



Woodrow Wilson
International
Center
for Scholars

*Conflict Prevention Project
Middle East Project*



WOMEN
WAGING
PEACE

Winning the Peace Conference Report

Women's Role in Post-Conflict Iraq



Supplemental Materials

Contents

Introduction to Winning the Peace: Women’s Role in Post-Conflict Iraq	3
Day One Proceedings	
Opening Remarks	5
Roundtable Discussions	
<i>Advancing Women’s Participation in Democracy, Governance, and Public Decision-Making</i>	7
<i>Advancing Women’s Economic Rights and Empowerment</i>	11
<i>Advancing Women’s Interests in Constitutional Law and Legislation</i>	15
<i>Advancing Women’s Participation in Civil Society</i>	19
Day Two Proceedings	
Opening Remarks	24
Panel Discussion I: Women in Iraq, Future Prospects	
<i>Moderated by Carla Koppell, Interim Director of the Conflict Prevention Project, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars</i>	
Zainab Al-Suwaij, Executive Director, American Islamic Congress <i>Women’s Role in Transition: The Current Situation</i>	26
Nasreen Sideek, Minister of Reconstruction and Development, Kurdistan Regional Government, Northern Iraq <i>Looking Forward: Opportunities Created by Reconstruction</i>	27
Hattie Babbitt, Senior Vice President, Hunt Alternatives Fund <i>Key Findings from Monday’s Women Waging Peace Sessions</i>	29
Question and Answer Period	31
Panel Discussion II: Key Issues in Transition	
<i>Moderated by Haleh Esfandiari, Consulting Director, Middle East Program, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars</i>	
Abdulaziz A. Sachedina, Professor of Islamic and Shi’ite Studies, University of Virginia <i>Religion in Democratizing Iraq</i>	34

Zainab Salbi, President, Women for Women International <i>Relief and Humanitarian Assistance</i>	35
Rakiah Al-Kayssi, Researcher, Iraqi Jurist Association <i>Transitional Justice</i>	37
Sanam Anderlini, Director, Policy Commission, Women Waging Peace <i>Demobilization and Reintegration of Soldiers and Reform of the Security Sector</i>	38
Question and Answer Period	41
Group Discussion: Previous Day's Findings and Conclusions	44
Appendices	
Appendix 1: Agenda	49
Appendix 2: Participant Biographical Information	52
Appendix 3: List of Participants and Experts	57

Introduction to Winning the Peace: Womens' Role in Post-Conflict Iraq

Sponsored by the Conflict Prevention and Middle East Projects of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and Women Waging Peace

Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and Women Waging Peace Offices
Washington, D.C.

April 21-22, 2003

Rapporteur: Annemarie Brennan

Principle Conference Organizers: Haleh Esfandiari, Swanee Hunt, and Carla Koppell¹

The crucial role women can—and should—play in Iraqi reconstruction was the focus of a forum on April 21 and 22, 2003, in Washington, D.C. “Winning the Peace: Women’s Role in Post-Conflict Iraq” was hosted by the Conflict Prevention and Middle East Projects of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and Women Waging Peace, a global initiative of Hunt Alternatives Fund. Twenty-six Iraqi women participated in the meeting—some expatriates living in the United States, Europe, or the Middle East; others living in Iraq. Among the participants were the first woman to be appointed judge in Iraq, the Minister of Reconstruction and Development of the Kurdistan Regional Government in Northern Iraq, and the President of Iraq’s Assyrian Women’s Union. More than 60 experts from non-governmental organizations and key international and U.S. agencies—including the World Bank, United Nations, U.S. Department of State, U.S. Department of Defense, and U.S. Agency for International Development—participated in discussions.

Hailing the end of Saddam Hussein’s regime and looking toward the future, the Iraqi women, who came from different political, ethnic, and religious groups, cited the notable lack of consideration regarding the participation, concerns, rights, and particular needs of the majority of the country’s population—its women. Discussion focused on the inclusion of women in four vital sectors of Iraqi administration: democracy and governance, economic activity, constitutional law and legislation, and civil society.

Participants reached conclusions regarding key ways to integrate women into reconstruction. On the first day of the conference, Iraqi women met with sector experts and policymakers in working groups to identify the most pressing needs and the most important potential contributions of women in Iraq. They arrived

at a set of findings—steps they felt would most effectively advance the role of women in post-conflict Iraq.

Michael Van Dusen, Deputy Director of the Wilson Center, opened the second day of the conference. The session began with introductions by Ambassador Swanee Hunt, founder and Chair of Women Waging Peace; Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson of Texas; and Charlotte Ponticelli, Senior Coordinator for International Women's Issues at the U.S. Department of State. The subsequent panel focused on future prospects for Iraqi women. Speakers were Executive Director of the American Islamic Congress Zainab Al-Suwaij, Reconstruction and Development Minister of the Kurdistan Regional Government in Northern Iraq Nasreen Mustafa Sideek, and Senior Vice President of Hunt Alternatives Fund Ambassador Hattie Babbitt. A second panel addressed key issues in the transition to self-government, specifically the role of religion in society, humanitarian assistance, and security sector reform. Four panelists gave presentations: Professor of Islamic and Shi'ite Studies at the University of Virginia Abdulaziz A. Sachedina, President of Women for Women International Zainab Salbi, Researcher at the Iraqi Jurist Association Rakiah Al-Kayssi, and Director of the Women Waging Peace Policy Commission Sanam Anderlini.

Following these morning sessions, Iraqi women participants presented the previous day's findings and conclusions. The group refined work from the previous day, fine-tuning recommendations and timelines for the successful inclusion of women in Iraqi development.

1. Annemarie Brennan is a program assistant at Hunt Alternatives Fund and Women Waging Peace. Haleh Esfandiari is the consulting director of the Middle East Project at the Woodrow Wilson Center. Swanee Hunt is the founder and chair of Hunt Alternatives Fund and Women Waging Peace and director of the Women and Public Policy Program and Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government. Carla Koppell is the interim director of the Conflict Prevention Project at the Woodrow Wilson Center and the deputy director of the Hunt Alternatives Fund office in Washington, D.C.

