

IRAQ

مستقبل العراق

Duty to the
Future:
Free Iraqis
Plan
for a
New
IRAQ



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THE “*FUTURE OF IRAQ PROJECT*,” DESCRIBED IN THIS PUBLICATION, EMBODIES OUR GOVERNMENT’S LONG-STANDING DESIRE TO HELP IRAQIS IN THEIR EFFORT TO FREE THEIR COUNTRY FROM TYRANNY.

OVER MANY MONTHS, THE PROJECT HAS BROUGHT TOGETHER FREE IRAQIS WHO ARE FORTUNATE ENOUGH NOT TO LIVE UNDER SADDAM HUSSEIN’S RULE AND WHO HAVE EXPERTISE IN A WIDE RANGE OF PROFESSIONS. THEY HAVE BOLDLY DISCUSSED CONCRETE PROPOSALS FOR THE REBUILDING OF THEIR COUNTRY AND THE RESTRUCTURING OF ITS INSTITUTIONS SO THAT IRAQ CAN RIGHTFULLY RETAKE ITS PLACE AS A LEADING NATION IN THE REGION AND BEYOND.

I HAD THE PLEASURE OF MEETING A NUMBER OF THESE DISTINGUISHED INDIVIDUALS AT AN IFTAAR I HOSTED DURING THE MUSLIM HOLY MONTH OF RAMADAN. I WAS IMPRESSED BY THE TALENT AND EXPERIENCE THEY BRING TO THIS ENDEAVOR, BUT EVEN MORE SO BY THEIR DEDICATION TO A VISION OF A NEW, FREE, AND DEMOCRATIC IRAQ.

I SALUTE THE COURAGE AND DETERMINATION OF ALL THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE “FUTURE OF IRAQ PROJECT.” I HOPE THAT THEIR PROPOSALS WILL BE SHARED WIDELY WITH THEIR COUNTRYMEN STILL IN IRAQ WHO HAVE NOT HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO IMAGINE OR DISCUSS AN ALTERNATIVE FUTURE FOR THEIR NATION. I AM CONFIDENT THAT BY SHARING THEIR EXPERIENCE OF LIVING IN FREE AND OPEN SOCIETIES AND THEIR IDEAS ABOUT IRAQ’S WAY FORWARD, THESE IRAQIS WILL EMPOWER THEIR COMPATRIOTS, WHO HAVE REMAINED INSIDE SADDAM’S IRAQ, TO BUILD A COUNTRY WHICH OBSERVES THE RULE OF LAW; ACCEPTS PRINCIPLES OF JUSTICE; AND RESPECTS THE RIGHTS OF ALL ITS CITIZENS TO LIVE TOGETHER IN HARMONY AND PROSPERITY.

SECRETARY OF STATE COLIN POWELL

Iraqis remember a time, now more than three decades past, when their cultural heritage, their oil wealth, and the education and skills of their people earned Iraq a respected place in both the Arab world and the larger international community.

The generation that has grown up since Saddam Hussein took power may have no personal memories of such a time, but they, too, have all heard the stories of their families. They, too, have shared the memories of an older generation who have not forgotten the time before Saddam consumed their nation and transformed the history of a people into the biography of a tyrant.

Many of the free Iraqis living outside the country – whether in the United States, Europe, the Middle East or elsewhere – have done more than remember. Long before the current military campaign to liberate Iraq, they have been actively engaged in turning hope into reality through an unprecedented effort to plan for a future

after Saddam Hussein is gone.

For the past year, many of these Iraqis have met in a series of 17 separate working groups, sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, to share ideas and plans for building a new Iraq.

The Future of Iraq Project, as this initiative is known, was not a political process or an attempt to create a kind of government-in-exile. It was, instead, a broad, voluntary effort to meld the talents, experience, and expertise of the large community of Iraqis living beyond the reach of Saddam Hussein, many of whom are now planning their return.

In these working groups – whose focus has ranged from democracy-building and oil to health, education, and water – free Iraqis have devoted themselves to planning how their homeland can recover from the cruelty and corruption of Saddam Hussein's regime, and to building the institutions of political, economic, and personal freedom that will allow Iraq once again to take its rightful place among the community of nations.

All the Iraqis in the working groups – whether previously active in Iraq-led political organizations or not – took risks in participating in the Future of Iraq Project.

Nevertheless, they

offered their expertise in the fields of civil engineering, health care, oil production, agriculture, or rule of law.

They also brought a diversity of views to their work. Virtually all of them agreed that the opportunity to share different points of view – even when their discussions did not lead to full agreement – was one of the most valuable aspects of their experience.

The Future of Iraq Project was neither an academic nor theoretical exercise. As Marc Grossman, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, said in testimony before the U.S. Senate on February 11, 2003, before the launch of Operation Iraqi Freedom, “In the legal field, for example, the Iraqi lawyers in the Transitional Justice working group have drafted 600 pages, in Arabic, of proposed reforms of the Criminal Code, the Criminal Procedure Code, the Civil Code, the Nationality Law, the Military Procedure Code and more.”

The Water, Agriculture, and Environment Working Group identified the need to provide clean water to Iraqi citizens as its first priority. In addition, they endorsed the Eden Again

project, which envisages restoration of the wetlands and marshes that Saddam Hussein has destroyed in an unrelenting, decades-long assault on the land and peoples of southern Iraq.

The membership of the Economic and Infrastructure Working Group mirrored the diversity of Iraq itself, drawing on professionals from the United States, Britain, Canada, Europe, the Middle East and Iraqi Kurdistan. Participants were from many different ethnic and religious groups: Sunnis, Shi'as, Assyrians, Kurds and many others. In their reports, they outlined a three-stage process that would focus on maintaining security and essential services, meeting the basic needs of all Iraqi people, and rebuilding the nation's infrastructure and economy.

A newer working group on civil society stated at the end of its first session in February 2003, “It is natural for Iraq, as the historic cradle of civilization, to have a civil society that respects, protects, and empowers Iraqis to prosper in a democratic government.”

The Oil and Energy Working Group has drawn up specific plans for rebuilding the oil industry's infrastructure while also working to diversify Iraq's economy. “All agreed that the oil and energy sector will be the driving force that

The Future of Iraq Project Working Groups

DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES ✻ ECONOMY AND INFRASTRUCTURE ✻ DEFENSE POLICY AND INSTITUTIONS ✻ EDUCATION ✻ PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMANITARIAN NEEDS ✻ CIVIL SOCIETY CAPACITY BUILDING ✻ TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE ✻ WATER, AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT ✻ PRESERVING IRAQ'S CULTURAL HERITAGE ✻ PUBLIC FINANCE ✻ OIL AND ENERGY ✻ LOCAL GOVERNMENT ✻ ANTI-CORRUPTION MEASURES ✻ FOREIGN AND NATIONAL SECURITY ✻ FREE MEDIA ✻ MIGRATION ✻ PUBLIC OUTREACH

allows Iraqis to prosper once the despotic regime of Saddam Hussein is removed," they said in a March 1, 2003, statement.

