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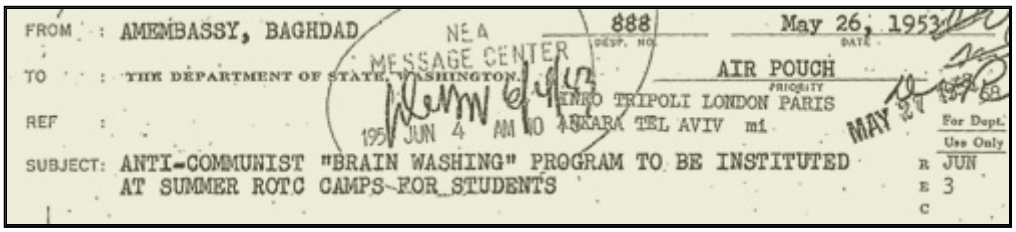
FROM : AMEMBASSY, BAGHDAD NEA 888 May 26, 1953
MESSAGE CENTER
TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON. AIR POUCH
PRIORITY
REF : AMMAN TRIPOLI LONDON PARIS
1953 JUN 4 AM 10 ANKARA TEL AVIV mi
SUBJECT: ANTI-COMMUNIST "BRAIN WASHING" PROGRAM TO BE INSTITUTED AT SUMMER ROTC CAMPS FOR STUDENTS
For Dept. Use Only
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U.S. embassy Baghdad cable from May 1953 mentions several Iraqi officials who will be delivering anticommunist lectures at government camps.

U.S. Propaganda in the Middle East - The Early Cold War Version

National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 78

Edited by Joyce Battle

December 13, 2002

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Of the many responses of the Bush administration to the events of September 11, 2001, one of the most significant and most widely discussed was its intensified and greatly expanded propaganda program for the Middle East. Announced innovations have included the appointment of advertising executive Charlotte Beers to lead State Department efforts to win hearts and minds;(1) the establishment of a radio station to broadcast pop music, Eminem, and an American slant on the news to young listeners <http://www.ibb.gov/radiosawa/index.html>; the creation of Arabic-language web sites; and the placement of U.S. government-sponsored commercials and advertisements in Middle Eastern media outlets. The government has discussed ways to improve the U.S. image abroad with motion picture executives.(2) The White House established an Office of Global Communications to coordinate U.S. propaganda worldwide.(3) The Defense Department developed plans for an Office of Strategic Influence to sway international opinion, but backed off following published reports that stories placed by the Pentagon would include disinformation. (4) Further propaganda activities correlated directly with the Bush administration's planned war against Iraq are underway.(5)

With the attacks, the magnitude of Middle Eastern disaffection for the United States was brought, violently, to the attention of official Washington, and a new focus on propaganda was one result. According to the Bush administration, "a deep misunderstanding of the United States and its policies" created this hostility. It argues that a more assertive campaign of self-promotion would reverse these views. It says that the end of the Cold War led to neglect of "public diplomacy", resulting in a diminution of U.S. prestige and global effectiveness.(6)

This is hardly the first time that the U.S., in response to international developments, has attempted to revitalize its propaganda activities in the Middle East. An earlier

episode occurred early in the Cold War, during the Truman and Eisenhower administrations, when the U.S. was expanding efforts to incorporate the region into a global anti-Soviet alliance. It wanted to protect and preserve Western control of Middle Eastern oil resources. It was concerned about the implications for U.S. interests of the diminished post-World War II abilities of Britain and France to project Western power and influence in the area, and by the enormous increase in anti-Western feeling that had been generated by the establishment of Israel.

The National Security Archive has collected a selection of documents illustrating aspects of this earlier propaganda campaign. They describe some of the goals, methods, and problems associated with propaganda in the Middle East. As the documents show, in some ways circumstances affecting propaganda during the 1950s were quite different than those of today, but many of the complexities that impeded U.S. efforts at the time have persisted.

Nearly all of these documents are from the State Department or its missions in the region. They therefore reflect only one aspect of U.S. propaganda efforts: in reality, intelligence outfits, including the then-newly created Central Intelligence Agency, handled a major part of these activities.

Most of the selected documents focus on Saudi Arabia, Iraq, or Iran.

Saudi Arabia had been established as a national state some 20 years before the time of these documents. Tribal leader Abd al-Aziz had gained control of most of Arabia with the help of adherents of a militantly austere interpretation of Islam, Wahhabism. He declared himself king of Saudi Arabia in 1932, establishing the primacy of the royal family that still rules today. Great Britain was the dominant power in the region, but King Abd al-Aziz granted an American company (later, after consolidation with other firms, the Arabian American Oil Company -- ARAMCO) the concession to develop Saudi oil resources. This was a fundamental component of the decades-long U.S.-Saudi "special relationship."

Britain created Iraq as a national state after World War I by consolidating several provinces of the collapsed Ottoman empire, and established a monarchy, the short-lived Iraqi Hashemite dynasty, by installing a World War I ally from Arabia to rule as a king amenable to British interests. Britain appointed Sunni Muslims rather than members of Iraq's Shi'a majority to staff its administrative infrastructure. Over the following decades, the British-established order was contested by a wide range of opposing factions, including Shiites, Kurds, Communists, and nationalists, the latter including, by the 1950s, followers of Ba'thism, an ideology calling for unity among all Arabs, development, technology, and resistance to foreign and neocolonial interference. In 1958, nationalistic military officers overthrew the Western-supported monarchical government, and established a republic. Among the initiatives undertaken by the new government were measures to end foreign monopoly control of Iraq's oil resources. Ten years later another coup led to the establishment of the Ba'thist regime currently ruled by Saddam Hussein.

In Iran, army officer Reza Khan was supported by Britain in his 1921 overthrow of the ruling Qajar dynasty. He became minister of war and prime minister, then deposed the leader of the country's weak ruling dynasty, and established himself as shah of Iran. He abdicated in favor of his son, Mohammed Reza, during World War II. In 1951, Iran's elected prime minister, Mohammed Mossadeq, nationalized the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC), a British-controlled consortium. Having no intention of ceding its domination of Iran's oil resources, Britain organized a Western boycott of Iran, and succeeded in decimating the country's economy. The shah, who did not support his prime minister's attempts to assert Iranian nationalism, fled the country in August 1953. Britain and the U.S. engineered a coup

against Mossadeq, the shah returned from exile, and resumed his Western-supported rule of Iran, lasting until the Islamic revolution of 1979.

Propaganda Objectives

During the 1950s, U.S. propaganda, as an instrument of the Cold War, was intended "to expose the fallacies of communism" and to warn of its dangers. **[Doc. 20]** **[Doc. 96]** Other goals for the Middle East included strengthening "Western-oriented elements," increasing awareness of the Soviet threat, and building "greater willingness to cooperate both regionally and with the West." **[Doc. 126]** In Iraq, "an emotional response" overcoming antagonism toward the West was sought, since "A realization of a common, global foe" could "forge a common, global bond between Iraq and the Western defense powers." **[Doc. 62]** In Iran, propaganda promoted the view that close relations with the West would "provide the "most profitable course." **[Doc. 71]** In all Arab countries, U.S. propaganda sought "Reversal of the Anti-American trends of Arab opinion" and guidance of "the revolutionary and nationalistic pressures throughout the area into orderly channels not antagonistic to the West." **[Doc. 127]** (7)

Exerting Influence

The targets for propaganda were varied: poor and predominantly illiterate rural populations, political and economic elites, professors, teachers, professionals, *mullahs*, and others who were "molders of opinion." **[Doc. 60]** Propaganda goals were to be achieved by controlling information and manipulating its interpretation. The tools used included financial assistance, pamphlets and posters, news manipulation, magazines, radio broadcasts, books, libraries, music, movies, cartoons, educational activities, person-to-person exchanges, and, of great significance for the Middle East, religion. Information could also be placed with American media outlets for playback in the region.

Foreign Aid

Foreign assistance was linked with propaganda to further American interests: for instance, a National Security Council (NSC) report in 1952 said that aid programs should be designed to achieve "psychological" objectives. **[Doc. 59]** To this end, the State Department's Office of Near Eastern Affairs argued in 1953 against economic assistance for Egypt under Gamal Abdel Nasser, then promoting African and Asian nonalignment, to show Middle Eastern government that "moderation, reasonableness and some degree of cooperation by the recipients with respect to United States basic objectives will lead to substantial economic assistance; while on the other hand Arab (or Israeli) extremism and lack of cooperation will result in far less or no aid." **[Doc. 117]** This message was considered especially important for the military sector: the NSC wanted to enhance "the understanding of the Army leadership [in the Middle East], and secondarily, the enlisted personnel towards the purpose of U.S. military aid as a factor in strengthening their national independence." **[Doc. 127]** Unfortunately, observers friendly to the American government in the region noted that economic assistance was being characterized as an effort by "Western imperialists to buy friendship." **[Doc. 24]**

Posters and Brochures

In Iran, the U.S. funded the display of posters at schools, shops, and other public buildings "sponsored by the Iranian Government and . . . planned and executed by the Iranian Government in cooperation with the Embassy." **[Doc. 16]** Brochures related parables, such as the illustrated story of "two young Iranian boys who are faced with the choice between communism . . . and patient study and industry . . . . The one who chooses communism suffers early and violent death in a street demonstration. The other boy leads a productive life beneficial to his country."

[Doc. 96] In Iraq, the American embassy used a mailing list, mobile film units, and "certain prominent anti-Communist religious leaders" to distribute propaganda brochures. **[Doc. 76]**

Newspapers, Magazines, Newsreels

U.S. news manipulation was intended to change the ways reality was perceived. Thus, Secretary of State Dean Acheson said in 1950 that U.S. propaganda should seek to refocus Arab attention on internal social and political problems and divert it from the Palestine conflict, an issue that immeasurably complicated U.S. policy objectives in the region. Labeling opposition to the U.S. "fanaticism", Acheson called for placing "corrective" articles to respond to critical news stories. **[Doc. 3]** At a working group meeting on ways to exert influence in the Arab world, measures to "buy in the newspaper more and be in a position to control the headlines as well as some of the editorials" were recommended. **[Doc. 58]** Propaganda guidelines called for "stimulation of the local press" to report on U.S. economic aid, and promotion of Western-supported collective security pacts "by stimulating the writing of indigenous articles on the subject and then cross-reporting them to other countries throughout the area." In Syria, the United States Information Service (USIS) arranged for the publication of anti-Soviet articles through "judicious use of copyrighted articles." **[Doc. 130]**

Anti-Soviet articles were placed in an Iranian magazine **[Doc. 96]**, and the American embassy reported plans for a nominally independent journalist to seek U.S. help for the publication of a "purely cultural" magazine. The United States Information and Educational Exchange Program (USIE) was to pay his salary and control editorial content, seeking first to "establish credence," and then to gradually "develop and use more direct hard-hitting anti-Sov[iet] material." **[Doc. 61]** A U.S.-backed Iraqi magazine was planned as well, "To make Iraqis aware of the dangers of Soviet imperialism" and to induce them to ally militarily with the West. **[Doc. 62]** American publications also could be useful: an embassy public affairs officer touring ravaged areas of predominantly Kurdish northern Iraq in 1953 (oppositionist activities seeking Kurdish autonomy were periodically suppressed) observed that American magazines, requested by a local leader, "may be as good propaganda as any we put out . . . . Colored advertisements provide topics for many a conversation." **[Doc. 104]**

(Iraqi government officials considered but opted against "reviving the magazine of the young nationalist group, the Ba'th Al-Arabi" because they decided it "had too heavy a Shia tinge." **[Doc. 118]** Iraqi government officials promoted nationalist ideology as an alternative to Communism, which appealed to activists seeking political and economic reform. It was presumably not expected that Ba'thist ideology would become a prominent factor in Iraq's evolving anti-royalist political climate.)

