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The Syrian Crisis of 1957:

A Lesson for the 21st Century

By Kevin Brown

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THE SYRIAN CRISIS OF 1957: A LESSON FOR THE 21st CENTURY

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Born of Adherence to U.S. Cold War Doctrine and Failure to Recognize the Primacy of Regional Factors

“If you want a war, nourish a doctrine. Doctrines are the most fearful tyrants to which men ever are subject, because doctrines get inside of a man’s own reason and betray him against himself. Civilized men have done their fiercest fighting for doctrines.”

– William Graham Sumner, *War, 1903*¹

“...dozens of books and essays on American foreign policy during the Cold War are virtually oblivious to the possibility that policy-making, intelligence-gathering, war-making and mainstream politics might be profoundly shaped by a social and cultural world beyond the conference table and the battlefield.”

– Christian Appy, *Cold War Constructions, 2000*²

A Lens on the Future

The Syrian Crisis of 1957, fueled by discontinuity between stated aims in the Middle East and actual policy execution, and sparked by the exposure on August 12, 1957 of a covert attempt at regime change clumsily fostered by the United States, led the nation to the brink of armed conflict with the Soviet Union in the fall of that year.³ But the root cause was not a simple doctrinal Cold War standoff between democratic “free world, free man” ideals and communist “enslavement.” Instead, the driving forces came from an inability for United States policy makers to see beyond international communism, according to Patrick Seale “always spelled with ominous capitals by Dulles,” as the foundation for all foreign policy.⁴ This doctrinal drive, coupled with a failure to recognize strong inward-looking domestic and cultural influences in post-colonial nations, resulted in diplomatic engagements that defied acceptance of Syrian non-alignment with the Cold War powers, thereby creating an ultimatum that led to Syrian defiance and a Syrian-Soviet alliance.

Historically, the Cold War friction between the U.S. and Syria has been wrapped up in the package of the Arab-Israeli and Soviet containment problems alone and rarely described in light of the rights and desires for Arab states' self-determination. In a critical meeting in November of 1957 as the Syrian Crisis rolled to a close, Syrian Foreign Minister Salah al-Bitar addressed the Arab-Israeli issue directly with William Rountree, the Assistant Secretary of State for Near East Affairs, stating: "instead of constantly placing so much emphasis on the problem of Israel, the U.S. should approach the issue of relations with the Arab countries on its own merits."⁵ A variety of fractious conditions, mostly centered on the declared policy of neutralism by Syria, created a strained relationship between the United States and Syria post-World War II.⁶ These issues gained momentum throughout 1957 as U.S.-Syrian relations began to sour and piqued when the covert plot in August, intended to overthrow a socialist and ostensibly communist Ba'ath Party government, was penetrated by Syrian intelligence. The resulting declaration of *persona non grata* status of American diplomats was responded to in kind by the expulsion of the Syrian Ambassador to the U.S, firmly propelling Syria into the supportive camp of the Soviet Union, a willing provider of aid previously denied by the United States. As 1957 came to an end, the closing months proved to be a test of the Eisenhower Doctrine,⁷ designed to insure regional security and the sovereignty of individual Middle Eastern States. Rather than serving as a defensive deterrent, and harbinger of independence, the doctrine nearly brought the United States and Syria's neighbors to armed conflict with the Soviet Union based on a tepid reception and misunderstanding of U.S.-led regional security cooperation, aggravated by missed diplomatic opportunities and a misread of diplomatic assessments.

United States policymakers had substantive ideas and notions on how to approach relations with the Middle East, and particularly Syria, as reflected in concepts originally articulated early in the Eisenhower presidency by the Psychological Strategy Board (PSB) in 1953 which suggested "concrete political action [and] the importance of personal relationships in the region [with] the aim to

present the United States as a true champion of social progress.”⁸ Given the United States’ response to the Suez Crisis in 1956, when the United States firmly objected to British and French aggression in seizing the Canal against the sovereign rights of the Egyptian government, a solid foundation for being a “true champion” of Arab independence was established. Key historical moments following the establishment of this type of political capital can be effectively seized by diplomatic efforts to sustain momentum. In October 1991, James Baker pushed the international and regional coalition that formed for Operation Desert Storm to the peace conference in Madrid. This was possible because of “a window of opportunity” to expend political capital earned by the successful Gulf War against Iraq. Similarly, in January through August 1957, there were numerous “windows of opportunity” to expend political capital earned by U.S. diplomatic actions during the Suez Crisis of 1956—but as it would turn out, each turned into a diplomatic near miss.

Had the diplomatic approach championed by Eisenhower, programmed by the PSB, and teed up by U.S. response to the Suez crisis been sustained, a more amicable pursuit of policy could have occurred. There are reasons to believe that these entreaties would have been well-received on the Syrian side due to a pre-disposition to view the U.S. favorably even before the Suez response.⁹ Unfortunately, the United States did not follow those constructive ideas put forward by the PSB and other administration officials, and instead pursued policies that reflected an overly-simplistic approach to the Syrians, global communism, and the Soviet threat. As a result, the incongruence between idealistic policy goals and misguided policy execution led to ineffective diplomacy, the failed coup in August of 1957, and months of American supported posturing in the region by Syria’s neighboring countries. Actions framed within a simple Cold War fight for influence pushed the Syrians into Soviet hands as a guarantor of their security and nearly pushed the United States and the Soviet Union into open conflict. The U.S. abandoned the liberal ideological approach that was at its disposal and opted for policy pursuits that suffered through missed diplomatic opportunities that could have provided a less problematic, regionally-based approach

to Arabs goals in general and Syrians in particular and might have avoided a persistent nihilistic influence on relations in the Middle East.

A Strong Desire for Positive Outreach Conflated with a Stronger Fear of Communism

In October of 1952, while campaigning in San Francisco as the Republican candidate for President, Eisenhower delivered an address a month prior to his election in which he described the “hundreds of millions ... in [Communist] occupied and satellite nations” as “enslaved,” and described the primary objective of U.S. policy to help the “enslaved ... resist the oppressor until his hold can be gradually weakened and loosened from within.” Eisenhower’s ultimate victory in the election one month later brought about an azimuth shift in foreign policy, starting with the President and manifesting itself in the National Security Council. The change in administration resulted in a new approach to Middle East policy that combined an increased interest in psychological warfare and covert operations in a more fiscally constrained effort at achieving the goals of the National Security Strategy. But the objectives, rooted in the values of a deeply ideological president with an affinity for psychological warfare, and set on the self-professed ideological and moral power of the United States as a beacon of freedom for the “enslaved” of the world, ran aground of a policy that, in an aggressive form of execution, was incongruous with those lofty guiding principles and the expectations of Syrian leadership.¹⁰

