

CLASSIFICATION — DISSEMINATION CONTROLS

SECRET
(When Filled In)

IN 65345

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*

FOLLOWED BY THE BPRL, CULMINATING IN THE 8 FEBRUARY 1963 TANK
ATTACK ON THE DEFENSE MINISTRY. [REDACTED] COMMENT: [REDACTED] *

PLANNING FOR AN APRIL 1962 COUP WAS INTERRUPTED BY THE ARREST OF
BPI BAGHDAD BRANCH, LATER BPRL, LEADER MUHSIN SHAYKH RADHY,
AND ALL KEY LEADERS OF THE BPI ORGANIZATION IN THE SECURITY
AND POLICE SERVICES IN LATE APRIL 1962. IN THE COURSE OF THE FOLL-
OWING TWO MONTHS, BPRL LEADERS DECIDED THAT ARIF REPRESENTED A
SECURITY HAZARD BECAUSE HE TENDS TO TRUST ANYONE HE LIKES WITH
POLITICAL SECRETS. THEY ALSO WERE AWARE OF ARIF'S PREDILECTION
FOR DEMAGOGUERY. IN THE PLAN DEVELOPED FOR A COUP TO BE STAGED
IN JULY 1962, ARIF WAS SLATED TO BECOME ONE OF A THREE-MAN
PRESIDENTIAL COUNCIL WITH MUHAMMAD MAHDI KUBBA AND BRIGADIER
NAJI TALIB, WITH THE REAL POWER TO BE VESTED IN A REVOLUTIONARY
COUNCIL, HEADED BY BRIGADIER AHMAD HASAN BAKR AS PRIME MINISTER.

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[REDACTED] COMMENT: [REDACTED] * [REDACTED] THE JULY COUP PLAN WAS CANCELLED ON
15 JULY. WHEN COUP PLANNING WAS RESUMED BY THE BPRL IN NOVEMBER
1962, ARIF WAS NOT CONSULTED. HOWEVER, WHEN THE FORM AND COMPOSITION
OF A NEW GOVERNMENT WAS DRAWN UP BY THE BPRL ON 12 DECEMBER 1962, FOR
A COUP TO BE STAGED ON 20 DECEMBER 1962, ARIF WAS SLATED, WITHOUT
HIS KNOWLEDGE TO BECOME INTERIM PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC AND A
MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEE, PENDING RESTORATION

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OF DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS. [REDACTED] COMMENT: [REDACTED] * AT THAT:

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TIME, IT WAS THE BPRL INTENTION TO RESTRICT ARIF TO THE PERFORMANCE OF A CEREMONIAL ROLE, WHILE USING HIS NAME AND CHARISMA TO ATTRACT SUPPORT FROM NATIONALIST AND PRO-NASIR ELEMENTS. THE FACT THAT ARIF HAS BEEN EXCLUDED FROM THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMAND, FORMED ON 8 FEBRUARY 1963, MAY BE REGARDED AS AN INDICATION THAT THE BPI IS NOT SO BEHOLDEN TO PRO-NASIR OR OTHER NON-BATH OFFICERS FOR THE SUCCESSFUL EXECUTION OF THE FEBRUARY COUP THAT IT NEED INCLUDE ARIF IN THE NCRC WHICH WILL GOVERN THE EXECUTIVE BODY. AT THE SAME TIME, IT CAN SAFELY BE ASSUMED THAT THE BPRL HAS RESPECT FOR ARIF, BOTH AS A DRAWING CARD WITH THE POPULACE AND AS A POTENTIAL DEMAGOGUE. THE BPRL WILL PROBABLY REFRAIN FROM EXCLUDING ARIF ALTOGETHER, A COURSE WHICH WOULD HAVE BEEN PREFERABLE SO FAR AS BPI SECRETARY GENERAL ALI SALIH AND HIS CLOSE ASSOCIATES ARE CONCERNED.