Plans were developed for an "intimate working relationship" between the Voice of American and Radio Tehran, and much of the material for "special programs on Radio Baghdad" was supplied by the USIS. **[Doc. 7]** **[Doc. 118]** In Iran, the U.S. provided anti-Soviet newsreels for screening at local movie theaters. **[Doc. 4]**

Cultural Influences

U.S.-controlled cultural influences, literary, educational, popular, and person-to-person, were intended to shape the attitudes of Middle Eastern targets and to inculcate Western values. U.S. goals included "an all-out prosecution of the Nixon and doctrinal programs, the first to pour large numbers of pro-Western, anti-Communist books into the area, the second to influence the intelligentsia." **[Doc. 127]** To this end, the American embassy in Iran planned to disseminate books on contemporary history, political philosophy, and fiction, in "deluxe", medium price,

and low price editions. "These publications would bear a publisher's name and have no obvious connection to the Embassy." **[Doc. 16]** In Syria, "indigenous anti-communist books written mainly from USIS source material" were circulated. **[Doc. 130]**

Embassy libraries and reading rooms were seen as invaluable means for promoting pro-Western attitudes. Ambassador to Iran Loy Henderson remarked that libraries made "major contributions toward molding public opinion in accordance with USIE objectives." **[Doc. 71]** During weekly cultural programs at the American embassy's library, "no opportunity to point out how Soviet Russia controls her creative artists is overlooked in the music program notes." To feature anti-communist books, the embassy placed "a special shelf in a prominent position in the Library" labeled "IN VIEW OF INQUIRIES RECEIVED, THIS SHELF IS RESERVED FOR PUBLICATIONS EXPOSING THE AGGRESSIVE OBJECTIVES OF COMMUNISM AND THE METHODS EMPLOYED BY INTERNATIONAL COMMUNISM AND BY ITS AGENT IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES." **[Doc. 96]**

"Psychological" plans included providing history and social science textbooks to schools to "influence their curricula in directions favorable to the United States, in order to counteract the Communist trend in many education institutions in the area." New reading rooms were to be opened at local universities "under color of sponsorship by American universities." **[Doc. 127]** Iran's Ministry of Education cooperated with the American embassy in planning "activities in the educational field" for Iranian students. **[Doc. 71]**

For wider, not necessarily literate audiences, movies were understood to be especially effective in spreading American social values. Franklin Roosevelt directed in 1945, the year of his famous meeting with Saudi Arabia's King Abd al-Aziz, that U.S. influence in the Middle East be expanded, and proposed, along with his wife Eleanor, that American films be shown in the region. **[Doc. 1]** During the 1950s, U.S. officials, concerned about insufficient anticommunist fervor among Middle Easterners, and increasingly aware of Arab disillusionment with the West, identified a solution: "we have to make more movies out there." **[Doc. 58]** Points of view to be presented in such films were to be controlled, if possible: the State Department was advised to approach an American film distributor to ensure that "pro-Russian" movies (like "Red Star", a World War II-era film about Nazi occupation of a Russian village) were not shown in "critical areas," such as Iran. **[Doc. 12]**

American embassy officials in that country wanted to show animated films featuring characters like Mickey Mouse, and asked if, "in the light of the increasing tempo of the cold war, Mr. Disney as a patriotic duty could be interested in preparing such a film that could be used to defend democracy where the communist system is being touted loudly." **[Doc. 4]** In Iraq, embassy staff wrote their own cartoon script, featuring a scary symbolic bear menacing prehistoric humans. The embassy asked for "Disney-type animation" to enliven the tale. **[Doc. 62]**

Attempts to appeal to what were thought to be local tastes did not always achieve the expected results. A USIS mobile film crew in Iraq reported some positive reaction to a film that used puppets representing figures from traditional folklore to enact an anticommunist parable, but many viewers were evidently appalled, decrying "these terrifying dummies. . . . Was there communism at the time of Hoja? . . . . Whence did the Americans snatch you, Hoja, to make fun of you? . . . . The films are unbearable. . . . . I have never seen sillier films. All are mere propaganda for America. . . . . And these ugly moving dummies, were they made by Truman? . . . . These films and this propaganda are useless. The only things which can uproot communism in Iraq are deeds and not words." **[Doc. 101]**

Exchange Programs and Associations

NSC objectives for the Middle East in the mid 1950s included a "material increase in the exchange of persons program, directed primarily to influencing the leadership of the countries concerned." (Travel restrictions hindered this plan during the McCarthy era; the granting of "leadership grants" to leftist journalists or politicians was inadvisable, for instance, since they were unlikely to receive U.S. visas.) (8) **[Doc. 22]** A working group on propaganda strategy recommended bringing Arab students to the U.S., for example, as a way of countering disaffection for the U.S. and dealing with a "rather general and dangerous lack of awareness of the communist problem and threat." **[Doc. 58]**

Official visits were recommended as a way to cultivate good will. Saudi Arabia's defense minister was invited to the U.S. in 1951, in part because the State Department feared that the "untraveled, inexperienced, and impressionable young man" would be unduly influenced by an earlier trip to France. ARAMCO volunteered to help with his entertainment, and the United States Air Force, which valued its low-profile access to Dhahran Air Base, asked that any pictures and press releases associated with the visit be sent to its Directorate of Intelligence. **[Doc. 29]** **[Doc. 37]**

The U.S. and allied regimes could also try to direct political activism in approved directions. An item broadcast by Radio Baghdad, of probable USIS origin, included praise for a Canadian "Association for Combating Communism" which had "foiled several Communist meetings in Montreal without enabling them to know any of the Association's members," adding that it would be "good to set up similar associations in all parts of the world." **[Doc. 122]**

Semiotics

The symbols considered useful for propaganda directed at the Middle East were intended to reflect well on American society, ridicule Communism and the Soviet Union, and encourage a belief in shared Western-Muslim values. To this end, a working group developing propaganda strategy in 1952 discussed commemoration of an anniversary for the philosopher Avicenna (ibn Sina), one of many Muslim scholars who influenced European intellectual history, because the Soviets had "taken the propaganda offensive" on the matter. **[Doc. 58]** Often, however, propaganda was aimed at an illiterate audience, and utilized vivid and crude iconography.

Posters disseminated by the USIS office in Iraq depicting a "Greedy Red Pig," with a hammer-and-sickle for a tail, were supposed to make "the Soviet-Communist state ridiculous as well as frightening to the ordinary Arab." The American ambassador was sufficiently pleased with the effort to tout a completely pig-based series. **[Doc. 21]** To bring the "realization . . . home swiftly to Iraq" that its interests lay with the U.S., the embassy planned to produce a map depicting Soviet expansionism that could be used on match books and other hand-outs, with a "red color to be watched closely to insure that it [did] not fade to pink or become muddy": it should be "hot . . . . The Embassy would prefer to lose the readability and retain the full impact of the bright red mass." An advertising campaign was planned to induce Iraqis to request the map, which would "give it added value." **[Doc. 62]**

One leaflet distributed by the embassy in Iran, entitled "Tale of the Beautiful Red Flower," contained an "allegory in which a red flower resembling the Venus Fly Trap symbolizes Soviet communism," showing how "lazy and frivolous bees are lured to destruction." The embassy was pleased with its impact, noting, "The text of this brochure has been picked up as an editorial by Iranian newspapers." **[Doc. 96]**

Inter-government Collaboration

American propaganda was created and disseminated with the knowledge and support of friendly foreign governments that identified their interests with the West. (Inducements could apparently help to obtain such cooperation: State Department representatives in Saudi Arabia, for example, asked for guidance should the Sultan of Oman ask for rifles and ammunition in exchange for permission to construct a Voice of America station in his country.) **[Doc. 19]**

United States - Saudi Arabia

Close relations with oil-rich Saudi Arabia were highly valued by the U.S. government: when Secretary of State Dean Acheson recommended providing medical help in 1951 to an ailing King Abd al-Aziz (ibn Saud), he called him the "best friend the United States has in the Middle East," and cited the "extremely favorable United States-Saudi Arabia agreement for the use of the Dhahran Airfield." **[Doc. 28]** But suggestions that American propaganda should be distributed in the kingdom were viewed skeptically by U.S. representatives familiar with local conditions.

There have always been inherent tensions in the U.S.-Saudi relationship, although over the years the American government and media have usually downplayed these contradictions. For their part, representatives of a royal family that characterizes itself as "guardian of the holy places" of Islam have tended to prefer that undue attention not be focused on the Saudi government's reliance on U.S. military protection, or on any quid pro quo arrangements underlying this support.