Day One Proceedings

Opening Remarks

As the first day of the conference began, the 25 Iraqi women, who came from Iraq and the diaspora, gathered in the Washington, D.C., offices of Hunt Alternatives Fund and Women Waging Peace. Ambassador Swanee Hunt, chair of the Fund, and founder and chair of “Waging,” welcomed participants. She said she was glad to see that the relationship between the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and Women Waging Peace had led to this gathering of Iraqi women—the first such group to come together for a discussion on the future of the country. This meeting, and the specific findings that those present would generate, Hunt said, would help to deepen policymakers’ understanding of the role of women in the reconstruction of Iraq.

Hunt introduced participants to the work and goals of Women Waging Peace. Launched at Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government, the initiative is currently a program of Hunt Alternatives Fund, a private foundation that advances innovative and inclusive approaches to social change. Waging advocates for the full participation of women in formal and informal peace processes around the world, Hunt said. She mentioned the initiative’s continued ties to the Kennedy School of Government, which hosts an annual executive program that brings women from the Waging network together to exchange strategies and meet with policymakers, who come for the last day of the program.

Haleh Esfandiari, consulting director of the Middle East Project at the Wilson Center, outlined the activities scheduled for the two-day conference. Participants would spend the first day at the Waging office, discussing the situation in Iraq in terms of women’s roles in governance, civil society, constitutional and legislative processes, and the economy; they would also develop strategies for the inclusion of women in these areas. The second day would be held at the Wilson Center and would feature two public panels and further discussions about the conclusions from the previous day.

The Middle East Project was launched in February 1998, in light of the importance of the region to the United States and the profound changes nations in the region are experiencing. Looking beyond day-to-day events, the Project’s aim is to focus instead on long-term developments in the region. Its meetings deal with the policy implications of regional developments; regional political, economic, and social problems; American interests in the region; the Middle East in the international system; energy resources; and strategic threats to and from the region.

The Project organizes meetings on the role of women in Middle Eastern societies. Among the subjects covered are employment; legal rights; political participation; the role women might play in advancing civil society; and the attitudes of governments, the intelligentsia, and the religious community toward women’s issues.

Hunt Alternatives Fund Senior Vice President Ambassador Hattie Babbitt reiterated the goal of Women Waging Peace: to change the public policy paradigm so women are fully included throughout formal and informal peace processes. Working with policymakers over the next two days would allow the Iraqi women to demonstrate the value of women's involvement, she noted.

Babbitt yielded the floor to Women Waging Peace Director Robyn Champion, who told those present more about the initiative. The more than 200 members of the Waging network, all demonstrated leaders with varied backgrounds, perspectives, and skills, bring a vast array of expertise to the peacemaking process as they work to avert war, stop it once it starts, and stabilize post-conflict situations once fighting has ended. They have met with more than 1000 senior policy shapers to collaborate on fresh, workable solutions to long-standing conflicts. Champion explained that the group's Policy Commission is researching and documenting women's activities in conflict prevention, negotiation and post-conflict reconstruction in some 15 conflict areas; these studies will provide models to encourage policymakers to include women and gender perspectives in their program designs.

Champion also outlined the annual Women and Power executive program. Designed for senior executive women from public and nonprofit sectors who have a keen interest in public work, and for private sector executives who have demonstrated an interest in public leadership, the program hones the skills and abilities of women to move between public, nonprofit, and corporate worlds to create successful alliances and build enduring partnerships.

Interim Director of the Conflict Prevention Project and Deputy Director of the Hunt Alternatives Fund Washington office Carla Koppell then introduced herself as the "human bridge" between the two days of the conference. With a background that includes the study of non-traditional threats to human and international security, Koppell spoke briefly about the destabilizing influence of such threats.

The Conflict Prevention Project focuses high-level political attention on the need to practice prevention as policy. Using meetings, roundtables, studies, book launches, films, and regular discussions on a wide range of conflicts and causes of instability, the Project broadens understanding of how to use policy analysis and dialogue to promote conflict prevention. In building on the work of the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, it also develops strategies for conflict prevention and demonstrates how high-level political attention can shift governments' impulses from reaction to prevention.

Among the ongoing efforts of the Project are series that explore the role of women in promoting peace and stability; the ways foreign assistance can promote conflict prevention, mitigation, and reconstruction; and how non-traditional threats such as economic and social disparities, demographic trends, vacuums in governance, environmental degradation and natural resources, and health crises can be destabilizing and have implications for international security.

Roundtable Discussions

Advancing Women's Participation in Democracy, Governance, and Public Decision-Making

Facilitated by Robyn Champion, Program Director, Women Waging Peace, Hunt Alternatives Fund

Iraqi Participants:

Vanessa Denha, Tanya Gilly, Esra Naama, Bushra Perto, Raz Rasool, Jennifer Ridha, Nasreen Sideek

Resource Experts

Sanam Anderlini, Ray Jennings, Richard D. Kauzlarich, Kathy Ward, Judith S. Yaphé

Notetaker

Olja Hocev

Transparency is essential for citizen control over government structures. Participants discussed the shift to democracy in Iraq, paying particular attention to the role of women. The conversation began as one participant asked, "What is governance?" Spurred by this question, the group worked to create a loose definition of the term and determine the role women could play within Iraq's future governance structures.

In outlining what they would like to see in a future government, participants expressed a desire for Iraq to ensure separation of powers among the three main branches of government: legislative, executive, and judicial. There was much discussion about who could run for office and how elections would be executed. One participant noted the importance of selecting people for office who would serve all Iraqis and influence the larger governmental structure to do the same. The importance of having national and local governance structures was considered, as was the question of how Iraqi citizens could take part in both processes. All participants recognized the critical need to eliminate from future governments those who held positions of power in Saddam Hussein's regime. Some participants felt that they would also need to be punished. One expatriate suggested the creation of national committees to rule the country, rather than moving directly to another presidential system. The role of transitional justice structures was discussed, and a participant with extensive experience in the development assistance field encouraged the Iraqi women to make suggestions to the U.S. Office for Transitional Initiatives.

Working group members addressed the difficulties that may be encountered as Iraq develops its new government. The utter lack of civil society organizations in the country generated the most concern. Groups ordinarily considered part of civil society—trade unions, the media, and voluntary associations, among oth-

ers—were controlled by the state under Hussein. Lacking a history of independent civil society organizations, Iraqis have little or no experience holding the government accountable. The lack of transparency in past Iraqi regimes is also cause for concern: Citizens do not trust the government and have been trained not to speak out for fear of death or torture. The past government's large spy network destroyed trust within communities and families. The perception of a corrupt society—fraudulent not only in government institutions, but also within religious organizations and the wider culture—prevails, having grown considerably worse following the imposition of sanctions in 1990.

