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TO : Department of State

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FROM : BAGHDAD 999 MARCH 26, 1951

REF : DEPARTMENT'S AIRGRAM A-131, MARCH 12, 1951

SUBJECT : FOREIGN LEADER GRANTS FOR IRAQIS

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The Embassy agrees with the Department in feeling that we should endeavor to reach leaders who represent a wider range of political opinion than those persons already cooperating closely with the United States -- leaders who are not yet beyond the pale of potential cooperation with the West. However, serious practical difficulties stand in the way of such action, and the reasons for these difficulties can best be made clear by citing specific cases. The following Iraqis might profit greatly (and ultimately the United States also profit in their greater understanding -- if not necessarily sympathy -- for our country) from a Leader Grant: Yahya Qassim, liberal editor of Al-Shaab newspaper; Hussein Jamil, ex-Minister of Justice, intelligent liberal; and Mohamed Hadid, leftist economist-journalist. However, not one of them would be likely to get security clearance because of their dossiers with the Iraq police regarding past Communist associations, and because of the probability that in the event of a Soviet occupation of Iraq, they might be expected -- at least initially -- to reach a modus vivendi with the newcomers. Thus, there is little purpose in inviting leftists, even as mildly pinkish as these men are -- or may have been in the past because they are probably not eligible to receive visas for the United States.

Another group which it would be useful to tap would be the Nationalists (Istiqlalists) and -- as the Embassy has already stated in its telegram no. 558 of March 24, 1951, possibly the most suitable of them for a Leader Grant would be journalist Member of Parliament Faiq Al-Samerrai. However, Samerrai could never be persuaded to apply for such a grant, and even if the Embassy were authorized to offer him such a grant without his previously applying, it is extremely doubtful whether he would feel it possible to accept the grant from a Government whose acts and motives he is constantly criticizing and belaboring. This is why a privately sponsored trip, like that planned by TWA, would be so appropriate. It is worth noting however that a journalist colleague of Samerrai of lower standing in the Nationalist party has just accepted the British Government's invitation to join a group of Iraqi newspapermen going at British Government expense for the opening of the Festival of Britain and a tour of the British Isles.

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Edward S. Crocker
Edward S. Crocker

APR 10 1951

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Department of State

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