U.S. representatives in the region were circumspect regarding Saudi sensibilities: an embassy official said, for example, that he would not review anticommunist "kits" provided by the State Department, because the Saudi government would oppose their distribution. **[Doc. 33]** American officials preferred to avoid incidents like the showing of a newsreel on Israel at the Dhahran military facility: American officials later apologized to a Saudi military officer who had been present; or the time when a Saudi prince shot a British consular officer -- he was imitating a violent movie he had seen a few days earlier, it was thought. **[Doc. 42]**

The fundamental problem for U.S. propaganda was identified by the American ambassador: "It appears that this material has the double objective of promoting and encouraging democratic government on the one hand while presenting the dangers of communism on the other. Since Saudi Arabia is an absolute monarchy its Government cannot be expected to welcome propaganda of the first category. There is no need for anti-communist propaganda and the pamphlets described in the airgram would be incomprehensible to the average Saudi." **[Doc. 46]** The American embassy advised against offending the Saudi leadership by pursuing propaganda goals too forcefully, in order to "obtain Saudi coop[eration] internationally" and "protect U.S. oil investment SA." **[Doc. 72]**

United States - Iraq

During the early 1950s, Iraq and the U.S. cooperated in disseminating propaganda, despite their divergent interests. Iraq helped the USIS in producing certain propaganda materials aimed at its Kurdish minority, including a bulletin, newsreels, and music broadcasts. **[Doc. 2]** Other propaganda was targeted at the population at large: the American embassy was "informed privately and informally that the Government has no objection to the widespread distribution of anti-Communist material . . . . The pamphlets will be issued without attribution, but no attempt will be made to hide the fact that they are produced by USIS." **[Doc. 76]** The U.S. provided material to Iraq's propaganda department for its dissemination: "By the direct subsidization of two newspapers, through special programs on Radio Baghdad, and through partial subsidization of two anti-Communist editors, anti-Communist information is being placed in public channels." **[Doc. 118]** **[Doc. 119]**

In late 1953, opposition activities, including student protests, led Iraq's education minister to launch an anticommunist program focused on schools and universities. The American embassy saw this as "an unparalleled opportunity to reach a priority target audience through Government channels." USIS suggested that the Iraqi ministry establish a college-affiliated institute of international affairs that would arrange and sponsor extra-curricular activities and "help channel the students' political interests into controllable lines," staffed, the embassy recommended, by a professor of Soviet affairs who "could assist in demonstrating to the students the nature of international Communism." The Iraqi ministry agreed to accept a Fulbright-funded American lecturer.

USIS also indicated it would ask for a Fulbright-funded emissary to organize a student athletic program. (The agency thought diversion was called for: "students flock to coffee houses, political centers, and other places where the only recreation is political agitation.")

The Iraqi education minister said he wanted a campaign to differentiate the students' "proper 'nationalist' demands" from Communism. USIS offered to help train personnel to assist in an anticommunist counter-propaganda program for imprisoned students. **[Doc. 92]**

Anticommunist lectures were also to be delivered to students sent to camps in northern Iraq for disciplinary military training. **[Doc. 95]** (The Arab nationalist Ba'thist ideology had relatively little popular influence in Iraq throughout the early 1950s; its appeal was limited largely to academics. At the military camps, anti-regime students won converts, including some of the military officers who guarded them. These officers were the nucleus of what later became Ba'thist domination of Iraq's army.) (9)

By 1954, however, the American embassy was expressing disappointment with the government of Iraq: "The constant hope of USIS officers that an indigenous distribution channel for non-attributed anti-Communist material could be opened with government help has never, until now, materialized." One problem was the government's view that the most effective way of spreading the anticommunist message was "to demonstrate its links with Israel and with world Zionism. Since support for Zionism is also linked in the public mind with the United States any such campaign creates a sort of neutralist 'plague on both your houses' attitude and could stir up increased enmity against the United States at the same time." However, the government provided "the only possible indigenous channels" for propaganda, and "All other channels must be opened and oiled by means not within the proper scope of USIS," so it, along with the embassy, decided to support the Iraqi campaign "by supplying raw material for the consideration of the committee and by such verbal advice on techniques as may seem appropriate. At the same time, the Public Affairs Officer and the Information Officer" would "endeavor constantly to point out effective local anti-Communist lines other than those which might ultimately react unfavorably against the United States." **[Doc. 118]**

Iraqi government pamphlets with "heavy emphasis on the links between Communism and Zionism" were disseminated using a USIS mailing list. Ambassador Burton Berry wrote, "This approach has not, however, had the popular reaction expected and future Government anti-Communist newspaper articles and pamphlets can be expected to place more emphasis on the anti-nationalist, rather than the pro-Zionist, aspect of Communism." **[Doc. 120]**

United States - Iran

The U.S. sought cooperation from Iran both for propaganda directed at Iranians and for propaganda broadcast outside the country. In 1950, for example, the U.S. ambassador noted that the Iranian government was "extraordinarily cooperative" in

providing radio facilities for American broadcasts reaching "Soviet people in sensitive Caucasian and Central Asian areas." **[Doc. 8]** For domestic propaganda, the embassy recommended that "There should be the minimum of open USIE activity and the maximum use, if necessary without attribution to USIE, of indigenous, Iranian channels." **[Doc. 6]** By October 1950, the American ambassador could speak of the "close coordination which [is] now effective between [the] embassy and [the] Iranian Propaganda Department." **[Doc. 10]**

But in November, Iranian Propaganda Director Bahram Shahrokh stopped Voice of America (VOA) as well as BBC relays on Radio Tehran, saying that his predecessor had been too friendly to foreign powers.(10) In December, Iran's prime minister told the American embassy that he expected Shahrokh to retain his position for some time. The embassy was not pleased, however, and suggested to the State Department that it "may wish to discuss this matter." **[Doc. 11]** In January, the propaganda chief was dismissed, and his predecessor restored to de facto control. **[Doc. 14]** The latter assured the embassy that he would "turn [the] Propaganda Department line closely toward that of [the] U.S.," that reports from the Soviet news agency Tass would no longer be distributed, and that he was searching for a way to resume VOA broadcasts. The American ambassador said that the "Situation will bear close watching and any changes must be gradual and inconspicuous." **[Doc. 15]**

The embassy's public affairs officer recommended developing a propaganda program purportedly controlled by Iran, with the U.S. supplying all material, equipment, personnel, and plans, noting that "even though the program would be designed to appear as an Iranian Government program, the news gets abroad that it is subsidized and more or less controlled by Americans. This fact has been demonstrated by the films program now in operation." To "have the program appear to be an Iranian venture" meant that "the major portion of the program would have to be in the educational field, developing knowledge of better agricultural and public health methods. The Iranian Government would reap the public credit for our program while our benefit would be realized through helping to raise the standard of living and thereby a certain measure of political and economic stability would be the result. In addition, the successful penetration of the country on this level would ultimately provide a sound foundation for the dissemination of information about the USA and its policies." **[Doc. 16]**

In the spring of 1951, Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadeq, in order to increase Iran's share of the revenue from sale of its oil, nationalized the oil industry. The British government, however, was determined to retain its control of Iranian oil resources, and sought support from its American ally. Ambassador Loy Henderson felt that the Iranian government was insufficiently aware of the disapproval that the U.S. press was expressing regarding its policies, and suggested that the VOA transmit critical U.S. editorials (while also conveying the rather contradictory impression that the U.S. was "generally sympathetic with Iranian aspirations for full econ and polit independence.") He also wanted to have the VOA transmit programs to Iranians making "friendly ref to Shah as their progressive leader." **[Doc. 41]**

During this crisis, the State Department was acutely aware of the potential for negative reaction to American propaganda. It commented, "The discretion exercised in the embassy's relations with local distributors and exhibitor [of propaganda newsreels] is appreciated; and under the circumstances, the Department agrees that all caution is desirable." **[Doc. 45]** These circumstances were made clear in an Iranian newspaper account in early 1952 reporting that "the Department of Press and Propaganda has been run by the American Embassy . . . . It is believed that the American Embassy has been paying sums of money to the Press and Propaganda Department with a view to using that Department as a means of propaganda for the United States." The head of the department was on the U.S. payroll, the paper said.

(Following this report, the aforementioned agency head requested that a messenger deliver future USIE scripts to him, without cover notes.) **[Doc. 47]**

Soon thereafter, the Iranian Interior Ministry ordered the closing of all information and cultural centers outside of Tehran, including those belonging to the USIE. Ambassador Henderson said that if Prime Minister Mossadeq were determined to carry out this policy it would "be preferable for us quietly to suspend operations with hope that after elections have been concluded and present state natl hysteria somewhat subsided we may be able quietly and unostentatiously to resume operations . . . it is our intention in case we do suspend activities . . . to transfer as much as possible of info activities to friendly Iran Govt institutions." **[Doc. 49]** An Iranian official expressed regret to the American embassy about the closings but said that "Some fo[reig]n cultural institutions in prov[ince]s had . . . engaged in activities contrary to [the] interests [of] Iran." **[Doc. 51]**

In the summer of 1952, the IIA told U.S. media how it wanted the British-Iranian oil dispute to be covered: show minimal interest, and minimize Iranian statements regarding legal aspects of the oil issue: "Avoid statements that would indicate U.S. concern over fate of Iran or will bail Iran out in a showdown. Support with factual coverage and moderate, selected comment Iran GOVT efforts to quell disorder and GOVT exposés of Tudeh COMMIE machinations." **[Doc. 69]**

In May 1953, Ambassador Henderson was at pains to assure the State Department that his embassy was conducting an effective propaganda campaign: it compiled "a list of 260 articles, features, editorials and commentaries which ha[d] been placed in the local Tehran papers, as well as provincial papers, on anti-communist subjects." In addition, "Individual Iranian governmental offices are . . . induced to sponsor" various film titles, "as apart from direct USIS presentation. As an example: 'Azerbaijan Day' [on the Russian occupation of a part of Iran following World War II] has been shown publicly both by the Ministry of Education and the imperial Iranian Gendarmerie while the Department of Propaganda has refused to take part in the sponsorship of the film." **[Doc. 96]**

U.S. news media could be useful tools for both direct and indirect manipulation of opinion in Iran. The State Department suggested that it could seek "to inspire editorials or articles in U.S. publications which can be useful in case Embassy should desire certain points of view brought out for benefit American public . . . . Additionally, VOA might pick up such editorials or articles and play them on Persian program without any indication U.S. official inspiration." **[Doc. 97]**

(In July 1953, "Clandestine Radio Azerbaijan at Baku", which had been broadcasting reports about preparation for a coup for several months, described "the intrigues of the American and British imperialists and the subversive actions of the Shah," as "part of a wide plan that is being carried out all over the country." Activities included uprisings, distribution by the army of arms to tribal groups, meetings with tribal leaders, staged demonstrations, and tribal conferences organized by the U.S. embassy.) **[Doc. 100]**

In August, Britain and the U.S. succeeded in engineering the overthrow of the elected Mossadeq government.

