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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

9 February 1963

DAILY BRIEF

***Iraq:** The coup leaders, having received pledges of support from key troop commanders throughout the country, are gradually consolidating their initial victory.

They claim to have overcome all resistance at the Ministry of Defense in Baghdad where forces loyal to Qasim were holding out. Skirmishes were still taking place in the city last night, however, and there are reports that Qasim himself is still at large. In a broadcast over Baghdad radio at about ten o'clock last night, the revolutionary council, mentioning "desperate attempts" by "Communist agents--partners of the enemy Qasim--to create confusion," authorized the security forces "to eliminate anyone who does not obey orders."

The twenty-one man cabinet named yesterday evening is dominated by members of the Baath Party. It also includes a few nationalists of other parties, as well as two Kurds. The cabinet appointments are almost identical to those planned by Baath Party leaders in mid-December when they hoped to move against Qasim before the end of the year.

The revolutionary council reportedly intends that Abd al-Salam Arif serve as President of the Republic for an interim period only. It hopes to use him as a figurehead to help attract nationalist support. Arif favors closer ties with the UAR than

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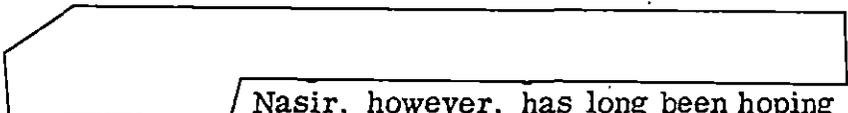
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do the Baathist leaders who are sympathetic to many of Nasir's views but who are sharply opposed to any idea of union.

The new Iraqi regime can be expected to pursue a more genuinely neutralist policy than Qasim did. It will probably try to retain Soviet military and economic aid agreements, while cutting down the number of Soviet personnel in Iraq. It has already acted to displace pro-Communist military officers and is certain to deal harshly with local Communists.

At the same time, it is also likely to seek an improvement in relations with some Western countries, accepting more economic aid if it is offered.



Nasir, however, has long been hoping and pressing for Qasim's overthrow, and he sent Arif a congratulatory telegram. For him, the new regime is preferable even if it remains largely independent of his influence.

The coup puts further pressure on the unstable Syrian regime, establishing an unsettling influence on the Iraqi side of Syrian territory at a time when the Azm government has already become panicky about Egyptian operations into Syria from Lebanon. Syria, which had partly closed the Syrian-Lebanese border a few days ago has now blocked all transit across that border.

The Husayn government is unhappy about the Iraqi coup because of its concern over anything which might increase the Nasirist threat to Jordan. Prime Minister Tal has warned against any foreign interference in Iraq. The Jordanian Army is on precautionary alert.

