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Thoughts on the recent STATE
cable to USAID/C concerning
the PRC review of 263-0061

The following comments are provided at the request of the Bureau and are occasioned by the need to provide some contextual framework for the 263-0061 evaluation recently reviewed by the PRC. Notes are keyed to the sections of the outgoing cable to which USAID/C was asked to respond.

A. Evaluation was complicated by the fact that Mission had just received a request from CU/MIT for a three year \$14,000,000. extension and Mission wished evaluation team to concentrate its efforts on developing an evaluation that shed light on the adequacy of the proposed extension in the light of past project activities. CU/MIT were asked and subsequently did provide a review of activities since the 1980 evaluation; i.e., they informed the Mission of progress against all the recommendations of the 1980 evaluation. This paper should probably have accompanied PES to AID/W, inasmuch as it addresses some of the questions raised in the STATE cable. USAID/C has enjoyed the full cooperation of the DRTPC and MIT in the recent evaluation. The willingness and capacity of both organizations is clearly attested in the several background papers developed by them and given to the Mission.

The evaluation team did not spend any time designing a "future project". The fact is that the extension of 0061 had been "in the mill" for some time having been openly solicited by the Mission in early 1982. The team doing the evaluation merely accomodated the desire of the Mission to look forward primarily (rather than backward) in the light of the request for extension.

B. A thorough assessment of DRTPC capacity was conducted. Involvement of GOE Ministries in research and training was examined; organizational structure and administration of the DRTPC (including job descriptions for all positions and salary scales) were laid out in detail. The evidence clearly attested that the DRTPC has since April 1982 (when the DRTPC finally got a full time competent director) taken great pains to develop its administrative and managerial capacity. There has been no shift in purpose. The evaluation team detected that in the absence of appropriate direction (by the GOE) the project had given greater realtive weight to research than institutionalization and that any and all subsequent work under the project should focus on the original purpose to institutionalize DRTPC capacity. The evaluation team spent considerable time investigating the demand for DRTPC services and how that demand should shape the activities of the DRTPC. There is clear evidence of a growing willingness on the part of GOE Ministries to pay for the work of the DRTPC and that such Ministries are well pleased with the quality of the work produced. In short, the 1980 evaluation attested the merit of the research and training efforts and there is evidence that, with the new director at the DRTPC, quality work will continue.

- C. It is true that the 1982 evaluation recommended much of what was earlier recommended in 1980. The fact is that much of what was recommended in 1980 did not come to pass because of the hiatus in leadership at the DRTPC and partly because the contractor's scope of work did not require the contractor to fully implement the 1980 evaluation recommendations. Accomplishments are detailed in the background papers to the recent evaluation. USAID/C would, I am sure, agree that end of project indicators are necessary. It is essential, therefore, that AID/W consider the 1982 evaluation in the light of the proposal for extension, a document which is not in the hands of AID/W. It is also perhaps fair to note that the project was not fully implemented from 1980 along the lines noted in the 1980 evaluation, for reasons noted above.
- D. Differences of opinion stemmed largely from differences of opinion on the part of the earlier director and the rest of the DRTPC and MIT staff concerning the kind of research that should be undertaken. Let's face it, the DRTPC is not removed from attempts to politicize its work even though it is attempting to develop full autonomous status within the framework of Egyptian higher education. The new director has bridged these earlier disruptive gaps and is fully dedicated to the project's purposes. The changes were personnel in nature and would require no institutional change. There is always the possibility that a new director could change the tone if not the direction of DRTPC efforts, but after all this is equally true in the U.S. There is no evidence that earlier problems are likely to resurface.
- E. MIT's role is clearly spelled out in background papers to the 1982 evaluation and the proposal for extension. An operational plan has been developed by MIT and the DRTPC. It is presented in the proposal. MIT clearly will down play research and relatively upgrade activities dedicated to arriving at institutionalization. There are few if any communications barriers. Higher education in Egypt is conducted largely in English and DRTPC staff speak English well (and usually three or four other languages). Language is not a problem; neither is religion or racial origin of Egyptian and U.S. personnel.
- F. The indifference concerning institutionalization is no longer a key issue. All parties understand its importance and this fact is reflected in the request for extension. No project can guarantee successful completion of all project objectives. There is a reasonable likelihood that project purposes will be accomplished. The amount of fund requested is \$7. million not 7.8. The project should be able to accomplish its objectives with an additional three years. There is no evidence that we could declare the project as being satisfactory and terminate it. There are no alternative autonomous research/training institutions in Egypt. That is what the project is trying to build. It is vital the AID/W staff fully understand that the DRTPC is unique in Egypt. It was set up to provide an alternative to the traditional university research structure which in no way was dedicated to the application of knowledge and was far removed from involvement with GOE Ministries.