High illiteracy rates, particularity among women, present another challenge. Women now compose 55 percent of Iraq's population, and many households are headed by women. Some participants stated that, in a culture that has grown more conservative over the past 12 years, men use women as a means to achieve their personal goals and constantly abuse women's human rights.

Participants stated that some in Iraq remain loyal to Saddam Hussein and seek to undermine the new democratic processes. The constant fear with which so many Iraqis lived for so long makes many unwilling to call too loudly for a democratic and open society. Participants indicated their concern about possible consequences if one region of the country were to reform more quickly or more completely than another. There are already great differences among regions in Iraq; what if one area allows for the full participation of women and another does not?

Many women, eager to be involved in the transition to democracy, worried that they would not have time to concentrate on creating a new government, working their regular jobs, and caring for their families. Those present agreed, however, that they would take the time necessary to seek funding and participate in reconstruction regardless of their other activities. Not all were certain they would be able to travel to Iraq in the near future.

Working group participants agreed that all groups with a stake in Iraq's future should be included in decision-making, though many were uncomfortable with the idea of tribal leaders in positions of power. Central to the discussion was the inclusion of women at all levels of formal governance structures throughout the country—including in parliament and other senior-level positions. Some supported the institution of quotas or set-asides for women in these structures. All agreed that when planning for participation in governance and public decision-making, it would be important to differentiate among groups of women—those more or less educated, those from different social classes and ethnic groups, those from different parts of Iraq. There would be a need, they said, for U.S. and international organizations in Iraq to reach out to women leaders in order to hear their views on community and local needs.

Although Iraqi women noted that a very small number of women were present at the planning meeting of Iraqi leaders and U.S. government officials in Nasiriyah, Iraq, on April 15 (herein after called "the Nasiriyah meeting"), and although the participation of women in the new government was specifically

noted in that meeting's concluding statement, participants felt U.S. officials wanted to discuss only general Iraqi issues, rather than ideas of particular concern to women. Several participants had shared their views about Iraq's future with media outlets, but they had the sense that the media pursued stories about different ethnic or religious groups, but not about women. The importance of being persistent in raising women's concerns and contributions was underlined. One participant stated that timing would be key in bringing about change. "The time for these issues is now," he noted. There was some disagreement as to how hard to push for the inclusion of women—should men be forced to accept women in governance, or should they merely be encouraged?

In examining the role of women in Iraq, experts turned to other conflicts in transition to compare needs, actions, and outcomes. In this case, examples from Afghanistan, Bosnia, and Northern Ireland were referenced. One participant explained that Rwanda demonstrated the importance of including women and youth in governance structures with its women and youth councils, representatives of which appear on the general local council and in Parliament. Kosovo was highlighted as an example, given its active civil society and local women's organizations and councils; women in Kosovo helped create governing bodies and are vocal in the reconstruction of Kosovo today. One person present drew on the example of Liberia, where hour-long radio broadcasts on women's issues helped educate women about participation in government. It was also noted that Kurdish women, active in all areas of development in northern Iraq, including the drafting of the autonomous region's constitution, could be used as examples for women in the rest of the country.

All agreed that women in Iraq would benefit from training in democratic structures, governance, and public decision-making. Suggestions included having representatives of women's organizations share their experiences with women in Iraq, helping Iraqi women organize locally, and training locals in possible election processes. Also discussed was the need to educate men about women's participation in government; many felt that without men's cooperation it would be impossible to sustain women's involvement. Some felt that even with outreach to men, objection to women's participation would be strong.

A media professional pointed out that Iraqi women appear to be educated and have good ideas, but they seem voiceless. She suggested that every woman who participated in *Winning the Peace* try to reach out to the public. They could raise awareness of the need for women's involvement in the development of Iraq's public decision-making structures, she said, by writing op-eds for the local paper or contacting local and national representatives.

The question of the Iraqi diaspora's participation was raised. Many felt the need for the diaspora community to help Iraq rebuild; overall sentiment favored having those who left Iraq share their expertise and help create a better future. Some participants suggested having women's groups in the United States or United Kingdom reach out to women's organizations in Iraq; the Kosovo Action Coalition was cited as an example of a diaspora community at work in the

United States. Conversely, one woman present shared her concern that instability could result if the international community floods Iraq with experts.

Ultimately, all participants called for trust building, accountability, and transparency in Iraq's new government. It was agreed that Iraqis should have access to decision-makers and should feel comfortable expressing their opinions. Great effort would be needed to build the legitimacy of a new system. Participants felt that Iraqis would need to craft an accessible, transparent system that excluded former members of Saddam Hussein's regime. Many cited the importance of reaching out to local Iraqi leaders, as well as U.S. and international policymakers.

Findings and Conclusions

Participants concluded that the following steps would help ensure the democratic participation of women in governance and public decision-making:

1. *Immediately* require that basic principles for U.S. operations include:
 - Procedures for identifying and appointing women within Iraq and in the diaspora to governance structures, and for establishing a consultative process involving women's groups;
 - A quota of not less than 30 percent for women in leadership posts applied to all levels of Iraqi governance, from local to national; and
 - Training and support for women in government, to ensure their capacity to lead effectively.
2. *Immediately* access existing funding opportunities:
 - Sponsor women in Iraq and the diaspora to participate in reconstruction. A database of contacts should be established for this purpose;
 - Create a coalition of Iraqi women in the diaspora to raise awareness and advocate for Iraqi women's issues, particularly within the media and government;
 - Require women's participation in contracts for reconstruction and ensure that some program funding is set aside for women.
3. *Immediately* involve women's groups in selecting leaders during the transition period.
4. *Immediately* develop and initiate media campaigns to educate Iraqi women about their rights, and highlight "success" stories of Iraqi women working at local or national levels.
5. *Medium term*, establish a national collective council for transitional leadership, and establish local committees or councils to represent communities in regional bodies and the national council. These mechanisms will ensure that women, who often are most active in non-governmental organizations, participate in decision-making.

