Assessing the human tragedy in Iraq

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Abstract

Before a framework can be set for efforts centred on human security to combat chaos, instability and insecurity in conflict areas, the human tragedy in those areas must be understood and discussed. This article analyses the human tragedy in Iraq and shows that it extends beyond our current perception of the situation. The war has led to the loss of lives and social capital, and has destroyed the Iraqi infrastructure. This substantially lowers the quality of life, leads to the inability to provide essential services and renders state-building activities even more difficult. In line with the policy of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, the article also emphasizes the need for reconciliation between the various groups in Iraq, an end to sectarian tensions and the preservation of the country's territorial unity as the ultimate resolution of the Iraqi question.

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The less discussed, if not totally ignored, aspect of the Iraqi crisis is the human tragedy that is unfolding amidst conflict and war in that country. It is a cliché to say that war is the cause of serious human losses and suffering. Furthermore, the perception of human tragedy in terms of the numbers of dead and wounded transforms it into a mechanical issue, ignoring its ''human'' dimension. Seen thus, human tragedy is interpreted as war losses. There is also the view that if the war is a just one, a certain degree of tolerance towards war losses is required. The widespread media coverage of the day-to-day violence in Iraq and other parts of the world also helps make this human tragedy an ordinary event, a mere news item.

Many instances could be cited in which human tragedy is treated as a sad but almost commonplace issue. This approach is problematic and should be critically evaluated, especially in the case of Iraq. The lack of insight into the nature and severity of the human tragedy in Iraq leads to an underestimation of its seriousness. The agenda is entirely taken over by the conflict, and the inadequate attention given to the human dimension may also result in failures in the provision of security in Iraq. A shift from a state-centric understanding of security to the provision of security at the human level is essential.

In this article I shall assess the human tragedy in Iraq. The following analysis is not limited to Iraq alone and may be applied to other war and conflict areas. Efforts to bring about a better world would best be served by establishing a framework in which the struggle against chaos, instability and insecurity in conflict areas is focused on human security. To build such a framework it is first essential to understand and discuss the human tragedy in conflict zones. My analysis will be organized in four parts. First, I shall deal with the human losses in Iraq; this is necessary to comprehend the nature and severity of the human tragedy there. Second, I shall deal with the loss of social capital in Iraq, so as to have a qualified discussion on one particular aspect of the human tragedy. Third, I shall elaborate on the destruction of the Iraqi infrastructure, which has a direct bearing on the daily needs of the Iraqi people; in the case of Iraq, recovery from human tragedy is also related to reconstruction activities there. Fourth, I shall emphasize the need for reconciliation between the various groups in Iraq, an end to sectarian tensions and the preservation of Iraq's territorial unity as the ultimate resolution of the Iraqi question. My analysis will be developed from the bottom up, namely from individual to state, while trying to cover human tragedy in a comprehensive way.

From state-centric security to a human-level understanding of security

Human tragedy is not only the tragedy of the individual or the society to which he or she belongs, but also a deep pain which leaves a lasting mark on future generations. Legitimacy is of concern for the future of humanity, as it is shaped around the idea of justice for and fair treatment of individuals and communities. What is best for the future of humanity is to pursue these relations in a way that would minimize human suffering. In this sense, alleviating the pain of one single individual is a huge responsibility. The more this requirement is placed in jeopardy, the more problems there will be awaiting us.

A bottom-up approach

Building a stable and secure future is related to solving current conflicts. This does not mean that no attempt is being made to put an end to ongoing wars and conflicts. What I wish to underline is the need to rethink security in conflict areas

by taking approaches with a stronger human orientation. The point of reference should be human tragedy, which will bring to the fore the pain and suffering at the individual level. This bottom-up approach to conflicts would lead to a more sensitive treatment of human suffering, as well as guaranteeing societal and state security. There is no dilemma of choice between comprehensive security measures and thinking of security provision in terms of human security. In addition, such a new approach will fill the gaps in security management and will set out a new framework designed to bring emancipation from human tragedy.

Human losses

What we have seen in Iraq since the invasion of 2003 is the worst human tragedy of the early twenty-first century. The invasion took place with the aim of freeing and democratizing Iraq; instead, what has unfolded in Iraq is enormous human loss and suffering. Each day we hear of many people being killed or injured. Death has been a part of daily life. Children playing with toy guns anywhere in the world are considered to be doing something normal. But the children in Iraq have seen guns more than any other children in the world. What they see is that guns are ending human lives indiscriminately, the victims ranging in age from newborn babies to the elderly. Although these children may find it hard to understand whether the gunfire is real or only a game, the human tragedy they have been part of is very real indeed.

