

Allies Joint Research Project to Jordan Issues

Recommendations

The Joint Research Project is a program of the Alliance Linking Leaders in Education and the Services (ALLIES). ALLIES is an undergraduate led initiative at the Institute for Global Leadership that creates a bridge for shared understanding between future civilian and military leaders.

The Joint Research Project (JRP) is an annual program that will bring together future civilian and military leaders from the United States in a semester-long venture targeted at two specific needs:

- The need for a new, integrated style of education for future military and civilian leaders, in which both sides are exposed to all perspectives of conflict management and engage with all dimensions of human security.
- The need for future military and civilian leaders to fully understand the far-reaching impacts of US foreign policy decisions at the ground level.

Eleven students from Tufts University, The Fletcher School, the US Military Academy and the US Naval Academy conducted research in Amman, Jordan, from 1-28 June 2008. Participants worked in three groups to explore specific issues within the broader research focus: Jordanian-US security cooperation, the impact of the Iraq war on Jordan's political reform process, and refugees in Jordanian society. Students met with actors from multiple sectors of Jordanian society, including the United Nations Mission to Iraq, the Center for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan, and the USAID Jordan Mission. Participants conducted formal and informal interviews, organizational site visits, and dialogue sessions.

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UNITED STATES DEMOCRACY PROMOTION IN JORDAN

INTRODUCTION

In 2003 the United States embarked upon a long-term strategy to defeat terrorism and secure peace and stability by supporting democratic transitions in the Middle East. This strategy was the underlying principle of what is now known as the “Freedom Agenda,” the Bush Administration’s foreign policy paradigm for Arab states.

In the case of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, popular perceptions of US actions in the region have significantly undermined the credibility of US democracy promotion efforts within Jordan.

The Freedom Agenda has been institutionalized through funding allocations and new bureaucracies and, as a result, the next administration is likely to continue the US’ pursuit of democratic transformations in the Middle East. Credibility is key to the success of these efforts. Therefore, the United States can and must take immediate steps to reduce inconsistencies in American regional strategy that exist in the mind of Jordanians.

BACKGROUND

In response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the Freedom Agenda was conceived to reduce the appeal of extremist ideology by promoting liberal ideals and democratic institutions in the Middle East. Three new State Department programs have been created as tools of the Freedom Agenda: the Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative; the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor; and the Middle East Partnership Initiative. In Jordan specifically, the USAID budget for democracy and governance has increased from \$500,000 in 2002 to \$15 million in 2006¹. These new programs and funding increase represent an institutionalization of the Freedom Agenda, which appears unlikely to be dismantled in the near future².

Despite new apparatuses and increased funding for democracy promotion efforts, Jordanians are skeptical of the United States' commitment to democracy in the Middle East because of other regional policies. Many Jordanians see American treatment of political Islamist parties as hypocritical. Former secretary of Jordan's foremost opposition party, the Islamic Action Front (the political wing of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan), Dr. Latif Arabiyat asserted that American suspicion had prevented cooperation in areas of shared democratic interest such as women's political participation, education, and expanded civil liberties. "I am sorry to say the US gave some very bad signs from the outside: 'All Islamists are terrorists,'" he said³. The United States' 2006 refusal to accept Hamas as the democratically elected ruling party of the Palestinian Authority had an enormous impact in Jordan where more than half of the population is of Palestinian descent⁴. It was seen as proof that the United States only supports democracy when it finds elections outcomes favorable.

Furthermore, Jordan's own democratic reform process has made questionable progress in recent years. According to Human Rights Watch, in 2007 Jordan had "regressed in protecting basic rights," such as the freedom of speech, the press, and assembly⁵. However, that same year the United States indicated that Jordan was making democratic progress by awarding over \$117 million in grants through USAID's cash transfer program. The distribution of these transfers is conditional upon Jordan's fulfillment of designated policy reforms set annually⁶. By distributing these transfers in 2007 the United States gave the appearance of satisfaction with the level of democratic reform in Jordan, which conflicts with the assessment by Human Rights Watch. Jordan's importance as a strategic ally in the Iraq War has made it politically difficult for the United States to pressure the Jordan to make political reforms beyond those favorable to the government of Jordan.

In the opinion of many Jordanians interviewed in June 2008, American support for a stalling domestic reform process and US regional rejection of legitimate Islamist parties indicate insincerity regarding the promotion of democracy in the region. As a result, the credibility of US efforts in Jordan has been damaged. According to USAID representatives in Jordan, in recent years Jordanian organizations have rejected USAID offers for funding⁷. Mizan is a Jordanian organization that uses the law to pursue its democracy and human rights agenda: it provides legal counsel to vulnerable populations and lobbies Jordan's Parliament to amend civil society laws. Mizan will not accept funding from the United States because negative perceptions of American motives would damage Mizan's own legitimacy in the eyes of its constituents⁸.

Local, grassroots organizations like Mizan are a testament to the efforts of ordinary

Jordanians to pressure their government for reforms. Ultimately, successful democratic transformation in Jordan will rely on this kind of bottom-up domestic impulse combined with political will from the top. For example, in 1989 King Hussein called for parliamentary elections for the first time in over 20 years in response to domestic pressure. Two years later, he launched the National Charter, which allowed for political parties in Jordan⁹. Public opinion surveys conducted by the Center for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan in 2007, indicate that the desire for democracy in Jordan remains strong, with Jordanians indicating an overwhelming preference for a democratic system (defined by political freedoms) to an authoritarian system of government¹⁰. US democracy promotion in Jordan hopes to amplify this desire for democratic transformation.

However, the United States must walk a fine line between supporting the gradual adoption of liberal values at the grassroots level, and actively encouraging top-down institutional change. For the United States to initiate or lead either of these efforts would be inappropriate and ineffectual; democratic reform in Jordan must be accomplished by Jordanians. Because of a convergence of interests, it is likely that the United States will continue its efforts to support reform. In order for American support to have a positive impact, it must have legitimacy among Jordan's population. This requires assuaging the skepticism many Jordanians currently have about the United States.