6. *Medium term*, ensure that women have adequate support to enable their participation in governance and public administration—this would include childcare and job skills training.
7. *Medium term*, develop training for Iraqis working on gender issues, exposing them to examples of inclusive governance models, perhaps by implementing an exchange program with other countries to broaden their experience.
8. *Medium term*, design electoral processes to build capacity among women so that their participation in local elections emboldens them to run for national office.

Advancing Women's Economic Rights and Empowerment

Facilitated by Miki Jacevic, Policy Program Officer, Women Waging Peace, Hunt Alternatives Fund

Iraqi Participants

Jawhara Mansour, Agnes Merza, Tamara Quinn, Amal Rassam, Zainab Salbi, Neeran Saraf

Resource Experts

Randa Akeel, Nadereh Chamlou , Nat Colletta

Notetaker

Gloria Smith

Economic reconstruction will be central to Iraq's overall rehabilitation. To achieve a vibrant economy, it will be necessary to advance the role of Iraqi women within the country's fiscal recovery. This working group discussed the challenges women face in this sphere, as well as their strengths and ways they might enter the economy.

Many Iraqis view economic development as one of the central reasons to support a new regime. The country suffered following the imposition of sanctions in 1991; much of the population is unemployed, and 60 percent of Iraqis are dependant on aid packages distributed by the UN Oil-for-Food Program. Although most people do not currently go hungry, their futures are insecure.

The Iraqi people have high expectations for the country's economic recovery. They believe reconstruction will begin soon and move quickly, bringing jobs and wealth to Iraq. Participants emphasized that timelines for recovery should be set conservatively so expectations are realistic. Economic, food, and humanitarian aid must continue, as there are no domestic social service networks.

In the immediate future, participants felt, several steps must be taken to protect women's interests. They cited that the current lack of electricity, water, and

security has made women hesitant to leave the house, fearing rape and other forms of assault. As women head many households in Iraq, this leaves those families without resources. Basic infrastructure repair must begin as soon as possible. Iraq has many widows; participants stated that it will be important to consider their economic and social needs. Job creation for women should be the focus of attention in the short-term, so women do not resort to prostitution for income.

One participant reminded others that providing a safe environment and employment for women would not solve all problems; Iraq's social infrastructure, including its educational and childcare systems, disintegrated in the 1990s. Women's economic empowerment will need to ensure not only a woman's ability to get a job, she said, but also the knowledge that her children will be safe in her absence. Women and children's health, too long neglected, must also be addressed as economic systems in Iraq are reestablished.

In the past, women were central in Iraq's economy, though relatively few occupied leadership positions. Participants agreed Iraq should develop systems to advance qualified women to decision-making levels in business. Iraqi women will need to create a network to promote women entrepreneurs and those with technical skills, they said. There was considerable discussion in the session about the role women in the diaspora could play in initiating programs for Iraqi women's economic empowerment.

The group discussed the need for Iraqi businesses, specifically women-owned businesses, to play a part in the country's reconstruction. Women-owned businesses should be included in all subcontracting; those overseeing the contracts must ensure that these companies are also being granted work. One person suggested the development of a clearinghouse of women-owned businesses. She hoped it would enable contractors in Iraq to locate and hire qualified, women-owned businesses. Participants agreed that women's participation in the Iraqi economy should not be limited to those roles traditionally filled by women; women should be active in all sectors. Many voiced the need for an organization similar to the U.S. Small Business Administration. This office could serve as an advocate for Iraqi, women-owned businesses and provide information on the technical qualifications of these companies. Some felt this office should set a minimum percentage of contracts to be awarded to women-owned businesses.

Participants agreed that, when generating jobs in Iraq, it would be important to recall that much of the adult population of the country—both men and women—is well-educated and has significant work experience, though not necessarily recent. As Iraq's economy sank into depression in the 1990s, many men left the country to seek employment elsewhere; Iraqi women took over these jobs, much as they did during the Iran-Iraq war. More recently, however, salaries continued to decline, and even women left their jobs—the lack of childcare and transportation could not be compensated for by such low salaries.

The importance of women's role in transitional and national leadership was also raised in discussions. It was agreed that women should be included in all transitional decision-making areas. Participants concluded that all sectors of the

Iraqi economy would need to include women in leadership posts. One participant raised the issue of those in economic decision-making positions *outside* Iraq. In post-conflict economic reconstruction, the United Nations, World Bank, and international non-governmental organizations play a critical role in influencing gender empowerment—and yet, the majority of those making the decisions for Iraq are men. Participants agreed that women should be part of these systems as well.

Much was made of the dramatic difference in experience between those women who left Iraq years ago and those who remained through the end of Hussein's regime. Participants disagreed as to who would be a better judge of what economic steps need to be taken in Iraq—those who remained in the country, and therefore know the current situation better, or those who left, and therefore have more experience with functioning economies. Many felt that an organization should be created to serve as a resource for women in the country to learn more about how to play a strong role in the economy.

Tied to economic recovery are economic rights, which are linked to constitutional and legal rights. Under Iraq's 1990 constitution, women and men are equal before criminal, civil, and labor laws. But within Iraq's family law, which is based on Sharia, or religious law, women do not have the same rights as men. Without a husband's permission, women lack the ability to leave the country or seek medical treatment for their children. Women do not have equal rights with regard to inheritance and divorce. Without these rights, women cannot be considered to have full economic equality.

Ensuring economic rights and empowerment will be an important step toward ensuring equal rights for women in all spheres of life; by generating and controlling economic resources, women will gain respect and position in society. Participating in economic revival will also be a question of survival. For women-headed households shouldering the financial burdens of their families, it is imperative that the post-war situation provides opportunities for them to earn an income sufficient to maintain their dependents. As the majority of the Iraqi population, women represent enormous social capital for the country and must be fully integrated into post-war economic regeneration. Discussion participants agreed that rehabilitation of Iraq's economy will not take place without the full and active participation of women in all sectors.

Findings and Conclusions

Participants concluded that the following steps would help ensure women's economic empowerment in post-conflict Iraq:

1. *Immediately* address gender perspectives in humanitarian aid, including in the Oil for Food delivery structure. The initial stages must address groups that may have been excluded from the former structure, particularly widows, single heads of households, and women with medical and reproductive health needs.

