

NEW MASS SPY TRIAL REPORTED IN BAGHDAD

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Iraq Accuses Israel of Planning Reprisal

(By The Associated Press)

Iraq's revolutionary court was reported to have started a new mass spy trial in Baghdad Tuesday night with the defendants accused of spying for the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency.

The new trial, reported by the Egyptian Middle East News Agency, was said to have started as Iraq accused Israel of preparing a large-scale reprisal raid to avenge the hanging of nine Jews Monday in Baghdad.

In a news conference broadcast by Baghdad radio, Iraqi Information Minister Abdullah Salloum Samerrai said Israeli troops were building up along the Jordan River in preparation for an attack on Iraqi troops in Arab Jordan.

London sources had reported that the Iraqi government intended to put 35 more prisoners—13 of them Jews—on trial before a revolutionary court on charges of spying and sabotage.

The Egyptian News Agency report did not mention any number of defendants.

It quoted the court president, Col. Ali Hadi Witwit, as saying only that the trial had begun behind closed doors and that the defendants were accused of working for the CIA.

The public hanging of nine Jews and five others Monday, following a similar spy trial, touched off furious outbursts in Israel and condemnation in many world capitals.

'INTERNAL AFFAIR'

"This is a purely internal affair with no room for intervention by any other country," the Iraqi information minister said in his Tuesday news conference.

Samerrai said the Israeli military buildup was a "prelude for massive aggression."

Iraq already has been put in a state of military readiness for

any Israeli reprisal.

The Iraqi government has about 20,000 troops stationed in neighboring Jordan. Their presence has been seen in some quarters as a tempting opportunity for Israeli reprisal.

But such an attack—coming so soon after Israel's commando raid on Beirut International Airport Dec. 28—could set off sparks that might embroil the whole region in another round of war, Western observers believe.

The U.S. State Department disclosed Tuesday that it had urged Israel not to retaliate. A spokesman, Robert J. McCloskey, told a Washington news conference: "The position every American administration has taken regarding the cycle of provocations and reprisals has been a consistent one. It should be avoided."

In New York, U.N. Secretary-General U Thant plunged into a strategy session with his special peace envoy Gunnar V. Jarring after calling at a news conference for moral pressure by the Big Four world powers to achieve a Middle East settlement. Thant had appealed with-

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out success to Baghdad to spare the nine Jews.

POPE APPEALS

The Vatican newspaper L'Osservatore Romano disclosed that Pope Paul VI, who has made clear in the past that he is opposed to the death penalty, also had appealed for clemency through the apostolic delegate in Baghdad.

Sharing an opinion expressed by various governments and public figures, the Vatican organ editorially deplored the executions and declared the cause of peace in the Middle East "can only suffer seriously."

The British government also decried the executions and drew a protest from the Iraqi government.

Iraq countered that Israeli propaganda machinery was "out in full force to slander Iraq and feature the hangings as a program against Iraqi Jews."

Travelers who arrived in Beirut from Iraq gave grisly accounts of the scene in Baghdad, where 11 of the convicts were strung up in red prison garb on hastily erected gallows in Liberation Square.

Signs pinned to the chests of the dead men gave their names and professions. The witnesses said about 500,000 Iraqis marched through the streets, waving banners denouncing Israel, imperialism and the United States.

Thant told a news conference in New York the Big Four—the United States, Britain, France and the Soviet Union—must be actively involved in the peace

efforts, "either singly or collectively."

VIGIL IN LONDON

In London Dr. Immanuel Jakobovitz, chief rabbi of the Commonwealth, joined an all-night, torchlit mourning vigil by British Jews outside the Iraqi Embassy. Police stood watch.

The official British reaction to the executions was voiced in the House of Lords by the Foreign affairs minister, Lord Chalfont.

Answering expressions of horror at the hangings, Chalfont disclosed the British had tried but failed to persuade the Iraqi government to exercise clemency for all 86 prisoners they have been holding for months to face espionage and sabotage charges.

"All those involved appear to be Iraqi citizens," Chalfont said. "Therefore there was no question of direct intervention. But we took up the matter informally on humanitarian grounds, pointing out the effect on Iraq's reputation abroad."

Israel's government had appealed to Britain, among other countries, to exercise its good offices with the Iraqis in the hope of heading off the executions.

British authorities theorized that Iraq's ruling Socialist Baathists have been using the affair for two purposes:

—To distract attention from feuding within the regime.

—To move against some of the regime's political opponents,

scores of whom have been arrested as suspected accomplices of real or imagined Israel agents.

Dr. Nabum Goldmann, president of the World Jewish Congress, called for U.N. intervention to secure rights for 8,500 Jews to quit Iraq, Syria and Egypt. Goldmann announced he is seeking the backing of the Big Four for his appeal, which he cabled to Thant.

The hangings were the latest

episode in Iraq's saga of bloodshed

Split by religious, racial and tribal differences, the country was thrust into an era of violence with the overthrow of its monarchy in 1958.

Then the pro-Western Premier Nuri Said, young King Feisal and his mentor, Prince Abdul Illah, were slain in a revolution led by Abdul Kerim Kassem and mobs dragged their

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bodies through Baghdad's streets in a nationalist frenzy.

Kassem lasted nearly five erratic years, an era of Communist influence marked by bloody battles between pro-Communists and Baath Socialists in the Northern provinces. Hundreds — some said thou-

sands — of anti-Kassem Baathists died in the struggle.

The dictator himself was executed in February, 1963, during a Baathist-led coup engineered by his one-time partner in revolt, Abdul Salam Aref. To prove Kassem was dead, the Iraqis displayed his lifeless face on television.