

~~Black action~~  
~~APRIL 1951~~  
~~DEPARTMENT OF STATE~~  
~~AFRICAN SOUTH~~  
~~NEA/P~~  
551

Assistant Secretary  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
10/26/51

TO: NEA/P - Mr. Jones

FROM: <sup>with</sup> ~~Headquarters, International Association~~  
~~SECRET OF STATE~~ Let. from Geo.G. Cameron  
Univ. of Mich. 10/24 giving negative observations on  
USIE in ~~letter~~ May (not from)

Please take the necessary action as indicated  
below

For return to this office with a reply pre-  
pared for the signature of EWB

For direct reply to the source of the  
communication, with a copy to this office.

For return to this office with your  
recommendation.

For your information and any appropriate  
action.

It is suggested you consult with \_\_\_\_\_

LEADLINE (if any): \_\_\_\_\_

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN  
Department of Near Eastern Studies.  
Ann Arbor, Michigan .

DC/R

October 24, 1951

Mr. Edward W. Barrett  
Assistant Secretary of State  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Barrett:

As usual, press reports of the University's Near Eastern project were garbled and not altogether accurate and ignored the major achievements for less important if more sensational comments. For about six months we lived among Iraqi and Iranian Kurds, returning periodically to our base in Baghdad or to a secondary base in Iran. We were busy at our own tasks involving teamwork examination of the area from many points of view - history, language, geography, anthropology, archeology and government. We had little opportunity and inclination to observe the operation of the Department of State in the propaganda battle. Inevitably, however, we saw some of the results, as well as the reaction of the people, especially in Kurdistan to them. They were not particularly wholesome.

For example, we spent several days in the area of a Baradost chieftain. In his tent we found a little tract with pictures representing a pig with hammer and sickle tail, the pig intent upon gobbling up various quarters of the world. The language of the tract was Kurdish. This chieftain, who presides over some 5,000 Kurds, was highly indignant. His people, he said, knew of communism, but they knew better their own ill health and poverty. "I know," he said, "the Baghdad man who is producing this sheet for your Government. I know how much he is being paid yearly to produce it. If one fourth of that amount was to be made available in medicines or in some other more tangible product of your country which could be used to lessen the poverty or to better the health of my people, would it not be a far more successful propaganda approach?"

According to information which came to me, this area is in truth honeycombed with propagandists for the other side. It was, of course, not wise for us to inquire concerning the techniques of infiltration and we made no effort to do so. I fear, however, that we have taken inadequate accounting of the tremendous power of the radio. In Iran, every teahouse possesses one, and the anti-British and sometimes anti-American propaganda has seriously damaged our position. The Iranians feel that the British tail is all too successfully wagging the American dog. They have not been touched by the animosity of the more western Moslems or Arabs toward America as a result of our backing of the Government of Israel. The Iraqis, on the other hand, are not only vocal - their antipathy to us stems directly from the Palestine war. For them, there is only one side of the matter and they combat any attempt to present the other side. One does become very tired of trying to explain America's position, trying to make them see that American streets are not paved with gold to be had for the asking, or to make them see that there are other countries also which badly need some assistance. It seemed to me constantly that America desperately needs to pass on a little of the information about the widespread commitments in all parts of the world which have been made, to explain in terms of the local monetary units.

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Mr. Edward W. Barrett

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just how much in time as in money has been poured into each particular area.

Iraqi officials, of course, when Arab, dislike programs or tracts aimed at the Kurds since they feel that these may arouse Kurdish nationalism. The same officials would probably object strenuously if one provided my Kurdish chieftain with medicines which would help him stamp out malaria or VD. Sensitivity, then is rampant but during my whole stay in the area I felt that America had been insensitive to the local feelings.

Nothing of this was contained in any statement given the newspapers. One correspondent asked if we were being successful in converting the Kurd to an understanding of a free economy. I replied simply that the independent Kurd did not need to be converted. He had already felt himself free and independent. Somehow the newspapers reported that as a confession that we were losing the propaganda battle.

Sincerely yours,

  
George C. Cameron

GGC:RT