



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

DOSSIER PART 9:

Overview

CONTENTS:

- [The US War against Iraq: The Destruction of a Civilization](#) (James Petras - August 21, 2009)
- [Iraq Rebuilds Higher Education Abroad](#) (12 Aug 2009)
- [Unfairness is better than mercy !!!!!!!!!!!](#) (August 4, 2009)
- [Iraq Education Initiative Scholarship Basics for Students](#) (29 July 2009)
- [Hussam Mohammed Amin: Former Iraqi Weapons Monitor Describes U.S. Abuse For First Time](#) (Michael Bronner, 23 July 2009)
- [Iraq Asks Professors to Return Home](#) (22 June 2009)
- [Spilled milk? Iraqi-American academics ..](#) [ال مس تورك شففت ال عرق ية عش تار](#) (April 18, 2009)
- [IRAQ: Higher education's uncertain future](#) (Kate Robertson 01 March 2009)
- [MP: Iraq Needs 4,000 New Schools to Meet Demand](#) (25 Feb 2009)
- [Education in the New Iraq](#) (29 June 2008)
- [Iraq: Girls Denied Education](#) (May 30, 2008)
- [Iraq: teachers told to rewrite history](#) (14 March 2008)
- [IRAQ: Education Becomes the New Casualty in Baquba](#) (10 Dec 2007)
- [Corruption in Iraq: Where did they learn that?](#) (02 Dec 2007)
- [Doors of learning reopen at Baghdad University](#) (Nov 12, 2007)
- [Jordan helping international agency save Iraq scholars](#) (September 21, 2007)
- [Back to School, Back to Horror](#) (14 Sep 2007)
- [Secret Report: Corruption is "Norm" Within Iraqi Government](#) (30 Aug 2007)
- [Iraq's Endangered Schools](#) (20 Aug 2007)
- [Iraq: Educational standards plummet, say specialists](#) (16 May 2007)
- [Three Iraqi Law Professors, Student Kidnapped](#) (29 Jan 2007)
- [Widespread condemnation of fatal attack on girl's school](#) (29 Jan 2007)
- [Students, Professors Flee to the Kurdish North](#) (28 Jan 2007)
- [Death of Iraq's middle class: The country's best and brightest have fled, demolishing hope for the country's future](#) (January 25, 2007)
- [IRAQ: It's Either Occupation or Education](#) (18 Dec 2006)



Stop the Assassination of Iraqi Academics !

A campaign of The **BRussels** Tribunal and

Campaña Estatal contra la Ocupación y por la Soberanía de Iraq

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 - [800,000 Iraqi Children Not Attending School](#) (Karen Button September 21, 2006)
 - [Gunmen kill prominent Iraqi academic in Baghdad](#) (28 Jan 2006)
 - ["Iraq's Education Systems Denies Children Education"](#) (18 Oct 2004)
 - [Rampant Corruption Cited in Iraq's Education System](#) (26 July 2004)
 - [What The US Didn't Do In Iraq Education](#) (June 15, 2004)
 - [How much does Dubya's administration care about education in Iraq?](#) (22 May 2004)
 - [IRAQ LOOTING](#) (29 April 2003)
 - [The Students of Moustanserya University](#) (22 Feb 2003)
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- [Iraqis Against 'Americanizing' Universities](#) (28 Aug 2003)
- [Iraqi scientists under pressure to help find WMDs](#) (AFP, Mar 10, 2004)
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- [Brief Overview of the Higher Education System in Iraq](#) (March 2005)
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- [Eight killed in Baghdad car bomb attacks](#) (24 April 2006)
- [Sectarian lines divide Iraq's university system, too](#) (25 April 2006)
- [Universities in Iraq taking a hard hit](#) (17 Jan 2007)
- [The Death of Iraq's Middle Class](#) (22 Jan 2007)
- [A Stroll Down Haifa Street In Baghdad](#) (Layla Anwar 27 Jan 2007)
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- [Universities in Iraq](#) (07 April 2007)
- [Web claim: 20 Iraq security forces executed](#) (CNN 17 April 2007)
- [Scores killed and wounded in market blast as Iraqi army making plans for US withdrawal](#) (22 May 2007)
- [Academia in the crosshairs](#) (Boston Globe, 30 Sept 2007)



Stop the Assassination of Iraqi Academics !

A campaign of The **BRussels** Tribunal and
Campaña Estatal contra la Ocupación y por la Soberanía de Iraq

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- *Students Fail, Like So Much Else Ali al-Fadhily and Dahr Jamail* (08 Aug 2008)
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- *Education in Iraq ...lack of planning and skillful teachers* (28 Aug 2008)
- *Education under pressure in Iraq* (UNICEF 15 Sept 2008)
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- *University Life in Baghdad: An Improvement in Safety but Political and Religious Influences Remain* (09 Nov 2008)
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- *Iraq: University students protest arrest of colleagues in campus* (Azzaman 13 Mar 2009)
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- *One third of Falluja youth illiterate, says study* (Azzaman, March 27, 2009)
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- *Iraq, once a country of fervent readers, now starves for books* (April 13, 2009)
- *Another Iraqi professor killed* (21 Apr 2009)
- *Fortune and misfortune of the Iraqi scientific community* (Mohammed Aref, 30 April 2009)
- *Mekki: Corruption in Education Ministry* (Heyetnet, 12 May 2009)
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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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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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Stop the Assassination of Iraqi Academics !

A campaign of The **BRussels** Tribunal and

Campaña Estatal contra la Ocupación y por la Soberanía de Iraq

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Campaña Estatal contra la Ocupación y por la Soberanía de Iraq

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A campaign of The **Russells** Tribunal and

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Stop the Assassination of Iraqi Academics !

A campaign of The **BRussels** Tribunal and

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Stop the Assassination of Iraqi Academics !

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2. *Call for assistance in documenting and registering assassinated Iraqi academics (p 32)*
3. *Action Needed Over Detention of Iraqi Education Ministry Officials. Unknown numbers murdered, dozen still illegally held (p 33)*
4. *Selected Media Reports from April 2006 (p 38)*

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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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Campaña Estatal contra la Ocupación y por la Soberanía de Iraq

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5. *List of Assassinated Academics*

6. *Frequently Asked Questions*

7. *UNHCR Guidelines on Asylum*

8. *The BRussells Tribunal Committee*



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Stop the Assassination of Iraqi Academics !

A campaign of The BRussells Tribunal and

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- **The US War against Iraq: The Destruction of a Civilization** (James Petras - Global Research, August 21, 2009)

Introduction

The US seven-year war and occupation of Iraq is driven by several major political forces and informed by a variety of imperial interests. However these interests do not in themselves explain the depth and scope of the sustained, massive and continuing destruction of an entire society and its reduction to a permanent state of war. The range of political forces contributing to the making of the war and the subsequent US occupation include the following (in order of importance):

The most important political force was also the least openly discussed. The Zionist Power Configuration (ZPC), which includes the prominent role of long-time, hard-line unconditional supporters of the State of Israel appointed to top positions in the Bush Pentagon (Douglas Feith and Paul Wolfowitz), key operative in the Office of the Vice President (Irving (Scooter) Libby), the Treasury Department (Stuart Levey), the National Security Council (Elliot Abrams) and a phalanx of consultants, Presidential speechwriters (David Frum), secondary officials and policy advisers to the State Department. These committed Zionists ‘insiders’ were buttressed by thousands of full-time Israel-First functionaries in the 51 major American Jewish organizations, which form the President of the Major American Jewish Organizations (PMAJO). They openly stated that their top priority was to advance Israel’s agenda, which, in this case, was a US war against Iraq to overthrow Saddam Hussein, occupy the country, physically divide Iraq, destroy its military and industrial capability and impose a pro-Israel/pro-US puppet regime. If Iraq were ethnically cleansed and divided, as advocated by the ultra-right, Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu and the ‘Liberal’ President Emeritus of the Council on Foreign Relations and militarist-Zionist, Leslie Gelb, there would be more than several ‘client regimes’.

Top pro-Israeli policymakers who promoted the war did not initially directly pursue the policy of systematically destroying what, in effect, was the entire Iraqi civilization. But their support and design of an occupation policy included the total dismemberment of the Iraqi state apparatus and recruitment of Israeli advisers to provide their ‘expertise’ in interrogation techniques, repression of civilian resistance and counter-insurgency. Israeli expertise certainly played a role in fomenting the intra-Iraqi religious and ethnic strife, which Israel had mastered in Palestine. The Israeli ‘model’ of colonial war and occupation – the invasion of Lebanon in 1982 – and the practice of ‘total destruction’ using sectarian, ethno-religious division was evident in the notorious massacres at the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in Beirut, which took place under Israeli military supervision.



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The second powerful political force behind the Iraq War were civilian militarists (like Donald Rumsfeld and Vice President Cheney) who sought to extend US imperial reach in the Persian Gulf and strengthen its geo-political position by eliminating a strong, secular, nationalist backer of Arab anti-imperialist insurgency in the Middle East. The civilian militarists sought to extend the American military base encirclement of Russia and secure control over Iraqi oil reserves as a pressure point against China. The civilian militarists were less moved by Vice President Cheney's past ties with the oil industry and more interested in his role as CEO of Halliburton's giant military base contractor subsidiary Kellogg-Brown and Root, which was consolidating the US Empire through worldwide military base expansion. Major US oil companies, who feared losing out to European and Asian competitors, were already eager to deal with Saddam Hussein, and some of the Bush's supporters in the oil industry had already engaged in illegal trading with the embargoed Iraqi regime. The oil industry was not inclined to promote regional instability with a war.

The militarist strategy of conquest and occupation was designed to establish a long-term colonial military presence in the form of strategic military bases with a significant and sustained contingent of colonial military advisors and combat units. The brutal colonial occupation of an independent secular state with a strong nationalist history and an advanced infrastructure with a sophisticated military and police apparatus, extensive public services and wide-spread literacy naturally led to the growth of a wide array of militant and armed anti-occupation movements. In response, US colonial officials, the CIA and the Defense Intelligence Agencies devised a 'divide and rule' strategy (the so-called 'El Salvador solution' associated with the former 'hot-spot' Ambassador and US Director of National Intelligence, John Negroponte) fomenting armed sectarian-based conflicts and promoting inter-religious assassinations to debilitate any effort at a united nationalist anti-imperialist movement. The dismantling of the secular civilian bureaucracy and military was designed by the Zionists in the Bush Administration to enhance Israel's power in the region and to encourage the rise of militant Islamic groups, which had been repressed by the deposed Baathist regime of Saddam Hussein. Israel had mastered this strategy earlier: It originally sponsored and financed sectarian Islamic militant groups, like Hamas, as an alternative to the secular Palestine Liberation Organization and set the stage for sectarian fighting among the Palestinians.

The result of US colonial policies were to fund and multiply a wide range of internal conflicts as mullahs, tribal leaders, political gangsters, warlords, expatriates and death squads proliferated. The 'war of all against all' served the interests of the US occupation forces. Iraq became a pool of armed, unemployed young men, from which to recruit a new mercenary army. The 'civil war' and 'ethnic conflict' provided a pretext for the US and its Iraqi puppets to discharge hundreds of thousands of soldiers, police and functionaries from the previous regime (especially if they were from Sunni, mixed or secular families) and to undermine the basis for civilian employment. Under the cover of generalized 'war against terror', US



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Special Forces and CIA-directed death squads spread terror within Iraqi civil society, targeting anyone suspected of criticizing the puppet government – especially among the educated and professional classes, precisely the Iraqis most capable of re-constructing an independent secular republic.

The Iraq war was driven by an influential group of neo-conservative and neo-liberal ideologues with strong ties to Israel. They viewed the success of the Iraq war (by success they meant the total dismemberment of the country) as the first ‘domino’ in a series of war to ‘re-colonize’ the Middle East (in their words: “to re-draw the map”). They disguised their imperial ideology with a thin veneer of rhetoric about ‘promoting democracies’ in the Middle East (excluding, of course, the un-democratic policies of their ‘homeland’ Israel over its subjugated Palestinians). Conflating Israeli regional hegemonic ambitions with the US imperial interests, the neo-conservatives and their neo-liberal fellow travelers in the Democratic Party first backed President Bush and later President Obama in their escalation of the wars against Afghanistan and Pakistan. They unanimously supported Israel’s savage bombing campaign against Lebanon, the land and air assault and massacre of thousands of civilians trapped in Gaza, the bombing of Syrian facilities and the big push (from Israel) for a pre-emptive, full-scale military attack against Iran.

The US advocates of sequential and multiple simultaneous wars in the Middle East and South Asia believed that they could only unleash the full strength of their mass destructive power after they had secured total control of their first victim, Iraq. They were confident that Iraqi resistance would collapse rapidly after 13 years of brutal starvation sanctions imposed on the republic by the US and United Nations. In order to consolidate imperial control, American policy-makers decided to permanently silence all independent Iraqi civilian dissidents. They turned to the financing of Shia clerics and Sunni tribal assassins, and contracting scores of thousands of private mercenaries among the Kurdish Peshmerga warlords to carry out selective assassinations of leaders of civil society movements.

The US created and trained a 200,000 member Iraqi colonial puppet army composed almost entirely of Shia gunmen, and excluded experienced Iraqi military men from secular, Sunni or Christian backgrounds. A little known result of this build up of American trained and financed death squads and its puppet ‘Iraqi’ army, was the virtual destruction of the ancient Iraqi Christian population, which was displaced, its churches bombed and its leaders, bishops and intellectuals, academics and scientists assassinated or driven into exile. The US and its Israeli advisers were well aware that Iraqi Christians had played a key role the historic development of the secular, nationalist, anti-British/anti-monarchist movements and their elimination as an influential force during the first years of US occupation was no accident. The result of the US policies were to eliminate most secular democratic anti-imperialist leaders and movements and to present their murderous net-work of ‘ethno-religious’ collaborators as their uncontested ‘partners’ in sustaining the long-term US colonial presence in Iraq. With their puppets in power, Iraq would serve as a



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launching platform for its strategic pursuit of the other 'dominoes' (Syria, Iran, Central Asian Republics...).

The sustained bloody purge of Iraq under US occupation resulted in the killing 1.3 million Iraqi civilians during the first 7 years after Bush invaded in March 2003. Up to mid-2009, the invasion and occupation of Iraq has officially cost the American treasury over \$666 billion. This enormous expenditure attests to its centrality in the larger US imperial strategy for the entire Middle East/South and Central Asia region. Washington's policy of politicizing and militarizing ethno-religious differences, arming and encouraging rival tribal, religious and ethnic leaders to engage in mutual bloodletting served to destroy national unity and resistance. The 'divide and rule' tactics and reliance on retrograde social and religious organizations is the commonest and best-known practice in pursuing the conquest and subjugation of a unified, advanced nationalist state. Breaking up the national state, destroying nationalist consciousness and encouraging primitive ethno-religious, feudal and regional loyalties required the systematic destruction of the principal purveyors of nationalist consciousness, historical memory and secular, scientific thought. Provoking ethno-religious hatreds destroyed intermarriages, mixed communities and institutions with their long-standing personal friendships and professional ties among diverse backgrounds. The physical elimination of academics, writers, teachers, intellectuals, scientists and professionals, especially physicians, engineers, lawyers, jurists and journalists was decisive in imposing ethno-religious rule under a colonial occupation.

To establish long-term dominance and sustain ethno-religious client rulers, the entire pre-existing cultural edifice, which had sustained an independent secular nationalist state, was physically destroyed by the US and its Iraqi puppets. This included destroying the libraries, census bureaus, and repositories of all property and court records, health departments, laboratories, schools, cultural centers, medical facilities and above all the entire scientific-literary-humanistic social scientific class of professionals. Hundreds of thousands of Iraqi professionals and family members were driven by terror into internal and external exile. All funding for national, secular, scientific and educational institutions were cut off. Death squads engaged in the systematic murder of thousands of academics and professionals suspected of the least dissent, the least nationalist sentiment; anyone with the least capacity to re-construct the republic was marked.

The Destruction of a Modern Arab Civilization

Independent, secular Iraq had the most advanced scientific-cultural order in the Arab world, despite the repressive nature of Saddam Hussein's police state. There was a system of national health care, universal public education and generous welfare services, combined with unprecedented levels of gender equality. This marked the advanced nature of Iraqi civilization in the late 20th century. Separation of church and



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state and strict protection of religious minorities (Christians, Assyrians and others) contrasts sharply with what has resulted from the US occupation and its destruction of the Iraqi civil and governmental structures. The harsh dictatorial rule of Saddam Hussein thus presided over a highly developed modern civilization in which advanced scientific work went hand in hand with a strong nationalist and anti-imperialist identity. This resulted especially in the Iraqi people and regime's expressions of solidarity for the plight of the Palestinian people under Israeli rule and occupation.

A mere 'regime change' could not extirpate this deeply embedded and advanced secular republican culture in Iraq. The US war planners and their Israeli advisers were well aware that colonial occupation would increase Iraqi nationalist consciousness unless the secular nation was destroyed and hence, the imperial imperative to uproot and destroy the carriers of nationalist consciousness by physically eliminating the educated, the talented, the scientific, indeed the most secular elements of Iraqi society. Retrogression became the principal instrument for the US to impose its colonial puppets, with their primitive, 'pre-national' loyalties, in power in a culturally purged Baghdad stripped of its most sophisticated and nationalistic social strata.

According to the Al-Ahram Studies Center in Cairo, more than 310 Iraqi scientists were eliminated during the first 18 months of the US occupation – a figure that the Iraqi education ministry did not dispute.

Another report listed the killings of more than 340 intellectuals and scientists between 2005 and 2007. Bombings of institutes of higher education had pushed enrollment down to 30% of the pre-invasion figures. In one bombing in January 2007, at Baghdad's Mustansiriya University 70 students were killed with hundreds wounded. These figures compelled the UNESCO to warn that Iraq's university system was on the brink of collapse. The numbers of prominent Iraqi scientists and professionals who have fled the country have approached 20,000. Of the 6,700 Iraqi university professors who fled since 2003, the Los Angeles Times reported that only 150 had returned by October 2008. Despite the US claims of improved security, the situation in 2008 saw numerous assassinations, including the only practicing neurosurgeon in Iraq's second largest city of Basra, whose body was dumped on the city streets.

The raw data on the Iraqi academics, scientists and professionals assassinated by the US and allied occupation forces and the militias and shadowy forces they control is drawn from a list published by the Pakistan Daily News (www.daily.pk) on November 26, 2008. This list makes for very uncomfortable reading into the reality of systematic elimination of intellectuals in Iraq under the meat-grinder of US occupation.



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Assassinations

The physical elimination of an individual by assassination is an extreme form of terrorism, which has far-reaching effects rippling throughout the community from which the individual comes – in this case the world of Iraqi intellectuals, academics, professionals and creative leaders in the arts and sciences. For each Iraqi intellectual murdered, thousands of educated Iraqis fled the country or abandoned their work for safer, less vulnerable activity.

Baghdad was considered the ‘Paris’ of the Arab world, in terms of culture and art, science and education. In the 1970’s and 80’s, its universities were the envy of the Arab world. The US ‘shock and awe’ campaign that rained down on Baghdad evoked emotions akin to an aerial bombardment of the Louvre, the Sorbonne and the greatest libraries of Europe. Baghdad University was one of the most prestigious and productive universities in the Arab world. Many of its academics possessed doctoral degrees and engaged in post-doctoral studies abroad at prestigious institutions. It taught and graduated many of the top professionals and scientists in the Middle East. Even under the deadly grip of the US/UN-imposed economic sanctions that starved Iraq during the 13 years before the March 2003 invasion, thousands of graduate students and young professionals came to Iraq for post-graduate training. Young physicians from throughout the Arab world received advanced medical training in its institutions. Many of its academics presented scientific papers at major international conferences and published in prestigious journals. Most important, Baghdad University trained and maintained a highly respected scientific secular culture free of sectarian discrimination – with academics from all ethnic and religious backgrounds.

This world has been forever shattered: Under US occupation, up to November 2008, eighty-three academics and researchers teaching at Baghdad University had been murdered and several thousand of their colleagues, students and family members were forced to flee.

The Selection of Assassinated Academics by Discipline

The November 2008 article published by the Pakistan Daily News lists the names of a total of 154 top Baghdad-based academics, renowned in their fields, who were murdered. Altogether, a total of 281 well-known intellectuals teaching at the top universities in Iraq fell victim to the ‘death squads’ under US occupation.

Prior to the US occupation, Baghdad University possessed the premier research and teaching medical



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faculty in the entire Middle East attracting hundreds of young doctors for advanced training. That program has been devastated during the rise of the US-death squad regime, with few prospects of recovery. Of those murdered, 25% (21) were the most senior professors and lecturers in the medical faculty of Baghdad University, the highest percentage of any faculty. The second highest percentage of butchered faculty were the professors and researchers from Baghdad University's renowned engineering faculty (12), followed by the top academics in the humanities (10), physical and social sciences (8 senior academics each), education (5). The remaining top academics murdered at Baghdad University spread out among the agronomy, business, physical education, communications and religious studies faculties.

At three other Baghdad universities, 53 senior academics were slaughtered, including 10 in the social sciences, 7 in the faculty of law, 6 each in medicine and the humanities, 9 in the physical sciences and 5 in engineering. Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld's August 20, 2002 pre-invasion joke, "...one has to assume they (scientists) have not been playing 'tiddlywinks' (a child's game)" (justifying the bloody purge of Iraq's scientists in physics and chemistry. An ominous signal of the academic bloodletting that followed the invasion.

