronouncements and troop movements indicated that Syria might intervene in Jordan to help the rebels and that Iraq or Saudi Arabia might enter to defend the monarchy, while a reported partial mobilization by Israel revealed that it might seize the West Bank if Jordan disintegrated. Syria criticized Israel's mobilization and Israel charged that Egypt and Syria aimed to take over Jordan. Nervous U.S. officials feared that any spark—such as the death of King Hussein—would set off a chain reaction leading to a war over Jordan. U.S. intelligence officers could only hope that “the neighboring states will work to preserve the Kingdom lest each . . . lose out in the division of the spoils.”¹⁵

Such concerns motivated Eisenhower also to protect Jordan from external encroachment. He publicly reaffirmed the Tripartite Declaration as a deterrent to foreign intervention. The Pentagon ordered the Sixth Fleet to sail to the eastern Mediterranean, stationed the Sixth Fleet Amphibious Task Group in Beirut, positioned two destroyers near Massawa-Aden, and alerted ground and air units in Europe for possible deployment to air and land bases in Turkey and Lebanon. Jordan's neighbors hesitated, and the kingdom survived.¹⁶

Second, Eisenhower based his policy during a crisis in Syria on the Eisenhower Doctrine. U.S.-Syrian relations had deteriorated since Shukry al-Quwatly became president in August 1955. al-Quwatly had criticized the Baghdad Pact, accepted Soviet arms supply, exposed an Anglo-American covert operation against his regime in October

14. Mallory to Dulles, 3 April 1957, General Records of the Department of State, RG 59, 120.1580, National Archives, Washington, DC; Collins to Assistant to Secretary of Defense, 15 April 1957, Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, RG 218, CICS Radford, box 16, 091 Palestine, National Archives, Washington, DC; Richard B. Parker, “The United States and King Hussein,” in *The United States and the Middle East: An Historical and Political Reassessment*, 2nd ed., ed. David W. Lesch (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1999), 107-13; Uriel Dann, *King Hussein and the Challenge of Arab Nationalism: Jordan, 1955-1967* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 55-77.

15. Collins to Assistant to Secretary of Defense, 15 April 1957, RG 218, CJCS Radford, box 16, 091 Palestine. See also Dulles to Moose, 29 March 1957, Mallory to Dulles, 22 April 1957, Dulles to Lawson, 23 April 1957, RG 59, 684A.85; Memorandum of conversation by Waggoner, 28 March 1957, RG 59, 683.84A; Mallory to Dulles, 3 May 1957, RG 59, 684A.86.

16. JCS circular cable, 25 April 1957, RG 218, JCS Geographic File, box 5, CCS 381 EMMEA (11-19-47). See also memorandum by Decker, 18 February 1957, JMEPC 300/12, 19 February 1957, RG 218, CJCS Radford, box 16, 091 Palestine; Drain to Dulles, 24 April 1957, John Foster Dulles Papers, Special Assistant Chronological Series, box 11, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Abilene, Kansas; JCS circular cable, 25 April 1957, CINCNELM to CINCATLFLT, 26 April 1957, memorandum by Army COS, 7 May 1957, RG 218, JCS Geographic File, box 5, CCS 381 EMMEA (11-19-47).

1956, denounced the Eisenhower Doctrine, suppressed conservative opposition, and apparently fomented the revolt in Jordan. Worried by evidence of mounting Communist influence in Syria, U.S. officials apparently launched a second covert operation in Damascus in August 1957, but Syria infiltrated the conspiracy, expelled three U.S. diplomats, and surrounded the U.S. embassy with tanks. In retaliation, Eisenhower expelled two Syrian envoys from Washington.¹⁷

This diplomatic showdown prompted Eisenhower to organize Western military maneuvers against Syria. Concerned that the Soviet Union might annex Syria or subvert neighboring pro-Western regimes, Eisenhower encouraged Turkey, Iraq, Lebanon, and Jordan to “band together, and using such excuses as necessary, move to eliminate the Syrian government.” Prudently, the president ordered the Pentagon to return the Sixth Fleet to the eastern Mediterranean, station NATO planes in Turkey, and alert military commands worldwide to prepare for war. Combined with signs that the Soviets wished to escalate the Cold War, events in Syria struck Dulles as “the greatest peril for us since the Korean War.”¹⁸

Contrary to Eisenhower’s wishes, however, only Turkey moved firmly against Syria. Jordan, Iraq, and Lebanon remained passive and Saudi Arabia blamed the trouble in Damascus on U.S. policies. Turkish leaders, by contrast, told U.S. officials that they considered Syria “a cancer on the Middle East,” and concentrated 50,000 soldiers near the Syrian border by September. Dulles hoped that the Turkish move would “‘cool off’ Syrian hotheads.” But an armed showdown developed and lasted for several weeks.¹⁹