Denial of human tragedy

When we watch, with a sense of irony, reports showing Iraqi children playing with toy guns, we are also witnessing a widespread denial of the human tragedy in Iraq. I would like to stress that media symbolism of that kind is an attempt to present snapshots of that tragedy. Although those attempts merit appreciation, we need to go beyond such symbolism and understand the issue as a whole. We should draw another picture giving the fullest possible portrayal of the human tragedy and losses in Iraq. Nor should that tragedy be presented as being specific to Iraq alone. As we can see from the attacks on New York, the London and Madrid bombings, the twin terrorist attacks in Istanbul and the attacks in Mumbai and Bali, human tragedy may strike at any moment. We live in a world of profound insecurity. The absence of reliable statistics on the Iraqi casualties in the first year of the war gives the impression that the real casualty numbers could be much higher than generally assumed. Table 1 shows an overall increase in human losses in Iraq. It can also be observed that of the total number of Iraqi deaths, the percentage of Iraqi civilian deaths is much higher than that of Iraqi Security Forces deaths and has been steadily rising since 2005, although the number of persons killed decreased in the second half of 2007.

It may be held that Iraq was responsible for the new insecurity in the region and that the foreign powers came to Iraq to contain the threat of "terror

and weapons of mass destruction" that the country presented. In other words, they were invading Iraq to put an end to terror at its very source. This view clearly has serious pitfalls, as we now look at the consequences of the invasion. First, whatever the mistakes of the Iraqi government before invasion may have been, they do not justify the worst human tragedy of the twenty-first century. In addition, the foreign powers in Iraq failed to find any connection to an international terror network, nor did they discover any weapons of mass destruction there.

Table 1. *Iraqi deaths, 2005–2007, by month*

Year	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May.	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
2005												
Civilians	n/a	n/a	257	301	573	469	518	1,524	645	463	598	344
Security forces	109	103	176	199	270	296	304	295	235	215	179	193
Total deaths	109	103	433	500	843	765	822	1,819	880	678	777	537
2006												
Civilians	594	707	930	823	970	755	1,066	2,733	3,393	1,315	1,742	1,629
Security forces	189	158	191	215	150	133	221	233	150	226	123	123
Total deaths	783	865	1121	1,038	1,120	888	1,287	2,966	3,543	1,541	1,865	1,752
2007												
Civilians	1,711	2,864	2,769	1,525	1,789	1,148	1,511	1,998	753	571	99*	–
Security forces	91	150	215	301	198	197	237	76	96	114	19*	–
Total deaths	1,802	3,014	2,984	1,826	1,987	1,345	1,748	2,074	849	685	118*	–

Source: *Iraq Coalition Casualty Count*, available at http://icasualties.org/oif/IraqiDeathsByYear.aspx (last visited 7 November 2007).
Note: *As of 7 Nov 2007.

The expansion of terrorist activities

There is another issue that adds insult to injury. It was only after the invasion that international terror networks found fertile ground and a safe haven in Iraq. Neither the Iraqi government nor foreign powers are capable of preventing the mushrooming terror activities in Iraq. In the age of the so-called "war against terror", the foreign powers created a suitable environment for terror networks to harm the Iraqi people and other neighbouring countries and to undermine international security. The Iraqi branch of Al Qaeda has struck out at Jordan, one of the region's stable and secure countries, and the Kurdish PKK terror organization attacks civilian and military targets in Turkey from the mountainous territory of northern Iraq. The existence of terror organizations in Iraq not only aggravates the human tragedy there but also poses the threat of smaller-scale tragedies elsewhere in that region and probably worldwide, since terror can now reach out globally.

Iraqi people are paying too high a cost and are not responsible for the form taken by those exactions. We should recognize this fact and always consciously strive to be just to the Iraqi people. We must do so to avoid placing international legitimacy and law in jeopardy. The Iraqi human tragedy is likely to have a long-lasting impact on the international and regional order. It has now become a litmus test for the sensitivity of international society to an ongoing human tragedy and the capability of addressing it. If the human being is still at the heart of modern society's concept of humanity, it is high time to demonstrate those values, norms and ethical considerations vis-à-vis the human tragedy in Iraq.

