

American Involvement in the Baghdad Pact

The creation of the Baghdad Pact (1955-1959), METO (Middle East Treaty Organization), or the Northern Tier Pact was a direct response to the creation of the NATO and SEATO organizations. The Middle East was believed to have been at risk of Soviet encroachment strictly on the basis of geography. Pro-western, or at least Western-friendly nations in the region including Turkey, Iraq, Pakistan, and Iran, with Great Britain as well, negotiated differences to form the Baghdad Pact. Each member signed anti-aggression pacts toward the other members and worked to improve economic, political, and cultural organizations within the region. The Baghdad Pact would survive the Suez Crisis, Arab-Israeli hostilities, and a reduction in British colonialism before transitioning to CENTO after Iraq pulled out in 1959. The Baghdad Pact would live on as CENTO until 1979, when Iran pulled out during the Iranian Revolution. This thesis will cover the organization's history while Iraq was still present, by focusing on American involvement from its inception in 1955 to the transition to CENTO in 1959.

While Great Britain joined the Baghdad Pact, the United States never officially joined. On the record, they observed. Off the record, Eisenhower heavily supported their operating budget. The purpose of this thesis is to study American involvement within the Baghdad Pact as they played a significant role despite not having become an official member.

The Baghdad Pact is not a well-known organization, and in most sources, it is viewed as being a complete failure. These sources, overall, do not identify the role that deterrence came into play, however. Also, the main remnants of the Baghdad Pact include the economic and educational developments that were created including new collegiate level institutions and infrastructure improvements including roads and bridges.

I plan to add to the historiography on this topic and clarify the active role that the United States played in the Baghdad Pact through their policies and funding for it. A major theme throughout this work is the American reasons for not officially joining the Pact due to their relationship with Israel and the Eisenhower Doctrine. The thesis for this project is as follows. Though the United States never officially joined the Baghdad Pact, American policymakers provided resources and strategic conditions, thus allowing the United States to take a very active role in the Pact's development.