2. ALSO ON 8 FEBRUARY, THE NCRC ANNOUNCED THE FORMATION OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT WITH BRIGADIER AHMAD HASAN BAKR AS PRIME MINISTER. WITH REGARD TO BAKR, IN SEPTEMBER 1958, QASIM'S MILITARY POLICE MADE A LITTLE KNOWN ERROR WHICH WAS TO CONTRIBUTE TO QASIM'S DEMISE. THEY PLACED TWO ARMY OFFICERS WHO HAD EACH ATTEMPTED TO STAGE LIGHTENING COUPS AGAINST QASIM IN THE SAME JAIL CELL. THE JUNIOR OF THE TWO, THEN MAJOR SALIH MAHDI AMMASH, RECRUITED THE SENIOR, BRIGADIER AHMAD HASAN BAKR, INTO THE BPI. HAVING

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DEPLETED THE NATIONALIST SIDE OF THE CAREFUL BALANCE, HE WAS WONT TO KEEP IN THE OFFICER CORPS, IN THE WAKE OF THE ABORTIVE BPI/UAR SPONSORED SHAWAF MUTINY IN MOSUL IN 1959 QASIM MADE HIS SECOND MISTAKE BY RESTORING AMMASH AND BAKR TO ACTIVE DUTY, THE FORMER AS OPERATIONS OFFICER OF THE IRAQI AIR FORCE AND THE LATTER AS OFFICER COMMANDING THE NINETEENTH BRIGADE. ALTHOUGH BAKR WAS RETIRED SUBSEQUENTLY, HIS SKILL IN ORGANIZING CLANDESTINELY AND THE RESPECT IN WHICH HE WAS HELD BY HIS MEN PROVED INVALUABLE TO THE BPI ARMY BUREAU — SO MUCH SO THAT IN FEBRUARY 1963 THERE WERE STILL EIGHTEEN BPI OFFICERS ORGANIZED IN QASIM'S OWN OLD BRIGADE — THE NINETEENTH, WHOSE ORGANIZATION INTO BPI CELLS DATED BACK TO THE TIME OF BAKR'S COMMAND. BAKR'S MITE WAS USED BY THE BPI ARMY BUREAU IN ORGANIZING FOURTH ARMORED REGIMENT COMMANDER KHALID MAKKI AL HASHIMI, WHO LATER ORGANIZED THE BATH CELLS IN THAT REGIMENT WHICH, IN TURN SPEARHEADED THE 8 FEBRUARY COUP. BAKR IS, IF ANYTHING, HELD IN GREATER RESPECT BY THE BPI CIVILIAN ORGANIZERS OF THE COUP THAN BY HIS MILITARY FOLLOWERS. FIFTY YEAR OLD CAREER SOLDIER, HE IS BELIEVED BY THE BPRL TO HARBOR NO PERSONAL AMBITION, AND TO HAVE A DEEP ROOTED PERSONAL BELIEF IN THE PRINCIPLES OF DEMOCRATIC CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT. BAKR HAS BEEN DESCRIBED BY BPRL MEMBERS AS MODEST, STRAIGHT FORWARD AND LOYAL. ALTHOUGH BAKR HAS NEVER HELD AN IMPORTANT BPI OFFICE, AND THUS

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APPEARS SOMETHING OF A FIGUREHEAD, HE WOULD APPEAR TO HAVE THE AGE, EXPERIENCE, AND LEADERSHIP WHICH MIGHT MAKE AN EFFECTIVE PRIME MINISTER. IF, AS HAS HAPPENED TWICE IN SYRIA, THE YOUTHFUL LEADERS OF THE BATH BEGIN TO DISPLAY INERTIA AND PREDILECTION TO SEEK PERSONAL POWER ONCE THEY HAVE EMERGED FROM THE UNDERGROUND IN WHICH THE PARTY HAS OPERATED FOR SO LONG BAKR MAY HAVE THE STRENGTH TO HOLD THE NEW GOVERNMENT TOGETHER AND, BY DOING SO, EMERGE AS A TRUE PRIME MINISTER.

3. DISSEM STATE, ARMY, AIR, CINCNELM, CINCSOUTH (PERSONAL)

END OF MESSAGE

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