Adopting a holistic approach

We certainly do not need media presence and symbolism to understand the Iraqi human tragedy. The sufferings in Iraq express themselves more loudly than any story written about them. There is nothing more universal than a mother's cry, the pain in the face of a wounded person or fear in the midst of gunfire. What is needed here is a holistic approach. We are living in an age of interdependence. We are a small part of each other. If we are to have justice in this new world, we need to feel the pain of the Iraqis, since we all have something in common with them. Anything short of this holistic approach will fail to assess the true nature of the human tragedy in Iraq, but will instead breed a conflict-based philosophy that will operate destructively at the expense of others.

The destruction of social capital

There is no hierarchy for consideration of individual suffering. However, the loss of social capital is an important issue and should be analysed on its own. It is likely to create long-term challenges that will complicate the task of ending the human tragedy in Iraq. The destruction of social capital paves the way for a substantially diminished quality of life and imposes an additional burden on state-building activities.

In terms of social capital, Iraq was one of the richest Arab countries. It has always been characterized by a high level of literacy and numerous university graduates and professionals such as teachers, doctors, civil servants and artists. In the present circumstances there can be no further talk of such a wealth of human resources. The Iraqi quagmire quickly eroded the base of social capital and the tough conditions forced such people to migrate to other countries. Those still in Iraq are working under enormous strain and threats and deserve genuine appreciation. It should likewise not be overlooked that more than 2 million Iraqis are estimated to have been displaced within Iraq (table 2). As table 3 shows, 40 per cent of those who have fled Iraq are from the professional class.

The traditional role of women in Iraq has begun to disappear. Iraqi women used to have a high level of literacy and were active in almost all areas of professional life. In the present conditions they are afraid of going out into the

street, let alone taking their well-deserved place in professional life. In terms of social capital Iraq is now one of the worst countries in the Arab world. This is an extremely sad situation and shows how quickly and easily war and conflict can destroy the social capital of a country.

Table 2. *Iraqi refugees living abroad, September 2007*

Iraqi refugees living abroad	2.2–2.4 million
Iraqi refugees in Syria	1.4–1.5 million
Iraqi refugees in Jordan	700,000–750,000
Iraqi refugees in Egypt, Lebanon, Iran	175,000–200,000
Iraqi refugees in the Gulf states	200,000
Iraqi asylum applications in industrialized countries (2006)	22,155

Source: Brookings Institution, "Iraq Index tracking variables of reconstruction and security post-Saddam Iraq", 29 October 2007, p. 29, available at www.brookings.edu/iraqindex (last visited 30 November 2007).

Table 3. *Migration indicators, May/June 2006*

New passports issued since August 2005	More than 2 million
Letters issued by Ministry of Education to release academic records to other countries	39,554
Percentage of professional class that has left since 2003	40%

Source: Brookings Institution, "Iraq Index tracking variables of reconstruction and security post-Saddam Iraq", 29 October 2007, p. 53, available at www.brookings.edu/iraqindex (last visited 30 November 2007).

The absence of civil society

The Iraqi state is unable to cater to people's daily needs. A serious consequence is that people may give up working for their future. There is cause for concern about how the Iraqi state treats its citizens in the current circumstances – and how individuals are treating each other, considering the chaos, fear and lack of hope in the country. Given these conditions, can we expect the development of freedom of thought, a civil society and the constructive engagement of people in state-building activities?

The answer is unfortunately not a positive one. The domestic struggle for power in Iraq does not allow the emergence of a functional and operational civil society, so at the moment there is virtually none. The media operate under strict scrutiny (table 5) and at considerable risk, for journalists have been one of the most targeted groups in Iraq. The existence of civil society institutions does not automatically mean that they are working. There is an enormous need for civil society activities in Iraq to build trust throughout Iraqi society.

Table 4. *Doctors in Iraq*

Iraqi physicians registered before the 2003 invasion	34,000
Iraqi physicians who have left Iraq since the 2003 invasion	17,000 (approx.)
Iraqi physicians murdered since the 2003 invasion	2,000
Iraqi physicians kidnapped	250
Average salary of an Iraqi physician	7.5 million Iraqi dinars (US$ 5,100) per annum
Annual graduates from Iraqi medical schools	2,250
Percentage of above who will work outside of Iraq	20%

Source: Brookings Institution, "Iraq Index tracking variables of reconstruction and security post-Saddam Iraq", 29 October 2007, p. 43, available at www.brookings.edu/iraqindex (last visited 30 November 2007).