Similar bloody purges of academics occurred in all the provincial universities: 127 senior academics and scientists were assassinated at the various well-regarded universities in Mosul, Kirkuk, Basra and elsewhere. The provincial universities with the highest number of murdered senior faculty members were in cities where the US and British military and their Kurdish mercenary allies were most active: Basra (35), Mosul (35), Diyala (15) and Al-Anbar (11).

The Iraqi military and allied death squads carried out most of the killing of academics in the cities under US or 'allied' control. The systematic murder of academics was a nation-wide, cross-disciplinary drive to destroy the cultural and educational foundations of a modern Arab civilization. The death squads carrying out most of these assassinations were primitive, pre-modern, ethno-religious groups 'set loose' or instrumentalized by US military strategists to wipe out any politically conscious intellectuals and nationalist scientists who might pursue an agenda for re-building a modern, secular society and independent, unified republic.

In its panic to prevent the US invasion, the Iraqi National Monitoring Directorate provided a list, which identified over 500 key Iraqi scientists to the UN on December 7, 2002. There is little doubt that this list became a core element in the US military's hit list for eliminating Iraq's scientific elite. In his notorious pre-invasion speech to the United Nations, Secretary of State Colin Powell cited a list of over 3,500 Iraqi scientists and technicians who would have to be 'contained' to prevent their expertise from being used by other countries. The US had even created a 'budget' of hundreds of millions of dollars, drawn from the Iraqi



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'Oil for Food' money held by the United Nations to set up 'civilian re-education' programs to re-train Iraqi scientists and engineers. These highly touted programs were never seriously implemented. Cheaper ways of containing what one American policy expert termed Iraq's 'excess scientists, engineers and technicians' in a Carnegie Endowment Paper (RANSAC Policy Update April 2004) became clear. The US had decided to adopt and expand the Israeli Mossad's covert operation of assassinating selected key Iraqi scientists on an industrial scale.

The US 'Surge' and 'Peak Assassination' Campaigns: 2006-2007

The high tide of terror against academics coincides with the renewal of the US military offensive in Baghdad and in the provinces. Of the total number of assassinations of Baghdad-based academics for which a date is recorded (110 known intellectuals slaughtered), almost 80% (87) occurred in 2006 and 2007. A similar pattern is found in the provinces with 77% of a total of 84 scholars murdered outside of capital during the same period. The pattern is clear: the murder rate of academics grows as the occupying US forces organize a mercenary Iraqi military and police force and provide money for the training and recruitment of rival Shia and Sunni tribesmen and militia as a means of decreasing American casualties and of purging potential dissident critics of the occupation.

The terror campaign against academics intensified in mid-2005 and reached its peak in 2006-2007, leading to the mass flight of tens of thousands of Iraqi scholars, scientists, professionals and their families overseas. Entire university medical school faculties have become refugees in Syria and elsewhere. Those who could not afford to abandon elderly parents or relatives and remained in Iraq have taken extraordinary measures to hide their identities. Some have chosen to collaborate with the US occupation forces or the puppet regime in the hope of being protected or allowed to immigrate with their families to the US or Europe, although the Europeans, especially the British are disinclined to accept Iraqi scholars. After 2008, there has been a sharp decline in the murder of academics – with only 4 assassinated that year. This reflects the massive flight of Iraqi intellectuals living abroad or in hiding rather than any change of policy on the part of the US and its mercenary puppets. As a result, Iraq's research facilities have been decimated. The lives of those remaining support staff, including technicians, librarians and students have been devastated with few prospects for future employment.

The US war and occupation of Iraq, as Presidents Bush and Obama have declared, is a 'success' – an independent nation of 23 million citizens has been occupied by force, a puppet regime is ensconced, colonial mercenary troops obey American officers and the oil fields have been put up for sale. All of Iraq's nationalist laws protecting its patrimony, its cultural treasures and national resources, have been annulled. The occupiers have imposed a 'constitution' favoring the US Empire. Israel and its Zionist flunkies in the



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Administrations of both Bush and Obama celebrate the demise of a modern adversary...and the conversion of Iraq into a cultural-political desert. In line with an alleged agreement made by the US State Department and Pentagon officials to influential collectors from the American Council for Cultural Policy in January 2003, the looted treasures of ancient Mesopotamia have 'found' their way into the collections of the elite in London, New York and elsewhere. The collectors can now anticipate the pillage of Iran.

Warning to Iran

The US invasion, occupation and destruction of a modern, scientific-cultural civilization, such as existed in Iraq, is a prelude of what the people of Iran can expect if and when a US-Israeli military attack occurs. The imperial threat to the cultural-scientific foundations of the Iranian nation has been totally absent from the narrative among the affluent Iranian student protesters and their US-funded NGO's during their post-election 'Lipstick Revolution' protests. They should bear in mind that in 2004 educated, sophisticated Iraqis in Baghdad consoled themselves with a fatally misplaced optimism that 'at least we are not like Afghanistan'. The same elite are now in squalid refugee camps in Syria and Jordan and their country more closely resembles Afghanistan than anywhere else in the Middle East. The chilling promise of President Bush in April 2003 to transform Iraq in the image of 'our newly liberated Afghanistan' has been fulfilled. And reports that the US Administration advisers had reviewed the Israeli Mossad policy of selective assassination of Iranian scientists should cause the pro-Western liberal intellectuals of Teheran to seriously ponder the lesson of the murderous campaign that has virtually eliminated Iraqi scientists and academics during 2006-2007.

Conclusion

What does the United States (and Britain and Israel) gain from establishing a retrograde client regime, based on medieval ethno-clerical socio-political structures in Iraq? First and foremost, Iraq has become an outpost for empire. Secondly, it is a weak and backward regime incapable of challenging Israeli economic and military dominance in the region and unwilling to question the ongoing ethnic cleansing of the native Palestinian Arabs from Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza. Thirdly, the destruction of the scientific, academic, cultural and legal foundations of an independent state means increasing reliance on the Western (and Chinese) multinational corporations and their technical infrastructure – facilitating imperial economic penetration and exploitation.

In the mid 19th Century, after the revolutions of 1848, the conservative French sociologist Emil Durkheim recognized that the European bourgeoisie was confronted with rising class conflict and an increasing anti-capitalist working class. Durkheim noted that, whatever its philosophical misgivings about religion and



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clericalism, the bourgeoisie would have to use the myths of traditional religion to 'create' social cohesion and undercut class polarization. He called on the educated and sophisticated Parisian capitalist class to forego its rejection of obscurantist religious dogma in favor of instrumentalizing religion as a tool to maintain its political dominance. In the same way, US strategists, including the Pentagon-Zionists, have instrumentalized the tribal-mullah, ethno-religious forces to destroy the secular national political leadership and advanced culture of Iraq in order to consolidate imperial rule – even if this strategy called for the killing off of the scientific and professional classes. Contemporary US imperial rule is based on supporting the socially and politically most backward sectors of society and applying the most advanced technology of warfare.

Israeli advisers have played a major role in instructing US occupation forces in Iraq on the practices of urban counter-insurgency and repression of civilians, drawing on their 60 years of experience. The infamous massacre of hundreds of Palestinian families at Deir Yasin in 1948 was emblematic of Zionist elimination of hundreds of productive farming villages, which had been settled for centuries by a native people with their endogenous civilization and cultural ties to the soil, in order to impose a new colonial order. The policy of the total deracination of the Palestinians is central to Israel's advise to the US policymakers in Iraq. Their message has been carried out by their Zionist acolytes in the Bush and Obama Administrations, ordering the dismemberment of the entire modern Iraqi civil and state bureaucracy and using pre-modern tribal death squads made up of Kurds and Shia extremists to purge the modern universities and research institutions of that shattered nation.

The US imperial conquest of Iraq is built on the destruction of a modern secular republic. The cultural desert that remains (a Biblical 'howling wilderness' soaked in the blood of Iraq's precious scholars) is controlled by mega-swindlers, mercenary thugs posing as 'Iraqi officers', tribal and ethnic cultural illiterates and medieval religious figures. They operate under the guidance and direction of West Point graduates holding 'blue-prints for empire', formulated by graduates of Princeton, Harvard, Johns Hopkins, Yale and Chicago, eager to serve the interests of American and European multi-national corporations.

This is called 'combined and uneven development': The marriage of fundamentalist mullahs with Ivy League Zionists at the service of the US.

- Iraq Rebuilds Higher Education Abroad (12 Aug 2009)

By Afif Sarhan, IOL Correspondent

BAGHDAD— Iraq is planning to send thousands of its students to compete their advanced studies in universities around the world, with the hope of breathing new life into the country’s once-respected education system that was crushed under the sanctions and then invasion.

“It is a fantastic achievement,” Zuhair al-Hummadi, personal assistant to the prime minister for educational affairs who is overseeing the initiative, told IslamOnline.net.

The plan will see some 50,000 students sent to get their masters and PhDs from abroad over the next five years.

While students will be encouraged to pursue studies in medicine, engineering, law and technology, they will be free to pick their area of interest.

The program will cost the government nearly \$1 billion, covering students’ tuition, fees and accommodation.

“It is an expensive investment but will certainly bring excellent results,” maintains Hummadi, who is also the head of the Higher Committee for Education Development.

The Committee will implement the program with the help of the Washington-based Academy for Educational Development (AED), an independent non-profit organization that will provide advice, control and administrative support.

Some 22 universities in the US and 21 universities in Britain are participating in the initiative.

“The scholarship is planned to start next fall with nearly 500 students who will travel to United States and United Kingdom,” said Hummadi.

“What makes it even more interesting for students is that it will run with relatively free country’s bureaucracy and they will be able to get their scholarship in any university from the listed countries.”



Professors hope the new initiative would help restore Iraq’s once highly-respected educational system.

Iraq Invasion (Special Coverage)



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The official asserted that more universities would be added in the near future.

“The program will also include universities in Australia, Canada, France and Japan.”

Lost

The government hopes the ambitious plan will be a turning point for the future of the country.

“We hope that it will be essential to keep stability in Iraq because education is the first step for democracy and peace,” says Hummadi.

For many Iraqis, the education system stands in stark comparison to what it used to be not so many years ago.

“Of course the educational system collapsed after the 2003 invasion,” Rim Abdullah, a dentistry teacher who was awarded a scholarship by the Saddam regime to pursue her PhD in England in the 80s, told IOL.

“Before the invasion, hundreds were getting their PhDs and Masters abroad.”

The Iraqi mother is blaming the West for Iraq’s collapsing education.

She notes that even before the invasion, the education system was crumbling under draconian embargo imposed by the US and the UN.

“Not only the Americans are guilty for the chaotic education in Iraq, but the UN helped too.”

Today, Abdullah is struggles in vain for her daughter to get the same chance she once got.

Saeed al-Munthar, a law professor who had his advanced studies in England before the 1991 sanctions, also blames the sanctions and the invasion for destroying Iraq’s once highly-respected educational system.

“The majority of teachers at Iraqi Universities had had their advanced studies abroad and helped new students to learn with quality,” he recalled.

“Today students are ending their studies with low experience.”

Munthar, however, is hoping that the new initiative would help Iraqis regain some of what they were made to lose.



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"I always had a dream to make advanced studies in England," says Abdel-Rahman, who will get his medicine degree from Baghdad University next year.

"I will study hard to get good marks and don't lose this chance."

- Unfairness is better than mercy !!!!!!!!!!! (August 4, 2009)

Sunshine, Days of My Life

I've talked a lot about the changes that happened in our life since war began, none of them shows the democracy and freedom..

Before war, there weren't any differences between Shiites and Sunnis, actually I didn't even know to which cast do I belong to!

But unfortunately our government is trying to make huge differences between us, so the two casts start to feel jealous, hate and hurts each other but Shiites and Sunnis have been living together for thousands of years and even married each other!!!.

Few days ago the students in Iraq got the marks of the ministerial exams, the most important exam in our life which will specify our future career..

To the great surprise for the students the marks were so unfair and low, I got 85.8 % and I am so lucky many are envying me!!

Every year about 60 students from my school join medicine, pharmacy and dentistry collages, their makes are higher than 90% but this year only 33 passed the exams !!!!!!!!!!! only five from our class took marks in goes ! it is insane.

With teary eyes and shock, I took a look in the web and saw that in some schools only 7 or 8 students passed the exams and in other schools in my city NO ONE passed the exams ..I started to wonder why ?

My friend called me crying also "there must be a huge mistake, no one we know took a high par" my friend said. The phone kept ringing, and no one was believing the crazy situation, most of the intelligent students who had 98 or 97 as final pars before the ministerial exams , failed, they'll have to repeat the 6th grade, others had 60% only or so, everyone was speechless!!

My lecturers in private classes and school teachers still believe I deserve 95% or so, but in the same time they say I must thank god because I passed, my physics teacher said his student which is a genius girl failed in 6 subjects "they didn't even mark her paper, they said she was absent in 6 exams but she attended them and answered well" he said .. I kept hearing such tragic stories



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In Anrbar, Mosul, Diala, al Aa'thamya the marks were so unfair, in Anbar the ministry didn't mark the papers for 27 exam sectors, and decided to re-exam them, in A'athamyia the marks are worse than in everywhere else, students with their parents, professors started to demonstrate, one of the parents said "if they say the people in the south are more clever and they deserve the high marks they got, well I demand the minister to bring the student who took the highest marks to compete with my daughter, she is so clever, it is unfair she got very low marks" ..

but don't you notice that all of these places are for Sunnis ??

Everyone knows that the students are the victims of politicians disputes.

Each year, Mosul , Baghdad, and Hela, have the best ratio of success and high marks, unlike this year .

Now the iraqi media talks about our marks the whole time, even deputies, because the government is revenging from Sunnis.. governors, and important parties are demanding to re-mark our papers ..

Before we get the marks, I saw an interview with the person who's responsible of the ministerial exams and the marking in Dijla TV , he said " Karbal and Diwania have the best results ever, the students are busy with studying in these places, unlike those in other cities who are busy with other things beside school" and added " I ask the students not to be nervous, if they won't have high marks, so what, they can repeat the 6th class ones and twice and three times till they get it well " and then he added that during Saddam's rule the students in the south didn't take as high marks as they deserve, and now justice was settled!!

Well I don't see any justice ..

I felt sooo angry, the students in the north and middle are the cleverest but I kept watching with my heart beating fast and reminding myself he is just a bad person who's trying to part the iraqis ..

Then he said "there were some mistakes in the questions, but the humans make mistakes, we phoned SOME cities and corrected the questions "

At that time I was unable to continue the interview, I knew the marking will be unfair, my grandma was watching tv and crying, I said "grandma, what shall I do, the government is revenging from the Sunni students" ..

Then on Saturday I saw an interview with the minister he repeated three times that the students in the south have always been the best.

The huge difference between the students' marks in different Iraqi cities made the iniquitousness so evident..



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one of the students got his marks and immediately had heart stroke because of the shock. it is so devastating to study so hard despite the dangerous situation, walk for long time in such hot weather in order to reach lectures when there's curfew, attend the exams, answer well, and then get so unexpected marks, WHY??

It is such a horrible government ,during Saddam's regime, who was dictator and despot ,the punishment of skulduggery in the ministerial questions, like selling them, or skulduggery in marking , the punishment was execution. when it comes to ministerial exams the rules were firm at his days. ..

For our government I'd like to say something:

I studied and prepared for the 6th grade so well, 16 months, at least 5860 hours of studying (12 hours per day, I usually study from 11 to 14 hours everyday) I tried to concentrate in spite of the hard situation, losing dear people, explosions and shooting, I did everything I could, I studied under the stairs during fights, my house was damaged for SEVEN times but I didn't give up ,I studied with chaos around me, I remember all the times I studied in the darkness till late time at night and used candles' light or torches, I walked for hours to reach the lectures at 2 pm while the temperature was more than 50 degrees, I didn't complain about carrying my books and searching for a room to study, as we closed all of the windows with wood because of the continuous explosions, I didn't care about the cold weather when the temperature in under zero degrees, or the hot weather in summer, I said, impossible in nothing for me, after all the suffering all I am asking you is to give us the result we deserve, based on our efforts and cleverness, not our cast or religions ..

Shiite or Sunni, I am Iraqi, and I'll rebuild Iraq in the future, if you like or not, I will not give up, my religion and cast doesn't matter, because I have a clear heart and unconditional love to Iraq, god will change what you damaged, we'll be great doctors, engineers and professors, it is right you didn't gave the Sunnis the marks they deserve, and gave Shiite students and those who are loyal for certain parties much higher marks, but it will not make us dislike each other, what happened made us even more determined to be important people in the future, so that Iraq will be lead by clever, educated , and respectful Iraqis, who don't part or treat people differently...

All I want to say is Saddam's unfairness is better than your mercy.

Sunshine

www.uruknet.info?p=56682



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A campaign of The BRussells Tribunal and

Campaña Estatal contra la Ocupación y por la Soberanía de Iraq

- Iraq Education Initiative Scholarship Basics for Students (29 July 2009)

[Please note that Al Jamiat is privately held by an education company, there is NO affiliation with the Iraqi government, scholarship or their partners. We are only assisting students in answering basic questions and directing them to the main website of the Iraqi Education Initiative as highlighted in the first paragraph below. The official website of the Iraq Education Initiative is: Higher Committee for Education Development in Iraq]

So many Iraqi students are asking us about the scholarship and the basics...so here they are as we understand them. The best and most accurate information can be found on the official site of the Higher Committee for Education Development in Iraq (?????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ?? ??????).

The newly launched Iraq Education Initiative scholarships will allow approximately 50,000 Iraqi students study in English speaking countries across the world. The first group of scholarships are being awarded for the upcoming year (2009/2010) and the scholarship application is open for students to apply. The Iraqi scholarship application is available here: http://www.hcediraq.org/index_files/Apply.htm

This is a scholarship awarded by the Iraqi government and requires students to return home to work for the same amount of time they were studying. The students are fully funded by the government of Iraq. There are currently NO open offices for students to go to for the scholarship. In order to receive it, you MUST fill out the application and send it in.

Fast Facts:

- **500-600 scholarships to be awarded in September 2009 to Iraqi students**
- **Students must apply to English speaking Universities (United States, United Kingdom, Australia, etc)**
- **Scholarships include tuition, fees, and living stipend**
- **Students may apply for Associates (2 year), Bachelors, Masters and PhD programs**
- **English language program study is available for students to improve language skills**
- **Open to all accredited Universities, Colleges, Community Colleges**
- **Scholarships are awarded according to the percentage of population in each province of Iraq**
- **10,000 scholarships available for the next 5 years (beginning in 2010/2011)**



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The first step you MUST take is to complete the scholarship application! Once you have completed your application, you will need to start thinking about where you want to attend college. The next steps will be easier once you have your application for the Iraqi scholarship completed.

To start you will need to:

1. Review the rules for the Iraq education scholarship
2. Fill out the scholarship application carefully and accurately
 - a. Bachelors degree scholarship application
 - b. Masters/PhD scholarship application
3. Send application in to the Higher Committee (HCED)
4. Receive confirmation of your application from the Committee
5. Wait for a response regarding your scholarship

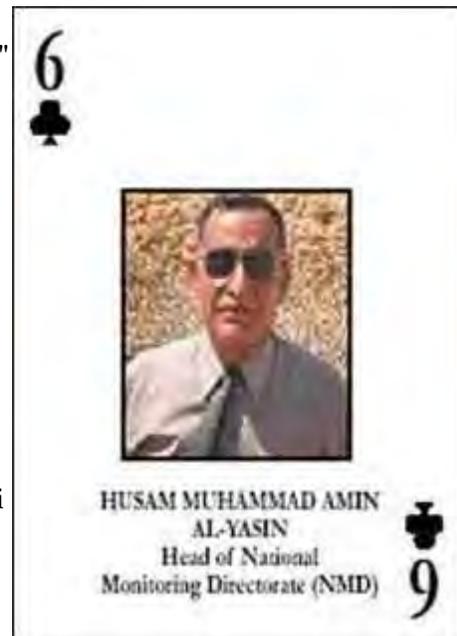
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- **Hussam Mohammed Amin: Former Iraqi Weapons Monitor Describes U.S. Abuse For First Time** (Michael Bronner - Huffington Post Investigative Fund – 23 July 2009)

By Michael Bronner

Special to the Huffington Post Investigative Fund

Major General Hussam Mohammed Amin, named the "Six of Clubs" on the Bush Administration's card deck of "Iraq's Most Wanted," had, perhaps, the most impossible job in pre-war Iraq.

Reporting to Saddam Hussein's powerful deputy prime minister, Tariq Aziz, Amin was the man in the middle through 12 years of fractious international weapons inspections between the two American wars -- Desert Storm and Operation Iraqi Freedom -- charged with managing the cat-and-mouse between Saddam and the aggressive teams of United Nations weapons inspectors. He visited the U.N. in New York a dozen times over the years with Iraqi delegations, and his white-mustachioed face was well known to anyone following the weapons fray.





