



Stop the Assassination of Iraqi Academics !
A campaign of The BRussells Tribunal and
Campaña Estatal contra la Ocupación y por la Soberanía de Iraq

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- [Education in Iraq: April 2010](#) (Full report)
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READ ALSO DOSSIER PART 1:

<http://www.brusselstribunal.org/pdf/AcademicsDossier.pdf>

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2. Urgent Appeal to Save Iraq's Academics

3. Selected Principal Endorsers of the Appeal

4. Selected Media Reports until April 2006

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5. List of Assassinated Academics

6. Frequently Asked Questions

7. UNHCR Guidelines on Asylum

8. The BRussells Tribunal Committee



WEBSITES:

<http://www.brusselstribunal.org/>

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<http://iraqsolidarity.org>

Email : iraq@nod050.org





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- **Police find decomposed body of Baghdad University professor** Azzaman, July 15, 2010)

By Laith Jawad

A decomposed body, infested with worms, of a university professor was found in the Qadissiya neighborhood of Baghdad.

Baghdad University's professor, Adnan Makki, was stabbed to death at his home, the police said.

"His decomposed body was found on Tuesday," a police officer, refusing to reveal his name, said.

"The professor was alone at home when attacked," the officer added.

The police cordoned the area and investigations are ongoing on the causes of the professor's murder.

The years since the 2003-U.S. invasion of Iraq have seen the killing, abduction and fleeing of thousands of Iraqi professionals and intellectuals.

University professors and scientists have been the main target.

-
- **University professor shot dead in Baghdad** (14 July 2010)

Baghdad, July 14 (AKnews) - A university professor got killed by unidentified gunmen west of Baghdad, reported an official security source today.

"Unknown gunmen riding in a car, shot a university professor dead as he was leaving his home in the University district in Baghdad and then fled to an unknown destination," according to the source.

The source declined to comment more but only noted "the security forces took the body to the nearby hospital while many specialists from the Criminal Investigation Office came to probe the crime scene".

Attacks through the use of bombed cars and improvised explosive devices have surged in Iraq and especially in Baghdad as the political blocs are negotiating to form the next government.

<http://www.aknews.com/en/aknews/3/163810/>



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- **Iraq's once proud educational system still lives in fear** (CSM 13 July 2010)

Scott Peterson, Christian Science Monitor | Christian Science Monitor

Baghdad — Security has improved across Iraq, and along with it attention to an education system battered by decades of deprivation, and, since U.S. forces took over in 2003, attacks by Islamist militants intent on disrupting daily life.

Higher salaries are designed to keep the best teachers in the country, or entice return from exile. Budgets have increased, and the U.S. embassy is providing teacher-training programs and other aid for which educators here say they are grateful.

But teachers say vast uncertainties remain in a system once renowned for producing top professionals, from doctors to engineers. Iraqi statistics count 31,598 violent attacks against educational institutions in the first five years of U.S. occupation. During the peak of sectarian killing from 2005 to 2007, some 340 university professors and 446 students were killed by insurgents and militiamen.

The result has been a degradation of Iraq's fragile social texture, which teachers say is reflected in a drop in some students' willingness to learn, and in increased criminality. "Again we feel it is a bit peaceful (now), but underneath, no, there is something fundamental" that has changed, says one English professor who asked not to be named, and who has received death threats.

Years of exposure to violence and fear have taken a toll. "For Iraqi boys, what's the point of (getting a degree) when your life is threatened?" asks the teacher. "This is so much more of an influence. So we really can't talk about ideals because this is the fabric - this is the raw material that is to be used for education."

Another English teacher - one of a dozen who met this month with Jill Biden, the wife of the U.S. vice president and also an educator - explained why she did not want her name in print. "Because things are not stable here still, you know," said the teacher, adjusting her headscarf. "They could kill or kidnap me."

'YOU CAN'T EXPECT MIRACLES'

After the fall of Saddam Hussein in 2003, the spirit of teachers was tested as ministries and schools were looted and bloodshed increased. In 2007, the English teacher who recently met with Biden survived a mortar shell that landed nearby and watched as sectarian violence took its toll on her mixed Sunni-Shiite neighborhood.

"Believe me, there was a time when you were walking in the street, and you could feel people pointing and saying, 'You are from the other side,' " recalls the teacher. "So imagine, in this situation, how creative can



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you be in your job when you are teaching? You can't expect miracles."

She left but returned in 2008, convinced that she had to help rebuild her country - pushing back against the sectarian impulses and years of violence.

"When I left Iraq (in 2007) there were no liquor stores. A boy was not allowed to wear shorts," recalls the teacher. "By the time I came back, in (my neighborhood) alone, there were four liquor stores next to each other - it's out in the open now."

NORMAL EDUCATION STILL FAR OFF

Also awaiting her return were some improvements in the education system. Salaries for professors were raised to about \$2,000 per month - compared with the average Iraqi income of \$185 per month.

Figures from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) for 2003 to 2007 state that the United States had "rehabilitated in full or in part" 2,962 schools, provided 8.7 million math and science textbooks, and facilitated workshops and training for 1,500 Iraqi faculty. In late June, the U.S. embassy and Iraqi Ministry of Higher Education announced a multiyear project: to fund close links between five U.S. and five Iraqi universities.

But one parent of a dentistry graduate says her daughter had to share some textbooks with nine other students. "They make it sound so good," the parent said of the USAID statistics. "I wish every single word of it were true - but it isn't."

During the meeting with Dr. Biden, the English teacher said the U.S. efforts "have made some difference.... You have brought so many things to our doorstep." But Biden also heard about "outdated methods" and old textbooks.

These teachers know that the problems are longstanding. After Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, stringent United Nations sanctions kept out everything from scientific journals to, at times, pencils. In its annual report on Iraq in 2002, the UN Children's Fund found "severe shortages of basic school supplies."

Today, many aspects of normal education remain a dream in Iraq. "This is the problem with a generation," says the first teacher. She cites her son who doesn't want to take or pass his exams. "I think we have to change the quality of life they are living, before we can talk about the kind of education we give them. How can you give them security? How can you give them hope?"

McClatchy Newspapers 2010

<http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2010/07/13/97419/iraqs-once-proud-educational-system.html>



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- **Military force storms Mosul university** July 12, 2010

NINEWA / Aswat al-Iraq: An Iraqi military force stormed the Mosul university on Monday and searched students and professors, according to a police source.

“A force from the 2nd division of the Iraqi army stormed on Monday afternoon (July 12) the Mosul university and sealed off all roads leading to it,” the source told Aswat al-Iraq news agency, pointing out that the force searched students and professors.

He did not give more details.

Mosul, the capital of Ninewa, lies 405 km north of Baghdad.

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- **Iraq recovery at risk without more effective aid, warn aid agencies** (July 9, 2010)

A group of aid agencies has today warned that if aid support from the EU and UK government for Iraq continues to fall, it could pose a serious risk to the country’s recovery.

Seventeen international and national non-governmental organisations (NGOs), including UK-based Mercy Corps and the NGO Coordination Committee for Iraq (NCCI), today launched *Fallen Off the Agenda? More and better aid needed for Iraq recovery*, highlighting that Iraq is still extremely fragile, ranking in the top ten of the 2010 index of failed states (see note 1). It remains volatile, rife with corruption and is struggling to rebuild after decades of sanctions and war. Yet attention and support for Iraq is presently waning and budgets have been slashed. The European Commission and the United Kingdom, for example, have drastically reduced their aid budgets for Iraq (see note 2).

Mervyn Lee, Executive Director of Mercy Corps said:

“Iraq is at a critical and difficult juncture, struggling to rebuild itself, and without enough of the right kind of support the country could once again unravel. Effective aid delivery and development assistance from the international community is still absolutely necessary to prevent that from happening.

“The international community – and that includes us here in the UK and countries throughout the European Union – have a moral obligation to make sure millions of Iraqis have a fighting chance for a stable, secure future. Long-term commitment and large-scale investment is critical to help pull the people of Iraq back onto their feet.”

The Iraqi public sector remains seriously impaired, say the agencies, unable to deliver quality basic service such as water, electricity, adequate healthcare and war widows’ pensions to millions of people in the



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country. Despite the country's oil reserves, the Government of Iraq does not yet have the capacity to effectively manage its potential, nor to efficiently respond to the most basic needs of the population. Furthermore, the government's ability to deliver basic public services relies almost completely on global oil price fluctuations.

As a result, the agencies also called for aid to focus on developing and working in partnership with local Iraqi community and civil society organisations.

Fyraz Mawazini, Executive Coordinator of the NCCI, said:

“Working to support and develop Iraqi civil society organisations is absolutely critical to provide essential services to the population, at the same time as reinforcing the capacity of the government. This will strengthen Iraq's governance, the government's accountability, and facilitate local communities' participation in the recovery process, which is key to ensure sustainable progress and development. Many Iraqi community organisations do not have yet the maturity, capacity and means to take on humanitarian, development and human rights challenges alone. More cooperation and partnership with the international community is needed to build a comprehensive, strong and independent civil society in Iraq, leading to a fully fledged democracy and more stable future for the country as a whole.”

Note 1: The Failed States Index 2010, Foreign Policy and The Fund for Peace. Note 2: The DFID budget for aid and development in Iraq, which was already seen as insufficient (£20 m for 2009-10), has been halved for 2010-11. In 2010, the European Commission budget for the development and cooperation with Iraq has also been halved (from €72.6 million for 2008 to €65,8 million Euros for 2009 and 2010). The European Commission budget for humanitarian aid for Iraq and for the 1.7 million Iraqi refugees in neighbouring countries in 2010 (€18 million) has also been reduced compared to last year (€20 million).

For further details (including a full list of the agencies involved in publishing this briefing) or to arrange an interview, contact Erin Gray, Mercy Corps European Headquarters Press Officer on 0131 662 5164 / 07917532954 or email egray@uk.mercycorps.org

[More and Better Aid Needed for Iraq Recovery_-Brief.pdf](#) PDF Format, 1 MB

(...) Excerpt from the report.

Education

Around 18% of Iraq's population above 9 years old is illiterate³¹ and illiteracy rates among women (25%) are over double those among men (11%). The illiteracy rate in rural areas is a serious problem with 35%



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illiterate adults compared to 19% in the urban population.

Nearly 9 in 10 children under 15 do not attend primary schools regularly, primarily because of the distance to school or insecurity. A group of Iraqi humanitarian NGO representatives and human rights activists working with the International Non Governmental Organisation (INGO), Mercy Corps, in Kirkuk explained that, because of the recent improvement in security, the Iraqi military is no longer protecting schools in the city of Kirkuk. Yet, given the high rate of child abductions, parents are very concerned and some have now decided to keep their children home.

Fourteen per cent of children are also out of school because they have no access to suitable schooling or are obliged to work to contribute to household income. Different surveys also indicate that enrolment of boys is systematically higher than girls, at all levels.

Education in Iraq is desperately lacking appropriate infrastructure, essential educational and pedagogic equipment and material, and qualified and experienced teachers. The lack of public schools and universities is a problem that dates back from before 2003, but the conflict has aggravated the situation. The United Nations report that more than 1 in 6 schools have been vandalized, damaged or destroyed . According to the Iraqi Ministry of Education, more than 23,000 schools are operating today, yet Iraq has less than 17,000 school buildings -so, there is a gap of nearly 6,000 facilities. Moreover, school premises are often in very bad condition and lack access to water, toilets and garbage containers. The shortages of school buildings and classrooms have led to the creation of 2 to 3 shifts in each school allowing some pupils only 2 to 3 hours of daily contact with teachers. In some part of Iraq, like in Kirkuk, most schools are now also ethnically segregated.

The poor quality of education is a significant factor in the high rates of student dropout both at the primary and secondary levels. In particular, the rate obtained through the Education Management Information System for the 2007/ 8 academic year highlights overcrowded classrooms and poor teaching capacities, while repetition rates have been forcing students with as much as 6 years of age difference to remain in the same classroom. Moreover, in some areas there are not enough schools that can provide adequate instruction in the language required by displaced children from other areas, (for instance: Arabic-speaking children in Northern Iraq).

Reform of the educational curriculum is also urgently needed. Most curricula have been in use for 3 or 4 decades without any real reform. The Ministry of education is incapable of reforming the curriculum in an appropriate way due to lack of capacity and experience.



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The whole national education system needs to be considerably strengthened at national, governorate and district levels to ensure access to quality education.

(...)

http://www.mercycorps.org.uk/sites/default/files/More_and_Better_Aid_Needed_for_Iraq_Recovery_-Brief.pdf

- **Saddam Hussein Struck Out of History to Split Iraq Even More** (Pravda.Ru 06.07.2010)

Iraq's Ministry for Education has decided to erase the memory of the former dictator of the nation Saddam Hussein. The scientific conference, which took place in Iraq last week, decided to not mention the name of the former Iraqi president Saddam Hussein in textbooks on history. It was also decided not to use such word combinations as the "US incursion" or the "US occupation."

The head of the committee for educational programs of the ministry stated that new education programs were not supposed to become a reason for discord in the society.

As for the word combinations related to the US military presence, Iraqi education ministry officials most likely decided to please US Vice President Joe Biden, who was visiting Baghdad at the time when the conference was being held.

Russia Today: US military in Iraq needed "hardcore" troops with warlike mentality

The decision to strike Saddam Hussein's name out of the history of Iraq may lead to unexpected results. The name of the Iraqi dictator may fall into the national mythology, which is a dangerous phenomenon. It is worthy of note that American tax payers will have to cover the costs connected with the production of new textbooks on the history of Iraq.

Not all Iraqis consider Saddam Hussein a bloody dictator. Even his execution received mixed reaction in the general public both inside and outside Iraq. Could the former Iraqi dictator hide for two years after the start of NATO's incursion if he had no support of his people?

Saddam was charged with the genocide of the Kurdish people and Shiite Iraqis. He was sentenced to death and executed on December 30, 2006. His cousin and the former head of the Iraqi intelligence Barzan Ibrahim al-Tikriti and the former chairman of the Revolutionary Court of Iraq, Awad Hamed al-Bandar, were executed on January 15, 2007. His sons were killed in a special operation.

However, Saddam Hussein is still a martyr for many Sunni Iraqis. The guerrilla warfare has not stopped in Iraq. Sunni suicide bombers have killed thousands of people. NATO troops have suffered considerable



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losses too. Explosions continue to occur in many Iraqi cities. A series of terrorist acts took place in the country on Sunday, July 4th.

Barack Obama stated during his address to the nation on July 4th that the USA would complete its military operation in Iraq already this summer. According to Obama, the withdrawal of US troops from Iraq before August 31 was one of the top priorities for the US administration. Washington plans to withdraw nearly 45,000 military men from Iraq by the end of August 2010. About 95,000 US servicemen are currently staying in Iraq. The contingent is said to be cut to 50,000 by September.

It is too early to speak about the end of the US military presence in Iraq. The White House is aware of the weakness of the incumbent Iraqi regime. Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri Maliki and his rival, the former head of the government Ayad Allwi have been in dispute during the recent weeks about the formation of the next government of Iraq. Washington had to interfere. Joe Biden arrived in Baghdad to reconcile the feuding sides. He had meetings with Maliki, Allawi and President Jalal Talabani.

Maliki, the sitting Prime Minister, stated that he relied on the largest faction in the parliament, although his bloc lost two seats during the parliamentary vote in March. According to Maliki, the argument between the politicians is not supposed to cause any damage to the interests of the country and its people.

Former Prime Minister Allawi said that Vice President Biden had not submitted any certain suggestions on how to regulate the crisis. The official added that the new government in Iraq must be established as soon as possible not to let external forces use the political vacuum to aggravate the situation even further.

Biden's attempts to find a solution to the political crisis have caused mixed reactions with Iraqi politicians. Some of them praised Biden's efforts to reconcile the feuding parties. Others claimed that the US Vice President was trying to endorse the American solution for an internal political crisis in Iraq.

Therefore, the recommendations from the Iraqi ministry for education not to mention Saddam Hussein's name in textbooks on history look quite hazardous against such a background. They may split the Iraqi society even more.

Even if the name of the Iraqi dictator no longer appears in textbooks, it will be preserved in world sources on history. Saddam is a part of world history and will always be.

Ivan Tulyakov - Pravda.Ru

URL: http://english.pravda.ru/world/asia/114134-saddam_hussein-o



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- **Breaking the cycle: Iraqi refugee students in Syria need help to go back to school**
(UNICEF 06 Jul 2010)

Source: United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

Support from UNICEF and European Union

By Rob Sixsmith

DAMASCUS, Syrian Arab Republic, 6 July 2010 – Lulls in conversation with 16-year-old Iraqi refugee Gailan are soon filled with the gentle inhale-exhale of sleep. Outside, the Damascus streets are silent, except for the shuffling of those woken early by the intense morning heat.

Gailan has just worked a 16-hour shift in a textile factory. He snatches sleep as his two sisters ready themselves for school. Both girls have been studying since dawn – determined to capitalize on the opportunities offered to Iraqis by a strained Syrian education system.

But with a 10-member family to support, education is a luxury that Gailan cannot afford.

Family flees conflict

"I hate it, but I am jealous of my sisters," he says. "Life is not comfortable for me, and it's unfair especially that I need to study and have to work because my family depends on me."

Gailan and his father were the first members of their family to flee the conflict in Iraq in 2008. His father had been kidnapped by a religious militia and then caught in a separate market bombing. Heavily medicated ever since, he is incapable of working; even the simplest movements are a struggle.

Gailan was also caught out by a country unravelling.

"Iraq was not good. Our house, our car, everything was blown up," he confides. "I was kidnapped at school. For one month they humiliated me, they tortured me. After a while I didn't care – because I thought they'd just kill me in the end."

Difficult life as a refugee

Escorting his siblings to school through a chaotic Damascus suburb gives Gailan time to reflect. Though Syria offers him a haven from the continued instability in Iraq, his life as a refugee is difficult. Even simple rights, such as his right to security, are not ensured. Often entrusted with money by his employer, he was



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recently kidnapped by a criminal gang looking for ready cash.

In addition, Gailan works at least 15 hours a day, six days a week for 1,500 SYP (about \$35). The mind-numbing janitorial work contrasts with the hopes that his father, Abu Rashid Rashid, holds for him.

"I was hoping for so much for Gailan – an engineer or a lawyer," explains Mr. Rashid. "Of course, I am proud of him now. I feel he has a certificate from real life, because he is such a great man to sacrifice himself for his family."

At 16, Gailan has had to mature quickly – a sense of responsibility that has combined with a fractured childhood and missed opportunities to ferment into a potent depression seething just under the surface.

"All the Iraqi boys round here work too. I don't know about them but I have thought of committing suicide as this is not a real life," he admits. "I used to be so aggressive when anyone talked to me. But all that matters now is the time when this finishes and I will be able to continue my studies and settle down for good."

Partnership for education

Financial constraints prevent a great many young Iraqis in Syria from studying. The gap in Gailan's own education is now five years – an extended absence that is very difficult to bridge. To help get dropouts like him back into schooling, UNICEF and its partners – including the European Union – have initiated a programme of remedial classes and out-of-hours vocational workshops.

It is a programme of support for those who have a multitude of reasons for not attending school and one very powerful reason to return – their desire.

"I am desperate for education," says Gailan. "Before, I wanted to be an engineer. Everybody loves to build their country. I want that chance again."

Watch for part two of this story, which will provide more information on efforts by UNICEF, the EU and other partners to help young Iraqi refugees re-start their education.

<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/EGUA-874T8Y?OpenDocument>



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- **Education for Peace and Prosperity in Iraq and Beyond** (28/05/2010)

By Karim Altaï

Professor Karim Altaï of James Madison University was a Franklin Fellow with the United States Department of State and President of the Iraqi American Higher Education Foundation

Last weekend I attended James Madison University's graduation ceremony – nothing unusual in that as I am a professor there. What was unusual was that of this year's nine Masters graduates in Integrated Science & Technology, three were from Iraq. They had been fully supported by JMU and stood tall and proud; the scene reminded me of the day I graduated from the University of Baghdad thirty years ago.

On most days, I'm less upbeat about education for Iraqis. My motherland and its educational system have been struggling of late; as an educator and academic it pains me to see Iraq's universities, formerly the educational Mecca in the region, now struggling to survive.

During Islam's Golden Age, Iraq was the center of knowledge; thinkers and researchers from around stood united, regardless of religion, nationality or language, united in their common goal to serve and advance humanity.

Graduates from Iraq's universities were the metric of excellence throughout the Middle East and around the world; Iraqi universities served both Arabic and non- Arabic students regardless of their ethnicity or religion. Whether from Baghdad, Basra or Mosul, Iraqi graduates were wont to excel and become prominent physicians, scientific pioneers, and global leaders in their chosen fields. That's the legacy of Iraq's education system.

Today, Iraq's universities are short on such talent due to brain drain and targeted killings; more than 400 Iraqi professors have been assassinated and the system is near ruin. My sister, a former Iraqi professor, fled when her office at the University of Baghdad went down in flames following the invasion. She is one of thousands of Iraqi professors and professionals who have fled Iraq to stay alive.

It's disheartening to see Iraq's education system in a state of collapse, lacking modern technological tools and basic facilities while neighboring countries are opening advanced institutions and universities as memories of the Golden Age fade.

Faculty who remain in Iraq face unimaginable difficulties with minimal support within the country, insufficient external interaction and virtual abandonment by the rest of the world. Examples are as discouraging as they are numerous – to mention one, medical professors at the University of Mustansiriyah sought to initiate video-conferencing with academics outside Iraq only to realize they had



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no external contacts.