Survival strategies

The fabric of society has unravelled. A societal structure is important for shaping a country's norms, values and daily course of life. In Iraq, it has been replaced by despair and fear: the ethical code of conduct in societal interaction and state–society relations has given way in Iraq to survival strategies. The most negative impact of such a situation is the loss of individual integrity and self-esteem.

Table 5. *Index of press freedom 2007*

156	Sri Lanka	67.8
157	Iraq	67.8
158	Palestine	69.8
159	Somalia	71.5

Source: Brookings Institution, "Iraq Index tracking variables of reconstruction and security post-Saddam Iraq", 29 October 2007, p. 35, available at www.brookings.edu/iraqindex (last visited 30 November 2007). The Index rated 169 countries on the basis of a questionnaire with 50 criteria for assessing the degree of press freedom in each country. It includes every kind of violation directly affecting journalists (such as murders, imprisonment, physical attacks and threats) and news media (censorship, confiscation issues, searches and harassment). In addition to abuses attributable to the state, those carried out by armed militias, clandestine organizations or pressure groups are also taken into account. The lower the score attained, the higher the degree of press freedom in the respective country. Although no specific information is given on how the overall score was compiled, the top-rated countries (Finland, Iceland, Ireland and the Netherlands) received an overall score of 0.75, with those in the middle (Cambodia and Liberia) receiving a score of 25.3. The overall average score for the Index was 31.5. Iraq is among the 20 countries with the lowest degree of press freedom, due among other things to the dangerous environment in which journalists have to work.

Of course, we should not forget that the suffering and psychological trauma of the Iraqi people did not start with the last war. The crimes of a repressive regime, coupled with the detrimental effects of the Iraq–Iran War, the Gulf War and the ensuing international sanctions, had already badly damaged the social fabric of the nation.

The destruction of the infrastructure

Another Iraqi dilemma is the transformation from an urban society to a weak society with little or no remaining infrastructure. The loss of economic and industrial infrastructure can easily be identified, but in Iraq it goes further, for the educational, health, cultural and artistic infrastructures have also been destroyed. In the ordeal of the ongoing human tragedy, the richest nation in terms of artistic and cultural events in the Arab world has left these qualities behind. It is indeed not a transformation but a deterioration of the quality of life that has taken place in Iraq. This weak society has to contend with the constraints of a destroyed urban environment. The disappearance of urban life poses a long-term challenge for state-building and societal security in Iraq.

The school system

Iraq's school system used to be seen as a model of Arab education. It has, however, been in continuous decline after twenty-five years of dictatorship, wars and sanctions. The international aid provided for education since 2004 has been unable to change this sharp decline and indicators show a precipitous decrease in quality since 2003.[1] In December 2006, groups such as the Iraq Students and Youth League estimated an attendance rate of only 6 per cent at Baghdad University.[2] The reason for this low attendance is the danger of violence to and kidnapping of students, faculty and even Education Ministry staff. During the same period, schools at every level in Anbar and Diyala provinces were shut down because of widespread insecurity. Moreover, international human rights groups and Iraqi officials estimate that between 169 and 300 academics were assassinated between 2003 and 2006.[3]

According to the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), approximately 50 per cent of the displaced are children under 18 – that is, over half a million children. And at least 220,000 of them are of school-going age. Claire Hajaj, Communications Officer with UNICEF in Iraq, has pointed out that "Many schools are being overwhelmed by an influx of displaced students. Often, there's simply not enough space to accommodate them all."[4]

1   Online NewsHour, "Iraqi education system caught in crossfire of continued conflict", 12 February 2007, available at http://www.pbs.org/newshour/indepth_coverage/middle_east/iraq/jan-june07/infrastructure_02-12.html (last visited 7 January, 2008).
2   Ibid.
3   Ibid.
4   IRIN, Humanitarian News and Analysis, "Iraq: Aid agencies struggle to support over two million displaced Iraqis", available at http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=75246 (last visited 2 December, 2007).

Table 6. *Education indicators*

Percentage of Iraqi boys of high school age enrolled in 2004	50%
Percentage of Iraqi girls of high school age enrolled in 2004	35%
Percentage of Iraq's 3.5 million students attending class in April 2007	30%

Source: Brookings Institution, "Iraq Index tracking variables of reconstruction and security post-Saddam Iraq", 29 October 2007, p. 44, available at www.brookings.edu/iraqindex (last visited 2 December 2007). The education statistics do not include the Kurdish regions, which are administratively separate.