By late 1957, Eisenhower faced a bind in Syria. To urge Turkey to relent from its military mobilization would amount to a retreat under Soviet pressure. Turkish military action, however, Dulles feared, “would have almost as bad an effect . . . as if the Israelis took military action on their own against Syria.” Worse, Egyptian pilots and soldiers trickled into Syria and on October 13 Cairo and Damascus formed a joint command to defend against Turkey, a move that made it more difficult for U.S. officials to press Turkey into action.²⁰

17. State Department paper, 20 November 1956, RG 59, 684A.86; Moose to Dulles, 19 May 1957, RG 59, 683.84A; Minutes of meeting, 16 May 1957, Whitman File: NSC Series, box 8; Collins to CJCS, 17 June 1957, RG 218, CJCS Radford, box 16, 091 Palestine; Memorandum of conversation, 14 August 1957, Christian Herter Papers, Telecon Series, box 10, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Abilene, Kansas; Douglas Little, “Cold War and Covert Action: The United States and Syria, 1945-1958,” *Middle East Journal* 44:1 (Winter 1990), 51-75.

18. Memorandum of conversation by John Eisenhower, 21 August 1957, Whitman File: International Series, box 43; Memorandum of conversation by Goodpaster, 7 September 1957, Whitman File: International Series, box 43. See also circular by JCS, 21 August 1957, RG 218, JCS Geographic File, box 6, CCS 381 EMMEA (11-19-47); Circular by CJCS, 23 August 1957, RG 218, JCS decimal file, 381 (8-23-57), box 41.

19. Memorandum of conversation by Goodpaster, 7 September 1957, Ann William File, International Series, box 43, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Abilene, Kansas; Memorandum of conversation by Dulles, 28 October 1957, John Foster Dulles Papers, GC&M Series, box 1, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Abilene, Kansas. See also Dulles to Embassy in Jidda, 27 August 1957, RG 59, 683.00.

20. Memorandum of conversation by Macomber, 6 October 1957, Dulles Papers, GC&M Series, box 1. See also memorandum of conversation by Stearns, 6 September 1957, RG 59, 674.85; Wilcox and Rountree to Dulles, 4 October 1957, RG 59, Lot 60 D 113, box 43; Rockwell to Rountree, 15 October 1957, RG 59, 674.83.

The tension over Syria finally broke when Syria and Egypt merged into the United Arab Republic (UAR) on February 1, 1958. Surprised by this development, U.S. officials initially feared that the UAR would challenge Israel militarily, bolster Nasser's stature, and press Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan to join the new union. U.S. leaders contemplated nudging friendly powers in the Middle East to occupy Syria. Eisenhower and Dulles soon realized, however, that opposition to the merger would only earn Arab resentment, and they also calculated that the UAR would provide certain gains such as arresting the spread of communism in Damascus and absorbing Nasser's political energy. Thus, the United States formally recognized the UAR on February 25 and the U.S.-Syrian crisis passed.²¹

The Eisenhower Doctrine provided a framework for U.S. action for the third time during a July 1958 crisis involving the pro-Western states of Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq. Lebanon became a major concern to Eisenhower in early 1958, when Lebanese Muslims, swayed by Nasser's vision of pan-Arab nationalism, challenged the authority of President Camille Chamoun, a Christian who had practiced a pro-American foreign policy and who tried to extend his six-year term in office, scheduled to end in September 1958, by amending the constitution to remove restrictions on such a move. When violence wracked Lebanon in May 1958, U.S. officials supplied Chamoun with weapons that he used to suppress antigovernment rioting. But instability lingered, and Chamoun asked the United States to intervene militarily to save his presidency.²²

Initially, Eisenhower declined to intervene. He recognized that the fall of Chamoun would probably vault into power an anti-Western, pro-Nasser radical or possibly even trigger an Israeli-UAR war for control of the country. Yet he also realized that intervention to prolong Chamoun's presidency would diminish U.S. prestige in many Third World states. Even after Chamoun met certain U.S. conditions, including abandoning his own quest to remain president, Eisenhower hesitated to act. Eisenhower and Dulles doubted that intervention "would either solve the present crisis or enhance Lebanon's long term position in the area."²³

A coup against the government of Iraq on July 14 finally prompted Eisenhower, still with great reluctance, to send soldiers into Lebanon. "This is probably our last chance to do something in the area," he told his advisors. Dulles agreed that "the losses from doing nothing would be worse than the losses from action." Eisenhower ordered the Marines to occupy strategic sites in Beirut and to preserve the independence and integrity of Lebanon, and he dispatched Deputy Undersecretary of State Robert D. Murphy to Beirut to find a political settlement that would enable an early withdrawal

21. Dulles to Herter, 29 January 1958, circular cable by Herter, 15 February 1958, *FRUS, 1958-1960*, 13: 412-13, 425-26; Minutes of meeting, 6 February 1958, Whitman File: NSC Series, box 9; Dulles to Embassy in Baghdad, 8 February 1958, RG 59, 674.83.