More broadly, security and stability in Iraq depend on boosting higher education from the development of a skilled workforce to providing the population with a sense of normalcy – both are necessary tools needed for building a better future for Iraq. The occupier, the United States, is carrying out a number of educational initiatives in Iraq, but current US exchange programs have probably reached only some 200 of Iraq's 34,000 professors over the past seven years. Although the US has the largest foreign presence in Iraq, other countries are more involved in its higher education. An effort that most Iraqi faculty are familiar with is the initiative by the First Lady of Qatar that has supported the training of more than 300 Iraqi faculty and funded numerous equipment purchases since 2003. One can only hope others will emulate her fine example.

I witnessed the urgent need to act during a recent visit to Iraq where I met with over 200 faculty and administrators at seven universities. Their words still echo in my ears: “You gave us hope and the opportunity to connect with our peers outside Iraq and that is the first step,” said one; “We have been destroyed, nobody wants to help us and we are on our own,” said another; and many pointed out that US promises of aid have yet to materialize. This situation could be addressed if there were a strong commitment by regional leaders and academics to resurrect Iraq's damaged system of higher education.

There are a number of steps we can take to begin to reverse the cynicism and begin to secure long-term stability in Iraq and the region.

There are more than 400 universities in Arabic countries; this number jumps above 600 when other Muslim countries are included. By setting up a network and database of interested faculty in each country in the region, we could unify to connect and support possible partners who could write joint proposals and compete for earmarked funding. By investing a small fraction of the region's annual military expenditure, this program could potentially reach all of Iraq's estimated 34,000 academics within a few years. The multiplier effect and the impact on their students and the Iraqi community at large would be tremendous, creating a far more positive impact than the much more costly – in terms of material resources and invaluable human lives – military and political maneuverings in the region.

Looking outward, regional leaders could also support the establishment of a network of universities, technical colleges, and faculty dedicated to reintegrating Iraqi faculty and institutions with the rest of the world, with the focus primarily on connecting Iraqis with their peers in the region. This needs to be a grass-root effort, faculty to faculty.

Iraq is known for its plethora of natural, mineral and human resources, and has faced many invasions throughout its history. Iraq will return to its feet, as it always has in the past, and will once again play an



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important role in the region, but to do this Iraq will need outside support.

The Middle East needs leadership that is progressive and visionary; a leadership that undertakes initiatives aimed at incorporating our Arabic and Muslim intellectuals and leaders with international academics and leaders. Globalization is an unstoppable force and the Middle East as a region, not just a few of its wealthier nations, needs to find a way to integrate constructively. We need more initiatives, like the one by the First Lady of Qatar, that envision and invest in the future of Iraq and that recognize and strive to address the problems in Iraq's education in its regional dimensions. Investment in education is an essential ingredient to providing opportunities and to improving the future in the region and the world. Iraqis richly deserve the chance to be part of that future.

Imagine the regional impact of a faculty team of scientists and engineers from Iraq, Syria and Turkey collaborating at Education City in Qatar, the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology in Saudi Arabia, or at the Masdar Institute in the UAE, developing improved water management or addressing desertification problems or becoming pioneers in renewable energy. Imagine a medical team composed of researchers from Iraq and Kuwait working together on a solution to the rising and alarming [cases of] cancer in their region. Imagine religious scholars congregating at Al-Azhar University in Cairo to work together on sectarian and religious reconciliation – an issue that's plaguing the region. The positive effects of such initiatives would resound throughout the region and will send a powerful signal to the rest of the world that the Middle East is not merely a place to be splashed across the headlines in times of conflict, but a center of learning and innovation for addressing humanity's challenges peacefully and collaboratively.

Imagine that. Better yet, imagine what we in the Middle East could accomplish if we were to set aside our differences and work together following the example of the First Lady of Qatar – imagine that. Only we can make it happen.

<http://www.aawsat.com/english/news.asp?section=2&id=21108>

- **Iraq's Education Setback** (Aljazeera.net, May 28, 2004)

Ahmed Janabi, (English-language), Doha, Qatar.

Following the invasion of Kuwait, UN sanctions imposed on Iraq in 1990 badly affected education in Iraq. During the 2003 U.S.-led occupation, the education system continued to deteriorate.

According to UNESCO, until 1989 Iraq had been allocating 5% of its budget to education. This percentage is higher than the maximum rate in developing countries, which stands at 3.8%.



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Tens of thousands of new schools were built across Iraq between 1960 and 1990. In the 1990's, during the UN sanctions on Iraq, the number of schools needing urgent repair in central and southern Iraq reached over 83%. This number has increased since the war on Iraq in 2003. U.S. appointed Iraqi authorities have started a campaign to reconstruct Iraqi schools.

Reconstruction

Muzhir al-Dulaymi, spokesman for the League for the Defense of Iraqi People's Rights, told Aljazeera.net that contracts for reconstructing schools in Iraq are not adequate to upgrade educational premises to the required standard. "Companies are winning bids worth millions of dollars to reconstruct schools, but in fact schools have only been painted. No improvement to the infrastructure, and no new equipment has been bought," said al-Dulaymi.

Aljazeera's correspondent in Baghdad says the painting was not exactly part of the reconstruction plan, but was carried out to change the characteristics of Saddam Hussein's time. "Schools were painted to wipe out slogans on school walls put up during the Saddam Hussein era," said Harif.

Anmar al-Azzawi, an Iraqi citizen told Aljazeera.net that students have seen nothing new in their schools, although ministry of education officials promised many new changes.

Iraq was unable to build new schools during 1990-2003 — the period of UN sanctions. In 1980, 500 pupils attended one school building, while in 2003 the number has risen to 4,500 pupils for each school building.

The U.S. occupation authorities handed over the ministry of education to Iraqis last month. Al-Dulaymi says they did this to avoid the headache of having to fulfill their promises. "They handed over the ministry of education to Iraqis. The question is, are they willing to spend enough money to develop education in Iraq? Will the occupation authorities give Iraqis the right to allocate enough money to reconstruct their education system? Let us see what the future brings."

Children out of school

The number of children under twelve who have left school in order to earn a living has been significantly increasing since the UN sanctions imposed on Iraq in 1990.



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UNESCO reports say that before the sanctions 95,692 students dropped out of school. In 1999, following nine years of sanctions, 131,658 Iraqi children were out of school. The number has increased since the occupation of Iraq and is unlikely to go down in the near future, despite promises made by U.S. appointed Iraqi authorities. Leaving school before twelve used to be an offense in Iraq, a law established in the 1970's. This law has become invalid since the collapse of the Iraqi state in April 2003. "The number of children out of schools is not monitored any longer," Harif said.

Earning a living is not the only reason children are leaving school. The security and political situation is also a major contributing factor. "There are people who have stopped sending their children to school fearing they may be kidnapped," says Harif. "Also a large number of children have left school in Shia areas to join the al-Mahdi army."

<http://www.worldpress.org/Mideast/1864.cfm>

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- **Iraq's political crisis disheartens the middle class** (LATimes 19 May 2010)

Many Iraqis who were enjoying normal life again are preparing to hunker down in the face of uncertainty. Some are finally giving up on the country.

May 19, 2010 | By Borzou Daragahi, Los Angeles Times
Reporting from Baghdad

When American tanks tore through her neighborhood, ripping up the roads as they uprooted a nation, she stayed put, refusing to move abroad like many of her wealthy friends.

When the black-clad gunmen took over her religiously mixed west Baghdad neighborhood, turning it into a killing field, she wouldn't let them drive her out of the country she loved.

And even when they killed her husband, gunning him down as he left work, she fought through her grief, staying in Iraq and hoping for better times.

But as a postelection political deadlock threatens to pull Iraq back into violence and uncertainty, Ibtisam Hamoody has had it. Within months, the 56-year-old former engineer and women's rights activist plans to take her savings, her family heirlooms and the youngest of her three daughters and settle in Jordan or Syria.



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"I know what's going on. It's not possible for there to be a good outcome," she said. "This time, I know it's going to be worse than before."

Over the last 30 months of relative security and economic progress, Iraq's middle class and intelligentsia had emerged from the shadows of war and exile, strutting around town without head scarves or cruising through gleaming new shopping districts.

But now, as they watch the camp of Prime Minister Nouri Maliki, whose allies control the nation's security apparatus, jostle with that of Iyad Allawi, backed by some of the same Sunni Arabs who support the insurgency, they are preparing to dash back into hiding.

Already, the crisis has changed the character of a country that was bristling with hope just a few months ago, not least, Iraqis say, because the imminent drawdown of U.S. troops might create a vacuum that will leave the political drama festering for years.

Years of immense suffering have also conditioned Iraqis to brace for the worst, if only to protect themselves from disappointment.

"We all hope that things will not go back to what we were facing before," Wahid Thani, 43, an engineer at the Housing Ministry, said as he spent an afternoon at a friend's snack shop. "But the indications we are witnessing suggest that we will face a bad situation again.

"We are pessimistic because of the things we are seeing. The disputes are like infinity, and can never be solved."

- **Gunmen kidnap student in Wassit** (May 12, 2010)

WASSIT / Aswat al-Iraq: Unknown gunmen kidnapped a student in front of Wassit university in central Kut on Wednesday, according to a security source.

"Gunmen kidnapped the student while leaving the university in central Kut on Wednesday (May 12)," the source told Aswat al-Iraq news agency.

"They took her to unknown place," he added, noting that police opened investigation into the incident. Kut, the capital of Wassit, lies 180 km southeast of Baghdad.

SH (P)



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- **Iraq On Air: Should Girls Study?** (May 11, 2010)

In rural areas, 30 percent of girls are never enrolled in primary school

By Rowayda Faris

RFE/RL's Radio Free Iraq has just launched a weekly youth program, "Shabab al-Nahreïn" (The Youth Of Two Rivers). The program takes on taboo issues in Iraqi society, particularly those among the country's booming younger generation (60 percent of the Iraqi population is under the age of 25). This week, host Rowayda Faris talks about women's education with guests and callers from across Iraq. Listen to the program in Arabic [here](#).

In her late teens, Huda is beautiful and smart, a combination many parents hope to see in their children.

"Having a diploma," says the young woman from northern Iraq who didn't want to give her full name, "is the same as having a weapon."

Yet the power afforded to women by education -- critical thinking, debate skills, career possibilities, and the ability to read marriage and legal contracts -- is seen as a drawback by many Iraqi families.

Huda's family stopped her from attending school when she was 13 years old.

"I had just learned to read and write," she says. "They said the reason was because 'you're too beautiful.' I wish I could finish my studies, see the world, my friends."

Now Huda is at home most of the time. "What am I doing? Just cooking and cleaning the house. What am I contributing [to society]? Now I have to rely on my father and brother for everything," she says.

But Huda's father believes he is saving his daughter from an unhappy marriage.

"If a girl studies too much, it will just make people get divorced," he says. "If my daughter goes to university, she will become very stubborn. Her husband won't like this, and eventually he will divorce her."

"Why would I send her to school?" he asks. "Eventually, there is a husband waiting for her."

Thirty percent of girls in Iraq's rural areas are never even enrolled in primary school, while less than half of all Iraqi children (44 percent) finish their primary studies. One in five Iraqis over the age of 15 is illiterate, with illiteracy rates among women more than twice that of men.



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Pulling girls out of school early to marry them off is common in the country's sprawling rural provinces -- somewhat less so in Baghdad, where university attendance among women is considerably higher. On average, one in five Iraqi girls between the ages of 15 and 19 is married.

'Girls Have Very Small Minds'

Huda's father also claims that unemployment, which a **2009 UN report** put at 18 percent in Iraq, is a problem.

"Our sons finish school, but there are no jobs for them," he says. "So why would we let girls study? We teach her how to read and write, and that's it. To go to university? To get a diploma? No, she doesn't need that. Why would [not continuing school] have a negative effect on her? It wasn't a problem for my mother or my grandmother, so why would it be for my daughter?"

Huda's brother agrees. "Hundreds of girls are sitting at home and they are happy," he says. "Why would she go to school? It is better for her to stay at home. Plus, everyone knows that girls have very small minds."

Seventeen percent of Iraqi women work, despite the fact that **women make up some 50 percent of the population**. By comparison, 42 percent of women are employed in neighboring Iran.

But for the younger generation, taboos on women's education and employment might be slowly changing. Asked if Iraqi men are scared of educated women, one young man from northern Iraq says he doesn't think so.

"Yes, there might be some men like that," he admits. "But in general, if a man is educated and has a modern mind-set, it shouldn't be a problem at all."

His friend, a young woman from the same area, agrees with him -- with one caveat. She says: "Some men might think, 'She is taking my place. I have the responsibility [to provide for the family]. So why should she work [instead of me]?"

But Huda's inability to continue school hurts her on more than just a practical level.

"When people ask me what grade I'm in at school, that's when I feel very, very low inside," she says. "I



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wish I could tell them that I was still in school.... I really wish I could go back to school."

Yassin Jaber, Kristin Deasy, and Alex Mayer contributed to this report

http://www.rferl.org/content/Iraq_On_Air_Should_Girls_Study/2038472.html

- **Gunmen kill student, injure civilian in Mosul** May 10, 2010

NINEWA / Aswat al-Iraq: A student was killed and a civilian was wounded on Monday by gunmen in northern Mosul, according to a police source.

"Unknown gunmen opened fire on a student near his house in al-Rashidiya region in northern Mosul, killing him instantly and injuring a passing civilian," the source told Aswat al-Iraq news agency.

"They fled to unknown place," he added.

Mosul, the capital of Ninewa, is 405 km north of Baghdad.

- **Kidnapped student found dead in Mosul** (May 6, 2010)

ARBIL / Aswat al-Iraq: A student who had been reported kidnapped in Arbil has been found dead in Mosul, his brother said on Thursday. "Police forces found on Wednesday night (May 5) my brother's body in al-Baath neighborhood in Mosul," Zerdesht Othman told Aswat al-Iraq news agency. "The body shows signs of gunshot wounds," he noted. "We still do not know the reason behind the killing of my brother," he added.

- **Mosul blast casualties up to 95** (May 2, 2010)

NINEWA / Aswat al-Iraq: One person was killed and 94 others wounded in a final count of casualties from a blast earlier on Sunday that targeted **two buses carrying Christian students** east of Mosul, a local official said.

"The final count of casualties from a blast of a car bomb and an improvised explosive device that targeted two buses boarding Christian students from Mosul University residents of al-Hamdaniya district, east of Mosul, was one death and 94 wounded," Abdulrahim al-Shimari, the chairman of the Ninewa Provincial Council's Security & Defense Committee, told Aswat al-Iraq news agency.



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“The wounds of about 10 of them are critical and were rushed to the Arbil hospital for treatment,” Shimari added.

He noted security forces had been escorting the buses “in light of operations that targeted Christians in Mosul in the past”.

Earlier, a police source in Ninewa had said a civilian man was killed and 90 others wounded in a blast from a car bomb and an IED that went off Christian university students in the area of Kokgli, east of Mosul.

Mosul, the capital city of the violence-stricken province of Ninewa, lies 405 km north of the Iraqi capital Baghdad.

AmR (S)

- **Student killed, another wounded in Kirkuk** (April 27, 2010)

KIRKUK / Aswat al-Iraq: One student was killed and another wounded when gunmen opened fire on Tuesday in central Kirkuk city.

“The two are students of Kirkuk University,” a local police source told Aswat al-Iraq news agency. He noted that both of them are residents of the Haweeja district, 65 km southwest of Kirkuk, and live in the university’s housing in the city.

The oil-rich city of Kirkuk lies 250 km northeast of Baghdad.

MH (P)/SR

- **Two university students killed, one injured in Iraq shooting** (Apr 27, 2010)

Baghdad - Two university students were killed and a third was injured Tuesday in a drive-by shooting in the northern city of Kirkuk, police said.

'Gunmen in a car opened fire upon a group of students standing near the (university) dormitories in downtown Kirkuk,' police told the German Press Agency dpa.

One of the two students killed was also an officer in the Iraqi army, police added.



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The motivation for the attack was unclear, but students have frequently been targeted in Kirkuk and the northern city of Mosul.

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- **On Global Action Week for Education the UN Calls for More Funds to Improve Access to Quality Public Education in Iraq** (UNAMI 20 Apr 2010)

Source: UN Assistance Mission in Iraq; Inter-Agency Information and Analysis Unit (IAU)

Baghdad – Amman, 20 April 2010, Marking the Education Global Action Week from 19-23 April which calls for "financing quality education as a right for all" the United Nations in Iraq says if the Education for All (EFA1) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are to be met in the country, more public spending is needed and additional sources of funding must be channelled.

"If we are to achieve, or even to come close to the 2015 goals, it is urgent to inject more national and donor resources to education" said Director-General Irina Bokova of UNESCO, the lead UN agency on the EFA Goals. "Education for all is a continuum that starts at birth and goes throughout life, with learning taking place in both formal and non-formal settings."

The 2010 Global EFA Monitoring Report² measures progress towards achieving the EFA Goals worldwide and shows that Iraq lags behind most countries in the region. As a result of decades of conflict and sanctions, quality and access to formal learning has decreased, negatively affecting enrollment at all levels of education. Primary school enrollment rates have dropped from 91% in 1990 to 85% in 2007.

The deterioration of the education system has led to higher drop-out rates and illiteracy remains a concerning trend, with the current national literacy rates estimated at 80% for children aged 10 years old and over. Women are particularly affected by illiteracy, especially in rural areas. For instance available data indicates that amongst women aged 15 to 24 living in the rural areas close 50% are literate, compared with 72%-80% of women living in urban and metropolitan areas respectively.

"Iraq faces considerable challenges to improve access to education and guarantee that girls and boys have equal opportunities" said Christine McNab, the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq. "More financial resources are needed to ensure that the constitutional right to education, from early childhood care, to mainstream schooling, to literacy and life skills for youth and adults in Iraq, is met by the government. The coming years will be crucial in determining whether Iraq will be able to achieve



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the objectives envisaged in the six Education for All goals and the Millennium Development Goals" she added, echoing Ms. Bokova's message.

The Government of Iraq is prioritizing education, increasing the budgetary allocation from 7.2% in 2008 to 9.9% in 2009 of total government expenditure³. However, considerable efforts are still needed to meet the 2015 target of 100% net primary enrolment ratio particularly in rural areas in accordance with the EFA and Millennium Development Goals⁴ aimed at achieving Universal Primary Education. Sustained investment in education will also be critical for attaining rest of the MDGs, as education can improve health, increase environmental sustainability and help eradicate poverty and hunger.

UNESCO is marking the Global Action Week for Education by organising a number of events throughout Iraq in partnership with the Ministry of Education. UNESCO Associated Schools (ASPnet) and community learning centres in Iraq are participating in the world's largest school lesson "1GOAL: Lesson for All". UNESCO launched a public awareness campaign to highlight the importance of education has which included distribution of material on educational funding to literacy centres and schools and public service announcements in addition to a broadcast message from the Minister of Education on the UNESCO-supported Educational Television Channel throughout the week. WHO will celebrate the week through a series of health education activities organised in partnership with Ministry of Education.

"Of all the issues confronting Iraq's children, the decline in children's right to access quality learning has perhaps the most alarming implications for Iraq's future, the next generation's doctors, teachers, and leaders" stated UNICEF Representative to Iraq, Sikander Khan. "We look forward to further accelerating our efforts with the Government of Iraq, Iraqi communities, parents and children themselves to again make Iraq the education gold standard in the region, which, along with investments in children's health and protection, will pay extraordinary dividends for a stable and prosperous Iraq in the future."

The UN Education Sector Team in Iraq (UNESCO, UNICEF, UNHABITAT, WHO, ESCWA, ILO, UNOPS, IOM and WFP with other INGOs) has supported the education system in Iraq through various interventions. Harmonized coordination and collaboration has enabled remarkable achievements that target all educational levels: kindergartens (early childhood), primary, intermediate, secondary and higher education as well as technical and vocational education in addition to adult literacy through non-formal education activities. The geographic coverage of education projects and activities varies from national to governorate level; in some area-based projects, coverage was even tapered to district or school level.

The UN in Iraq will continue to work closely with relevant national stakeholders, including the Ministries of Education in Baghdad and Kurdistan Regional Government the Parliament, the Directorates of Education, civil society organizations, NGOs and local communities to address the factors affecting access



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to quality education in Iraq.

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EFA Goals site: <http://www.unesco.org/en/efa>

To download a fact sheet on education in Iraq please visit www.iauiraq.org
<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/LSGZ-84PHFY?OpenDocument&rc=3&emid=ACOS-635P5D>

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- **Increased funding needed to ensure quality education in Iraq – UN** (20 April 2010)

Global Action Week 2010 calls for increased funding for education

More public spending is required in Iraq to ensure quality education for all, a right enshrined in the nation's constitution, the United Nations said today, as the world body-backed Global Action Week for Education gets under way.

“Iraq faces considerable challenges to improve access to education and guarantee that girls and boys have equal opportunities,” said Christine McNab, the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq. She appealed for stepped-up resources for the Government to ensure that it provides education, from early childhood care and mainstream schooling to literacy and life skills for youth and adults.

Iraq has increased the budget allocated for education from 7.2 per cent in 2008 to nearly 10 per cent last year, but much more needs to be done to meet the 2015 target of 100 per cent enrolment in primary schools in rural areas, one of the eight Millennium Development Goals (**MDGs**) and one of the **six internationally-agreed targets** of “**Education for All**,” a UN-backed movement launched in 1990.