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In December 2002, as the prospect of war grew increasingly inevitable, Amin coordinated Iraq's "full and final" disclosure of chemical, biological and nuclear programs to the U.N. Iraq produced a 12,000-page declaration--12 CD-ROMs and 43 spiral-bound volumes -- that would be devoid of revelations, Amin told reporters, "because Iraq is clean of weapons of mass destruction." He made one of his last public appearances at a Baghdad press conference two months later, in March 2003, as American troops massed on the Kuwaiti border.

As war rolled over the Iraqi regime, Amin disappeared from view. The only public information about him since was the announcement by U.S. Central Command that he was captured "on or around" April 27, 2003.

After the Iraqi insurgency began to dominate the news and the U.S. government figured out that Amin had essentially been telling the truth about WMD all along, the mechanical engineer was largely forgotten, except for sporadic interrogations about the Saddam regime. He was held without charges for nearly three years.

Amin's story of his incarceration, related here for the first time, offers another instructive chapter in the scandalous history of detainee treatment -- one that encompasses both physical torture and the more subtle moral quandary of leaving prisoners to languish indefinitely without any meaningful legal process, the status quo for prisoners at U.S. detention facilities in Iraq, Afghanistan and Guantanamo Bay. It again raises key questions the Obama Administration has yet to fully answer as it assumes control of America's unconventional wars: How can it square urgent, real battlefield needs with the rule of law and the spirit of the nation's ideals?

Story continues below +

Hussam Amin's story is not one the Bush Administration meant to be heard, at least not for a while.

"I am sorry," Amin said, rebuffing me when I reached him, through a series of intermediaries, in the country of his exile far from Iraq. "We signed a paper, at the prison when we were released, [agreeing] not to talk to any media, or not to say anything. I am sorry," he said again. "I am a refugee now."

The "paper at the prison" Amin feared was his "Conditional Release Agreement" with Multinational Forces-Iraq, the U.S.-led military command, barring former prisoners from making political statements "inside or outside Iraq" for 18 months after their release, which also required the bond of a family member.



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A few days later, however -- a few hours before my overnight flight back to New York -- Amin let me know that he would be sitting at a small coffee shop in his neighborhood. He'd be wearing a gray shirt, he said. He asked that I not bring along any Iraqis, or disclose his whereabouts.

"I do not tell this story, ever to anyone," said the tentative, physically diminished 57-year-old man, crushing out a cigarette as we settled into a booth. But over the next several hours, Amin did tell the story, with an unsettling mix of humor, irony and anger.

Eventually Amin would entrust me with one of the few things he managed to take with him when he was quietly released from custody just before Christmas in 2005: 40 pages of an illicit diary he kept during his captivity at Camp Cropper, the U.S.-run prison for "high value detainees" near Baghdad-- the only first-person account to emerge so far from the war's secret-most cells.

The Black Bag: 'Now I will die'

In Amin's telling, the weeks immediately following the invasion found him moving furtively around Baghdad, dogged by overtures from an Iraqi-American physician rumored to be working with the CIA, offering, through relatives, to help Amin turn himself in. Then, on April 12, 2003, Amin's friend and former colleague, chemical engineer Amer al-Sa'adi (the "Seven of Diamonds" on the card deck, also a high-profile liaison to the U.N. before the war), made a gallant public surrender, declaring before news cameras that he would prove to America that Iraq had been honest all along. Amin made what he calls a patriotic decision to join al-Sa'adi and arranged a meeting.



Amin was given the address of a house in the Karada section of Baghdad, from which he was taken in a small convoy of cars to a former presidential site in Ramadi and turned over to the U.S. military. There, he said, he was interrogated for several hours by a "respectful, logical and professional" American colonel with a "good background" on Iraq's prior WMD programs. Afterwards, he said, he and the colonel shared lunch.

It was shortly after lunch, Amin said, that he was suddenly overwhelmed by soldiers, his hands and feet bound and a black bag pulled over his head. They hustled him away to a Saddam-era base that U.S. forces used as the first stop for their top prisoners.

Lt. Gen. Hussam Amin, of the Iraqi National Monitoring System, left, speaks with Hans Blix, chief U.N. weapons inspector, right, at Saddam International Airport in Baghdad, Iraq, Nov. 20, 2002. Blix and about a dozen U.N. officials were leaving after a two-day visit to Iraq in which they discussed the inspection process with Iraqi officials. (AP Photo)



Camp Nama was run by a secretive U.S. Joint Special Operations task force, and was off-limits even to most military personnel. Those who did have access retained operational anonymity -- few knew even each other by their real names. The CIA would eventually become worried enough about being associated with what went on there that it barred employees from setting foot inside.

His senses swimming in the suffocating blackout bag, Amin couldn't anticipate where the next blow was coming from, he said -- or whether it would be a punch, a kick or a whack with "some kind of special metal stick" as unseen interrogators demanded the location of nonexistent weapons. He lost track of time, unsure whether he'd been there hours or days. At some point amid the fusillade, he was told that he would be executed. He believed it. He felt blood running down his face and neck -- three jagged gashes across his forehead that would require stitches. "Every day, I thought, 'Now, I will die,'" he said -- which was precisely the point: He was in "Purgatory," the task force's nickname for the initial interrogation/disorientation ordeal.

At some point his captors briefly removed the bag. He was ordered to lie on his side and keep his eyes fixed to the wall inches from his face. It hurt to breathe. He tucked his head in and snuck a glance at his chest: It was black with bruises. Each time he nodded off, one of his minders would kick him or hit him with the stick. "Even when you are sleeping, they beat you," he told me, shaking his head slowly. "You wake by punching."



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For Amin, Purgatory would last five days, he said, after which he was packed off to Camp Cropper, a large prison near Baghdad Airport holding thousands of detainees, and logged into a solitary cell.

Some details of Amin's account could not be directly confirmed, but they are consistent with later news reports and recent interviews about widespread abuses of prisoners at Camp Nama in the early months of the war. What occurred at the secret prison represents something of an overlooked angle to the ongoing torture debate, which has focused on the more exotic CIA techniques, like waterboarding, used on al-Qaeda prisoners. In Iraq, it is those captured by the U.S. special operations teams who allege the most severe treatment.

"That was standard procedure when they were grabbed by special forces," said Rod Barton, an Australian bioweapons expert who was one of the senior advisors to the CIA from the Iraq Survey Group, the team sent by the invasion force to hunt for WMD after the invasion. "Purgatory was official policy, not the result of a few undisciplined soldiers, and in that regard it was most disturbing...What the special forces were doing was physical. They were hitting people -- at least. This goes beyond psychological torture."

The U.S.-led special operations task forces in Iraq included a melange of military and non-military players including the 75th Ranger Regiment, the 2nd Ranger Battalion, Navy SEALs, Delta Force, Special Forces, British Special Air Service (SAS), Polish Special Air Service, CIA, DIA, FBI, Marine Corps recon troops and Blackwater contractors, according to one former task force member who spoke to me at length about his experience with the unit.

Barton, who had long experience as a weapons inspector in Iraq (which included extensive interactions with Amin in his capacity as U.N. liaison), told me he first realized something was deeply wrong while reviewing files of other former weapons scientists held at Camp Cropper. People he'd interviewed over a decade of U.N. inspections were unrecognizable in the mug shots taken when they were logged into Camp Cropper.

Barton recalled two January 2004 briefings (also recounted in his 2006 book, *The Weapons Detective*) in which Maj. Gen. Keith Dayton, military commander of the Iraq Survey Group, inquired about bruises and abrasions visible on detainees' faces after viewing slides that included the induction photos. Dayton was told the detainees were injured "resisting arrest." In reality, Barton said, they'd been through Camp Nama.

Charles Duelfer, the chief U.S. weapons inspector in Iraq, also dealt with Amin extensively before the war. "He was a quiet, thoughtful, beleaguered guy," Duelfer said, likening Amin's job to that of a Hollywood continuity supervisor -- charged with keeping track of every detail in the script, guarding against



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inconsistencies and struggling to mitigate those that inevitably emerged. "His headaches were enormous. Any little discrepancy we'd come across, he'd have to sort that out."

The peril associated with a slip was significant: After contending with the inspectors by day, Duelfer said Amin then had to report to Saddam's Special Security Organization, the elite intelligence service tracking every detail of the inspectors' activities, as well as the inspectors themselves.

Senior technocrats like Amin could have been relatively easily induced to cooperate without being abused, or even arrested, Duelfer believes. He said he made an effort to get some detainees including Amin released. He was unsuccessful. "The same quality of intelligence that went into the miscalculations about Iraqi WMD went into creating the stupid blacklist of people to be captured," he said. "It was almost like they made a list of every Iraqi whose name they knew. Some of them were people who opposed Saddam and could have been really helpful to us, but they'd end up in prison and you couldn't get them out."

A spokesman for Special Operations Command, Kenneth McGraw, declined to comment on Hussam Amin's case, other than to say the command has "no record of an allegation" from him. He said that from April 2003 to date, 68 members of Special Operations forces have been disciplined for detainee abuse in Iraq and Afghanistan combined.

Yet the accumulated evidence shows that violence was systemic in these kinds of interrogations at Camp Nama and other facilities.

Stories about what was happening at Camp Nama began circulating later, after the military responded to the welling Iraq insurgency by expanding operations at the base. Interrogations were conducted in "the 'Black Room'...a windowless, jet-black garage-size" cell where "some soldiers beat prisoners with rifle butts...and, in a nearby area, used detainees for target practice in a game of jailer paintball," according to a 2006 report by the New York Times. A Human Rights Watch report from the same year includes whistleblowing soldiers' descriptions of physically abusive interrogations "of hundreds of anonymous, and often innocent detainees" at Camp Nama and other facilities in Iraq, noting that a policy of abuse was "apparently built into the interrogation regime."

That was corroborated to me by another American covert operator who served in Iraq during this time and has first-hand knowledge of the facilities and methods. "There were all kinds of teams operating under all kinds of rules," said the man, who spoke on condition that his name and U.S. government employer not be identified. "If, for example, the CIA wanted something done that fell outside its guidelines, it would get another group to do it that could."



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Which groups had what rules, and who approved them? It's hardly just a history lesson. America's wars in Iraq and Afghanistan continue to revolve around the capture of people on CIA and Special Operations "blacklists."

Isolation: *'I felt I was lucky'*

At Camp Cropper, Amin no longer was beaten, but he found himself in a void. His cell, he said, was fetid, dark and airless, one corner doubling as a urinal. He had no bed for the first five months, only a blanket and a crushed water bottle for a pillow. Detainees weren't allowed to shower or shave; Amin showed me with a hand how long his beard grew.

These descriptions were nearly identical to those of another former Cropper prisoner I've interviewed who was detained during that period, as well as those of intelligence personnel who visited the camp. "Cropper was a really, really horrible place, in the early days in particular," one Iraq Survey Group member acknowledged during a recent background discussion.

In his cell, Amin could hear the roar of planes from the nearby airport, and then, more and more, the war. Six months into his incarceration, he bent over surreptitiously squirreled sheets of Red Cross tablet marked "Family News Only" and began to write his prison diary. As the pages accumulated, he hid them in his cell. The entries, varying in length from a few lines to a few pages, range from banal to arresting.

It would be more than a year before Amin was permitted to mix with or talk to his former colleagues, fellow inmates at Camp Cropper. "When this segregation was lifted...we were congratulating each other as if we were out of the prison itself," he noted in his diary.

Amin then learned he was not the only one to go through Purgatory. "Inside the prison I saw injured colleagues...who were barbarically tortured," he wrote later, citing several by name. "When I heard my friends' stories, I felt I was lucky because I stayed [in Camp Nama] only [five] days and the level of torture was less than what they suffered."

While Amin and others were sitting in their cells, the U.S. District Court in Washington on July 7, 2003, issued one of the clearest definitions to date regarding torture in Iraq. The historical irony: The case involved not Iraqis in U.S. detention, but rather American servicemen who had been held by Saddam Hussein's regime during the first Gulf War.

The case, *Acree v. Republic of Iraq*, is named after retired Marine Col. Clifford Acree, who was taken prisoner and horrendously beaten after his OV-10 "Bronco" aircraft was shot down over Iraq on July 17,



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1991. Acree suffered a fractured skull and broken nose, and lost 30 pounds during the ordeal. He and 16 other American POWs filed suit in 2002, naming as defendants the Republic of Iraq, the Iraqi Intelligence Service and Saddam Hussein.

Awarding the plaintiffs combined damages of \$959 million, the court noted among other things that "the torture inflicted included severe beatings, mock executions, threatened castration, and threatened dismemberment. The POWs were systematically starved, denied sleep, and exposed to freezing cold. They were denied medical care and their existing injuries were intentionally aggravated." The Bush Administration sought, successfully, to overturn the Acree decision so as not to place a financial burden on the new Iraqi government.

Freedom: 'Poor Those Who Imprisoned Me'

In early 2004, Amin notes in his diary, his captors finally provided him with proper medical treatment: "After all the suffering, I was taken to day to Ibn Sina Hospital while handcuffed," he wrote on Jan. 5. "They also put a bag over my head so that I don't see anything. I was diagnosed with gastric ulcer accompanied with interior bleeding. I felt that [my wife] and the girls were thousands of miles away, when they were only 2,000 meters away..."

Amin said he lost 50 pounds in his first year of captivity. His diary notes that in February 2004 "they started giving us rice after all we had [previously] was MREs [military-issue Meals Ready-to-eat]. Apparently the Red Cross had interfered when they saw we were losing weight. They began giving us an apple or an orange every day. When I came here, I was 86 kg [190 lbs]. After two months, my weight became 76kg [168 lbs]. Now I am only 64kg [141 lbs]..." A month later, on March 25, he wrote: "According to the medical check, 15 of the prisoners were diagnosed with TB. They were all taken to building #6 so that they won't spread the sickness to others."

I read those entries to a Red Cross official, who said neither marked weight loss or disease were acceptable, and the weight loss in particular is hard to justify given the US military's ample food supplies in Iraq. One explanation may be the use of "dietary manipulation," which has been cited among the "enhanced interrogation techniques" employed by U.S. military interrogators in Iraq.

Dietary manipulation was one of 14 interrogation techniques that were outside the Army Field Manual but used as a matter of policy by the Joint Special Operations Command in Iraq when it was under the leadership of Gen. Stanley McChrystal, who President Obama has now tapped to run the war in Afghanistan. The 14 techniques were more "than...any other military organization at that time," according to a 2004 report by Vice Admiral Albert T. Church, then the Naval Inspector General. Other techniques

including use of muzzled dogs, "safety positions," sleep adjustment/management, "mild" physical contact, isolation, sensory overload and sensory deprivation.

McChrystal's tenure began shortly after Amin's five-day stay at Camp Nama but coincided with the abuses alleged in the New York Times and Human Rights Watch reports.

President Barack Obama meets with Army Lt. Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal, in the Oval Office at the White House, May 19, 2009. McChrystal, who was head of Joint Special Operations Command in Iraq, is now the commander of U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan.



None of the senators on the Armed Services Committee asked McChrystal about Camp Nama during his confirmation hearing for the Afghanistan post last month. McChrystal testified that he does not condone mistreatment of detainees and that he was uncomfortable with some of the interrogation techniques he found in place in Iraq when he assumed his command in October 2003, adding that he immediately sought to reduce the use of certain methods.

In a sharp follow-up query to McChrystal after the hearing, however, Sen. Carl Levin (D-Mich.) pointed out that seven months into his command McChrystal made a request to Gen. John Abizaid, head of U.S. military operations in the Middle East, for permission to use five additional "enhanced" interrogation techniques not listed in the Army Field Manual - techniques that had been suspended by Abizaid two months prior - including "sleep management," "control positions," and "environmental manipulation." As an addendum, McChrystal asked that, in "exceptional circumstances," handcuffs be allowed to "enforce the detainee's position."



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Abizaid denied McChrystal's request to use control positions, but approved the other four, which, in his written response to Levin's query, McChrystal said he used "sparingly." He also noted that he chose not to request permission to use physical contact or diet manipulation, "techniques which were in use by the SMUs [Special Mission Units] when I assumed command," he wrote.

Clifford Acree, the Marine pilot tortured under Saddam, was freed after 47 days of captivity. Some prisoners at Camp Cropper continue to languish without charges six years after the invasion, and many more at Guantanamo have been held for nearly eight years. Last week The Washington Post reported that inmates at the U.S.-run Bagram in Afghanistan have been protesting their indefinite detention by refusing to leave their cells since at least July 1 for showers or exercise.

In his journal and during our interview, Hussam Amin described the open-endedness as the most excruciating torture of all, each repetitive round of ongoing interrogation cruelly dangling the promise of release as the Bush Administration strained against all odds to justify the war:

"I have been interrogated dozens times by the CIA, the FBI, the U.S. army, the U.S. military intelligence, the State Department, the British intelligence and even a professor from Harvard University. All of them agreed that it's unfair that I stay in prison and that I was just doing my job through collaborating with the weapons of mass destruction inspection team," Amin wrote on April 26, 2005. "The last interrogation was by Charles Duelfer, the head of the [Iraq Survey Group]. He told me that keeping me in prison for this long is wrong and that he and the team are sympathetic. Moreover, he told me that he expected me to be out of prison 'very soon,' and that was in November of 2004. They lie to me every time."

On December 23, 2005, in the darkness before dawn, Hussam Amin's American military guards placed the black bag over his head once again. He was driven to a nondescript stretch of highway outside the Baghdad International Airport compound, where the bag was removed for the last time: After nearly three years, he was quietly reunited with his family, one of 22 Iraqi officials released that night, among them several once considered "Iraq's Most Wanted." Included in the group were "Mrs. Anthrax" (Dr. Huda Salih Mahdi Ammash, an American-educated scientist named the "Five of Hearts"), "Dr. Germ" (Dr. Rihab Rashid Taha) and others.

On the eve of his release, U.S. military officials at Camp Cropper, fearing for Amin's safety from insurgents, had tried to persuade him to accept safe passage to exile in a third country. Amin refused, hoping to live quietly with his family in Iraq. As it turned out, however, the U.S. military knew better. After a flurry of death threats, Amin fled just a few weeks later, joining an estimated two-million-more anonymous countrymen for whom Iraq is no longer safe. His experience has been much like theirs. His family is divided -- his wife and daughters living with him, his sons unable to get visas and marooned in



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Iraq. He has lost two nephews to the insurgency. He searched for over a year for work, finally landing a menial job well outside his field and expertise. When I met him, he was logging 12-hour days on a construction site.

As the months at Camp Cropper stretched into years, Amin had joined the long line of prison diarists who turned to verse: In one poem, in which he seems to question some of his own choices in life, he also addresses his captors, posing the notion that neither he, nor they, will escape the experience of Iraq:

Alas, you don't see that one day you destroyed your

Life in this place

You destroyed the value of your life no matter where

You end up on this planet...

Today, I am a prisoner inside my homeland

A stranger, who came from very far

To steal my freedom, leads this prison

Yet he failed, for Baghdad, Tikrit and any other city

Live in my veins. Never leave me. And will never leave them,

Poor those who imprisoned me; they don't know any of this.

Michael Bronner has written for Vanity Fair and the New York Times op-ed page, and reported from Iraq and Guantanamo for the weekday edition of CBS' 60 Minutes. Hussam Amin's diaries were translated by Alaa Majeed, an Iraqi journalist now based in New York. The Huffington Post Investigative Fund is an independent nonprofit journalism venture based in Washington, D.C.



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- **Iraq Asks Professors to Return Home** (22 June 2009)

17 Percent of Exiles Have University Degrees

06/22/2009 8:32 PM ET

The government of Iraq issued a call on Monday to professors living abroad to return to the country to use their expertise in rebuilding the country.

Once boasting one of the most educated populations in the Middle East with a well-funded education program, Iraq's educated classes were devastated by years of economic sanctions, war and sectarian and criminal violence.

Although the level of violence has dropped in the country over the last two years, hundreds of Iraq's professors have not returned, al-Malaf Press writes in Arabic.

Sadiq al-Rikabi, the political advisor to Iraqi PM Nuri al-Maliki said at the beginning of a three-day conference organized by the Iraqi Ministry of Higher education and Technology that Iraq's professors are an integral piece of Iraqi society and could affect the future of the Iraqi economy should they choose to return.

At least 350,000 Iraqis living in exile have university diplomas, or about 17 percent of the roughly two million Iraqis who have left the country since 2003, the agency adds.

About 200 Iraqi professors came to the gathering in Baghdad, al-Malaf Press writes, some of whom expressed misgivings at the idea of returning to a country where violence continues to smolder.

Muhammad al-Rabi'i, an Iraqi professor of engineering at Dublin University reportedly told Reuters that he planned only to make short visits to Iraq, adding that while many professors did not seek to return to Iraqi to reside, but suggested that short-term projects involving expatriate experts could still benefit the country.



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- **Spilled milk? Iraqi-American academics ..** [ل ميس حيرك شفت ل عزق لة عش حار](#) (April 18, 2009)

In a recent distribution, an [impressive list](#) (4.5 MB PDF) is offered of more than 300 Iraqi-American academics who were invited to attend an "Iraqi Academic Conference" during March 14-15, 2009 "To Help Improve and Sustain Higher Education in Iraq".

This event was hosted by The National Academies, Washington D.C. in collaboration with the Cultural Office of the Embassy of Iraq in Wash. D.C.

Impressive, indeed.

But what did they meet for? What was the purpose of their gathering? What is the connect with Iraq?