2. *Immediately* appoint a full-time gender focal point within the Office for Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance of Iraq. The person who holds this position would need to ensure that:
 - Women-owned enterprises and businesses with gender-sensitive policies are included in reconstruction;
 - A percentage of contracts and subcontracts are awarded to women and women-led businesses; and
 - Opportunities are created for women at all socioeconomic levels, including women with limited job skills.
3. *Immediately* place women in leadership positions throughout all components of the economic and legal transition process. Ensure that women of all ethnic and religious groups are included, reflecting the diversity of Iraq's population. For this to happen successfully, create venues for training and supporting women in their leadership roles. Particular caution is needed to ensure that women and their issues do not become marginalized within a Women's Ministry; rather they should be mainstreamed throughout all businesses and government institutions.
4. In the *medium term*, institutionalize gender equality in all aspects of economic and legal reconstruction on the macro and micro levels. In particular, pay special attention to the implementation of the Beijing Conference's recommendation for a quota of 30 percent women's representation in all economic, legal, and governmental institutions.
5. *Short term*, create a women's employment agency or a database for women to seek jobs as one of many efforts to help women find employment and support women's active economic participation.
6. Any post-conflict setting typically leads to an increase in sexual trafficking and the number of prostitutes.
 - *Immediately* stop the abduction of women and girls for prostitution;
 - Beginning in the *short term*, create and enforce laws and policies to stop the promotion of prostitution and trafficking. These would include, but not be limited to, policies regarding food aid distribution and the actions of international soldiers and employees stationed in Iraq.
 - In the *medium term*, provide women who are working as prostitutes with health care, job training, and alternative economic opportunities.
7. *Long term*, create a national Iraqi organization for women professionals and business owners.

Advancing Women's Interests in Constitutional Law and Legislation

Facilitated by Ambassador Hattie Babbitt, Senior Vice President, Hunt Alternatives Fund

Iraqi Participants

Rakiah Al-Kayssi, Basma Fakri, Zakia Hakki, Pauline Jasim, Riva Khoshaba, Katrin Michael, Pascale Warda

Resource Experts

Vivien Hart, Mikaela A. McDermott, Philippa Strum

Notetaker

Annemarie Brennan

Constitutional law and legislation will form the framework of the new government in Iraq. By establishing an inclusive constitution that provides checks and balances against government mismanagement, the founders of Iraq's new legal system will help ensure a stable society. As conversation on this topic began, one participant told others that she had spent the previous weekend reading the constitutions of South Africa, Tunisia, and several other nations, as well as investigating the protocol of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). It would be important, she said, to understand what other modern constitutional drafting committees have done before making recommendations about Iraq. She noted that South Africa's constitution calls for the equal representation of men and women in all levels of government, and that the Tunisian constitution sets men and women equal before the law. Although these ideals are not always attained, it is important that they be stated as goals.

One participant, who has studied law extensively in Iraq and the United States, shared with the group some of her recommendations for the new Iraqi constitution. For the overall constitutional framework, she determined that Iraq must find a good source of law on which to base pre-constitutional proclamations. She argued that, in addition, a council in the Ministry of Justice should take the place of a minister for the time being; this council should ask for the population's help in developing the new legal environment in Iraq. Citing the need for the establishment of a representative democracy, she also stated the necessity of a secular government and equality for members of different ethnic groups, as well as women and men. She also prescribed the abolition of laws and organizations created or supported by the Ba'ath regime. Calling for the establishment of a Ministry of Family and Human Rights, she asked that a special committee be formed to oversee compensation of victims of Saddam Hussein. She advocated for prosecution and/or mandatory retirement of Ba'ath party officials guilty of human rights violations. She also called for a free press; a return to the high educational and health care standards of the past; care for internally displaced people; the creation of a social security system for the elderly and dis-

abled; the end of polygyny and forced or underage marriage; full equal rights, including reproductive rights, for women; and the creation of a strictly defensive army. She cited the successful reconstruction of West Germany and Japan as models for Iraq.

These recommendations served as a helpful catalyst for additional discussion. Many participants expressed concern that, were a constitution to be drafted immediately, the citizens of Iraq would have no say in the process, as the country does not yet have national-level, democratically elected representatives. The group agreed that a practical approach would be the drafting of two constitutions—one interim, which would be drafted by a committee selected by the international community and would set out the mechanisms for transitional governance and justice, and one long-term, which would be drafted by elected representatives and would provide guidelines for long-term legislative development. The interim constitution would provide for the election of representatives and the drafting of the long-term constitution. Believing it essential to safeguard women's rights and promote their interests, group participants advised that for each constitution, the drafting committee include a team of women lawyers, jurists, and other professionals to prevent possible violations of women's rights. The constitutions would provide for three independent branches of government: the executive, legislative, and judicial. Of these, participants felt an independent judiciary to be most critical. Without it, the constitution and other laws would be rendered meaningless, impossible to enforce.

Participants also agreed that perhaps the most important feature of Iraq's constitutions would be the absence of Sharia-influenced family law. Previous constitutions and legislation in Iraq provided for equal protection of women and men with regard to civil and criminal law, but allowed religious law to influence family statutes. Moving forward, participants argued, women must be equal to men with regard to family law as well. Women and men should have the same rights to inheritance, marriage, divorce, and child custody. Families should not be permitted to force young women to marry against their will. Honor killings and other forms of domestic violence should be prohibited.

Beyond merely eliminating inequalities, participants felt the constitution must state explicitly that women and men are equal. This assertion of gender equality would provide a framework through which demands could be made for structures and mechanisms that ultimately ensure constitutional enforcement and implementation. It would also afford legal protection for women against gender-based religious, tribal, or cultural laws and practices they oppose. More than one participant cited the South African constitution, which calls for equal representation of women in government and provides for the Commission on Gender Equality, which has a mandate to promote gender equality by recommending new legislation and advising Parliament regarding laws that affect gender equality and the status of women. Some felt that honor killing and domestic violence should be dealt with in the penal code, rather than within family law. Many participants believed it would be necessary for the constitutions to recog-

nize the ethnic and religious diversity in Iraq in an effort to reinforce pluralism and civil security.