Shortly after Eisenhower became president, he directed the development of the Psychological Strategy Program for the Middle East from February through April of 1953. The stated primary objective was “to create a pro-U.S., anti-Soviet opinion climate in which regional controversies can be resolved and regional defense measures undertaken.” The specific goals from the plan for Syria were ambitious, broad, and dangerously paradoxical. The approach included soft power and public diplomacy approaches involving exchanges of Muslim leaders, U.S. Church members, and selected anti-U.S. Arab leaders to expose them to Western influence, to

revitalization of the economic planning activities of the Arab League. However, on the other end of the spectrum, the approach included still classified actions focused on prevention of communist-rightist collaboration.¹¹ The relationship between positive, growth-oriented approaches that leveraged economic aid for ‘less-favored’ areas and security-oriented goals focused on preventing communist collaboration was a perilous dichotomy, and would have to be carefully managed through adept diplomatic engagement if all goals were to be achieved. Instead, three years later in January of 1956 the successor to the PSB, the Operations Coordinating Board (OCB), was still ineffectively attempting to promote soft power approaches, recommending a focus on developing commercial interests, expanding oil exploration, building a Syrian refinery “before the Soviets” could, and establishing economic staffing in the Syrian foreign service post. Meanwhile, priority was given to regime change in order to resist communism, with aid programs focused on that objective to include the funding of covert programs.¹² This despite the previous failure of the planned overthrow of Syrian President Shukri al-Quwatli in 1949 who would ultimately return to power, and more importantly, the defiant position of the U.S. diplomat in Syria at the time, Deane Hinton who presciently warned:

“I want to go on record as saying that this is the stupidest, most irresponsible action a diplomatic mission like ours could get itself involved in, and that we’ve started a series of these things that will never end.”¹³

The absence of a concerted approach toward realizing the stated objective of “concrete political action and personal relationships” had lasting impact, and the failures began in the earliest days of the Eisenhower Administration. In a seemingly innocuous example of words not matching deeds, and the President’s cabinet perhaps not being on the same sheet with him, President Eisenhower reflected in a July 1953 memorandum to Secretary Dulles on a letter he received from then Chief of State for Syria General Fawzi Selu. In his memorandum the President expressed his concern over the State Department staff response that he need not reply to the Syrian head of state since Selu had been replaced by recently elected

President Adib Shishakli. Eisenhower found the advice “difficult to accept,” and felt that “failure to reply could certainly be regarded as something of a slight.”¹⁴ In response, John Foster Dulles disagreed and dissuaded the president from responding. In one of the earliest examples of a time when the United States President had an opportunity to wield his personal influence in an effort to invest in strong relationships with Syria with minimal investment, his staff recommended against this simple, personal engagement. In so doing, the policy of building and sustaining positive personal diplomacy with Syria, the specified intent of the PSB D-22 Memorandum, was dismissed as unimportant in the face of an overriding National Security Council concern over Soviet capability and penetration in that nation.

Over the course of the Eisenhower presidency, a lack of adherence to the early, more principled objectives of Middle Eastern growth and public diplomacy in support of that aim became conflated, or perhaps overcome, by security-oriented goals that were required to achieve practical success against Soviet influence in the region and a continued flow of oil out of the region. These temporal responses to near term problems resulted in ever-increasing incoherence over the long term and a distortion of how American policy was pursued and perceived abroad.

Two Cultures, Two Doctrines, One Goal: Eisenhower Doctrine and Arab Solidarity Pact

Arab desire for self-determination was manifest in the embrace of positive neutralism as a means to that end. Meanwhile, the stated goal of United States Middle East policy from as early as Eisenhower’s first year in office in 1953, was to “weaken objectively the intellectual appeal of neutralism and to predispose its adherents toward the spirit of the west,”¹⁵ as if neutralism was somehow ‘in the spirit’ of Soviet Communism and not simply an inward approach to Arab self-determination. Yet a comparative reading of the Eisenhower Doctrine published on January 5, 1957 and the Solidarity Pact between Jordan, Syria, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia on

January 19, 1957 raises the question as to why there should ever have been conflict over Arab nationalism in general, and Syrian nationalism in particular, in the middle of 1957, given a desire on both sides to preserve a right to independence for Arab nations.

A central tenet of the Eisenhower Doctrine was support “without reservation [of] the full sovereignty and independence of each and every nation of the Middle East.”¹⁶ In the text of the Arab Solidarity Accord, published just two weeks after the Eisenhower Doctrine was rolled out, it seems clear that the signatories shared the United States’ primary tenet of Arab independence, albeit with a different foundation, stating that they would joint to “preserving Arab existence and independence . . . in order to participate in safeguarding peace and security in accordance with the principles of the Arab League Charter and the United Nations Charter.”¹⁷ However, though the text of both the Eisenhower Doctrine and the Solidarity Accord refer to the underlying principles of the United Nations and the need to come to the aid of a nation whose sovereignty is challenged, the United States’ approach could be deemed disingenuous given the comparative texts, if not at least flawed due to a lack of appreciation for the Arab point of view. As the historical record demonstrates, the disconnect caused by a lack of public diplomacy, strategic communication, or simple appreciation of on the ground realities in Syria was unfortunately sensed much too late by Dulles just two days prior to the announcement of the Eisenhower Doctrine, and then made all too clear in a very telling exchange nine months later near the close of the crisis on November 7, 1957. In the meeting between Secretary William Rountree and Syrian Foreign Minister Salah al-Bitar both recognized, in hindsight, the inevitability and criticality of a year’s worth of policy misinterpretation between the two countries.¹⁸

Cultural and institutionally-imposed misunderstandings, existent and exacerbated by a lack of effective personal diplomatic engagement with leaders of the Arab world, and an inability to heed the warnings of Foreign Service Officers immersed in the culture on the ground across the Middle East, led to the

unfortunate misinterpretation of how the Eisenhower Doctrine would be applied and perceived in the region. The misapplication of the doctrine is a curious matter given the emphasis placed by the Eisenhower administration on effective communication of United States' values and policies. In February of 1953, just one month into Eisenhower's first term, it was recognized that poorly coordinated information activities had "materially contributed to the toboggan slide on which U.S. prestige" was declining.¹⁹ Nearly four years later, a lack of progress toward improving this situation, perhaps instigated by Dulles' bullish approach in Near East and Far East diplomacy, likely gave him pause.²⁰ Just forty-eight hours prior to the Presidential address to Congress announcing the Eisenhower Doctrine, the President was warned by his Secretary of State that the "initial impression about [the] program in the Arab world that this is imperialism and colonialism... could be pretty bad."²¹ Despite the recognized importance of establishing a positive international view of administration policy as a matter of standing practice, it is telling that hours prior to announcing such a far reaching and impactful statement of foreign policy, senior level officials in the administration were expressing concern over the implications of perceptions.²²

Covert Operations—Contributing to the Unraveling of Good Relations

By the time of the Syrian Crisis, the United States had an established record of using covert operations to support achievement of foreign policy goals. The overthrow of al-Quwatli in Syria in 1949, the success of the coup in Iran in 1953 to depose Mohammed Mossadeq, and the plot to overthrow the democratically elected president of Guatemala, Jacobo Arbenz, in 1954 reinforced the growing ease with which the U.S. used the threat of the Soviet influence to justify interventions that, theoretically, went against the broader message of non-imperialism. With the pronouncement of the Eisenhower Doctrine, military and economic resources could be committed to this effort in the name of bolstering the individual security of Middle Eastern nations and regional security as a whole,

all the while operating under the true objective of containing communism. Instead the initial proclamation of the doctrine was met with immediate suspicion and resistance, and execution of the doctrine only served to push Syria further from the United States' orbit, and create a sense of American imperialist behavior among enemies and allies, an unfortunate progression given the early understanding by administration officials of the importance of getting ahead of this bow wave of international perception.