The released list of attendees does not contain any agenda, deliberations or resolutions for that event.

A [search of The National Academies web site](#) for "Iraqi" yields nothing on this gathering.

The [Iraqi Embassy's declared intention](#) for holding the event was devoid of any sustainable concrete venues.

The only available feedback on what transpired is posted on the [U.S. Department of Defense's Military Health System Blog](#).

So much for Iraq's belated benefit to the educational system resulting from the six years of American occupation.

Thank you for collecting the names of the distinguished Iraqi academics in the U.S.

Update:

It appears that the above event was staged for the benefit of Kurdish interests, abetted by a fervent American "[professor](#)", namely [Carole O'Realy](#), who serves too well the State Department, the Pentagon and Ammar Al-Hakim (pictured below). (See also [her statement](#) before the United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations on April 3, 2009).

The following (in Arabic) is a thorough investigative background on the above murky conference by [Iraqi Ishtar](#). We need many with her investigative skills.

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- **IRAQ: Higher education's uncertain future** (Kate Robertson* 01 March 2009)

Despite the assassination and attempted assassination of a number of candidates in the run-up to local elections in Iraq last January, for the main the event passed off without the feared descent into violence and bloodshed. In fact, the elections delivered a number of secular candidates into the political arena and left a tentative note of optimism in the air, even among those who watch from recent exile, constantly assessing the risks of return. Although this is by no means the 'normalisation' of Iraq that some wish to have you believe, nevertheless in this continuing fragile environment there is a burgeoning sense of possibility. What does this mean for Iraq's higher education sector? How best to support the renaissance of this once much vaunted 'beacon' in the region?

The attack on Iraq's higher education sector and its international isolation goes back nearly two decades to the imposition of UN sanctions - at best highly questionable and at worst obscenely corrupt and damaging. The sanctions denied academics access to scientific and medical journals, essential equipment, the internet, international collaboration and much more besides, depriving in turn the Iraqi people of academic expertise, as part of a deliberate strategy of deskilling.

The task, therefore, is not just to repair the wanton destruction of Iraq's higher education infrastructure since 2003, nor simply to reverse the massive outflow of Iraq's academic and administrative capital, among the hundreds of thousands who fled Iraq in fear of their lives.

At its most elemental, the task is about drawing the Iraqi higher education sector academically, structurally and administratively into the 21st century and back into the international arena.

There has been no independent quality control agency to monitor and ensure minimum standards in teaching and research across higher education institutions. And there have been no government or private research-funding bodies to consistently encourage, nurture, support and reward excellence in research.



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Likewise, there has been little possibility of international collaboration for a generation of academics that has never had the opportunity to engage internationally. Nor have there been many possibilities for international publication given the isolation and declining academic rigour.

The most fundamental of the many challenges facing Iraq's higher education sector is that of re-establishing its universities as independent institutions, dedicated to education, learning and knowledge-creation, free of political, religious, ethnic and sectarian influence, and free of the control of those who would use them as personal fiefdoms and for personal gain.

Encouragingly, the rhetoric of independence is now being heard at ministerial level, seemingly accompanied by the political will to halt the spiral of academic decline, which went into freefall post-2003, and the exodus of so many of Iraq's academic leaders.

For those now living in exile, however, the complexities associated with return are considerable, with the inevitable question of security and protection lying at its heart following the assassination of more than 300 of their colleagues.

The decision as to when security is 'sufficient' to engender return remains a very personal one and, although recent months have seen a trickle back, the return of Iraq's higher profile academics - among the first to have been included on the hit lists - is less imminent.

The Iraqi government's adoption of strong-arm tactics to try to force return, including public vilification in an ironic echo of the Bush 'you're either with us or against us' stance, has been unhelpful. So has the formal dismissal of a large number of people from academic posts for their failure to return, despite their critical importance to Iraq's future and the resulting catastrophic loss right across the discipline spectrum.

But more recently, the 'them and us' rhetoric seems also to have softened, opening the way for more creative approaches and lateral thinking on initiatives to support the re-engagement of this critical group as academic leaders, mentors, supervisors, lecturers, researchers and political advisors - pending their return.

With the support of members of the CARA Scholars at Risk UK University Network, a collaboration of 45 UK universities working to promote and defend academic freedom and provide practical support for academics at risk, CARA is developing and implementing a Middle East programme to which Iraq's academics in exile are central.



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Through a number of complementary up-skilling, research and international networking activities, the programme aims to sustain and enhance Iraq's academic capital in exile, while also facilitating and supporting active contributions to Iraq's higher education sector - using the latest online communication technologies - and to the future of its independent thinkers.

CARA will run a number of pilot schemes whose success will also depend on the support and engagement of the Iraqi Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, with whom positive dialogue is ongoing.

As for the question of increased security and protection to support return, bringing an end to the current climate of impunity in which not a single perpetrator of the targeted campaign of assassinations against Iraqi academics has been brought to justice, is an obvious and long overdue starting point.

Much might also be achieved by running a national public awareness and education campaign to highlight the critical importance of Iraq's educators and educational institutions to the future economic prosperity of its children, as well as to its future economic development.

In this all-important election year - Iraq's national elections are to be held in December - there are windows of opportunity which, coupled with opportunism and vested interest, may encourage senior politicians from all parties and local religious and community leaders to collectively support initiatives from which Iraq and its people will finally be the outright winners.

** Kate Robertson works with CARA, the Council for Assisting Refugee Academics..*



- **MP: Iraq Needs 4,000 New Schools to Meet Demand** (25 Feb 2009)

Makki Slams Budget Cuts to Education, Warning of Decline in Quality

7:51 PM ET



Tawafuq Front.

Iraqi MP Ala Makki, chair of the education committee in Parliament.

Budget cuts for education spending in Iraq will create difficulties for the country's education sector, said the Iraqi MP who chairs the Education Committee in the Parliament.

Makki added that the financial allocation for the education sector in the 2009 Budget is just under six percent in total, down from 6.8 percent in 2008.

The MP, a member of the predominantly Sunni Arab Iraqi Islamic Party announced that to meet educational demand, Iraq will need to build "four thousand new schools at a budget of \$100 million during the next five years," al-Malaf Press writes in Arabic.

Just four percent of Iraq's next budget has been allocated for pre-university education, the MP said, adding "This means that (Iraq) will not be capable of building the requisite number of schools," and also warning of "a decline in the hiring capacity of the Ministry of Education, and a decline in the standards of education in regards to the distribution of educational necessities."

As for Iraq's higher education budget, Makki said that higher education spending was down to about two percent of the total budget, which he said would mean a decline in the number of professors who would be appointed to jobs this year, as well as a decline in the possibility to distribute laboratories to universities and difficulty absorbing the growing number of students admitted to universities.

Iraq **is facing belt-tightening** as slumping petroleum prices amid a global economic slowdown cut into the oil exporter's revenues.



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- Education in the New Iraq (29 June 2008)

Five students were wounded when the bodyguards of Education Minister Khudhair al-Khuzai (Da'wa) randomly opened fire at students inside the campus of the College of Education in the Saba' Abkar district north of Adhamiya last Thursday. The minister, who was visiting the campus to oversee the ministry board examinations, first claimed there was an assassination attempt by one of the students prompting his security detail to open fire, though he later retracted his claim on an interview with Radio Sawa. PM Maliki has promised to investigate the incident. And we all know how these investigations end.

- Iraq: Girls Denied Education (May 30, 2008)

PARENTS CONCERNED ABOUT MILITIA VIOLENCE ARE PULLING THEIR DAUGHTERS OUT OF SCHOOL.

By Samah Samad in Kirkuk

(IWPR) Thirteen-year-old Huda Ahmed's world was turned upside down when her classmate was kidnapped two years ago.

The girl was snatched by armed men on her way to school in Kirkuk, and was only released three days later when her family paid 40,000 US dollars in ransom.

Fearing harm may come to their only daughter, Huda's parents pulled her out of school. Often depressed, she now spends her days cleaning the house and watching television when there's electricity.

Huda envies her classmates and two brothers, who still attend school, and says she is deeply conflicted about her parents' decision. She calls it "an ugly crime perpetrated against me", although in the next breath, says she understands her parents' logic.

"I'll go back to school the first chance I get, but for the time being I will respect my parents' decision," said Huda.

A survey released earlier this year by NGO Women for Women International found that Iraqi girls are being removed from school at an alarming rate. Three-quarters of the 1,510 women surveyed said girls in their families were being denied an education, and just over half said the trend began following the US-led invasion in 2003.



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In the north province of Kirkuk, where ethnic and sectarian violence have broken out sporadically, the directorate of education estimates that about 30 per cent of girls have dropped out of school over the past five years.

Experts said that a combination of factors, including poor security, poverty and tradition, were at play.

Daliya Mukarram, 33, a social worker specialising in education in Kirkuk, said girls in rural areas have always had difficulty accessing education because of strict tribal restrictions and traditions. In the 1970s, the Ba'athist government insisted that girls in the countryside stay at school until the age of ten.

Yet today, even well-educated parents in the region have begun pulling their girls out of class because of the violence and instability, said Mukarram.

"The rates of girls leaving schools have soared recently due to the deteriorating security situation and the fear that [girls] will be targeted by terrorists," she said.

Huda's father, 44-year-old Ahmed Latif, said he doesn't want her to attend class because she could be killed or sexually assaulted, "which would be a stain on the family's honour".

"I forced my daughter to drop [out of] school to protect her from gangs and terrorists," he said.

Her mother, Faza Mustafa, 39, said, "It hurts me to see her so sad because she had to quit school. We want all our children to be educated and get good jobs in the future."

Although both of Huda's parents are literate and value education, other families disapprove of sending girls to study.

Nawal Hasan, a 41-year-old housewife in Kirkuk, does not allow her three daughters – ages 9, 12 and 17 – to attend school. Hasan's mother permitted her to have an education so that she could learn the alphabet and write her name. However, she dropped out of elementary school and married at age 19.

"I prefer for my daughters to stay at home," she said. "It's better than if they go to school and get hurt. Our family traditions do not allow girls to go to school...Sending girls out of the house and mixing with [strangers] will taint their reputations and the family's honour."



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Poverty is also driving some parents to pull their children out of school and send them to work instead, Women for Women International noted in its report.

Nadwa Mahmood, head of the Al-Intisar girls' school in Kirkuk, said that while teaching staff have been flexible about attendance and the government has provided them guards since 2006, girls continue to drop out at age 13 or 14.

Mahmood fears the consequences that a lack of education will have on the girls' prospects.

"The issues of illiteracy will have a huge impact on the girls and even when they get married it will have a bearing on their children because these [future mothers] might continue the tradition of their families and keep their daughters at home," he said.

According to Mukarram, girls who stay at home often feel empty and depressed and develop poor habits such as addiction to television and overeating.

Ali Ghadir, a 35-year-old writer from Kirkuk, said that girls and women are losing what little independence they had because of the security situation. He said an entire generation will be affected if girls continue to leave school.

"In the future, there will be a huge class of uneducated women and that will affect their children," he said. "These girls will spend the rest of their lives working in their homes and will marry whomever their parents want."

In order to combat the problem, the ministry of education is sending out mobile teams to villages around Kirkuk to educate students who have dropped out, said Nassradeen Abdulrahman, head of planning bureau at Kirkuk's directorate of education.

The ministry of education has also developed a fast-track programme to help students between the ages of 12 and 18 who quit elementary school, continued Abdulrahman.

Mukarram said that charities could also help increase children's education opportunities by providing study materials for them to use at home.

However, while these solutions may help girls pulled out of school because of security concerns, those whose families do not value education will not appreciate outside efforts to educate them, maintained



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Ghadir.

“These issues are considered family issues and the families make decisions,” he said. “The idea is that organisations don’t have the right to interfere with family issues.”

From: http://www.iwpr.net/?p=icr&s=f&o=344869&apc_state=henpicr

- **Iraq: teachers told to rewrite history** (14 March 2008)

MoD accused of sending propaganda to schools

By Richard Garner, Education Editor

Britain's biggest teachers' union has accused the Ministry of Defence of breaking the law over a lesson plan drawn up to teach pupils about the Iraq war. The National Union of Teachers claims it breaches the 1996 Education Act, which aims to ensure all political issues are treated in a balanced way.

Teachers will threaten to boycott military involvement in schools at the union's annual conference next weekend, claiming the lesson plan is a "propaganda" exercise and makes no mention of any civilian casualties as a result of the war.

Related articles

- [What the MoD's guide says... and what it omits](#)
- [Click here to Have Your Say](#)

They believe the instructions, designed for use during classroom discussions in general studies or personal, social and health education (PSE) lessons, are arguably an attempt to rewrite the history of the Iraq invasion just as the world prepares to mark its fifth anniversary.

Steve Sinnott, the general secretary of the NUT, said: "This isn't an attack on the military – nothing of the sort. I know they've done valuable work in establishing peace in some countries. It is an attack on practices that we cannot condone in schools. It is a question of whether you present fair and balanced views or put forward prejudice and propaganda to youngsters."



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At the heart of the union's concern is a lesson plan commissioned by an organisation called Kids Connections for the Ministry of Defence aimed at stimulating classroom debate about the Iraq war.

In a "Students' Worksheet" which accompanies the lesson plan, it stresses the "reconstruction" of Iraq, noting that 5,000 schools and 20 hospitals have been rebuilt. But there is no mention of civilian casualties.

In the "Teacher Notes" section, it talks about how the "invasion was necessary to allow the opportunity to remove Saddam Hussein" but it fails to mention the lack of United Nations backing for the war. The notes also use the American spelling of "program".

Addressing whether the MoD should be providing materials for schools, Mr Sinnott said that he did not object, as long as the material was accurate, presented responsibly and contained a balanced view of opinions.

The union has protested to the Schools Secretary, Ed Balls, who has referred the complaint to the MoD. In a letter to Mr Balls, Mr Sinnott said: "I have to say that were the MoD pack to be distributed and followed without the legally required 'balanced presentation of opposing views' there would, in my view, be very serious risk of a finding of non-compliance with section 406 (of the 1996 Education Act) at least.

"I do not doubt that there would be many members of this union who would not accept as 'fact' the assertions made particularly in the Teacher Notes, nor, I think, could some of the assertions made in the Student Worksheet be regarded as non-controversial."

Mr Sinnott reminded Mr Balls that a High Court judge had ruled that the film *An Inconvenient Truth*, by the Oscar-winning former American vice-president Al Gore, could not be used in schools without teachers counteracting some of the assertions made in it.

Mr Balls sought to distance himself from supporting the material.

He said: "I am sure you are aware my department does not promote or endorse specific resources or methods of teaching for use in schools but I appreciate you drawing this to my attention." Mr Balls added that he had instructed his officials "to take this matter up" with the MoD.

A spokesman for the MoD said the ministry had consulted with interested parties over the proposed lesson plan in order to ensure it had the support of the education community. "We did ask the Stop The War coalition to take part although it refused."



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The spokesman added that the programme was "a set of web-based resources" whose use was "completely voluntary".

"We have consulted widely with teachers and students during the development of these products and feedback from schools has been extremely encouraging," he added.

"Teachers and students found them to be valuable and fun resources for applied learning.

"They are designed to support teachers in delivering a whole range of subjects across the national curriculum and its equivalents in Scotland and Wales.

"We are happy to engage with the NUT and we will be writing to them."

Union members say they are also worried that armed forces recruitment fairs in schools glamorise the job by citing exotic countries that recruits will visit but fail to mention that they may be required to kill people.

According to an independent assessment of the MoD's recruitment material by the Joseph Rowntree Trust, however, the material concerned was "very dubious". The trust said it had used misleading marketing with advertising campaigns that "glamorise warfare, omit vital information and fail to point out the risks and responsibilities associated with a forces career".

Mr Sinnott said: "On their recruitment material, it tells what an exotic lifestyle this can be, but it doesn't mention that being in the military involves killing people. These things don't feature as they should in a proper, balanced view of what it is like being in the armed forces."

What the MoD's guide says... and what it omits

* "Iraq was invaded early 2003 by a United States coalition. Twenty-nine other countries, including the UK, also provided troops... Iraq had not abandoned its nuclear and chemical weapons development program". After the first Gulf War, "Iraq did not honour the cease-fire agreement by surrendering weapons of mass destruction..."

The reality: The WMD allegation, central to the case for war, proved to be bogus. David Kay, appointed by the Bush administration to search for such weapons after the invasion, found no evidence of a serious programme or stockpiling of WMDs. The "coalition of the willing" was the rather grand title of a rag-tag group of countries which included Eritrea, El Salvador and Macedonia.



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* "The invasion was also necessary to allow the opportunity to remove Saddam, an oppressive dictator, from power, and bring democracy to Iraq".

The reality: Regime change was not the reason given in the run-up to the invasion – the US and UK governments had been advised it would be against international law. Saddam was regarded as an ally of the West while he was carrying out some of the worst of his atrocities. As for democracy, elections were held in Iraq during the occupation and have led to a sectarian Shia government. Attempts by the US to persuade the government to be more inclusive towards minorities have failed.

* "Over 7,000 British troops remain in Iraq... to contribute to reconstruction, training Iraqi security forces... They continue to fight against a strong militant Iraqi insurgency."

The reality: The number of British troops in Iraq is now under 5,000. They withdrew from their last base inside Basra city in September and are now confined to the airport where they do not take part in direct combat operations.

* "The cost of UK military operations in Iraq for 2005/06 was £958m."

The reality: The cost of military operations in Iraq has risen by 72 per cent in the past 12 months and the estimated cost for this year is £1.648bn. The House of Commons defence committee said it was "surprised" by the amount of money needed considering the slowing down of the tempo of operations.

* "Over 312,000 Iraqi security forces have been trained and equipped (Police, Army and Navy)."

The reality: The Iraqi security forces have been accused, among others by the American military, of running death squads targeting Sunnis. In Basra, the police became heavily infiltrated by Shia militias and British troops had to carry out several operations against them. On one occasion British troops had to smash their way into a police station to rescue two UK special forces soldiers who had been seized by the police.

* "A total of 132 UK military personnel have been killed in Iraq."

The reality: The figure is 175 since the invasion of 2003. A British airman died in a rocket attack at the airport two weeks ago despite British troops not going into Basra city on operations. Conservative estimates of the number of Iraqi civilians killed since the beginning of the invasion stand at around 85,000.



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* "From hospitals to schools to wastewater treatment plants, the presence of coalition troops is aiding the reconstruction of post-Saddam Iraq."

The reality: Five years after "liberation", Baghdad still only has a few hours of intermittent power a day. Children are kidnapped from schools for ransom and families of patients undergoing surgery at hospitals are advised to buy and bring in blood from sellers who congregate outside.

- IRAQ: Education Becomes the New Casualty in Baquba (10 Dec 2007)

BAQUBA, Dec 10 (IPS) - The alarming security situation in Diyala province north of Baghdad has killed off much of the education system.

By Ahmed Ali.

Ahmed Ali is IPS' correspondent in Iraq's Diyala province, he works in close collaboration with Dahr Jamail, their U.S.-based specialist writer on Iraq who travels extensively in the region.

Photo: Dhiya Thamer was 6 years old. He was shot on September 16th 2007 dead by gunmen who opened fire on his family's car as they were returning from registering him for his first day in school. His ten year old brother Qusay was wounded in the attack. The lady holding his body is his mother.



The photo is from AP the photographer was Adem Hadei.



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The U.S.-led invasion of Iraq had at first brought hope. Salaries were increased; a newly appointed primary or secondary school teacher was given 200,000 Iraqi Dinars, about 150 dollars a month.

In September 2006, the Ministry of Education increased teachers' salaries by 20 to 50 percent in an attempt to entice them to stay in their jobs.

But in Diyala capital Baquba, 40km north of Baghdad, lack of security means many teachers have quit, and children are not going to school.

This is a trend across Iraq. According to a report released last year by the non-governmental group Save the Children, 818,000 children of primary school age, representing 22 percent of Iraq's potential student population, were not attending school.

"We suffer so much because of the problem just of going from home to school; no one can easily move in the streets," Layla Hussein, a secondary school teacher told IPS in Baquba. "The militants are everywhere."

The security situation remains volatile despite massive U.S.-led military operations to rid Diyala province of militiamen, al-Qaeda and resistance fighters.

"Day after day our education system is in decline," primary school teacher Juma'a Jabur told IPS. "One should ask who will benefit from stoppage of school work, and from keeping the boys and girls at home."

Sectarian militias have regularly entered schools, and no guard has dared stand in their way.

"Sometimes, they come to ask about Shia teachers, or even about Sunnis," Nasir Hamza at the directorate-general of education told IPS. "Shia teachers have stopped coming to school for fear of being killed by the militants." As a result, Hamza said, many teachers have stopped coming to work. "The staff is not enough, so we had to start cutting classes."

Scores of teachers have been killed in Diyala province, says Hamza. Many schools have ceased to function entirely.

"The head of the school and his assistant may be threatened and forced to stay home or to quit, so one of the teachers becomes the head in order to keep work moving," a member of the local council of Baquba, speaking on condition of anonymity, told IPS. "As a result, no good outcomes can be attained on the level and performance of the pupils."

Displacement as a result of violence has also taken its toll on education.



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“All the teachers who work in schools located outside their villages or cities have asked to be moved to schools near their homes because of the difficulty in getting anywhere,” Hatam Abi, department manager at the directorate-general of education in Baquba told IPS. “As much as we can, we do move all the teachers near their homes.”

