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US foreign policy, Iraq, and the Cold War 1958-1975

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Abstract

This thesis analyses the ways in which U.S. policy toward Iraq was dictated by its broader Cold War strategy between 1958 and 1975. While most historians have focused on 'hot' Cold War conflicts such as Cuba, Vietnam, and Afghanistan, few have recognized Iraq's significance as a Cold War battleground. This thesis shows where Iraq fits into the broader historiography of the Cold War in the Middle East. It argues that U.S. decisions and actions were designed to deny the Soviet Union influence over Iraq and a strategic base in the oil-rich Gulf region. This was evident in the Eisenhower administration's response to Iraq's revolution in 1958, when it engaged in covert action to prevent communists from gaining control of the state; in the Kennedy administration's efforts to bolster the first Ba'th regime during its war with the Kurds in 1963 because it perceived it as anti-communist; in the Johnson administration's support for the anti-communist, Arab nationalist regimes during the mid-1960s; and in the Nixon administration's decision to support the Kurdish rebels in 1972-75 after the second Ba'thist regime drew Iraq partially into the Soviet orbit. This suggests a clear pattern. Using newly available primary sources and interviews, this thesis reveals new details on America's decision-making toward and actions against Iraq during a key part of the Cold War. Significantly, it raises questions about widely held notions, such as the CIA's alleged involvement in the 1963 Ba'thist coup and the theory that the U.S. sold out the Kurds in 1975. Finally, it argues scholars have relied excessively and uncritically on a leaked congressional report, the Pike Report, which has had a distorting affect on the historiography of U.S.-Iraqi relations. This thesis seeks to redress these historiographical deficiencies and bring new details to light.

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Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, Ford and Brezhnev attempted unsuccessfully to reach further agreement on strategic arms limitation. They held wide-ranging talks on regional issues including Afghanistan, the Iran-Iraq War, Central America, southern Africa, the Middle East, and Cambodia. Cold War—resulted in the disestablishment of the SCI within days of Kennedy's inauguration as President.[10] However, subsequent events would return Iraq to the attention of American officials. [11]. On June 25, 1961, Qasim mobilized troops along the border between Iraq and Kuwait, declaring the latter nation "an indivisible part of Iraq" and causing a short-lived "Kuwait Crisis." Following Kurdish leader Mustafa Barzani's 1958 return to Iraq from exile in the Soviet Union, Qasim had promised to permit autonomous rule in the Kurdish region of northern Iraq, but by 1961 Qasim had made no progress towards achieving this goal. words of State Department official James Spain, the "policy of the nationalist Arabs who Given this, US foreign policy throughout the Cold War period was, by its very nature, reactive, responding to threats—both real and imagined—as they arose. Consequently, America's policy toward Iraq was driven by America's perception of the Soviet threat. This book underscores the reactive nature of US foreign policy during the Cold War, while assessing America's policies toward Iraq. As a study of the Cold War, this book is situated within a wider debate about superpower interventions in the Third World. Because of this, the US policy toward Iraq between 1958 and 1975 was based on Iraq's perceived role in the Cold War, leading to a series of major and minor interventions, which have contributed to the country's ongoing instability. Acronyms and Abbreviations. It seemed that the United States had finally righted the wrong that it inflicted in 1975—until now. But even this latest betrayal shouldn't come as a shock. It's entirely consistent with the interests toward the Kurds that the United States has privately described from the very beginning. Bryan R. Gibson is an Assistant Professor of History at Hawai'i Pacific University. He is the author of *Sold Out? US Foreign Policy, Iraq, the Kurds, and the Cold War*. View Comments. Tags: Argument, kurdistan, Middle East, United States. This book analyzes the ways in which US policy toward Iraq was dictated by America's broader Cold War strategy between 1958 and 1975. While most historians have focused on "hot" Cold War conflicts such as Cuba, Vietnam, and Afghanistan, few have recognized Iraq's significance as a Cold War battleground. This book argues that US decisions and actions were designed to deny the Soviet Union influence over Iraq and to create a strategic base in the oil-rich Gulf region. kurdistan kurdis war cold war qasim regime Cold War foreign policy Kurdish war Kurdistan Policy Qasim regime. Bibliographic information.