

SECURITY : RESTRICTED

PRIORITY: AIR POUCH

TO : Department of State

OII INTERNATIONAL PRESS AND PUBLICATIONS DIVISION 511-8021/4-1050

FROM : BAGHDAD 381 April 10, 1950

APR 27 1950

APR 25 4 08 PM '50

REF :

SUBJECT : RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN CONNECTION WITH THE KURDISH-
NEWS BULLETIN

For Dept. use only.
APR 28
IE
DCR
AREA

I have the honor to report the following developments in connection with the Kurdish-language news bulletin prepared weekly by USIS Baghdad:

1. Currently the bulletin is sent out in 820 copies, to the following destinations:

- Baghdad - 115
- Northern Iraq - 476
- Iran - 116
- Syria - 102
- Miscellaneous - 11

DECLASSIFIED
Authority NND 852914
By DA NARA. Date 7/1/92

Date of Action
Action Office Symbol
Name of Officer

2. The question of getting the bulletin to Tehran promptly has been difficult because of changes in the time at which the weekly Embassy pouch leaves Baghdad for Tehran. The present solution is to send copies of the bulletin to Tehran in an unaccompanied air pouch each Monday. This assures quick delivery but is a considerable drain on USIS postage funds.

3. The Public Affairs Officer visited Tehran and Tabriz in February. In both places he had the opportunity to discuss the Kurdish bulletin with those directly interested. At Tabriz he met Habib Ameri, the Consulate's contact man with Amr Khan Shikkak. Mr. Ameri gave assurances of the Shikkak leader's continuing interest in receiving the Kurdish bulletin. At Tehran the Embassy arranged a meeting with the Iranian Director General of Propaganda and Broadcasting, Bahram Shahrokh, who expressed great interest in the bulletin and asked that one hundred copies be sent each week to him, for distribution among Kurdish chieftans in the Iranian frontier area bordering on Iraq. Mr. Shahrokh already has arranged Kurdish-language broadcasts from radios Tehran, Tabriz and other points which can reach Kurdish listeners, and he has completed plans for a weekly Kurdish newspaper to be edited in the various Kurdish dialects of Iran. Appearance of the newspaper only awaits the allocation of funds for this purpose. During the Public Affairs Officer's trip, he acquired certain sample publications in Kurdish of interest to the Kurdish translators at Baghdad, enabling them to compare their Babani Kurdish of Suleimaniyah with the Kurdish written across the frontier in Iran.

4. The Iraqi Government's official attitude toward the bulletin continues friendly and favorable. The Public Affairs Officer recently had occasion to discuss the bulletin with the Acting Director General of Propaganda and Broadcasting, Hussein Rahhal, who said that the bulletin was

File under Iraq

APR 19 1950

REGnade:ecw

RESTRICTED

ACTION COPY — DEPARTMENT OF STATE

The action office must return this permanent record copy to DC/R files with an endorsement of action taken.

This Document Must be Returned
DCR
511-8021/4-1050
FEB 27 1952
FILED
TH

was satisfactory in every respect. In fact, during the meeting further arrangements for USIS-Iraqi Government collaboration in connection with Kurdish material was worked out. At the invitation of the Baghdad State Radio Director, Rashid Nejb, the Information Officer has made a tape recording giving in Babani Kurdish talks on health and education together with a program of Kurdish music and singing as produced by the State Radio. This tape recording will be played before films showings by the Mobile Films Unit in Kurdistan. The Unit is leaving for the North on April 7, for an extended tour, and during the tour the director of the Radio is arranging for well-known Kurdish musicians and singers in the villages to record their own music on the Unit's tape recorder. Upon return to Baghdad, tapes thus recorded will be run off at the Broadcasting Studios and will be made part of the permanent Kurdish music collection of the Radio and will be re-broadcast back to Kurdish listeners in Northern Iraq.

5. The first criticism of the Kurdish bulletin appeared on March 14, 1950, when a letter sent to Al-Alem Al-Arabi and published by that paper commented on what the writer described as American efforts to revive the "Greater Kurdistan" project.