The Working Group on Democratic Principles and Procedures debated some of the most difficult and contentious issues of political authority and ethnic identity. Nonetheless, they were able to agree on broad principles of democratic governance and a federal system of representation within a unified Iraq. As one participant said, "We all need to feel that we are Iraqis before we are Kurds or Shi'as or Sunnis, Arabs, or Turkmen. We have to have the feeling of belonging to Iraq."

Although the Future of Iraq Project comprises free Iraqis, neither the participants nor the State Department ever intended this initiative as a means of dictating the parameters of the future to the more than 20 million Iraqis who endure Saddam's iron rule. To

the contrary, many of the working groups have sought out informal ways of communicating with those inside Iraq about their ideas and proposals – well before military action. Moreover, the working group recommendations – whether dealing with health, oil, or political processes – all take an "inside-outside" approach in which free Iraqis will assist the people of a liberated Iraq in further developing and implementing the plans of the Future of Iraq Project. They will offer skills and resources that are simply not accessible to those inside Saddam's walls of oppression.

As Under Secretary Grossman said in his congressional testimony, "Iraqis on the outside will not control the decisions that will ultimately have to be made by all Iraqis. And the people we are working with are a great, great resource, but they know, and we all know, that all Iraqis in the end must be able to talk freely and work together to build a free and democratic Iraq."

U.S. sponsorship of the Future of Iraq Project is tangible evidence of its

long-term commitment to the freedom and welfare of the Iraqi people. The project is also an implicit promise that Iraq's future belongs exclusively to the Iraqi people and no one else.

In the words of Douglas Feith, Under Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, the United States' post-war work will proceed with a two-part resolve, "a commitment to stay and a commitment to leave."

The United States and coalition members will remain to accomplish the basic objectives of removing the regime of Saddam Hussein, locating and destroying all weapons of mass destruction, and ensuring Iraq's territorial integrity. But the United States has an equal commitment to leave the area as soon as possible, demonstrating

that the future of Iraq belongs solely to the Iraqi people.

Then, as Iraqis themselves determine, the United States will join with coalition allies, friends, and international organizations to support the country's long-term efforts in building a peaceful, democratic, and prosperous Iraq.

As William Burns, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, told Arab journalists, March 6, 2003, before the launch of military action,

Creating a solid representative government, beyond the brutal regime of Saddam Hussein, is a complicated process. It has to be driven by Iraqis, and that includes Iraqis from inside Iraq now – as well as those courageous people in the outside Iraqi opposition who have worked for many, many years to help bring that reality about.

The United States will exercise its responsibilities to help support that process and to help build those institutions.

But we're going to do it in cooperation with the international community and with Iraqis themselves, because it's going to require that kind of cooperation, internationally and among Iraqis themselves to serve the interests of Iraqis and the interest of stability in the region.

The Future of Iraq Project is one step on the road to a new nation. In a series of recent interviews, some of the participants in the project shared their thoughts on the experience.

Their voices are real, diverse, and by no means unanimous. They express skepticism, concern, and contradictions – even as they share fundamental views on the need for freedom and democracy for Iraq. They are, in short, the voice of freedom, the voices of Iraqis who care about the future, and want the opportunity to take control of it once again.

**MUHANNAD ESHAHER,
ARCHITECT AND URBAN
PLANNER**

"I imagine the free Iraqi parliament is going to be the noisiest parliament in the world."

I am part of the Iraqi Forum for Democracy, a board member and founding member. We are dedicated to promoting, by peaceful means, democracy for Iraq. We focus primarily on educating Iraqis that democracy is an alternative.

Up until ten years ago democracy was never an alternative—it was always "are we going to have an Islamic state or a communist state or an Arab nationalist state," just three choices. Somebody has to break this deadlock and introduce a fourth choice, democracy. Nobody went out to talk about democracy, so we decided to create a forum and go forward with the democracy message. We have members worldwide and a lot of members participated in the working group because our objectives are closely tied.

You know, the problem is that anything coming from the U.S. government has to be met with great suspicion. There is a history behind that. Being an Iraqi, my first response was 'Why? Why can't we just go out on our own and do this? Are we going to be coached, told what to say?' Even today there

are members who would never participate in any working group.

The U.S. administration should be the first to realize how people look at their motives. This is not just emotion. If I sit down with an Arab to argue the U.S. case, he wins. He has more ammunition than I do. He has event, after event, after event, even weighed against the examples of Kosovo and Kuwait.

As far as the Democratic Principles Working Group, examining issues like decentralization requires a background in urban planning. A country like Iraq requires a lot of regional and urban planning and certainly the working group touched on federalism, which is one form of decentralization. This is an important issue not only because of the political aspirations of the Kurds and others, but also to address housing and traffic problems in Baghdad and redistribute the wealth. That is were I come in – we need to break this over-centralization of resources.

Iraqis crossing a footbridge over traffic in Baghdad, February 2003. The population of Baghdad has risen to nearly four million. The city has served as the nerve center for Iraq's Ba'athist regime.





There were no sharp differences about principles – rather about methods. Everyone in the room agreed that we need to replace dictatorship with democracy; that we need to have a free parliament, with free and fair elections. There were multiple ideas on how to get from point A to point B.

One result of the working group process was that it helped Iraqis listen to each other. If we don't have a chance to listen to each other, then we only listen to ourselves and our close associates. So when the State Department cleverly picked people from different backgrounds and we sat together, we discovered we have a lot in common. We used to think we had few commonalities. It takes away the fear and that is the number one advantage that will remain with us.

The other thing is that Iraqis were able to come up with a document. It may not be the final word on these issues, but we came up with something real – out of nothing, just using our skills.

I strongly agree that this is the type of process that needs to be repeated inside Iraq. Why? It gives us a chance to shout at each other across the table and at the end of the day sit down together to have our meal and tea. Our disputes over, we had the opportunity to vent all our disagreements

and suspicions among ourselves. That has never taken place because we have a dictatorship.

I imagine the free Iraqi parliament is going to be the noisiest parliament

in the world. You shut a person's mouth for so long, then when he has a chance to speak, he has a lot of things to tell and shout and scream, which I think is necessary.

I like the idea of a three-man council, above partisan politics, to start the dialogue. I'd like to see the groups merit-based. We have so much experience to draw on,



above: Iraqi citizens pull down a statue of Saddam Hussein in Karbala, April 2003.

you don't have to make ethnic representation the number one priority. The kind of diversity we saw around the table in Washington should come naturally.



On transition, I think there were two main ideas. Some favored the opposition heading the transition, with the (opposition) political parties being represented according to certain percentages. Some favored having a group of experts in opposition to Saddam but not representing any political party. Hand them the task of organizing the transition, but then they would still be missing the sovereignty - the final right to take decisions in the name of the people.

From day one until elections, Iraq will be left without a sovereign and there are ideas about how a council can fill this void.

If there are U.S. forces in the country, there must be a U.S. general in the country and the Iraqi people will have to accept this. There ought to be consultation between the sovereign council and the general, but not to take directions from the general.