While rich countries nurture their economic recovery, many poor countries face the imminent prospect of education reversals

Global Action Week aims to raise awareness of the importance of “Education for All,” whose importance was reaffirmed by more than 160 nations in the Senegalese capital, Dakar, in 2000.



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This year's week calls on governments and donors to act together and mobilize their resources, as well as to honour the \$50 billion pledge to boost education made at the Group of Eight summit in Gleneagles, Scotland, in 2005.

“Of all of the issues confronting Iraq's children, the decline in children's right to access quality learning has perhaps the most alarming implications for Iraq's future, the next generation's doctors, teachers and leaders,” said Sikander Khan, the Representative of the UN Children's Fund (**UNICEF**) to the country.

This year's Education for All-Global Monitoring Report 2010 by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (**UNESCO**), entitled *Reaching the Marginalized*, found that the global financial crisis threatens to deprive millions of children in the world's poorest countries of an education, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, with a knock-on effect on future economic growth, poverty reduction and progress in health and other areas.

“While rich countries nurture their economic recovery, many poor countries face the imminent prospect of education reversals,” UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova said when the publication was launched in January, noting the failure of donors to deliver on pledges. “We cannot afford to create a lost generation of children who have been deprived of their chance for an education that might lift them out of poverty.”

The report urges rich countries and the so-called G20 group of developed and developing countries to scale up aid needed to avoid damaging budget adjustments in the poorest countries, stressing that a financing gap of \$16 billion a year must be bridged to reach the “Education for All” goals.

Rich countries international and financial institutions are exaggerating how much aid they provide to help poor countries cope with the financial crisis, using “smoke and mirrors” in their reporting, it says.

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=34429&Cr=education&Cr1>

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- **Send In the Professors** (NYT April 8, 2010)

By **KARIM ALTAI**

Harrisonburg, Va.

I SPENT one of the most difficult nights of my childhood in Baghdad worrying that I was failing two of my classes. What kept me awake was the fear of having to tell my mother, whose emphasis on doing well in school reflected generations of faith in learning.



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Iraq once boasted one of the most advanced systems of higher education in the Middle East. But that system now lies in shambles. More than 400 professors have been assassinated. Universities have been devastated by bombs, looting and neglect. My sister's office at the University of Baghdad was burned in an attack that forced her to join the thousands of academics who have fled their posts or their country.

Those Iraqi faculty members who remain have only minimal support within the country and are virtually cut off from the wider world. Examples of their isolation are as disheartening as they are numerous. To mention just one discouraging incident: Professors at the University of Tikrit wanted to host a conference to address desertification and drought, but could not figure out whom to invite, or how to invite them.

While studying this situation for the State Department recently, I visited with 200 faculty members and administrators in Iraq, and I saw firsthand how cynical some have become. "You destroyed Iraq — why are you here?" one asked. Another professor looked at me, paused, and, with his hands folded, said, "Occupy us with your knowledge and advances, not with your guns." I immediately understood his hostility — my personal security detail that day included more than 20 armed guards.

To be fair, the United States is carrying out a number of commendable educational initiatives in Iraq. For example, a [youth exchange program](#) enables 50 Iraqi students to come to the United States each year. The new [Fulbright Visiting Scholarship Program for Iraq](#) will allow more than two dozen Iraqi professors to spend time at American universities. And the [Iraqi Virtual Science Library program](#) provides Iraqi faculty members and professionals access to international journals at reduced cost.

But these American exchange programs have allowed only about 200 Iraqi professors to study abroad over the past seven years. Other countries have been far more involved in rebuilding Iraq's higher education system. Qatar has supported the training of more than 300 Iraqi faculty members since 2003, while 450 Iraqi medical practitioners have received training in Britain since 2007.

Clearly, the United States must do more to live up to the [2008 Strategic Framework Agreement](#), which called for Iraq and the United States to "promote and facilitate cooperation and coordination in the field of higher education and scientific research." Resurrecting Iraq's damaged system of higher education would help give the country's long-suffering people a sense of normalcy as well as the tools to build a better future.

A key first step in this effort is to harness members of an Iraqi diaspora that includes Muslims, Christians and Jews. This will not be hard. Recently, when I talked to an Iraqi-Jewish professor who immigrated to the United States more than 50 years ago, he told me, without hesitation, "I volunteer to teach." He and I



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are not alone. There are many more Iraqi-Americans who value the high-quality education they received growing up in Iraq and who are eager to help.

The Department of State should also help set up a network to connect and support interested academics in each country. Before long, we would have academics from both countries writing joint proposals and working together to procure financing for their projects.

Just 5 percent of this year's quick response fund — allocated by Congress to support short-term, high-impact projects in Iraq — could support more than 100 American-Iraqi faculty collaborations. With an investment of less than half a percent of our annual military expenditure in Iraq, this program could reach all of Iraq's estimated 30,000 faculty members.

Imagine American and Iraqi experts working to uncover documents dating back to the earliest days of civilization. Or a joint medical team solving the mystery of the alarming rise in the incidence of childhood cancer in southern Iraq and finding treatments that save children throughout the world. Imagine too an Iraq that once again provides its youth with opportunities for learning and serves as a regional beacon of scientific, cultural and religious understanding.

Every Iraqi child's worst worry should be the one I grappled with that night so many years ago. I often think of how, the following morning, emboldened by a breakfast of my favorite cheese and fresh-baked flatbread, I confessed my fear of failing my classes to my mother. "Education is the most important thing in the world," she said. "Once you realize that, there is nothing you cannot accomplish."

Karim Altaii, a professor of engineering at James Madison University, was a Franklin fellow with the United States Department of State from 2008 to 2009. He is the president of the Iraqi-American Higher Education Foundation.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/08/opinion/08altaii.html>

- **Education in Iraq: Facts and Figures, April 2010**

EthiopianReview.com | DB | April 20th, 2010 at 2:53 pm

Education is a fundamental human right which should be directed to the full development of the human personality. Under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the second Millennium Development Goal (MDG) and the second Education for All (EFA) goal, the Government of Iraq is committed to ensuring that, by 2015, children everywhere in Iraq, all boys and girls alike, are able to complete a full course of



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primary schooling. In addition, through the other EFA goals and targets under MDG Two, the Government is committed to promoting quality education and learning as a lifelong experience from the pre-primary level through to the end of the secondary level and onwards into [continuous](#) adult learning.

The Government of Iraq has therefore identified education as one of its main priorities, reflected by the increase of total government expenditure allocated for education from 7.2% in 2008 to 9.9% in 2009.

Improved education levels will provide a critical contribution to Iraq's efforts to meet all eight MDG targets. Improved education will boost skill levels in the Iraqi labour force and increase economic productivity, contributing

to the alleviation of poverty under MDG One. A quarter (23%) of the population lives in poverty, spending less than ID77,000 per month (less than US\$2.2 per day). In particular, improved school enrolment and education levels among women will assist in fulfilling Iraq's commitment to promoting gender equality and empowering women (MDG Three and EFA Goal Five). Increased literacy (EFA Goal Four) and numeracy skills – particularly among women – will raise awareness and understanding of health and environmental issues among the population, instrumental to assist key behaviour change to improve child and maternal mortality (MDGs Four and Five) and facilitate increased environmental sustainability (MDG Seven). Improved literacy levels will also encourage use of [new technologies](#), which will contribute to more productive and inclusive partnerships for development (MDG Eight).

Overall, Iraqis' perceptions of education have deteriorated during the past few years. In 2004-2005, over 70% of Iraqis had a positive perception of local schools. This dropped considerably to 43% by March 2007, but had risen once again to 63% by February 2009.

(Inter-Agency [Information](#) and Analysis Unit (IAU); UN Assistance Mission in Iraq)

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- **Destroying educational institutions or using them for military purposes is a war crime** - Dirk Adriaensens, member of the BRussells Tribunal executive committee (23 March 2010)

[\[La destrucción de instituciones educativas o su uso militar es un crimen de guerra\]](#)

"The Education system in Iraq, prior to 1991, was one of the best in the region; with over 100% Gross Enrolment Rate for primary schooling and high levels of literacy, both of men and women. The Higher



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Education, especially the scientific and technological institutions, were of an international standard, staffed by high quality personnel". (UNESCO Fact Sheet, March 28, 2003)^[1].

As a result of U.S. ongoing Occupation of Iraq, today Iraq is more illiterate than it was five or a twenty-five years ago, because the U.S. Administration and U.S. forces occupying Iraq began to root and destroy every aspect of Iraq's education.

Iraqi educational system was the target of U.S. military action, because education is the backbone of any society. Without an efficient education system, no society can function, writes Ghali Hassan in May 2005.^[2]

Facts have proven him right. This is also one of the conclusions of the book *Cultural Cleansing in Iraq*.^[3]

Random facts.

A recent UNESCO report "*Education Under Attack 2010 – Iraq*", dated 10 February 2010, concludes that "*Although overall security in Iraq had improved, the situation faced by schools, students, teachers and academics remained dangerous.*"^[4] The destruction of Iraq's education is ongoing. Aswat Al Iraq reported on 4 January 2010 that "*the 2010 federal budget offers the country's education and higher education only 10 percent of the funding they need.*"

Let's present a few random facts that give an idea of the scale of the destruction of Iraq's education sector under occupation.

The director^[5] of the United Nations University International Leadership Institute published a report^[6] on 27 April 2005 detailing that since the start of the war of 2003 some 84% of Iraq's higher education institutions have been burnt, looted or destroyed^[7].

Like most higher education institutions across Iraq, Baghdad University escaped almost unscathed from the bombing. In the subsequent looting and burning, 20 of the capital's colleges were destroyed. No institution escaped: the faculty of education in Waziriyya was raided daily for two weeks; the veterinary college in Abu Ghraib lost all its equipment; two buildings in the faculty of fine arts stand smoke-blackened against the skyline. In every college, in every classroom, you could write "education" in the dust on the tables. ^[8]



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Ongoing violence has destroyed school buildings and around a quarter of all Iraq's primary schools need major rehabilitation. Since March 2003, more than 700 primary schools have been bombed, 200 have been burnt and over 3,000 looted.^[9]

Between March 2003 and October 2008, 31,598 violent attacks against educational institutions were reported in Iraq, according to the Ministry of Education (MoE)^[10]

Since 2007 bombings at Al Mustansiriya University in Baghdad have killed or maimed more than 335 students and staff members, according to a 19 Oct 2009 NYT article, and a 12-foot-high blast wall has been built around the campus.^[11]

Education under Attack (2007) reported that 296 people serving as education staff were killed in 2005; and 180 teachers were killed between February and November 2006.^[12]

These are just a few examples to highlight the level of cultural genocide in Iraq. The list is endless, the real number of casualties much higher. More information can be found in the book *Cultural Cleansing in Iraq* and in the BRussells Tribunal archives on Iraqi education under occupation, perhaps the most comprehensive database on the Internet about the assassination of Iraqi academics and the destruction of Iraq's education.^[13] Our campaign to protect Iraqi academics^[14] is still ongoing, because the tragedy continues. The UNESCO report "*Education Under Attack 2010 – Iraq*" is very clear: "*Attacks on education targets continued throughout 2007 and 2008 at a lower rate – but one that would cause serious concern in any other country.*" Why didn't it cause serious concern? Is it because it's US design?

The petition we issued, containing also a call for action, is still valid today and can still be signed:

<http://www.petitiononline.com/Iraqacad/petition.html>. An excerpt:

1. We appeal to organisations which work to enforce or defend international humanitarian law to put these crimes on the agenda.
2. We request that an independent international investigation be launched immediately to probe these extrajudicial killings. This investigation should also examine the issue of responsibility to clearly identify who is accountable for this state of affairs. We appeal to the special rapporteur on summary executions at UNHCHR in Geneva.



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We urge that educators mobilise colleagues and concerned citizens to take up the cause of the salvation of Iraq's intellectual wealth, by organising seminars, teach-ins and forums on the plight of Iraq's academics.

Occupying schools.

When writing “Killing the Intellectual Class” for the book *Cultural Cleansing in Iraq*, I added a short story about occupation of schools by the MNF-I.

“it certainly is our policy to not establish military headquarters or other operations in protected areas under the Geneva Convention,” said Lt. Col. Gary Keck, a spokesman for the Department of Defense in Washington, when a journalist asked why the US army occupied a girls’ and boys’ school of a town in northern Iraq.^[15]

At a UN press briefings in Amman on 30 April 2003, the question was asked:” *Do you know of any other schools that are still occupied & would you ask them of making a point to stay away from the schools, so they can be rehabilitated?”*

Answer: S. Ingram: *I am not aware of any other places that this situation holds. I remember the incident you referred to, there was a school in the north & some contacts were necessary to persuade the US troops there to leave the premises, which they subsequently did. I am not aware of any other places where schools are being occupied.*^[16]

“*I’m not aware*”. A pack of lies. Because occupying schools is exactly what the US Army did (and still does) on a regular basis. I heard and read numerous eyewitness accounts about Iraqi protests after US Forces occupied schools and educational institutions.

The origins of armed resistance in Fallujah f.i. can be traced almost precisely to April 28, 2003, when U.S. troops, who had arrived in the city five days earlier, massacred 17 apparently unarmed protesters. The April 28 protest had demanded an end to Fallujah’s occupation and, more specifically, that U.S. troops vacate the al Qaid primary school, where classes had been scheduled to resume on April 29.^[17]

And it continued. On the 29th of February 2008, the Association of Muslim Scholars (AMSI) published a press release condemning the American occupation forces for the seizure of an Islamic Secondary School in Baghdad. ^[18]



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On the 1st of May 2008, the Iraqi News Agency “Voices of Iraq”, reported that: “The U.S. military withdrew from a building of the education department in Sadr City in eastern Baghdad, which they used it as a barrack last month.”^[19]

This was basically all the hard information I had found about the occupation of educational institutions by the occupation forces and I thought the evidence was a little thin to make a decent case, so I decided not to use it for the book.

But now I read in the UNESCO report 2010:

“MNF-I, the Iraqi Army and Iraqi police units occupied more than 70 school buildings for military purposes in the Diyala governorate alone.”^[20]

This is only in one province. There’s no information at my disposal about the other regions, but we can almost certainly conclude that occupying schools by occupation forces was/is a general phenomenon throughout Iraq. Where else would you station a one million strong army and security forces?

On the 11th of April 2003, a number of Iraqi scientists and university professors sent an SOS e-mail complaining American occupation forces were threatening their lives.^[21]

The appeal message said that looting and robberies were being taken place under the watchful eye of the occupation soldiers.

The occupation soldiers, the e-mail added, were transporting mobs to the scientific institutions, such as Mosul University and different educational institutions, to destroy scientific research centres and confiscate all papers and documents to nip in the bud any Iraqi scientific renaissance.^[22]

John Agresto, in charge of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in 2003-2004, initially believed that the looting of Iraq’s universities was a positive act in that it would allow such institutions to begin again with a clean slate, with the newest equipment as well as a brand new curriculum.^[23]

The Hague IV Conventions^[24] on Laws and Customs of War on Land, 1917, make explicit, in Article 56, that educational institutions are to be regarded as private property, and thus must not be pillaged or destroyed, that occupying forces in war are bound to protect such property and that proceedings should follow their intentional damage, seizure or destruction. Article 55 reinforces this duty relative to all public buildings and capital. Further, an occupying power is obliged, according to Articles 43 and 46, to protect life and take all steps in its power to re-establish and ensure “public order and safety”.



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In addition, The Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict^[25] (ratified by the Republic of Iraq in 1967) creates a clear obligation to protect museums, libraries and archives, and other sites of cultural property. Paragraph 1 of Article 4 notes: “The High Contracting Parties undertake to respect cultural property situated within their own territory as well as within the territory of other High Contracting Parties by refraining from any use of the property and its immediate surroundings or of the appliances in use for its protection for purposes which are likely to expose it to destruction or damage in the event of armed conflict; and by refraining from any act of hostility, directed against such property.”

Using schools and universities for military purposes, destroying educational institutions and assisting in looting, criminal neglect when educational staff is being harassed and assassinated, dismantling the Iraqi education system and active involvement in training, funding and arming murderous militia's....

War crime upon war crime upon war crime. When will there be justice for Iraq? When will there be a serious investigation into these crimes by official International Human Rights Bodies? And who will charge the successive Anglo-American Administrations for War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity?

Dirk Adriaensens, member of the **BRussels** Tribunal Executive Committee.

^[1] http://portal.unesco.org/es/ev.php-URL_ID=11216&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

^[2] <http://www.globalresearch.ca/articles/HAS505B.html>

^[3] <http://www.plutobooks.com/display.asp?K=9780745328126&CID=BRUSSELLS>

^[4] <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4b7aa9df5.html>

^[5] http://www.la.unu.edu/about_staff_reddy.asp

^[6] <http://www.unu.edu/news/ili/Iraq.doc>

^[7] <http://www.brusseltribunal.org/Academicspetition.htm>

^[8] <http://www.brusseltribunal.org/academicsArticles.htm#weed-out>

^[9] <http://www.islamic-relief.com/ecamp/orphans-iraq/education-iraq.htm>

^[10] <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4b7aa9df5.html>

^[11] <http://www.ohio.edu/outlook/2009-10/March/Iraq-professor-409.cfm>

^[12] <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4b7aa9df5.html>

^[13] <http://www.brusseltribunal.org/AcademicsResources.htm>

^[14] <http://www.brusseltribunal.org/Academics.htm>

^[15] <http://www.csmonitor.com/2003/0404/p07s01-woiq.html>

^[16] <http://www.un.org/apps/news/infocus/iraq/infocusnews.asp?NewsID=509&sID=9>

^[17] <http://www.worldpress.org/Mideast/2183.cfm> and

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2004/mar/17/iraq.rorymccarthy>

^[18] <http://heyetnet.org/en/content/view/2670/33/>

^[19] http://www.iraqupdates.com/p_articles.php?refid=DH-S-01-05-2008&article=30525

^[20] <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4b7aa9df5.html>

^[21] <http://www.islamonline.net/english/news/2003-04/12/article02.shtml>

^[22] Dirk Adriaensens in “Cultural Cleansing in Iraq” p 119,

<http://www.plutobooks.com/display.asp?K=9780745328126&>

^[23] Nabil al-Tikriti in “Cultural Cleansing in Iraq” p 98, <http://www.plutobooks.com/display.asp?K=9780745328126&>

^[24] <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/lawofwar/hague04.htm>

^[25] http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13637&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html



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- **Mosul University's students protest against arresting professor** (March 15, 2010)

NINEWA / Aswat al-Iraq: A number of students of the Mosul University's Faculty of Engineering on Monday staged a demonstration against the arrest of a professor by army forces, according to one of the protest's organizers.

"The students demonstrated inside the campus against the arrest of Professor Omar Ahmad Youssef, without an arresting warrant by army forces last night," Ameer Younes told Aswat al-Iraq news agency. "The angry students demanded authorities in Ninewa to stop the recent arresting campaigns and to free innocent detainees," he explained.

Mosul, the capital of Ninewa, is 405 km north of Baghdad.

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- **Iraq: EI protests against the continued harassment of union leaders** (26 Feb 2010)

EI is very concerned about the continuous governmental interference the Iraqi Teachers' Union (ITU) is experiencing. The ITU, an organisation currently applying for EI membership, continues to face extreme attacks from the Iraqi government which wants to control the union.

The Global Union Federation representing more than 30 millions educators and education workers worldwide has been recently informed that Ibrahim al-Battat, leader of the ITU has been arrested and an arrest warrant issued for Jasim Hussein Mohammed, the national leader of ITU.

Iraqi teacher unionist al-Battat was arrested and then released on 22 February after an eight-day detention period. He was involved in strike actions, and his home came under fire after he refused to hand over the union memberships lists. The first information received by EI was very alarming, referring as it did to al-Battat's death.

In a protest letter to the Iraqi Prime Minister Jawad Al-Maliki dated 25 February, EI General Secretary Fred van Leeuwen said: "We are very concerned that trade unionists continue to be harassed in Iraq. The lack of respect for fundamental trade union rights and the interference in trade union affairs by political parties supported by the authorities is a threat to the entire development of the labour movement in Iraq."



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EI reasserts its support for autonomous and independent trade unions in Iraq and elsewhere, free of political and state interference. EI calls on the Iraqi authorities to stop this repression of the independence of the ITU and its leaders, and urges them to respect international labour norms.

<http://www.ei-ie.org/en/news/show.php?id=1197&theme=rights&country=iraq>

- **Christian Student Killed in Iraq; Fourth Murder in Days** Thu, Feb. 18 2010

By [Ethan Cole](#) | Christian Post Reporter

The bullet-riddled body of a 20-year-old Christian student was found on the street of the northern Iraqi city of Mosul Wednesday.

Wissam George was missing since that morning when he left for school, a police officer, who spoke on condition of anonymity, told Agence France-Presse. George was studying to be a teacher.

George is the fourth Christian to be gunned down in Mosul since Sunday.

Rayan Salem Elias was killed outside of his home Sunday and grocer Fatukhi Munir was killed in a drive-by shooting at his shop Monday. On Tuesday, Christian student Zia Toma, 21, was shot and killed by a gunman using an automatic weapon. Toma was an engineering student. The gunman also wounded 22-year-old pharmacy student Ramsin Shmael. Both Toma and Shmael are Assyrian Christians.

- **200 Russian scholarships to Iraqis** January 6, 2010

BAGHDAD / Aswat al-Iraq: Russia has granted Iraqi students and researchers 200 scholarships within the Iraqi cultural program in Moscow, according to an official statement. "The scholarships will cover different scientific fields," said the statement received by Aswat al-Iraq news agency. "This is the biggest number of scholarships allocated by the Russian government to Iraq in the history of the Iraqi-Russian cultural exchange," it explained.

