

ME. *signed*

September 24, 1959

NEA - Mr. G. Lewis Jones

NE - Armin H. Meyer

American Friends of the Middle East

With regard to your recent inquiry concerning the activities and usefulness of AFME, the following comments might be of use to you in connection with your forthcoming discussion with Harold Minor:

1. On the whole AFME appears to be playing a useful role in the development of U.S.-Arab friendship. Its principal activities, as you know, are in inter-cultural relations and student affairs. It now has offices with student counselors in Cairo, Damascus, Jordan Jerusalem, Amman, Baghdad, Tehran, and Karachi. It is our impression that the advice and information provided through these facilities for foreign students is a very positive factor in encouraging and directing the flow of scholars to this country. In some of these places USIA depends on AFME for counseling, particularly of private students. With regard to inter-cultural relations, AFME performs a useful service in bringing foreign leaders to this country and sponsoring visits by leading Americans to the Middle East. In a number of cases we have found it extremely helpful to call on AFME to sponsor certain visits which we as government were unable 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. In general, AFME has established a good reputation with governments of the area and its sponsorship of an American visitor usually assures him of favorable and extensive attention.

2. There have been problems in the past with excessively vociferous expressions on political matters from AFME representatives. We recognize that to retain AFME's independent appearance its leaders should express objective viewpoints on U.S. Government policies and actions. Such criticism, however, ought to be restrained and unemotional. This point was made by Stuart Rockwell in a conversation with Harold Minor last June.

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4. Other aspects of AFME's activities are those it carries on in this country/

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country as a forum for information and exchange of views on Middle East problems. To this end, it publishes a monthly newsletter, occasional papers prepared by its research section, and a basic facts series of mimeographed sheets on individual countries. It usually conducts also some kind of annual conference in the United States where scholars, journalists and representatives of the Middle Eastern countries gather for discussions of Middle Eastern affairs. Thus, there is of course an element in AFME's activities aimed at the American public and intended to inform and to some extent influence it in viewpoints on the area.

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