Deindustrialization

Iraq has now become one of the least developed countries in the region. The lack of electricity and energy resources, the scarcity of water, the pollution and serious problems in municipal services, among other things, are negatively influencing the quality of life. There is hardly any economic activity other than providing logistic support to Iraqi military and foreign powers. The road network is not safe and is badly damaged after almost five years of conflict. The deindustrialization of Iraq is also a major problem.

It is the duty of a state to provide the necessary infrastructure for economic activity and other realms of life. However, the Iraqi state is in a dual dilemma: it is neither able to reconstruct the country's infrastructure, nor is it capable of providing the services needed by society there. Thus besides directly hurting the Iraqi people, the lack of infrastructure is also a major obstacle to providing vital services for them. Current resources are mostly allocated to meet immediate needs; this is not a sustainable project without planning long-term investments in reconstruction of the infrastructure. Iraq's high rate of inflation is the biggest challenge to economic stability. Inflation in 2006 averaged 50 per cent, well above the International Monetary Fund (IMF) revised 2006 target of 30 per cent.[5] Estimates of unemployment vary from 13.4 per cent to 60 per cent. International organizations are trying to provide food aid to more than 3.7 million malnourished children and other family members.[6]

Prioritizing security

In the absence of infrastructure, the most efficient public bodies have been prisons and detention centres. One aspect of the human tragedy in Iraq is mass detention.

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5   "Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq, March 2007", Report to Congress, in accordance with the Department of Defense Appropriations Act 2007 (Public Law 109–289, Section 9010), available at http://www.defenselink.mil/home/pdf/9010_March_2007_Final_Signed.pdf (last visited 7 January 2008).

6   Ibid.

Table 7. *Detentions in Iraq*

	Held by the Coalition	Held by the Iraqi government	Total
	(numbers rounded to nearest hundred)		
Jan. 2004	8,500	–	8,500
June 2004	6,400	–	6,400
Nov. 2004	8,300	–	8,300
Apr. 2005	10,000	–	10,00
June 2005	10,000	5,000	15,000
Oct. 2005	11,600	11,800	23,400
Dec. 2005	14,000	12,000	26,000
Feb. 2006	14,200	15,300	29,500
Apr. 2006	15,400	13,300	28,700
June 2006	12,600	15,200	27,800
Aug. 2006	13,600	22,000	35,600
Oct. 2006	13,600	15,700	29,300
Dec. 2006	14,500	15,200	29,700
Mar. 2007	17,900	19,800	37,700

Source: Global Policy Forum, ''War and occupation in Iraq June 2007'', ch. 4, on unlawful detention, p. 39, available at http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/issues/iraq/occupation/report/full.pdf (last visited 2 December 2007).

As table 7 shows, the number of prisoners held by the Iraqi forces and the Multinational Forces was 37,700 in March 2007. Without exception, the UN institutions and the international civil society organizations all underscored the unacceptable conditions in Iraq, which may be characterized as the growing number of detainees without access to lawyers. If attention is given to the reports on serious human rights violations in Iraqi prisons and detention centres, the legacy of the Abu Ghraib prison scandal seems to be still with us. One of the most salient features of the Iraq war has been the cruel and utterly inhuman methods used in dealing with Iraqi civilians, including women and children, when raiding homes or when targeting locations for bombardment without considering the human cost involved.

Iraq's public finances are largely spent on security – that is, to finance the Iraqi army and police forces. The priority is given to state security. This is a fair and wise idea. However, state security should be handled together with societal security, namely by investing in reconstruction of the infrastructure – building facilities such as schools and hospitals – in order to alleviate the people's suffering and address their needs to some extent. The absence of the necessary infrastructure also entails losses in social capital. The crucial point is that no one is in a position to decide on the ''value of life'' in Iraq. Insecurity should therefore not be tolerated, either for the state or for the people.

What future for Iraq?

The human tragedy described above is a serious issue in today's world. The only way forward is to mobilize all possible support to end it. While no one can completely assess such a far-reaching tragedy, our analysis does show that the human tragedy in Iraq extends beyond our current perception of the situation there and may get even worse. The various statistics all underline this serious situation, and progress to date in addressing it is not promising.

In retrospect, it is clear that the decision to establish the sectarian-based "Governing Council" designed and imposed by Paul Bremer, the first new ruler of Iraq in the aftermath of the war, fuelled the sectarian differences and paved the way for the ensuing sectarian violence. The current situation is not the fault of the Iraqi people. It is problematic to determine who is responsible for such a human tragedy.