In an attempt to avoid U.S. direct involvement in an Arab-Israeli conflict or open warfare with the Soviet Union, the United States instead resorted to undercover operations. On April 7, 1955 the OCB, charged with oversight of ongoing covert activities, complained that "the increasing influence of leftists and few communists" inside the Syrian Army was impeding American plans for Middle East defense."²³ Despite all prior assessments by U.S. diplomats on the ground in the region that the Communist threat was overinflated, and the warning by Foreign Service Officers that this situation could be defused by simple diplomatic engagement, the United States pursued covert operations. When the Syrian Government alleged that the Syrian Socialist Nationalist Party (SSNP) had ties with the CIA, it generated polemic public statements in Syrian newspapers, stirring anti-Western sentiment and paranoia as to the true intentions of the United States in the Middle East, and generated "a torrent of Arab anti-Americanism."²⁴ History was repeating, as the warnings of appointed diplomats repeatedly went unheeded resulting in the ill effect of poorly placed and poorly executed covert operations.

Failed Diplomatic Opportunities

Perhaps it is a bit Pollyanna to suggest that these covert blunders could have been avoided if only better diplomatic efforts were prioritized. However, there were significant strategic opportunities for diplomatic engagement that indicate a different approach was possible if only the Eisenhower Administration had followed its stated aims and taken those opportunities more seriously. In late January 1957, shortly after the unveiling of the Eisenhower Doctrine,

Saudi Arabia's King Saud met with Eisenhower for one hour and forty-five minutes and ended the meeting by impressing upon the President that in the Cairo meeting of the Arab League earlier that month he had urged his associates to look upon American efforts in the region as motivated by genuine friendship and a desire to help—and not a desire to conquer. As the meeting closed, King Saud strongly recommended a face-to-face talk with the leaders of Egypt and Syria, calling such a move “very valuable.” During this personal one on one meeting, the details of which Eisenhower recorded in his diary, King Saud suggested the President ask Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser and the King of Syria to visit the White House, stating that “he believed great good could come of such visits,” and was quick to assert that “he was certain these people did not lean nearly so much toward the Soviets as we had thought and they would like to re-establish their ties with the West.”²⁵

Here was the King of Saudi Arabia, whom Syrian expert David Lesch refers to as a “counterpoise to Nasser” and whose alliance was a critical corollary to the Eisenhower Doctrine, and yet even he, from an Arab perspective, encouraged open diplomatic negotiations with Nasser and Syria.²⁶ When Eisenhower balked and informed the King that he did not feel he could do so without risking difficulty in the U.S. relationship with Israel, the King suggested that an invitation for the “head of the Jewish State ... would be quite all right and satisfactory.”²⁷ But such a diplomatic tripartite never occurred in the months leading up to the crisis as Eisenhower did not receive encouragement from his Secretary of State to pursue such a course of action. It seems that Richard Immerman's characterization of Dulles' dealings with independent states in the third world was correct—that he was “floundering in an alien sea,” suffering from “frequent confusion of nationalism and communism,” and unable to grasp the cultural and post-colonial perspective that King Saud was attempting to offer.²⁸

Shortly after the release of the Eisenhower Doctrine, James Richards was appointed to Special Ambassador status by Eisenhower and specifically tasked to embark on a fifteen-nation fact finding

mission throughout the Middle East in the spring of 1957 to determine how the mutual security approach resonated in the region. While his approach to meeting with Syria is treated differently in a number of secondary sources, they all conclude he purposely did not engage directly with Syrian officials, but not by virtue of his own inclinations.²⁹ An approach that avoided engagement with Syria seems, once again, in direct contravention of the prescribed policy of the administration to wield the diplomacy and moral position of the United States. In fact, the political director of the Syrian Foreign Office, Ghazi Al-Kayyali suggested that the U.S. should have directly sought out a meeting with the Syrian regime rather than having expected Syrian leaders to take the initiative.

Recommendations by Syrian and Saudi Arabian leadership were not exclusively representing Arab-centric opinion, as their desire for a balanced diplomatic approach that included Syria were seconded by the U.S. special ambassador to the region. Ambassador Richards cabled back to Washington before finishing his trip, admitting that he, himself, was uncomfortable visiting Israel without having also visited Syria. If directed to visit Israel, Richards stated he would do so only under formal protest as he deemed such an action would represent an undeniable image of anti-Arab sentiment in the eyes of the Syrians.³⁰ Richards was ordered to return to the U.S. after first stopping in Israel, and as a result, relations with Syria took a turn for the worse and reified perceptions of the Eisenhower Doctrine as a furtherance of American imperialism in the Arab world. This turn of events also providing strategic fodder for similar Soviet claims about American intentions and supported their regional efforts at extending their influence.

Despite the fact that al-Kayyali had characterized the Eisenhower Doctrine as an effective means of merging Arab agendas and creating regional security, and the fact that the United States' own Foreign Service expert assigned to diplomatic efforts in the region suggested engagement with Syria, the United States once again failed to recognize and seize the opportunity to establish inroads for amicable diplomatic negotiations with the Syrian regime. Instead, Richards

returned to the United States in May 1957 having steered clear of Syria while selling the concept of American economic and military aid to Syria's neighbors. As a result, the tension in the Middle East over the months following Richards' tour increased.

Just a few weeks after the Syrian's uncovered the plot to initiate a coup on August 12, the United States engaged once again in aggressive shuttle diplomacy sending Loy Henderson, Under Secretary of State and a man with a long history of foreign service in the Middle East, throughout the region again, this time to secure support for belligerent action against a Soviet supported Syria. Once again, however, the United States did not have their lead statesman engage directly with Syrian leadership. The Syrian government informed the U.S. Embassy that Richards was welcome to visit Syria if he so desired—rather than use this open door, the U.S. countered that Henderson would only do so if formally invited. As it played out, the Richards trip resulted in the promise of \$68 million in economic aid and \$50 million in military aid to Syria's neighbors, yet lacked the inclusion of as much as a simple diplomatic engagement with Syria.

The visit to neighboring countries generated ill-feeling in Syria, which perpetuated earlier characterizations of the Eisenhower Doctrine as “advancing the selfish aims of the United States... without taking into account the national aspirations of the people of the region.”³¹ Egyptian President Gamal Nasser's recommendation in this situation “was that [the U.S. Government] should go in for bit of ‘psychiatry’ and deal gently with Syrians in such a way as to relieve their fears.”³² Similarly, the Saudi Foreign Minister to Pakistan reported to his American counterpart James Langley that “Syrians were Arabs [and] that Arabs could not possibly be Communists, therefore nobody should be concerned about recent events in Syria.”³³ Unfortunately, Langley characterized this view as unsophisticated, while Dulles considered it hardly believable that the Saudi's could see Israel as a greater danger to the Middle East than the Soviets.