Subsequently, propaganda opportunities vastly improved. In September, the embassy noted that "USIS Tehran reports that with the recent change in government the attitude of the motion picture Censorship Commission toward anticommunist film material has apparently changed so that it may be possible for USIS in the future to obtain official permission to show some anticommunist films . . . . It will be necessary at the outset to adhere to those films which are factual presentations of communist aggression. Later, it may be possible to use films of an even stronger propaganda line." **[Doc. 106]** The U.S. would seek to inculcate the view "that Iran

leaders and public have chosen to align themselves with free world and to indicate it in interest Iranian security and prosperity cooperate closely with Western democracies." **[Doc. 108]**

USIS indicated that its activities were to be largely overt except for "backstopping" material: "speeches and comments by influential private and government personages; commentary played back over VOA." It observed, "The government is recognized throughout the country as being one brought in and supported by the U.S . . . . it is of the greatest importance that no stone be left unturned to make this regime successful." In this, it would be able to "count on complete cooperation working with the present director" of Iran's division of propaganda, "who recognizes that our aims within Iran are parallel and who has shown every inclination to willingly accept suggestions and materials for working together." These plans included the dispatch of USIS employees to various Iranian cities, with the title of vice consul, to "develop personal contacts . . . supply as much servicing as possible to newspapers and magazines in the area, schedule film showings, develop and place material for radio programming, and develop and direct English language classes," using persons who were "likeable, friendly types who mix easily." **[Doc. 110]**

In the same vein, the State Department supported "A somewhat peripheral but extremely important propaganda mechanism . . . the International Educational Exchange Service in the Department of State which handles Iranians visiting the United States under Government auspices and sends certain American scholars to Iran." **[Doc. 112]** In addition, Ambassador Henderson pointed to the need for a propaganda campaign focusing specifically on the oil issue, "to relate the present American emergency financial aid to the need for a prompt settlement of the oil dispute with Great Britain . . . ." **[Doc. 114]**

U.S. Government - U.S. Media

Americans as well as Iranians were the tools and targets of Iranian coup-related media manipulation. The U.S. embassy and USIS developed propaganda accentuating "popular support" for the shah "as demonstrated by [the] events of August 19" (the coup) and "continued ovations and praise in meetings with small groups as well as broader public appearances," and they planned to "develop material along same policy lines for immediate distribution Iran and media and for use by Department and USIA [United States information Agency] in [the] U.S." **[Doc. 108]** The USIA asked to be provided with all "press materials supporting agreed themes for possible further exploitation U.S. press and USIA media. Iran situation receiving little press attention and materials needed help create reaction favorable new regime, U.S. aid efforts." **[Doc. 111]**

The infrastructure available to exploit new propaganda opportunities in Iran included a "P area of the Department of State" that used "the Department's News Division in dealing with local correspondents, a Historical Division, and offices which deal in the placement of magazine articles and arrangements for official speaking engagements." There was also "a confidential American agency [the CIA was only a few years old when this document was created] which is sometimes in a position to provide assistance in the propaganda field. I have arranged an informal relationship here which can be used if propaganda experts desire to have something said or played in Iran which should not be directly related to the U.S. Government." In addition, an "ad hoc 'Iran Propaganda Committee' to serve as a forum for ideas and a center of attraction for all persons involved in propaganda activities related to Iran" was established. **[Doc. 112]**

In November 1953, Ambassador Henderson requested an approach to "one of the three American publications having most influence in Iran; namely, New York

Times, Time Magazine and Newsweek" requesting that it carry an article written by the embassy pointing out that "Wily Dr. Mosadeq" had an "attempted policy of open blackmail against the free world . . . . When the Iranian people finally realized the situation, under the leadership of those loyal to the Shah and to Iranian institutions, the forces opposed to alliance with or domination by the communists arose in wrath . . . " The U.S. also wanted Iranians to understand that it was necessary for the British-Iranian oil dispute to be settled on terms acceptable to the West: the article noted that "There seems to be a failure on the part of many of them to realize how necessary it is for them to stand behind their Government in a determined attempt to solve the most important problems of the country before the emergency aid which the United States has extended to Iran is exhausted." **[Doc. 114]**

(The collaboration of American media, including the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, *Time*, and *Newsweek*, with "the intelligence community" was discussed, post-Watergate scandal, in a report prepared by the congressional Church Committee and in more detail in a *Rolling Stone* article by Carl Bernstein.) (11)

Press helpfulness is also illustrated by an incident involving Kuwait. A late 1953 *Newsweek* story described insular and conservative Kuwait, improbably, as a new soft spot for communism, and reported that "a Kuwait union organizer" attended a World Federation of Trade Unions conference in Vienna. U.S. consulate sources observed that there was "no evidence of increased Communist activity in Kuwait--or for that matter of any Communist activity" or any indication that any Kuwaitis had been to Vienna, or that there were any Kuwaiti unions. But it noted that even if the story were untrue (perhaps derived from a Soviet broadcast "picked up by a monitoring service" (not identified)) the article "may have done some immediate good . . . in that the [Kuwaiti] Director of Public Security appears to have been enough frightened . . . to have decided he will accept long-standing British advice that he should have a British security expert to set up an anti-subversives department . . . . A cooperative British adviser would be an invaluable contact man for the Consulate for exchange of information and would also be important in the prevention of the development of subversive activity of any sort in Kuwait." **[Doc. 115]**

U.S. Government - Academia

Teachers and researchers, with their contacts and regional knowledge, were and are valued sources of information for the U.S. government about conditions in foreign countries. For instance, after learning that University of Michigan professor George Cameron had delivered a talk on Soviet propaganda, the State Department approached him for advice regarding the U.S. version. **[Doc. 34]** The initiative did not always come from the government: in early 1952, the American embassy in Iraq was intrigued by a U.S. graduate student's offer to survey public opinion among Iraqis. The research would purportedly be independent, but would receive funding and be directed behind-the-scenes by the embassy's office of public affairs. The embassy noted that "Because of suspicion of foreigners, feeling against U.S. because of Israel, and gen[eral] reluctance discuss opinions with strangers, such surveys [are] impossible with open USIE support." The plan presented an "excellent opportunity to learn something concerning important young group in Iraq without any apparent participation US Govt." **[Doc. 52]**

U.S. Government - Private Associations

Nominally independent non-profit associations of individuals with an interest in foreign affairs could be used as a way to convey sympathetic interest in Middle Eastern issues. For example, Ambassador to Iraq Burton Berry said in 1952 that "we, as propagandists, can only do our best to keep alive the hope in the Arab world that a political solution [to the Arab-Israeli dispute and continuing colonial

interference by Britain and France] on the part of the United States is possible. We can do this by emphasizing the growing interest in contemporary Middle East political problems on the part of Americans;" to do so he recommended "the channel to the activities of the American Friends of the Middle East [AFME]." **[Doc. 74]** Several years later, a State Department officer commented that "In a number of cases we have found it extremely helpful to call on AFME to sponsor certain visits which we as government were not able to sponsor. Exchanges under such auspices tend to give the individuals concerned an independent status which enhances their effectiveness in whichever Middle Eastern country may be concerned." Occasionally, it would be necessary for this appearance of impartiality to be real: "We recognize that to retain AFME's independent appearance its leader should express objective viewpoints on U.S. Government policies and actions." However, any such divergence should be "restrained". **[Doc. 134]**

After the British and American-sponsored coup in Iran, the local USIS office requested additional staffing for the Iran America Society, in order to extend "our operations into a number of special classes for high ranking ministry people and others in our prime target groups." The society had "contributed greatly toward our objectives" as "a very strong center in which pro-American sentiments can be widely and efficiently developed with much less chance of the label 'American Propaganda' being affixed." **[Doc. 110]**

U.S. Government - Publishing Industry

Victor Weybright, founder of the New American Library of World Literature, Inc. (publisher of authors ranging from William Faulkner to D.H. Lawrence to Ayn Rand to Henry David Thoreau to Ian Fleming to Mickey Spillane) was an enthusiastic ally of the government (he had worked in a U.S. government propaganda office in Britain during World War II.) He visited the Middle East in 1951, and then reported to a State Department public affairs officer that "we are now working on a number of forthcoming books at the suggestion of . . . your staff in which the primary motivation is to be of service to the international aims of the country." Though he "leaned over backward everywhere" not to involve the government in distributing literature, at his request "your people in Washington are making available to the American Book Publishers Council, a list of the key scholars and intellectuals abroad who might well receive review copies of certain American books." **[Doc. 36]**

Weybright was told, "certain projects aimed at stimulating the commercial distribution overseas of United States books constitute one approach to which we are devoting considerable attention and effort. It goes without saying that it would not have been possible to undertake these projects without the cooperation and efforts put forth by you and your colleagues. The information which is being collected for you by our Division of Information Centers will soon be available." (12) **[Doc. 44]**

As the U.S. expanded its influence in the Middle East, the government needed to expand its technical and linguistic capabilities: in 1952, for instance, the State Department's regional production center in London had no Arabic typesetting facilities. **[Doc. 76]** In June of that year, Franklin Publications, Inc. was established, with a $500,000 grant from the USIA (about $3.3 million in current dollars.) (13) In October, the IAA provided the company with "guidance for . . . publication and distribution of works in Arabic using funds granted by the State Department," listing goals that included "reducing Arab ignorance, suspicion, and resentment of the West and particularly the United States."(14) **[Doc. 78]**

To support Franklin's endeavors, the State Department asked diplomatic staff for information about the book trade in their host countries, seeking "Comments on the way in which anti-American feeling might express itself with respect to the Franklin

program." However, "The Department's role in the undertaking outlined is not to be mentioned outside the missions or consulates." **[Doc. 67]**

When Franklin officials (including the vice president of the D. Van Nostrand Company and the director of the Brooklyn Public Library) traveled to the Middle East, with Top Secret clearances, they were to be "treated as private businessmen." **[Doc. 79]** **[Doc. 80]** Dan Lacy, Director of the IIA's information Center Service, told company president Datus C. Smith, Jr. that although it would "be desirable both in your present trip and in any field operations Franklin Publications may maintain in the area to avoid the degree of association with the Embassy which would tend to establish Franklin Publications in local eyes as a mere tool of the State Department, it will be necessary to maintain a close liaison with the public affairs officers in the missions concerned."(15) **[Doc. 78]**

Propaganda Themes

One aspect of the government's propaganda program was the cultivation of a positive view of America among the people of the Middle East. The image to be projected was of a society that valued and supported freedom, that was economically and militarily strong, and that supported peace and a role for international institutions in governing intra-state affairs.