"It is not surprising that the U. S. Government should sponsor the interests of Kurdish people after it only recently sponsored the interests of a group of rogues and vagabonds, and created a state for them in the heart of ARABIA in order to realize its own political objectives and strengthen the foothold of its modern imperialism. It is not surprising that the U. S. should be so deeply concerned with the true interests of Kurdish people, because its imperialistic policy makes it utterly necessary to bring such states into existence, especially in strategic areas. The efforts made by American politicians to push the Kurdish language into their bulletins and those of the U. N. etc. makes clear this tendency.

"But we, who know a great deal about the implications of this policy, would only like to say that such tunes will not make us merry, no matter how melodious they may be, unless they make the whole of Iraq merry."

There seems to be no reason for uneasiness at the publishing of this article in Al-Alem Al-Arabi. It is a newspaper of minuscule circulation with an editor who has the reputation of being not only a liar and an opportunist but also a little daft.

6. A question regarding the Kurdish bulletin from another source came recently when the Turkish Minister to Iraq, Rahmi Apak, in the course of a cocktail party expressed to the Public Affairs Officer his concern that USIS was publishing a bulletin in the Kurdish language. "We Turks have burned our mouths on the Kurds before, and we don't want to do it again," he said. It was explained to him that the bulletin was intended primarily for the Kurds of Iraq, and that it was intended as an effort to fill the gap in the democratic information activity countering Soviet propaganda to the Kurds. Even this small effort by USIS, Baghdad is important because it reaches so many Kurds who know nothing but Kurdish. At the Turkish Minister's request a copy of each bulletin is being sent to him. It is hoped that his fears will be allayed when he sees the

type of material that goes into the bulletin, especially how much there is regarding friendly Turkish-American cooperation.

7. The British Embassy at Baghdad has long been considering publishing something in Kurdish again. It will be recalled that there was a Kurdish-language magazine published by the British Information Section during and immediately after the Second World War. The British have consulted closely with the American Embassy, especially with USIS, and it has finally been decided to issue a monthly cultural magazine in Kurdish, edited and printed at Mosul. The British are bending over backwards to make certain that there be no appearance of competition in producing Kurdish-language material between British and American Governments. As soon as the British publication appears, copies will be sent to the Department.
8. A frank appraisal of the Kurdish bulletin after eight months of its existence seems to indicate that it has been a worthwhile undertaking. Requests continue to come in from readers who wish to receive the bulletin regularly; furthermore both Iraqi and Iranian governments have indicated by word and deed their approval of the bulletin, both in the way it is produced and circulated and in its content. There are certainly many improvements which could be made in it, both physical and linguistic. It would be a much more attractive publication if it were printed rather than mimeographed. The two translators who prepare it are not fluent in English, and, therefore much of their material they translate from the Arabic bulletin. The material thereby suffers in clarity and interest. However, we are continuing to search for a first-class Kurdish translator and until we find him, the present translators must do. The Department has generously indicated its wholehearted support of the bulletin and has told us to go ahead with its expansion but has not allocated specific funds for the bulletin. It is suggested that the Department inform Baghdad of the extent it is prepared financially to support further expansion, elaboration, and development of USIS Baghdad Kurdish-language operation. Currently we are producing the Kurdish-language bulletin and we have prepared Babani Kurdish soundtracks for a number of the "Health in the Americas" cartoons. We are also now beginning the collection of a small tape library of Kurdish music. We would like to improve the appearance and content of the bulletin, enlarge our music collection (for possible use should VOA ever begin a Kurdish-language broadcast) and print here at Baghdad certain health posters with Kurdish captions. The latter would cost about 40,000 Iraqi dinars (approximately \$112.00) per three-colored poster, including the artist's fee and all printing charges, for 500 copies.

Edward S. Crocker
Edward S. Crocker

REGnade/ECW

REG

(Handwritten initials)