In the midst of the crisis, in a joint Department of State-United States Information Agency message issued on September 25, it became clear to the administration yet again that the long understood, but rarely emphasized need for effective communications to bridge the gaps of misunderstanding and quell the situation needed to be addressed. But a warning to “step up [the] psychological campaign ... immediately” would be much too little, much too late, as the battle for influence in Syria needed to be measured in years, not months or weeks.³⁴ Yet again, the United States had missed an opportunity for direct personal engagement with Arab leaders in an attempt to hastily undo what had gone undone on the diplomatic front. Engagement might help to avoid armed conflict—but open talk was unfortunately an anathema to the all-important confrontation with International Communism and unlikely under those conditions.

If there is any question in the historical record about what happened on August 12, 1957 regarding U.S. attempts at covert regime change, what is at least clear is a desire to instigate conflict and regime change in the aftermath of the failed attempt. The United States prepared secretly to intervene in the internal affairs of another nation, while openly stating otherwise, and the United States was fully committed to aggressive action against Syria.³⁵ In a Syrian government press conference on August 23, in a declaration of allegiance to the positive neutralism of the Bandung Conference, Syrian officials declared they wanted nothing to do with the “paternalism of the so-called great powers.”³⁶ Despite a warning to the NSC by Ambassador Richards not to move too fast in a situation which might well change character and ease off in a few days or weeks, the months that followed and the actions taken were focused on preparing the region for war. At this juncture, Eisenhower was ill-informed on the facts and Syria had had enough of interference in its internal affairs.³⁷ As a result, in a full implementation of the Eisenhower Doctrine, the President took the position that the U.S. should “start shipping material at once, making use of the emergency fund” because it was essential to “do everything possible to bring up the strength of the nations in the area quickly.”³⁸

On August 28, 1957, two weeks after the Syrian government called for the expulsion of American diplomats in the wake of the alleged coup attempt, the President expressed his concern to the NSC over messages received from King Saud regarding tensions in Syria. In these messages the King claimed that he felt he must blame the U.S. for much of the difficulty there. Oddly, this same memorandum quotes the President as saying that he cannot personally confirm the “time and motivation for the cool treatment the U.S. had been receiving from Syria of late.”³⁹ The President, having had the opportunity to engage with King Saud and perhaps missing the overt offer the King made to help mediate with Egypt and Syria, was inexcusably perplexed. Had he listened more intently, taken more seriously, and pressed his cabinet to pursue more aggressively the King’s suggestion for direct engagement in January, perhaps the situation would have been on a different path altogether.

Secretary Dulles, the President’s main advisor with the role of assisting in cutting through the fog, suggested to the President that the cooling of relations occurred sometime in 1955 when offers of costly U.S. military assistance were turned down in lieu of Soviet bids. While accurate, this assessment seems a bit disingenuous and in denial of the stream of intelligence estimates over the previous two years, the missed diplomatic opportunities that were foregone, and the impact on the Syrian psyche of recent covert operations that were turned out by Syrian intelligence two weeks prior. In answering the President regarding King Saud’s assertion that the U.S. was to blame for the tensions in Syria, the Secretary suggested simply that the King was difficult to manage because he was insulated from receiving U.S. information, and that despite previously successful engagements, “those results [had] six months to wear off.”⁴⁰ In response, the President noted that he felt that King Saud was “the key to the Middle East,” suggesting a realization that an Arabization of the approach to the Middle East was missing.

Eisenhower's approval of NSC-155/1 on July 14, 1953 called for "reversal of anti-American trends of Arab opinion" focused on fair treatment of all Arab nations.⁴¹ Had the public diplomacy mission of the United States Information Agency been more holistically integrated for the four years prior to the crisis, diplomatic efforts may have rested on a firmer foundation of public support and been facilitated by reduced "insulation" of key leaders in the region like King Saud. Balancing military preparedness with more open and aggressive diplomacy may have pre-empted the escalation of misunderstandings on all sides, particularly those accelerated by the Arab image of Americans as imperialists. Again, it seems that King Saud represented a key diplomatic engagement for the future of Middle Eastern affairs, that direct personal engagement with Egypt and Syria were in order, and that if the U.S. had simply followed its own objectives as stipulated three years prior in PSB D-22 and leveraged personal relationships in the region, Eisenhower may have been able to champion U.S. foreign diplomatic success and forego the clumsy handling of covert operations in Syria.

Diplomacy Comes Full Circle

During the critical meeting in November 1957, eight months after the release of the Eisenhower Doctrine and nearing the end of the crisis, Assistant Secretary for Near East Affairs William Rountree expressed his personal regret to Syrian Foreign Minister Salah al-Bitar that U.S.-Syrian relations were in such dire straits. Rountree described how he believed that the Eisenhower Doctrine was simply widely misunderstood and misinterpreted. In response, al-Bitar offered that the United States had erred by unilaterally publishing the doctrine. Al-Bitar had, in fact given a vote of confidence to the concept of the doctrine in late 1956, but suggested that the United States had not considered a more multilateral approach for its release with the Arab nation's domestic and international concerns in mind, deeming it too reliant on U.S. objectives. Al-Bitar reiterated that Syria was neither "systematically hostile to the United States, nor Communist," but that the doctrine, while appropriate for "old-established democracies," was inappropriate for application in

Arab States.⁴² Their conversation ended with a realization that the normalization of relations between the U.S. and Syria could only come by virtue of visits to Damascus by well-informed and responsible Americans qualified to explain and discuss US foreign policy with representative Syrians⁴³—ironically a central tenet of the PSB doctrine of 1953 calling for personal and broad public engagement as a critical component of Middle Eastern and Syrian foreign policy.

The November 1957 personal meeting between Rountree and al-Bitar did result in a path toward rapprochement and ending the crisis. It is an unfortunate truth that until this meeting, the impression of “my country right or wrong,” a pervasive attitude during the Cold War that led to value-based foreign policy, unnecessarily stalled diplomacy, and created conditions for conflict, sustaining the crisis from August through October. Given a belief that, absent any firm evidence to the contrary, “one must proceed from the lowest common denominator of the antagonism of the systems and assume the worst of the other side,”⁴⁴ the common goals of the Eisenhower Doctrine and the Arab Solidarity Accord would instead run in parallel universes throughout 1957. These types of lowest common denominator approaches could have been refined or debunked with a more direct and engaging approach to foreign diplomacy, the type of diplomacy King Saud suggested to President Eisenhower during his personal visit to the White House on the heels of the release of the Eisenhower Doctrine in January 1957. Instead, a combination of progressive escalation and ignored diplomatic opportunities allowed the Eisenhower Doctrine to run off azimuth.