Freedom

In the government's view, foreign observers did not appreciate U.S. values and accomplishments; therefore, a major purpose for propaganda should be emphasizing to the world America's role as a beacon of freedom for the world. Thus, a strategy session seeking ways to mitigate Arab distrust proposed that the Voice of America utilize "Lincoln's Gettysburg address--they swallow that hook, line and sinker -- United Nations, freedom, away with slavery, and that sort of thing." **[Doc. 58]** The IIA recommending promoting "an understanding of and sense of communion with the central themes of Western thought, with especial emphasis on those most eloquently stated Western ideals of the dignity and freedom of individual men." **[Doc. 78]** Without irony, a State Department cable declared one month after the British-American coup in Iran that a primary propaganda goal was "Allaying Iranian distrust of 'outsiders' (U.S. in this case) by repeating and reiterating sole interest U.S. in Iran is in free, independent, strengthened Iran capable taking her place in community free nations." **[Doc. 107]**

Military/Industrial Prowess

Demonstrating "the overwhelming and increasing industrial and military strength of the United States" was viewed as one way of increasing its influence. In October 1950, the ambassador to Iran suggested an emphasis in propaganda on the "quick overwhelming effectiveness U.S. and U.N. in Korea;" this recommendation was made shortly before allied forces became bogged down in a quagmire similar to what would ensue years later in Vietnam. **[Doc. 10]** The State Department welcomed a suggestion for a "friendly display of force to strengthen the American position" by either sending ships to the Persian Gulf or planes to the Dhahran Air Base in Saudi Arabia. It was "assumed that such a visit would be undertaken only with an enthusiastic invitation from the Saudi Government." **[Doc. 68]** **[Doc. 70]**

Since one aspect of the Cold War was competition between capitalism and communism as systems for achieving development and prosperity, scripts prepared by USIE for broadcast by Iran's Department of Press and Propaganda "did not neglect to present the result of the latest research in the United States and to make rather prominent mention of the country. This is also true of the present new industries series which have covered such things as plastics, rayon, diesel engines, chemurgy, frozen foods and fertilizer." **[Doc. 47]** Likewise, a report on policy

implementation noted, "our films, news releases, and broadcasts have emphasized economic" (as well as military) developments. **[Doc. 130]**

(These messages were not inevitably well received. A highly critical report by an Iranian newspaper -- called "leftist" by the U.S. embassy -- on American propaganda complained that Radio Tehran served the interests of the "Yankee World" and broadcast "USIE-originated absurdities . . . Every day we listen to the lengthy talks on American rubber industry, automobile industry, tank factories and the fantastic amounts of money U.S. industrialists make.") **[Doc. 48]**

Lover of Peace

The U.S. wanted to be respected for its military power and also admired as a peace-loving nation, differentiating itself from a violent and disruptive Soviet Union. So a brochure prepared for Iranian consumption, illustrated by a dancing bear, contrasted Soviet statements and its "youth demonstrations" with the accomplishments of the "Free World" and the United Nations, including assistance for health care, food and clothing distribution, and rehabilitation training. **[Doc. 96]** Radio Baghdad broadcasts, of probable USIS origin, denied Communist claims of social equality and accused the Soviet Union of hypocrisy, charging that, despite its stated support for peace, it "mobilizes all its material power for war. It produces atomic planes, heavy guns, and tanks, and mobilizes and trains the army in preparation for war, and spreads fear and horror among the peaceful nations." **[Doc. 122]** In contrast, "America's moral, religious, economic and political strength was presented through the information media with emphasis on our hope and intent for peace." **[Doc. 130]**

Present-day American predilections for unilateralism, for disregarding the United Nations, and for unequivocally supporting Israel, make it unlikely that Middle East policy decisions could be used to win over popular opinion among Arabs and Muslims today, but the 1956 Suez crisis presented the Eisenhower administration with such an opportunity. The U.S. had forced Britain, France, and Israel to back down following their invasion and occupation of Egypt. Following the crisis, USIA recommended emphasizing the "Strong U.S. position in support of U.N. on armed invasion of Egypt motivated by principles morality and justice . . . . taken in interest of strengthening machinery for settling disputes peacefully . . . U.S. through U.N. took lead in bringing about cease fire and procuring withdrawal foreign troops from Egypt . . . Outcome U.N. efforts to settle current ME problems will have effect degree confidence U.S. public and other peoples free world may have in efficiency of international machinery for settlement disputes." **[Doc. 131]**

Atomic Apologia

Pervasive fear of nuclear weapons is now being used by the Bush administration to generate wide popular support for an invasion of Iraq. During the 1950s, however, winning acceptance of nuclear power and alleviating nuclear phobia were major U.S. propaganda goals. Dwight D. Eisenhower's 1953 United Nations "Atoms for Peace" speech was meant to ensure that the world was aware of massive and growing U.S. nuclear warfare capabilities, to defuse mounting international anxiety about atom bombs, fallout, open-air tests, Strontium-90 in the milk supply, and all the other side effects of the "nuclear age," and to neutralize campaigns calling for genuine disarmament by the major powers. The U.S. vigorously promoted atomic energy, and sponsored nuclear research and development programs in countries around the world, including the Middle East and South Asia. These efforts were intended to demonstrate the scientific and economic benefits that would accrue to governments that joined U.S.-led alliances, to create markets for American technology, and, ultimately, to undermine opposition to the extraterritorial stationing of nuclear weapons, then being secretly stockpiled around the world. As President Eisenhower said, there were certain steps that could be taken "To hasten the day

when fear of the atom will begin to disappear from the minds of people and the governments of the East and West."(16)

Among its plans for the Middle East in the mid 1950s, the NSC included "sponsorship of conferences in the area on the peaceful uses of atomic energy and the fostering of regional nuclear studies centers." **[Doc. 127]** In 1955, a "program to demonstrate on a continuing basis the advantages of the peaceful uses of atomic energy [was] stepped up. Scheduling the Agency's comprehensive exhibit on the subject for showings in Near East countries this fall and winter was a priority activity." **[Doc. 130]**

Pacifist sentiments calling for banning the bomb were not welcome. The American embassy in Tehran was joined by the Iranian government in waging a coordinated campaign against a Stockholm-based anti-nuclear peace petition. The campaign included plans for Iranian army prosecution of an individual who signed the petition. **[Doc. 10]**

As part of an effort to create a positive image for the U.S. in Iraq, the USIS office in Baghdad set up a library window display captioned "The Atom in the Service of Humanity . . . the United States is eager to share with the rest of the world the benefits derived from atomic research, and towards this end the AEC plant at Oakridge, Tennessee is shipping radioactive isotopes to collaborating institutions throughout the world." An Iraqi newspaper story describing the display noted that it included "pictures depicting the atom in the service of humanity! One of these pictures shows an atomic flash and cloud shooting up into the sky after the explosion of an atomic bomb." The article said that people "should not pay any attention to such harmful propaganda." A day later, a notice was pasted to USIS windows declaring, "We want the destruction of atomic and germ warfare -- Partisans of Peace."

Such negative thinking was not to be countenanced: the embassy assured Washington that the statement "was removed while the paste was still fresh . . . . The reaction of the leftist paper is interesting only in that the pasting up of the sign by the 'Partisans of Peace' would appear to confirm the community of interest between the paper and the Communists." **[Doc. 77]**

Biological warfare was also a sensitive issue: the American embassy in Iran prepared pamphlets on the topic "as a rebuttal to Communist germ warfare propaganda" [presumably North Korean, Chinese, and Soviet charges that the U.S. used biological weapons during the Korean war]. Thirty thousand pamphlets were produced, but "only 3,000 copies [were] distributed because communist propaganda on germ warfare died down and it was deemed advisable to let the matter lie unless it were revived." **[Doc. 96]**

Religion as a Propaganda Asset

Militant interpretations of Islam as espoused by groups like al-Qaeda terrify Americans today, but for decades the Middle East's religious tradition was viewed as a valuable asset that could be exploited to achieve American ends: as President Eisenhower said in a letter to a confidante, "the religious approach offers . . . a direct path to Arab interest."(17) **[Doc. 133]** The NSC said in 1952 that "The three monotheistic religions in the area have in common a repugnance to the atheism of communist doctrine and this factor could become an important asset in promoting Western objectives in the area." **[Doc. 59]** A USIE program for Iran recommended "Development of specialized materials which tend to instill among religious elements a friendly attitude toward the West and antipathy for Communism," although "In the case of religious leaders (*mullahs*)" American influence "cannot be direct and it may never be appreciable." **[Doc. 6]** (Soon thereafter, the embassy reported that two *mullahs* had begun public anticommunist sermons in Tehran, and

that others had been sent to the Tabriz and Kurdish areas for the same purpose.) Plans called for playing up "Moslem prosecutions by Communist satellites and Soviet and Soviet-Communist attitudes toward religion." **[Doc. 10]** The U.S. expected to be able to rely on anti-Communist religious leaders in Iraq as well. **[Doc. 76]**

The State Department arranged for Radio Jidda in Saudi Arabia to broadcast religious programming in the Tatar, Uzbek, and Azerbaijani languages. After sponsoring (evidently) the composition of a Christian-themed oratorio, it planned to approach Beirut's Armenian Seminary to obtain lyrics. **[Doc. 53]** Identification of a "common moral front" among various faiths and American values was encouraged: in Iran, the embassy distributed an eclectic brochure with a mosque on its cover called "Voices of God", containing quotations from the Koran, the Muslim poet Hafez, Jesus Christ, the Biblical prophet Isaiah, the Chinese philosopher Mo Tzu, the Buddha, the Sanskrit Bhagavad Gita, Abraham Lincoln, and Mahatma Gandhi. **[Doc. 96]**

To demonstrate U.S. religious tolerance, the American embassy in Iraq utilized posters, including photographs of the construction of Washington, D.C.'s Islamic center. **[Doc. 21]** One member of a working group on Middle East propaganda speculated, "maybe we could get the children of Washington to do a competition painting of that Mosque in some of the art classes and develop something along that line." **[Doc. 58]**

The IIA organized an Islamic colloquium for American and foreign Muslim scholars, that "On the surface" looked "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." Government officials even saw a role for the U.S. in guiding Islam's modern-day evolution and revitalization: "Among the various results expected from the colloquium are the impetus and direction that may be given to the Renaissance movement within Islam itself." **[Doc. 89]** The American embassy in Egypt recommended that a member of the Muslim Brotherhood be invited to attend, because his position "makes it important that his desire for an invitation be considered carefully in light of the possible effects of offending this important body." **[Doc. 103]**

Princeton lecturer (and former president of the American University of Beirut) Bayard Dodge met with William Eddy (of the CIA and ARAMCO) about financial support from oil companies for the colloquium, to supplement a grant from the State Department, while the printing in Arabic of conference papers was to be paid for by Franklin Publications. **[Doc. 90]** **[Doc. 94]**

William Eddy also discussed a Christian-Muslim "common moral front" against communism with *New York Herald Tribune* columnist Dorothy Thompson: "As you know, there have been very few signs that the Western Powers place any value upon Muslims and from the point of view of psychological warfare alone, we need desperately some common ground to which we welcome the Muslims and the Arabs as respected and valued friends."