RECOMMENDATION 1: TONE DOWN THE RHETORIC OF THE “FREEDOM AGENDA”

The United States should limit the ambitious rhetoric of the “Freedom Agenda” and its democracy promotion exhortation so that it is more consistent with the feasible range of action and attainable goals.

The continued military presence of the United States in Iraq and the electoral success of Islamist movements, specifically the IAF in Jordan and Hamas in Palestine, have increased the United States' anxiety over regional security. In the interest of security, the United States has strengthened its support of incumbent regimes in Arab states rather than pressuring these regimes to reform. Rhetoric meant to promote and praise democratic reform in Jordan that does not acknowledge the inconsistencies between the United States' security interests and its ability to advocate real progress undermines the perceived commitment of US calls for democracy and support for civil society reform actors in Jordan. Additionally, the Freedom Agenda does not recognize that the pace of democratic reform will ultimately be driven by domestic factors and not external pressure. Therefore, US exhortation that outstrips the slow, top-down reform process in Jordan worsens the gap between US rhetoric and reality. The United States can move to close this gap by:

- Limiting its praise for the Jordanian regime for reforms that have not created wide-scale

political effects;

- Taking into account how the perception of the US' regional interests (especially in Iraq) and policies affects the credibility of its pressure for political reform in the eyes of the Government of Jordan;
- Redefining the goals of promoting political reform for Jordan from a western-style vision of participatory democracy to a vision of a political system that addresses the demographic realities (Palestinians, tribal influences, new economic classes) and political needs of Jordanians;

RECOMMENDATION 2: IDENTIFY ATTAINABLE POLITICAL GOALS

The United States should focus its democracy promotion efforts on attainable political goals in Jordan such as youth engagement, civil education, and building tools for an independent press and media.

In order to close the gap between rhetoric and realistic capabilities, the United States must also identify, define, and implement a more attainable set of goals to support reforms in Jordan. As described by Marina Ottaway, “The most promising projects are those where the interests of the United States, the regime, and reform advocates overlap.” Identifying these nexuses of interests is key in formulating realizable reform projects. Attainable projects in addition to a more reasonable rhetoric from the US on democratic reform would realign the United States’ message, goals, and on-the-ground efforts into a cohesive strategy with tangible outcomes. Areas of focus should include:

- Youth engagement – The United States should fund programs that work on youth outreach to build community and promote civic as well as economic capacity building and opportunities.
- Civic Education – The United States should encourage Jordanian groups to develop a “Civic Curriculum” for schools and general public awareness campaigns.
- Supporting independent press and media projects – The US should fund efforts to expand internet access, blogging, community radio, and efforts to reform the Press Law.

RECOMMENDATION 3: ENGAGE WITH THE ISLAMIC ACTION FRONT (IAF)

The IAF should be included in US outreach to Jordanian political parties, in order to gain a more holistic view of Jordanian politics and identify projects that a wider set of reform advocates will support.

By engaging with the IAF, the strongest opposition party in Jordan, the United States can learn important lessons about the current state of political discourse in Jordan, the efficacy of various models for organization and mobilization, and new opportunities to push the

reform process forward. Only talking to the Government of Jordan and civil society actors that will say what the US wants to hear in order to receive American funding will not deliver a clear picture of political realities. It is possible to discuss the challenges of political reform with the Muslim Brotherhood and shared democratic interests while still disagreeing on certain political platforms of the IAF. Inclusion of the IAF, one of the most important political entities in Jordan, in a larger engagement effort with political parties and Jordanians citizens need not confer legitimacy on all the positions held by the IAF. However it can lead to a richer and more balanced reform effort in Jordan whereby both external and internal reformers apply different sets of strengths and contribute competing visions.

RECOMMENDATION 4: CHANNEL DEMOCRACY AID THROUGH DIFFERENT SOURCES

American funding for democracy promotion should not be channeled through the State Department, but rather through organizations with a degree of separation from other foreign policy actions, such as the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX), or other international and regional non-governmental organizations.

The development of democratic culture in the Middle East is a long-term interest of the US. This goal is often incongruent with the US' short-term diplomatic and security goals. Association with widely unpopular US foreign policy and geopolitical interests as represented by the State Department and USAID undermine the efficacy of programs funded by these sources. Many civil society actors and reformers in Jordan refuse to take funding from the US Government because it taints their credibility in the eyes of the Jordanians they hope to reach or serve. In order to fund worthy and credible Jordanian reformers, it is better for democracy promotion aid to come from sources with a level of separation from the US Government. Channeling funding through more independent groups such as UNDP, NDI, NED, IREX, and NGOs can provide that degree of separation and allow US funds to reach credible Jordanian organizations that would otherwise not be able to utilize American funds.

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Many Jordanian civil society actors themselves described the credibility challenges of the United States' involvement with democracy promotion in Jordan. According to Mohammed Abu Rumman, a journalist of the *Al-Ghad* Arabic Daily, US calls for democracy were taken less seriously by the Jordanian Government and Jordanian civil society due to developments of 2006-2007: deterioration of security in Iraq, the election of Hamas in Palestine, and the relative empowerment of Iran in the new regional dynamics. These events forced the United States to pull back from applying adamant pressure on friendly, authoritarian regimes in the region to undertake political reforms. This lessening of pressure discredited the US calls for

reform in the eyes of civil society actors in Jordan and the region. Rumman claims that civil society actors and academics in Jordan will be wary of any renewed, vigorous calls for democracy from the United States.

Additionally, the United States' regional policies create a quandary for Jordanian civil society actors to navigate if they are to accept American funds and maintain credibility in the eyes of Jordanian citizens. Numerous sources indicated that there are instances of Jordanian NGO's involved with political reform, human rights advocacy, and governance issues rejecting USAID funds. The director of Mizan (see Background section), Ms. Eva Abu Halaweh, explained that she will not accept American funding because the United States does not have an acceptable human rights record and the people who seek assistance from Mizan (whether Jordanian, Jordanian of Palestinian descent, or refugees from Iraq) harbor suspicions of the US' ulterior motives as a result of the Iraq war and American support for Israel. Whether or not these suspicions are founded or unfounded, the perceptions of the United States and mistrust of US involvement can discredit any civil society organizations that directly partner with the United States.