The working group also discussed the need to ensure women's representation in government development processes, as well as within government itself. Discussion of this topic focused on finding a mechanism to bring women to the table. There was disagreement over the establishment of a quota system. Some agreed it would be important to have a "critical mass" of women to ensure their needs would be met, but were unsure about a quota. Others were concerned that a quota that was "too high" would prompt a backlash among Iraqi men. Still others argued that without a quota, the Iraqi government would be unable to ensure women's election. They cited the United States, where women have access to power structures but are rarely elected to political office—only 14 percent of U.S. Congressional representatives are women. It was finally agreed that a quota of between 30 and 50 percent would be appropriate.

Participants engaged in a similar debate over the creation of a women's ministry. Some believed a women's ministry would highlight women's concerns and guarantee them a voice within government. Others argued that channeling women's issues into a single ministry would have the opposite effect: it would isolate these issues and prevent the government from mainstreaming women's concerns. One participant suggested that an NGO be created to fulfill the role that would be played by the women's ministry. She believed lawmakers should craft a legislative framework for the efficient creation of an NGO to serve women's health, education, and domestic violence needs. This and other NGOs could advance the position, capture the talents, and service the needs of women.

Many present recognized the need for the advancement of civil society in Iraq, in the form of media, religious groups, voluntary associations, and opposition political parties. Participants agreed that a vibrant civil society would help make Iraq's new government responsible to its citizens. In most post-conflict societies, women head approximately 60 percent of civil society organizations; in Iraq, it will be vital for women to be part of this transitional system. Participants believed this would encourage the government to consider women in its laws and plans.

Any transitional system must answer the question of how to deal with those in the previous regime who committed crimes. The transitional constitution, and through it the new Iraqi government, would need to determine how to punish Ba'ath Party officials who violated human rights. Of particular importance would be the punishment of those who perpetrated crimes against women and ethnic minorities. One participant raised the importance of continuity: would the elimination of the Party's officials mean that all people previously involved in the country's administration must be removed? What would this mean for efforts to govern the country? It could be essential, others noted, that the families of perpetrators and war criminals be protected from victims seeking revenge.

Iraqis have no history of democracy. If they are to govern themselves effectively, they must be educated about the system and their role in that system.

Conference participants suggested a range of programs, including radio and television ads and series to demonstrate how women can make an impact in a democratic society. This would provide Iraqi women with an understanding of their rights and responsibilities, as well as the mechanisms by which they can make their voices heard. By deliberately reaching out to women, the international community and the Iraqi government will help ensure their participation in Iraq's future.

Findings and Conclusions

Participants concluded that the following steps would effectively advance the rights and interests of women in the development of the constitution and legislation:

1. *Immediately* form a committee of Iraqi women lawyers, as well as other qualified professionals, to define and protect women's rights and interests, and to draft principles and provisions for inclusion in any Iraqi constitution.
2. Beginning in the *short term*, with the constitutional drafting committee, recognize that, as 55 percent of the population, women must represent no less than 30 percent of all committees, bodies, and structures that are convened to plan for the reconstruction of Iraq. The same gender balance should be applied to parliamentary and other structures for the governance of Iraq.
3. In the *short term*, draft an interim constitution and draft, ratify, and legitimately adopt a permanent constitution in the *long term* that is secular and provides for:
 - the separation of powers within the government (i.e., three branches);
 - the recognition of the equality of all individuals in society;
 - the acknowledgement that Iraq is a multiethnic state;
 - the protection of the freedom of religion;
 - the inclusion of a bill of rights;
 - a guarantee that civil law predominates religious law;
 - the secular jurisdiction over issues of "family law," including all issues connected with marital rights and obligations;
 - the incorporation of appropriate principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325;
 - the design of mechanisms for transitional justice; and
 - the abolition of all existing laws and decrees that violate human rights.
4. *Medium term*, establish an independent judiciary that is trained and strengthened over the *long term*. Beginning in the *short term*, ensure that women participate actively throughout this branch of government.

5. Beginning in the *medium term*, launch an education and sensitization campaign that informs Iraqis of their constitutional and legal protections in a democratic society. This campaign will need to deliberately and proactively reach out to women (e.g., through women's radio programs and women's meetings in communities throughout the country) to ensure implementation.
6. *In the long term*, in order to heal Iraqi society, ensure that the crimes of the previous regime are revealed and perpetrators are brought to justice. Particular attention should be paid to abuses women suffered and to crimes perpetrated along ethnic lines. At the same time, the families of war criminals should be protected from liability and persecution.

Advancing Women's Participation in Civil Society

Facilitated by Ambassador Swanee Hunt, Chair, Hunt Alternatives Fund and Women Waging Peace and Director, Women and Public Policy Program, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University

Iraqi Participants

Zainab Al-Suwaij, Raya Barazanji, Paiman Halmat, Nadia Mirza
Nazaneen Rashid, Sarbagh Salih, Kanar Sarraj

Resource Experts

Kathlerine Blakeslee, Virginia M. Bouvier, Matthew Levinger, Sussan Tahmasebi

Notetaker

Camille Pampell

In any country, a viable civil society encourages government to operate responsibly, acting as a check against mismanagement and corruption. Working group members began their conversation on the subject by addressing the limited history of civil society in Iraq. Although under Saddam Hussein the country featured charitable organizations, trade unions, workers unions, a bar association, and the national Women's Federation, government control over these organizations limited their effectiveness. Truly non-governmental groups did not exist and the Ba'ath Party controlled the media, a vital component of healthy civil society.

Without a new government in place in Iraq, we cannot be certain of the nature of any future civil society; the form of structure of the future state will affect what flourishes—or does not. If the government is Islamic, civil society groups are likely be limited; if the state is federated and secular, they could grow into vital and productive institutions. One thing is certain: in creating new organizations, Iraqis will not be able to rely on groups permitted under the Hussein regime, as they lack legitimacy. Even with the “de-ba'athitization” of the media, Iraqis who knew them as mouthpieces of the regime are unlikely to

be able to trust them. New organizations must be created. Even as civil society develops, Iraqis will be hesitant to speak freely.

One participant asked how empowering women would fit into the overall scope of needs in Iraq. Unable to answer to the question, participants agreed that a system must be developed to monitor the reality on the ground and learn how best to include women in the development of civil society. They suggested a research project be funded to determine what is in place in civil society, paying particular attention to informal structures and religious groups. Donors should ensure that every agency active in Iraq has a gender plan, is hiring Iraqi men and women equally, and is doing its best to ensure an equal mix of men and women providing relief work. It was suggested that the aid delivery system could be structured to empower women in civil society as well.

