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August 11, 1953
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SUBJECT: VISIT TO THE BARZANI AREA

Enclosed is a memorandum prepared by Lee Dinsmore, Public Affairs Officer in Kirkuk, reporting a short trip to the Barzan tribal country in Iraqi Kurdistan. The report notes that some of the Barzanis who were scattered after the Mulla Mustafa insurrection in 1946, particularly those who have been exiled to southern Iraq by the Government, are now being allowed gradually to return to the Barzan area. The report describes the razed villages, bad roads and communications and general isolation of the area to which they are returning.

Burton Y. Berry

Enclosure
As stated herein.

CC: Tehran

JRBarrow/jh
REPORTER

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SUBJECT: Trip by PAO Lee Dinsmore, Kirkuk in Northern Liwa, Barzani area.

August 7, 1953

August 2 to 5, 1953

The single, most striking observation on this short trip into Barzani tribal country was that of the scarcity of population, razed villages and lack of contact with the main lines of communication and commerce. This fact has much to do with the continuing attitudes of separateness and contributes to the conviction on the part of the inhabitants that they are not really a part of the country, Iraq. Very much the same attitude is expressed by government servants in these areas who feel that assignment to a distant Nahia or Qada in the region is akin to banishment. In 1946, after the latest Barzani insurrection, large numbers of these tribesmen and their families left the area and went to Sheikhan in Mosul, Makhmour and Koi Sanjak in Erbil, Iran and to prison or government-supervised exile in the south of Iraq. A group also followed Mulla Mustafa. Recently, the government has released the majority of the group held in detention in the south and some of them have begun to arrive back in their villages in the North. Ahmed Agha, Mulla Mustafa's brother, is one who must stay in Basra and is not allowed to return. They are poor and have little to return to except their mountains, and they are bitter. Several loan officials think that it would be unwise for the government to allow the Aghas to return but that there would be little trouble if they were kept in the south where they have no influence. Hamad Agha el Mergasuri has returned within the past 10 days to the tiny village of Mergasur. There is a police post with 30 men stationed in it but nothing left of the village except three or four widely scattered houses. He expressed himself quite frankly to me as hoping for aid to the Kurds and said that he had no money with which to begin to farm. This "aid" was understood to be that which the government should give. The young Mudir Nahiaa, Faiq Aqrawi, was present and quite obviously reluctant to carry on a lengthy conversation on the subject of the Barzanis and their problems. In another conversation with him, he asked the reporting officer if he knew Awni Youssef, Erbil lawyer. (See report on this man of April 10, 1953.) The Mudir also discouraged our showing some film strips to the police and villagers in the evening. His advice to me was all in the negative whenever the subject of our film van was introduced. It is my opinion that he does not want American films or printed materials in his area. His reference to Awni Youssef is probably enough to

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cast suspicion on his own political color. Another formerly incarcerated campmate of Hamad Agha came in while we were sitting together. He had no money and had hiked from Erbil and over the mountains. He admitted having benefited from his years in exile because he had learned Arabic reading and writing. Now, however, he was without prospect for a job and had come back to the mountains to live with relatives.

At another village and police post, Shanidar (where Ralph Solecki is digging in his cave), I heard Barzani songs recalling great days of fighting the police and the deeds of Mustafa Kemal Pasha. Mrs. Solecki told of the village women and their pride in the number of policemen that their husbands had killed during the troubles. An interesting money-making scheme carried on twice a year between Shanidar and Zibar is a bridge of logs and branches built by a Barzani Agha over which the whole Herki bi-annual trek passes with animals. This valley is also noticeable in its lack of inhabitants. The Qaimaqam of Zibar, Mohammed Sherif Dabbagh, had many complaints typical of the official stationed in small and distant posts. There is no opportunity for farmers to sell any produce because no truck owner will come in over the bad road. Ten government employees live in mud houses overrun with rats, mice and scorpions; and no one ever comes in to inspect from Erbil or Baghdad. Mail comes in twice a week, usually with someone riding a mule over the mountains from Aqra. Since time on one's hands in this part of the world produces nothing creative, they spend theirs bemoaning their dreary appointment and waiting for the next chance to go to Erbil to get someone to arrange their transfer. A young Communist lawyer (name not given) has recently been sent to Zibar to serve two years under the surveillance of the Qaimaqam. He is not behind bars but is not allowed to roam. The Qaimaqam commented that two years in Zibar with nothing to do would not be a lesson to change his ways but would only confirm the young man's hate for the government and increase his purpose to overthrow it. The Qaimaqam asked to be put on the list of receivers of the Kurdish Bulletin and the USA News Review. He is especially desirous of our film van's coming as often as possible. He would like also to have a TCA Agricultural Consultant visit the area for advice to Kurdish farmers.

On the way through Batas I stopped for a call on the friendly Mudir Nahia, Kamal Hassoun, who asked for magazines again. Used copies of a variety of American magazines may be as good propaganda as any we put out. The questions which are raised from the perusal of them give excellent opportunities for the occasional visiting American to talk about the USA. Colored advertisements provide topics for many a conversation.

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