Since direct US support for democracy promotion is suspect in the eyes of Jordanians, the United States should both redirect some of its governance aid to Jordan through independent institutions, as well as focus its own direct, visible spending on attainable goals that are in alignment with a more modest rhetoric. These attainable goals should be areas of shared interest between the US government, government of Jordan, and civil society actors such as youth engagement, civil education, and independent media. According to Save the Children, 60 percent of Jordan's population is under 24 years old and 70 percent of youth one year out of school are still unemployed. In a society where the unemployment rate is officially 13.5 percent (and unofficially closer to 30 percent), unemployed, educated youth may search for opportunities outside Jordan¹¹. With the current demographics, development of economic opportunities and training programs for youth are highly suit Jordan's economic interests, and also the security interests of the United States. Similarly, civic education and the growth of independent media are congruous both with King Abdullah's National Agenda and with the United States' goal of spreading liberal democratic ideals. According to Sami Zubaidy, a journalist for the Jordanian daily *Al-Rai*, internet newsmedia has great potential to become a thriving arena for political discourse because internet publications can claim liberties restricted by current Press Laws in Jordan. However, the high cost of internet remains the greatest barrier to the growth of this arena (Zubaidy). US support for Jordan's internet infrastructure is a tangible project that is likely to support political openness and impact positively on Jordanian's opinion of the US government.

THE WAY FORWARD

Ultimately democratization is a Jordanian process dependent on domestic political will. Any external democracy promotion efforts must look to identify areas where incentives exist and align with the goals of various sectors of Jordanian society. At the level of high politics, the key to US efforts is to creatively market pro-reform aid programs to the Jordanian leadership as a necessary measure to maintain domestic stability. Among the general population, the goals of US democracy promotion should be modest and seek ways to support those needs identified by Jordanians themselves.

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2 Minter, Paulette Chu. "Why George Bush's 'Freedom Agenda' is Here to Stay." Web Exclusive. Aug 2007. *Foreign Policy*. http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story_id=3959. Accessed 5 Oct 2008.

3 Arabiyat

4 "Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan". Culture Grams World Edition. 2007.

5 Human Rights Watch. "Country Summary: Jordan". Jan 2008. www.humanrights.org. Accessed 12 May 2008.

6 Stevens

7 Ibid

8 (Halaweh)

9 Choucair, Julia. "Illusive Reform: Jordan's Stubborn Stability". Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

10 Braizat, Fares. "Democracy In Jordan 2007". Center for Strategic Studies, University of Jordan. December 2007.

11 Country Report: Jordan. *CIA World Factbook*. 2 Oct 2008. www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/jo.html (3 Oct 2008).

UNITED STATES-JORDANIAN SECURITY COOPERATION

INTRODUCTION

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has proven to be one of the United State's most valuable Middle Eastern allies. Its geo-strategic location enables it to play a major role in the region, but being small and lacking natural resources, it also predestines it for greater vulnerability as its fate is tied to the political and economic futures of its neighbors. In its efforts to promote a secure and stable Iraq, US foreign policy in the Middle East needs to empower Jordan as a country and as a regional leader.

BACKGROUND

Jordan's relationship with Iraq incorporates both Iraqi relations with other regional actors and the over-arching regional strategy of the Hashemite Monarchy. In its traditional role as

the inter-Arab mediator, Jordan has often sought to bring about a peaceful cessation to hostilities and has worked to craft an Arab consensus which is amicable to Hashemite interests.

King Abdullah was vehemently opposed to the initial invasion in 2003. He argued that deposing Saddam Hussein from power would upset regional stability and usher in sectarian violence in Iraq, opening the door to external influence. However, once the confrontation between the United States and Saddam Hussein's regime began, Jordan sought to cooperate with the US and has since worked extensively to secure internal peace in Iraq. Jordan was the first Arab state to send an ambassador to Baghdad post-2003, and Jordan's International Police Training Center (JIPTC) trained over 55,000 Iraqi police officers in the aftermath of the invasion. JIPTC, created in June 2003 to address the severe lack of quality police forces inside the new Iraq, rapidly became the world's largest police academy¹. At its peak, JIPTC housed and trained 3,720 Iraqi police officers, with classes of over 800 graduating every four weeks². While JIPTC cost the United States \$450 million over the course of four years, Sunni and Shia alike trained and lived together and sectarian identity melted away as policemen learned to prioritize national unity³. JIPTC was especially important in that it produced a civil police force as opposed to a national army. Because the complexities of counterinsurgency warfare render an effective police force of greater utility in combating insurgents than traditional military units, JIPTC was a crucial lynchpin in ensuring long term Iraqi stability. Unfortunately, United States funding for JIPTC was cut off in 2007 due to the lack of ability to monitor JIPTC trainees once they returned to Iraq.

The 2003 Coalition invasion of Iraq posed many significant problems for the Hashemite Monarchy. Beyond the traditional understanding between Saddam Hussein and the Hashemites, the advent of representative government in Iraq empowered the Shia majority. The Shia ascendancy in Iraq coincided with a renewal in Iranian posturing and Hezbollah advances in Lebanon, leading King Abdullah to famously criticize the rise of a "Shia crescent," stretching from Tehran into the Levant.

The reality of the interconnected destinies of Amman and Baghdad was brought home in November 2005, when Abu Musab al Zarqawi's Al Qaeda in Iraq conducted a series of bombings aimed at civilian targets in Amman. As the Amman bombings demonstrated, instability and insurgency in Iraq are likely to continue to spill-over in Jordan for the foreseeable future. The desire to minimize spill-over violence has played a major role in formulating Jordanian Iraq policy post-2003.

Ultimately, Jordan has played a constructive if limited role in the development of the new Iraq⁴. While many regional actors have sought to destabilize Iraq and provoke chaos in

order to advance their strategic agendas, Jordan has worked with Iraqi security forces and government officials to rebuild Iraq as a peaceful, secure, and sovereign entity⁵.