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- **Iraqi Academe, How Can We Help?** (March 16, 2009)

WASHINGTON -- Iraqi American academics gathered this weekend to discuss “How can we help Iraqi academia?” and “How can we help in reforming curriculum and teaching methodologies at Iraqi universities?”

In panel discussions on those two topics Saturday, scholars offered a variety of perspectives on steps forward -- with many questioning the wisdom [of a government plan, announced last May, to send 10,000 Iraqi students on scholarships](#) overseas (a third and final panel Saturday focused on the secondary question of which specialties should be supported).

A. Hadi Al Khalili, the cultural attaché for the Embassy of Iraq in Washington, which sponsored the conference, described the five-year fellowship program as “very ambitious and very useful as an investment in the future of Iraq.” But several others worried about brain drain. “We can’t use failed policies again and again and again,” said Qais Al-Awqati, a professor of medicine at Columbia University. “What will happen is what happened here. Which is that we’re all here, basically.”

Attendees gathered here (at the National Academy of Sciences headquarters) to discuss what’s happening there -- and how to connect the two places. Iraqi university leaders are in fact eager to collaborate. A delegation of seven Iraqi university presidents visited the United States in February with partnerships, for research and faculty exchange, in mind.

However, "a common theme" of that visit, and another one involving Iraqi education leaders, was: "We're not connecting with U.S. universities. ... How are we able to connect universities, institutes, associations, societies, between the United States and Iraq?" asked Karim Altaii, a professor of integrated science and technology at James Madison University and a fellow at the U.S. State Department. “Should we start with university consortiums?... Should we start a brand-new NGO that is completely dedicated to Iraqi higher education?"

“How would the Ministry of Higher Education get in the picture?" Altaii asked, pointing out that Iraq's higher education system is centralized whereas the United States' is decentralized.

Muthanna H. Al-Dahhan, professor and chair of chemical and biological engineering at Missouri University of Science and Technology, offered a long list of ideas for discussion. “Everything will help, no matter how simple and how easy," Al-Dahhan said.

For faculty, he suggested collaborating on opportunities for sabbaticals and, for students, he posed the idea of organizing training programs for standardized tests needed for entry to foreign universities (like the Graduate Record Examination and the Test of English as a Foreign Language). He also described



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sending American faculty to Iraq for short but intense workshops. “The first important thing is substantial funding, funding and funding,” Al-Dahhan said. “Without resources given to universities and colleges, nothing will happen.”

Another idea was to conduct department-level reviews of Iraqi institutions and, more specifically, to send all-star teams of scientists to evaluate Iraq’s medical colleges. “Look at the department, recommend what needs to be done and hopefully the government there can help set up or take in these recommendations,” said Salih J. Wakil, professor of biochemistry and molecular biology at Baylor College of Medicine.

He continued: “You can bring in here the 10,000 students. That’s good. I’m not quite sure that I would do that. What I would recommend is -- yes, we could bring some students. But more importantly I’d like to take people from here to go there and teach ... give them an appointment.”

“The best thing we can do is do science there.”

The structure of the two-day conference was such that Saturday's schedule featured the series of three panels and Sunday's involved “action working groups.” Many were raring to get right to the action part. During the Saturday of speeches, some expressed their restlessness in the form of written questions on index cards.

It fell to the moderator of the panel on curriculum to read the anonymous inquiries aloud. “One of them begins ‘speeches, speeches and more speeches.’ And the other says, ‘Can we move from theory to 1, 2, 3 ... implementation plan?’”

Some panelists were similarly action-oriented. Ihsan A. Al-Shehbaz said they cannot hope for others to revive Iraqi higher education but must do it themselves. He cited a laundry list of ails in need of attention.

“We lack, I should have said just one word -- everything,” said Al-Shehbaz, an adjunct professor at the University of Missouri at St. Louis and head of the Department of Asian Botany at the Missouri Botanical Garden. “No new foreign graduates, no latest texts, library materials, latest informatics, modern labs, research funds, supporting staff, international exposure, workshops, international collaboration, incentives, competition. But most importantly, we lack diversity. My colleagues who teach in my field translated books 30 years ago, 35 years ago, and they continue to use the same books over and over again.”

As for him, “I will arrive home just before midnight Sunday and Monday morning I’m going to Iraq,” Al-Shehbaz said Saturday. He’s visiting as part of a project on the country’s flora. “I sent 40 copies, free, of a book authored by four friends of mine, the latest in my field. And we’re going to give them to professors and top graduate students for free. I’m going to give two seminars and we’re planning to give intensive



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courses in my field.”

The goal of mutual exchange was a major theme of the conference, one complicated by another theme that kept coming up -- the difficulty Iraqi students and scholars face in obtaining visas to come to the United States.

“I think we should all just make an official request to the State Department to facilitate visas for academics, to stop placing these obstacles in their way,” said Zainab Bahrani, a professor of ancient Near Eastern art and archaeology and director of graduate studies at Columbia. “Because they say that they want to help Iraqi academia and this is a place where they can just make it easier. So let’s ask them officially, all of us as a group. Let’s just ask them to make this easier.”

— **Elizabeth Redden**

<http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2009/03/16/iraq>

- **Academics Struggle for Civil Society in Iraq (November 25, 2008)**

WASHINGTON – Two of the three scholars invited from Iraq to share analysis of academic conditions there could not get visas to attend this week's meeting of the [Middle East Studies Association](#). Those gathered at the annual meeting for a panel on “the role of academics in building civil society in Iraq” had to settle for having the papers paraphrased to them by a colleague. This twist of fate, however, prompted the remaining panelists to reflect on the challenges that still exist for students and scholars in a post-Saddam Iraq.

Though Riyadh Aziz Hadi, a high-ranking administrator at Baghdad University, and Amer Qader, a professor at Kirkuk University, were unable to attend the event, their scholarly work was presented before the panel.

This is kind of good for the event in a sinister way,” said Abbas Kadhim, professor of Islamic studies at the Naval Postgraduate School, in Monterey, Cal. and a product of Iraqi higher education. “This shows you some of the difficulties that remain for Iraqi academics. If someone cannot attend an event like this -- because of a denied visa with one year’s notice [the case for Hadi and Qader] -- you’re looking at a sequestered group of people.”

Scholars in Iraq are still relatively isolated from the outside world, Kadhim said, citing the pertinent example of the difficulty of securing a visa for foreign research. Domestically, he added, most have severely



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limited and unreliable Internet access, if they have access at all.

Though not to the extent that it was during the Saddam regime, Kadhim said, academic freedom is still constrained in Iraq. Inside the classroom, he said, the free flow of ideas between student and professor is limited by former customs. For example, he noted that many Iraqis consider the questioning or challenging of a professor publicly an “act of hostility.” Even the wider academic curriculum cannot offer a diversity of interests or values to students, he said, noting that degrees are “cookie cutter” by design and leave no room for electives.

Scholars are similarly constrained by administrators and government officials, Kadhim said, calling the university just another “mini dictatorship.” Though Saddam has been deposed, he said many “Saddamists” still exercise their control over academe. He noted that many unfairly awarded degrees were given to some academic administrators now in control in Iraq. Some, for example, wrote their dissertations on topics such as the “economic genius” and the “eloquence of the speeches” of Saddam Hussein.

Iraq has suffered a brain drain since the 1990s, Kadhim said, when a number of scholars left the country to teach either elsewhere in the Middle East or at American institutions. Academic freedom was only one concern of these fleeing scholars, he said, noting that many professors lived on a salary of \$5 a month in the early 1990s.

Hadi and Qader's papers, presented by Kadhim in their absence, touched on the security concerns of many academic scholars. Their works noted that while state universities are pleading with expatriate academics to return to Iraq, many scholars are unwilling to risk their lives to do so. As Kadhim noted, "It can take upward of 30 years to generate a junior scholar in a field in Iraq, but it can only take a 25-cent bullet to end their life."

Despite the immediate concerns for academe in Iraq, Kadhim said he was still optimistic about its future, if only because of its resilience through conflict.

“It’s a miracle that there is even higher education in Iraq,” Kadhim said. “One thing happens at Virginia Tech and the campus is shut down entirely and some of its students are traumatized, quite rightly, to this day. Imagine that happening every day to students in Iraq.”

Encouraging to some is the increase in educational opportunities for Iraqis. Amal Shlash, director of the Bayt al-Hikma Research Centre in Baghdad, described higher education as the “only achieving activity in the country.” In 2002-3, the academic year of the United States invasion of Iraq, there were 19 public universities and three private universities in major towns throughout the country -- four of which were in Baghdad. Now, the country hosts 23 public universities and 23 private universities. The country went from educating 322,000 students in 2002-03 to educating around 370,000 students this year.



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Shlash said, during the Saddam era, universities were only allowed to be built in cities with populations greater than one million. Now, she said, universities can be built anywhere in the country. This has resulted in a higher number of female enrollees than ever before because many young women now no longer have to leave home to attend a university. At Baghdad University, the enrollment is 57 percent female. Even more striking, in the southern city of Nasiriyah, the university's enrollment is 71 percent female.

In spite of this enrollment growth and the news that the Iraqi government is making greater oil profits than ever, Shlash noted that higher education receives a lower percentage of the state budget than it did during the Saddam regime. Since 2003, the government appropriation for higher education has remained relatively static between three and four percent.

The only way to further encourage the growth of higher education and rescue Iraqi society is for these institutions to demand more money from the government, Shlash said, noting that many do not have the luxury of catering philanthropists as institutions do in the United States.

"We need to rebuild the middle class in Iraq," Shlash said. "The people with a quality higher education have left the country. No democracy can succeed in a country without a middle class."

<http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2008/11/25/iraq>

- **Professors who fled Iraq return to find jobs scarce** 14/10/2009

By **Aamer Madhani**, USA TODAY

BAGHDAD — Twice a week for the past 10 months, Esmaa Ahmed has spent her days milling outside the Ministry of Higher Education office in hopes of getting her old teaching job back.

So far, she hasn't had much luck.

"I come here on Sundays and Wednesdays," said Ahmed, 42, a fine-arts professor who fled Iraq with her family in 2007 after her husband was threatened by militiamen and a son was injured in a car bombing.

"In all this time, I spoke with the director once and his deputies twice, but they just tell me to be patient. Most days, I just stand here all day, and no one talks to me," she said.



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Ahmed and hundreds of other Iraqi professors who left during the worst days of sectarian fighting are now returning as security improves in this war-torn country — and finding it difficult to pick up their old lives.

NEW LIFE: [Soldier fights to secure future for Iraqi translator in U.S.](#)

The flood of returning professors follows Prime Minister [Nouri al-Maliki](#)'s call last year for university instructors, doctors and other professionals to come home and help rebuild Iraq.

At least 1,500 professors have returned to Iraq this year and petitioned the ministry to teach. About 800 have landed jobs, but that also includes recent graduates, said Adnan Jumali, a director at the ministry.

Al-Maliki's ambitious request for the educated class to come home came as the Iraqi government's coffers were brimming because the price of oil hovered at more than \$100 a barrel for much of last year. As oil prices tumbled, so did Iraq's teaching jobs.

Jumali said the ministry started the year wanting to fill 6,300 university positions but scaled back to the goal of 2,000 as the budget was slashed twice.

"The situation is very difficult for those trying to come back, and we understand they are frustrated," Jumali said. "We are serious in our efforts to bring back the returnees to their jobs, but it will take time."

'Trying to fill the gap'

Iraq's academic community was hit hard by sectarian violence. Enrollment plummeted at many universities few even managing to crack the books.

Even so, many students say the quality of their education has dropped as some of the most experienced professors who fled Iraq had their positions filled by less-experienced instructors.

"Replacing an experienced teacher is difficult, especially if he has a rare specialty," said Khalid Asaad, a fourth-year biology student. "But the other teachers are trying to fill the gap and help us get through this issue."

Other professionals who fled earlier — during [Saddam Hussein](#)'s regime — also want to reclaim their old



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positions.

'Iraq is still not ready for us'

Emad Hassan, 38, left his job as a mathematics professor at Qadisiya University in 1998, and has been teaching in Libya. After hearing al-Maliki's plea, Hassan decided to come back to Baghdad.

"I thought it would be a matter of days or weeks before I had a job, but it's been miserable," said Hassan, who moved his family in with his parents. "I'm almost out of savings. I'm a man, but I'm having to rely on my mother and father to support my family. Of course, I wish I never came back. I caution my friends who are ... thinking of coming back that Iraq is still not ready for us."

Even for those lucky enough to snap up a job, the situation hasn't been easy.

Falah Hadi, 49, started teaching at the University of Baghdad in July but hasn't gotten a paycheck yet.

The ministry's Jumali said about 200 professors hired this year still haven't been paid because of clerical issues.

Hadi said he trusts the ministry will straighten out the pay.

"I'm happy at this point to be doing my job," Hadi said. "I have faith the other problems will be worked out."

Contributing: Ahmed Fadaam and Enas Ibrahim

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- **Iraqi Teachers' Union asserts its independence from all political blocs** (2 June 2008)

The Iraqi Teachers' Union (ITU) is calling on its members and branch leaders to be vigilant in protecting their organisation from being used by any political party or group in the months leading up to the governorate elections expected before October.

"Education in Iraq is for all," the union's governing body asserted in a position statement issued 27 May in Baghdad.

The head of the ITU, Jassim Mohammed Hussein, urged his members to be cautious of political blocs that



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seek to use teachers in their political campaigns.

As the country is experiencing “painful, turbulent and serious changes,” it is incumbent on all citizens to preserve Iraq’s national identity, Hussein said. “And here, perhaps the greatest responsibility rests with Iraqi teachers and with the education system, for teachers are the promoters of human and cultural values.”

The union’s official statement reads as follows:

The ITU is aware of the difficulties our country is facing and therefore the ITU must clarify some points which we hope colleagues will take seriously into account:

1. Perhaps the subjective and objective challenges in Iraqi political scene requires from our union, the ITU, to be vigilant so as not to be used by any political force that seeks to use it for personal gains. Education in Iraq is for all.

2. The recent ITU action (after the fall of the dictatorship) was effective and well organized. The ITU-led picket in Iraq [December 2007], achieved most of its objectives for Iraqi teachers and helped all state employees to gain [wage increases]. The ITU-led action was praised and supported by many global sister unions and federations. And for this, the ITU will not allow its achievements to be used in political trading in the Iraqi political arena.

3. The ITU (both the central office and its branches across Iraq governorates) has nothing to do with any political bloc that carries the name of the teachers. The ITU is convinced that the teaching profession and the sacred cause of the teacher is a national cause for all Iraqis, and for all Iraqi political blocs.

4. At the same time, the ITU encourages and urges our fellow teachers and other Iraqi cultural and academic personnel to get involved in political action and parties as individuals and not as ITU. The ITU refused to be used or allow education to be used as tool for political gains.

In conclusion, the ITU applauds the current political mobility that is happening at the moment which demonstrates the vitality of Iraqi society and we wish success to all Iraqis, whether they are political or otherwise.

The ITU promises that it will continue to campaign on behalf of Iraqi teachers and for proper education for all Iraqis.

<http://www.ei-ie.org/en/news/show.php?id=788&theme=rights&country=iraq>



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- **Dreams of college destroyed in Iraq** - Damien Cave, June 4, 2007

BAGHDAD — They started college just before or after the American invasion with dreams of new friends and parties, brilliant teachers and advanced degrees that would lead to stellar jobs, marriage and children. Success seemed well within their grasp.

Four years later, Iraq's college graduates are ending their studies shattered and eager to leave the country. In interviews with more than 30 students from seven universities, all but 4 said they hoped to flee Iraq immediately after receiving their degrees. Many said they did not expect the country to stabilize for at least a decade.

"I used to dream about getting a Ph.D., participating in international conferences, belonging to a team that discovered cures for diseases like AIDS, leaving my fingerprint on medicine," said Hasan Tariq Khaldoun, 24, a pharmacy student in Mosul, north of Baghdad. "Now, all these dreams have evaporated."

"Staying here," said Karar Alaa, 25, a medical student at Babel University, south of Baghdad, "is like committing suicide."

The class of 2007 came of age during a transformation that, according to students, has harvested tragedy from seeds of hope. They are the last remnants of a middle-class that has already fled Iraq by the tens of thousands. As such, they embody the country's progression from innocence to bitter wisdom, amid dashed expectations and growing animosity toward the Americans.

They said would leave their country feeling betrayed, by the debilitating violence that has killed scores of professors and friends, by the growing influence of Islamic fundamentalism and by the Americans, who they say cracked open their country, releasing spasms of violence and then failing to protect the moderate institutions that could have been a bulwark against extremism.

"I want to tell them thanks for liberating us but enough with the mistakes," said Abdul Hussein Ibrahim Zain Alabidin, a Shiite Turkoman studying law at Kirkuk University. The errors, he said, "led to division and terrorism."

Iraq's roughly 56,000 graduates began their college careers under far different circumstances. Under the Bush administration's plan to spread democracy through the Middle East, they said, they felt special, chosen, about to be famous on the worldwide stage.

"I thought we would be like stars," said Ahmed Saleh Abdul Khader, 21, a biology student in the southern city of Basra.

Alabin in Kirkuk said, "I was thinking that Iraq would be like Las Vegas, especially Kirkuk, which has oil."

Instead, after an initial period of hope after Saddam Hussein's regime collapsed, the students said they watched in awe as Iraq's underlying sectarian and ethnic conflicts emerged and flourished. At the



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country's 21 universities, the decline started with chaos. Looters stole ancient artifacts and destroyed buildings at Basra University, for instance, only days after British troops reached the area in 2003.

Violence followed. In June 2004, a geography professor at the University of Baghdad was murdered after leaving the campus. He would not be the last.

"We've lost over 200 professors, being killed," said Abid Dhiyab al-Ujayli, the minister of higher education. "A number of others have been kidnapped."

Scores more have fled, he said, leading the perpetually upbeat Ujayli to spend much of his time trying to convince those still here to stay. It's a particularly difficult task; in November, dozens of ministry employees were kidnapped in broad daylight by gunmen wearing police uniforms.

"I'm not going to say we are in a good position," Ujayli said. "We are surviving. We are trying our best to have an educational system to be as good as we can."

Students said Iraq's university system had significantly declined, dragged down by chronically canceled lectures and decrepit equipment, all in an atmosphere of growing terror and violence.

Alabin said his class of law students in Kirkuk shrank from 85 in 2003 to just 30 at graduation because of the bloodshed and fear. He acknowledged that more Shiites were entering college than before; he was even one of the students who said he did not plan to leave, declaring that "I am no better than those who have suffered or been killed."

But he could not contain his frustration with the country his class would inherit. He said he and his friends constantly discuss "the ugliness of terrorism, the free-for-all of killing in Iraq, Americans' mistakes, the way they humiliate Iraqis, the shameful stance of neighboring countries and the loss of the Iraqi identity to divisions by sect and ethnicity."

"I blame Saddam because he sold Iraq and was behind the coming of the occupiers," Alabin said. "I blame the American administration for its mistakes in dealing with Iraqis."

The mood was even darker last week at Mustansiriyah University in Baghdad. In January, two car bombs and a suicide bomber killed at least 70 people at the school. A month later, a woman laced with explosives blew herself up at the university entrance, killing 40 more.

In the immediate aftermath of the attacks, charred metal, bloodied notebooks, glass, fingers and make-up cases littered the ground. Students later buried the detritus of the attack in a courtyard where they regularly gather.

The memorial, a mound of dirt with banners naming those who died, now acts as a constant reminder of the horrors this year's graduates have endured.



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"We even have a mass grave now in the university," said a student who would give only his first name, Saif, for fear of retribution. "Imagine flesh and body parts - we buried that here at Mustansiriya University. Imagine how bad our situation was."

Several students about to graduate said the attacks only hardened their resolve to complete their studies. Indeed, at many universities in Baghdad, the class of 2007 has tried to make the best of a difficult situation.

At a graduation party at Baghdad's University of Technology in April, students sprayed Silly String on one another near cardboard simulations of mortar tubes and rockets - macabre parodies of Iraq's situation.

At Baghdad University, students shared jokes about the violence over their cellphones. Graduates from the dentistry department recorded a song with verses that poked fun at each student for his or her quirks.

Three of the song's subjects, Mudher Rafid, 22, Ahmed Bahir, 22, and Hasan Haitham, 22, said that humor had helped them stay sane through the chaos. On a recent afternoon in eastern Baghdad, speaking English well and wearing T-shirts with Western brand names like Diesel and Ecko, they said they wished the world would remember that not all young Iraqis wanted to kill one another.

Ahmad Fadam and Diana Oliva Cave contributed reporting from Baghdad. Additional reporting was contributed by Iraqi employees in Baghdad, Hilla, Kirkuk, Mosul and Basra.

- **EI protests against killing of teachers in Iraq (21 Nov 2006)**

"Teachers should be guaranteed a safe and secure working environment," says EI in a letter addressed to the President of Iraq, Jalal Talabani, on 16 November. Since February this year, 180 teachers have been killed and up to 100 have been kidnapped.

The dramatic escalation of violence against education institutions and teachers has prompted an exodus of academics and teachers as well as sharp decrease in school attendance. Currently, only 30 percent of Iraq's 3.5 million students are currently attending classes compared with 75 percent in the previous school year.

EI General Secretary, Fred van Leeuwen, urges the Iraqi government to support educational institutions and teachers, and give them the resources to promote peace and tolerance through education.