In his study on the sustained absence of a true regional power in the Middle East for the last half of the twentieth century, Ian Lustick directly addresses the mistaken identification of Arab nationalism with pro-communism in great power foreign policy. “Despite their explicit focus on what they perceived as the threat of Soviet expansionism, the United States, Britain, and France each pursued policies that treated any independent Arab unity scheme going beyond the kind of cooperation among existing states as

contrary to Western interests,” a concern not solely shared by Western powers. Neither John Foster Dulles, nor Anthony Eden of the United Kingdom, nor, for that matter, Khrushchev could abide the idea of a truly independent, powerful, and united Arab state. As a result, foreign policy in the Middle East was fashioned, and more importantly implemented, “rather cavalierly by great power diplomats and intelligence officers.”⁴⁵

Despite diplomatic opportunities in the first half of 1957, the United States could seemingly not escape this cavalier, historically biased approach to the Middle East. Syrian receptiveness to military and economic support from the Soviet Union increased in response to a feeling of distrust over Anglo-American covert influence inside Syria. Discreet encouragement of anti-governmental factions combined with Syrian perceptions of Ambassador James Richards’s mission throughout the region from March to May of 1957 as “peddling war” against Syria to neighboring countries under the Eisenhower Doctrine set the conditions for escalation.⁴⁶ Dulles could be said to have favored a rational approach to the Syrian government, but it was also unfriendly and biased—hardly the start point for effective diplomatic solutions. Rather than a balanced diplomatic approach, Dulles’ pursuit of options that gave discreet encouragement to internal opposition, followed by efforts to encourage an uprising in the region by inciting tension on Syrian borders, were indicative of an aggressive stance that ultimately created a blowback effect for U.S. efforts and a window of opportunity for the Soviet Union.⁴⁷

Following more than a century of serving as a symbol of freedom and independence to the Middle East prior to and throughout World War II, how did the “cherished tradition of fair-mindedness” that Kermit Roosevelt suggested Arab nations attributed to the United States become so tarnished?⁴⁸ Why did Secretary of State John Foster Dulles adopt a new enthusiasm for Western intervention—a shift that British Prime Minister Harold MacMillan recalled came as Dulles “seemed ready and even anxious to consider measures which only a few months before he would have denounced as shocking and immoral”?⁴⁹ Why did the U.S. fail to achieve the

goals of a Middle East policy intended “to weaken objectively the intellectual appeal of neutralism and to predispose its adherents toward the spirit of the west”? How did objectives to “break down world-wide doctrinaire thought patterns [of] Communist and other doctrines hostile to the U.S.,” and “foster worldwide sympathetic acceptance of the free mind in the free man as the resolution of the world’s problems” instead generate heated debate in the United Nations General Assembly?⁵⁰ The answer lies at least partly in the failure of the United States to recognize it was prisoner of its own doctrinaire approach that defied understanding of neutralism and Arab nationalism as seen on the ground by appointed diplomats, instead viewing them as “hostile” to U.S. objectives.⁵¹

In fact, the “sale” of U.S. doctrine quite possibly could have been successful, and the Syrian crisis diverted, if the United States had only listened to the “market analysis” provided by King Saud on January 29, 1957, suggesting a direct diplomatic engagement with Egypt and Syria to keep them engaged with the West. Instead, as the American-Syrian Crisis reached its peak in mid-September 1957, the Eisenhower administration found themselves relying on eleventh hour diplomacy aimed at helping the Middle East better understand U.S. goals and using the King as their emissary. The President informed King Saud via cable that “the United States [stood] fully prepared to meet aggression against the free states of the Middle East. The most dangerous form of aggression, however, is that which takes place through the quiet and masked subversion of independent nations. To seek this kind, any nation needs more than the force of arms. We all need the understanding and support of our friends.”⁵² In mid-crisis, the President and the administration finally came to grips with the realization that the Soviets had likely made first use of the Arab proverb that “the enemy of my enemy is my friend,” and that it was time to enlist Arab friends to help return to the policy objectives presented eight months prior.

The American mistake in Syria from August through November of 1957 was representative of recurrent post-World War II actions cloaked in containment doctrine that consistently mischaracterized

local, national struggles in much larger, and inappropriate American Cold War terms. As relayed by long time Cold War diplomat Charles Yost, Ambassador to Syria in the year of its unification with Egypt under the UAR, the Eisenhower Administration failed to recognize a fact that “seems to be largely forgotten ... [that] Syrian Leaders at the time were primarily though not exclusively Ba’athist” and that this affiliation was sought to “escape left wing pressures, *including* communists.”⁵³ Instead, the existence of these Ba’athist affiliates in positions of power within Syria generated a desire to continue rolling back communism and liberating “captive peoples” based on the overriding fear of International Communism and a misguided interpretation of the socialist tendencies of the Ba’athists as a communist proxy.⁵⁴

There are a number of reasons that this three month period of August to November is instructive for historians and the policy making community, particularly as the United States continues to struggle with establishing a solid reputation in the Middle East in the 21st century. The Syrian Crisis provides a case study in failed diplomacy when the internationally accepted virtues of United States power are sacrificed at the altar of exceptionalism stemming from imagined “self-other” relationships during any diplomatic effort. As Douglas Little has offered, this is the product of centuries of development of the concept of Orientalism, and that in order to effectively “understand America’s encounter with the Middle East after 1945, one must appreciate the cultural baggage and the racial stereotypes that most Americans carried with them into that era.”⁵⁵

The greatest mistake made by the United States during the early Cold War period was “its failure to comprehend the Arab psychology in the postcolonial era and the depth of Arab rivalries,” as Elie Prodeh describes the period of the 1950s.⁵⁶ Current diplomatic histories of the Syrian Crisis do not emphasize the lack of American appreciation for the Arab perspective and motivations in describing the U.S. mishandling of diplomatic relations. The Syrian government in 1957 simply did what was best for ensuring its continued security and economic viability. These

domestic and cultural Syrian influences are at the foundation of the American diplomatic fog that prevented a clear understanding of growing incentives for the Syrians to align with the Soviet Union as the winners, leaving the U.S. as the loser in a zero-sum calculation. Perhaps Nasser's recommendation that the U.S. attempt international "psychiatry" and a more gentle approach, was not as bizarre as it may have sounded in the moment in 1957, particularly given al-Bitar's assertions of how Arabs perceived the Loy Henderson visit to the region. Al-Bitar described the lack of engagement with heads of state in either Egypt or Syria and instead only with "certain countries of the Middle East, [as] the signal for the beginning of military and related activities against Syria."⁵⁷ It seems that had the United States acted on the best advice of their regional expert and Foreign Service officer, the Henderson trip may have had a wholly different effect on placating the situation and achieving American objectives had he been allowed to balance his visit in order to speak not only to the U.S. friends, but their enemies as well.

Recognizing Regional Factors—and U.S. Failures

In November of 1957, shortly after al-Bitar and Rountree had commenced rapprochement between the United States and Syria, Eisenhower penned an "eyes only" note to Dulles asking if it might be worthwhile to "bring Nasser back to our side," suggesting perhaps a latent recognition of a missed opportunity for direct engagement with key Arab influencers, as opposed to the failed covert approaches chosen to achieve an American solution.⁵⁸ Matthew Jones in *The Preferred Plan* focuses on decisions to pursue covert action in support of the Eisenhower Doctrine as an important part of the "preferred plan," yet Jones recognizes this moment as "one more indication that there were other, less controversial ways to fulfill Western goals in the Middle East than working through covert means for the overthrow of friendly governments."⁵⁹ Aggressive diplomacy, political engagement, and personal engagement—all tenets of the original doctrinal approach the U.S. established

for relations with the Middle East, and all available through Arab friends and intermediaries, could have proven a more effective route to manifest the values-based approach proclaimed in early speeches by the Presidential candidate in 1952.