Jordan also continues to provide invaluable military assistance to the United States. Nevertheless, the overall balance of consequences of the war on Jordan has been negative:

- Jordan lost its main trading partner, which also supplied highly subsidized oil for 15 years;
- The influx of an estimated 450,000 to 1,000,000 Iraqis has put a strain on Jordan's limited resources and has altered the natural growth of consumer prices;
- As a Sunni power, Jordan is increasingly worried about an influential Iran in Iraq and about exacerbating the Sunni-Shiite divide;
- Jordan has become a terrorist target and is experiencing a rise in domestic extremism.

These consequences constrain Jordan's ability to effectively cooperate with the United States and advance US interests in Iraq.

RECOMMENDATION 1: BUILD UP THE CAPABILITY OF THE IRAQI POLICE TO ENSURE SECURITY

The United States and Jordan should resume their partnership to train and equip Iraqi police officers, in order to gradually and fully restore their responsibility for policing, public order, and counterinsurgency operations. The United States should:

- Propose the establishment of an international fund to resume the training of Iraqi police officers at the Jordan International Police Training Center (JIPTC).
- Conduct an assessment of previous strengths and deficiencies of JIPTC, in order to implement the necessary improvements and ensure the highest quality of training and success.
- Establish the stages of a training process that outlines the path to a self-sufficient Iraqi Police.

RECOMMENDATION 2: ALLOW FOR A SUCCESSFUL POLITICAL PROCESS TO ENSURE POLITICAL STABILITY

The United States should encourage Jordan to spearhead a region-wide diplomatic surge of Arab political engagement with the Iraqi government. The United States should:

- Work with Nayef Zeidan, the new Jordanian ambassador in Baghdad, to actively engage the Iraqi government and other Arab neighbors in an effort to restore Iraq's standing

within in the Arab world .

- Assist the governments of Jordan and Iraq in reaching out to Iraqis living in Jordan, in an effort to provide for their economic, health, and education needs and to ease their eventual transition back into Iraqi society. The US should encourage the use of Iraqi oil revenues, in effect having Iraq invest in its own future.
- Encourage Jordan to actively discourage the anti-Shia rhetoric aimed at Iraqi refugees.
- Encourage Jordan to reach out to all levels of Iraqi society, in an effort to build bridges between both countries' civil societies to foster constructive relations for the future.

RECOMMENDATION 3: ENHANCE THE APPROPRIATE FINANCIAL CHANNELS TO ENSURE RECONSTRUCTION

The United States should reconsider and re-evaluate the various channels through which it provides financial assistance for the reconstruction of Iraq. The United States should:

- Ensure that funds needed for civilian programs are available through the Department of State or other civilian agencies. The United States should make sure that civilian programs do not see themselves forced to resort to military funding from the Department of Defense.
- Promote the involvement of highly specialized civilian agencies, easing the burden often placed on the military to perform civilian activities.
- Refocus efforts in reconstruction policy to basic infrastructure that improves the quality of life of all Iraqis, while only gradually and subtly pushing for democratic and liberal values.

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The above recommendations are based on more than 16 interviews conducted in Jordan in June 2008.

Dr. Mohammad Zweiri, an expert on Iran at the Center for Strategic Studies, identified a number of causes and possible implications for a Jordanian-Iraqi rapprochement, and more broadly, an expansion of Iraqi ties to other Arab states. Subsequent to his visit to Tehran, Iraq's Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki made his way to Amman to discuss relations with the Jordanian government and King Abdullah personally. Maliki's visit came two years after the Jordanians originally named an ambassador to Iraq, but withdrew Ahmed al Lozi because of security concerns. The visit marked a general sea change in the Arab world in which the status-quo powers began to accept the new, Shia-led Iraqi government. Not only did the Maliki visit embody a breakthrough in Jordanian-Iraqi relations, with a brand new three-year oil deal signed, but it also paved the way for an Iraqi reconciliation with Saudi Arabia.

According to Dr. Zweiri, many Jordanians are clearly unnerved by perceived Iranian influence in Iraq. Sunni Arabs tend to see a “Shia crescent” falling over the region, extending from Tehran, through Iraq into Syria, and into Lebanon⁶. Iran has gained leverage and influence in Iraq through reaching out to all players in Iraqi politics, regardless of sectarian or ideological affiliation. Through reaching out to all actors inside Iraq, Iran has established a rapport with factions both inside and outside Baghdad. To counterbalance this trend, the United States and Jordan must engage in a similar political game. The U.S. must encourage Jordan to engage in relations with all Iraqi political factions, especially those outside of the central government, including the Awakening Councils and Shia groups in the south. Only by approaching the problem of Iraq as a political contest instead of a security matter can Jordan promote lasting stability. An independent and strong Iraq will never be friendly with Iran because of cultural, historical, and religious reasons⁷. Consequently, Iran’s objective in Iraq is to foster disunity and instability. Jordan and the Arab states must vigorously counteract this Iranian maneuvering by fostering closer ties not only with the Baghdad government, but also with marginalized groups throughout Iraqi society⁸.

According to interviews with NGO officials, King Abdullah is using the wedge issue of anti-Shiism, coupled with a nationalist appeal, against Iraqis to bolster his own standing. Given Jordan’s economic downturn, rising costs, and high oil prices, the new Iraqi republic is an easy rhetorical target. While this does give the Monarchy an important scapegoat, it damages the long term Iraqi-Jordanian relationship. The State Department is aware of the Monarchy’s vacillation on this subject and has approached senior NGO officials to try to use their leverage to gain better treatment for Iraqi refugees. Unfortunately, due to the extensive security alliance between Jordan and the United States, no one in the Embassy feels comfortable calling out Jordan on its short-sighted practices. This is clearly a delicate situation. The U.S. needs Jordan for strategic positioning, regional stability, and operational space to project power into the Middle East and beyond. However, its reliance on Jordanian friendship must also consider the foremost U.S. interest in the region, which is a stable, responsible, and independent Iraq fully integrated into the Arab fold. Jordanian anti-Shia rhetoric directly damages the prospects for an Iraqi reconciliation with the Arab world, making an Iraq-Iran détente more likely. In order for Iran to be checked, Iraq must emerge as a mainstream Arab partner. While the US must appreciate its special relationship with Jordan, it must also not lose sight of the long term regional implications with Iraq.

