

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRIME MINISTERThe Regent of Iraq

His Royal Highness Emir Abdul Ilah, Regent of Iraq, is a distinguished Moslem leader, whose chief distinction is his reputation for integrity, industry and devotion to duty. All these are important qualities in a region which has been a special target of Axis propaganda and where political life has been full of intrigue and turbulence.

Abdul Ilah became Regent in May 1939 upon the death of Ghazi I, and his appointment was confirmed the same year by the Parliament of Iraq. He proceeded to purge the entourage of the former King which was riddled with corruption. His policy has been so definitely pro-British that his enemies have called him a British agent. They have referred to the fact that he graduated about 31 years ago from Victoria College in Alexandria and later studied military engineering in Great Britain.

The Regent, is of course, a constitutional ruler and consequently has not played a very active role in politics. His influence, however, has been directed towards ensuring reasonably settled political conditions in Iraq. This, together with his pro-Allied leanings has made possible Iraq's important contribution to the war effort in the form of foodstuffs, oil, transport to Iran, and the quartering of United Kingdom and United States troops in that country. Even more important Iraq has provided the Allies with an area in the Middle East where they could depend upon a friendly people and Government.

On April 4th, 1941, Rashid Ali-al-Gailani established a pro-Axis government by a coup d'etat. The Regent had to flee to Transjordan but returned during the same year with British help. Iraq was the first Arab State to declare war on the three major Axis powers on January 7th, 1943.