The human being is at the centre of the universe, for as the Holy Qur'an states, the life of an individual is as valuable as the whole of humanity. If we accept this as a universal principle, we will have no hesitation in helping Iraqis in the name of humanity. Anything that falls short of such an attitude will lead to serious questioning of the ethical values of our contemporary world vis-à-vis the human being.

Large-scale internal and external displacement of Iraqi civilians, sectarian and ethnic violence, death threats, killings, abductions and problems of housing, food, water, education and health problems are urgent issues that must be resolved to alleviate the distress and suffering of the Iraqi people. It is in our hands to stop this human tragedy by joining together in our hearts and uniting our efforts to assist the people of Iraq, regardless of their religion, sect or ethnic origin. The noble burden of building a stable, secure and united Iraq rests on the shoulders of both Iraqis and those who feel that human tragedy and suffering must not shape the twenty-first century.

The contribution of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference

While some improvements in the security situation in some regions now give cause for hope, the overall situation in Iraq continues to be a major concern for the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC), which is deeply committed to helping the people of Iraq. For this purpose, an OIC Ministerial Contact Group was recently established to create a task force to follow very closely the developments in Iraq and suggest practical measures conducive to assisting the government of Iraq to face the daunting challenges. The first meeting of the Contact Group was held in New York in September 2007 alongside the Annual Co-ordination Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of OIC member states. This body at ministerial level should visibly increase the Organisation's contribution to the establishment of lasting peace and security in Iraq.

In the OIC's view, the situation in Iraq needs an intermeshed range of measures to achieve security, stability and development. These measures should help above all to stop violence and sectarian infighting and achieve national reconciliation. The OIC tackled one of the main obstacles to the national reconciliation process, namely the sectarian violence, by bringing together thirty high-ranking representatives of Iraq's major Sunni and Shiite religious authorities in October last year in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, where they signed an important document known as the ''Mecca Declaration''.[7] The initiative, based on the principles inherent in the tolerant and noble values of Islam which prohibit killings, displacements, destruction of houses of worship and any other similar acts, was aimed at ensuring the sanctity of human life and putting an end to the bloodshed in Iraq. These efforts by the Organisation of the Islamic Conference and the scholars who worked together to produce the document, and the Mecca Declaration itself, met with a resounding welcome from Islamic authorities and leaders the world over. Sunni and Shiite religious leaders in Iraq and elsewhere expressed their full support for the call to ban bloodshed and the violation of property and the sacred principles of Islam.

The OIC General Secretariat will soon reactivate this process. It is conducting consultations with stakeholders, including the government of Iraq, on how to build on the Mecca Declaration, and envisages convening another meeting to help promote national reconciliation in Iraq. At the same time, the OIC General Secretariat is now completing the final preparations to open an OIC office in Baghdad. It has already appointed an ambassador from an OIC member state. With this presence in the field, the Secretariat will be able to increase direct contacts, extend services and follow up initiatives. It also plans to dispatch a high-level OIC delegation, comprising representatives of the OIC General Secretariat, specialized and affiliated OIC institutions and the OIC Contact Group, to Iraq in order to discuss with the authorities the urgent needs of Iraq in different domains as part of our share in implementing the International Compact.[8] This will be followed by my official visit to Iraq in the near future.

A major element in the growing optimism of the OIC is based on the premise of a stronger role of the United Nations in Iraq, supported by the international community within the framework of the new mandate stipulated in Security Council Resolution 1770.[9] We have been also very much reassured and encouraged by the International Compact drawn up by the government of Iraq and the United Nations. Meanwhile, the OIC continues to emphasize the need to

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7   Declaration available at http://www.oic-oci.org/oicnew/english/conf/iraq-meeting/mekka-doc.htm (last visited 2 December 2007).

8   The International Compact is an initiative of the government of Iraq for a new partnership with the international community. Its purpose is to achieve a national vision for Iraq which aims to consolidate peace and pursue political, economic and social development over the next five years. See http://www.iraqcompact.org/en/about.asp (last visited on 2 December 2007).

9   UN Security Council Resolution 1770 (2007), UN Doc. S/RES/1770 (2007), expanding the UN role in Iraq and UNAMI's mandate by twelve months.

respect the sovereignty of Iraq and its territorial integrity and people's unity, and rejects any call for its division.

The Organisation of the Islamic Conference, with all its institutions, will continue its co-operation and efforts at all levels with a view to bringing lasting peace and well-being to Iraq. We have no choice but to continue our endeavours to bring about a peaceful, stable and prosperous Iraq and to end the human tragedy in that country.