Yasar Qatareh of the Regional Centre for Conflict Prevention was critical of the Arab states and their failure to embrace the new Iraq. According to Qatareh, the Arabs focused too much on the security implications of instability in Iraq and failed to develop a comprehensive strategy to aggressively mold Iraq into a favorable outcome. By this, Qatareh means that short term security concerns—arising especially after the 2005 Amman attacks—

completely dominated the strategic discourse in the Arab world and consequently the long term benefits to be won through intensive political engagement were lost in the wind. Indicative of this trend was the disastrous mistake on the part of King Abdullah of throwing together the entire Iraqi Shia community into the infamous “Shia Crescent.” Such an inflammatory comment created resentment towards Jordan within Iraq and individuals who might otherwise have been sympathetic towards working with the Americans were dissuaded because King Abdullah had made clear that the Arabs saw no distinction between the many numerous Shia factions in Iraq. For the Arabs, the matter became a matter of security instead of one of politics—the Shia of Iraq represented Iranian influence and were consequently an enemy to be challenged instead of a diverse political group to be engaged on an individual basis. For the Arabs to serve their own long term interests, they need to place a much greater emphasis on political maneuvering in Iraq and less emphasis on cut and dry security issues.

As part of the quest for lasting stability in Iraq, the United States has expended a large amount of resources on Iraqi reconstruction. While direct United States reconstruction can be an effective part of our counterinsurgency strategy, direct aid (especially from the United States Army), often carries with it a negative connotation for local aid recipients. In addition, many international aid organizations are uncomfortable or unwilling to accept aid from the United States military out of a concern of losing their perceived neutrality. Many international organizations, such as the United Nations Office for Project Services Overseas (UNOPS), are desperately in need of funding to carry out Iraqi reconstruction and would welcome American aid money. However, the regulations governing UNOPS prevent it from receiving aid directly from the Department of Defense. A simple funding reallocation—from DoD to the State Department—would allow organizations such as UNOPS to accept American money and implement the development projects that are so critical to fostering Iraqi self-determination and stability. Reallocating significant reconstruction funds from DoD to the State Department would not add any cost and would dramatically increase the utility of each dollar to win the battle for the Iraqi population⁹.

1 Bill Flink. The Embassy of the United States of America, Amman, Jordan. Personal Communication. 17 June 2008.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 Lasensky, Scott. “Jordan and Iraq.” United States Institute of Peace. December 2006. 16 May 2008. <<http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr178.pdf>>.

5 Ibid.

6 Dr. Mohammad Zweiri. Center for Strategic Studies. Personal Communication. 12 June 2008.

7 Ibid.

8 Yasar Qatarneh. Director, Regional Centre on Conflict Prevention. Personal Communication. 17 June 2008.

IRAQI REFUGEES IN JORDAN

INTRODUCTION

Currently, ten percent of Iraq's population is externally displaced; the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees gives a high estimate of 2.2 million displaced Iraqis. That ten percent includes virtually every ethnic, religious, and socioeconomic group in Iraq. A large swath of this externally displaced population is held in limbo in Jordan, unable to work or go to school, with only a small percentage receiving just enough cash assistance and basic social services to survive. The inability to support their families, further their educations, or plan for their futures is demoralizing and a waste of valuable skills that could contribute to rebuilding Iraq. If the United States addresses the Iraqi refugee crisis in a well-thought, long-term plan, it can restore this human capital to Iraqi society. If it addresses the crisis poorly, Iraqis living in exile may have little to offer their country, if they return at all. Additionally, if the United States does not address the crisis well, it will leave its primary Arab ally with a large, unemployed, vulnerable and angry refugee population. By saddling Jordan with such a large burden and draining Iraq of its valuable human capital, the United States would leave the region worse off, both for its citizens and for US interests.

BACKGROUND

The first "wave" of Iraqi refugees entered Jordan in 1991 during the Gulf War; however, the number of Iraqis living in Jordan has sharply increased since the US-led war in Iraq that began in 2003, with most Iraqi refugees coming to Jordan after the Sumara mosque bombings in 2006. While the demographic trends are known, the actual number of Iraqis living in Jordan is a highly politicized issue and varies from source to source. The highest estimate sits at around one million, while the lowest is around 200,000. The US and Jordanian governments accept the 2007 findings of FAFO, a Norwegian organization commissioned by the Jordanian government, which argues that 450,000 Iraqis are living in Jordan. Most of these 450,000 are there illegally. Complicating the issue is that Jordan never signed the 1951 Refugee Convention, or its 1967 Protocol, which outlines specific rights and procedure for refugees; however, in 1998, Jordan did sign a Memorandum of Understanding with UNHCR, which allows Iraqis asylum seeker status, but not prima facie refugee status. Although UNHCR has made a Temporary Protection Regime that issues asylum seeker cards to Iraqis, the cards are not recognized by the government and provide Iraqis with no legal protection. As of June 2008, UNHCR had officially registered 53,227 Iraqis in Jordan.

Although the Jordanian government gives Iraqis slightly more privileges than other foreigners -- allowing them full access to education and the same access to healthcare as non-insured Jordanians, for example -- many Iraqis report discrimination and blocked access to these social services. Because most Iraqis are not legally residing in Jordan, they are unable to obtain work permits and must live on cash assistance distributed by NGOs like CARE International. Lack of legal status also means that most Iraqis live in fear of deportation; many do not seek work in the informal sector for fear of being arrested and forcibly returned to Iraq. For those Iraqis that are registered with UNHCR, the only legal solution is third-country resettlement. Yet many Iraqis wait in Jordan well past the six-month period demanded by the Jordanian government for resettlement, largely because the American and other countries' embassies are struggling to keep up with the huge demand for visa processing. The Jordanian government exhibits an understandable hesitation to implement a long term Iraqi population policy. Most Iraqis in Jordan wish to repatriate to a stable Iraq, or to resettle to a third country, but the realities of the security situation in Iraq, and the inability of UNHCR and third-country hosts to quickly resettle even the small percentage of Iraqis registered with UNHCR, indicates that most Iraqis will not be leaving Jordan in the near term.