While the level of violence is down in Diyala for the moment, other difficulties afflict the education system. Examination papers did not reach pupils in many Diyala schools earlier this year. And the results were extraordinary. “What happened is that the pupils faked their answers; all the pupils in the same class had the same answers,” said Jabur.

“The teachers who were in charge of monitoring the pupils allowed the pupils to share the answers under threat,” a teacher told IPS on condition of anonymity.

The result of all this will be serious, the teacher said. “This has happened for the first time in the history of Iraq, and it will have a direct effect on a whole generation.”

- Corruption in Iraq: Where did they learn that? (02 Dec 2007)

[Right-wing war supporters](#) loved Damien Cave's excellent New York Times piece [charting improvements in Baghdad](#) in the wake of the U.S. military troop surge. On "Reliable Sources" last week, Howard Kurtz noted that many felt the liberal media had taken too long to report the good news in Iraq. Well, I hope right-wing hawks spread Cave's latest far and wide, too: "[Nonstop Theft and Bribery Are Staggering Iraq.](#)" The headline says it all, but the details are chilling too:

"Jobless men pay \$500 bribes to join the police. Families build houses illegally on government land, carwashes steal water from public pipes, and nearly everything the government buys or sells can now be found on the black market.

"Painkillers for cancer (from the Ministry of Health) cost \$80 for a few capsules; electricity meters (from the Ministry of Electricity) go for \$200 each, and **even third-grade textbooks (stolen from the Ministry of Education) must be bought at bookstores for three times what schools once charged.**

"'Everyone is stealing from the state,' said Adel Adel al-Subihawi, a prominent Shiite tribal leader in Sadr City, throwing up his hands in disgust. 'It's a very large meal, and everyone wants to eat ...' The extent of the theft is staggering. Some American officials estimate that as much as a third of what they spend on



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Iraqi contracts and grants ends up unaccounted for or stolen, with a portion going to Shiite or Sunni militias."

Cave interviews a young father and new police recruit who says every single person in his training class of 850 paid between \$400 and \$800 to get the slot. Transparency International, a nonprofit that studies corruption, says Iraq is now the third most corrupt country in the world, beyond Myanmar and Somalia.

Cave is an excellent reporter (full disclosure: he used to work for Salon) who left Iraq for a spell back in the U.S. and is doing incredible reporting on his return. [In an online conversation](#) about the "return to normalcy" piece the right-wing blogosphere loved, he noted the signs of progress but also warned about ongoing trouble. One fact that stood out to me from Cave's talk with the Times' Mike Nizza was the way the military was itself paying for Iraqi cooperation. "At one point, south of Baghdad, I watched an American lieutenant pass out \$10 bills to a long line of Iraqis for about 20 minutes of canal cleaning work as a proud sheik sat nearby, like a godfather, full of pride and power," Cave told Nizza.

I can already anticipate worldly-wise neocons pouncing on their keyboards to explain this is just how those Arabs operate, but in fact the image reminded me of nothing more than the way the Bush administration has privatized the war and handed out contracts to its cronies. Just imagine Dick Cheney as the proud sheik, and you've got the picture.

So while my first reaction to Cave's story today was outrage -- Is this what we're fighting for? -- then I remembered: Cronyism, corruption and incompetence are the hallmarks of the administration that pushed the invasion. So maybe the answer is yes.

-- Joan Walsh

http://www.salon.com/opinion/walsh/iraq_war/2007/12/02/iraq_corruption/

- Doors of learning reopen at Baghdad University (Nov 12, 2007)

BAGHDAD, (AFP) — One month into the new academic year and education at the sprawling University of Baghdad is as near to normal as it has been for years -- the grisly killings of two professors and two students aside.

Educators at the tree-lined, garden-sprinkled campus on the banks of the Tigris River are upbeat that 2007-2008 will restore the university's reputation for excellence that it has enjoyed since it was established 50 years ago.



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Student numbers -- both Shiite and Sunni -- are back to near capacity, they say, many vacant lecturing posts have been filled and the kind of sectarian violence in Baghdad which virtually wrote off last year's academic efforts has dipped significantly.

"We could say the situation is about as normal as is possible, given the circumstances," said a 24-year-old lecturer in soil science, who despite his bubbling optimism would give his name only as Salah and declined to be photographed.

"Last year was the worst ever -- sometimes no one would turn up for lectures for an entire week. On average we had eight to 10 students out of around 20 arriving for laboratory. This year it is around 15. Sometimes we even get a full class of 20," said Salah, sporting a striped orange shirt and slicked-back hair.

"There has been a vast improvement in the security situation," he said, repeating a refrain that has begun to echo right across the Iraqi capital.

US commanders attribute the fall in bombings, shootings and death squad murders to a "surge" of an extra 28,500 American troops on the streets of Baghdad and its surrounding violent belts since June.

The more cynical say the city of four million people has simply been polarised into a maze of Shiite and Sunni enclaves off limits to anyone from a rival sect and that the "ethnic cleansing" of neighbourhoods is more or less complete.

Most students interviewed by AFP on the campus in the capital's central Jadriya neighbourhood acknowledged they take circuitous routes to reach the university -- avoiding either Sunni or Shiite neighbourhoods, depending on their own ethnic allegiances.

"I dare not go through Al-Amel neighbourhood," said a woman student from behind dark sunglasses, referring to a southwestern suburb which is under the control of Shiite militiamen.

"I can't take the most direct route -- it is too dangerous," said the fourth-year biology student, a Sunni, smiling nervously and refusing to give her name.

Chemistry masters student Ahmed al-Maliki was happy to be named and was one of the few who said he took the most direct route possible to the campus, from the Sadr City Shiite ghetto in eastern Baghdad where he lives.

"There is a tangible improvement in the security situation," said Maliki, the gigantic scorpion buckle on his black belt glinting in the morning sunshine.



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"Some students didn't turn up when the university reopened in early October but each day saw the numbers rise and now the classes are full," said the 22-year-old student.

While he is adamant it is a whole lot easier getting around the capital than it was even just six months ago, he warns that lethal dangers still exist.

"In late September, three masters students were travelling down Palestine Street (in central Baghdad) when unidentified gunmen opened fire on their car. Two were killed and one seriously injured. I have to admit that really shook me."

The lack of professors -- either killed or fled overseas -- is affecting education at the campus, he believes.

"In the past there were seven professors in our faculty. Three of them have since been killed. Now there are only four -- two of whom are not of sufficient experience to be able to lecture masters students. Which leaves just two."

Up in an expansive office on the 13th floor of the campus administration, university media director Dr Intisar al-Suaidi does her best to paint a bright picture of education in 2007-2008 but admits she doesn't yet have the statistics to give more than mere broad brushstrokes.

"Last year about 50 percent of registered students on average turned up for lectures. This year the figure is around 90 percent."

Suaidi however had no enrolment figures for the new academic year and instead offered a prospectus which showed that there were 57,500 students and 5,300 lecturers at Baghdad University in 2005 -- before the violence spun out of control, taking students, lecturers and staff members with it over the abyss.

She was, however, able to say that 160 professors have been killed by insurgents -- who have targeted academics, journalists, poets and intellectuals in particular -- since the US invasion in 2003.

And that already this term another two have been shot dead.

Mohammad al-Otobi, professor of natural history, was kidnapped by gunmen who swooped on his home last month and led him away. His body was found dumped in the street a few days later.

Dr Khalil al-Nuaimi, a professor of engineering, suffered a similar terrifying fate later in the month.

"Yes, things are back to normal," said soil science lecturer Salah. "But maybe not totally normal yet."



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- **Jordan helping international agency save Iraq scholars** (September 21, 2007)

By Linda Hindi

AMMAN - Jordan's educational institutions are taking part in an Iraqi scholar rescue mission following a series of kidnappings and killings of academics in war-torn Iraq.

Officials from the Institute of International Education's (IIE) Scholar Rescue Fund (SRF) said they have been in talks with education officials here, who welcomed the effort and offered help.

"We are all grateful for what Jordan is doing in caring for large numbers of Iraqis and especially happy with their support for Iraq's scholars who are considered as an asset for the region and the world," IIE CEO Allan Goodman told The Jordan Times, commenting on the outcome of a visit by the fund to Jordan in June.

The fund's chief and vice chairman of the IIE, Henry Jarecki, said in a telephone interview from New York: "Education Ministry and others such as the University of Jordan opened their doors to help the inflow of first-class intellectuals. We sent curriculum vitae for senior scholars whom we thought would benefit Jordan and are in contact with the education authorities to help place them."

According to these officials, under the support of His Majesty King Abdullah's vision to further enhance the intellectual capital of Jordan, their delegation was welcomed "enthusiastically".

HRH Princess Ghida Talal was noted to be a large contributor in furthering their mission in Jordan.

During the visit, the institute hired an Iraqi woman scholar, Hala Fattah, who has lived in Jordan for two decades to become a local correspondent. Fattah will manage an office based in the capital that will work to find host institutions.

An UCLA graduate with a PhD in Middle Eastern History, Fattah told The Jordan Times from a SRF meeting in Washington that "preserving education" in Iraq was a top priority and the agency is working to develop mechanisms that will help professors teach their Iraqi students through distance learning technology.



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SRF Project Director Nada Soze said it is important to place the senior intellectuals in the MENA region to avoid the brain drain when order returns to Iraq.

“The most important thing is that once professors are out of Iraq they keep in contact with their students,” she said.

For the Iraqi fund, the organisation aims to raise around \$15 million of which around 75 per cent has been endowed. The Gates Foundation, for example, provided the fund with \$5 million.

Director of Strategic Partnerships for IIE/SRF Jim Miller said that current funding will allow the rescue of around 150-175 scholars.

The IIE/SRF is providing fellowships for persecuted scholars to help them find safe havens via temporary visits to institutions in any safe country around the world.

The aim of the effort is to help preserve humanity’s intellectual capital, saving one voice at a time.

“Each scholar saved rescues not only people but also ideas,” an IIE statement reads.

As an independent, nonprofit organisation functioning since 1919, the IIE has been a world heavyweight in international education and training for decades and administers over 200 programmes annually.

Although the organisation has been involved in scholar rescue missions since the early 1920s, these efforts were institutionalised in 2002 when a \$50 million endowment fund was created specifically for saving scholars.

The fund has since helped save the voices of 155 academics from three-dozen countries, according to the IIE.

In Baghdad over past two years, the mass abduction from a science research institute and the bombings of Baghdad’s Mustansiriyah University and booksellers market are some of the dramatic events that prove systematic persecution and have been closely observed by the organisation, the IIE statement said.

SRF fund’s director said that over the past five years the organisation was receiving around 40 applications a month from victimised scholars from around the world. Over the past year, however, the fund was witnessing around 40 to 50 applications a week from Iraq alone.



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“The Iraqi scholars were uniformly more qualified than most of the other perspective fellowship recipients. We concluded that an Iraq programme needed to be set up,” Jarecki said.

Jarecki recalled a meeting with Iraqi Minister of Higher Education Abid Ajeely and said that the minister regrets that it is tough to make real contributions to the education sector while 50 per cent of his job is security operations like negotiating with people whose relatives are kidnapped, ransom requests, surveillance cameras and gated schools.

The IIE/SRF officials noted that their organisation played a historic role in saving lives and thus ideas that have helped shape the intellectual world.

A list of previous rescues includes scholars from Italy during the Mussolini era and hundreds targeted during World War II, many of whom went on to become Nobel laureates.

The SRF will aim to place around 200 of the most threatened senior Iraqi scholars within the next two years across the Middle East and North Africa region.

It was decided to choose their surrounding region “both in order to minimise language and culture difficulties and to ensure that scholars are in a position to quickly return to help rebuild Iraq once the conflict subsides,” according to an IIE statement.

Based in New York City, the organisation has 18 offices around the world and employs a staff of 450 worldwide, according to www.iie.org



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- **Back to School, Back to Horror** (14 Sep 2007)

By Ali al-Fadhily*

BAGHDAD, Sep 14 (IPS) - As another school year begins in Iraq, parents approach it with dread, fearing for the safety of their children.

With the security situation grimmer than ever all over the country, just stepping out of one's house means a serious threat to life.

"God knows how we could send our kids to school this year," Um Mohammed, a mother of five in Baghdad told IPS. "Our financial situation is the worst ever and the prices are way too expensive for the majority of Iraqis to afford. I might have to keep some of them at home and send only two."

The 40-year-old woman shed tears when she started to talk about the family's financial now compared to what it was before the U.S. occupation of Iraq.

"My God, don't those Americans have any conscience? We were not rich before, but life was easy and we used to celebrate the school season, watching our kids trying their uniform on and looking at the colourful pictures of their new books," she said.

Iraqis blame their government's failure to provide them with basic necessities on the U.S.-led occupation that has brought such an incompetent regime to power.

The Iraqi Ministry of Education promised Iraqis a better educational year in 2007, a promise that has been made every year for the past four years.

"The educational system in Iraq is destroyed and we are suffering all kinds of difficulties," said Hassan, a school headmaster in Baghdad who spoke on condition that his last name and the name of his school would not be used. "There will be a shortage of desks, blackboards, water, electricity and all educational supplies – as well as a critical shortage in the number of teachers this year."

Teachers, like other Iraqis, have fled the country because of threats from sectarian death squads. Some were evicted from their areas and moved to others inside Iraq for sectarian reasons.

According to Iraq's Ministry of Higher Education, as of February 2006, nearly 180 professors were killed and at least 3,250 have fled Iraq to the neighbouring countries. The situation has deteriorated



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severely since then.

"The number of teachers leaving the country this year (2006) is huge and almost double those who left in 2005," Professor Salah Aliwi, director-general of studies planning in the Ministry of Higher Education told reporters during an Aug. 24, 2006 interview in Baghdad. "Every day, we are losing more experienced people, which is causing a serious problem in the education system."

While teachers are at risk, Iraqi families are concerned for the safety of their children as well.

"I am not sending my two boys to school this year," Tariq Ahmed from Baghdad told IPS. "I am sure hundreds, if not thousands, of students will be abducted and killed by militias. I am not gambling with my boys' life just to support Bush's lies that the country is safe and sound."

Last month, the Iraqi Ministry of Education warned of possible low attendance of pupils at schools this year, saying it expects at least a 15 percent decrease in attendance compared to previous years.

Leila Abdallah, a senior official at the Ministry of Education, told reporters on Aug. 28 there has been a 54 percent increase in exam failure rates compared to previous years.

She added that many students had not completed their last exams as they had been forced by violence to flee their homes to safer areas.

The Iraqi NGO Keeping Children Alive (KCA), recently said education standards in Iraq had dropped and many schools were relying on teachers teaching at least 100 students per class.

"Owing to lack of teachers, a class now has dozens of students, a situation that is preventing teachers from giving sufficient attention to individual pupils," Moussa Dureid, a spokesperson for the KCA, said.

According to an Oxfam International report released in July, "92 percent of children had learning impediments that are largely attributable to the current climate of fear."

The report added, "Schools are regularly closed as teachers and pupils are too fearful to attend. Over 800,000 children may now be out of school, according to a recent estimate by Save the Children UK - up from 600,000 in 2004."



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Iraqis do not feel secure despite the reassurances of U.S. and Iraqi authorities that the security situation has improved.

"Universities are death squad headquarters," Qutayba Assaad, a professor at Al-Mustansiriya University in Baghdad told IPS. "They are practicing all kinds of torture inside the university and they abducted many of my colleagues because of their sect or their objections to what the clerics are doing inside universities."

"What education are you talking about," Kussay Kathum, a student at Baghdad University told IPS. "This country is dead and its body is being torn apart. They should stop schools and colleges attendance until they solve the core of the problem."

His colleague, Sumaya agreed with him.

"Indeed they should change the whole system in Iraq before sending us to school. It is suicide to go to colleges where the government's militias kill people. It seems that our American colleagues do not care for what is happening to us."

(*Ali, our correspondent in Baghdad, works in close collaboration with Dahr Jamail, our U.S.-based specialist writer on Iraq who travels extensively in the region)

- **Secret Report: Corruption is "Norm" Within Iraqi Government** (30 Aug 2007)

posted by [David Corn](#)

As Congress prepares to receive reports on Iraq from General David Petraeus and U.S. Ambassador Ryan Crocker and readies for a debate on George W. Bush's latest funding request of \$50 billion for the Iraq war, the performance of the government of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki has become a central and contentious issue. But according to the working draft of a secret document prepared by the U.S. embassy in Baghdad, the Maliki government has failed in one significant area: corruption. **Maliki's government is "not capable of even rudimentary enforcement of anticorruption laws," the report says, and, perhaps worse, the report notes that Maliki's office has impeded investigations of fraud and crime within the government.**



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The draft--over 70 pages long--was obtained by *The Nation*, and it reviews the work (or attempted work) of **the Commission on Public Integrity (CPI)**, an independent Iraqi institution, and other anticorruption agencies within the Iraqi government. Labeled "SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED/Not for distribution to personnel outside of the US Embassy in Baghdad," the study details a situation in which there is little, if any, prosecution of government theft and sleaze. Moreover, **it concludes that corruption is "the norm in many ministries."**

The report depicts the Iraqi government as riddled with corruption and criminals--and beyond the reach of anticorruption investigators. It also maintains that the extensive corruption within the Iraqi government has strategic consequences by decreasing public support for the U.S.-backed government and by providing a source of funding for Iraqi insurgents and militias.

The report, which was drafted by a team of U.S. embassy officials, surveys the various Iraqi ministries. "The Ministry of Interior is seen by Iraqis as untouchable by the anticorruption enforcement infrastructure of Iraq," it says. "Corruption investigations in Ministry of Defense are judged to be ineffectual." The study reports that the Ministry of Trade is "widely recognized as a troubled ministry" and that of 196 corruption complaints involving this ministry merely eight have made it to court, with only one person convicted.

The Ministry of Health, according to the report, "is a sore point; corruption is actually affecting its ability to deliver services and threatens the support of the government." Investigations involving the Ministry of Oil have been manipulated, the study says, and the "CPI and the [Inspector General of the ministry] are completely ill-equipped to handle oil theft cases." There is no accurate accounting of oil production and transportation within the ministry, the report explains, because organized crime groups are stealing oil "for the benefit of militias/insurgents, corrupt public officials and foreign buyers."

The list goes on: "**Anticorruption cases concerning the Ministry of Education have been particularly ineffective....**[T]he Ministry of Water Resources...is effectively out of the anticorruption fight with little to no apparent effort in trying to combat fraud....[T]he Ministry of Labor & Social Affairs is hostile to the prosecution of corruption cases. Militia support from [Shia leader Moqtada al-Sadr] has effectively made corruption in the Ministry of Transportation wholesale according to investigators and immune from prosecution." **Several ministries, according to the study, are "so controlled by criminal gangs or militias" that it is impossible for corruption investigators "to operate within [them] absent a tactical [security] force protecting the investigator."**

The Ministry of the Interior, which has been a stronghold of Shia militias, stands out in the report. The study's authors say that "groups within MOI function similarly to a Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organization (RICO) in the classic sense. MOI is a 'legal enterprise' which has been co-opted by organized



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criminals who act through the 'legal enterprise' to commit crimes such as kidnapping, extortion, bribery, etc." This is like saying the mob is running the police department. The report notes, "currently 426 investigations are hung up awaiting responses for documents belonging to MOI which routinely are ignored." It cites an episode during which a CPI officer discovered two eyewitnesses to the October 2006 murder of Amer al-Hashima, the brother of the vice president, but the CPI investigator would not identify the eyewitnesses to the Minister of the Interior out of fear he and they would be assassinated. (It seemed that the killers were linked to the Interior Ministry.) The report adds, "CPI investigators assigned to MOI investigations have unanimously expressed their fear of being assassinated should they aggressively pursue their duties at MOI. Thus when the head of MOI intelligence recently personally visited the Commissioner of CPI...to end investigations of [an] MOI contract, there was a clear sense of concern within the agency."

Over at the Defense Ministry, the report notes, there has been a "shocking lack of concern" about the apparent theft of \$850 million from the Iraqi military's procurement budget. "In some cases," the report says, "American advisors working for US [Department of Defense] have interceded to remove [Iraqi] suspects from investigations or custody." Of 455 corruption investigations at the Defense Ministry, only 15 have reached the trial stage. A mere four investigators are assigned to investigating corruption in the department. And at the Ministry of Trade, "criminal gangs" divide the spoils, with one handling grain theft, another stealing transportation assets.

Part of the problem, according to the report, is Maliki's office: "The Prime Minister's Office has demonstrated an open hostility" to independent corruption investigations. His government has withheld resources from the CPI, the report says, and "there have been a number of identified cases where government and political pressure has been applied to change the outcome of investigations and prosecutions in favor of members of the Shia Alliance"--which includes Maliki's Dawa party.

The report's authors note that the man Maliki appointed as his anticorruption adviser--Adel Muhsien Abdulla al-Quza'alee--has said that independent agencies, like the CPI, should be under the control of Maliki. According to the report, "Adel has in the presence of American advisors pressed the Commissioner of CPI to withdraw cases referred to court." These cases involved defendants who were members of the Shia Alliance. (Adel has also, according to the report, "steadfastly refused to submit his financial disclosure form.") And Maliki's office, the report says, has tried to "force out the entire leadership of CPI to replace them with political appointees"--which would be tantamount to a death sentence for the CPI officials. They now live in the Green Zone. Were they to lose their CPI jobs, they would have to move out of the protected



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zone and would be at the mercy of the insurgents, militias, and crime gangs "who are [the] subjects of their investigations."