Participants identified the importance of working with men for women's empowerment. In advancing the interests of women, it would be vital to collaborate with Iraqi men. Men should be allowed—and encouraged—to add their voices to the call for women's participation. Some felt it important to remember that despite a focus on women's advancement, civil society groups should not take men out of the equation. Others felt differently, arguing that men already have a stable, active role in society, whereas women have been largely excluded for the past several years.

Even in a secular system, religion will play a powerful role in Iraq's developing civil society. Secular groups should not dismiss religious charitable organizations, though there is sometimes a tendency to do so. The support of religious leaders will be critical, and regardless of the religious tradition, people will unite behind them. Tapping into these networks will be crucial, as they have the capacity to mobilize thousands of people quickly and may have access to funding.

One point of concern was noted with regard to religious organizations. In both Shi'ia and Sunni religious groups, it is rare to find women in decision-making positions. An Iraqi participant stated that Iraqi women were ready for leadership positions. "Iraqi women are intelligent, capable, smart, and educated. They are just waiting to bloom." Others agreed, noting that though traditionally blocked from these positions, women have much to offer. One participant cited the example of Transition within Tradition, a January 2002 Women and Public Policy Program conference. This program examined how women in Afghanistan could contribute to the future of their country in culturally accepted ways; it explored how Afghan women could be faithful to their heritage and their dreams of creating a better society.

A participant who attended the Nasiriyah meeting noted that at that meeting only four women were present out of more than 50 participants, and that each of those four came from outside Iraq. She stated that increasing the number of women in decision-making positions in Iraq would take considerable effort. Women have the knowledge and capacity, but they have yet to let this talent emerge. She argued that, as in the Transition within Tradition model, more Iraqi

women from conservative religious groups must be mobilized. Women's empowerment would not come from an outside group with no knowledge of the culture, she said. It must come from someone with an insider's perspective.

Trust between different ethnic and religious groups (and also between Iraqis living in-country and in the diaspora) will be critical to building Iraq's civil society and involving women in that change. There is not a history of internal conflict in Iraq, but there are sensitivities to be aware of among the Christians, Jews, Sunni, Shi'ia, and others who live there. Some have been refugees for 30 years, some for five, and others remained in Iraq throughout Saddam Hussein's long regime. Tolerance among these groups must be learned over time and will take a great deal of effort. A central factor in building trust among Iraqis will be the de-ba'athitization of the culture. Groups affiliated with the previous government will not be trusted in the future; for people to have confidence in civil society, Iraqis will not be able to use existing organizations or membership structures.

One participant noted that as aid workers travel to different communities, they will need to make special efforts to gain people's trust. After so many years of war and persecution, Iraqis will be skeptical of everyone—including Americans and NGOs. She suggested that NGOs employ Iraqi women—many of whom are well-educated—as translators; this would be an important bridge to the community and would also empower women. Others noted that aid workers should make a special effort to gain women's trust. Once someone has done so, they argued, the women's informal influence would carry over to families and neighbors.

Another participant noted that women may be able to play a special role in reconciliation and trust building within Iraq. She said that women are perceived as having a comparative advantage in these areas. This may provide a compelling reason to include women in Iraqi reconstruction at an early stage—because it will progress more easily with their mediating influence. The central role of women in building trust between groups in other conflicts was highlighted. In Northern Ireland, Kosovo, and South Africa, women were able to cross conflict lines and bring women together to rebuild their societies.

One person present asked others whether they believed help from those outside Iraq would be seen as helpful or distracting. While one participant suggested that Iraqis in the diaspora return to their areas of origin to share what they have learned abroad, other participants felt that Iraqis from the diaspora might be viewed with mistrust by those who never left the country. One woman who has lived in the United States for several years added, "In fact, I expect to be called names, to be called a traitor, a turncoat, an American agent." She went on to say that a key part of gaining trust would be delivering on promises to help. Those returning to or entering the country to aid Iraqis must be able to act quickly and contribute something people need. And they must take care, she cautioned, not to raise expectations beyond what they can deliver.

One participant who has previously worked on the integration of diaspora and in-country populations said that the presence and expertise of those in the

diaspora is not always welcome. Expatriates are useful as bridges between cultures, but they usually remain in country to help for only a short time. It is therefore key to develop the capacity of those who will remain long-term. Taking a two-pronged approach—working from inside and outside the country—will make any efforts more successful. Another person argued that because they were so controlled by the previous regime, people may not be able to empower themselves. They will be preoccupied by how to get food and how to cope with the trauma of war. They may not be ready to think about improving society yet. All participants agreed that, when able, Iraqis should play a central role in rebuilding efforts; all wanted to avoid an “all-international, all-the-time” approach.

A participant from within the policy community cautioned that groups or individuals traveling to Iraq for reconstruction should not, in their eagerness to aid the country, take resources from programs and structures that already exist. Members of the international community are not always aware of informal civil society organizations, she said. Expatriates must be fully informed of what exists before imposing anything new.

Some participants felt that the northern Kurdish region could be used as an example of how to create a vibrant civil society in Iraq. The region has active political parties, newspapers, and trade organizations. Women's groups in the north are particularly active; derived of different political and religious organizations, they have united successfully to work against honor killings and polygyny and for human rights. Other speakers cautioned that while Kurdish women can serve as an example for other Iraqi women, those in the areas recently controlled by Saddam Hussein will need to develop their own solutions.

A participant who works for the U.S. Agency for International Development was excited about her opportunity to discuss civil society with Iraqi women. She said she wanted to learn about what Iraqis need and “take it back to USAID and to the State Department and say this is what we need to do and this is why we need to do it now—for women.”

Findings and Conclusions

Participants concluded that the following steps would effectively advance the role of women in post-conflict Iraqi civil society:

1. *Immediately* conduct field assessments of the status and skills of women within civil society—within both formal and informal structures—before devoting resources to projects and plans. In the *long term*, establish a permanent institute to increase attention to gender issues in Iraq.
2. *Immediately and medium term*, support women in leadership roles in a wide range of post-conflict initiatives (particularly those dealing with issues such as reconciliation, trauma, domestic violence, disarmament, and demobilization) so that the reconstruction effort can build on women's comparative advantage as bridge builders across groups.