RECOMMENDATION 1: ESTABLISH A SEMIANNUAL SURVEY

The United States government should use its diplomatic channels to ensure the implementation of a semiannual, impartial survey of the numbers and characteristics of the post-2003 Iraqi refugee population.

The United States government should fund the implementation of a semiannual survey of displaced Iraqis in Jordan in order to allow for better implementation of any and all services. The US must recognize that influential stakeholders each have an interest in low or high numbers being accepted as official fact, and so it should make extra effort to ensure the impartiality and legitimacy of the findings. Recognizing that many segments of the Jordanian government believe that the maintenance of the status quo is in its best interest, the US must work through the numerous diplomatic channels that already exist to convince the government of the urgency that it treat the Iraqi population as a special refugee population. The US can best do this by:

- Funding the study through a third party, whether it is through a nongovernmental organization such as FAFO, or through a supranational organization, such as the United Nations Population Fund.
- Conducting the survey semiannually until Iraqis begin leaving Jordan in significant number.
- Involving Jordan in defining the focus of the survey and research.

RECOMMENDATION 2: NORMALIZE THE STATUS OF DISPLACED IRAQIS

The United States should utilize its influence and provide conditional aid in order to ensure a protective status specifically for Iraqis in Jordan that includes the right to work.

Bearing in mind that the treatment of Iraqis in Jordan now will have implications for the future stability of the Iraqi state, the US should propose and back a temporary protection status for externally displaced Iraqis in Jordan. It should include protections similar to the 1998 Memorandum of Understanding and the 2003 temporary protection status instituted by UNHCR but not agreed to by the Government of Jordan. At a minimum, it should alleviate fears of deportation, provide legal guarantee of access to services, access to secondary education, and continued access to primary education. Potentially through the provision of these resources, the US should also work with Jordan to find avenues to utilize the Iraqi human capital in Jordan (e.g. allowing doctors to work in health clinics for Iraqi refugees, allowing teachers to organize schools...), thereby helping both Jordan and the Iraqi refugees. The United States can do this by:

- Pushing for protective status to be extended to those Iraqis who have come to Jordan since conflict ensued in 2003, including all Iraqis facing generalized violence should they return to Iraq, and not just those who specifically fall under the definition of a refugee under the 1951 Convention or its 1967 Protocol;
- Accepting the commensurate costs of registering Iraqis into this temporary protection status and asking UNHCR to implement the registration process;
- Utilizing US clout and influence in order to make this legal status a reality, and providing a substantial, conditionalized aid package to the Government of Jordan in order to offset the costs to the Jordanian economy, primarily arising from Jordan's already high inflation level of 15 percent.
- Supporting equal rights for Iraqis to compete with other foreigners for work permits, as well as supporting a non competitive work permit that allows Iraqis to work in Jordan until stability resumes in Iraq and repatriation can occur.

RECOMMENDATION 3: IMPROVE PROCESSING OF US RESETTLEMENT REQUESTS

The United States government must meet its commitments to Iraqis that have worked with the US government and military in Iraq. It must use full diplomatic force in Jordan to fulfill the annual quotas prescribed by Defense Authorization Act of 2008 and streamline the process of resettlement of the caseloads given to the embassy by UNHCR.

The US should live up to its commitment to resettle 30,000 Iraqis in the next five years; additionally, it should fill the Defense Authorization Act quota of an annual 5,000 Iraqis who have assisted US military efforts. The US should commit to resettle a total of 110,000 Iraqis in the next ten years, including the annual 5,000 Defense Authorization Act quota. To

accomplish this, the United States must improve its ability to quickly and efficiently process Iraqis eligible for resettlement in the US through the US Embassy in Amman.

- The United States must increase staff at the Embassy to better handle the volume of cases identified by UNHCR. The backlog is best addressed with increased midlevel Department of Homeland Security staffing on site in Amman.
- The United States should reconsider the Patriot Act of 2001 and Real ID Act of 2005 (the material support laws), granting asylum to any refugee or asylum seeker whose support for terrorism was coerced, unintentional, or inconsequential.
- The United States should encourage a public information campaign to better inform Iraqis of the nuances of UNHCR programs and support, and the levels of legal and illegal status Iraqis can have in Jordan. The United States should encourage UNHCR to distribute informational pamphlets and conduct door-to-door informational campaigns in neighborhoods with high levels of Iraqi refugees.
- Additionally, the US should push UNHCR to explicitly outline to Iraqis what asylum seeker status entails and what rights it affords and does not afford.

RECOMMENDATION 4: IMPROVE QUALITY OF AND ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE FOR IRAQI REFUGEES IN JORDAN

The United States should implement a two-sided funding plan focused on both a long-term build-up of the Jordanian health care system and a short-term emergency response.

The United States should support the World Health Organization (WHO) as the best-placed technical agency to coordinate governmental and non-governmental efforts in health care for Iraqis living in Jordan. The United States can provide the projected funds to implement the WHO's working plan to scale up the Jordanian health system to tackle the needs of the Iraqis while building a long-lasting system that will ultimately see Jordanians as the primary beneficiaries.

The United States has given Jordan \$1.7 million to handle health care needs of Iraqis to date. The World Health Organization has been working with the Ministry of Health to ease the medical prices on Iraqis living in Jordan. The United States can provide the projected funds to implement the WHO's working plan to scale up the Jordanian health system to tackle the needs of both Iraqis and Jordanians. The projected WHO budget for FY 2008 is \$9.6 million, of which 29 percent has already been met by funds from the international community. The United States should provide the remainder of the funding, given the level of commitment thus far, which has also included \$1.4 million to the WHO for pharmaceutical drugs for Iraqis. This funding will also upgrade the system to benefit all Jordanians for long term development efforts while addressing the immediate needs of Iraqis displaced within Jordan.