Maliki has also protected corrupt officials by reinstating a law that prevents the prosecution of a government official without the permission of the minister of the relevant agency. According to a memo drafted in March by the U.S. embassy's anticorruption working group--a memo first disclosed by *The Washington Post*--between September 2006 and February 2007, ministers used this law to block the prosecutions of 48 corruption cases involving a total of \$35 million. Many other cases at this time were in the process of being stalled in the same manner. The stonewalled probes included one case in which Oil Ministry employees rigged bids for \$2.5 million in equipment and another in which ministry personnel stole 33 trucks of petroleum.

And in another memo obtained by *The Nation*--marked "Secret and Confidential"--Maliki's office earlier this year ordered the Commission on Public Integrity not to forward any case to the courts involving the president of Iraq, the prime minister of Iraq, or any current or past ministers without first obtaining Maliki's consent. According to the U.S. embassy report on the anticorruption efforts, **the government's hostility to the CPI has gone so far that for a time the CPI link on the official Iraqi government web site directed visitors to a pornographic site.**

In assessing the Commission on Public Integrity, the embassy report notes that the CPI lacks sufficient staff and funding to be effective. The watchdog outfit has only 120 investigators to cover 34 ministries and agencies. And these investigators, the report notes, "are closer to clerks processing paperwork rather than investigators solving crimes." The CPI, according to the report, "is currently more of a passive rather than a true investigatory agency. Though legally empowered to conduct investigations, the combined security situation and the violent character of the criminal elements within the ministries make investigation of corruption too hazardous."

CPI staffers have been "accosted by armed gangs within ministry headquarters and denied access to officials and records." They and their families are routinely threatened. Some sleep in their office in the Green Zone. In December 2006, a sniper positioned on top of an Iraqi government building in the Green Zone fired three shots at CPI headquarters. Twelve CPI personnel have been murdered in the line of duty. The CPI, according to the report, "has resorted to arming people hired for janitorial and maintenance duty."

Radhi al-Radhi, a former judge who was tortured and imprisoned during Saddam Hussein's regime and who heads the CPI, has been forced to live in a safe house with one of his chief investigators, according to an associate of Radhi who asked not to be identified. Radhi has worked with Stuart Bowen Jr., the Special



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Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, who investigates fraud and waste involving U.S. officials and contractors. His targets have included former Defense Minister Hazem Shalaan and former Electricity Minister Aiham Alsammarae. And Radhi himself has become a target of accusations. A year ago, Maliki's office sent a letter to Radhi suggesting that the CPI could not account for hundreds of thousands of dollars in expenses and that Radhi might be corrupt. But, according to the US embassy report, a subsequent audit of the CPI was "glowing." In July, the Iraqi parliament considered a motion of no confidence in Radhi—a move widely interpreted as retaliation for his pursuit of corrupt officials. But the legislators put off a vote on the resolution. In late August, Radhi came to the United States. He is considering remaining here, according to an associate.

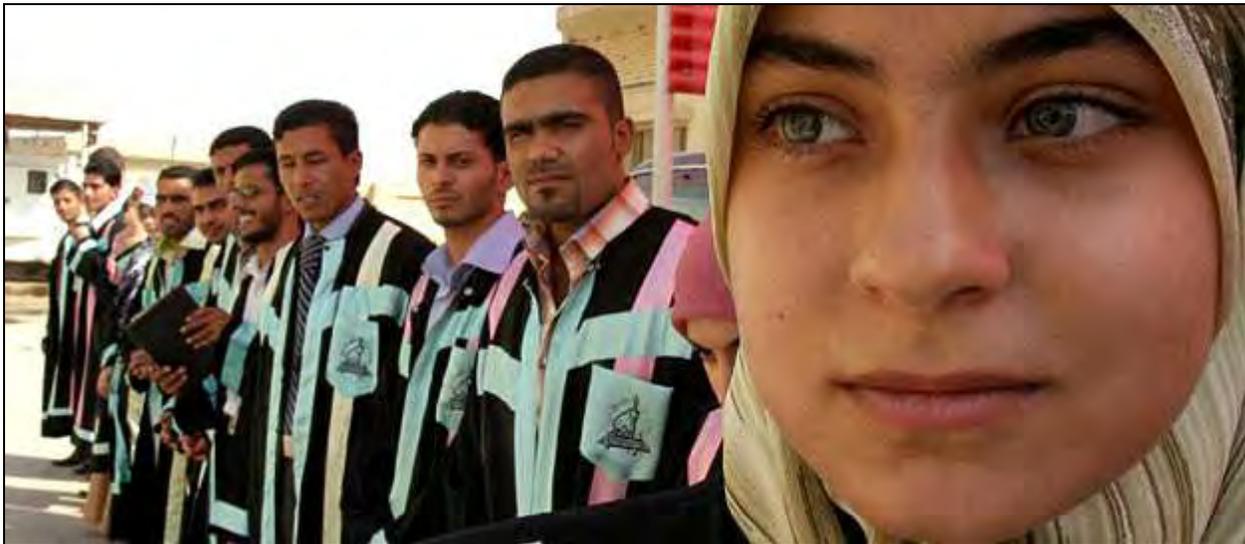
Corruption, the report says, is "one of the major hurdles the Iraqi government must overcome if it is to survive as a stable and independent entity." Without a vigorous anticorruption effort, the report's authors assert, the current Iraqi government "is likely to lose [sic] the support of its people." And, they write, continuing corruption "will likely fund the violent groups that our troops are likely to face." Yet, according to the report, the U.S. embassy is providing "uncertain" resources for anticorruption programs. "It's a farce," says a U.S. embassy employee. "There is a budget of zero [within the embassy] to fight corruption. No one ever asked for this report to be written. And it was shit-canned. Who the hell would want to release it? It should infuriate the families of the soldiers and those who are fighting in Iraq supposedly to give Maliki's government a chance."

Beating back corruption is not one of the 18 congressionally mandated benchmarks for Iraq and the Maliki government. But this hard-hitting report--you can practically see the authors pulling out their hair--makes a powerful though implicit case that it ought to be. The study is a damning indictment: widespread corruption within the Iraqi government undermines and discredits the U.S. mission in Iraq. And the Bush administration is doing little to stop it.

<http://www.thenation.com/blogs/capitalgames/228339>

- **Iraq's Endangered Schools** (20 Aug 2007)

Teaching has become a dangerous, often fatal, occupation in war-torn Iraq, where higher education is the latest casualty.



Risky Business: Students preparing to graduate from the University of Karbala, Iraq

By [Zvika Krieger](#) | NEWSWEEK

Aug. 20-27, 2007

Saad Jawad does not like to take chances. The University of Baghdad professor goes to the campus only once or twice a week, varying the days to throw off any would-be killers. He does most of his work at home on the Internet, and most of his private meetings with students are by phone. "Other than my short trips to the campus, I'm at home almost 24 hours a day, seven days a week," he says.

Iraq's ivory tower is under siege. Thousands of academics have fled the country, classes are frequently canceled, students often stay home and research has slowed to a standstill as sectarian militias increasingly target academia. Between 250 and 1,000 professors have been killed since the 2003 invasion, according to different estimates. Many more have received bullets through internal mail, had death threats tacked to their office doors, or received anonymous phone calls warning them not to come to work, often for showing a lack of zeal in the sectarian conflicts. "Professors are usually more secular than the general population, more open-minded, interested in things other than religious proselytizing," says John Agresto, senior adviser to the Higher Education Ministry in Iraq from 2003 to 2004. "Their secular nature is what is getting them targeted."



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In addition to assassinating professors, insurgents have also started bombing university campuses, killing dozens of students and faculty members. And in their quest to secure sectarian enclaves, militias have made universities throughout the country unsafe for anyone of the "wrong" ethnic group. "Terrorism is targeting scholars in an almost unprecedented way," says Allan E. Goodman, president of the Institute of International Education in New York. "It's hard to say there even is a higher-education system in Iraq anymore."

The situation is so grave that the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research now allows professors to go to campus just twice a week, and to transfer to other universities in the face of threats. More than 1,000 academics and 10,000 students chose that option this year. Many more students, especially women, have quit school, with some universities operating at 10 percent to 20 percent of capacity. "It is difficult to say that my colleagues are longing to go back to Saddam's rule," Jawad says. "But they are longing to go back to some sort of stability and security."

The state of paralysis will do lasting damage. At least 30 percent of all professors, physicians, pharmacists and engineers in Iraq have fled since 2003, according to the Iraqi Ministry of Displacement and Migration. Jawad says that more than 100 courses at Baghdad University have been canceled this semester for lack of instructors. At Al-Nahrain University, some departments have lost all their faculty members. Replacing so many seasoned professors is not possible in the short term, Jawad says. "How can you replace them with new graduates with no experience, with no training abroad, with no foreign languages?" he asks. "It will take at least 20 to 30 years to furnish universities with professors of this caliber again."

- Iraq: Educational standards plummet, say specialists (16 May 2007)

Source: [United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs - Integrated Regional Information Networks \(IRIN\)](#)

BAGHDAD, 16 May 2007 (IRIN) - Education specialists in Iraq say they are concerned that pupils and students in the current academic year will leave school without completing this year's curriculum, and new graduates will not be competent to pursue their careers.

"Violence and lack of resources have undermined the education sector in Iraq. No student will graduate this year with sufficient competence to perform his or her job, and pupils will end the year with less than 60 percent of the knowledge that was supposed to have been imparted to them," said Professor Fua'ad Abdel-Razak, an educationist at Baghdad University.



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"Many other factors have worsened the situation, including the lack of experienced professionals or good salaries for teaching staff, a paucity of text books and no work experience during their last year at college," Abdel-Razak added.

Country-wide violence is keeping more and more children at home, while public infrastructure continues to deteriorate. With municipal workers facing daily attacks, streets are in need of repair, street lighting is often non-existent, open sewers are common and many public and school buses lie in garages awaiting repair.

Graduates

Abdel-Razak said the situation was particularly difficult for graduates, who would end their courses without the necessary skills.

"Medics, pharmacists, biologists and dentists are desperately seeking training in hospitals because what they have learnt so far does not give them enough confidence to treat patients. There is a really huge difference between now and the times of Saddam Hussein when medical graduates left college with the competence to treat any patient," he said.

"Other professions are encountering similar problems and we hope the government will be able to devise a new plan for the educational system before the country finds itself in total chaos for lack of competent professionals," Abdel-Razak said.

Primary schools

According to Lina Muhammad, a primary school teacher in Baghdad's Mansour district, no teacher in her school will be able to complete this year's curriculum because of violence, low attendance by students and lack of teaching materials.

"More than a quarter of the curriculum for every subject has not been covered. We hope we can teach them next year what they have missed this year," Lina said.

"Children's capacity for learning has been reduced and the main reason for this is the effect the violence has had on their minds and this might continue to affect them for years to come," she added.



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Low attendance

A senior official and analyst in the Ministry of Education, May Makin, said teachers were forced to go over old lessons with their students many times because many of them had a low attendance rate in school because of violence and displacement and there was not enough time to cover the curriculum.

"Teachers cannot abandon those children who did not attend school because of the violence, so they have to take special care of them and, unfortunately, many other students were forced to go over the same lessons again and again so as to help their classmates catch up," Makin said.

Students who are about to graduate said they were worried about leaving university without enough knowledge and experience.

"I remember when I entered college and students were graduating with detailed knowledge, and leaving direct to the global job market, but unfortunately today I and my colleagues find ourselves graduating knowing that , with our lack of experience, no one would employ us," said Salman Rafi, a sixth year student at Mustansiriyah University's Medical College.

as/ar/cb

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- **Widespread condemnation of fatal attack on girl's school** (29 Jan 2007)

Women had the most freedom under the Iraqi constitution of 1958 before that government was destroyed by the Richard Helms CIA coup that installed the Baathists and paid thugs like a young Saddam Hussein to murder Iraqis who wanted to keep their oil in Iraq. Even under the Baathists and Saddam, women had more freedom than they have today under the present Islamic constitution and US Pentagon-created civil war.-- WPA



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BAGHDAD, 29 January (IRIN) - The Iraqi government, the United Nations and NGOs have condemned an attack against a girls' school in Baghdad that left five students dead and more than 20 injured on Sunday. Parents, students and teachers were left horror-struck after the incident.

Kholoud Secondary School in the mainly Sunni Adel neighbourhood of western Baghdad witnessed one of the most horrific attacks against Iraq's education system since the US-led occupation of the country began in 2003.

"We were terrified by what happened. They were young girls trying to build their future. It is unacceptable and I hope it will be an example to the government to show that something urgent must be done to stop such terrorism in Iraq," said Nawal Muhammad, a teacher at the school and a member of the Teacher's Union of Iraq.

"When I saw those girls dead in the ground I couldn't believe that I was inside a school; I thought I was in a war zone," Nawal added. "We are revolted with this situation. Schools should be safest place in the world."

Several projectiles exploded in the courtyard of the school, shattering windows in the classrooms and spraying pupils with glass.

Four girls died instantly and another at hospital, local police said.

In Ramadi, some 125km west of the capital, a truck bomb exploded near a primary school, leaving two children dead.

On Sunday, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) issued a joint statement condemning the deadly attack, expressing outrage at such a needless waste of children's lives.

"This is yet another tragic reminder of the risks facing Iraq's schoolchildren every day as they struggle amid the insecurity to receive their right to education. The apparently deliberate targeting of children in this incident is an unforgivable crime," said Roger Wright, UNICEF representative for Iraq, and Mohamed Djelid, UNESCO country director, in the statement.



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UNICEF and UNESCO called upon all parties in Iraq "to exercise their responsibility and duty to ensure that schools remain safe havens for children to attend, learn and play. Finding appropriate strategy to bring education to children in environments where normal schooling has become impossible is now an imperative."

Families, especially those who had their girls studying in the school, have been shocked by the incident and have kept their children at home indefinitely.

"Unfortunately, I will have to keep my daughter at home. I will never agree that she goes back to school to be the next victim of this violence. I want her to learn but not in crossfire. She was in another classroom during the attack and if she had been outside, I might now be burying her somewhere," said Majida Obaid, 34, mother of a student who was in class at Kholoud Secondary School during the incident.

Obaid's daughter, Hala Ahmed, 13, said the pupils of the school could not understand why they were targeted: "We are innocent girls. We are not fighting. Why are they attacking us? We just want to study."

The Ministry of Education in Iraq has also condemned the attack and urged the Ministries of Defence and Interior to increase security at schools and universities in Baghdad.

"The education system in Iraq has been the most affected since the US-invasion. Teachers and students are being targeted on a daily basis and incidents like this one clearly show the chaos that our country is in," Muhammad Jabbri, a spokesman at the Ministry of Education, said.

The Ministry of Interior was not able to identify who fired the mortars at the Baghdad school but said the area had been the scene of reprisal attacks between Sunni extremists and Shi'ite militias.

- **Three Iraqi Law Professors, Student Kidnapped** (29 Jan 2007)

Education Ministry Demands Better Protection for Professors, Schools

By Wathiq Ismael Baghdad, Jan 29, (VOI) – Three university professors of law and a student were kidnapped in northern Baghdad by unidentified gunmen, an official source in the higher education and scientific research ministry said on Monday.



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"The three professors, working in the al-Nahrain law school, were kidnapped on Sunday while they were going home from work in the area of al-Kazimiya, north of Baghdad," the source told the independent news agency Voices of Iraq (VOI). "The professors are Adnan al-Abid of Mosul, Amer al-Qisi of Diyala and Abdul-Mutaleb al-Hashimi of al-Anbar," added the source. The source said Dr. al-Hashimi's son, a student at the law school, was kidnapped as he was in the professors' company.

The ministry denounced assaults on university professors and called on the security authorities to take whatever measures necessary to protect them and scientific institutions. "The number of university professors assassinated since April 2003 and until the end of 2006 exceeded 185, the detained 142 and the kidnapped more than 52," the ministry said in its statement received by VOI.

- Students, Professors Flee to the Kurdish North (28 Jan 2007)

Wafa Mosuli, a 23-year-old college student of Kurdish descent, fled Mosul after the sectarian strife between the city's Kurds and Sunni Arabs intensified in late 2005 and early 2006. She now studies archeology at Arbil's Salahaddin University. Seven of her neighbours and one of her classmates were killed during a week of clashes in their neighbourhood. She now has problems communicating with her mainly Kurdish classmates and some professors, which she hopes to overcome quickly. While the "unbearable situation" in the city forced her to leave, she feels nostalgic for the friends and streets she left behind. Many like her doubt that they will get another chance to return to their old communities. "If I tell you that I cry every single day, it is still not enough, because I was forced to leave all my memories, friends and childhood behind," Wafa said sadly. "If I get a sense that it (the situation) is going to improve, I will run from here to Mosul barefoot." - Mohammed Salih

Mohammed A. Salih, IPS

ARBIL, Jan 26, 2007 (IPS) - Academic life in Iraq's volatile southern and central regions has become increasingly paralysed, with hundreds of students and professors targeted and many more abandoning their educational institutions in search of a refuge.

Raad Yaseen, 25, fled Baghdad's insecurity in mid-2004 to study at Mosul University, 396 kms north of the capital. He stayed there barely a year, fleeing again in early 2005 to Arbil, 80 kms east of Mosul, in the country's safer northern Kurdistan region. Now he studies sociology in Arbil's Salahaddin University.



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He is still traumatised by the "horrible scenes" he saw in Mosul.

"Right outside our dormitory, we could see corpses dumped on the streets with notes pinned on their chests that 'this traitor is punished'," Yaseen, a Sunni Arab, recalled of the experiences he and fellow students had in Mosul.

His family later followed him to Arbil after militias tied to the al-Badr organisation, the military wing of the powerful Shia Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq, forced them to evacuate their house in Baghdad.

Several of Yaseen's classmates and friends were killed as part of the rampant violence that has engulfed academic staff as well.

"Because of the violence over there, it is very difficult, almost impossible, to study," he said. "And I see no solution for this situation in the country really."

Since the eruption of violence in Iraq, following the U.S.-led invasion in 2003, Kurdistan's five universities have been flooded with students and professors who abandoned their original schools.

Figures from regional government institutions show that from the beginning of 2006 until November of the same year, nearly 1,200 students from other parts of the country have been admitted to Kurdistan universities. That figure is growing on a daily basis as the number of people fleeing violence in the central and southern parts of Iraq continues to rise.

"This year we have been forced to admit students more than our initial plan," Dr. Mohammed Sabir, head of the Planning Department in the Ministry of Higher Education of Kurdistan's Regional Government, told IPS.

"If this wave of new students is going to continue, then we have to postpone the [course of] study for some of them to next year, since we cannot accommodate all these students," he said.

Kurdistan's universities are already grappling with demonstrations and strikes from students protesting the inadequate facilities. Many believe there is a systematic terror campaign designed to bring Iraq's academic life to a halt.

In the latest incident of violence, 70 students were killed on Jan. 17 in a series of bombings that targeted Baghdad's al-Mustansiriyah University, one of the country's largest scientific centres. Following that incident, more students and academic staff are expected to abandon their universities.



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In November last year, in the biggest kidnapping operation since the war began, more than 150 employees and visitors in an office of Iraq's Higher Education Ministry in Baghdad were abducted. Many of them were later killed, while others were released.

The mass kidnapping led to the temporary shutdown of most universities. Although Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki eventually ordered the educational institutions to be reopened, academic life in the capital has been tense and unreliable ever since.

According to figures from BRussell's Tribunal, a non-governmental organisation tracking academics killed in Iraq's violence, over the past three years, more than 250 Iraqi academics have been killed and hundreds more have disappeared.

Some of the more affluent professors are leaving for neighbouring countries, especially those on the Persian Gulf. Others prefer to move to Kurdistan.

Many of the students in the predominantly Kurdish cities of the north face difficulties in learning the Kurdish language, commonly used in local universities for communication and, in many cases, teaching.

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- Death of Iraq's middle class: The country's best and brightest have fled, demolishing hope for the country's future (January 25, 2007)

On a blistering June afternoon in 2003, I sat in the Baghdad office of the president of al-Mustansiriyya University, the historian Taher al-Bakaa.

I was there as part of group of Middle East scholars to assess the condition of Baghdad's universities and libraries in the wake of the war. Outside, students were celebrating graduation. Inside, huddled around a fan, we talked about past dictators and tyrants, and about how al-Bakaa would now revitalize his campus, which had been looted and burned just after the fall of the city two months before.

There was an infectious confidence in al-Bakaa and others whom I met that Iraq's universities would play a positive role in the rebuilding of the country and re-establishing links with the West.

But today, Al-Bakaa lives in Boston as one of more than 1.5 million refugees who have fled the war. In Baghdad this week his campus was bombed, and more than 60 students waiting for buses to take them home were killed.

The new refugees

This new refugee crisis dwarfs earlier ones in the Middle East, including that of the Armenians in 1915 and the Palestinians in 1948 and 1967. Beyond the basic numbers, what makes this crisis such a challenge is that a large portion of the refugees are from Iraq's middle class.