I want to touch on one more point, the word "colony." In my field, urban planning, "colony"

is a good thing—an extension of the city. You create housing colonies, an industrial colony. It is understood as a positive extension or expansion. This is how the word was

expanded. The Arabic word "isti'mar" comes from the word "imara" building.



used in the 17th century. Now it has such a negative meaning. The minute you hear "this country has been colonized," we start feeling sorry. I don't mind being colonized under the original meaning of the term—to be rebuilt,

above: Political banners for competing political parties in Iraqi Kurdistan, 2001.

**RUBAR SANDI,
CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF
EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF
THE INTERNATIONAL
CORPORATE BANK
BUSINESS GROUP**

"My focus is on how to create jobs – drawing from my experience in developing countries – things such as credit guarantees for women and small businesses, so they can go to the bank and know that a credit-guarantee agency is responsible for the risk"

I've been working in many developing countries, and I've seen the impact of economic prosperity on people, so I always stay focused on what happens "the day after".

If people see that on the day after there is security, there is a relaxation of controls and more freedom, there is clean water, electricity and health and education for their kids – then people will be happy and say we can see the difference in our lives.

So I have tried to come up with a road map to reform and rebuild Iraq economically, socially, and politically. I look at it both ways, in terms of the national security of this country – I'm an American, my kids were born here -- and I also look to the welfare of the Iraqi people.

That, to me, is a winning formula. Every road has to be a two-way street: you need to be able to go down the road and come back.

In my travels, people ask me, what about the future and I say, yes, I absolutely support President Bush because he is not going to attack Iraq but rather liberate Iraq. He won't start a war, he will end a war that has been going on for 20 years. For the past 20 years there has been nothing but war and misery. So we want to stop this war. Freedom doesn't come cheap. Right now, people are dying in Iraq every day.

As for myself, I haven't known their kind of suffering, and I was a casualty of war. I participated in two wars against Saddam Hussein, 1974 and 1991. But I still would not give myself the authority to go and manage Iraq. I will give myself the authority to contribute and help Iraq, but not decide for Iraq.

I do know about the Iraqi mentality, and the biggest challenge is dealing with the psychology of terror. Thirty-four years under a dictatorship. The other challenge is that Iraqis are now accustomed to the "luxury" of the oil-for-food program, and they are used to having things delivered to them. I talk to people about this, and I can see the gap in perception. At

An Iraqi girl covers her head from the heat at a local Baghdad market, September 2002.





this point, 70 percent of the population knows only one leader, Saddam Hussein. Imagine that. They are Saddam's generation. So it will take time, a lot of time and patience to heal.

My focus is on how to create jobs - drawing from my experience in developing countries - things such as credit guarantees for women and small businesses, so they can go to the bank and know that a credit-guarantee agency is responsible for the risk. That is the way you can put people into businesses and increase capital.

There was a study in Egypt showing that the assets of the poor exceeded by 55 times all the investment and financing in the country, including the Suez Canal and the Aswan Dam. The poor, in other words, have the highest repayment of debt. So with this bottom-up approach, we can bring small or "micro" lending to small business, and make that the backbone of the economy. At the same time, we build the proper institutions - banking, law, good governance, protection for stockholders. Then down the road we'll be able to start privatizing some of the industry, which would help increase capital and jobs.

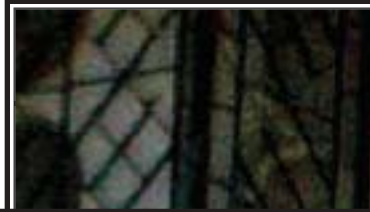
I have encouraged Japanese and U.S. companies to invest in Iraq, in manufacturing, high tech and low tech, because that will create

large numbers of jobs – just as happened when Japan invested in Korea in the 1960s.

I believe that Iraq has many advantages. Oil is one, but with oil, if you increase production, the price drops. And now, you need \$30 to \$40 billion of investment in infrastructure in the next eight to ten years. So, another \$40 billion in debts. But Iraq has the human resources – one of the best-trained and educated workforces.

There are other assets, tourism and the services industry. The services industry is about 75 percent of the economy of any country. Iraq has great cultural and tourist assets – Islamic and Christian – all over Iraq, along with some of the oldest historical sites in the world.

So we are in the process of developing what we call the Phoenix Plan, tailored for Iraq, named for the mythical Arabian bird which came back from the ashes. And in the plan, we have the credit-guarantee facility, the Iraqi Development and Reconstruction Bank, the insurance-guarantee program. Stability, rule of law, good investment laws, and an environment that would encourage investment. It is a ten-year plan. The Iraqi Development Bank is based on something done in other countries on a smaller scale.



Children working alongside men in a Baghdad shoe shop, December 1998. By law, Iraqi children should attend school until age 15 but those laws have not been enforced because of Iraq's blighted economy.



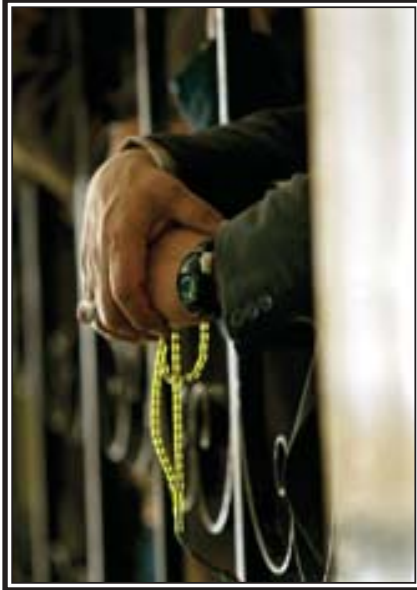
Workers at the Dura oil refinery outside Baghdad, February 2003. Iraq's estimated oil reserves are second only to Saudi Arabia's reserves. Free Iraqi experts are examining ways to upgrade the industry's aging infrastructure while also diversifying Iraq's economy.





An Iraqi porter carries sacks of wheat purchased in Turkey for sale in Baghdad, July 2001.

Credit guarantees tie it all together. You don't need large amounts of cash. Less risk, less chance of failure. What I see is that the business people have the technical



expertise but don't have experience in managing money. Banks don't have the technical expertise but know about money and credit. So we really need to marry the two together and increase the prospects for success.

One thing I say is, don't fight the informal markets, but legitimize them by giving them tax incentives, because you want their entrepreneurial spirit. Establish a people's entrepreneurial association. Bring in the informal markets – after all, they've learned how to survive and flourish under Saddam. We can implement a lot of these

ideas in Iraq. Bring women into the economy with micro-lending, as low as \$500 for a couple of sewing machines, for example.

Every Iraqi should have a right to access a credit facility and grants from government. Then you will encourage these small businesses and entrepreneurs – textiles, dry cleaning, small construction, spare-parts manufacturing. Government should provide good policies and a safe environment for the private sector and encourage foreign private investment

– that's the role for government.

Iraq is a devastated country, so it's going to take time. We have to be realistic about these things. I am a businessman, and businessmen cannot be dreamers. My father used to say, "The greatest risk in business is not to take a calculated risk."

above: A buyer holds his prayer beads at the Baghdad Stock Exchange, February 2003.