The Syrian crisis began to subside in a series of diplomatic engagements that came as a result of Saudi mediation, Syrian and Soviet engagement in the United Nations, and ultimately point-to-point diplomatic engagements between cabinet and ministry officials of the two nations that took far too long to ultimately come to fruition. These engagements insured that international, regional, national, and cultural objectives were all taken into account. The crisis came to a more formal conclusion with the unification of Syria and Egypt as the United Arab Republic (UAR) in February 1958. It was Nasser and al-Bitar who ultimately decided that unification would help deter communist takeover and protect their national and regional ambitions. In an example of learning the lessons of the past, Eisenhower and Dulles recognized that opposition to the merger would only earn Arab resentment, and further recognized that the existence of the UAR would provide certain gains toward limiting the spread of communism in Damascus and a means for absorbing Nasser's political energy. Thus, the United States formally recognized the UAR on February 25, 1958 and the U.S.-Syrian crisis had completely passed.⁶⁰ Arab nations had been imploring the United States to recognize their pursuit of Arab nationalism and neutralism as a barrier to Communism. That time had finally come and would, ironically, become a point of leverage in United States foreign policy in the Middle East as the Kennedy administration saw Nasser and other Third World nationalists as "potential bulwarks against Soviet communism rather than as communist stooges," and successfully used nationalism to preserve U.S. interests in the Middle East.⁶¹

Though recognized early in the administration as critical, the importance of aggressive diplomacy was inhibited by inconsistent integration in foreign policy efforts through the decade. If, in fact, effective communication of American intentions was the desired goal of the administration, then the advice of C.D. Jackson in a speech to

members of the National Security Council in 1953 was certainly not heeded the four years hence:

If men and women in other countries are to believe that American objectives and their own aspirations have much in common, this is to be brought about not merely by telling them so. It is to be done by our acts, explained and interpreted by our words.⁶²

More effective diplomacy—both public and traditional—as supported by the assessments of the OSB and USIA and fed by the on ground expertise of Foreign Service Officers in the region, would have insured a more consistent application of the Eisenhower administrations ultimate goals of stability in the Middle East. With the Syrian Crisis in the annals of history, Eisenhower reflected on problems across the Arab world in July of 1958, shortly after the United States landed 10,000 Marines in Lebanon, stating that “the problem is that we have a campaign of hatred against us, not by governments but by the people [who] are on Nasser’s side.” Odd that a decade which began with a Syrian and greater Arab population that was pro-American would end in this way,⁶³ but it comes as no surprise given the post-colonial nationalist attitude of Arab nations, their intense desire for self-determination, and the head on collision with an uninformed, cavalier and bullish U.S. doctrine.

The reaction to an implicit ultimatum that “you are either with us or against us” should be no less surprising when overlaid on the mid-1957 Syrian Crisis than it is when applied to the contemporary Arab response to a similar ultimatum issued by America following the historical attacks on September 11, 2011. Unfortunately, the history of the Syrian crisis and a lesson on maintaining open diplomatic channels in a crisis are lost in the annals of Cold War standoffs with international communism, and have defied recognition of another occasion when “ultimatums, perceived as threats, initiate a cycle of defensive communication in which the audience is immediately cued to get their guard up. Defiance, not cooperation, is often the response.”⁶⁴ The remedy is to insure that public diplomats and strategists get comfortable with discomfort, cross the Rubicon, and

heed the warning of former Secretary of State James Baker who advocated that you negotiate peace with your enemies, not with your friends. If not, we may remain in a cycle of generating or sustaining failed and failing states throughout the Middle East.

Lessons for the 21st Century—The Crisis Today

The current crisis in Syria, initiated by a March 2011 uprising to oust President Bashar al-Assad and his Ba’athist regime, is descending into the valley of “the choice of the lesser of two evils,” but without a clear answer as to which evil United States policy makers should pursue. Early in the conflict, the choice was clear—supporting rebel groups would force al-Assad to step down from power and remove a key Iranian ally, thereby providing a counter balance to the arc of Iranian induced instability in the Levant—a *containment* of Iran. While it seemed that the removal of al-Assad would insure a limiting effect on Iran, the picture is now complicated by the gains of Islamist rebel groups with ties to al Qaeda. It is perhaps ironic that the Ba’athist regimes birthed by U.S. alienation of Syria in the early Cold War era, would have been responsible for repression of Islamist organizations that now threaten both the al-Assad government as well as U.S. interests in Syria and the greater Middle East region.

Though it is a bit of a stretch to consider *containment* of Iran as anything close to an actual doctrinal component of U.S. policy—after all, no 21st century George Kennan has proclaimed such a position—it is eerily familiar to the overarching policy toward the Soviet Union that drove military and diplomatic decisions in 1957 and created similar uncertainty in Syria, albeit short of open conflict. Much of that uncertainty was driven by failure to adapt diplomatic efforts to counter the prevailing attitude in the Cold War era in Syria, “the throbbing heart of Arabism”, that there was no room for compromise on “what, in Syrian eyes, was the post-colonial monstrosity known as Israel.”⁶⁵ It was “The Arabists,” as Robert Kaplan calls them, that were the appointed expert diplomats in Syria assigned to report on what was going on in their parcel of

the world in order to inform policy choices. But history shows that the perceptions and opinions of these experts did not manifest in the policies of the United States, making it difficult if not impossible for the U.S. to communicate effectively in Syria in one-on-one diplomatic fashion or in a broader public diplomatic engagement.

In an oral history collected in 1978 from Charles Yost, a career diplomat who served in Syria, the Eisenhower Doctrine, aimed at shoring up opposition to Soviet influence, was instead received with great suspicion and hostility because it created a fear of U.S. covert interference exercised at will and all across the Middle East. In Yost's opinion, the doctrine was a mistake, and he contended that even if it was not, it was at a minimum not well messaged to Syrian leaders or their population. He reflected on driving in his sedan through Syrian streets where people, upon seeing American flags on the car, would yell "Down with Eisenhower Doctrine." Yet Yost contends, they wouldn't have really known what it was they were actually protesting. And with regard to an attempted CIA coup in August of 1957, Yost shared that the local station chief actually advised against it, yet nevertheless was told to execute it. The result was, as history has recorded in Yost's explicit description, an ill-advised attempt at "clumsily getting into their domestic affairs" and conducting "more Cold War hanky panky than was justified and more than Ike would have preferred to initiate."⁶⁶

If there is a simple lesson from 1957 that can be applied today, it would be to take heed of the advice of area experts. Current U.S. Ambassador to Syria Robert Ford is described by Kaplan as "straight out of the mold of Arabists going back decades: dealing with a new situation as he has found it, basing his judgments on considerable area and linguistic expertise."⁶⁷ Ford believes the U.S. strategic goals are to deny safe haven and access to chemical weapons for terrorist groups, and assure Syria is a source of stability in the region, and believes the only way to achieve this is through a politically negotiated transition. But that will require game-changing diplomatic engagement.