And just as those earlier refugee crises sent shock waves throughout the Arab world, this crisis will have an impact on the stability and viability of Iraq and the surrounding countries for decades to come. Our normal image of the refugee -- malnourished, languishing in dusty camps -- doesn't apply here.

Iraq's middle-class refugees are its teachers, doctors, college professors, scientists, bureaucrats, technicians and entrepreneurs, the very people upon whom the future of that country depends.

They are leaving for multiple reasons, but chiefly because of the violence, which the UN estimates claimed more than 34,000 lives last year, and the rational fear that the new Iraq will be run by religious



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demagogues intent on turning back the clock on issues of religious equality, their daughters' access to education and professional lives, and freedom of thought and expression.

In the old Iraq, mixed middle-class marriages of Sunnis and Shia were common; now these are deadly. The sectarian designation of one's co-workers at the office was rarely a topic of polite conversation or had much relevance, and now has become the touchstone for most forms of social interaction.

Iraq's middle class is fleeing at such a rapid rate that over 40 percent has left since 2003. Add this to this torrent a slow trickle of Iraq's educated classes from the 1970s forward, and we've reached a point where virtually everyone who could leave has left or fled to Kurdistan. For all intents and purposes, Iraq's middle class is near death, and what is left is just a pale shadow of its former self. It has ceased to be a relevant feature of Iraqi society.

In Iraq, the loss of this class means the loss of the basis of civil society and the disappearance of those Iraqis who would be committed to non-sectarian politics.

Welcomed . . . for now

In the greater Middle East, at least for the moment, these new middle-class refugees have been welcomed. A good example is the recently established Syrian International University for Sciences and Technology, which has filled its teaching staff with Iraqi scientists and professors. These refugees have also pumped the equivalent of billions of dollars into the moribund economies of their neighbors as they buy homes and businesses. But every course taught in Syria by an Iraqi professor means little to an Iraqi student sitting in an empty classroom; every dinar spent in one of Amman's upscale shopping malls is one less to pay for goods or services in Baghdad.

On the other side of the equation, these refugees constitute a volatile addition to already unstable societies. Iraqi refugees are treated either as tourists or illegal aliens in their neighboring host countries. It is assumed that their residence is temporary. But past refugee crises suggest that most refugees, especially those from the middle class, never go home. Disenfranchised and stateless, they will be increasingly resented by their hosts as competitors for resources, jobs and political power. Iraq's middle class refugees will then become the raw material for a new generation of extremists, angry and intent on violence directed not just against enemies in Iraq and the Middle East, but also against those of us in the West whose actions made them refugees in the first place.



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U.S. responsibility?

The U.S. government has a moral and legal responsibility for Iraq's refugees. This is already recognized in special programs established to help certain Iraqis -- primarily interpreters and others whose service to the U.S. would endanger their lives -- come to America.

However, only a tiny fraction of those needing refugee status have been admitted to the U.S. While publicly officials cite concerns about national security, another explanation for this resistance is that expanding this program would be interpreted as an admission of failure in Iraq.

Nevertheless, key to any solution is creating conditions that will allow Iraqis safety, but not preclude return. In the near term, the U.S. should offer unlimited extensions of temporary visas to Iraqis. In the long term, the U.S. should be prepared to absorb a large portion of this refugee population.

The central irony of the middle class refugee applies here as well. They make their homelands poorer by leaving, but make our societies richer in coming.

- **IRAQ: It's Either Occupation or Education** (18 Dec 2006)

By Dahr Jamail and Ali al-Fadhily

BAGHDAD, Dec 18 (IPS) - Two in three children in Iraq have simply stopped going to school, according to a government report.

Iraq's Ministry of Education says attendance rates for the new school year, which started Sep. 20, are at an all-time low.

Statistics released by the ministry in October showed that a mere 30 percent of Iraq's 3.5 million students are currently attending classes. This compares to roughly 75 percent of students who were attending classes the previous year, according to the Britain-based NGO Save the Children.

Just before the U.S.-led invasion in spring 2003, school attendance was nearly 100 percent.

Iraqis are forgetting almost what a child needs. Dr. Ahmed Aaraji of the Baghdad Societal Organisation, an



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Iraqi NGO which monitors the state of Iraqi schools and families in an effort to assist families where possible, is trying to remind everyone what that should be.

"To build a child's character, the home atmosphere should be appropriate, parents should attend to children, the school environment should be proper, and the whole society should function at the best level," he told IPS. "But none of these factors seems to exist in Iraq any more."

Iraq was awarded The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) prize for eradicating illiteracy in 1982. At that time, literacy rates for women were among the highest of all Islamic nations.

Education today presents a quite different picture. An IPS correspondent visited a primary school in the capital city, located in the volatile al-Amiriyah district in western Baghdad not far from the airport, after making his way through piles of garbage. And these piles grow bigger by the day, residents say.

The two-storey building looks neat enough with a fresh coat of yellow paint, but one step inside reveals years of neglect.

"During the regime of Saddam Hussein, Iraqi schools suffered from the poverty of the state due to the U.S.-backed UN sanctions," the headmaster told IPS. "The main problem now is the corruption of contractors and senior administration staff."

Contracts have been handed out for refurbishment, he said. But in effect, "they just paint the walls and fix some cheap accessories to collect their cash, and go."

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) declared as early as October 2004 that the education system in Iraq was "effectively denying children a decent education, and the poor quality of the learning environment delivers a major blow to children."

The study also confirmed that thousands of schools lacked the basic facilities to provide children a decent education.

UNICEF representative Roger Wright said in the October 2004 report: "Iraq used to have one of the finest school systems in the Middle East. Now we have clear evidence of how far the system has deteriorated. Today millions of children in Iraq are attending schools that lack even basic water or sanitation facilities, have crumbling walls, broken windows and leaking roofs. The system is overwhelmed."



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Two years later, the situation has grown far worse. Now it is so bad that international agencies are not around to survey it any more.

Still, several parents continue to send their children to school. "We have to because what is the alternative," Um Abdulla told IPS at the front gate of a school in Baghdad as she waited to collect her children.

Literacy is declining with school education. UNESCO estimates that the literacy rate in Iraq as of Dec 11 is below 60 percent, meaning six million illiterate adults. The average literacy rate in Iraq 2000-2003 was 74 percent, according to UNICEF in 2004.

In the rural areas illiteracy is worse. Only 37 percent of rural women are literate, and only 30 percent of Iraqi girls of high school age are even enrolled in school. That compares with about 42 percent of boys, according to the UNESCO report this month.

Security is the prime concern, for parents and teachers.

"Roads are unsafe, with all the explosions and abductions that threaten our children on their way to school," mother of three Um Suthir told IPS.

Mothers usually accompany their children to school and bring them back home. With abductions on the rise, neither are safe.

Many schools in the capital have lowered their hours of classes to less than four a day due to shortage of teachers and facilities, and lack of security.

In war-torn Fallujah, many of the schools destroyed in the November 2004 U.S.-led attack on the city have not been rebuilt. This has led to reduced hours of classes being held in sometimes three shifts in makeshift buildings.

Ali al-Ka'abi from the Ministry of Education said the problem is worse in the capital and in cities in al-Anbar province to the west of Baghdad, where up to 30 percent of school buildings are being used by U.S. and Iraqi soldiers. This province, that includes Fallujah and Ramadi, has seen the fiercest resistance to U.S. occupation.



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The collapsing economy is also keeping several children away from school. Many children have had to leave school because of family poverty or after the families were evicted from homes and hometowns for sectarian reasons.

"We are now living in a factory building, and there is no school near our shelter," a Baghdad resident told IPS. "I've had to ask for my oldest boy to help cover expenses by working as a cleaner at a mechanic's shop nearby."

The man said he used to own a small supermarket where he also lived; he now works as a porter. And he has no hope his children can ever go to school any more. (END/2006)

- Annals of Liberation: The End of Education in Iraq (October 5, 2006)

Ignorance, extremism, fear, death, ruin -- and oodles and oodles of bribes and war profits for the cronies, the crooks, and the cranks...yes, Iraq is definitely the wave of the future! After all, it's the first nation in the world where the Bush Agenda has been applied in its purest, most unfettered form. If you want to know what the future holds for America at the hands of the Bush Faction (in whatever permutation it replicates itself after 2008), then just cast your beady eyes to Baghdad and environs. - Chris Floyd

Chris Floyd

"I have seen the future, baby:

It is murder."

-- Leonard Cohen

Iraq's universities and schools near collapse as teachers and pupils flee. (Guardian)

Excerpts: Iraq's school and university system is in danger of collapse in large areas of the country as pupils and teachers take flight in the face of threats of violence. Professors and parents have told the Guardian they no longer feel safe to attend their educational institutions. In some schools and colleges, up to half the staff have fled abroad, resigned or applied to go on prolonged vacation, and class sizes have also dropped by up to half in the areas that are the worst affected.



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Professionals in higher education, particularly those teaching the sciences and in health, have been targeted for assassination. Universities from Basra in the south to Kirkuk and Mosul in the north have been infiltrated by militia organisations, while the same militias from Islamic organisations regularly intimidate female students at the school and university gates for failing to wear the hijab.

Women teachers have been ordered by their ministry to adopt Islamic codes of clothing and behaviour. "The militias from all sides are in the universities. Classes are not happening because of the chaos, and colleagues are fleeing if they can," said Professor Saad Jawad, a lecturer in political science at Baghdad University.

Well, for goodness' sake, who needs all them pointy-heads anyway, filling young people's heads with reason and curiosity and critical thinking and other such devilish notions what would cause them to question the scriptures? What a dream come true to see liberal professors hounded from campuses and clean-living, right-minded spirit warriors for God assuming leadership roles in universities! Surely David Horowitz himself is on his way to Baghdad right now to congratulate those militias who are putting his ideas into practice so forcefully.

Ignorance, extremism, fear, death, ruin -- and oodles and oodles of bribes and war profits for the cronies, the crooks, and the cranks...yes, Iraq is definitely the wave of the future! After all, it's the first nation in the world where the Bush Agenda has been applied in its purest, most unfettered form. If you want to know what the future holds for America at the hands of the Bush Faction (in whatever permutation it replicates itself after 2008), then just cast your beady eyes to Baghdad and environs.

- **800,000 Iraqi Children Not Attending School** (Karen Button September 21, 2006)



Schools in Iraq will soon resume, but thousands of worried families will be keeping their children at home for fears of kidnapping or worse.

Girls are at particular risk. A joint Ministry of Interior (MoE) and UNICEF study found that of those who do not attend school, 74 percent are female children.

A recent report by the UK-based organisation Save the Children, entitled "Rewrite the Future: Education for children in conflict-affected countries," documents the effects of armed conflict on primary education in 30 countries. Some 115 million primary-aged children do not attend school for various reasons, the report says, yet by far the biggest contributor is conflict, which deprives one in three, or 43 million, from attending.

In Iraq that translates to 818,000 primary-aged children, or 22.2 percent of Iraq's student population, who are not attending school.

Since 2003, violence has dramatically increased in a country that once enjoyed relative security. Attacks on schools by US and Iraqi government forces and civilian militias, kidnappings by organised crime, and the ever-present threat of car bombs, sniper's bullets and random shootings all contribute to the violence.

Iraq's education ministry reported that in the first half of the 2005 academic year alone, 64 children were killed and 57 injured in attacks on schools. Another 47 were kidnapped. Yet these numbers don't include the children who were killed or injured on their way to or from school.



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Besides violence, displacement is a contributing factor to student nonattendance. Thousands of children are from families who've fled US-led sieges on their communities or sectarian violence and therefore don't have access to education.

In a June report, the UNHCR (United Nations High Commission on Refugees) put the number of refugees inside Iraq at 1.8 million, an increase of 800,000 people from last year. Not included are the estimated 100,000-150,000 who were displaced as a result of US military operations in Ramadi this summer.

Professors have also been a target of Iraq's violence, causing a severe shortage in teachers. In the first four months of 2005, 311 teachers and employees with the education ministry were killed and another 158 injured.

During that same time, 417 schools, including universities, had been attacked, resulting in the closure of several. According to the Ministry of Higher Education, close to 180 professors have been killed between February and August; another 3,250 have fled the country.

While there are no accurate figures for how many teachers have left Iraq since the US-led invasion, statistical records kept by the University Professors Union of Iraq show that over 10,000 professionals, including physicians, have fled the country since 2003.

Two more left just last month. Earlier this spring, I met with Saleh Mohammed and his wife Eman Hussain* in Amman. Both taught at Baghdad universities. They told me their concern was mostly for their son, who they had moved to Amman where about 500,000 other Iraqis now live. They planned, however, to stay in Baghdad, despite the danger. Now, six months later, they have left their beloved country due to the dire security situation, unsure when they might return.

"The number of teachers leaving the country this year is huge and almost double those who left in 2005," Professor Salah Aliwi, director general of studies planning in the Ministry of Higher Education reported to IRIN (Integrated Regional Information Networks). "Every day, we are losing more experienced people, which is causing a serious problem in the education system."

This month the MoE announced it is raising salaries by 20-50 percent in attempts to entice teachers to stay. It remains to be seen if that will make any difference. Even with the more than 13 thousand guards hired by the MoE to protect educational institutions in Iraq, it has not been sufficient to calm the violence or quell the exodus.



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Once the model of education in the Middle East, twelve years of grueling sanctions and three years of bloody occupation have left Iraq's system in shambles, a generation of children both traumatised and, it seems, deprived of education.

*Not their real names.

- **Gunmen kill prominent Iraqi academic in Baghdad** (28 Jan 2006)

BAGHDAD (Reuters) - Gunmen shot dead a prominent Iraqi academic and political analyst in his car in a Baghdad street on Saturday, police said.

Abdul Razak al-Na'as, a familiar face on Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabiya Arabic satellite television channels, had just left his offices at Baghdad University's College of Information in the center of the capital, police said.

Gunmen blocked his car with their own and then opened fire, killing him instantly.

The Sunni academic had often condemned the continued presence of U.S. troops in Iraq and criticized the Kurdish- and Shi'ite-led government, saying it was unable to run the country.

The Iraqi Accordance Front, the biggest Sunni political grouping, said Na'as had "paid the price for his noble stances."

"I hold the American forces and the Iraqi government responsible for protecting Iraqi academics and politicians," Front spokesman Zafir al-Ani told Reuters.

A number of Iraqi academics have been killed in the past two years, but in the chaos following the U.S. overthrow of Saddam Hussein in March 2003, it has not always been easy to establish whether the killings were politically or criminally motivated.

Story from REDORBIT NEWS:

<http://www.redorbit.com/news/display/?id=372651>



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- "**Iraq's Education Systems Denies Children Education**" (18 Oct 2004)

“The current [education] system [in Iraq] is effectively denying children a decent education, and the poor quality of the learning environment delivers a major blow to children” declared the UNICEF Iraq representative, Roger Wright. These declaration accompany the first comprehensive study on the condition of schools in post-conflict Iraq conducted by the Iraq Ministry of Education with the help of UNICEF.

The survey has confirmed that thousands of school facilities lack the basics necessary to provide children with a decent education.

Roger Wright added: “Iraq used to have one of the finest school systems in the Middle East. Now we have clear evidence of how far the system has deteriorated. Today millions of children in Iraq are attending schools that lack even basic water or sanitation facilities, have crumbling walls, broken windows and leaking roofs. The system is overwhelmed.” He commented that the decay is the result of over a decade of neglect and under-funding during the sanctions era, as well as the impact of three wars, starting with the Iran-Iraq war.

The survey collected data on students, teachers, and the condition of buildings for every kindergarten, primary, secondary, Yafi'een (Alternative), and vocational schools and higher education institutes in the country. In all, the survey covered over 20,000 schools and institutes.

The survey reveals that, in this last year, school enrolment surged but also that the facilities available are not near to adequate. There are not enough desks, chairs, or classrooms. Many schools have had to double up, with a quarter of all primary schools in Iraq running two or three shifts per day – meaning reduced classroom time for each shift of students.

It also revealed that enrolment of girls was lower than boys in every grade. Overcrowding, insecurity and the lack of water and sanitation facilities in schools are the three main causes of lower enrolment of girls. On a daily basis, teachers, children and their families in Baghdad, and other flash-points of conflict and criminality, have to overcome the fear of bombings, explosions and kidnapping.

These difficulties have only partially been reduced by rehabilitation works carried out since March 2003 and, since when the survey was carried out in January 2004, the worsening security situation has now slowed down work on improving education facilities.



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Wright observed that: "The problem is not just delays in improving school buildings, more importantly, poor security is also holding back improvements in the quality of teaching and learning that is going on inside the classroom."

He added that despite difficulties inside Iraq, UNICEF, the Ministry of Education, and many other partners continue to work to rehabilitate schools and conduct trainings to help ensure Iraqi children get the quality education they deserve

- Rampant Corruption Cited in Iraq's Education System (26 July 2004)

Baghdad. Iraq's minister of education says the country's education system is so corrupt that there is little he can do about it, although he would like to do a lot.

Corruption throughout Iraq's educational system is so rampant that Interim Minister of Education Sami al-Mudhaffar, says he would like to get rid of just about everyone involved in it.

This was his response when asked what he would like to change.

"Oh God. I will change everything," he said. "I will change the whole system, the whole education system of Iraq. The leaders of the present education system. I would do it really because they are corrupted people. They are very corrupted people. Most of the school headmasters are corrupted, most of them. But I can not do anything because I have to have replacements."

And, he says he does not have replacements.

The minister said the corruption exists at every level of the education system, including students or parents who pay teachers for grades, teachers who pay administrators for supplies and favors, administrators who pay director-generals for favors and advancement.

He said the system for obtaining school supplies is corrupt because contractors overprice nearly everything.

"For example, if you want to buy something, instead of paying 5,000 dinars you could get it for 25,000 dinars, and the difference is 20,000 dinars, which has been taken by the people who are corrupted," he explained. "Then you go higher and higher and you reach into the millions of dinars and millions of dollars. That is corruption."



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The frustrated minister says he has spoken with administrators and teachers throughout the system, telling them corruption is not acceptable. But he says it is so widespread that he holds little hope much that anything can be done to stop it.

Mr. al-Mudhaffar says it will likely take decades to rid the system of corruption.

The minister says he is not sure whether Saddam Hussein corrupted Iraq or if Iraq corrupted Saddam Hussein. But he says that in order to lead a corrupt society the leader must also be corrupt.

But the minister of education insists he is not corrupt.

- **What The US Didn't Do In Iraq Education** (June 15, 2004)

Christina Asquith -

Special Middle-East Correspondent for EducationNews.org

Baghdad—The sound of the American administrators pulling out of Iraq is the sound of silence.

The flutter of US helicopters over Baghdad still makes the barefoot children point and laugh. The daily drumbeat of suicide bombs and mortars landing in the city still cause everyone to jump. But the departure of the dozens of US administrators sent to rebuild the country has barely caused Iraq to skip a beat. Not now. Not during the occupation.

The Americans are leaving with much fanfare, but the truth is they're presence in rebuilding most Iraqi institutions will barely be missed.

This isn't the typical, America-centric attitude of the world. The conservatives credit American when they laud accomplishments here. The liberals blame America when they say Iraq is circling the drain. And, of course, America did start this debacle. But in truth, the Americans ceased to be the center of-the-universe at least a year ago, when the war stopped being a military venture and began to be about "Rebuilding Iraq". That's when the Americans slipped off stage, and left much more in Iraqi hands than has been generally recognized.

When I examine the last year in the rebuilding of Iraqi education, I see how American efforts here have been like a noisy, colorful sideshow, grabbing all the headlines but that's about it. In fact, most of the 1,400 or so bureaucrats who lived in the Green Zone, the American headquarters in Baghdad have had little intervention in Iraq's rebuilding. Now, as they leave Iraqis to the wolves, their legacy will become even smaller.



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I realized this yesterday, when I read the Washington Post's profile of Dr. John Agresto, US senior advisor to the Minister of Higher Education, who had just left Iraq and was breaking rank by admitting that the Iraqi higher education system was still crawling towards what it was *before* the war. The last year has been a missed opportunity in higher education, Agresto said.

What he didn't say was how little effort President Bush's administration put into higher education here in the first place.

Immediately after the war, President Bush-appointed about 20 Americans to serve as US advisors to Iraq's centralized government ministries—Ministry of Oil, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Higher Education.

The first US advisor appointed to the Ministry of Higher Education had nothing to do with education. He was a weapons of mass destruction expert, appointed because Saddam was known to use the universities as a launching pad for WMD experimentation.

By May, when little turned up, that advisor was replaced by Dr. Drew Erdmann, a PhD from Harvard University with no experience in university administration. Erdmann told me last June that he had driven into Baghdad along with a US Defense Department team with an unclear mission, and once he got there he was picked "in a fluid process" to be the US Senior Advisor to the Ministry of Higher Education. Since the Iraqi minister had been arrested, Erdmann became Iraq's defacto Minister of Higher Education. He was 36 years old.

Let's pause for a minute. Sit yourself down at the mahogany table with the 22 Iraqi university presidents. Men in their 50s and 60s, who all have PhD's from top universities in England, Scotland and America; erudite, accomplished intellectual men. Due to the US invasion, they had just lost their offices, libraries and research equipment. The textbooks were burned and stolen. US soldiers occupied the dormitories. The Ministry building itself was burned to the ground, along with every file, computer and desk. In May, Amb. Paul Bremer instituted the DeBaathification Policy, which forced the firing of all the top university administrators and professors because they were Baath Party members. Half of the intellectual leadership in academia was gone.

