

**Office of the Historian
Bureau of Public Affairs
United States Department of State**

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The Department of State released today *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume E-4, Documents on Iran and Iraq, 1969-1972*, as an electronic-only publication. This volume is the latest publication in the subseries of the *Foreign Relations* series that documents the most important decisions and actions of the foreign policy of the administrations of Presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford. Volume E-4 is the fifth *Foreign Relations* volume to be published in this new format. It is available to all free of charge on the Internet. Approximately 25 percent of the volumes scheduled for publication for the 1969-1976 subseries, covering the Nixon and Nixon-Ford administrations, will be in this format.

This volume documents the foreign policy of the Nixon administration towards its then staunch friend in the Middle East, Iran under the Shah. It also documents limited U.S. relations with a potential opponent, increasingly pro-Soviet Iraq. Since Iran and Iraq were rivals, the closer the Nixon administration's ties were to Tehran the wider the gap became with Baghdad.

U.S. relations with Iran had been close since the early 1950's, but the Nixon administration saw in the Shah and Iran a key oil-rich ally able to further U.S. interests in the area, and a pillar of security in the Persian Gulf. The volume documents a debate between the Departments of State and Defense over the question of how many modern weapons the Shah required and how much of Iran's resources should go to defense as opposed to social and economic development. The debate ended in May 1972 during President Nixon's visit to Tehran, when the President pledged to supply the Shah with virtually all available arms except atomic weapons. To pay for these weapons, as well as the so-called "White Revolution" to modernize Iran, the Shah needed higher oil prices. Pleased that the Shah did not join the rest of OPEC in demanding oil industry ownership, the United States was willing to accept his independent efforts to control his nation's oil resources. The volume also tracks the latent popular discontent at the Shah's rule for what his critics charged was a corrupt, extravagant, and dictatorial regime. Although U.S. Embassy officials reported that student protests and terrorist incidents had increased, the Nixon administration saw no immediate threat to the Shah's stability. The President and other officials believed that the Shah was a benign dictator whose rule best suited Iran's current stage of development.

The volume also documents less congenial U.S.-Iraqi relations, which had been severed officially in 1967. With no presence in Baghdad, the Nixon administration was hampered in handling issues like the Ba'athist persecution of Iraqi Jews in 1969. Still,

U.S. officials interpreted this and other events as a sign of the Ba'athists' weakness, and initially resisted Iran's argument that Iraq constituted a danger. The volume demonstrates that the Nixon administration was guided by the apparent expectation that the Ba'athist regime would fall on its own, beset by internal unrest from Iraq's armed Kurdish minority. As the Ba'athists consolidated their power, however, their tilt towards Moscow became a concern to Washington. In addition to welcoming Soviet involvement in the Iraqi oil industry, the Iraqis signed a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with Moscow in early 1972. A second theme emerges with the U.S. perception of a threat from Baghdad. Alarmed at the increased Iraqi potential for "trouble-making" in the Gulf, and eager to thwart Soviet acquisition of a Middle East base, President Nixon agreed in May 1972 to the Shah's long-standing appeal to join his assistance effort to the Kurds. The volume shows that the goal of this covert assistance was to prevent the Kurds from making peace with Baghdad, and keep the Iraqi government too absorbed with internal instability to disturb its neighbors. US officials' early assessments of support for the Kurds in Iraq deemed it a success.

The volume, including a preface, list of names, abbreviations, sources, annotated document list, and this press release, is available on the Office of the Historian website (<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/frus/nixon/e4>). For further information, contact Edward Keefer, General Editor of the *Foreign Relations* series, at (202) 663-1131, or by e-mail to history@state.gov.