22. Minutes of meetings, 27, 29 May, 3 June 1958, Whitman File: NSC Series, box 10; Irene L. Gendzier, *Notes from the Minefield: United States Intervention in Lebanon and the Middle East, 1945-1958* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

23. Dulles to embassy Beirut, 18 June 1958, Whitman File: International Series, box 34. See also McClintock to Dulles, 13 May 1958, memorandum of conversation by Thompson, 20 May 1958, RG 59, Lot 59 D 600, box 1; Minutes of meeting, 29 May 1958, Whitman File: NSC Series, box 10.

of U.S. troops. "We must get Lebanon into condition where it can take care of itself," Eisenhower told Dulles, "because we cannot keep troops there indefinitely."²⁴

The military intervention in Lebanon produced acceptable short-term results for the United States. General Fuad Chehab won election to the presidency on July 31, accommodated the nationalists and Muslim rebels by distancing himself from the United States, and restored stability to Lebanon. His election, Director of Central Intelligence Allen Dulles told the National Security Council, was "probably the most favorable result under the complicated circumstances existing in Lebanon." U.S. forces withdrew from the country in late October.²⁵

The Eisenhower Doctrine also informed U.S. policy in Jordan and Iraq. As U.S. Marines occupied Lebanon, Eisenhower endorsed a British operation to prevent a revolution in Jordan. Hours after the coup in Baghdad, Britain suggested joint intervention to save King Hussein from a copycat rebellion. Foster Dulles told Eisenhower that he had "no enthusiasm" for the idea because King Hussein was an unpopular leader of an artificial state, and intervention would inflame Arab nationalism and likely fail. The JCS endorsed intervention, however, and Allen Dulles warned that a power vacuum in Jordan would trigger an Israeli-Iraqi clash. Eisenhower thus endorsed British action in Jordan and provided logistical support but declined to send U.S. combat troops.²⁶

Eisenhower considered the British intervention in Jordan a success. The infusion of British troops and financial subsidies stabilized the kingdom internally, while U.S. diplomacy shielded it from external pressures. When British forces departed in late 1958, King Hussein's throne was stable. In addition, the Anglo-U.S. collaboration revealed that the breach between Washington and London from the Suez-Sinai War had fully healed.²⁷

Beyond Lebanon and Jordan, Eisenhower remained opposed to Western military action to contain intraregional conflict. Britain proposed joint military operations against Arab radicals in Iraq and Syria, and Allen Dulles warned that the Iraqi coup, if not reversed, would imperil not only Lebanon and Jordan, but also Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Iran. Yet Eisenhower refused to sanction "a big operation" in Iraq or Syria because it would run "far, far beyond anything which I have the power to do constitutionally."

24. Memorandum of conversation by Goodpaster, 14 July 1958, *FRUS, 1958-1960*, 11: 211-15; Memorandum of conversation, 16 July 1958, Whitman File: Diary Series, box 34. See also military attaché to Army, 14 July 1958, Dulles to McClintock, 15 July 1958, circular cable by Dulles, 15 July 1958, Murphy to Dulles, 17-19, 22, 30 July 1958, Chamoun to Eisenhower, 21 July 1958, RG 59, Lot 59 D 600, boxes 3, 4.

25. Minutes of meeting, 31 July 1958, Whitman File: NSC Series, box 10. See also memorandum for the record by Stimpson, 4 August 1958, Herter Papers, Memorandum Series, box 18; Douglas Little, "His Finest Hour? Eisenhower, Lebanon, and the 1958 Middle East Crisis," in *Empire and Revolution: The United States and the Third World Since 1945*, ed. Peter L. Hahn and Mary Ann Heiss (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2001), 17-47.

26. Memorandum of conversation by Goodpaster, 16 July 1958, Whitman File: Diary Series, box 35. See also Allen Dulles briefing notes, 14 July 1958, White House Office Files, Office of Staff Secretary, International Series, box 10, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Abilene, Kansas; CNO to COMSIXTHFLT, 17 July 1958, RG 218, JCS decimal file, box 92, CCS 381 (8-23-57).

27. Memoranda of conversation, 14, 23 August 1958, Herter Papers, Telecon Series, box 11; Memorandum of conversation by Lakeland, 15 October 1958, RG 59, Lot 61 D 20, box 1; Morris to Hadow, 10 December 1958, Caccia to Lloyd, 18 December 1958, FO 371/134313.

Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev warned, moreover, that U.S. intervention in Iraq would cause “most dangerous and unforeseen consequences.” Whereas the United States could manage an intervention in Lebanon, Dulles noted, “in the other countries, the thing might blow up.”²⁸

Indeed, despite U.S. moderation, the Western interventions in Lebanon and Jordan provoked tension between the superpowers. The Soviets publicly attributed the operations to “the yearning of the oil monopolies of the USA and other western powers to preserve their colonialist rule . . . and the failure of the Baghdad Pact and the notorious [Eisenhower] doctrine.” In the Security Council, the United States and Britain vetoed Soviet resolutions demanding an immediate end to the occupations and the Soviets vetoed U.S. resolutions approving them. After Khrushchev warned that Eisenhower was “playing with fire in a powder keg,” the Pentagon prudently monitored Soviet military maneuvers; sent five air squadrons to Adana, Turkey; placed forces worldwide on a general alert; and ordered North American Defense Command fighter interceptors, armed with MB-1 atomic rockets, to five-minute alert status.²⁹

The Eisenhower Doctrine faded in practical importance in the aftermath of the 1958 interventions. U.S. officials affirmed their determination to practice anti-Soviet containment in the Middle East, thus continuing the anti-Communist pretensions of the doctrine for decades to come. Yet they also realized that Arab nationalism and anti-Western passions posed a greater challenge to their interests in the region. As officials in Washington realized that their resistance to Arab nationalism had failed to guarantee Western interests in the region, the Eisenhower Doctrine faded as the administration adopted a policy of accommodating nationalism by such means as nurturing a rapprochement with Nasser.

U.S. officials also found it difficult to square the Eisenhower Doctrine with the Arab-Israeli conflict. They intended the doctrine to shield the Middle East from the external influence of the Soviet Union. Arab states, however, disliked the doctrine in large part because of their mounting anti-Western anger stemming from their frustrations over Israel. Likewise, Israel feared that the doctrine would augment the power of its adversaries. The Arab-Israeli conflict weakened the foundation of the Eisenhower Doctrine, in other words, and the doctrine in turn further aggravated that conflict.

Yet the Eisenhower Doctrine left a major legacy in U.S. diplomatic history. In the context of the Middle East, it signaled a growing American willingness to accept responsibility for the security and stability of the Middle East. Thus it became an important milestone on the long road that began in 1945, when the United States identified vir-

28. Record of conversation, 14 July 1958, Records of the Prime Minister's Office, PREM 11/2387, Public Record Office, Kew, England; Thompson to Dulles, 19 July 1958, Whitman File: International Series, box 36; Memorandum of conversation, 15 July 1958, Whitman File: Diary Series, box 34. See also memorandum of conversation, 14 July 1958, Whitman File: Diary Series, box 34; Allen Dulles briefing notes, 14 July 1958, WHO Files, Office of Staff Secretary, International Series, box 10.

29. Thompson to Dulles, 16 July 1958, RG 59, Lot 59 D 600, box 4; Thompson to Dulles, 19 July 1958, Whitman File: International Series, box 36. See also Whisenand to Twining, 16 July 1958, memorandum by Joint Staff, 22 July 1958, RG 218, JCS decimal file, box 92, CCS 381 (8-23-57); Phillips to CJCS, 18 July 1958, RG 218 CJCS Twining, box 9, 091 Middle East; Intelligence synopsis, 23 July 1958, Whitman File: International Series, box 35; Leverton to CNO, 19 July 1958, Twining statement, 24 July 1958, RG 218, JCS Geographic File, box 155, CCS 381 Lebanon.

tually no vital interests in the region, and extended into the early twenty-first century, when the United States maintained a huge military and political presence across the region. The Eisenhower Doctrine thus provided another building block for the foundation of American preeminence in the region.

On a broader scale, the Eisenhower Doctrine's precedent of using military force to stop the spread of communism outlived the Eisenhower presidency. It contributed to the fateful decision to commit combat forces to Vietnam in the 1960s and to deployments of U.S. forces to other hot spots in later decades. (The domestic political consensus, manifest in the blank check authority that Congress granted the president when it approved the doctrine, by contrast, did not survive the Vietnam era.)

The Eisenhower Doctrine, in summary, had a short but intense duration. At the end of the Suez-Sinai War, Eisenhower worried that the demise of Anglo-French influence and the rise of Soviet interest in the Middle East boded ill for the preservation of U.S. objectives in the region. Thus he assumed explicit responsibility under the doctrine to stop Communist expansion in the region by fiscal and military means. The president secured congressional approval of this doctrine but found it difficult to convince the Arab states or Israel of its purpose or usefulness. Nonetheless, Eisenhower on three occasions used economic and military aid, political initiatives, and military troops to advance or protect U.S. interests. In the process, he raised the prospect that the United States would fight in the region or even on a global scale, and he accepted responsibilities in the Middle East that the United States would retain for decades to come.