As the Obama administration works its way through very difficult choices, it is dealing with the onset of a post-war period for the nation that has guided security strategies focused on a more fiscally attainable and less active National Security Strategy, much like the New Look approach Eisenhower instituted in his first term in office. But the region is much more unstable than even the post-World War II Middle East, and is further complicated by the complexity of a non-state threat in al Qaeda that Eisenhower did not have to consider. Is it best for the U.S. to deal with “the devil we know,” and attempt to keep al-Assad in power? Or is best to continue to adhere to a Middle East doctrine that would suggest a continued concern for the security of Israel in an Iranian influenced, Allawite run Syria? Perhaps the real answer doesn’t lie solely in support to rebels in order to limit Iranian influence through al-Assad, or solely in support of the stability of the al-Assad regime as a counter to al Qaeda influence, but instead will rely on dialogue with the leaders of the region in a more holistic sense as suggested by Ambassador Ford. Instability post-Arab Spring and increasing turmoil in neighboring Iraq suggest that there is no place for unilateral or thin-sliced approaches to the current Syrian conflict. A regional solution is in order that, while supportive of U.S. objectives, is not solely framed around U.S. objectives. Throughout April 2013 the Obama administration held talks with leaders of Turkey, Jordan, Qatar, and United Arab Emirates. It seems that the historical lesson learned from the 1957 crisis in Syria is that those talks should not solely concentrate on security approaches to ending conflict and should not include only those four nations aligned with the United States. Instead, diplomatic outreach to Bashar al-Assad and Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad should be part of a grand strategic approach addressing not only the optimal way to end conflict and re-establish a stable and reformed Syrian government, but also the security of Israel and the influence of al Qaeda in the region.

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2. Christian G Appy, editor, *Cold War Constructions: The Political Culture of United States Imperialism, 1945–1966*, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000), 4.
3. Capturing the period of the crisis as August to November of 1957 for the purposes of this paper generally reflects that which most secondary sources also consider (As an example, Philip Anderson, “‘Summer Madness’: The Crisis in Syria, August-October 1957,” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 22:1/2 (1995): 21-42, but is more specifically defined here by the period beginning with the initial Syrian actions on 12 August declaring U.S. diplomats *persona non grata* following the discovery of a coup attempt by the U.S. and ending with dialogue between Syrian Foreign Minister Salah al-Bitar and Assistant Secretary of State William Rountree on 7 November. See U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955-57. Vol.XIII, Near East: Jordan-Yemen, Document 419. Memorandum of a Conversation, New York, November 7, 1957* (Washington, DC: GPO), 1988, 740.
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18. See U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955-57. Vol. XIII, Near East: Jordan-Yemen, Document 419. Memorandum of a Conversation, New York, November 7, 1957* (Washington, DC: GPO), 1988, 740. Bitar and Rountree both admit that the Eisenhower Doctrine was improperly unveiled without Arab buy in, and was widely misunderstood.
19. Ibid, “Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955-57,” 740.
20. Appy, 82. The author describes Dulles’ overtly aggressive, domineering, and potentially prejudicial style and he and others were slow to realize that the lack of a humble and grateful response to a 1951 wheat deal was culturally acceptable to the recipients, and instead took offense. The expectation was that of “a groveling supplicant,” as Dulles had suggested the Indians would likely “come crawling on their hands and knees” if the US made an offer of assistance. This pig-headed type of world view shaped Nehru’s personal characterization of Dulles as “nasty,” and had a ripple effect on other nations in Nehru’s circle of ‘positive neutralist’ thought—Syria being one.
21. In a telephone call from Dulles to the President at 1003 AM, 3 January, 1957 prior to the address to Congress announcing the Eisenhower Doctrine he stated, “don’t want initial impression about our program in the Arab world that this is imperialism and colonialism which could be pretty bad.” Papers of JFD, Telephone calls series, Box 11, Memo of Tel Conv, WH, Jan 1957 to Feb 28 1957.
22. Memo from CD Jackson to Abbott Washburn, Deputy Director of the International Information Activities, 19 Feb 53. The memo continued

on to highlight the need “not to kill information activities, but to set up some good ones.” White House Central Files, OFF 133 L – 6; OF 133-M-1 Psychological warfare Presidents committee on IIA, Folder (1). The lack of progress to that end over the course of the presidents first term resulted in an emergent telephone call from Dulles to the President at 1003 AM, 3 January, 1957 prior to the address to Congress announcing the Eisenhower Doctrine he stated, “don’t want initial impression about our program in the Arab world [to be] that this is imperialism and colonialism which could be pretty bad.” Papers of JFD, Telephone calls series, Box 11, Memo of Tel Conv, WH, Jan 1957 to Feb 28 1957.

23. Douglas Little, “Cold War and Covert Action: The United States and Syria, 1945-1958,” *Middle East Journal*, 44:1 (Washington, DC: Middle East Institute, Winter 1990), 51-75.
24. *Ibid*, 75.
25. Dwight D. Eisenhower, Top secret Diary, 31 January 1957. *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower*, ed. L. Galambos. Document #13, World Wide Web Facsimile by The Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial Commission of the print edition (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996). Accessed at <http://www.eisenhowermemorial.org/presidential-papers/second-term/documents/13.cfm>.
26. David W Lesch, *Syria and the United States: Eisenhower’s Cold War in the Middle East* (Boulder and Oxford: Westview Press, 1992), 106.
27. Eisenhower, Document #13.
28. Richard H Immerman, *John Foster Dulles and Diplomacy of the Cold War* (Princeton: University Press, 1990), 280-281.
29. For competing views see: Peter Hahn, *Caught in the Middle East: U.S. Policy toward the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1945-1961* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 226; Salim Yaqub, *Containing Arab Nationalism: The Eisenhower Doctrine and the Middle East* (University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 133; Little, 133. While Little suggests that Syria rejected the visit, Hahn suggests Richards was directed away because of “the regimes unfriendliness to the United States”, almost ironic given the purpose of a statesman and the advisement of Arab leaders, except when viewed through the framework of a prejudiced approach to the Middle East. Official archives demonstrate the divide over engagement was more a domestic U.S. policy issue.