The United States should implement this two-sided funding plan by:

- Provide full funding to the WHO - Jordan for fiscal year 2009 to implement programming that will build up the Jordanian system as a whole, enabling targeted service to Iraqis specifically via access to secondary and tertiary care for chronic illnesses, access to mental and psychosocial care, strengthening surveillance and information systems, and technical support for inter-agency coordination between the governmental and non-governmental sector.
- At the same time, the US should support those NGOs that are in operation exclusively for the Iraqi population displaced within Jordan. Among these are Caritas, Save the Children and CARE International. These health programs and clinics serve the Iraqi population most effectively as they waive the “foreign guest” fees placed by the Government of Jordan on Iraqis who have been displaced. Also, these clinics are best suited to address the immediate health needs of Iraqis as they are within the communities of the displaced, provide a safe space and are well known to Iraqis.
- Support the health efforts of international and national non-government organizations (NGOs) that lack the continuous funding to continue emergency and essential health services specifically for Iraqis as a short term provision while WHO - GoJ efforts are being implemented.

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The above recommendations derive their validity from the major themes and concerns highlighted by the different stakeholders in the displaced Iraqi situation. While government officials, international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and displaced Iraqis had different priorities and concerns based on their interests and areas of work, there were several overwhelming themes voiced by all.

Firstly and most importantly, there was a general consensus that accounting for the number of displaced Iraqis currently in Jordan was a difficult and incomplete task. Governmental officials, such as spokesmen for the Ministry of International Cooperation and Planning noted that, while the FAFO study was commissioned by the government, the psychological status of displaced Iraqis and their legal statuses attributed to projection of such varying numbers as 150,000 (FAFO Study) and 450,000 (government press release and official number). From the perspective of non-governmental organizations on the ground, such as ICRC, UNHCR, WHO, and CARE International, the lack of a comprehensive survey of the population hindered the efforts of the organizations in providing aid to displaced Iraqis and to the Jordanian government. This concern was beyond attributing a number to the population and included the need for demographic data such as health status, educational level, mental state, and current economic status. Without this vital information, donations from the international community via the UN and from the US government potentially go

wasted due to misallocation of funds in programs that do not have sufficient background on the population living in Jordan.

While on the one hand recommending any sort of aid to the Jordanian government or to private international NGOs depends on first knowing how many displaced Iraqis there are and assessing their needs, the evidence highlighting that the US can do more to aid the Iraqis already identified by the government and NGOs compels the need for recommendation two. UNHCR, in conjunction with the government of Jordan with which it has a Memorandum of Understanding to provide durable solutions to Iraqis with refugee status, impressed the need for more logistical and monetary support for its work. While funding for UN agencies is a continual struggle dependent on state willingness and capabilities, the US has a clear path of action in this realm because there are already thousands of identified displaced Iraqis under the watch of UNHCR who are waiting to be processed by the US Embassy. US Embassy personnel echoed that processing visas for resettlement or voluntary repatriation of the small number (11 percent of all Iraqis in Jordan) of refugee-status Iraqis took many months due to coordination with the State Department. Increasing personnel on-site in Jordan would expedite the process and legitimize US support of concrete action since the UNHCR is the only legal NGO to provide relief of Iraqi refugees. Given the Jordanian government's concern of national security as paramount to human security of displaced Iraqis, the US has little room to maneuver aid via any channels other than through the government (including through UNHCR). Thus, providing as much needed support to process the claims of already-identified refugees gives the US a narrow plan of action that is easily executable.

However, despite what US embassy personnel alluded to as a tricky balance between wanting to comprehensively address the Iraqi situation and complying with the Jordanian government's security concerns and terms of aid allocation, the US must use all leverage possible to address the legal status of displaced Iraqis. Senior government officials conceded that the immigrant status of Iraqis – whether they are legally refugees under UNHCR mandates or not – is the only politically viable option short of closing borders – an illegal action under the Geneva Conventions. Furthermore, the continued lament concerning the lack of natural resources and the growing number of unemployed young people impressed the sentiment that most Jordanians cannot be asked to give more to help displaced Iraqis (Judeh, Shraideh). Indeed, Jordanians, as echoed by community-based NGO leaders, feel that Jordan is already doing more than her neighbors in aiding Iraqis and believe the US is the duty holder in the situation (MIZAN). Meanwhile, testimonies of Iraqis living in idle with no work and in fear of deportation and of an unknown future compel a recommendation whereby the US leverage its position as a benefactor to Jordan and lobby for normalized, protective status of displaced Iraqis within Jordan (refugee interviews). While conditioning aid would be the most efficient way to ensure that Iraqis can at least

access education, healthcare, and limited housing and job markets, that senior officials complained that the US did not give any specific FY2007 funds for government administered assistance to Iraqis highlights the US current lack of any policy dealing with the issue of status (Shraideh).

Despite the normalization of legal status standing in the way of ensuring the well being of displaced Iraqis in Jordan, the government of Jordan has turned a blind eye to private international NGOs' relief works targeted at Iraqis. This is crucial aspect of the displaced Iraqi situation in Jordan that the US government can use to an advantage in channeling aid and support to the population. In the realm of education, several UN bodies, notably UNICEF was able to convince the government of Jordan to allow Iraqi children to attend school. This prompted huge support among donor states and won the approval of the government of Jordan because the funding went to build up the educational system as a whole, even as it was aiding Iraqis specifically. This provides a key lesson in addressing Iraqi needs: when trying to deliver vital services to Iraqis, programming must be directed to building up the Jordanian system as a whole, aiding vulnerable Jordanians as well (UNHCR, Shraideh, ICRC).

Thus, drawing from the lesson of the education struggle, recommendation four attempts to copy the same success in the provision of healthcare. Not surprisingly, displaced Iraqis testified health issues and expenses as one of the most important factors to deteriorating lifestyle and well being. This is especially true for mental health deterioration, which itself poses further difficulties as it is a stigma in Arab society (ICRC, CARE International, WHO). The WHO, which is best placed as a technical assistance body to build up the Jordanian healthcare system as a whole while aiding displaced Iraqi needs, emphasized the lack of information of Iraqis' health status as hindering the effectiveness of WHO programming to help all of Jordan's vulnerable populations. Budgetary constraints constitute the bulk of WHO's concerns in properly addressing the Jordanian government's desire to upgrade their public system and the international community's concern in helping displaced Iraqis get sufficient access to adequate healthcare. With only 29 percent of its \$9.2 million budget met in FY2008, neither the people of Jordan or the displaced Iraqis will benefit from an upgraded Jordanian health system as a whole.