Below is the content of EI's letter in English:

Mr Jalal Talabani President Convention Centre (Qasr al-Ma'aridh) Baghdad Republic of Iraq

Brussels, 16 November 2006



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Mr President,

Education International, the global union federation of teachers representing over 30 million members in 169 countries, is very concerned by the continued killings and abductions of Iraqi academics and teachers.

Hundreds of academics have been killed in Iraq since March 2003. The Iraqi Minister of Education has stated that 296 members of education staff were killed in 2005 alone. According to the UN Office for Humanitarian Affairs, 180 teachers have been killed since February 2006 and up to 100 have been kidnapped. Over 3250 teachers have fled Iraq.

Not only do abductions of teachers constitute serious violations of the right to live and work in a secure environment, but of the right to life itself. Education International does not only refer to the recent mass kidnapping in the Ministry of Higher Education's scientific research directorate. Abduction and murder ravage families and put at stake the future of Iraq. The killings of teachers and closures of schools punishes the young people and does not give a message of optimism and hope.

Education has a major contribution to make to the future of the country and the current violence prompts an exodus of teachers. The resulting massive brain drain of teachers is a catastrophe which affects the reconstruction and nation-building process significantly, and will continue to do so for years to come.

The violence against teachers also contributes to a dramatic decrease in school attendance rates. According to recent statistics from the Ministry of Education, only 30 percent of Iraq's 3.5 million students are currently attending classes. This compares to approximately 75 percent of students attending classes in the previous school year.

Educational institutions and teachers should be supported and given the resources to promote peace and tolerance through education, rather than being targets of violence.

Education International therefore urges your Government to ensure a safe and secure environment for lecturers, teachers and students. Education International will contact the United Nations Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions to request that the matter be investigated.

Education International sincerely trusts that this message is one your Government can support.

Sincerely yours,

Fred van Leeuwen

General Secretary



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cc:

Iraqi Ministries of Defence, Interior and Higher Education

Speaker of Iraq's parliament: Hajim al-Hassani

Kurdistan Teachers Union, KTU

UNCHR Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions

<http://www.ei-ie.org/en/news/show.php?id=308&theme=statusofteachers&country=iraq>

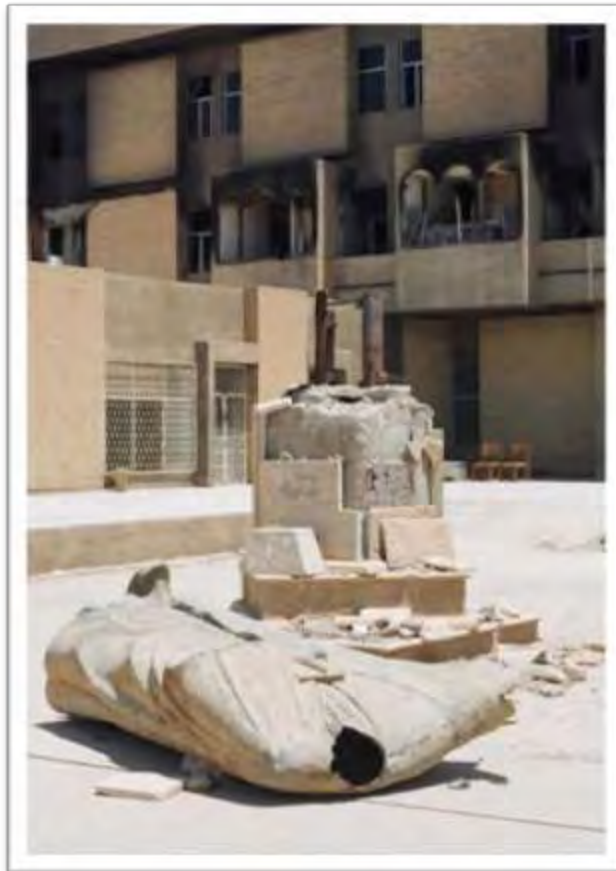
Opening the Doors:

Intellectual Life and

Academic Conditions in Post-War Baghdad

Headless statue of Saddam Hussein portrayed in academic garb in the courtyard of the National Library and Archives

A Report of the Iraqi Observatory, 15 July 2003



Keith Watenpugh • Edouard Méténier • Jens Hanssen • Hala Fattah

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1.1 Mission Context

Word began to trickle out of Baghdad in mid-April 2003 that the Iraqi National Library and Archives and the library of the Ministry of Holy Endowments and Religious Affairs (al-Awqaf) had been burned and looted during the paroxysm of aggravated mayhem that followed the collapse of the Baathist regime. Soon,



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it became clear that in addition to the damage to those libraries, universities, research centers and private institutions had also been harmed or destroyed, and that additional elements of Iraq's rich cultural heritage in the form of historic buildings, musical archives and contemporary art were at risk. These were moments of deep and profound sadness that ultimately gave way to conversations about ways to work to rebuild and restore what had been lost.

As these conversations continued, several of us – primarily a group of historians of the contemporary Middle East – decided to travel to Baghdad to catalog the extent of the damage to institutions of higher learning and cultural production. We also intended to record the needs of Iraq's academic and intellectual community as it rebuilds itself in the face of a generation of brutish rule by Saddam Hussein, a decade of debilitating U.N. sanctions, a brief and humiliating war, and an open-ended American-led military occupation.

We assigned ourselves three specific objectives:

The renewal and enhancement of contacts with colleagues inside the Iraqi academic community, especially in the humanities and social science, while at the same time gauging their status and professional welfare;

The assessment, with the guidance of our Iraqi colleagues, of the material condition of libraries, archives, universities and research centers;

The establishment of bases for future cooperation between international and Iraqi academic communities, institutions and professional associations.

This is the report of our findings following a 9-day visit to Baghdad (22-30 June 2003), perhaps the most violent week in terms of Iraqi and coalition casualties since the “end” of the war on May 1. We found ourselves aided in that task by a remarkable collection of fellow historians, professors from other disciplines, librarians, bibliophiles and religious leaders. A suggestion of what should happen next by one of these, the historian Imad al-Jawahiri, provides the title and the spirit of this report. And despite the fact that conditions in Iraq proved much worse than anticipated – especially in terms of security and the competence of the American-dominated occupation administration, the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) – we took comfort in the words of yet another historian, Kamal Muzhar Ahmad, that “it is the responsibility of the historian to be always optimistic.”



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Any discussions of intellectual activity in Iraq, from academic freedom to student exchange programs must be understood in light of the fact that the country and its people are under military occupation and lack a sovereign government. The presence of 168,000 foreign troops, a general lack of public security and services, and a rapidly shifting political terrain has created a volatile and politicized context for Iraq's cultural heritage, universities, libraries, and research centers. Further, heirs of an intensively centralized state, the institutional bases of intellectual and academic life in Iraq now depend upon the American authorities for funds and security; and that aid is predicated first and foremost upon American ideological and strategic interests. Consequently, our Iraqi colleagues face a dilemma: the American presence, which represents access to the outside world, redevelopment funds and the promise of a truly autonomous, rigorous academic environment comes at the cost of a military occupation and the modalities and demands of an American foreign and domestic policy which external observers and Iraqis alike increasingly consider colonialism. How institutions outside of Iraq – colleges, universities, professional societies and donors – respond to this dilemma will contribute to the very warp and weft of Iraq's intellectual community and its relations with the rest of the world for decades to come.

1.2 Purpose and Organization of the Report

This report is built on three themes:

A description of the current material and organizational condition of Iraq's intellectual and academic community;

An assessment of the prevailing conditions of Iraqi cultural and intellectual life;

A characterization of the ongoing relationships between the Iraqi academic and intellectual community and the occupation forces/structures of governance.

Each section or sub-section ends with is a series of suggestions based on our observations and tempered by our experience as university professionals and years of living and conducting research in several Middle Eastern countries.

We intend this report for the international academic community writ large. We hope it can be used as a starting point for policy discussions at colleges, universities, and professional organizations worldwide – especially as American universities begin to vie for multi-million dollar USAID reconstruction grants. We also encourage those working to establish academic exchange programs or those looking to offer their



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expertise in fields as diverse as book preservation to university management to see it as a resource and a guide.

We conceived this work in the spirit of complete transparency and collegial discourse. It includes judgments and assessments that may not be shared by all members of the group, but rather represent a consensus opinion. Our conclusions are based on a rapid assessment of the situation, often less than forthcoming answers from CPA officials and occasional obfuscation by Iraqi bureaucrats, and thus, may not be complete. The report should be seen as a beginning and a road map for later groups.

Subsequent to the publication of this report – still a work in progress – members of the group will be adding detailed appendices, corrections, maps, digital video clips and updates. Hypertext links to relevant reports and documents appear as entries at the end of chapters.

1.3 Method

As noted in a recent International Crisis Group report, “Baghdad: A Race Against the Clock” (11 June 2003), “Baghdad is a city in distress, chaos and ferment.” There is no general landline telephone service, and satellite phones are unreliable; we often just dropped in on people during their office hours or at their homes. Others came and spent time with us at our hotel. In addition, with daytime temperatures reaching highs of 45-50 C (113-122 F) – compounded by the lack of electricity and air-conditioning – our working days were foreshortened to a few hours each morning, and the early evening. The 23:00 civilian curfew made nighttime meetings difficult, especially as most Iraqis want to be home by dusk (20:00). Nevertheless, we were able to meet with dozens of local academics, intellectuals, artists, and bureaucrats as well as foreign diplomats, representatives from the UN Development Program, UNESCO and officials of the CPA. Before our departure from Amman, we also met with Iraqis who had taken refuge in Jordan, NGO workers recently returned from Baghdad, as well as representatives of foundations and the local and foreign academic community.

There was no set questionnaire or “talking points;” rather conversations in Arabic, English and French tended to flow freely from topic to topic. Most were friendly and collegial although others were not. Iraqis of all strata were willing to speak in a frank and open manner. They evidenced little concern over criticizing either the former regime or the current authority. CPA officials tended to be less forthcoming.

In addition to these more formal meetings, we also visited universities, libraries, academic and research institutes, coffeehouses frequented by writers and artists, book dealers, and important historic Islamic and Ottoman sites.



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1.4 Group Members

Hala Fattah graduated from UCLA (1986) with a Ph.D. in Modern Middle East History. She specializes in the history of modern Iraq. Now an independent scholar living in Jordan, she is the author of *The Politics of Regional Trade in Iraq, Arabia and the Gulf, 1745-1900* (Albany, New York: SUNY Press, 1997), several articles on Iraqi intellectuals in the 18th and 19th centuries, reformist Islam and the contours of the pre-modern Iraqi state.

Jens Hanssen (Oxford, D.Phil. History, 2001) is Assistant Professor of Middle Eastern and Mediterranean History at the University of Toronto, Canada. Oxford University Press is publishing his forthcoming book on 19th and 20th century Beirut. He has written on memory and reconstruction in post-war Lebanon and recently co-edited a book on “Arab Provincial Capitals in the Late Ottoman Empire” (2002).

Edouard Méténier, *Professeur agrégé d'histoire*, is currently conducting research on late 18th to early-20th-century Iraqi social and intellectual history. Attached to the Université de Provence / IREMAM, he is also a research fellow of the Institut Français du Proche-Orient - Damas. This was his third visit to Iraq since 2001; he lived in Baghdad from November 2001 to May 2002.

Keith D. Watenpaugh (Ph.D. Modern Middle East History, UCLA 1999) is Assistant Professor of History at Le Moyne College in Syracuse, New York. He also serves as Associate Director of the college's Center for Peace and Global Studies and is an Affiliate in Research of the Harvard University Center for Middle East Studies. He has written extensively on the origins of the Baath Party, Arab Nationalism, and European colonialism in the Levant. This was his second research visit to Iraq in six months.

1.5 The Iraqi Observatory

To maintain the momentum and follow-up on the connections and findings of this report, the authors, in concert with other Middle East specialist and Iraqi colleagues have begun to form the Iraqi Observatory (IO). Associates of the IO will make subsequent visits to Baghdad and other cities, continue to focus on issues of academic freedom and ethics against the backdrop of both the occupation and the emergence of new structures of power, and produce critical and engaged writing on the situation as it unfolds in Iraq. For more information, please contact the authors of this report.

1.7 Acknowledgements



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The authors are solely responsible for the descriptions, analyses and conclusions of this report. Their findings do not necessarily represent the opinions of these organizations and groups. Any support should not be interpreted as an endorsement of the report or its conclusions.

Additional Information

International Crisis Group, "Baghdad: A Race Against the Clock" (11 June 2003)
<http://www.crisisweb.org/projects/showreport.cfm?reportid=1000>

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2. Material and Organizational Conditions of Baghdad's Academic, Cultural and Intellectual Resources

2.1 Summary

Iraqis have borrowed from a story in *The Thousand and One Nights* the name “Ali Baba” to describe the loosely organized groups of looters who took advantage of the power vacuum created by the collapse of the Baathist regime to steal among other things, appliances, building materials, communication devices, electrical transformers, computers, and books. While most of this looting has abated, some looters have moved on to disassembling entire buildings brick by brick. This is certainly the case for the late-Ottoman Qushla located near Suq al-Saray and the Mandate-era former Ministry of Defence complex at Bab al-Muazzam. Ali Baba is an apt, if not ironic, euphemism: he stole from thieves. Similarly the looting was mostly directed against state institutions, though not only those associated with the Baath Party; in very limited instances, private homes and businesses also fell victim. In several cases, arson accompanied the looting. Stories, some verging on “urban legends,” are in wide circulation that *agents provocateurs* of uncertain origin set these fires. We have no evidence that this is the case; nor however, is there evidence that efforts are underway to investigate/dispel these reports.



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Almost all state institutions, universities, libraries and research institutes were harmed, although in some cases the looting and destruction was limited to the theft of computers and other easily replaceable items. Looters and vandals damaged classroom environments and research spaces; even in places not physically destroyed, they stole chairs, tables, blackboards, windows and doors. Items of unique value are gone. And not just old Ottoman archives, historic manuscripts, books and documents, but also student records and transcripts - the mundane trappings of everyday life in a modern educational system.

Iraq's structures of teaching, learning and research not only suffered substantially after the war, but continue to face the cumulative effects of two decades of mismanagement, Baathist cultural politics, and regime paranoia. This has accelerated since the early 1990s when the state took extreme austerity measures as a response to UN sanctions and the fall in oil revenues. As a consequence many of these institutions are frozen in terms of development somewhere in the late 1980s. For these, the looting was just a last humiliating act in a longer process of erosion that transformed what was perhaps the most elaborate and well-developed higher educational and research system in the Arab world into a pale shadow of its former self.

This chapter provides a snapshot of current material and organizational conditions at the capital's universities, libraries and research facilities; a subsequent section will address specifically academic life at these institutions, the way in which the higher education structures of Iraq were corrupted by the party elite and security apparatus, and how the current program of de-Baathification is affecting the university system.

2.2 Universities

The group surveyed conditions at three campuses in the capital: Baghdad University, primarily the Bab al-Muazzam Campus, al-Mustansiriyya University, and al-Nahrayn (Two Rivers) University, formerly Saddam University. The universities share many of the problems brought by the war and its aftermath, namely safety issues, unreliable water and electricity and transportation. Moreover, these institutions still face fundamental problems from before the fall of the regime, namely, being cut off from all substantive international contact for much of the last two decades. In real terms, this meant a suspension of subscriptions to academic journals, library acquisition, and travel abroad for faculty members and students. Most fundamentally, freedom of thought and expression and academic independence, were severely limited throughout the period.



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A drastic fall in state investments in universities after 1990 made the pre-war situation worse. It was determined at the time that as it was impossible for the state to continue to fully fund universities and maintain a level of quality, it would create a multi-tiered and hierarchical university system. This new system neglected the established universities in Baghdad and provincial centers to the benefit of ad hoc elite institutions like Saddam University. Colleges of law, technology and medicine were founded along the same lines and lavished with resources with the intent of supplying the state with a loyal class of highly educated and competent technocrats.

In terms of the most pressing needs, universities, students and their families have organized buses and carpools for transportation. Moreover, the low level of student and faculty absenteeism impressed us at a time of rampant insecurity. Nevertheless, due to actual or imagined threats to personal safety women faculty members and students have found it increasingly difficult to come to school. This structural disadvantage far more than the much-vaunted Islamist profile at the universities may impair the access to higher education that Iraqi women faculty and students have traditionally enjoyed. During the several hours we spent on the campuses in Baghdad, there seemed to be little difference between the immediate ante bellum period and now in terms of religious or social pressure on women. While women have held positions of prominence in Iraqi higher education and female students make-up at least 50% of the student population, female faculty members expressed concern that this role has changed for the worse over the last decade and they openly worry that it may continue to decline.

All universities have undergone sweeping changes in administration at the behest of the CPA in the middle of the academic year: coalition officials dismissed the presidents of universities and deans of faculties as well as most of the heads of departments. Where CPA interference has been minimal, faculty elections have been smooth and consensual. As in other sectors of society, the CPA's heavy-handed purges of the universities' rank and file lies at the heart of academic discontent (see below). Many of those faculty who have been removed from their teaching posts have been able to make informal arrangements with their colleges to continue teaching as "volunteers" without a salary - such a solution, however, can not continue indefinitely, and the start of the next academic year will be a decisive test.

Education advisors associated with the CPA have also indicated that new admissions procedures will be in place for the Fall term as part of a broader reform of educational structures.

Despite the onerous circumstances, including the lack of tables and chairs, examination booklets and even chalk, the normal rhythm of the academic year is beginning to return to the city's campuses. Students, excited and happy to be at school, had set up for themselves makeshift cafeterias where young men and women gathered, talked, debated and enjoyed the company of one another. The students were all well



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dressed – a major accomplishment in the heat and without running water. Their professors complained about them in ways comparable to what we say about our own undergraduates, suggesting a certain normalcy was taking shape. The resourcefulness and adaptability of Iraqi faculty and students was readily in evidence.

2.2.1 Baghdad University

Baghdad University (founded in 1957) is one of the oldest secular institutions of higher learning in Iraq. The Walter Gropius-designed main campus – al-Jadriyya – is on a peninsula formed by a bend in the Tigris River and suffered minimal damage during the war, but was looted afterwards. Its liberal arts-oriented branch campus at Bab al-Muazzam is closer to the urban core. Approximately 80,000 undergraduates and graduates attend both campuses. In mid-May, the American administrator for higher education in Iraq, Dr. Andrew “Drew” Erdmann, choreographed the election of a new university president in a raucous opening session. The new president, Dr. Sami al-Muzaffar, is a biochemist by training, a Baathist refusnik and one of the most respected scholars on campus. The Americans had vetted the credentials of new administrators before or shortly after the election. Classes resumed thereafter on a limited schedule and at the time we were in Iraq students were about to sit for their final exams.

The Bab al-Muazzam campus is a collection of buildings interspersed between small landscaped gardens. The entrance of the campus – like all campuses – is heavily guarded by US military forces, some of them patrolling the alley along which faculties are spread. The main library as well as some of the departmental libraries have been devastated by looting and in some cases, fire. Soot blackens offices and some still smell of smoke. Thieves had taken furniture, air conditioners and electrical appliances from the History department's offices. We had conversations with faculty and students in darkened and over-heated rooms, due to the lack of electricity. Nevertheless, members of the teaching and administrative staff were optimistic and forward-looking.

With the exception of a few comments on misunderstandings, deliberate or accidental, between the American authorities and the faculty of the Bab al-Muazzam campus, most of the professors and deans we spoke to were willing to leave the past behind them, and to embark on something new and hopefully, better. A recurring complaint was an inability to make contact with the CPA officials in charge of the universities.

A striking feature of the Bab al-Muazzam campus is the “battle” taking place on the walls and public spaces between rival student organizations. These new groups, which would have been illegal in the old system,



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have coalesced around various interests both political and religious and a whole range of rapidly evolving ideologies. Perhaps fearing the radicalization and religious polarization which has gripped al-Mustansiriyya University, a secular student organization has taken to displaying signs like the this:

The campus central library at al-Jadriyya is mostly intact, with losses at the utmost of 10% of the total collection. Yet, like all libraries in Iraq, it is woefully out of date, with the collection of new books and periodicals ceasing almost entirely after 1990. While al-Jadriyya's central library escaped destruction, the same does not hold for the Bab al-Muazzam campus' Wazirriyya central library, which contained the Fine Arts, Humanities and Literature collections and has been looted and burned. Several departmental libraries, which often housed copies of doctoral dissertations, have been destroyed.

Following a quick survey of the Department of Music in Baghdad University's Faculty of Fine Arts, it was determined that at least 1,000 music records (vinyl disks), 5,000 tapes, dozens of record players, 30 pianos and hundreds of books were stolen from the Musical Arts Department, including Opera, Baroque and Iraqi recordings. Most recordings were stored in the Iza'at al-Sha'b (People's Radio) building which was bombed during the US attack on Baghdad, and/or at Uday Hussein's "private station" Iza'at Sawt al-Shabab (Voice of Youth Radio.) The holdings of both institutions have been stolen and catalogues only exist in the form of M.A. theses like that completed just six months ago by Ms. Zeinab Subhi on 1950s radio in Iraq. She has assumed responsibility for the library of the Iraqi Broadcasting Station.

2.2.2 Al-Mustansiriyya University

Al-Mustansiriyya University is named for the al-Mustansiriyya Madrasa, a beautifully restored 13th century Islamic college set on the banks of the Tigris. The modern university, founded in the 1960s as a private institution and later nationalized, today operates mainly from its new campus to the northeast of central Baghdad. It offers graduate and doctoral degrees in most arts and sciences. Seemingly more overtly politicized than Baghdad University, local media reports that the school has been the site of student-on-student violence and the assassination of a dean. The climate of openness has resulted in the emergence of a profusion of student groups. Again, hall walls are covered with announcements calling for the formation of new student associations, political opposition to the American occupation and in some cases, denouncing faculty as Baathists, or as this poster implies, un-Islamic.