MOHAMMED AL FAOUR, FORMER IRAQI MILITARY OFFICER

"The Iraqi soldier and officer needs to know what democracy is, how to defend freedom, the constitution – how to accept civilian leadership."

I was a major in the Iraqi Special Forces until 1991 when I defected. I also worked with Iraqi military intelligence during the Gulf War, in a unit called the "Triple Nine Unit," a deep reconnaissance unit. I defected in 1991 and went to work with Amnesty International and the media.

I am from Baghdad. My father was also a deputy prime minister and minister of interior. He was one of the participants in the 1958 revolution.

I came out of the military academy tradition. I completed my studies in the United Kingdom and U.S., returned to Baghdad and enrolled in the military academy. I graduated as a second lieutenant and carried on my career until I reached the rank of major. By then we reached the point where we were not fighting for our country or for the military ethics, but rather for just one person.

I was very young at that time and I thought, "Now you're a major, maybe you'll be a general and then you'll be involved on a much bigger scale

in the kinds of human-rights violations that were happening at that time in northern and southern Iraq." One day I sat with my wife, and we weighed our lives as refugees



against my future as one of Saddam's generals and we decided to become refugees – and I'm proud of it.

I am part of the Iraqi National Movement. It was established just after September 11 by civilians and military officers. We

represented many factions, both of the Kurdish parties, the Turkmen and Assyrians, and also the Free Officers Movement and several civilians ones, as well as several

structure; civil-military relations and education for defense; defense policy in a regional context; and demobilization.

I believe the military should have a major role

smuggling, and in helping in national disasters like floods and earthquakes. The army can participate in major agricultural and construction projects, like a corps of engineers.

This needs time and effort and money. The Iraqi army needs education – the chance to get out and see the world. It needs a big effort.

Our aim is to change the Iraqi army into a professional army – no more conscripts; we want it to become an army for career soldiers. The Iraqi soldier and officer needs to know what democracy is, how to defend freedom and the constitution – how to accept a civilian leadership. But this needs a lot of effort and a complete reassessment of the role the army has played over the past 30 years.

Iraqi officers stand at attention in front of the Unknown Soldier



individuals who are now among the 65-member committee. That is the leadership committee developed after the December 2002, London meeting of opposition groups.

During our working group, we break into six or seven subgroups to report on specific subjects like the mission of the military in post-Saddam Iraq; force, mission and

in stabilizing the new Iraq and defending the new civil government and its constitution. I think the military, after education, can play a big role in peacekeeping missions, in fighting terrorism and drug

**AHAM ALSAMMARAE,
OWNER OF AN ELECTRICAL
ENGINEERING CONSULTING
FIRM WITH CLIENTS IN
CANADA AND
THE MIDWESTERN AND
NORTHEASTERN
UNITED STATES**

“When you say ‘de-Ba’athification,’ some Iraqis believed what you meant was that you were going to kill all Ba’athis – when what we were really talking about was changing the education, conditioning, and institutions that underlie the current structure in Iraq. So it is good to talk about these things.”

I am one of the 65 Iraqi opposition figures elected in London. I believe I was identified for the working groups because I was Iraqi, in opposition, with technical expertise. They really sought out expertise.

The Democratic Principles working group is 34 people representing almost all the Iraqi opposition groups. We have differences. Our views span from the far left to the far right, from the Islamists to the Kurdish parties, the nationalists to the independents.

Everyone approached “democracy” from a different angle but we built a consensus around the idea that there is one democracy. People have to elect their representatives in all areas. They have to elect a president, and

there should be separation of powers among the branches of government.

We talked about all that and then we talked about whether Iraq should be secular or

We also talked about federalism, decentralization, de-Ba'athification. There was a lot of discussion on this issue because some of the terminologies used

We were discussing the welfare of the people of Iraq and how to ensure democracy and protect the rights of individuals within our diverse society.

As individuals, we have

opinions, but we do agree on some basic ideas. We agree that Iraq should remain united, that it should be democratic in the future, secular, and that major changes, such as a federal structure of government – must be through referendums and elections.

For example, our work on a constitution – who are

we to say our thinking represents the Iraqi people if no one elected us? We are trying to offer something for Iraqis to build on. They will revise, change and send their best proposals forward.

**ILHAM AL-SARRAF,
A CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST,
SPECIALIST IN POST-
TRAUMATIC STRESS
DISORDERS**

“The working group gave me camaraderie with the Iraqi people and this empowered me to speak the truth about what I witnessed in Iraq. I had never spoken about it until now.”

I have been involved as an Iraqi-American since the Gulf War in 1990. Then I got involved with American Friends Services and the American Red Cross. My specialty is trauma and post-traumatic stress disorders. I am with the aviation disaster team of the Red Cross. I also began to travel with Doctors for Social Responsibility and I traveled to Iraq three times with them.

In Baghdad, I went from hospitals, to clinics and to schools to distribute books, medicine, and whatever we brought. I also gave lectures at Saddam's Hospital for acute stress disorder and post-traumatic stress needs.

In 1999, I was giving the lecture and, imagine, the doctors were crying. I was wondering why they were crying and they explained, “Every symptom you've described applies to us.” I was devastated—can you imagine a physician being traumatized and trying to treat traumatized people?

When tensions with



Islamic. These were very tough discussions but we reached a point of agreement, that we are secular but have accepted a lot of Islamic mores, which would not just be dropped after hundreds of years. We tried to arrive at a compromise on this question.

above: Iraqis in Baghdad listening to the radio, July 2002.

gave a negative, wrong impression. When you say “de-Ba'athification,” some Iraqis believed you meant that you were going to kill all Ba'athis – when what we were really talking about was changing the education, conditioning, and institutions that underlie the current structure in Iraq. So it is good to talk about these things.

All participants were free to say whatever they wanted; they had to convince others – move opinion by their arguments. But remember, we're not talking about the detailed stipulations of something like a new constitution.

Iraq rose again, a couple of people from the State Department called me. I was naturally very suspicious. I hesitated until I spoke with a respected friend, who

said, “No, Ilham, you have to get involved. These are good people who are working for our people.” So that’s how I really got involved.

It was interesting that

and hope. I threw myself into the work, knowing that it was for people who do not have a chance – between wars and sanctions.

In the first session, after the four hours of discussion, I thought I’d go crazy with so many opinions. You put two Iraqis in one room and you get 12,000 opinions! But I knew to let the process go forward because we had to learn to trust each other. By the afternoon it was really nice because we moved into structure: what we needed to do and, how we’re going to do it. It went well. The second meeting of the working group was even more productive.

I must explain something about the fear Iraqis feel. I have been in the United States for almost 40 years, but until I met within the working group and heard them criticize Saddam out loud, I had not given myself the permission to say, “He is an atrocious dictator. He is the worst.”

After the Gulf War, it was even worse because we kept hearing that Saddam was sending spies over here. We were terrified that he could hurt our families. But now, I have to do what I have to do.

To me, the Future of Iraq Project working

groups did two things. They established hope and a means of speaking for people who are powerless. And those who are speaking have power and have ability. That’s beautiful.

