

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

1/16

Mr. McWilliam

I don't think Mr. Bruce
need see this. I also
believe it is premature, by
about 6 or 7 months, to
send this to Mr. Dulles as
requested.

JDS

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file

MEMORANDUM

January 13, 1953

To: U - Mr. Bruce

From: I - ~~Dr.~~ Wilson Compton *WC*

Subject: Colloquium on Islamic Culture to be held in September, 1953, under the Joint Sponsorship of the Library of Congress and Princeton University

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As a result of steps taken by the International Information Administration (IIA), the Library of Congress and Princeton University are jointly sponsoring a meeting in September, 1953, between leading intellectuals of the Islamic world and of the United States. I enclose a summary of salient facts connected with this project, known as the Colloquium on Islamic Culture, and copies of three basic documents pertaining thereto.

On the surface, this colloquium looks like an exercise in pure learning. This in effect is the impression that we desire to give. IIA promoted the colloquium along these lines and has given it financial and other assistance because we consider that this psychological approach is an important contribution at this time to both short term and long term United States political objectives in the Moslem area.

Since it may be desirable for the Secretary to participate in the program of the colloquium, it is requested that this information be transmitted to the office of Mr. Dulles.

Enclosures:

- Summary of Salient Facts
- Brochure entitled, "Colloquium on Islamic Culture in its Relation to the Contemporary World, September, 1953"
- Instruction to Tehran (repeated to Ankara, Beirut, Cairo, Karachi)
- Circular Airgram, August 1, 1952, 3:45 p.m.

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COLLOQUIUM OF ISLAMIC CULTURE, SEPTEMBER, 1953

Summary of Salient Facts

The Library of Congress and Princeton University are jointly sponsoring a meeting between leading Islamic intellectuals and Americans interested in the Moslem world. Meetings will be held at Princeton University from September 8 to 17, 1953, and in Washington on September 18 and 19, 1953. Of the 50 to 60 delegates, approximately half will be Moslems.

The colloquium was promoted by the International Information Administration (IIA) and receives extensive financial and other support from IIA. Personnel of other offices of the Department are also contributing generously in time and advice.

The basic purpose of the colloquium is to further good will and mutual understanding between Islamic peoples and the United States. Since two or three outstanding intellectual leaders are being selected from each Islamic country, the colloquium is expected to bring together persons exerting great influence in formulating Moslem opinion in fields such as education, science, law and philosophy and inevitably, therefore, on politics.

Publicizing the colloquium is a matter requiring constant attention and study. The problem is to gain favorable response among the Moslem peoples without arousing the various elements hostile to the West. Clearly, this is a delicate matter which each embassy will have to handle according to the requirements and specifics of the situation in its country.

its country. IIA hopes that Moslem intellectual leaders will themselves promote favorable reactions from indigenous publicity sources.

Among the various results expected from the colloquium are the impetus and direction that may be given to the Renaissance movement within Islam itself. To further this end, the Exchange of Persons program of the IIA is giving leader grants to the delegates from Islamic countries so that they can spend a total of three months in the United States and can visit educational and other institutions either before or after the two weeks of the conference. Many of the delegates will doubtless also be invited to lecture. This important part of the plan will be coordinated by a private organization such as The Middle East Institute or The Governmental Affairs Institute.

It is also expected that the discussions between intellectual leaders of the Islamic world and of the United States will stimulate interest in and research on the Islamic world within American educational circles.

The three major areas defined for discussion are (a) classical elements in Islamic culture, (b) Islamic law and society, and (c) intellectual and spiritual movements in Islam today. More than half of the papers presented at the discussions will, it is hoped, be prepared by Moslem scholars. Every effort is being made, in fact, to ensure that the visitors from Islamic countries feel that the conference is an honor and tribute to their culture and position.

In addition to the American delegates, the majority of whom will be oriental scholars and all of whom will have a connection with the Moslem world, there will be meetings, luncheons and special lectures

during the colloquium at which internationally famous American intellectuals will be invited to participate. The Islamic scholars will thereby have an opportunity to become acquainted with a wide range of thought and opinion in the United States.

The colloquium is fortunate in having Dr. Bayard Dodge, President-
The American emeritus of ~~Peirce~~ *in Beirut* University, as Director.

In addition to taking the initiative in promoting the colloquium, IIA has contributed most of the funds for its conduct. The two main items so far are \$25,000 for administrative expenses and for the attendance of Americans plus the facilities of its exchange program to bring the participants from Moslem countries. IIA expects also to contribute toward the costs of publication of the papers and discussions.

Since the nature of the expenditures that can be made with monies that the IIA has contributed are limited by legislation and since the exchange program cannot give grants to some individuals whose presence at the colloquium would be desirable, it is hoped that outside sources may provide a small amount of financial assistance. The sponsors would thereby have more flexibility of operation, particularly for entertainment and other amenities that mean a great deal to persons from the Moslem world.

An interesting development in connection with the colloquium is the possibility that the Islamic Institute, an organization in Washington sponsored by the governments of eleven Moslem countries, may be dedicated while the colloquium meetings are taking place in Washington. In any event

event, the Institute has indicated a desire to cooperate.

It is hoped that the Secretary and possibly the President may wish to entertain the delegates and that the Secretary will be able to participate in the program of the colloquium.

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IIA: IPO: GID: amon: bv



Cleared in substance:

IES
Mr. Donovan

IEI/N
Mr. Ware