At the university, we met with the Dean of the College of Education, Professor Jirjis, a geographer, as well as members of the History faculty. Like the discussion with the members of the faculty at Baghdad University, first and foremost, these educators were concerned for the safety of their students and the creation of safe and healthy working environments, especially as the students take their final exams.



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When asked what they needed as scholars and teachers in the future, Dr. Musa Muhammad Tuwayrish, a professor of International Relations responded, Iraq is “a drowning man in need of oxygen, all else comes second.” We encountered this response often; the immediate needs relating to material, security and transportation conditions are so great that it is difficult to think beyond just the mere day-to-day. However, in the course of the same conversation, two of the younger faculty members, Dr. Salih al-‘Akili, an assistant professor of Modern European History, and Dr. Firdaws ‘Abd al-Rahman, an assistant professor of Ottoman History, expressed a very specific sense of what they needed, namely internet communication, faculty exchange programs, and support to conduct research abroad.

These needs were reinforced during a conversation with Dr. Tahir Muhammad al-Bakka’, the newly-elected president of the university, a historian who wrote his doctoral dissertation on the early Pahlavi Dynasty in Iran (and in so doing made an oblique criticism of Saddam’s regime) and a former high-ranking member of the Baath party who has escaped de-Baathification.

Bakka’ confirmed that plans were underway to restore services to the school and he had just received an approximately \$30,000 disbursement from the CPA to meet immediate needs and begin maintenance. He is an energetic and enthusiastic advocate for his school.

The library facilities at al-Mustansiriyya have been destroyed as have the offices housing the university’s central records administration.

2.2.3 Al-Nahrayn University

The former Saddam University – founded in the mid-1990s as response to the embargo – is located next to the al-Jadiriyya campus of Baghdad University. It has proven controversial among academics because it was carved out of its older neighbor and drained it of its best faculty and students. Students faced high admission standards, tough entrance interviews and a rigorous curriculum. Graduates had to work for the government for a fixed term. Unlike Baghdad University, whose expansion seems unchecked, al-Nahrayn has a student body of only 2,500. Seeking to avoid the pathologies of large state schools, the university’s classes are small and there is a low teacher-student ratio. The school’s new president, Dr. Mahmud Hayawi Hamash, a medical doctor, hopes that as it is redeveloped, the school can remain an elite institution.



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2.2.4 Recommendations

1) The modernization and restocking of university library holdings and teaching facilities should take the highest priority along side the reconstitution of institutions such as the National Museum or the National Library and Archives.

Rationale: Investment in the human capital of Iraq and the country's future is urgent, university libraries have a pre-eminent role to play in that process.

2) A centralized international organization of collegiate/university librarians should be formed immediately to work directly with Iraqi university departmental and central librarians to coordinate major acquisitions and to handle donations.

Rationale: The creation of a centrally organized body under a UNESCO umbrella, for example, would guaranty a multilateral approach and would help to reduce redundant efforts, acquire efficiencies of scale and ensure the responsiveness of the CPA.

3) Free, uncensored, unfiltered and unlimited internet and www access should be introduced to Iraqi university campuses.

Rationale: Unfettered access to the tools or information technology is a guarantor of liberal values and the best and most efficient means of integrating Iraqi academia into global networks of intellectual exchange.

4) Adequate security measures must be taken not only to secure the campuses, but also to maintain equal access by female students, staff and faculty.

Rationale: Guaranteeing physical access to campus by women will help prevent any further erosion of their status.

2.3 Scientific and Scholarly Societies

We visited two of Iraq's leading academic institutions, Bayt al-Hikma (House of Wisdom) and the Iraqi Academy of Sciences. Despite the fact that both institutions share many functions and associates, Bayt al-Hikma falls under the control of the administrator for culture, the Italian diplomat Ambassador Pietro Cordone, while the Academy has been placed in Erdmann's education portfolio. In the pre-war period, both institutions came under tight control by the regime's now-disestablished Presidential Office.



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Affiliation with either place carried with it special privileges and stipends and thus the regime often employed these institutional forms as conduits for rewards to those most loyal. The institutions suffered heavy losses during the looting. The Bayt al-Hikma's library was looted; gone too are artifacts from its small museum. The Academy of Sciences suffered less, however its remarkable library has had some of its most precious books systematically removed. Still, both institutions will be well suited after significant investments in infrastructure to host international conferences, workshops and symposia, and to serve as a nexus between the Iraqi and international academic communities.

A list of other institutions not visited will appear in a later appendix.

2.3.1 Bayt al-Hikma (House of Wisdom)

Located at the northern end of Baghdad's historic core between the Tigris and the old Ministry of Defence complex, Bayt al-Hikma has taken its name from a translation/research institute founded by the Abbasid Caliph al-Ma'mun in 832 CE that was famous for its translations of Greek philosophical texts into Arabic. The modern Bayt al-Hikma was established in 1995 by the Presidential Office itself. As originally conceived, this Bayt al-Hikma functioned as a research center, with lecture facilities, publications, a library and museum. The faculty associates of Bayt al-Hikma were drawn from the various universities in Baghdad and divided according to discipline. Junior researchers received stipends and office space at the institute. It produced several journals, including a monthly general interest cultural magazine, the *Majallat al-Hikma* as well as useful editions/translations of sources and documents in foreign languages.

Before the fall of the regime, the Bayt al-Hikma acquired the reputation of being intimately tied to the elite inner-circles of power. Doctoral dissertations and other scholarly work attributed to members of Saddam Hussein's family were ghost-written by faculty affiliates. More generally, the Bayt al-Hikma served as a center for the production of regime-sanctioned knowledge and political orthodoxy. It was surprising then that of all the institutions in Baghdad, it has been among the first to receive money for redevelopment from the CPA. The staff have begun repairing and repainting one wing of the complex with a \$17,000 grant from Ambassador Cordone's predecessor, the American diplomat John Limbert. New computers were in evidence as were chairs and tables. When asked about why his office had moved quickly on behalf of Bayt al-Hikma, Cordone, replied that it had been "cleansed" of high-ranking Baathists, estimating that 75 people had been removed. He also noted that a new international board of trustees for the institute was being formed to oversee its redevelopment. Despite Cordone's support, the future of Bayt al-Hikma is problematic: Erdmann anticipates that for ideological reasons it may be allowed to "wither away."



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We asked the chair of the history program of Bayt al-Hikma, the Medievalist Dr. Abdul-Jaffar al-Naji about the connections with the *ancien régime*. He admitted that these were complex and shaped by the repressive nature of the Baathists. However, in an interesting turn, he used words like “re-establish” and “re-institute” to describe the ongoing work of the institution. These were not references to the pre-war efforts of Bayt al-Hikma, but rather to the original 9th Century version thereof. This style of conscious anachronism was a central practice of Baathist nationalist historicist thought and it is significant that this institution has fallen back into that pattern. Consistent with its “forerunner,” the center was refocusing efforts on translation, organizing a conference of Orientalists in November on the civilization of Wadi al-Rafidain (Mesopotamia) and publishing a multi-volume work on the history of Ashurnasirpal’s Babylon. Again, this focus on the pre-Islamic “Arab” past of Mesopotamia – the “restoration” of Babylon being the most prominent example of the phenomenon – was a key element of the nationalist meta-narratives employed by the regime and invented and defended by faculty from the Bayt al-Hikma. During our two visits, we noted a cautiousness, defensiveness and lack of openness on the part of most of the faculty at Bayt al-Hikma.

2.3.2 al-Majma‘ al-‘Ilmi al-‘Iraqi: The Iraqi Academy of Sciences

Unlike Bayt al-Hikma, which dates only from the last decade, the Academy of Sciences is the oldest institution of its kind in Iraq. Founded under the Hashemites in 1948 and modeled on the Cairene and Damascene Academies, it draws together fellows from various disciplines, including Modern and Ancient Middle Eastern Languages, History, Social Sciences and Physical Sciences. Faculty associates and researchers were given office space, research support and library access. The building complex, designed by noted Iraqi architect Rifaat Chadirji, is located in the city’s Waziriyya district. In addition to a main, multi-storied building, outbuildings house conference rooms, additional office and storage space and a print shop. The facilities were looted, though not burned, and for the most part damage to the building seems superficial. The Academy also housed an extensive and comprehensive library. The library’s collection is especially strong in language, literature, history and the humanities and has benefited from the donation of entire personal collections, like those of noted Iraqi historians Ahmad Sousa and Abbas al-Azzawi. Gone are microform copies of manuscripts and periodicals as well as the older books in Arabic, Ottoman and Persian. According to the Academy’s remarkable head librarian Ms. Juwan Mahmud, these books were not looted, but rather taken by someone with expertise in language and literature for safekeeping and that when the situation stabilizes, “they will be returned.” Mahmud did not know who this was, nor had she had any contact with this person. She has graciously provided us with a summary of current holdings and a translation will appear in an appendix in the following weeks.



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We met with the faculty and staff of the Academy of Sciences twice. On the first visit, the Academy's general secretary, Dr. Ahmad Matlub, a well-known literary critic and Arabic language specialist, received us. We noticed that the staff had taken measures to secure the remains of the library and control access to the stacks. By the second visit, it was clear that staff had begun clearing away debris and cleaning in earnest. The relationship of the Academy to the CPA had only been determined a few days before our arrival. As stipulated above, it falls under the jurisdiction of Erdmann. Its uncertain status has meant that it had yet to enjoy the kind of financial support that Bayt al-Hikma has received; likewise, prior to our leaving Erdmann had not visited the institution, though he was in close contact with its director, Dr. Hayawi, also president of al-Nahrayn University.

Without clear support until this point, the residual leadership of the Academy, which has also witnessed the removal of several individuals on political grounds, has not begun to make plans beyond basic repairs. Due to its respected position in Iraqi society, as well as its solid pre-Baathist tradition of scholarly excellence, the Academy will certainly regain its status as the leading scholarly/ professional body in the country. In the past, the academy supported the systematic study of Syriac and Kurdish language and literature. Consequently, it may be able to provide a venue for greater cooperation between intellectuals representing the different components of the Iraqi national community. Seeking to build connections with the West, Dr. Hayawi has extended a formal invitation to the Middle East Studies Association to hold a joint meeting at the Academy in the coming months.

2.3.3 Recommendations

1) International scholarly and professional organizations should immediately create structural, professional and personal links with their colleagues at both institutions.

Rationale: While questions remain about the long-term viability of the Bayt al-Hikma, both institutions are structurally competent to make and maintain such links.

2) The Middle East Studies Association and similar groups should respond quickly to invitations like that provided by Dr. Hayawi to hold joint conferences and symposia.

Rationale: This kind of exchange will ensure that Iraqi and non-Iraqi academic and intellectual relationships are based on professional dignity, probity, equality and collegiality. Moreover, quickly reintegrating intellectuals who are committed to a liberal vision of society at both institutions will reinforce their standing and strengthen the bases of modern and secular civil society.



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3) *The international academic community should be willing to help introduce the affiliated faculty of the Academy of Sciences and Bayt al-Hikma to contemporary research in all fields, but most especially in fields once considered off limits by the Baathist apparatus. This includes, but is not limited to the fields of Islamic Studies, Women and Gender, Truth and Reconciliation, Media and Society, and Human Rights Jurisprudence.*

Rationale: Introducing these fields will aid in the articulation of new and vital research agendas at both institutions and again harness the human capital at each as engines for the creation of civil society.

4) *The restoration and modernization of the printing facilities at the Academy of Sciences should be undertaken as soon as possible.*

Rationale: Before the war the Academy of Science was one of Iraq's primary sources of independent scholarly books, translations and edited volumes. A modest investment in their printing facilities would suffice for the resumption of publishing. It could be used to publish Iraqi academic journals and together with other presses, licensed to reprint copyrighted textbooks and other urgently needed materials.

2.4 Libraries and Archives

An initial and comprehensive investigation of the conditions at several library and manuscript collections was conducted in late-May 2003 by Nabil al-Takriti, a Ph.D. candidate in History at the University of Chicago who has family ties to Iraq and has done research and NGO work there in the past. The report is available at the website of the Middle East Librarians' Association's Committee on Iraqi Libraries. Mr. al-Takriti's report provided a starting point for many of our investigations, and in some cases, we were able to confirm his initial findings. A subsequent appendix will update Mr. al-Takriti's work.

The focus of our efforts was the documentation of the status of the National Library and Archives, the Awqaf library, the Qadiriyya Library and the university libraries. We also were interested in the pre-war program of archival centralization, which brought historic documents from provincial collections to the capital. An additional concern was an examination of the role of non-state actors in the rescue of elements of the library's collection, primarily that of a Shiite faction from Sadr/Revolution City, a suburb of Baghdad. This group claims to act in the name of al-Hawza al-Ilmiyya, or college of Shiite clerics of Najaf.

Baghdad book dealers report the availability for sale of books and manuscripts from all of the looted libraries and collections. Visiting the famous Friday book market at Al-Mutanabbi Street, we confirmed this fact, although the permanent bookshops have not – it seems – been implicated. Nevertheless, many of



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the book dealers have systematically removed any identifying markings – stamps, library cards, first pages and interior pages – that indicate the original provenance of the books.

2.4.1 The National Library and Archive

The building that once housed the National Library and Archives is located on Rashid Street opposite the Mandate-era buildings of the old Ministry of Defence. The modern three-storied structure has four wings built around a central courtyard. It included library stacks, reading rooms, microform reading equipment, bindery, photocopying offices, laser printers and photography labs. For a précis on its holdings see the previous report of group member Edouard Méténier at the MELCOM website. We met twice with library staff, including the current director, Mr. Kamil Jawad Ashur. On the second occasion, we made a complete visual survey of the building's interior itself. We should note that the “Hawza” has added their own guards, complete with a semblance of a uniform of black shirts, slacks and beards, to the library – perhaps not trusting the library staff to adequately care for what is left, or to monitor events at the library and their interests therein.

According to library employees and representatives of the “Hawza,” the library fell victim to two separate arson attacks. During the first attack, while the Americans were at the gates of Baghdad, looters took most of the high-ticket items like photocopiers, computers, scanners and office equipment. A small fire broke-out in the building at that time, perhaps to cover the tracks of the looters. In a point that is still unclear, Ashur noted that employees moved books from the off-limits collection – perhaps both rare and politically sensitive books – to what he termed a “secret safe location” before the hostilities. He refused to disclose the location to us; noting, quite rightly that it would then “no longer be a secret.” When asked if the CPA knew of the location of this cache of books, he assured us they did. In our conversation with Ashur, he estimated that 50% of the library's collection burned. Later discoveries cast doubt on the amount destroyed, and actual numbers may be an order of magnitude less than estimated. He was unwilling to share with us how he reached this figure and there are no records whatsoever of what is stored in various remote locations.

Ashur confirmed that among the items packed and stored before the war were newspapers, periodicals and Ottoman archival materials including *tapu* (cadastral) registers, *sijils* (court proceedings) and *firman*s (imperial decrees.) He thinks that around 350 *tapu* documents and no more than one half of the 1500 *sijil* records remain. He also confirmed that over the last five or six years the central authorities moved the entire Ottoman collection of Mosul and about half of the Ottoman collection of Basra to Baghdad. The complete lack of precision and the fact that stories often shifted and amounts of books and other materials



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ranged so widely from day to day, led us again to doubt the overall veracity of the employees' accounts of what occurred and moreover their competence as library administrators.

Nothing prepared us for the sheer horror of the interior of the library. All that remains in the main wing are piles of ash that had been books. The heat in the entry hall of the library had been so intense that it had begun to melt the ceramic floor tiles. Much of the structure had lost integrity from the heat and the cement walls crumbled at the touch. Those areas not directly burned, perhaps half the building, are covered in an oily soot which has provided a useful medium for graffiti. Scattered throughout the library is the phrase "Death to Saddam the Apostate" and signed by the "Hawza," suggesting that they saw their intervention on behalf of the library as a combination of civic duty, religious activism and a blow against the memory of the regime.

Iraqi engineers and representatives from Cordone's office inspected the building and pronounced it unusable. The ambassador informed us that he hopes to be able to use the officers' club building at al-Balat al-Malki as a temporary storage location while a new structure is built. Plans for this move are tentative. There are no immediate plans to rebuild the library, and the future employment status of the library employees is unclear.

After the first conflagration, and shortly before a more devastating fire broke out representatives of the Haqq Mosque in the renamed Sadr City, under the leadership of their media-savvy sheikh al-Sayyid Abdul-Mun'ım al-Mussawi entered the library and welded shut a steel fire door on the ground floor, sealing off an entire wing. Ashur estimated that 30% of the collection "mostly books" was inside. Again, it is hard to check the accuracy of his figures. Meanwhile young men using commandeered trucks transported a large portion of the books that could not be secured at the library to their mosque where they are currently stored. Mahmud al-Sheikh Hajim the senior caretaker of the collection claims they are in possession of 300,000 volumes. Cordone told us that al-Mussawi had promised to return 350,000 books. Both of these numbers struck us as high. During a visit to al-Haqq Mosque, we estimated that the books occupied approx. 150-200 cubic meters. We also found more than fifty, 50-liter sacks of archival materials from the Mandate through the Revolution of 1958, and confirmed earlier press reports of the presence of books in Hebrew, some with handwritten comment-aries. Hajim did not allow us to copy down or photograph title pages of any of the books.

The building where the books are stored is safe, and only Hajim has a key and he must first receive approval from one of his superiors before opening the door. The mosque is never deserted. While the room is not ventilated, and interior temperatures were much higher than those outside, the lack of humidity would indicate that the books are not in any immediate danger of deterioration.



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Hajim provided us with no information as to the modalities of how they plan to return the books to the library. However, our sense was that they planned to do so once *they* were certain the books would be safe and under Iraqi control. Al-Mussawi has been in contact with Cordone and the latter expressed a real fondness and respect for the former, a signal perhaps that they have arrived at an agreement of some kind.

2.4.2 The Ministry of Religious Endowments (al-Awqaf) Library

The shocking pictures of the Al-Awqaf Ministry in flames first appeared on Arab television stations during the war. When we arrived in Baghdad, we confirmed that fire had destroyed the building housing the library and archives of the al-Awqaf. In order to update al-Takriti's earlier report, we interviewed al-Sheikh Husayn Al-Shami, a leading Shiite reformist cleric now responsible for the al-Awqaf at the institution's temporary location in Munir al-Qadi's house on the corniche in al-Azamiyya.

Al-Shami was personally unaware of the issues concerning the library and he relied on his employees for information on what had happened. He stipulated that the library staff had been able to rescue a portion of the library's total holdings, but was vague as to how much was secure and behind locked doors. Valuable items

had in fact been safeguarded, he had been told, but he had also learned that 50% of the publications were burned or looted. He was more loquacious when asked about his vision for the future of the library. In his view, the library itself would be rebuilt and employ modern forms of cataloging and information technology. Once completed, the safeguarded manuscripts would be made available to researchers. When asked about the two major libraries at the Shiite shrine cities, he informed us that they were safe.

The deputy head of the library, Mr. Muhibb al-Din Yassin informed us that the only catalog of the manuscripts in the al-Awqaf collection was prepared by Dr. 'Abdallah al-Jaburi in the 1970's. Since then, the three great manuscript collections (Sadr, Ta'i and Suhrawardi), which altogether numbered around 980 manuscripts were added to the library, but were never fully cataloged. Until the full collection is professionally cataloged, it will be impossible to obtain a comprehensive picture of what was lost in the looting or in the preceding decades.

2.4.3 Al-Qadiriyya Mosque, Library and Soup Kitchen Complex

Located in the Bab al-Sheikh neighborhood, the al-Qadiriyya holds the earthly remains of 'Abd al-Qadir al-Gaylani, founder of the Qadiriyya order of Sufis. The Qadiriyya is one of the most important orders in the



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Islamic world and it is extremely popular in South Asia. Before the war, thousands of pilgrims from India and Pakistan would visit each year and Saddam Hussein made the shrine complex into a showcase of his regime's support for Islam. Consequently, the old complex underwent a major, vulgar and still unfinished expansion. This phenomenon of state-sponsored restoration was not limited to the al-Qadiriyya, but took shape throughout Iraq. The Shiite shrines of al-Kazimayn, Samarra, Najaf and Kerbala, the last two having been severely damaged in the 1991 uprising, were all "restored;" and in Baghdad, the shrines of Al-Hallaj, Ma'ruf al-Karkhi, and Sultan Ali also underwent a process of forced renovation. Several Christian churches, most notably the ancient churches of Mosul have likewise been compelled to undergo reconstruction, and like the al-Qadiriyya, these projects were not completed before the war.

While visiting the complex, we were received warmly by the *mutawalli* (executor), the elegant al-Sayyid ʿAbd al-Rahman al-Gaylani, 16th successor to Sheikh ʿAbd al-Qadir. Holding a degree in political science from George Washington University, the *mutawalli* noted that no officials from the CPA, save a representative of the US military had visited him, and wryly observed that when the British created Iraq they first offered the crown to his ancestor, rather than the Hashemite Faysal. In line with this sentiment, he advocates a return of the monarchy to Iraq. He emphasized the need for security and hoped that once resumed they could begin serving meals to the poor at the mosque's 900-year old soup kitchen. Prior to the war they had served 1500 meals a day and were now down to less than 100.