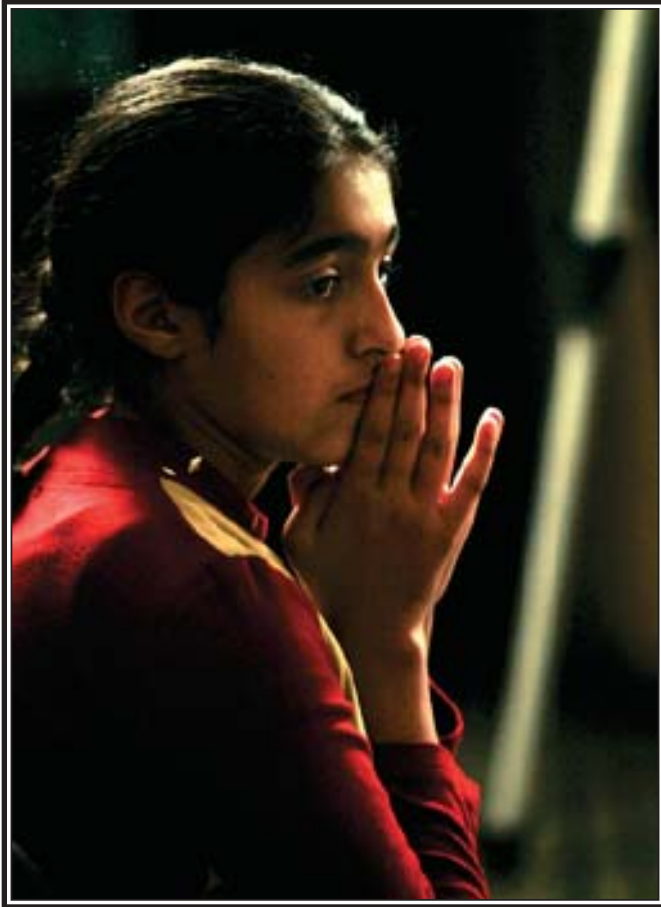
Second, the working group gave me camaraderie with the Iraqi people and this empowered me to speak the truth about what I witnessed in Iraq. I had never spoken about it until now.

It made me very proud that there are so many bright, skilled Iraqis from every profession who have made it to this country. So we have moved well beyond our suspicions. We were torn—war, no war—but I feel the power is with us.

Some say this type of process will need to be repeated inside Iraq, throughout society. I can tell you how I view this on several different levels. Based on the knowledge I’ve gained in my specialty – I do de-briefing for traumatized victims of aviation and other disasters. At the first [post-conflict] meeting, people will be stunned. They will huddle among their family and they will not come out on to the street.

Those who have lost their home or a loved one – someone will emerge seeking help. The NGO’s are going to have to be there to offer a place — a clinic, a shelter — for these people to huddle.

Then later it will



An Iraqi high school student listens to a video conference exchange between Iraqi students in Baghdad and American students from Bloomfield, Connecticut, March 2003.

that distrust among us was evident. Look, the first thing that comes to our minds is, “Who among us is going to tell Saddam about this, and then is my whole family is going to be wiped off the face of the earth?” But once we saw we were operating in a democratic system, then the suspicions began to subside and it was replaced with optimism

be family-to-family, neighbor-to-neighbor communication, "Is everything okay? Did anything happen to you? Is Saddam really gone? How many people are lost?"

They will go through shock and disbelief. Then they will question the current reality and then they will go through the anger stage, "How could he have done this to us? Bring these sanctions on us? Bring this devastation?"

And anger does transform into depression. It is at that point that we try and intervene to give people the opportunity to tell their story. "What happened to you?" We call this debriefing, pull people aside, huddle them in a family and talk about the pain.

This is what we did in South Africa. I was part of the Truth and Reconciliation effort, traveling as a "People-to-People Ambassador." We were about 74 professionals from 11 countries. We arrived when people were in between this anger and depression stage, and we asked, "What did you smell? What did you see? What did you feel? What did you do?" It seems simplistic, this effort, but it helps a lot. Only after this stage can you go in and set up groups focused on action.

**AZZAM ALWASH,
AN ENGINEER AND
ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVIST
WHO HAS STUDIED AND
WRITTEN ABOUT THE
MARSHES OF SOUTHERN
IRAQ**

"Show pictures of what happened to the marshes and you have a convert to the Eden Again project."

I have been active in advocating regime change and a change in U.S. policy toward Saddam for the past 10 to 20 years. I have been active with the Iraq Foundation, and in that capacity, I have interacted with the State Department.

I have seen how lobbying can change, or at least influence, American policy - and from that perspective, I am very much aware of the effectiveness of the Iraqi-American community in working to move policy.

By 1997-98, we became convinced that sanctions were helping Saddam become stronger and gain more control of the Iraqi people with food and medicine. So, we were advocating a change in policy, a more forceful engagement. A continuation of the sanctions was not a policy that we would advocate.

With the Future of Iraq Project, the State Department contacted us because we had access to people who were technocrats as well as

people who belonged to the Iraq Forum for Democracy and we were able to join a number of the working groups.

Because of the fact that I am a civil engineer, and with my fascination with the southern marshes, I took on the marshes project that we called Eden Again.

The marshes are important because if they can be rejuvenated, it would be tangible proof - for all of Iraq - of how we can improve life in there.

I have very vivid memories of the marshes from puttering around in a boat with my father, who was an irrigation engineer. I remember the waters and threading through the reed beds.

Now, using satellite photos, we've been trying to raise awareness about the devastation of the marshes by Saddam and the work of the Eden Again project through the Iraq Foundation.

At the time we started, I didn't have a clue about the kind of attention this

issue was going to get - the state of the marshes was really a private passion of mine. Now I'm getting calls from places like Sweden and Syria and Australia, asking how they



This was the vibrant life of the Iraqi marshlands in 1974. In 1994, 60 percent of the wetlands were destroyed. In 2001 commercial satellite imagery showed that only 10 to 14 percent of Iraq's southern marshlands remain.

can help. It's kind of nice. It's touched a nerve. It's not like the issue of war. It's something no one can disagree with. Show pictures of what happened to the marshes and you

have a convert to the Eden Again project.

The destruction of the marshes is tangible proof of the extent of the effort to punish the opposition – I mean it took a Herculean

effort to divert the waters away from the marshes. Right in the middle of sanctions – to spend that kind of money to destroy the area of the marshes. It's incredible, mind-

boggling.

Our biggest challenge is to move from the theoretical to the technocratic. We have a great lack of information, a lack of “clarity of data.”



Data is a state secret in Iraq and releasing it is punishable by death, just like anything else.

We identified areas where data is collected. So, if there was a conflict, we would know where to go to secure that data, and use it for planning the future of the region.

We have remote sensing, space images, and anecdotal evidence from refugees. But we also have a brain trust, institutional memory about water flows, which can be exploited very efficiently in our culture. But that historical memory stops around 1990-91. We're left with the memories of those like my father and others who had been involved in building the systems and who had emigrated from Iraq.

The other major issue in Iraq is the lack of an environmental ethos. The Tigris and Euphrates rivers have been used as open sewers since - forever. But especially in the 1970s and 80s, the military-industrial revolution meant that all the waste from plants and factories of weapons of mass destruction was just dumped into the rivers.