30. Memorandum of Telephone Call between Herter and Richards, May 1, 1957, 10:10 am. CAH Telephone Calls 3/8/57 to 8/14/57 (1). Box 10. Christian Herter Papers. Dwight D. Eisenhower Library; Abilene, Kansas. Herter states: "Ambassador Richards said he realized the kind of pressures we had from Congress but still felt strongly that since he will not be going to Syria Egypt or Jordan he should not go to Israel; that if he went it would be over his protest; and that he felt it would do more harm among the Arab countries than the good it would do on the hill."
31. FBIS, Daily Report, Damascus, 7 January 1957, "Syrian Cabinet on Eisenhower Doctrine," Accessed at <http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:hul.eresource:fbisdare/>.
32. U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955-57. Vol.XIII, Near East: Jordan-Yemen*, 379. Telegram From the Embassy in Egypt to the Department of State, *September 1, 1957* (Washington, DC: GPO), Accessed at <http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v13/d379>.
33. Bonnie F. Saunders, *The United States and Arab Nationalism: The Syrian Case, 1953-1960* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1996), 68.
34. U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955-57. Vol.XIII, Near East: Jordan-Yemen*, 404. Circular Telegram From the Department of State to Certain Diplomatic Missions and Consular Offices, *September 25, 1957* (Washington, DC: GPO), 1988, 715. This was a Joint Department of State-USIA message identifying the need the need to "step up psychological campaign ... immediately." Additionally, Footnote 6 to Document 404 states, that "a small interagency group, headed by Ambassador Moose and including representatives from the CIA, Departments of Defense and State, and USIA, was formed to study the reasons why the U.S. psychological warfare program in the Middle East had not achieved a satisfactory degree of success and to make recommendations for a new approach."
35. Staff notes 177, 22 August 1957, DDE Diary Series, Box 26, August 1957, Aug 57 memo(2) folder, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Abilene, Kansas.
36. Ibid, "Letter from Syrian Foreign Minister Salah al-Bitar to President Eisenhower, December 6, 1956."
37. Anderson, p.25.

38. Memorandum of Meeting with NSC, Aug 26, 1957, 6:15pm, DDE Papers as President, 1953-61, Ann Whitman File, International Series Box, Box 48, Syria(3). Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Abilene, Kansas.
39. Ibid, "Memorandum of Conversation, John Foster Dulles and President Eisenhower, August 28, 1957"
40. Memorandum of Conversation, John Foster Dulles and President Eisenhower, August 28, 1957, DDE Papers as President, 1953-61, Ann Whitman File, International Series Box, Box 48, Syria(3). Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Abilene, Kansas.
41. Little, 89.
42. Ibid, "Letter from Syrian Foreign Minister Salah al-Bitar to President Eisenhower, December 6, 1956."
43. U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955–57. Vol. XIII, Near East: Jordan-Yemen, Document 419. Memorandum of a Conversation, New York, November 7, 1957* (Washington, DC: GPO), 1988, 740.
44. Anderson, 30.
45. Lustick, Ian, "The Absence of Middle Eastern Great Powers: Political 'Backwardness' in Historical Perspective." *International Organization*, 51: 4 (1997): 667–670. Lustick describes how the "hegemon-centric" approaches of the Great Powers on both sides of the Cold War fanned the flames of Arab nationalism.
46. Letter from Eisenhower to James Prioleau Richards, 9 March 1957. In *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower*, ed. L. Galambos and D. van Ee, Doc# 63. World Wide Web facsimile by The Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial Commission of the print edition; Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996, <http://www.eisenhowermemorial.org/presidential-papers/second-term/documents/63.cfm>; Department of State *Bulletin* 25 March 1957, 480; 27 May 1957, 841–845; 17 June 1957, 969–972, and 1 July 1957, 17–19.
47. FRUS, 1955-1957, Vol. XIII, Near East, Jordan-Yemen, Washington 1988. Dulles to Moose, Syrian Embassy, 28 May 1957 (Central Files, 783.00/5–1757).
48. Roosevelt, 1.

49. Jones, Matthew. "The 'Preferred Plan': The Anglo-American Working Group Report on Covert Action in Syria, 1957," *Intelligence and National Security*, 19:3 (2004): 413.
50. Memo, Report of the Psychological Planning Board Panel to C.D. Jackson, March 31, 1953; PSB Miscellaneous Memos; Box 1; C.D. Jackson Records, 1953-54; Dwight D. Eisenhower Library; Abilene, Kansas. This document lays out the objectives for "Doctrinal Warfare" for which C.D. Jackson was responsible in a number of roles throughout the Eisenhower Presidency. These early policy formulations set a firm foundation for approaches to the Middle East for the next 8 years.
51. Memo, USIA Memo "U.S. Doctrinal Program", January 15, 1954; OCB Miscellaneous Memos(2) ; Box 1; C.D. Jackson Records, 1953–54; Dwight D. Eisenhower Library; Abilene, Kansas. This document demonstrated an expansion of "hostile doctrines" beyond communism and neutralism to include "nationalism, racialism and other aspects of residual totalitarianism."
52. Department of State outgoing telegram from DDE to King Saud, 11 September 1957, Secret/Presidential Handling. Electronic Image. Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Abilene KS.
53. Oral History Transcript, OH-191, State Department Official and Foreign Service Officer Charles Yost, Authored by Loy Henderson. Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Abilene, Kansas. Author provided italicized emphasis.
54. Appy, 192.
55. Little, 3.
56. Prodeh, Elie. *The Perils of Ambiguity: The United States and the Baghdad Pact*, in David W. Lesch, *The United States in the Middle East: A Historical Reassessment* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), 100.
57. "Excerpts from U.N. Debates on Syria," New York Times, October 22, 1957.
58. Personal Note DDE to JFD, DDE Papers as President, 1953–61, Ann Whitman File, International Series Box, Box 48, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Abilene, Kansas.
59. Jones, 411.

60. 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,; Dulles to Embassy in Baghdad, 8 February 1958, Whitman File: NSC Series, Box 9, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Abilene, Kansas.
61. Fawaz A. Gerges, “The Kennedy Administration and the Egyptian-Saudi Conflict in Yemen: Coopting Arab Nationalism,” *Middle East Journal*, 49:2 (Spring1995): 292.
62. Speech by C.D. Jackson to NSC and Commissions of American Legion on Psychological Warfare. Box 244, OF 72-A-2, C.D. Jackson Dwight D. Eisenhower Library; Abilene, Kansas.
63. Little, 84.
64. R.S. Zaharna, “American Public Diplomacy in the Arab and Muslim World: A Strategic Communication Analysis,” *Foreign Policy Focus*, 1 (November 2001).
65. Robert Kaplan. Once Upon a Time in Syria, STRATFOR, April 10, 2013.Ibid.
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67. Kaplan.

Author Biography

Colonel (Retired) Kevin Brown served 24 years as an infantryman in the United States Army including combat deployments to Iraq that required tactical level one-on-one diplomatic engagement, at times with strategic level implications. Service first as a Battalion Commander in Baghdad in 2005–2006 as sectarian tensions heightened, followed by a return to theater as a Deputy Brigade Commander in Kirkuk in 2007–2008 at the height of the historic “surge” of troops when efforts at reconciliation were in high gear allowed him to witness firsthand the importance of engaging the enemy in dialogue. Having retired from the Army in 2011, he is currently a PhD Candidate in the Security Studies Program at Kansas State University. He holds a Masters in Public Diplomacy from Norwich University, a Masters in Operations Research from the Naval Postgraduate School, and a Bachelor’s Degree in Aerospace Engineering from the United States Military Academy. His research interests are informed by his military experience and include diplomacy, human rights, and conflict resolution. His dissertation research has just begun, and is focused on the role of religion in shaping the future of United States foreign policy in an increasingly Islamic post-Arab Spring Middle East.

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