It was at the al-Qadiriyya that the group had its most pleasant surprise. The large research library at the mosque appeared unscathed and secure. Built from various private collections mainly from Gaylani family members, the library opened in 1954. According to Mr. Nuri al-Mufti, who has worked as librarian at the al-Qadiriyya for the better part of four decades, the collection includes 65,000 publications and 2,000 manuscripts, many of which were stored for safe keeping prior to hostilities.

In an important correction to the story told to Mr. al-Takriti, the *mutawalli*, the shrine wardens and the library's director all denied that boxes containing manuscripts from the al-Awqaf library were moved to the al-Qadiriyya complex, casting further doubt on the credibility of al-Awqaf employees.

2.4.4 Recommendations

1) *International efforts should be undertaken to aid Iraqi library professionals in cataloguing by both card and digital systems the lost and remaining stocks of books and materials. However, by no means should such an effort take priority over the restoration of university libraries.*



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Rationale: As noted in the report, current holdings are not in jeopardy of further deterioration or pilfering. Likewise, there are no permanent facilities available to house either the National Library and Archives or al-Awqaf; and their staff are in a state of reorganization. Until permanent structures built, such efforts would have little lasting effect. Only after a thorough cataloging has taken place, should efforts like those made to restore the Sarajevo library begin.

2) Foreign library professionals, especially those from Arab countries should work to establish professional training programs for Iraqi librarians.

Rationale: Very few of the people directing or caring for libraries in Iraq now are trained librarians. A case in point is Ms. Juwan Mahmud of the Academy of Sciences. While dedicated to her job and the institution, she has an advanced degree in English. For the most part library staffs have not received training in modern library techniques, cataloging, or con-servation. A model program along these lines has begun at the National Museum.

3) Interpol and the US FBI should begin to track and work to return stolen books and manuscripts like they are doing for artifacts stolen from the museum or archaeological sites.

Rationale: Traffic in manuscripts and books is taking place openly. Just as ancient artifacts have been placed on international watch lists, so too should these items. Efforts to produce a catalogue of identifying markings are underway by MELA members, however additional forensic methods may be needed to identify “cleansed” books.

4) Iraqis should be able to return looted books to a central facility without fear of prosecution. Under no circumstances should rewards be offered for the return of books before current collections have been completely secured.

Rationale: National pride combined with community outrage has led many Iraqis to return looted materials. This has included books. The announcement of a general amnesty may lead to more books being returned, especially if it becomes apparent that criminal investigations will take place to recover stolen materials.

5) The former Ottoman barracks, the Qushla, with the attached governor’s palace or the old Ministry of Defense complex should be considered as the new permanent location for the National Library and Archives or other culturally oriented activities.



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Rationale: Both of these structures have a long history in Baghdad and are visual reminders of the city's Ottoman and Hashemite past. Owned by the state, the CPA has made no effort to protect either site and looters are taking them apart with impunity, so much so that they are in danger of collapse. These buildings could be easily adapted to modern use, while at the same time anchor the city's main historic district.

6) *Every effort should be made to prevent the holdings of the National Library and Archives and the al-Awqaf from becoming subject to conflict between non-state actors like the Sadr City-Hawza or other groups and an emergent Iraqi state.*

Rationale: Various ad hoc groups have successfully integrated themselves into several spheres of Islamic high culture and administration in the city. Until now they have been cooperative and generous in their aid, however, it is unclear how they will relate to a future Iraqi government. Conflict is unlikely, but the CPA and other bodies should monitor the situation.

7) *European, North American and Middle Eastern national archives should launch initiatives to microfilm government documents relating to Iraq.*

Rationale: These initiatives would make up in a very limited way the losses incurred by Iraq's national archives and help Iraqi researchers - beyond the privileged few who will be able to travel to Washington, London, Paris or Istanbul - to re-examine their modern history *in situ*.

8) *Structural engineers should conduct a study on the water groundswell that is threatening the al-Qadiriyya complex and endangering the library and ossuary.*

Rationale: The al-Qadiriyya is built on very high groundwater levels. The water is literally bubbling onto the surface because the war has damaged the previous drainage system set up by a British company in the 1950s.

Additional Information:

Middle East Librarians Association Committee on Iraqi Libraries

<http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/IRAQ/mela/melairaq.html>

Middle East Library Committee

<http://www.ex.ac.uk/MELCOM/index.htm>



3. Academic and Intellectual Life in Contemporary Baghdad

3.1 Summary

Baghdad is a city alive to debate, discussion and intellectual exploration. The removal of the old regime eliminated the ideological checks and networks of surveillance which prevented free expression; likewise, the most pernicious forms of oppression – the language of self-censorship and the act of internal policing – are ebbing away and Iraqis of all strata are testing for themselves the very limits of free speech and thought. To even the most jaded observer these are revolutionary times in the capital. It would be tempting but wrong to make analogies to Berlin in the moments after the fall of the Wall or Prague and Budapest following the collapse of Soviet hegemony. Unlike the citizens of those cities, Baghdadis live under foreign occupation and lack the rudimentary structures of public safety and urban life itself; while Iraq is freer than it has been in recent memory, that sense of freedom is tempered by a palpable trepidation and a lack of confidence in the future.

Boys hawking armfuls of dozens of newspapers fill the streets. Political graffiti cover the walls of public buildings and dueling banners festoon old statues or the kitschy public art of the *ancien régime*. Groups have renamed squares and entire neighborhoods after beloved figures from the past like ‘Abd al-Karim Qasim or the murdered Shiite cleric Sheikh Muhammad al-Sadr. With this grand and anarchic project of iconoclasm, Baghdadis are laying claim to the public spaces of their city and in so doing re-inscribing on its face new layers of meaning and making new memories.

However there are reasons to be concerned that this openness and vitality may vanish in the face of increased insecurity, media controls and the failure to resume support for the arts. Further, it is far too early to get a broad sense of what kinds of research – primarily in the humanities and social sciences – would now be undertaken by Iraqi scholars. Where we did get a picture of projects under preparation, Bayt al-Hikma for example, the research agenda described was not a departure from the past, but rather conceived within the narrow formulaic restrictions of Baathist thought. Architects now freed from the often-capricious demands of the president and his staff envision Baghdad as a canvass on which to experiment with regionalism and new environmental and technological innovations.

Nonetheless, as the occupation of the country continues, especially if it becomes more heavy-handed in the face of organized resistance, public discourse, which until now has not pivoted on anti-Americanism, may increasingly lose its multidimensionality and autonomy and grow polarized, sterile, colorless and monolithic.



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3.2 Academic Life under the Baath

As university professionals we were keen to learn what challenges our colleagues had faced in the past. A series of conversations with Iraqi academics, primarily Alya Sousa, ‘Imad al-Jawhiri, Hussam al-Rawi al-Rifai’, Kamal Muzhar Ahmad, Issam Khafaji and Farouq Darweesh provided the raw material for this section. Each possesses different origins and professional trajectories, but all were gracious, honest and forthcoming in their conversations with us. Sousa is an American University in Beirut-trained historian, whose father Ahmad Sousa, along with ‘Abd al-Azziz Douri and Majid Khadduri, were the leading historians of a previous generation. She has written on the inter-war period and left the Department of History at the University of Baghdad in the early 1990s. Jawahiri, a specialist of contemporary Arab intellectual and social history, who did both his undergraduate and graduate work in Iraq, is distinguished among his colleagues as one of the few who refused to join the Baath. Hussam al-Rawi, a champion of architectural regionalism and historic preservation, is an urbane English-trained architect. He has served in various administrative positions at Baghdad University and was expelled due to his rank within the Baath Party structure in May 2003. Among his most recent and celebrated commissions is the mosque-tomb complex of one of the three founders of the Baath itself, Michel ‘Aflaq, who died in Baghdad in 1989. Kamal Muzhar is one of the most respected historians in Iraq. Now retired he still supervises Ph.D. students and conducts graduate seminars at Baghdad University. Issam Khafaji and Farouq Darweesh fled Iraq in 1979 and have now returned as advisors to the CPA’s Ministry of Higher Education. Khafaji, a leading Iraqi dissident has taught both in the US and Europe, most recently at the University of Amsterdam. Darweesh, an engineer, was a former administrator at Baghdad University. He has taken leave from Cal Poly Pomona to work in Baghdad.

Each emphasized a pattern of systematic abuses and corruption of higher education and scholarly research by the state apparatus; they also related anecdotes about acts of individual cronyism and the mental and physical abuse of professors by members of the ruling elite. At the same time, they conveyed the sense that there were no inherent flaws to the system of higher education or professional development *per se*. Rather social forces exterior to the universities had robbed the institutions of their prestige, vitality, rigor and overall excellence. Under Saddam Hussein, says Kamal Muzhar, “quantity came before quality, and the best professors were thrown out. In the old regime no one was put in the right place.” Jawahiri likened the influence of the party on the academy to that of a washing machine: it mechanically washed away undesirable people and ideas.

Baathist policies towards higher education in Iraq have shifted tremendously over the last 32 years. For example, Kamal Muzhar recalls that while the first systematic purges of Communist faculty took place in 1968, he insists that until 1979 university professors elected their own directors, chairs and deans. The



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exiles Khafaji and Darweesh concurred that the situation had become truly unbearable only by 1979. Others point to the mid-1980s as the point that the system broke down altogether, with the near collapse of scholarly exchange after the state made travel abroad difficult and contingent upon ranking membership in the party. Before this time, Iraqi academics enjoyed the right to travel abroad to conferences and meetings, and in many cases, the state subsidized their expenses. Still, the security apparatus often considered those who did spend time abroad suspect and they could face harassment and interrogation on their return. The reduction in freedom to travel had its cognate in the abandonment of the tradition of earning at least one higher degree at a school in Europe or North America. An older generation of Iraqi academics remember a time when they could study freely in other Arab states, the US and Europe and enjoyed free tuition and liberal stipends from the government.

Where most Iraqis who completed graduate work before 1979 did so abroad, very few studied overseas in the period 1980-1991 and after the Gulf War, almost no one did. The few who traveled enjoyed close ties to the ruling elite. For the humanities and social sciences, this has been especially detrimental: foreign language acquisition has been poor and exposure to contemporary research almost nonexistent. Jawahiri emphasized this last point, noting that an entire generation of junior professors have spent no time abroad, have never attended international conferences or have not built connections with colleagues outside of Iraq: “They must go abroad for their Ph.D.s so that they can be exposed to new systems and methods, and thereby acquire prestige and be good professors.” Along these same lines, and in a sentiment shared by Sousa, Jawahiri was particularly eager to host international conferences and to have his students participate in scholarly gatherings abroad.

Jawahiri also provided us with insight into the structure of faculty development in the academy and how the state used systems of rewards and punishments to induce and ensure loyalty. Iraqi universities employed a tiered system of faculty advancement accompanied by a kind of tenure that guarantees employment but not necessarily rank. Ideally, movement from lecturer to assistant professor to professor was based on successful teaching and the review of research and publications by external evaluators. Jawahiri noted that the regime made it increasingly easy for party members to move through the ranks. Salaries, which were low even by academic standards, were tied to rank. When one became an administrator or chair, salaries increased steeply. Membership in institutions such as the Iraqi Academy of Sciences carried with it additional stipends and there were often opportunities to teach a heavier load for additional pay. Nevertheless, access to these upper ranks and perquisites often came at the price of party membership.

Sousa, who left the university out of frustration in the early 1990s and worked with the UN until the most recent invasion, looks back fondly on her career in the academy and notes that until it became untenable



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after the mid-1980s, women professors received a great deal of support for their research and development. Her experience highlights the fact that state policy encouraged women's access to higher education and faculty positions. Not only was this in line with Baathist tenets of secular equality, but also was a pragmatic response to the demographic realities created by the slaughter of large numbers of young Iraqi men in the Iran-Iraq war. She also suggested that there was some degree of freedom in historical research on contemporary historical topics, but this was limited in scope due the closed nature of most Interior Ministry and other state archives, and in an intriguing footnote she mentioned that until he was executed by Saddam Hussein in 1989, Fadil Barak al-Takriti, an academic himself and head of the intelligence services, had begun to allow some limited access to more recent state documents.

The issues of academic corruption aside, al-Rawi conveyed to us the potential for arbitrary horror inherent to the old system. Luay Hussein, one of Saddam Hussein's most favored nephews failed a required engineering course because of attendance problems. Al-Rawi, as head of the engineering section at the time had to inform the nephew of this fact. In retribution, young toughs from Luay's entourage severely beat and maimed the professor who gave Luay the failing grade and later tried to ambush al-Rawi himself on the street. When the president's office learned of the occurrence, a staged, videotaped beating of Luay's accomplices was produced and shown to the faculty at Baghdad University as a kind of apology. Nevertheless, al-Rawi was not renewed as head of engineering. The story highlights the vulnerable position of Iraqi academics in the period before the war. Those in the arts and humanities were especially at risk, as they did not necessarily share with their colleagues in the sciences an obviously pragmatic value to the state. Historians were in constant danger, as the state placed a premium on the maintenance of an ideologically "correct" portrayal of the past.

Most if not all Iraqi historians and other academics with international reputations – and without the kinds of connections enjoyed by some of the above – have left the country over the last three-decades to assume better paying or less restrictive positions in the Arab Gulf, Jordan, Libya, Yemen and the West. Prominent examples are the returned exiles Khafaji and Darweesh, or the Ottomanist, Sayyar Al-Jamil. This phenomenon is by no means limited to Iraq but is an omnipresent fact of intellectual life in the Arab world.

3.2.1 Recommendations

1) Fair, open and transparent mechanisms should be used to reinstate or compensate academics who were denied opportunities or expelled for political or ideological reasons over the last 30 years.



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Rationale: This measure is the first logical step in addressing the systematic corruption of Iraqi academia. It would also have the potential to bring back to Iraq a vast reserve of much needed human capital.

2) Women in academia should be encouraged to compete for senior administrative and leadership position and measures ensuring equal access and diversity must be established.

Rationale: Few if any women have been elected to leadership roles in the series of post-war elections held on the various campuses.

3) The process for filling new positions or vacancies at all levels of the academy should be open and transparent and meet minimum standards of due process and equal opportunity.

Rationale: This would open the system to the largest possible pool of human resources and prevent much of the cronyism and nepotism that drove the old system.

4) Senior faculty sabbaticals, junior faculty research leave, graduate student support and undergraduate study abroad programs should be resumed as soon as possible.

Rationale: All of the Iraqi academics we met demanded these kinds of programs. The regularization and normalization of forms of exchange will provide the basis of the ultimate reintegration of Iraqi academics with the rest of the world.

5) Faculty should develop their own standards of self-management, and design procedures for faculty advancement and rank and tenure.

Rationale: The university system suffered most when non-university professionals manipulated the system for their own ends. Faculty self-management would help to preclude a recurrence of this phenomenon.

6) Rotating visiting professorships for non-Iraqis – preferably in the 1-3 month range – in the humanities and social sciences should be immediately established at all of Iraq's universities.

Rationale: This again was a consistent request from the Iraqi academics we met. In particular, there is a great demand for the teaching of non-Iraqi history.



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3.3 De-Baathification and the Academy

On the larger impact of De-Baathification, please refer again to the ICG's report.

We found that there are two parallel processes of de-Baathification at work at Iraqi universities and scholarly institutions. The first and very public process has followed a series of official orders unilaterally promulgated by the CPA and its chief administrator, L. Paul Bremer. No court has tested the legality of these acts and its implementation has been haphazard and in some cases arbitrary. The second and more grass-roots process of de-Baathification has been undertaken by Iraqis themselves in both formal and informal ways: elections, petitions and in a few cases threats of physical violence.

Based on our analysis of discussions with relevant CPA officials, the American edict on De-Baathification is predicated on a false analogy between Baathism and Nazism. This analogy has been promoted most heavily by Iraqi exiles in the United States like Brandeis University professor Kanan Makiya. In 1945, the allies intended De-Nazification to inoculate the German people against any revival of fascism. In 2003, the American hope is that elimination of high-ranking members of the Baath from positions in the public sector will prevent the recrudescence of authoritarianism in Iraq. The analogy between the Nazis and the Baath – especially in terms of rank and file members – fails on its face: likening the Nazis to the Baath either undervalues the sheer horror and inhumanity that the former visited upon the world or exaggerates the global reach and influence of the latter.

In principle, De-Baathification recognizes the irrefutable fact that the party saturated the lived experience of Iraqis, denied them basic human rights and insinuated itself in all aspects of the production of knowledge, art and culture. However, the structures of authoritarianism are not unique to Baathism and thus merely eliminating Baathists will not keep Iraq free. Any liberal, pluralist reform of Iraq will require more than just the elimination of Baathist ideology. We contend that the best way to prevent the reestablishment of the authoritarian structures the Baath created and benefited from is the formation and strengthening of viable institutions of civil society, of which academia is a central element.

The ruling that most directly impacts upon the university and allied systems is CPA *Order Number 1: De-Baathification of Iraqi Society* which appeared in the 17 June 2003 edition of the *al-Waqi' al-Iraqiyya*, the official gazette of Iraq. Section 2 reads:

Full members of the Baath Party holding ranks of...Regional Command Member,...Branch Member...Section Member,...and Group Member... are hereby removed from their positions and banned from future employment in the public sector.



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The CPA implementation of this process has been inconsistent at best. The CPA has removed most senior university officials. This includes the former president of Baghdad University, Mahmud al-Rawi, a second circle member of the party. Beyond the top ranks and in the middle there is a great deal of difference in treatment. Bremer has reserved to himself the right to waive the ban and has done so, especially in high profile cases of individuals associated with the National Museum like Dr. Moayad Damerji, or the aforementioned president of al-Mustansiriyya University, Bakka'. In both cases, their utility to the administration in terms of competence and public relations merited the exoneration. In no way do we mean to disparage Damerji or Bakka' as competent Iraqi public servants, but rather to note the selective, seemingly arbitrary and non-transparent implementation of the ban. Those who have fallen through the cracks are professors like Hussam al-Rawi; while well respected and beloved of his students and colleagues, he has neither an international support network nor obvious utility to the new order. By the same token in using party rank as the main criterion, individuals who were not high ranking members or even members at all, but who consciously made use of the pernicious nature of the former regime to their own ends can escape notice. Consequently, De-Baathification has the potential to be a source of tremendous injustice, resentment and distrust.

Our prediction is that most professors who have lost their positions in the university system who want to return will be allowed to do so at some point, perhaps following an official enquiry and renunciation of party membership, though it is unlikely they will ever be permitted to resume positions of leadership.

The other form of De-Baathification is much less formal. Hussam al-Rawi related the story of Dr. Ahmad al-Hadithi, a Pennsylvania State University trained ovine-bovine veterinarian and Dean of the College of Veterinary Sciences at Baghdad University. Originally from the village of Haditha on the Euphrates, and intensely and personally loyal to Saddam Hussein himself for having lifted his family from poverty, Dr. al-Hadithi was renowned as an informant and demagogue. Within days of the collapse of the regime graffiti appeared on the walls of the Veterinary College announcing "Death to Dr. Ahmad; the little Saddam!" Fearing for his personal safety, al-Hadithi has not returned to campus. Dramas like this have played out on each of the campuses in Baghdad. As noted previously, it may have led to the murder of a dean at al-Mustansiriyya. Nevertheless, this kind of ad hoc cleansing is also dangerous and open to abuse by those seeking personal vengeance or political advantage. It could create a cycle of revenge and easily spiral out of control. Still, what we saw at the universities was not merely cases of disgruntled undergraduates and an extreme and irreversible form of student evaluation, rather our sense is that when professors have been ostracized it has been undertaken in a judicious and moderate fashion. In fact, the reverse scenario is more often the case: Students have held rallies or petition drives on behalf of terminated professors.



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The process of De-Baathification left us with more questions than answers. De-Baathification, as used by the CPA is a monolithic term and influenced by the Cold War ethos and Eurocentrism which dominates the thinking of its analysts; it fails to grasp the fact that Baathism in its Takriti-mode relied far less upon bureaucratic mechanisms of domination and reified ideologies and more on tribal ties, filial networks and ethnic perquisites. It needs to be deconstructed both as an American policy and as a long-term Iraqi goal. How can a massive, diverse elite with entrenched ties and large, multi-tiered networks of patronage be replaced with something more “civilian” and less “Stalinist?” How can a new social and political elite be reconstructed through outside pressure in the space of a few months? Will the vilification of the Baathists have the reverse effect of promoting exemplars of the former regime to the status of national heroes?

Where perhaps the analogy to the De-Nazification of Germany is most apt is the long-term. While the modalities of the Cold War and the Soviet threat led the Western Allies to rehabilitate large numbers of former Nazis, and moreover to never de-Nazify whole categories of the German public sector like universities, real de-Nazification came in the late 1960s as younger Germans, caught up in the spirit of those times completed the task. The true test of De-Baathification is not whether a handful of party hacks are prevented from resuming their posts, but rather if Iraqis can create for themselves a robust civil society.

Recommendations:

1) Current De-Baathification programs should cease; short of a cessation, it should be held in abeyance until a self-regulating and Iraqi-controlled system, which guarantees due process, can be developed.

Rationale: The current program of De-Baathification is of uncertain value and dubious legality. The basic goals of De-Baathification can be reached through less drastic and more professional and legal means.

2) An aggressive Truth and Reconciliation process, perhaps on the model of systems used in Argentina, South Africa and Chile, should replace De-Baathification and be integrated into plans for academic redevelopment/reform and extended throughout Iraqi society.