And, in my opinion, that is why you get these cancer clusters. I don't have direct data - but in the north the cancer rates are compatible with normal rates for the

region. But when you get to Baghdad, the cancer rate increases, and when you get to Basra, the rate is twofold what the norm is. Well, if you plot the pollutants from north to south, they obviously increase and the waters are super-polluted by the time it enters the area around Basra.

It has nothing to do with depleted uranium. Depleted uranium is an easy thing to scare people with. But most of those shells were fired in Kuwait, so why isn't Kuwait suffering from higher cancer rates? What happened with industrial pollution has been ongoing for 20 years. In the 80s, we had the marshes to act as a purifying agent for the water, but they are gone now.

HATEM MUKHLIS, PHYSICIAN AND CO- FOUNDER OF THE IRAQ NATIONAL MOVEMENT

"We need to find a system that works for Iraq - a system that treats everyone equally, under one law, where there is no taking advantage of anybody, and where amendments can be made according to what people want. "

The value of the working group was bringing Iraqis together to sit at the same table and exchange ideas in a civil manner. We all had different ideas and came from different backgrounds, and we found that we could agree on principles of democracy and federalism, but not upon specific programs at this stage.

The two main issues were federalism and setting up a transitional government. With regard to federalism, the Kurds felt strongly about the need to have a federal system since Iraq is roughly 75 percent Arab and 25 percent Kurdish, so they are a minority, and could be "voted out" in the name of democracy.

We need to reach a fair agreement, one that is a "win-win" agreement reached through negotiation. But there are many kinds of federalism. There is the U.S. kind, German, Swiss - different types of federalism. What works for America may or

may not be the best kind of federalism for Iraq.

We need to find a system that works for Iraq - a system that treats everyone equally, under one law, where there is no taking advantage of anybody, and where amendments can be made according to what people want.

We need to educate Iraqis about federalism and how it works. We were able to agree on the principle of federalism, if not how it actually might work. We agreed to postpone the details until later. The Kurds were skeptical, so you need to go in with good will. You have the problem of Kurds who once lived in Baghdad and were not allowed to live there anymore. So if we decide on a federalism that is ethnically delineated, they would not be allowed to move back. By the same token, if I wanted to retire to the mountain areas, which I love, I couldn't live there because it would be part of Iraqi Kurdistan.

So what are we going to do in places like Kirkuk? There are people who want to go back to their homes. That land has been taken from them and given to people from other parts of Iraq. So we have to find a solution that is acceptable to both, so that both sides do not

feel they were robbed of their rights. But that is not going to be decided by the Iraqi working groups now, but it will have to be decided with a vote.

On how to handle the transitional period, I gave my ideas and I was hoping that they would be integrated into the final report, but they were not, so there are still major differences. So I put forward my ideas separately. The major issues were, number one, de-Ba'athification. We have to have some kind of Truth and Reconciliation process that would absolve them and reintegrate these Ba'athists into society, because, after all, many of them have a lot to contribute to the rebuilding of Iraq. A lot of them are good people and a lot of them have suffered under Saddam. We have to be together, we have to rebuild together.

The next part is the role of the military in the post-Saddam era. There are many different views, among them the idea that the army has no role at all – and frankly that view kind of bothers me a lot. I want to save lives on both sides. I care about my people. I am a doctor by profession. That is my role in life, to save lives. How are we going to save lives if we say to well-trained military people, “We are going to

try all of you.” What’s going to happen? They will fight and there will be more death and havoc and suffering.

So we have to give the army its prestige back. It has to be educated and well equipped, modernized, and given the role of protecting the constitution and the country – not the regime. There are thousands and thousands of people whose only job is the army and they have to be provided for. What do you do with them? You don’t throw them on the streets. You keep them and integrate them into society.

With regard to the Iraqi opposition, my view is that you can’t rely 100 percent on the exile Iraqis – you have to include people inside the country who have suffered persecution and been under the gun for so long. These people want and deserve to feel reborn again. Because we have been so lucky on the outside, enjoying democracy. We have had a choice. They haven’t had such choices.

How should transition work? First, there should be a period of martial law to establish peace and stability. As soon as that

is done, the rule should be given to an Iraqi civilian authority, and that way, the government will be one of technocrats, with deputies from different factions and ethnic groups.

Iraqis will have to see changes and benefits right off. They need to feel the change in health, work, the freedom to speak and move – and they will accept democracy.

Forget about politics. Think about the Iraqi people, those are the guys who are under the gun, who are being treated like animals, who are being rounded up by Saddam. Iraqis are refugees, they are dying on the high seas, they have no money, no prospects for education, I could go on and on. They have suffered, so think of change from a humanitarian point of view.

There are 25 million people who deserve to be helped who are being tortured. It is unbelievable what is happening to them. They deserve to be helped. The only thing Saddam cares about is Saddam.

After the conference in London, I was one of the 65 involved in the continuation of the planning. I would like to be part of delegations that go to the European countries and give them the Iraqi view. I’m involved in rallies, reaching out to the Iraqi people inside and telling them that Saddam is the

enemy, not anyone on the outside.

I, for one, have a lot of projects in mind. I want to work on reforming the health system and agriculture. Another dream I have is to build a monument to the people who have died under Saddam – a monument with flowers and a garden that people could come to and remember what happened to them under Saddam

And I would like to write a book about my experiences, to collect many of these memories. So I have a lot of ideas in mind, and I hope God will give the strength to complete some of them.

**TANYA GILLY,
MEMBER OF THE FREE
MEDIA WORKING GROUP**

“In Iraqi Kurdistan... I was very impressed by the freedom that people have to express their views and their feelings. In Sulaymaniyah, there is a political satire magazine and all the ministers watch what they are doing during the week because they don’t want to be on the cover of the next issue. It’s great. It has created a kind of transparency that was never there before.”

I am a Kurd from the city of Kirkuk. I left the Middle East at age seven. My parents were sought by Saddam Hussein’s regime. There were two assassination attempts on my father’s life, so we fled to the West.

After moving to the Washington area, I began working with the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), in the public relations office here. Through them, I had a chance to meet some of the working group organizers and then, through the PUK, I was actually nominated to attend these working groups.

The first was the Anti-corruption group. There were lots of wonderful people in this group. We had a wide spectrum of Iraqis. There were lawyers, judges, former

judges, writers, and engineers. It was very well representative of Iraqi society. The actual corruption issue—well, in the Middle East baksheesh (petty bribes) basically

With the control he has had over the Iraqi economy—nearly 30 years now—he has really used that to his advantage. If you look at the ministry posts and

These were the ones we felt would have to be dealt with once Saddam is gone, because we hope the economic situation will improve rapidly and the modest civil servants



gets you everything you want. Saddam, unfortunately, has taken it to another level and I think this is something we are going to have a hard time reversing.

Corruption was a tool that Saddam used to keep control over the people. He created so much bureaucracy that people had to resort to bribes to get their paperwork done or even to get a decent job.

higher governmental posts, relatives of Saddam Hussein fill them all. So the corruption began at the top and then trickled down to the general population.