Perhaps Saudi Arabia could be especially useful: according to Eddy, its profligate King Abd al-Aziz, "as head of the puritanical Wahhabi movement to restore the pure faith and practices of Islam" was "without any doubt the most representative and influential Muslim in the world today." **[Doc. 26]**

Abd al-Aziz's son shared his thoughts on these matters with U.S. representatives. In 1952, the future King Saud, campaigning to ensure his succession, obtained

elaborate press equipment, an innovation in his then undeveloped desert domain. To please the influential *ulama* allied with the Saudi royal family, he planned to initially publish religious tracts. He also planned the first publication in Saudi Arabia of the Koran, according to the State Department, and asked ARAMCO to get him radio broadcasting equipment. A department official was helpful: "It was pointed out to him" that he needed to get people used to tuning in. "It was suggested that at the outset the reading of religious material would probably be the best means of introduction." Prince Saud also confided that he foresaw giving more tangible form to Saudi leadership, including "plans which he did not wish to discuss in detail now to spark plug a pan-Islamic movement. He said it could do a great deal of good in the Muslim countries by causing them to work together as a unit." The U.S. official assured Saud that "his information about Islamic unity was very interesting and we would be very glad to know more about it when his plans were more clearly formulated. In general, however, I told him that we would welcome such a movement under his leadership because we could be sure that it would be friendly and wisely led." **[Doc. 55]**

Image versus Reality

The idealized image to be projected in the Middle East of a freedom-loving America was contradicted by the U.S. government's mutually beneficial relationships with autocratic regimes in the region. Despite rhetorical claims, influential Americans tolerated and valued authoritarian rule. The State Department said of American press views of the shah of Iran, "For a time, some hope was even expressed that he might assume personal leadership in Iran, possibly establishing military dictatorship in the fashion of Egypt's Naguib. But as editors saw the Iranian situation going from bad to worse, they very soon 'wrote off' the Shah as a force to be reckoned with, and many now believe that his days are numbered." **[Doc. 82]** An internal oil company memorandum that fell into State Department hands observed, "the value of the patriarchal system of Government of Kuwait and the special treaty relationships with the West . . . . The continuity which this form of Government gives, the absence of irresponsible electioneering, freedom from a local gutter press, and the non-existence of the more unpleasant aspects of nationalism are factors which greatly assist the conduct of our operations." (The writer was also concerned about the resistance of Kuwait's rulers to reform -- but only because this could ultimately undermine Western interests.) **[Doc. 9]**

A 1952 memorandum assessed the likelihood that several Arab governments could override domestic opinion against joining a Western-sponsored Middle East defense organization (MEDO). A State Department official reported, "It is too early to tell whether the present Lebanese Government is or will be strong enough to accept MEDO over popular and political opposition," whereas Iraq, happily, "has the government which could lead the people into MEDO against their own desires." **[Doc. 81]**

For some Americans, openness was a liability. An official of the Trans-Arabian Pipeline said that the publication of a Federal Trade Commission report "on the alleged 'crimes' committed by the petroleum companies" (including illegal overcharges and price fixing), widely reported in the Arab press, had undermined the prestige of American oil companies. **[Doc. 88]**

Unsurprisingly, State Department propaganda did not dwell on American failings. The department declined to support publication of a book by Sayid Amin al-Mumayiz entitled *America as I Saw It* because "Although an important aspect of the Campaign of Truth program is assistance in the publication of indigenous material," the inclusion of material on the "Negro problem and anti-semitism seems to promise a certain sensational approach." **[Doc. 30]**

The views expressed by some State Department officers reflected mainstream elite opinion in a still-segregated Washington, D.C. In 1952, an Office of Near Eastern Affairs official commented, regarding the anticipated demise of Saudi King Abd al-Aziz, that "we might well welcome" succession by his brother to the throne, because his sons "are not especially outstanding and are all born of Negro mothers." **[Doc. 55]**

The State Department did not appreciate foreign scrutiny of American racism, and to counteract criticism dispatched members of minority groups overseas as emissaries embodying American diversity -- within limits. In 1954, an embassy official was concerned that Iranians had gained most of their knowledge of "the Indian problem" from Howard Fast's *The Last Frontier* (which described, sympathetically, attempts by a group of Cherokees to retain their territory), published in Iran "with the backing, it is believed, of an unfriendly power," and of "the Negro problem" from social critic Erskine Caldwell, published in Iran "probably under the same auspices." The embassy opposed plans to invite a Native American artist, Solomon McCombs, to tour Iran if African-American Olympic track champion Malvin Whitfield visited there as an athletic representative -- "In the judgment of the Embassy it would be unwise . . . . to have two such visits of representatives from minority groups come so close together . . . . Under the circumstances it seems unwise to urge that Mr. McCombs be sent, since too much emphasis on our minorities would probably be misconstrued." **[Doc. 123]**

Average Americans did not always appreciate that 1950s-style anticommunist fervor did not preclude government-promoted international outreach programs. After receiving requests from several Iraqis for tourist brochures, a concerned Franklin, Michigan Chamber of Commerce representative contacted the State Department. He was reassured that a USIS program had probably inspired the requests, and that "supplying information on democracy in action is one of the ways in which we are combating communism." The Michigander had feared that details on his town would be shared with the Iraqis' "neighbor to the East." **[Doc. 56]**

Factors Inhibiting Achievement of Propaganda Goals

Palestine

Those aspects of U.S. propaganda meant to improve America's image in the Arab world were hindered by differences between U.S. priorities and those of the people of the region. Of these issues, observers familiar with local conditions repeatedly stressed the primacy of Palestine. During the time span covered by these documents, Israel's 1948 establishment, with crucial U.S. support, and the consequent displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees were events of great immediacy. The effect on the attitudes of Arabs, and of Muslims outside the Middle East, was overwhelming.

Secretary of State Dean Acheson, noting that anti-Americanism in the region was rising, recommended propaganda stressing that the U.S., despite its stance on Palestine, valued friendship with Arabs. **[Doc. 3]** In 1951, the State Department attributed a decrease in animosity toward the U.S. in part to "United States efforts to convince the Arabs of its impartiality as between them and Israel." **[Doc. 17]** In 1952, the NSC said that the Arab-Israeli conflict was one of the principal threats to U.S. interests in the Middle East. **[Doc. 59]**

The ambassador to Iraq said "The basic distrust of the West . . . is a political distrust," that could "only be met by a political solution." **[Doc. 74]** He said that Palestine was always the first topic raised by Iraqis, who warned interlocutors "not to believe that lapse of time will change Arab attachment to Palestine or that the young generation will hold different views or that U.S. loans and grants will cause Arabs to forget and forgive." He said, "I suggest that we look urgently at our plans

to bring Arabs around to West outlook and from Baghdad today it seems that surest way to accomplish this is by our govts squarely facing two problems" (restoring Arab confidence in American good faith, and modifying British and French policies in the region.) **[Doc. 73]** The president of the American University of Beirut said that the Arab-Israeli conflict helped America's Cold War adversary, because the Soviet Union exploited the misery of Palestinians as victims of Western imperialism. **[Doc. 24]**

The Kurds

Competing national interests also complicated U.S. plans for anticommunist propaganda directed at the Kurds. The breakup of the Ottoman empire and the delineation of national borders after World War I had left large Kurdish populations in Turkey, Iraq, and Iran; U.S. policy toward the Kurdish minorities in each of these countries has always been largely determined by the state of its relationship with the relevant national government

The American embassy in Iran supported Kurdish Voice of America broadcasts as long as they supported the Iranian government rather than Kurdish nationalism, to "avoid possible resentment Central Iran Govt authorities whose continued cooperation is essential connection USIE activities Iran." **[Doc. 27]** The government of Iraq cooperated with the U.S. in producing anticommunist bulletins, newsreels, and music broadcasts aimed at Iraqi Kurds, but it too was opposed to any measures likely to augment Kurdish nationalism. **[Doc. 2]** **[Doc. 35]** When the American embassy in Ankara asked for help with Kurdish-language radio broadcasts from the Turkish government, it was told that there was no "Kurdish question" in Turkey. The embassy recommended that Kurdish Voice of America broadcasts be transmitted instead from either Iran or Iraq. **[Doc. 31]** Seeming to concede that adamant government objections precluded the use of Turkey as a base for Kurdish propaganda, the State Department in Washington noted, dryly, that "It was not anticipated, of course, that a direct approach would be made to the foreign governments in connection with the question." **[Doc. 32]**

Anticolonialism

Innate contradictions hindered U.S. efforts to portray itself to Middle Eastern audiences as a defender of freedom and self-determination, in spite of its ties with Britain and France and its burgeoning plans to project its own power in the region. Britain proposed Anglo-American propaganda cooperation **[Doc. 23]**, but the ambassador to Iraq observed that it was problematical for America to "present a united front with Great Britain and France and, at the same time, to avoid the accusation of perpetuating colonialism." **[Doc. 102]** In non-Arab Iran one observer said that antagonism toward the U.S. derived not from its support of Israel but the fact that "the British tail is all to successfully wagging the American dog." **[Doc. 35]** In late 1951, while Britain was striving to reverse Iran's nationalization of British-controlled oil interests, an American propaganda newsreel shown in rural Iran included an image of the British U.N. delegation head. He was "thoroughly booed, to the extent that no one in the audience could hear the narration." **[Doc. 38]**

Nationalism

"Anti-western" nationalism was viewed as one of the principal threats to U.S. interests in the Middle East. **[Doc. 59]** Although propaganda programs were based in part on the assumption that U.S. popular culture, and the display of America's material success, would impress Middle Eastern audiences, local observers sometimes indicated otherwise. In January 1953, Iran's Ministry of Propaganda and Broadcasting drafted a report on the activities of mobile film units in the provinces. The document, which the American embassy "acquired through informal channels," explained that propaganda films were generally well received by Iranians, but "the

more the films are connected with their lives and the farther they are from odd scenes of American and European large cities, the better the people will like and realize them . . . By experience we have learned that the people in remote areas are frightened of foreign propaganda and dislike it no matter whether it is American, Russian or British. A sort of suspicion arises in their minds which is not desirable if good result is to be obtained from our work." **[Doc. 87]**

Not surprisingly, resistance to foreign influence led to direct attacks on propaganda outlets, despite the best efforts of friendly government officials. During anti-regime protests in Iraq in late 1952, inspired in part by the government's pro-Western policies, opposition groups attacked the USIS office in Baghdad. **[Doc. 83]** **[Doc. 84]** **[Doc. 85]** Iraq's foreign minister and the American ambassador agreed that the office should be re-opened without delay "to offset Commie blow at both Iraq and U.S. prestige." **[Doc. 86]**

Individual acts of opposition could be dealt with severely. Through conducting a survey to assess the effectiveness of propaganda pamphlets, the USIS found out that some were not being delivered, and it contacted the appropriate Iraqi government agency. Noting that the American embassy had attained "excellent cooperation with the Post Office Department in Iraq," and "every assistance from the Director-General," it reported that "At least one postman who was found not to be delivering USIS pamphlets was discharged. Another, discharged as a Communist, was discovered to have kept undelivered batches of USIS pamphlets in his home." **[Doc. 98]**

Demands for Change

To the extent that American propaganda was perceived as supportive of a repressive status quo, it was not well received by those Middle Easterners who sought political and economic reform, and who failed to see the benefits to be gained from enlisting in the Cold War on the Western side. It appeared to these political activists that conservative regimes embraced alliance with the U.S. as a way to procure crucial foreign backing, lessening pressure to establish responsive institutions or to implement measures intended to win popular support.