Rationale: The well-established modalities of Truth and Reconciliation would enjoy a warm reception in higher education circles and have tremendous impact; the process must employ international norms of openness and due process. Regardless, any attempt to implement Truth and Reconciliation must take shape in accordance with Iraqi social forms and not merely be extracted from other examples. Nor should it operate in lieu of formal criminal investigations or procedures.



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3.4 Newspapers, Coffeehouses, and Civil Society

While it is difficult to arrive at an accurate total, at least 75 new independent newspapers and journals have begun publication in Baghdad. This number stands in stark contrast to the pre-war situation where the state controlled the press and there were just a handful of newspapers. While it is unlikely that the market can sustain this number of new journals, and indeed several papers have already disappeared, the quantity that will remain will provide an unprecedented and vital space of discourse and exchange. For the moment, the Iraqi press is the freest press in the Arab world and the only obvious restrictions come in the form of CPA orders banning incitement, advocating the return of Baathism or promoting ethnic or religious hate.

The papers range greatly in quality and coverage. Many of the papers are associated with emergent or traditional political groups like the Communists, liberals and the Kurdish parties; others are purely commercial ventures. What all papers share is a relative lack of advertising copy, suggesting that either their publishers have deep pockets or they are receiving subventions or most likely, both. Three new dailies have emerged as front-runners in the Baghdad market: *al-Zaman*, *al-Takhi*, and *al-Sabah*. Of these *al-Zaman* (Time) is by far the most slick, and with *al-Sabah* (Morning), the only paper that publishes in full color. *Al-Zaman*'s editorial offices are headquartered in London, where usually half of the journal is prepared. The front and rear faces are completed in Baghdad. The paper's professional layout is mirrored in the elitist topics it covers and its cost, 750 I.D.s (\$.50). The week we visited Baghdad, the paper presented a series of articles on Foucault and Barthes as well as a history of Iraq and Arab nationalism that championed Gamal 'Abd al-Nasser and 'Abd al-Karim Qassim. This elevated discourse aside, the paper is not above printing images of scantily-clad western models and movie starlets on its last pages. *Al-Zaman*'s publisher, Saad Bazzaz has claimed that the paper is neutral with regards to Iraqi party politics, but it is certainly right of center. *Al-Takhi* (Fraternity), on the other hand is a sober and serious paper. Founded in the 1960s, it continued to publish through the Baathist period. The paper has connections to the Kurdish Democratic Party and shares its website. *Al-Sabah* is the most pro-CPA paper and the one with the least obvious links to any political party.

Despite the new openness of the period, the newspapers have yet to carve out distinctive identities for themselves. In many cases, they only reflect pre-war disputes among exilic communities and ideas about Arab nationalism that were *au courant* in the 1960s. This is both a function of the lack of politics, *per se*, in Iraq and the fact that an older generation of Iraqi journalist dominates journalism. Certainly, as political forms become more resolved in the country, and print-capitalisms takes root, the newspapers that survive will evolve accordingly.



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Concerned about a lack of a functioning library in the capital that could collect these papers, we received assurances from the French Embassy that it will be possible within a year to forward newspapers they have collected to the Institut Français du Proche Orient in Amman, Jordan. They would constitute a veritable treasure trove for the study of emergent civil society.

The newspapers of Baghdad seemed staid in contrast to the potential of the web. The plethora of weblogs like that of the “Baghdad Blogger” reveals how younger Iraqis are using the web as a medium for discourse. Any analysis of emerging trends in Iraqi thought must chart the on-line dimensions of public discourse. Currently, access to the web is growing at an exponential rate in Baghdad, with cyber cafes connected via satellite links springing up throughout the capital’s middle-class districts.

Despite obvious security problems and the lack of electricity, Baghdad’s coffeehouses have again become sites of vigorous discussion and fellowship. This is especially the case at the Shahbandar Café at the northern gate of the Suq. Located on the street of the booksellers, the café attracts an artistic and literary crowd, especially on Fridays. Places like Shahbandar provide a valuable space for creating intellectual networks. With the collapse of telephony and the disestablishment of state-controlled syndicates and unions, cafés and other “third spaces” are becoming a fundamental part of new intellectual connections. And while cafés are exclusively male spaces, we noted a remarkable diversity of clientele in terms of age and social background at Shahbandar.

Like Beirut and Aleppo, Baghdad has long been known for its salons, called *nadi*, *majlis* or *muntada*. This tradition, far from having been erased by the old regime, persisted. However, this survival often came at the price of cooptation, as was the case for with the city’s musical *maqam* of Friday evenings. Others survived through a conscious effort at self-censorship and by limiting themselves to politically innocuous topics like representational art, traditional crafts and classical poetry. In this category are the salons of Mrs. Widad al-Urfali in Mansour and Mrs. Amal Yasin Al-Khudayri in her late father’s Ottoman-era courtyard house on the banks of the Tigris near Bab al-Sharqi. In addition religious and linguistic minorities established clubs and hosted talks and cultural evenings. Among these are the Assyro-Chaldean Nadi al-Babil or the Armenian-Iraqi General Benevolent Union. Despite their non-academic character, they were undoubtedly part of Baghdad’s intellectual life. Art galleries and exhibition openings also played a great role, especially Qassem Sibti’s al-Hiwar gallery. Sibti recently added a cafe and garden to the gallery rooms. In the overgrown garden, younger journalists, writers, critics and artists meet and engage in conversation and debate.

Whether or how quickly these institutions can resume their role in the life of the capital is still an open question. The status of Mrs. Urfali’s and Mrs. Khudayri’s salons are in doubt: Urfali’s salon has been taken



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over by the Iraqi National Accord as its headquarters, and Khudayri's house was ravaged during the events which followed the war. Still, while we were there, other clubs resumed their meetings, including the Nadi al-Babil, where National Museum curator Donny George delivered a speech on the state of the museum *in Assyrian* to a packed house. The al-Hiwar gallery was crowded and alive.

Among the more important initiatives we noted were:

The "Al-Mada" project which was launched by Fakhri Karim, an Iraqi communist in the late 1980's and 1990's. Fleeing Baghdad, Karim founded a publishing house and cultural center first in Beirut and then in Damascus. The publishing house has become one of the most important in the Arab Middle East. In the aftermath of the war, Karim returned to Iraq and is now using a house on Abu Nuwas street as a base for the al-Mada center's activities. Beside publishing books and a monthly review, he intends to begin a local daily newspaper, organize conferences and various cultural activities. Karim plans to open branches in other areas of Baghdad, as well as in the provinces.

The National Committee for the Preservation of Iraqi Cultural Goods, which was founded by a group of college students and recent graduates. They have embarked upon a "consciousness raising" campaign to alert people to the vulnerability of Iraq's historical heritage, and to the ways to protect it. Their effectiveness is clearly limited by the material conditions prevailing in Baghdad, and they have faced tremendous problems in maintaining momentum.

The Association for Culture and Environment, an NGO begun by the well-respected physician, Dr. Abd al-Hadi al-Khalili. Unlike the Committee for the Preservation, this association recruits mainly among the older generation, primarily university professors.

The emergence of a free press, spread of internet technology and the vigorous use of informal settings for the exchange of ideas suggest that Baghdadis are laying the foundation of civil society. Nevertheless, these forms are taking shape in the face of an increasingly turbulent political milieu. How, or even if this nascent civil society can withstand the formation of a new Iraqi government is an open question. Traditionally institutions like the above are among the first to fall victim to state concerns about security and political stability.

3.4.1 Recommendations:

1) The newspapers, journals and magazines of Iraq must be collected and archived.



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Rationale: These are the building blocks of a New Iraqi History.

2) Foreign institutions of civil society should identify potential partners in Iraq and begin to build relationships and exchange programs rather than impose preexisting Western NGOs.

Rationale: Salons, clubs, art galleries, and Iraqi NGOs constitute the basis of civil society. That such institutions are taking shape in Iraq is the most encouraging sign that a truly democratic and independent future is possible. Iraqi-based initiatives have a higher probability of success. Likewise, in partnering with these institutions, Iraqis will be exposed to functioning, viable and successful examples of civil society and begin to place a higher value on these kinds of projects.

3) The historical urban fabric from the al-Mustansiriyya Madrasa to the remains of the Abbasid citadel should be turned into a cultural space for Iraqis. UNESCO and ICOMOS should protect this zone as a world heritage site and Iraqi urban planners should begin to think about ways to reclaim this space for the people. The mandate-era former Ministry of Defense compound should likewise become a cultural center.

Rationale: The historic urban fabric of the city has been neglected in the past two decades. Modest efforts to preserve and develop this area began before the war, but have suffered from a lack of funding. The development of these areas as open, public places will help the formation of new and vital spaces of gathering and sociability, promote tourism and function as a pedestrian zone whose symbolism is untainted by the Baathist regime and could be used to help instill a sense of Arab-Ottoman heritage, national identity and pride.

Additional Information:

Website for *al-Zaman*

<http://www.azzaman.com/>

Website for *al-Takhi*

<http://www.birayeti-xebat.net/>

The “Baghdad Blogger”

http://dear_raed.blogspot.com/



4. Relations between the Iraqi Academic and Intellectual Community and the Coalition Provisional Authority

4.1 Introduction

The CPA has lost much of the support and goodwill it enjoyed after the overthrow of the old regime. Its perceived inability to manage the basic needs of everyday life in the capital - public safety, electricity, water, telephone, and gasoline – is the main cause of that loss. However, rarely did our contacts express virulent anti-Americanism (the occupation is not considered an international or coalition effort by most Iraqis). Nevertheless, confidence in the CPA is quickly dissipating.

In an observation shared by foreign NGO workers, we noticed a mounting frustration even among members of the large educated Iraqi middle class who had been willing to give the Americans the benefit of the doubt, and who saw the occupation as a tremendous opportunity. For some this frustration has the potential to transform into a radicalized antipathy towards the American presence and their reform efforts and, moreover, contribute recruits for the increasingly organized paramilitary resistance.

Adding to the sense of frustration and disempowerment is the perception that the CPA is institutionally indifferent to the needs of Iraqis. The aura of indifference is perpetuated by the lack of mechanisms for Iraqis of all strata to communicate effectively with the CPA. Presumably with more Iraqi control of the state, this problem will resolve itself, however, the CPA's choice of Saddam Hussein's former palace as the base of its operations sends at the very least confusing and mixed signals to the Iraqi people.

Generally meetings between Iraqis and the CPA take place at the Iraqi national conference center, located opposite the Rashid Hotel and behind a series of US Army checkpoints. Civilian officials of the CPA – and the military personnel who accompany them – usually wear body armor and carry side arms when out of the Presidential Palace compound.

While this policy was being relaxed while we were there, with the upsurge in violence against the military in Baghdad proper and at the universities, it is unclear how much further or if at all, this policy will change. Such a distancing cannot help but reinforce the stereotypes and misperceptions held by all sides.



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4.2 Higher Education and the CPA

Without independent budgets or endowments and with the presence of US military personnel and weapons on their campuses the universities of Iraq have been placed in a subordinate and dependent position. The same holds for other research and cultural institutions. The United States, as dominant partner in the CPA is using its preeminent position to control the shape of higher education, taking an active stance towards staffing, curriculum and admissions.

However, the American agenda for Iraq's universities is not an unqualified commitment to the development of a system of higher education that will serve as a basis for civil society. Rather counter-terrorism and non-proliferation drive American efforts. The appointment of Andrew (Drew) Erdmann, Ph.D., as the CPA's "advisor" to the Iraqi Ministry of Higher Education clearly reflects this agenda. Far from being a mere adviser, Erdmann is the *de facto* head of Iraq's university system with the ultimate power to veto appointments and set budgets. He answers first to L. Paul Bremer and then the Pentagon. According to his official US State Department biography, he is a member of the "Secretary of State's Policy Planning Staff, where he was responsible for counterterrorism (sic), homeland security, and Central Asian policy." He did graduate work in History at Harvard and recently defended a doctoral dissertation entitled, "Americans' search for 'victory' in the twentieth century" (2000). Before joining the US State Department, he held fellowships at various policy think tanks like Harvard's Olin Center. He is not from the State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, which traditionally administers US government-supported foreign exchange and education programs including Fulbright. In addition, he appears to neither have formal preparation in Middle Eastern History and Politics nor speak Arabic. Moreover, he has no training in university management or practical leadership experience in the administration of large public institutions of higher learning.

Erdmann, who is scheduled to remain in Baghdad at least until October, does not seem to command the respect of the few Iraqi academics and intellectuals with whom we spoke who have met him.

During a 24 June meeting, and after assuring us that the CPA was committed to letting the Iraqis control their own destiny as soon as possible, Erdmann outlined what he called the "bedrock principles" of America's plan for post-Saddam higher education in Iraq. First, Iraq's universities are to become autonomous entities. It is unclear if this means the complete privatization of higher education, but it does open the door for independent international boards of trustees. He suggested that the Ministry of Higher Education may eventually be abolished and universities "floated." Presumably this would insulate Iraqi academia from the country's political structure, while at the same time provide additional opportunities for control and oversight by non-Iraqis. Second, communication and exchange would be expanded and



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was explained as a key tenet of American “Public Diplomacy” in Iraq. “Public diplomacy” is a euphemism for highly coordinated pro-American propaganda that has gained wider use since the aftermath of 9/11. It connects the origins of terrorism with the conclusion that anti-Americanism is built on an incomplete or stereotypical understanding of American government and society. Third, De-Baathification, as discussed earlier, would act to eliminate authoritarian tendencies from the universities. And fourth, the Iraqi scientific community would be “normalized.” The term normalize in this context means monitoring the research agenda for Iraqi nuclear engineers, biologists and chemists capable of aiding in the production of “Weapons of Mass Destruction.” According to Erdmann this is part of finishing the processes of disarming Iraq and a prophylactic measure to keep impoverished Iraqi scientists from selling their expertise to terrorists or governments hostile to the US.

In a prima facie sense, Iraqi academics advocated each of these principles. However there are reasons to be concerned that the planned implementation of the reforms will reinforce and perpetuate the subordinate condition of Iraqi higher education. Further, the US is placing itself, with planned USAID higher education subcontracts to American universities, in a position to dominate Iraqi educational structures for the foreseeable future. The inescapable fact is that Iraqis did not design the “bedrock principles” as a formula for reform, but rather they derive from a plan drawn up before the occupation of the country in Washington. Most fundamentally, the USAID contracts are not a response to Iraqi initiatives: they are based on remote assessments by state department officials in consultation with representatives of the Iraqi exile community.

Iraqis, having to deal with the trauma of occupation, the challenges of survival, and the possibilities of an impending civil war have had little time to devote to large-scale educational initiatives. Seeming to fail to recognize this, Erdmann has adopted the position that the Iraqi academic community is unable to identify initiatives, plan strategies for reform, or budget as a consequence of a “basic lack of competence” and Baathism. This struck us as an unfair, inaccurate and hasty generalization; it is also a convenient position that infantilizes Iraqis and justifies a heavy-handed American intervention in the Iraqi academic scene.

This is the crux of the dilemma we outlined in the introduction. In the current formulation, aid, development and reform all first must pass through the prism of American national interests in Iraq and the Middle East. Similarly, if the security situation in Iraq deteriorates and the American occupation continues, reform programs closely allied to these American interests will prove problematic and a focus for resistance. This fact should be part of the thinking of institutions seeking to cooperate with US government initiatives in Iraq. These organizations should be conscious of the fact while they may consider themselves as distinct from the US government, disinterested and benevolent, Iraqis will conflate them with the occupation and see them as complicit actors in the forwarding of American interests.



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In addition to secular higher education, Erdmann has inherited control of three religiously affiliated institutions: the Saddam Islamic University, al-Fiqh University and Babylon College. Islamic University and al-Fiqh were semiprivate institutions; the former was founded with help from Kuwait at the time of the Iran-Iraq war as an initiative to support Sunni education. After the war with Kuwait, its external support vanished and it acquired the Saddam sobriquet. It is unlikely that the institution will continue to exist and several Iraqis we spoke with speculated that its functions would be folded into the Sharia Faculty at Baghdad University. Al-Fiqh is a Shiite-centered institution. Babylon College is a private ecumenical Christian school which serves both the Chaldean and Assyrian communities. Erdmann was unable to articulate a clear policy on these institutions. Finally, just days prior to our meeting he was informed that the Iraqi Academy now fell under his control; he assured us that it would receive a budget.

Accompanying Erdmann to the 26 June meeting was Lt. Col. Stephan Curda, a reservist who, in civilian life, is a specialist in Information Technology and distance learning at the University of West Florida. While the US Army's role in the overall management of higher education is unclear, the presence of Curda and various military officers at other meetings held with CPA officials made visible how closely the US Army monitors the civilian administrators and their actions. Curda's background highlights an underlying American emphasis on technology and science in the redevelopment of Iraqi academia.

At the meeting was the aforementioned returned exile Professor Farouk Darweesh in his capacity as advisor to Erdmann.

We contend that the CPA should recognize the professional dignity, vitality and resourcefulness of Iraqi intellectuals and academics and empower them to chart their own path, rather than implement vague policies in a non-transparent way for the sake of a nebulous "counter-terrorism" agenda.

4.3 Culture and the CPA

Libraries, Museums and the Bayt al-Hikma all fall under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Culture and its senior advisor, the Italian diplomat, Ambassador Pietro Cordone. Cordone came out of retirement to replace the American diplomat John Limbert. An Arabist by training, he has served at many Middle Eastern posts. Quite elderly, he will leave Iraq by August. Near the end of our visit, we met with Cordone, his assistant, Mr. Fergus Muir, Head of Architecture Branch, British Department of Culture, Media and Sport, and Colonel A.J. Kessel of the Special Functions Team of the U.S. Army 352nd Civil Affairs Command. Colonel Kessel had been one of the first Americans on the scene of the burned National Library.



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The conversation with Cordone revolved primarily around the state of post-war cultural affairs and what specific measure were being undertaken. Cordone emphasized that they were in the process of reorganizing the Ministry of Culture following a removal of 40%-60% of its high-ranking staff. Simultaneously, his office is encouraging the formation of independent boards of directors and/or trustees for the various institutions. In principle, this is parallel to the “floating” of the university system and anticipates the growth of private funding and endowments. He also made clear that his intention was to systematically link the Iraqi cultural heritage sector with international NGOs. One example he gave was coordinating with the Italian NGO Un Ponte Per, in restoring and preserving parts of Old Baghdad. He spoke of reviving one of two studies conducted in the 1990s on the rehabilitation of Baghdad’s late Ottoman core that includes the 19th-century Qushla, governor’s mansion, post office and secondary school.

Cordone seemed committed to building on cultural initiatives and cooperative agreements that had begun before the war. This course of action privileges European initiatives inasmuch as forms of diplomatic and cultural contact between the United States and Iraq were non-existent in the pre-war period. No doubt, this has led to conflict between CPA’s Culture and Higher Education offices – which share the same room in the Saddam Hussein’s Presidential Palace complex.

4.4 Recommendations

1) American Universities should refrain from competing for US AID Higher Education grants until the military occupation of Iraq ends and an independent and sovereign government exists in Iraq. That said, institutions should make an effort to build contacts and offer expertise to the Iraqi academic community on an informal basis in preparation for that moment.

Rationale: In addition to reasons outlined above, as long as US military forces occupy Iraqi university campuses and Iraqis do not have sovereign control of their institutions, they remain in an inherently unequal and subordinate position. Embarking upon any project that is directly sponsored by the government of occupation under those circumstances would reinforce that position of inequality. Other paths of support should and must be taken.

2) The US Department of Defense should consider replacing Dr. Andrew Erdmann with an Arabic-speaking qualified university professional who has experience in Middle Eastern History and Society and training in university management and faculty self-governance.

Rationale: Erdmann is surely a good analyst and historian of the US. His appointment, however, is a wasted opportunity. The Iraqis could benefit from someone expert in how universities can and should be



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run, who understands better the history and culture of the region and who does not perceive Iraqi professionals through the lens of counterterrorism and nonproliferation.

3) No move to privatize Iraq's public higher education system should be undertaken unilaterally by the CPA, nor should there be any impediments to the establishment of private institutions of higher learning.

Rationale: Public, low cost higher education and post-secondary training is a deeply rooted part of Iraqi society and a formula for development that enjoyed tremendous success until the 1990s. Any decision of such magnitude must be undertaken by Iraqis themselves. We note that the recent student demonstrations in Tehran began as a protest against privatization schemes of Iranian universities. However, private institutions of higher learning have a long history in the Middle East and could find a ready constituency in Iraq.

4) The CPA should move as quickly as possible to guarantee independent sources of revenue for the university systems.

Rationale: It was noted by several of our interlocutors that universities had their own financial resources granted to them before the war, but that those funds were frozen with all other Iraqi bank accounts. Consequently, the CPA placed itself as the only source of current funding for salaries and general budgets. Without independent budgets, universities will remain in a dependent relationship. Earmarking Iraq's oil revenues for the development of its cultural heritage, educational systems, medical and social services could help dispel the belief that the US is in Iraq to rob it of its natural resources.

5) Foreign governments, if they have not already done so should place a priority on cultural affairs in their diplomatic missions to Iraq, This should be buttressed by ongoing multilateral approaches including close cooperation with UN programs and organizations such as UNDP and UNESCO, as well as direct cooperation with the Iraqis in ways that can bypass the CPA.

Rationale: This form of cultural and educational development tends not to produce the kinds of unequal and dependent relationships envisioned in current CPA planning. Furthermore, in internationalizing approaches to development problems in Iraq, the problematic close association of US interests with progressive initiatives is reduced.

Additional Information:

Official Biography of Andrew Erdmann, Ph.D.

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/pil/13437.htm>
