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Authority 100-969000  
By NARA Date 3/31/02

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

# AIRGRAM

*SOE 14 IRAQ*

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A-477  
NO.

TO : Department of State  
 INFO : Amembassy TEHRAN, BEIRUT, LONDON, TEL AVIV  
 FROM : Amembassy Brussels  
 SUBJECT : Political: Condition of the Jewish Community in Iraq  
 REF : Brussels 4585  
*nan*

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

OCT 20 8 19 AM 1970

RS/AM  
ANALYSIS BRANCH

DATE: October 16, 1970

*TSS - gcs, goss  
gss to Southard*

The body of this airgram is an Embassy translation of a report on the Jewish community in Iraq. The report was prepared by the Belgian Embassy in Baghdad and passed to us by the Belgian Foreign Office. The Foreign Office cautioned that the Belgian Embassy in Iraq should not be cited as the source of this report.

Summary:

Slow improvement in the condition of Iraqi Jews with some reappearing in the economic sector. University reopens its doors to Jewish students. Authorities have renounced the use of certain harrassment. Emigration remains forbidden but clandestine departures are made easier by the aid of people living in Kurdish territory. The regime is probably tending towards a normalization but is fearful of reactions of extremists.

End Summary

The last report which I sent to you on the question of the Israeli community in Iraq was dated June 4, 1969. It was noted in that report that the legal condition of the Jewish community had been improving.

As a matter of fact, in the spring of last year, the authorities revoked certain discriminatory ordinances put into effect by the Ministry of the Interior in 1963. These ordinances covered the rights of Iraqi Jews to travel, to engage in financial activities and to undertake contractual relations. If since then, this legal adjustment has remained

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Clearances:

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 PA/HO Department of State  
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largely a dead letter, the real lot of Iraqis of the Jewish confession has none the less in a general fashion slowly improved. In the business world, for example, their ostracism is no longer complete. Certain Jews are discreetly reappearing in business firms which employ them. They are also reappearing at the head of firms still owned by Jews. In these latter cases, the Jews operate for the most part behind Arab frontmen. The Embassies are noticing that it is no longer exceptional that their commercial services are dealing with Jews employed by Iraqi firms.

Higher education is no longer inaccessible to them. At the beginning of the new academic year, the university alone received 20 Jewish students. In principle, all the faculties are open to them with the exception perhaps of the medical faculty where they are encountering difficulties in enrolling. It seems that the authorities believe there is too large a proportion of Jewish doctors in the medical corps of Iraq.

Vexations, which darkened their existence, are tending to disappear. The use of the telephone has been, in principal, returned to them. Their movements within the country are coming under less control. Police surveillance has been relaxed and the general atmosphere tends towards a detente.

On one point, however, the regime remains intractable: emigration. But in this field as well, unexpected horizons recently have opened. If legal departure from the country remains forbidden, clandestine movement has become more practicable than at any time since the Baathists took power. As a matter of fact, the pacification of the Kurds has opened in the North of the country a zone where the frontier is wide open. This zone has been quickly exploited. It seems that as soon as hostilities between the Montagnards (Kurds) and the Government in Baghdad ended, philanthropic associations approached Barzani and set up in Kurdistan an organization for passing Jews across the Iranian frontier.

To this time, some 250 Jews have used this organization to leave Iraq. Met and cared for at the Iranian frontier by a charitable organization based in Tehran, they have been for the most part sent on to Canada or Denmark where special arrangements for ~~their~~ immigration have been made available to them.

At the beginning of September, however, about 100 Jews, who too confidently departed more or less grouped together, attracted the attention of the police. They were arrested at Irbil; all their possessions were confiscated;

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and they were beaten and thrown into jail. They were, however, quickly released and do not seem to have been bothered further by the police.

It appears that the era of overt harrassment is finished and that we are moving towards a new equilibrium permitting the two communities to live together. Moreover, as a matter of principle, if it were not for the political conditions which prevail, the Baathists could not be hostile to the Jewish community. The Baath ideology postulates tolerance in questions of religion and race, and in Iraq itself its policies are aimed at rallying the support of the minorities.

Furthermore, the regime has learned to measure the force of world opinion and knows that this force is sensitized to the lot of the Jews remaining in Arab lands. Perhaps the Government has given thought to offering an example in Iraq itself of the harmonious co-habitation which could come into being between Jews and Arabs - a harmony which should one day reign in a liberated Palestine toward which all of its political efforts are aimed.

At this moment, however, a complete normalization of the lot of the Jews is not possible since this would risk once again attracting the thunder bolts of the extremists.

*[Signature]*  
EISENHOWER

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