



<http://gdc.gale.com/archivesunbound/>

U.S. AND IRAQI RELATIONS: U.S. TECHNICAL AID, 1950-1958



The program of technical cooperation in Iraq, prior to the Revolution of 1958, was frequently cited as an example of the ideal Point Four program. The overthrow of the established government led naturally to questions concerning the "failure" of American technical assistance in that country.

Date Range: 1950-1958

Content: 52,834 images

Source Library: National Archives II, College Park, MD

Detailed Description:

A close examination of the efforts of the U.S. Operations Mission (USOM) in Iraq indicates, both that there were some severe obstacles faced by the mission and that, despite these, the success achieved was considerable. Three kinds of aid were provided: United States technicians advised or worked with the Iraqi Government; supplies and equipment were provided for demonstration purposes; and Iraqi personnel were sent to the United States or third countries for observation or training programs. The bulk of assistance was directed towards improving agricultural methods, but much also was achieved in such areas as preventive medicine, education, and administrative improvement. To consider the Revolution as proof of failure is to misunderstand both the purposes and potential achievements of the Point Four program. Economic improvement can be made to serve political ends but is not political in itself. Also, it was a mistake to consider technical assistance as a means to support the status quo; the aim of the Point Four program was to promote the combined growth of economic improvement and political freedom.

International Cooperation Administration and Point Four

The International Cooperation Administration program in Iraq typified the Point Four ideal. Under this ideal, the U.S. helped newly-developed nations acquire technical "know-how" needed for promoting economic growth. The ICA and USOM's technical cooperation program in Iraq provided aid of three types. First, U.S. technicians were detailed to advise the various branches of the Iraqi government. Second, limited amounts of supplies were provided for use

by U.S. advisors to demonstrate the effectiveness of new techniques. Third, Iraqi officials, technicians, and students were sent to the U.S. or third countries for training and education.

Fields of Activities

In the 1950s, 75% of the Iraqi population derived their livelihood from the soil, therefore agriculture constituted the most important area of USOM activity. Agricultural technicians were supplied to various branches of the government with the principal emphasis on the well-known American triumvirate of the land-grant college system-research, education, and a country-wide extension service.

In public health, USOM emphasized preventive medicine, since in Iraq preventive medicine was not practiced as much as curative medicine.

In education, USOM emphasized technical training, an obvious need in a country where illiteracy was high. Special technical schools were established, and greater emphasis was placed on technical work in the public schools.

The public administration program got off to a slow start, even though this was one of the most important USOM programs. Surveys were made in several fields such as personnel, finance, records management, and so forth. Technical advisors were supplied where needed and American bureaucratic ideals were utilized. A public safety training program was also established.

The community development program planned the establishment of a nationwide system of multi-purpose village-level workers who were to improve the average villager's life. These workers were trained in techniques for stimulating local initiative and cooperative community action.

In transportation, the USOM supplied a group of engineers to help the Ministry of Works and Communications develop a highway system and to maintain the system.

Assessment

The question naturally arises as to how effective was the USOM in Iraq. Without purporting to answer this question, this publication provides the documentation necessary for one to make an assessment of the program's effectiveness. In addition, this collection will provide the user with the necessary examples of how effective the current U.S. program may be in present-day Iraq.

Publisher's Note: This collection comprises, in its entirety, the Primary Source Media microfilm collection entitled *Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, 1948-1961: U.S. Operations Mission in Iraq, 1950-1958*.