Iran

In 1951, the American embassy in Tehran said that "The mental attitude" of Iran's "large rural population complicates our task . . . . As a whole, they have a deep and abiding hatred and distrust of the ruling class which leads them to the belief that our economic and military aid programs are designed to further strengthen the ruling class whom they regard as their oppressors. Every effort must be made to mitigate the strength of this feeling which is definitely encouraged" by the Soviet Union. **[Doc. 16]**

The embassy recommended development aid for functional reasons, arguing that achievement of U.S. objectives depended on it. The embassy argued that the dire condition of Iran's rural poor precluded any interest in anti-Soviet propaganda, so to be effective "the major portion of the American program would have to be in the educational field, developing knowledge of better agricultural and public health methods. The Iranian Government would reap the public credit for our program while our benefit would be realized through helping to raise the standard of living and thereby a certain measure of political and economic stability would be the result." **[Doc. 16]**

Evaluating the impact of American propaganda on rural Iranians, field workers for Iran's Propaganda Ministry offered the same advice: some viewers "said it would be far better had the government sent them some bread rather than undertake to spend

so much money sending them films. In some places the inhabitants asked for doctor[s] and medicine rather than films." **[Doc. 87]**

Iraq

Assessing the probable impact in Iraq of a propaganda film entitled "When the Communists Came", an American embassy review panel indicated that there was a possibility of the film "backfiring . . . . [it] does not contain sufficient recognition of the universal desire on the part of the peasant in the Middle East for land and for a better life. These must somehow be represented as available not by revolution, but by political means . . . . In a country such as Iraq where land reform is one of the pressing issues, the brutal treatment of landlords is not likely to awaken any sympathy among the peasant population." **[Doc. 64]**

American academic and indefatigable field researcher George Cameron said he was told by a local Kurdish leader, who had seen America's previously discussed anticommunist pig poster, that he knew "the Baghdad man who is producing this sheet for your Government. I know how much he is being paid yearly to produce it." The Kurdish leader said that his people knew more of ill health and poverty than communism, and "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?" **[Doc. 35]**

The American embassy in Baghdad told the State Department a story exemplifying the unanticipated reception elicited by some propaganda efforts. Several years earlier, the Iraqi government had shown the Ernst Lubitsch/Billy Wilder film "Ninotchka", as part of its effort to purvey an anti-Communist message. (At the outset of the movie, the character played by Greta Garbo is an ultra-serious Soviet emissary. By film's end she has been transformed by her Parisian experiences.) "After several showings the film was withdrawn because the Iraqi audience considered Ninotchka's somber existence in Russia preferable to her gay and immoral life in Paris." **[Doc. 64]**

Disillusionment

The appeal of the American way of life had its limits: in the Middle East, there was "a hostility arising from religious sources -- perhaps no longer primarily a zealous detestation of the infidel but rather a resentment of the contempt or indifference with which the West is thought to view Islam and Islamic civilization, coupled with a conservative aversion to what are thought to be the materialism, godlessness, and immorality of Western and particularly American life." **[Doc. 78]**

Americans living and working in the region cited local disillusionment with U.S. policy as a major impediment to winning popular support. The president of the American University of Beirut stated that "We have heretofore been held in highest regard by the Arab peoples but we cannot continue to win or deserve their admiration unless our policies are inspired once more by the ideals so frequently publicized which the Arabs had come to admire." **[Doc. 24]** Advising Franklin Publications on the most effective tone to adopt for Middle Eastern propaganda, an IIA official suggested emphasizing "persistent American friendliness for and interest in the Arab world . . . An especial effort should be devoted to publications that emphasize U.S. neutrality between Israel and the Arabs, an awareness of Arab rights in the controversy."

One participant in a State Department discussion of strategy observed, "We cannot change the U.S. Government policy . . . I think our propaganda is to make U.S. policy palatable," or "at least less unpalatable." **[Doc. 58]**

Conclusion

During the Cold War, American propaganda was a tool in an anticommunist crusade; today, it is a facet of the U.S. "war on terrorism." Now, as then, it is characterized as a remedy for anti-Americanism. Now as in the past, U.S. policy toward Palestine is the primary source of Arab and Muslim dislike for the U.S., generated as well by apparent American indifference to the suffering of Iraqi civilians under sanctions and the pervasive presence of U.S. military forces, viewed by many as protectors of autocratic and unpopular regimes rather than as defenders against external aggression.

Methods for disseminating propaganda are vastly more sophisticated today than in the past: there is now widespread access to radio and satellite television, videos, popular music, and the Internet. But the effectiveness of America's propaganda apparatus is limited by inadequate knowledge of Middle Eastern languages, culture, and social mores. The U.S. government seeks help from the private sector in targeting the region, but a predilection for cartoonish depictions of Middle Easterners and Middle East issues is likely to limit the appeal of products created by the American entertainment industry. For the foreseeable future, exchange-of-person programs will be hindered by visa restrictions, the inconvenience of travel for those from the region, hostility, and grass roots movements among Arabs and Muslims encouraging the rejection of U.S. influence.

Documents from the 1950s in this collection reflect, in large measure, the assumption that favorable public opinion in the region was necessary in order to achieve U.S. objectives. Today, however, Bush administration decision makers see overwhelming military power as the way to achieve U.S. goals in the Middle East, and to enhance its prestige. Their policies seem to embrace a position asserted by George Kennan in 1952: the U.S. should not expect to be popular or liked in the Middle East; instead, "We should demonstrate that we are prepared to act and that we mean business in the protection of our strategic interests. We should shift the emphasis in our policy in order to obtain this respect." The response of policy makers in the Middle East "should not be motivated by love of the U.S." **[Doc. 75]**

George W. Bush has described the conflict between the U.S. and those who resist its policies in the Middle East as a battle between good and evil -- those who "hate" the U.S. do so because they oppose freedom and the democracy for which the U.S. stands. This simplistic formulation is granted some level of acceptance by a fearful domestic audience, seeking comfort and reassurance, but is viewed incredulously by many observers in the region, who are familiar with America's support for corrupt and repressive dictatorships, in the Middle East and around the world, and its selective policies regarding weapons of mass destruction.

In the version of reality projected by representatives of the Bush administration, and reflected in large measure in the U.S. news media, America's history of exploiting, for its own political purposes, the most conservative and militant interpretations of Islam, in the Persian Gulf region, in Pakistan, and in Afghanistan, is to be forgotten. So too is America's habit of looking the other way, when convenient, as allies accelerated their nuclear weapons programs (consider Israel, Pakistan, and Iraq.) So too is U.S. aid and comfort for Iraq during the Iran-Iraq war (while also, on occasion, providing arms and intelligence to its adversary), thus helping to perpetuate a horrifically bloody conflict. So too is the Reagan administration's policy of downplaying Iraq's use of chemical weapons against Iran during that war. So too is the first Bush administration's decisions, after Iraq used chemical weapons against Kurdish Iraqis, to continue providing taxpayer-guaranteed financial credits to Saddam Hussein's government, and to seek "opportunities for U.S. firms to participate in the reconstruction of the Iraqi economy, particularly in the energy area."(18)

During the 1950s, the U.S. sought to project an image of itself as a peace-loving nation, supportive of the United Nations and international law (an image not always strictly coincident with reality), but any attempt to convey a similar message by the current administration would be belied by America's denigration of the U.N. in recent years, its massive global arms sales (to the Middle East, in particular), and its preference for unilateral decision-making. Likewise, President Bush's statements of tolerance and respect for Muslims are contradicted by the powerful influence on his administration of those conservative Christians who deny the legitimacy of Islam, ridicule its tenets, and embrace the brutal Arab-Israeli conflict as a sanctified means to an apocalyptic end -- to include, as they envision it, the annihilation of Muslims, Jews, and all others who have not embraced a "born-again" version of Christianity.

The documents in this collection concerned with the 1953 coup in Iran are of particular contemporary interest. While campaigning for an invasion of Iraq, the Bush administration assumes a favorable military outcome for the U.S., a position that seems irrefutable given the disparate force levels between the two adversaries and conditions in Iraq following 10 years of sanctions. Still, foreign occupations are expensive to maintain: this had much to do with ending the imperial ambitions of Britain and France. Saudi Arabia, other conservative Gulf states, Germany, Japan, and other U.S. allies provided much of the funding that paid for the Persian Gulf war; such generous subsidies will not be available for an invasion of Iraq. Many observers conclude that the U.S. plans the invasion, an innately risky undertaking at a time when the country faces severe economic problems, only because it is counting on an eventual financial windfall, to be gained from ensuring a permanent military presence in the region, and from reasserting Western control over Iraqi, and ultimately, perhaps, over all Middle East oil resources.

The Bush administration is evidently contemptuous of opposition to its planned invasion of Iraq by, according to all reports, the vast majority of the people of the Middle East. America's war plans rely on the cooperation of dependent principalities whose rulers can, with U.S. protection, or must, under U.S. coercion, ignore domestic opinion. The underlying assumption is that manifestations of opposition will be limited to a few demonstrations outside embassies to let the locals blow off steam, while the U.S. relies on the repressive, often U.S.-trained, internal security forces of its client regimes to keep the situation under control. Meanwhile, in its public statements the administration maintains, straight-faced, that it is fighting for democracy, and is compelled to resort to war because the people of the Middle East, sadly, understand and respect only force.

Propaganda strategies developed in tandem with war plans will include those arguments explaining and defending U.S. actions that have the widest popular appeal. As has become the rule for U.S. military operations, information will be controlled and filtered by the Pentagon. In Iraq, some will welcome an overthrow of the present repressive government, even if brought about by a foreign invasion; the U.S. government will do what it can to ensure that this reaction monopolizes news coverage. The administration has reason to be confident that a passive opposition party, a pro-war mainstream press, all the apparatus of news manipulation available to the government, and a public and mass media predisposed to view the motives of their country in a favorable light, and to hope that their sense of insecurity will be lessened by an attack on a designated enemy, are likely to ensure that a U.S. invasion of Iraq will be judged a success - at least in the short term.

Epilogue

Several more recent documents concerned with the issues discussed in this collection are appended.