So in the working group, we saw corruption as something that, unfortunately, has been embedded in our society by Saddam. It’s not the common worker at the passport office who was taking the baksheesh to get your passport ready on time for you that seriously concerned us.

We focused on the top – officials taking protection money or giving away important jobs for a price.

would not really need to rely on the baksheesh in order to survive.

The working group came to the conclusion that the regime’s major institutional corruption was the root cause of all the types of corruption that exist, even in the private sector where people sought government contracts. If the institutions change,

above: Students read a local newspaper at a coffee shop on the Sulaymaniyah University campus, February 2003.

the effects will be felt throughout society.

We worked in a very open fashion. We started out by introducing ourselves; giving a little information about our professional background and shared whatever ideas we had about possible directions that the working group might take.

The first hours were a real brainstorming session. We talked about different forms of corruption, deciding on a basic definition of corruption and what kinds of corruption should be dealt with right away.

We divided into two subgroups: law, methods and practices; and media and awareness. We asked ourselves what would be our message to the Iraqi people once Saddam was gone. We talked not only about public awareness but also about education through the schools. Basically, redeveloping the ethics in Iraqi society that Saddam has killed.

I was back about a year ago, traveling in Iraqi Kurdistan. Unfortunately, I could not go to Kirkuk which is still under Saddam's control.

The visit was very heart-warming. I was very impressed by the freedom that people have to express their views and their feelings. Officials were put on the spot, you know. If they embezzled money, they were fired for it. And people weren't

afraid to say, "I know what my rights are and I don't need to pay you any money for you to do your job."

This was just wonderful for me to see. In Sulaymaniyah, there is a political satire magazine and all the ministers watch what they are doing during the week because they don't want to be on the cover of the next issue. It's great. It has created a kind of transparency that was never there before. In Iraq, you can never say anything about any official, just say, "Yes, sir," and walk on.

**JOHN KANNO,
AN ELECTRICAL ENGINEER
WHO IS ACTIVE IN THE
ASSYRIAN CULTURAL
COMMUNITY IN THE
UNITED STATES**

"With all the different personalities, it was great. Someone would get excited about an idea, start talking fast in English or in Arabic – and I'd say, 'Slow down please.' But the different perspectives were exciting to me."

I've been thinking about writing a book about the Future of Iraq Project, or at least my experience. People who don't know, people who are going out in the street and protesting, they are not privileged to the information that we were sharing with each other through these Iraq meetings. I'm not saying we were doing anything top secret or anything, but they are not focusing on what Iraqis have to say.

I would like it understood we are not warmongers. There is nothing more that we would like than to see a peaceful resolution to all this, but realistically, we know that's not going to happen because we know the kind of man Saddam is.

Peaceful resolution depends on Saddam and he's not packing his bags. He is already saying he is going to unleash the chemicals, and release the gasses and blow up the oil wells. Why is he

doing this? If he loves his country that much, why doesn't he just leave? Because he loves power more than he loves his country.

The Assyrian National Congress in Modesto, California, submitted my name for the Future of Iraq Project because of my work with our television station. I came to America in 1981 and I've worked with the Assyrian National Congress for the past 17 years.

My parents emigrated from Iraq in 1957. Although I have never seen my ancestral homeland, I will see it soon. England has given me education; the U.S. has given me experience. So why don't I use this to help the people in the country that I have ties to? I will go back.

What the news media outlets are not showing is that there is a complete plan (developed by the working groups) that will take care of Iraq for "the day after." There is a constitution that is being written. There are over 600-pages dealing with a judicial system for Iraq. There is a plan for the electricity sector, the communications sector, and the economy. There

are so many issues that are being addressed but no one's reporting them. It's unfortunate, but a million people marching all over the world makes better news.

that we got from the United Nations reports. Some of the participants brought current, first-hand information and we made a lot of educated guesses. What we came up with is

that California has 43,000 megawatts and it's about the same size as Iraq.

So the state of the electrical grid is pretty bad. A lot of the rebuilding that's going

preserved our language and culture. We still speak it in our home. We are probably 250,000 Assyrians in America. In Iraq, we number a million to 1.5 million, and we are greatly concerned about the safety of every ethnic minority inside Iraq.



Iraqi students study for their end of year exams by oil light due to the lack of power in Baghdad, May 1999.

There were two electrical engineers in our Economy and Infrastructure group. We were so diverse. With all the different personalities, it was great. Someone would get excited about an idea, start talking fast in English or in Arabic – and I'd say, "Slow down please." But the different perspectives were exciting to me.

I think once the regime changes, much of the information that emerged in our working groups will be important. There was a lot of information

a two-year and a five-year plan.

In a nutshell, a two-year plan would bring the country from the 4,500 megawatts of uninterrupted electricity, back up to the 10,000 megawatts they had before the Gulf War. The other plan is to increase that to 15,000 megawatts within five years. Now, you've got to understand

to be done will be guaranteed by oil revenue. That is not to say that it's guaranteed by oil, but rather by the oil that's in the ground – a kind of reconstruction bond. We've talked about the tax system—that's also part of our group. At this point, the electrical plan has been completed and we are waiting, basically, for the day after.

In the state of California there are some 50,000 Assyrians. In Chicago, the largest community, there are about 100,000. We are Christians. We've

HAMID ALI ALKIFA'Y,
A WRITER AND JOURNALIST
BASED IN LONDON

"There is a sense of reconciliation among Iraqis. We are sick of killing and destruction and dictatorship. People really want to get rid of the dictatorship and establish democracy."

I am an Iraqi writer and journalist who has been living in exile for the last 22 years in London. I write for all sorts of papers—*The Independent*, *Open Democracy*, *Al-Hayat*, *Al-Zaman*, *Al-Nour*—as well as for magazines and Internet sites.

I was delighted to be invited to be part of the Free Media Working Group. It is an important topic and a special area of interest to me. I was glad to participate in the discussions, and I only hope my contribution was worth the effort to invite me.

We discussed how Iraqi media institutions should function in the future, after the fall of Saddam Hussein. We discussed how to deal with present Iraqi institutions.

My position was that we should not sack everyone because people were forced to do what they did. But, obviously, we must remove those regime people in positions of influence. And all media institutions that were founded by Saddam and

his son Uday must be closed immediately. If these institutions are to be reinstated, they must be under new names and new management.

Many thought the Ministry of Information should be abolished. My view was that that wasn't the real issue, but rather, it was what should the role of a ministry of information be. After all, some free democratic countries have ministries of information. For example, here in Britain we have a Ministry of Media, Culture and Sport, but that doesn't mean daily interference in the running of the media.

So my idea was that we should keep the Ministry in place, but change the rules so that Iraq's media becomes free. Maybe in five years or so we can do away with it. I'd love to see that.

There is a sense of reconciliation among Iraqis. We are sick of killing and destruction and dictatorship. People really want to get rid of the dictatorship and establish democracy and tolerance. I see this everywhere and certainly among our working group, which is made of made up of Shi'as, Kurds, Sunnis, and others.