THE WAY FORWARD

The Iraqi refugee crisis should be addressed in such a way that Iraqis living in Jordan are able to return and positively contribute to Iraq's reconstruction. Since it is likely that most Iraqis in Jordan will remain there for the short term, they should be able to live with a sense of normalcy – full access to education, access to affordable and non-discriminative healthcare, some ability to support themselves, some type of legal and recognized status, and timely third-country resettlement for those who qualify. In return, the US needs to offset the strain

on Jordanian services and the economy. Once stability begins to return to Iraq, Iraqis should begin returning as soon as possible. Those who have not yet returned should be living with a sense of normalcy, but should be preparing to resume their lives and places in Iraqi society. The US should live up to its commitment to resettle 30,000 Iraqis in the next five years; additionally, it should fill the Defense Authorization Act quota of an annual 5,000 Iraqis who have assisted US military efforts. The US should commit to resettle a total of 110,000 Iraqis in the next ten years, including the annual 5,000 Defense Authorization Act quota. In the long term, most Iraqis should have returned to Iraq from Jordan to contribute to a strong society and continued security and stability in their country. Iraqis living in the United States should be fully integrated into society. Parallel systems, and those that serve Iraqis exclusively, should not be put into place. Rather, long term solutions should be utilized that leave Jordan with a stronger social services system for addressing the needs of poor Jordanians.

Interviews conducted:

- US Embassy in Amman
 - Ambassador David Hale
 - Phil Frayne – Public Affairs Officer
 - Ben Ball – Deputy Political Officer
 - Duffy Winters – Economics Officer
 - Dana Mansuri – Deputy Director of USAID Mission to Jordan
 - LTC David Womack – Department of Military Assistance Program Office
 - SA Andrew Schad – Director of Force Protection Detachment
 - Katie Schaefer – Office of Public Affairs
- Eva Abu Halaweh – Executive Director of Mizan, Law Group for Human Rights
- Harriet Dodd – Director, CARE International Jordan
- Mohammed Abu Rumman – Journalist & Head of Research, *Al-Ghad* Arabic Daily
- Dr. Hassan Barari – Researcher, Center for Strategic Studies, University of Jordan
- Dennis Walto – Country Director for Jordan and Lebanon, Save the Children
- Dr. Hassan Al-Momani – Director, International Studies Program, University of Jordan
- Dr. Rula Qawas – Director, Center for Women’s Studies, University of Jordan
- Mohammed Khalil – Program Manager, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (German non-profit organization to promote development of democracy and civil society)
- USAID Technical Programs Team
 - Kathryn Stevens – Director, Office of Program Management, USAID
 - Laura Slobey – Team Leader, Population and Family Health, USAID
 - David Bruns – Team Leader, Social Sectors Office, USAID
 - Steve Gonyea – Director, Office of Economic Growth, USAID

- Kenana Amin – Office of Program Management, USAID
- Dr. Tawfique Hasou – Director of Research, Jordan Institute of Diplomacy
- Oraib Al Rantawi – Director, Al Quds Center for Political Studies
- Dr. Mahjoob Zweiri – Researcher, Center for Strategic Studies, University of Jordan
- H.E. Mr. Nasser Judeh – Minister of State for Media Affairs and Communication, Prime Ministry, Government of Jordan
- Vince Raimondi – Director, Iraq Support Unit, US Embassy in Jordan
- H.E. Mr. Nasser Shraideh – Secretary General, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, Government of Jordan
- Feda Ghraibeh – Director, Coordination Office for Iraqi Reconstruction, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, Government of Jordan
- Dr. Ayman Khalil – Director, Center for Research on Arms Control and Security, Arab Institute for Security Studies, University of Jordan
- Brett Walker – Intern, Center for Research on Arms Control and Security, Arab Institute for Security Studies, University of Jordan
- Jameel Al-Nimri – political analyst and columnist, *Al-Arab Al Yawm* Daily Arabic Newspaper
- Matar Saqer – Public Information Officer, UNRWA
- Dr. Abdul Latif Arabiyat – Former Secretary General, Islamic Action Front (IAF)
- Dr. Hashim Elzein Elmousaad – Head of Mission, WHO Jordan
- Yasar Qatarneh – Director, Regional Center on Conflict Prevention
- Hani Hourani – Director, Al Urdun Al Jadid Research Center
- Kim Gordon-Bates – Deputy Head of Delegation, ICRC Jordan
- Caroline Douilliez-Sabouba – Head of Project Women and War, Iraq Delegation, ICRC Jordan
- Raja Allawi – Iraq Delegation, ICRC Jordan
- Mr. Bashir Abu Jamous – Governance Analyst, UNDP Jordan
- Mouin Rabbani – Independent Analyst and Former Analyst, Middle East Program, International Crisis Group
- Ziad Ayad – Associate Research Officer in the Public Information Unit, UNHCR
- Dana Bajjali – Mass Information Assistant in the Public Information Unit, UNHCR
- Iraqi refugees in Jordan
 - Widow with four young children
 - Mother with three disabled daughters
 - Wife of disappeared Iraqi translator with three children
 - Wife with three children and a husband who has disappeared
 - Sabayean woman
 - Iraqi youths – Save the Children Youth Programming, Nuzha Office
- Ahmed Drua – Jordan Public Security Directorate
- Peter Krogh Sorensen – Director, UNOPS Jordan

- Laetitia Kraus – Political Information Officer, UNOPS Jordan
- Sami Zubaidy – journalist, *Al Rai* Daily Newspaper
- Bill Flink – former Director, Jordan International Police Training Center
- Asma Khader – Secretary General, Jordanian National Commission for Women
- Dr. Faiz Zoubi – Former Vice President of Mu'tah (the Jordanian Military Academy)
- Jason Erb – Deputy Country Director, Emergency Programs, Jordan/Lebanon Country Office, Save the Children
- Nuha Ma'ayta – Former Member of Parliament and current Head of the General Federation of Jordanian Women (GFJW)

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