One concerns a case of turnabout involving the U.S. and the shah of Iran: during the turbulent 1950s, American propaganda sought to improve the image of the Iranian ruler. In 1969, after a huge protest in Washington against the Vietnam war, presidential aide Dwight Chapin sought publicity for the shah's praise of a beleaguered Richard Nixon: "Friendly columnists should be called today--and given excerpts of the Shah's remarks about the President . . . . Eric Sevareid should be called by Shakespeare [Frank Shakespeare, former president of CBS Television and director of the USIA] or perhaps by Klein--and try to get the thrust of the Shah's remarks into his show for tonight." **[Doc. 135]**

Protests against the shah grew in the years preceding the Islamic revolution. In December 1977, immediately before a visit by Jimmy Carter to Iran, students attacked the local facility of the previously discussed Franklin Publishing, Inc. The State Department said the motivation for the assault was "unclear". **[Doc. 136]** (The Iran America Society, also discussed previously, was targeted during the same week.)

A group of American teachers discussed growing anti-Americanism with State Department officials in late 1978, observing that recent statements of support for the shah by Jimmy Carter had "not had a salutary effect," nor was the U.S. government's underplaying of the Iranian government's violent suppression of political protests helpful. One teacher said he was "embarrassed to try to explain the meaning of such statements to his students." All mentioned Iranian acquaintances who were encouraged by Carter's statements on human rights but were deeply aggrieved by his support for the shah: Iranians "otherwise well-disposed toward the United States" were "extremely hostile in recent days as a direct consequence of their sense of betrayal." An embassy official replied that Iran-U.S. relations were on a government-to-government basis, that the "Administration is inclined to see the Shah as Iran's best hope for continued economic and social development," and commented that the criticism demonstrated "naiveté about the realities of inter-governmental relationships." **[Doc. 137]** (Overwhelming opposition led to the shah's exile from Iran a few months later.)

Comments in 1979 on Kuwait's news media reflect little change from conditions described in the 1950 document on Kuwait included in this collection. **[Doc. 9]** Kuwait's press was controlled by the government, restricted its reportage to domestic issues, did not criticize Kuwait's rulers or foreign heads of state, and practiced self-censorship. "The owners and editors of the media in Kuwait are just as interested as the ruling family in protecting Kuwait from harmful publicity . . . . It is safe to say that, if there is now a threat to the security and stability of Kuwait, that threat does not arise from or draw support from the mass media." **[Doc. 138]** (The State Department's most recent report on human rights in Kuwait, following the 10 years of close cooperation with the U.S. that followed the ejection of occupying Iraqi forces, suggests that creation of a truly free and independent press in Kuwait is as unlikely as ever.) (19)

Manipulation of news, including that with a religious association, for propaganda purposes continued. Several months before the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, an "Islamic Association of Afghan Students" including Afghans, Palestinians, and Indians, demonstrated in front of the Soviet embassy in India. The protest was funded by the New Delhi CIA station and organized by a CIA "asset". The CIA sought images from extensive Indian newspaper and television coverage to replay in neighboring countries, and additional demonstrations were scheduled for Germany, Iran, Denmark, and the United States. **[Doc. 139]**

Staged events to exhibit sympathy toward Islam appear to be conventions for every American president. During the Iranian hostage crisis, proposed venues for this gesture by Jimmy Carter included a meeting at the White House with professors and

students of Middle East or South Asian studies, or with diplomats, or with families of hostages. A visit to Washington's Islamic Center to express "season's greetings" to U.S. Muslims was also suggested, although one scrupulous adviser called the idea "Too artificial." **[Doc. 140]**

In late 1983, during the U.S. intervention in Lebanon (along with French, Italian, and British forces) undertaken in response to conflict among Israelis, Palestinians, Syrians, and Lebanese, the Reagan administration developed plans for a "public diplomacy strategy" for the Middle East. Its anticipated activities included making senior officials available for television, for briefings given to "major media centers," and for visits to editorial boards, business groups, churches and educational institutions. Its targets were congress, business, labor, and special interest groups, and "major, regional local, and specialized" media. **[Doc. 142]** **[Doc. 144]**

U.S. propaganda was no longer hobbled by the technological shortcomings of the 1950s. Under Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger noted in November 1983, "The U.S. Government has an extraordinarily extensive range of communications resources to support public diplomacy strategies. The breadth and depth of our capabilities permit comprehensive, flexible approaches which can be tailored to widely varying audiences and policy needs."

The themes for domestic audiences were: "we will stay the course [in Lebanon] because it is in America's long-term interest" and "We do not envisage any change at this time in the size, role or mission" of the multinational force (MNF). Foreigners would be told that "None of the Middle East problems can be seen in isolation from each other . . . Cowardly, terrorist attempts to force the withdrawal of the MNF will not succeed . . . Political and strategic stability is a vital Western interest. Common efforts are needed to resolve potentially explosive issues, including the Arab-Israeli, Iraq-Iran and Lebanese crises." **[Doc. 143]**

(The U.S. withdrew from Lebanon in February 1984, the Iran-Iraq war lasted for five more bloody years, and the Palestine-Israel dispute is no closer to resolution than it was 18 years ago.)

Sustaining the war in Afghanistan was a greater priority for the Reagan administration than the costly intervention in Lebanon. Working with National Endowment for Democracy-funded associations such as the American Friends of Afghanistan, the U.S. distributed books, trained teachers (selected "Based on the recommendation of local Mujahiddun [those who wage *jihad*] commanders,") and taught video documentation techniques. **[Doc. 145]** "Public diplomacy" goals for Afghanistan, developed as the U.S. consulted "closely with Pakistan," included making sure that the war stayed in the forefront of international attention, undermining a Soviet "political offensive", "involving other governments to a greater extent in supporting the Afghan people's cause," preventing the Soviet Union from achieving a negotiated settlement, and seeking "greater involvement of the private sector in support of various elements of our Afghanistan policy." A special interagency working group was formed for Afghanistan, to coordinate efforts "to maximize media coverage of the war and publicity favorable to the resistance." **[Doc. 146]**

Notes

1. http://www.state.gov/r/, 3 October 2002

2. http://www.brycezabel.com/mediapage/nytimes102001.htm, 3 October 2002

3. http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/07/20020730-3.html#7, 3 October 2002

4. http://www.fas.org/sgp/news/2002/02/dod022102.html, 3 October 2002

5. http://www.dod.gov/news/Nov2002/t11212002_t1118sd2.html, 4 December 2002

6. http://www.state.gov/r/adcompd/, 3 October 2002

7. During the mid-1950s, a specific U.S. policy for Saudi Arabia, in addition to strengthening the U.S. "special position," was to take "all appropriate measures to bring about the cancellation" of an agreement between the Saudi government and Aristotle Onassis to transport Saudi oil on his tankers. [Doc. 128] The arrangement would have ended monopoly control of Saudi Arabia's oil by American oil companies, but was forestalled by the U.S. government.

8. Similar problems will also probably complicate the Bush administration's future "public diplomacy" policies.

9. John F. Devlin, *The Ba'th Party* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1976), 108-109, 194.

10. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1950: The Near East, South Asia, and Africa*, vol. 5 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1978), 615 n.

11. Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, 1978, see relevant excerpt available online at http://jeremybigwood.net/AJR/Church_Committee.htm, 17 October 2002; Carl Bernstein, "The CIA and the Media," *Rolling Stone* (Oct. 20, 1977), says that former CIA directors William Colby and George Bush "persuaded the committee to restrict its inquiry into the matter," and that the committee's report discusses the issue in "deliberately vague and sometimes misleading terms." See excerpt, http://www.realhistoryarchives.com/media/ciamedia.htm, 12 October 2002

12. Before establishing the New American Library, Victor Weybright worked for the American branch of the British publishing firm, Penguin Books, Ltd. He asked Penguin to authorize publication in India of an inexpensive edition of George Orwell's novel *1984*, saying "In this particular case, we are more interested in the effect of the book upon readers than in the commercial aspects of any such translation."

Subsequently, an officer of Penguin Books wrote to a colleague, "With reference to the proposition for an edition of 50,000 copies of *1984* for India, this interests me considerably, as less than a week ago I had a visit from a somewhat vague individual from Washington, who is concerned with the distribution of certain books of alleged propaganda value throughout the world, and the one title which he mentioned was Orwell's *1984* and the one territory in which he seemed to be particularly interested was India, so that I can only think that Weybright's enquiry stems from the same source."

(George Orwell's correspondence indicates that he was asked for advice on propaganda for India and Pakistan, and that he responded that broadcasting would not be effective due to limited access to radios.) See Steve Hare, "Big Brother," in *Selected Articles from Society Publications*, available online http://www.penguincollectorssociety.org/articles.htm, 7 October 2002

13. http://libweb.princeton.edu/libraries/firestone/rbsc/finding_aids/franklin/index.html, 4 October 2002

14. Victor Weybright was a "founding trustee" of Franklin Publications. He wrote that "Franklin had been envisaged by some of the founders as an adjunct to

American propaganda abroad, but Datus Smith, former director of the Princeton University Press who became Franklin's president, soon established a policy that Franklin would never become a propaganda organization. It developed as the friendly advisor and occasional short-term creditor of book enterprises which now operate under local management in most the Arab countries, in parts of India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Africa and South America. . . . I was pleased to find that from the very beginning books controlled by NAL [New American Library] were so well adapted for foreign translation that a large number of our titles were utilized." *Victor Weybright, The Making of a Publisher* (New York: Reynal & Company, 1966), 251.

15. Dan Lacy received a State Department Superior Service Medal "for his role in creating Franklin Books." He was a member of Franklin Publications' board of directors. In 1953, he joined Victor Weybright in opposing anti-pornography legislation and in disseminating a widely cited anticensorship statement (Ibid., 236.) (His later positions included assistant archivist of the United States, deputy chief assistant librarian of Congress, and head of the United States Information Agency overseas library and publishing program.)

- http://www.ala.org/alonline/news/2001/010423.html, 10 October 2002
- http://libweb.princeton.edu/libraries/firestone/rbsc/finding_aids/franklin/ (Available Online [October 10, 2002])
- http://www.ala.org/alaorg/oif/freeread.html, 10 October 2002

16. http://www.tamu.edu/scom/pres/speeches/ikeatoms.html, 11 October 2002

17. Eisenhower also responded to the apparent suggestion from a shared acquaintance that "preventive war should either have been waged or at least threatened upon a number of occasions in the past few decades. He ignores the fact that no Congress could ever have been induced to declare such a war. But his failure to ponder what such a venture would have brought about is mystifying. War is war, no matter by what adjective it is described. His idea is that all of these Presidents quailed before heavy responsibility. No matter what else might be said of President Roosevelt or of President Truman, I think that no one properly could charge them with being cowardly either in the physical or in the moral sense."

18. Executive Office of the President, "NSD 26: U.S. Policy toward the Persian Gulf," October 2, 1989.
http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2001/nea/8268.htm

19. http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2001/nea/8268.htm