I think that, in the short term, much depends on what will happen. Is there going to be direct military rule or will the opposition form a new government? If there is direct military

Saddam Hussein.

I think that, in the long run, the whole area will benefit from this change. Democracy will benefit everyone. Human rights will benefit all countries



rule, then people in the region will say, "What have you achieved, you Iraqis? Instead of having a national government, you have an occupation!" Obviously they don't know that most Iraqis really prefer an occupation to

Iraqi men in a Baghdad tea room, January 2003.

in the region. Maybe some regimes will be threatened, but I think – if they are intelligent – they will benefit from the mood for change and introduce real reform, introduce democratic change – and save their regimes.

I believe change in Iraq will be a change for the best. Iraqis, to start with, will benefit immediately. But the rest of the area, indeed, will benefit because democratic change will engulf the whole area. This can only be good for the people.

I cannot emphasize enough the need for more Iraqis to explain to the Muslims of the region that change is not against Islam. This change is not against Arabs, it is not against Iraqis, and it is not for oil. It is for human rights, it is for democracy. They don't understand that it is now in the interest of the United States to promote democratic changes because it is the dictatorships and despotic regimes that have caused all this trouble for the United States.

We broke down into four committees, one on education and training for journalists. I was on that one. And another for the reconstruction of the media institutions, and I'm participating in that one as well. We have another for writing a code of ethics for journalists, and then a fourth group related to the protection of journalists in Iraq.

**MAHMOUD THAMER,
PHYSICIAN AND PUBLIC
HEALTH EXPERT WHO HAS
TAUGHT MEDICINE IN IRAQ
AS WELL AS IN THE UNITED
STATES**

"I think that public health education and public health research — with an emphasis on handling the endemic health problems in Iraq such as bilharzias, tuberculosis, and maternal-child care, including immunizations — should probably be strengthened."

I was born in Iraq, I received my medical degree in the United States, and taught medicine for nine years at the University of Baghdad. After the trials and tribulations that marked the rise of the Ba'ath Party, I had to leave the country, but I still have my friends and family in Baghdad.

I visited Iraq periodically until about 1979. There was a relative openness then to people who were not members of the party so I was invited to give lectures and participate in various professional conferences. Since

Saddam took over completely as president, I have been invited a number of times but choose not to attend.

I am not a member of any political party. I am independent. I think that most of the people in our public health working group are independent. My medical specialty is cardiology.

I was very glad that these groups have been initiated. I think it was an important step but I hope there will be many other steps after this. I hope that we can return to a very hopeful outlook. Iraq is blessed with abundant resources, a cradle of many civilizations. It was very gratifying in the early 1970s to see that the health field was progressing so rapidly. Our medical graduates were excellent and we offered our own post-graduate training.

With the politicization of everything by the current regime, you have a totally different picture. Medical students were no longer selected on ability. Higher-grade staff appeared to be in place to write reports on others. People began to disappear – this is the legacy of the regime.

I think that public health education and public health research—with an emphasis on handling the endemic health problems in Iraq such as bilharzias,

tuberculosis, and maternal-child care, including immunizations — should probably be strengthened.

When I was in Iraq, we did a study of the admissions and we were



UNICEF and Iraqi agencies initiated a five-day polio campaign beginning February



23, 2003, intended to vaccinate a quarter of a million Iraqi children against polio. Free Iraqi experts place a high priority on assessing and addressing Iraq's public health needs.

astounded to find over half the admissions were related to cardiovascular problems, many of which were tied to rheumatic fever and diabetes.

I have no doubt that

the health care system has deteriorated in recent years. What happened is this: more and more money was spent on armaments and wars so there was much less

money to spend on the health sector. Then you had excellent people on the faculties who were dismissed because of their political "infidelities" to the regime. And then

you had decisions made for political judgments, not because of medical advantages.

The effects of sanctions were certainly devastating for the people and they



were not successful in loosening the regime's grip on government.

But we have to hope. I believe that, like all terrible situations that are abnormal, anomalous, they are not going to last. But I hope that we will learn the lessons, so that the situation will not reoccur.

**LAITH KUBBA,
SENIOR PROGRAM
OFFICER FOR THE
MIDDLE EAST AND
NORTH AFRICA AT THE
NATIONAL ENDOWMENT
FOR DEMOCRACY,
A NON-PARTISAN
ORGANIZATION DEDICATED
TO STRENGTHENING
DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS
WORLDWIDE**

"The interesting thing is that the way the working groups were convened and facilitated, they were not meant to illicit a firm position or blueprint, but rather to identify what the issues are and highlight some of the options. In that respect, their conclusions provide a useful starting document for the interim administration that will move ahead with these responsibilities."

The Future of Iraq Project is, without doubt, an effort that is better late than never. It should have been started by Iraqis much earlier. Still, the fact that the State Department took the initiative and convened those meetings and drew together Iraqis who did not know each other prior to those meetings, that was a very good step.

It was a step in the right direction, absolutely

necessary. What the State Department did was an initial mapping out of what issues lay ahead and how Iraqis from different perspectives look at the same issues, whether the issues are local government, civil society, transition, etc.

Is this sufficient, is this ideal? No. I think ideally this effort should have been done by Iraqis. It should have been done by Iraqis over the years. The fact that it has been started by this State Department initiative also need not mean that it should remain with the State Department.

I think what they did, quite rightly, was to have a clear start date and end date to this process, having mapped out the issues, brought the participants together and introduced them.

As far as I understand now, many of those people have taken upon themselves some of these initiatives and given it a spin and a new lease of life. That includes the group I am affiliated with, the Iraq National Group, and now I understand many of the participants are really involved in planning for post-Saddam Iraq. In this respect, the Future of Iraq Project has been extremely useful.

The interesting thing is that the way the working groups were convened and facilitated. They were not meant to elicit a firm position or blueprint, but rather to identify what the

issues are and highlight some of the options.

In that respect, their conclusions provide a useful starting document for the interim administration that will move ahead with



these responsibilities. It will have a kind of map, highlighting the various options and, perhaps, the various obstacles can help practitioners and planners

as they move ahead.

Certainly the interim administration cannot rely solely on the conclusions reached in the working group. I really believe they need to take



the report and call upon other experts to elaborate on a particular option, or focus on one problem that has been identified without clear solutions. Those sorts of post-working groups activities need to take place, and I believe they are taking place.

A vendor waves as he passes a mural in Sulaymaniyah, a city in Iraqi Kurdistan that has been under the protection of US-led air patrols for over a decade.

WE IN THE WORLD COMMUNITY DESIRE TO HELP IRAQIS MOVE THEIR COUNTRY TOWARD DEMOCRACY AND PROSPERITY. WE WANT TO HELP THE IRAQI PEOPLE ESTABLISH A GOVERNMENT THAT ACCEPTS PRINCIPLES OF JUSTICE, OBSERVES THE RULE OF LAW AND RESPECTS THE RIGHTS OF ALL CITIZENS. IN SHORT, WE WANT TO SEE AN IRAQ WHERE PEOPLE CAN LOOK TO THE FUTURE WITH HOPE.

**SECRETARY OF STATE
COLIN POWELL**



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