Now, in a haphazard selection process, they were given 36-year old Drew Erdmann. He controlled the budgets, the staffing, the curriculum, and the physical renovation.

Meanwhile, back in Washington, President Bush's administration was casting its net for someone permanent for the post. Please Note: The tanks had already rolled into Baghdad. The US military had been planning for a year. Still, President Bush's administration didn't have anyone for their most important representative in higher education.

They eventually picked Dr. Agresto, who told the Washington Post that his background on the Middle East was as deep as a Google search, which turned up nothing. But he was a loyal Republican and



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friend of US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld. It was like this in most ministries: The US advisors appointed to run Iraq's key institutions were Republican loyalists, few who had any background in the Middle East or spoke Arabic.

Not to demean Dr. Agresto, an accomplished academic, a Cornell University PhD and former president of St. John's College in New Mexico. Agresto was popular among Iraqi presidents. He was known as candid, hard working, and for creating democratic procedures within Iraqi universities.

But, let's face it, he and his staff of 10 weren't enough to make a dent in the Iraqi higher ed. Agresto made some significant change, but he also got muddled in a lot of day to day minutia—creating budgets, smoothing over relations between the military and the universities over student dormitories, trying to get the proper government badges for his Iraqi staff, helping individual professors.

This isn't only Agresto. I once saw a deputy senior advisor of a different ministry—a renowned US professor of art history and archeology—measuring a security fence. This is what the US's best and brightest were doing in Iraq?

The New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman said months ago that we were shortchanging Iraq. Is there anything more important to those in Washington DC right now than Iraq, he wondered? Why weren't we doing more?

If the Bush administration was really serious about helping Iraq universities, why didn't he put together a team of a dozen of the US's top Middle East scholars, give them money and set them off? With \$87 billion to throw around, why not appoint one US advisor to each of Iraq's 22 universities? Why not have a US advisor in charge of funding, another in charge of rebuilding, a third in charge of curriculum revision? Why only Agresto, a man picked at the last minute?

If the US had had more people on the ground, then it wouldn't have mattered so much when in March, due to security, Agresto could barely get out of the Green Zone, let alone visit some of the 16 universities outside Baghdad. In the last four months, the US advisors might as well have run the occupation via satellite phone from Virginia. It didn't even feel like the Americans were still 'occupying Iraq'. They were just living there, uninvited, for a little while, offering a some good programs here and there, and complaining that journalists never write about them. In the last few months, the Americans in the Green Zone looked like the crew of the Titanic, offering nautical training courses on the deck as the ship slow sinks.

This is why I say the US has been the side show. While they were trapped inside the Green Zone, the real players were reforming Iraqi higher education.

In the case of the universities, this was the Minister of Higher Education, who was picked by a Sunni religious member of the Governing Council, and who proceeded to fire all the democratically elected university presidents and appoint his own followers.



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Then, there were the Shia militias, led by Moqadar Sadr, a bunch of thugs who descended onto campus to harass the women and intimidate free speech. They took over security on campuses and now patrol the entrances at some universities.

Lastly, there are the Iranians, who have been funding computer centers and offering aid on campuses. When Iraqi intellectuals talk about fear of the future, they don't worry about Americans, who they see as having had a foot out the door from the beginning. They think closer to home. They worry about their neighbors, and former enemies, the Iranians.

Although it is the educational system that I know best, I venture to guess much the same has happened in the other ministries.

Most Iraqis are beyond depressed. Apparently the line at the border checkpoint with Jordan is now four hours long. What will happen when the Americans finally leave on June 30th? Who knows, but it won't have much to do with America.

For more articles on Iraq education, visit

<http://web.archive.org/web/20040821161314/http://www.christinareporting.com/>

Christina Asquith is a freelance journalist who's written for The Christian Science Monitor, The New York Times and The Economist. She recently finished a book about her year as a teacher in a tough Philadelphia school. It is due out next year. Contact her at ChristinaAsquith@hotmail.com

- **How much does Dubya's administration care about education in Iraq?** (22 May 2004)

We have some items for your consideration.

First, here's part of Dubya's weekly radio address from October 18, 2003:

During the decades of Saddam Hussein's oppression and misrule, all Iraqis suffered, including children. While Saddam built palaces and monuments to himself, Iraqi schools crumbled. While Saddam supported a massive war machine, Iraqi schoolchildren went without text books, and sometimes teachers went unpaid. Saddam used schools for his own purposes: to indoctrinate the youth of Iraq and to teach hatred.

Under Saddam, adult illiteracy was 61 percent, and for women it was a staggering 77 percent. Iraq is a nation with a proud tradition of learning, and that tradition was betrayed by Saddam Hussein.



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As part of our coalition's efforts to build a stable and secure Iraq, we are working to rebuild Iraq's schools, to get the teachers back to work and to make sure Iraqi children have the supplies they need.

Six months ago, nearly all of Iraq's schools were closed, and many primary schools lacked electrical wiring and plumbing and windows. Today, all 22 universities and 43 technical institutes and colleges are open, as are nearly all primary and secondary schools in the country....

Under Saddam, textbooks were so rare, six students had to share each one. So we're working with UNESCO to print 5 million revised and modern textbooks free of Baathist propaganda, and to distribute them to Iraqi students. By the end of the school year, there will be enough textbooks for each Iraqi student....

Noble aims, yes? Now let's look at a couple of items about how Dubya's administration followed through on those promises.

The first item comes from Thursday's Coalition Provisional Authority briefing:

Ambassador Bremer received word earlier this week, and it was finalized today, on ... the largest grant issued by the Bank in 30 years, a \$40 million emergency grant to print new textbooks for the 2004/2005 school year here in Iraq. The World Bank grant will finance the printing and distribution of approximately 72 million textbooks for 6 million students in all provinces for the upcoming school year. This quantity covers over 600 titles for all 12 grades of the primary and secondary system.... And an additional agreement for a second grant of \$60 million to finance the rehabilitation of schools is being worked out.

So it's not the US who's paying for Iraq's textbooks — it's the World Bank. (And no, the US doesn't provide all the money for the World Bank.)

Now let's go on to an AP report about the rebuilding of Iraq's universities

The United States has failed to rebuild Iraq's university system just weeks before the planned handover of control, the top American education adviser to Iraq told The Associated Press on Friday. Congress has provided only about \$8 million of the \$500 million needed to repair damage resulting mainly from postwar looting, and foreign governments have done little more, John A. Agresto said in an interview at Samford University, where he was scheduled to give a commencement speech Saturday.



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As a result, Agresto said thousands of Iraqi university students and faculty members do not have basic supplies like desks and chairs, and teaching equipment stolen from technical schools has not been replaced.

At some vocational colleges, students learn "theoretical carpentry" because they lack tools, he said.

According to the figures in this article, the largess of Dubya's administration and its Republican allies in Congress has extended to only 0.2 % of the money that's needed to do the job.

We won't comment any further. The facts we've presented pretty much speak for themselves.

- IRAQ LOOTING (29 April 2003)

From: Keith Watenpaugh <watenpkd@lemoyne.edu>

H-Levant List et al.:

Like all of you I have found myself at a loss for words at the destruction of Iraq's cultural heritage, especially the libraries.

And while international resources will be mobilized to aid Iraq in the recovery of its pre-Islamic past, I fear that less effort will be brought to bear on behalf of its Islamic Art or its Ottoman and post-Colonial collections.

What is needed, and what the H-Levant community and other H-Net groups can do is begin to think about aiding the Iraqi libraries in the process of rebuilding.

The best model for this project is the Herculean and heroic efforts of Jeff Spurr and Andras Riedlmayer at Harvard. Through the late 1990s they worked to help begin to rebuild the Sarajevo Library which had been deliberately burned in the course of the Balkan war.

Employing a two-step process, Spurr and Riedlmayer identified microform copies of manuscripts known to be from the library in Sarajevo held by private individuals or in public collections, made copies and sent them to Bosnia. They also encouraged presses to forward to the library books from their backlists.



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I am certain that many of us have similar microforms and our libraries may also be able to participate. We need to begin to find these.

For example, I have copies of the first year of al-Arab, the first post-Ottoman newspaper published in Iraq, from ironically, the National Library in Aleppo. I am certain that many of you also have Ottoman documents relevant to Iraq from the Bashbakanlik or other central Ottoman sources.

I would also encourage those of you who buy used books abroad be cognizant of the possible Iraqi provenance of the books and consider purchasing them in the hopes of returning them to Iraq.

Those of you interested in exploring how we can help in this process, please let me know and I will begin to collect names and hopefully find a - especially people in library sciences - possible institutional body/affiliate who could help.

In the space of the past few days, the National Museum, the House of Wisdom where the National Library, the National Archives and the rare manuscript collection are housed, were obliterated by looters in Baghdad.

As a historian of the Ottoman Empire I am truly shocked and awed at this kind of national mnemocide that has taken place under the US guns. The National Museum was looted of an estimated 50,000 irreplaceable artifacts dating back thousands of years; the National library and the National archives torched and hundreds of thousands of documents burnt in a frenzy of looting. Most devastating in all of this is the realization that all it took for the Americans to stop the plunder was to place one tank at the front entrance and a platoon of soldiers around each building. Even after pleas by a journalist to stop the on-going carnage, US military command in Baghdad refused to act. This erasure of Iraqi, Arab and world heritage is on a scale of a destruction of La Bibliothèque Nationale and the Louvre in a single day. **What happened in Baghdad over the weekend is cultural genocide and responsibility for it must lie with the US. The failure to protect an occupied country's national heritage is a war crime under the Geneva Convention.**

A colleague, a professor of Middle East history, at the university of Michigan, has written the following on the matter:

"The US forces were perfectly capable of guarding the *Oil Ministry* buildings, just by stationing a tank outside them. At one point for two hours looting of the Museum was deterred in a similar manner, but then the tank was inexplicably called back. It was not that the US military could not have performed this



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task because of continued insecurity. Some sort of decision was taken about what was important and what was not.

I personally cannot escape the conclusion that this monumental tragedy for Iraq's national history was the result of Rumsfeld's willful ignoring of All the warnings received and the unilateralism with which the Anglo-American forces proceeded. I put most of the blame on the civilians at the head of the Department of Defense.

I do not think any American can fully understand the emotional shock of it. Not only are thousands of antiquities gone, but so too are all the manuscripts and archival documents on which early modern and modern Iraqi history writing could have been based. Nor do I think the Iraqi intellectual class will soon forget or forgive this travesty.

I suspect for the US to allow the looting of Iraq's archeological and manuscript heritage was in fact a contravention of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. The US was the occupying power when the looting occurred, even if there were pockets of resistance (none to my knowledge have been alleged at the Museum site). It is certainly is a contravention of the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (<http://www.icomos.org/hague/>). In short, we can say of the complete loss of Iraqi national history: It was foreseen; it was preventable; it was horribly stupid and tragic; it will have long-term negative effects on the Iraqi perception of the US role; and it contravened international law."

That having been said, what actually went on inside the National library? In a recent eye-witness account of the destruction of these world heritage sites in the Independent (<http://argument.independent.co.uk/commentators/story.jsp?story97350>), Robert Fisk has asked the question why? Why were these institutions of learning a national memory targeted and looted in such a systematic way?

The museum artifacts will be of immense value in the shadowy world of art dealers and museum agents. Indeed, a colleague at the Royal Ontario Museum here in Toronto has told me that the first artifact from Baghdad's national museum has already been sighted at a Paris auction on Monday!

The American Council for Cultural Policy (ACCP) reportedly contacted the Pentagon and the state department in Washington prior to the start of the invasion of Iraq. This in turn has alarmed academics to who have followed this group's lobbying to facilitate the import of Iraqi and other Near Eastern antiquities into the United States since its inception in 2001. Liam McDougall of the Sunday Herald has researched the membership of ACCP. It counts among its members collectors and lawyers linked to collections and



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exhibitions of Nazi loot. The president of the Archaeological Institute of American (AIA), Patty Gerstenblith has commented: "The ACCP's agenda is to encourage the collecting of antiquities through weakening the laws of archaeology-rich nations and eliminate national ownership of antiquities to allow for easier export."

The lootings so far do not point into the direction of this group. However, it is improbable that the looting of the museum was the work of an ignorant mob. Apparently, computer indexes of the museum's inventory were deleted during the looting. Now this is not the work of an irate mob but suggests that a plan was underlying the crime. Without an index, it will be impossible to trace the origins of artifacts as they appear at auctions and in private collections. Moreover, the high-security building's vaults were opened not by explosions but from what we hear by a key. Again, I have a strong suspicion that the network of wealthy art dealers has made contacts in Baghdad long before the city was evacuated by the Iraqi army and its leaders.

But why the burning of Ottoman documents, worthless to art collectors and antiquity dealers? Why destroy the raw material of Iraq's social history? Why burn sixteenth-century correspondences between the Baghdad governors with the Sublime Porte in Istanbul, eighteenth-century taxation statistics and nineteenth-century Arabic newspapers? Only years of Ottoman language training and historical research would be able to bring the vitality of five hundred year of history. This week, half a millennium of world history has been willfully destroyed! Says Charles Tripp from the School of African Oriental Studies in London:

"This is really a terrible thing for Iraq," he said. **"One of the problems has been establishing an identity, a place in history and in the future. If you lose those documents you are subject to remolding of history which will be extremely dangerous."**

How did the Pentagon react to the first questions regarding the mnemocide in Iraq? Characteristically, Secretary of defense, Donald Rumsfeld, dismissed the possibility of a military error of judgment: Today's issue of the New York Times quotes him as saying: "To try to pass off the fact of that unfortunate activity to a deficit in the war plan strikes me as a stretch." Yet, while the Pentagon did head the urgent pleas of archaeologists to include these buildings in their off-target list, the US government insisted that it gave no directives to protect the buildings in question and that "We leave such decisions to commanders on the scene."

For more information see two articles in the New York Times:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/04/16/international/worldspecial/16MUSE.html>



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- **The Students of Moustanserya University** (22 Feb 2003)

How Sanctions Destroy Iraqi Education

By MICHAEL WOLFF

"During the war, Iraq's infrastructure was completely destroyed. The devastation was total."

Dennis Halliday

UN Coordinator of Humanitarian Aid to Iraq

In the morning, as our bus drove through the streets of Baghdad, our delegation was able to get a close-up view of conditions in the city. I noticed a number of interesting things. I saw two motorcycle officers on large Japanese motorcycles. They wore helmets and polished boots. They were very clean--very professional in appearance. I was sort of surprised to see them. There were some relatively large traffic jams. The freeways were nice and very modern, but without lanes. The driving was chaotic. Earlier in the morning, an old Chevrolet sedan had sideswiped our bus. The two drivers had stopped to yell at each other for a minute, then drove their separate ways. The cars we saw were mostly German and Japanese models, all beaten up with fading paint. Almost every car had a badly cracked windshield. Many cars were missing headlights or had none at all. Driving at night can be a very dangerous proposition because many vehicles don't have headlights. We saw everything from donkeys pulling wooden carts to big Mercedes gasoline trucks belching smoke. I was continually fascinated by the sight of these antique behemoths roaring down the highways or idling in traffic.

The buildings were in a various state of disrepair--chipped paint, rusting signs, weeds, abandoned stores, garages and gas stations. We saw a BMW car dealership, but the parking lot was completely empty. It was like traveling through a place where time had stood still. The clock had stopped on August 6, 1990--the day the economic sanctions were imposed. Amazingly though, the Iraqi people have adapted. Despite twenty years of war, despite the unremitting toll of the strictest blockade in modern history, life in Iraq goes on. The Iraqi people are truly survivors.

At ten o'clock, our delegation arrived in front of Moustanserya University where we were warmly and generously greeted by members of the faculty and student body. As we debarked from the bus, a number of delegates held up signs denouncing U.S. military involvement in the region and chanting "<U.S./UN>, END THE SANCTIONS NOW."



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My goal was to interview as many of these students as possible. I wanted to find out what they thought of the sanctions and how their lives had been impacted by U.S. policies. I wanted to hear about the subjects they were taking and what they thought about the school and the government. I wanted to listen to them and get to know them.

Standing next to me was Samaa Elibyari, an Egyptian-born Canadian from Montreal. I didn't know it at the time, but she was a lifetime religious and political activist who was involved in numerous projects. She was a radio talk show host and a writer. She was working with the Canadian Islamic Congress. As I came to know her better, she struck me as a woman with a strong moral conscience and a good understanding of Iraq, Islamic culture and the Middle-East in general. I explained to Samaa that I needed a translator so that I could interview the students. I requested her assistance and she agreed to help me.

While the other delegates were standing out front, Samaa and I immediately waded into the group of students in search of an interview subject. We came across Mahmoud Yelya--a foreign student from Yemen. As he spoke to us in English, several students gathered around to listen to him. He was working on his second year at the University and taking computer science and engineering. "There are a lot of Yemenis," he told us. When asked about the sanctions, he gave us a response that we found very common among the students. "There's no reason for it," he explained. Time and time again the students expressed to us an inability to understand why they were the ones who had to be punished by the sanctions and why their education had to suffer for a lack of books or references. Clearly, these students are innocent victims and not only are the Iraqis innocent victims, but the foreign nationals who come to Moustanserya to get an education are victimized as well.

The delegation went inside where we met with the University President who told us about the school and explained the negative impact the sanctions have had on the educational system.

Moustanserya University is one of the oldest schools in the world with a lineage that goes back at least 800 years. The school has quite a history. During the Gulf War, the campus was damaged by a cruise missile, and in 1980, there was an Iranian assassination attempt on Tariq Aziz who was giving a lecture on the campus--an event that helped precipitate the Iran-Iraq War.

The University currently has about 30,000 students with many of these being foreign nationals. The school is completely subsidized by the Iraqi government for a number of reasons, but mainly so the students won't have to drop out for financial reasons. The range of classes includes everything from French and physics to computer science and engineering. High grades are required to attend the University. According to the University President, Moustanserya also has a student union with free student elections. The faculty cannot interfere in the election process. As far as the impact of sanctions on



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the University, the main problem is a severe shortage of educational material. All educational materials are banned by the UN sanctions committee.

After our meeting with the University President, we were invited to go out and mingle with the students and see the campus. Despite ten years of sanctions, the campus was very clean and well taken care of. The general attitude of the students and faculty was very positive. It reminded me very much of the hope and optimism that we have all seen on American campuses. The students were well-dressed and polite--full of vitality and friendly smiles. There are not enough words to describe how pleasant it was to be interacting with these fine individuals.

As Samaa and I interviewed the students, we were given some unique insights into what was happening on the campus. At the top of the list, many of the students expressed a concern about the quality of their education. Their materials were outdated. The references were obsolete. One student showed me a crumbling 1952 calculus textbook he was studying from. We were told that UNSCOM inspectors had entered the central library, confiscated the chemistry books and burned them. This last revelation was very troubling. For many of the students, the education they received at Moustanserya would be their only chance to escape a life of grinding poverty and hopelessness.

Several of the students pointed out the fraudulent nature of the sanctions. "Some people support the sanctions," a student told us. "Too many people are benefiting from them." He told us about corruption and how only poor people are affected by the sanctions. The U.S. government was continually "inventing reasons to continue the sanctions," he said. Another told us "The Iraqi people don't care about the sanctions. We have to move on despite the sanctions. We have to live our lives." This gave me the unfortunate impression that many Iraqis were beginning to grudgingly accept the sanctions as a permanent part of their lives.

We talked to a group of young women. They were all incredibly beautiful and well-dressed. Some of them spoke English. They asked me about American culture--Brad Pitt and Antonio Banderas. "All of us here like Brad Pitt and Antonio Banderas," one of them proudly declared.

We talked about politics and the Middle-East:

"We don't like the Zionists," a young woman told me. "They have come and taken our land."

"Oh, are you Palestinian," I asked, somewhat confused.

"No, we are Iraqi, but we support the Palestinians. They are our brothers and sisters."



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She had made a beautiful and remarkable statement on Arab solidarity.

After talking to several more students, a picture began to emerge. The students I had talked to told me that they liked the education they were getting, but that it had been negatively impacted by the sanctions. All of the students seemed genuinely thankful that the Iraqi government was paying for their education. It's really quite a testimony to the Iraqi educational system--that despite a military blockade, despite the war, the almost daily bombings, the famine, the lack of medicine and the enduring poverty, young students from all around the world still strive to come to Moustanserya University to get an education and better their lives.

The optimism of the students was an extraordinary thing to see. They are faced with difficulties that most of us cannot even imagine. They live in a country that has been wrecked and ravaged by war and sanctions. They have to deal with emotional and financial hardship--family difficulties, stunning unemployment, a nearly complete lack of medical care, outdated educational materials. They are faced with the constant threat of U.S. bombings and renewed American military aggression. And yet, despite all of these obstacles, the young students of Moustanserya University continue to come to school and they continue to learn. They come because they want to better their lives. They want to get their degrees and move on to get good jobs and lead productive lives.

We owe these students an enormous amount of gratitude. They are a reflection of ourselves and of the ability of all of us to persevere in the face of staggering adversity. They are students battling against genocidal sanctions. Their story is an epic and heroic struggle. I hope they succeed.

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