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FOREIGN SERVICE DISPATCH

(Classification)

FROM: AMEMBASSY, TEHRAN

610
DESP. NO.

November 10, 1951
DATE

TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

ATR POUCH

REF: Dept. Circa-3265, Oct. 25, 1951, 8:25 a.m.

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For Dept.
Use Only

SUBJECT: MOTION PICTURES: Cooperation of American newsreels.

RECORDS & DISTRIBUTION SECTION
219 Rm 51

The Embassy appreciates the advice given by the Department in the circular airgram under reference. The Embassy wishes to point out that efforts to prevent knowledge of its connection with the Universal International Newsreel have been largely responsible for the inability to obtain consistent evaluations of the effectiveness of this project. As far as the Embassy is aware, the exhibitor who handles the United Newsreel in Iran has no knowledge of the Embassy's interest in this reel. All contacts with this exhibitor have been made through a local member of the staff of the Film Section, who had previous experience in cinemas and who was in a position, therefore, to ask certain questions about the effectiveness of the reel. No American is available who has sufficient knowledge of the local language or time to follow through completely on evaluation. The Embassy feels that in Iran particularly it is most essential that the interest of the Embassy should not be known to the exhibitor. There is considerable suspicion over foreign propaganda and any indication on the Embassy's part that it wished to encourage the showing of this newsreel would immediately arouse suspicions. It is for this reason that reporting on the reel from this post has necessarily had to be sporadic.

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There is no question that the exhibitor handling the reel is enthusiastic about it. Information has been received that he is now receiving two copies of the reel, a point on which the Embassy would appreciate verification. The Embassy does not feel that the reel is getting as wide a circulation as it should. The problems in connection with theatrical exhibition and distribution were outlined to the Department some time ago. These difficulties are operating to the detriment of a wide circulation of the reel.

Probably the most successful reel to date has been the one which dealt almost exclusively with Iran, opening

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INTERNATIONAL
DIVISION OF MOTION PICTURES
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
NOV 15 1951
PREPARATION TIME

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

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opening with the scenes in the Security Council and the Prime Minister's arrival in New York. The Department may be interested in the fact that when this reel has been shown Sir Gladwyn Jebb, head of the British U.N. delegation, has been thoroughly booted, to the extent that no one in the audience could hear the narration. This reel also included Dr. Grady's arrival in New York and since he was well known in Iran his remarks found an attentive audience. The remainder of the reel showing Queen Soraya and Princess Ashraf at the horse races in Paris was very well received. In short, this reel is reported to have been very effective and very well received in spite of the reaction to Sir Gladwyn Jebb's remarks.

As in the previous reports, the Embassy wishes to repeat its suggestion that some identification be included on the reel other than merely the Universal International credit title. Universal International, for obvious reasons, is associated with British films. There is no indication on the reel that it is U.S. produced and the Embassy believes that this should be included. The Embassy is also of the opinion that there should be some identifying background music to cover the credit title which will be repeated each time. Also, there is a need to identify each issue by number. This would make reporting of distribution as well as reactions much easier.

In short, the theatrical distribution of this reel has been very successful to date and the Embassy hopes that the Department will continue to support the United Newsreel project. The Embassy would like to see a wider theatrical distribution but the limitations inherent in commercial motion picture activities will not make that possible at the present time.

When this project was initially proposed the Department indicated that it might sometime consider permitting USIE to distribute 16mm prints of this newsreel. The Embassy strongly suggests that 16mm prints of these newsreels be made available to USIE after they have completed their theatrical run. The USIE Film Library has no films which include anything remotely resembling topical news items. Requests are made daily for this type of material and it is hoped that some arrangement can be made whereby a few 16mm prints in Persian of each of the reels will be made available soon.

For the Ambassador:

G. Edward Wells
G. Edward Wells

Public Affairs Officer