3. *Immediately* ensure that the donor community utilizes a high gender standard that is broadly and consistently applied. This would include, for example, having strong women's representation among the donor leadership, and hiring Iraqi women to deliver humanitarian relief.
4. *Immediately* engage members of non-governmental organizations, professional associations, and women's organizations to encourage and train women working in civil society, including, among others, those in faith-based organizations so that they might in turn influence the broad constituency of these organizations.
5. In the *short term*, support the community of women's organizations in Northern Iraq. In the *medium and long term*, encourage the creation and development of new women's organizations throughout the country.
6. In the *medium term*, secure funding to provide women with education, legal aid, and training in business and management skills, including accounting, grant proposal writing, and reporting. These funds should be distributed or administered by local women's organizations.

Day Two Proceedings

Opening Remarks

Michael Van Dusen, Deputy Director, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

The second day of “Winning the Peace: Women’s Role in Post-Conflict Iraq” was hosted by the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. Opening the public discussions was Michael Van Dusen, deputy director of the Wilson Center. He noted the importance of bringing together scholars and policymakers in efforts like the reconstruction of Iraq.

“You have to get the scholars out of their ivory towers and understand the practical problems of governance, and you have to get the policymakers away from their inbox and start thinking long term.”

Ambassador Swanee Hunt, Chair, Hunt Alternatives Fund and Women Waging Peace

Ambassador Hunt began her opening remarks by commenting on her pleasure at the partnership between Women Waging Peace and the Wilson Center. She went on to explain the events of the first day of the conference.

Citing the findings and conclusions from the previous day’s proceedings, Hunt emphasized the important role women can play in Iraq’s peacebuilding process. Policymakers and aid agencies could use them to help ensure the success of future structures in the country, she said. Hunt also mentioned one recent effort that did not include women in discussions—to its detriment.

“I hosted negotiations regarding the war in Bosnia in 1994, when I was Ambassador in Vienna. There were about 50 or 60 people involved; two sets of negotiations lasted about 15 or 16 days...I was keenly aware of who was flying in from Croatia and Bosnia for those meetings. Not one woman—and Yugoslavia had the highest percentage of women Ph.D.s, per capita, of any country in Europe... You have to actually work at not having women.”

Ambassador Hunt followed this line of thought—that women are sometimes not merely overlooked, but deliberately excluded from negotiations. “When I asked UN officials working in Africa why there were no women on the negotiating teams there, they said, ‘The warlords won’t have that, because they’re afraid the women will compromise.’”

She closed her remarks by listing policy accomplishments that will help overcome such attitudes, including UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and the G8 Foreign Ministers’ statement on women in peacebuilding. “So, there is momentum building up, and we see this meeting as a step in that journey.”

Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson, United States House of Representatives

Congresswoman Johnson thanked Hunt, Women Waging Peace, and the Wilson Center for making the meeting possible. She also thanked the Iraqi women participants for coming to Washington to discuss the future of their country. She reiterated the importance of including women in reconstruction. Citing her own experience as an African-American woman in the United States she acknowledged the challenges women in Iraq would encounter. "It can only come with your willingness to be a part of it, and I thank you for being here."

Charlotte Ponticelli, Senior Coordinator for International Women's Issues, U.S. Department of State

Charlotte Ponticelli told those present that her staff, like others throughout the Administration, is mindful of the need to include women in reconstruction efforts. Pleased that women were included in the Nasiriyah meeting, she noted that the meeting's concluding statement specifically mentioned the importance of women's rights. Ponticelli thanked participants for coming together to help plan for the inclusion of women in post-conflict Iraq. "This event...is a contribution to our continuing dialogue among friends and experts who have already been doing valuable work on these issues."

Panel Discussion I: Women in Iraq, Future Prospects

Moderated by Carla Koppell, Interim Director, Conflict Prevention Project, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and Deputy Director, Hunt Alternatives Fund Washington, D.C., Office

Women's Role in Transition: The Current Situation

Zainab Al-Suwaij, executive director of the American Islamic Congress, opened the panel's discussion by acknowledging that this time of transition is an emotional one for Iraqis, both in the country and in the diaspora. "I have seen people tearing down the statues of the man who terrorized me for...the first 20 years of my life...For the Iraqi people, this is both wonderful and scary at the same time. We have an enormous challenge before us. I am here today to talk about how we can meet that challenge."

A participant in the failed 1991 uprising against Saddam Hussein, Al-Suwaij fled Iraq more than a decade ago. She returned for the first time to attend the April 15 Nasiriyah meeting. "Women have central roles to play in building the new Iraq," she told listeners. "Iraqi women from different ethnic groups and different religions want to participate and want to have a role in the new government in Iraq."

She stated that women should be involved throughout the rebuilding process, serving in government, starting new businesses, and even working to restore oil fields. Beyond that, Al-Suwaij argued that women must also play a leading role in rebuilding the Iraqi family—both individual families and the larger, national "family." She included expatriates in this category; key to Iraqi reconstruction is connecting women in the diaspora with those still living in Iraq, she said.

"The Iraqi family has been torn apart for more than 24 years under Saddam Hussein's rule. For more than two decades, children and parents have been turned against each other by the government...In order to exert as much control as possible over the Iraqi population, Saddam divided ethnic groups and families. Hundreds of thousands of Iraqis were employed as informants for the Iraqi regime...Now we must restore positive values in the home and throughout society."

She acknowledged the challenge of bringing the Iraqi family together when Saddam Hussein's government so effectively divided the people. But, she said, the goal of a democratic society is achievable.

Al-Suwaij also expressed a desire to see women involved in the rehabilitation of Iraqi education. "It is my hope that women will take the lead in developing the most basic institutions of civil society, especially the educational system...Our entire 'family' needs to be involved."

"We now stand at the beginning of a new Iraq and the decisions we make now will have an impact for decades to come. I pray that we can all work together to meet the challenges of today so we can build a better future for all Iraqis."

Looking Forward: Opportunities Created by Reconstruction

Nasreen Sideek, minister of reconstruction and development in northern Iraq's Kurdistan Regional Government, also called for the involvement of women throughout all reconstruction efforts in Iraq. She cited support for women's inclusion in decision-making processes in the United States, the international community, and within a number of Iraqi political parties.

“The new government of Iraq must be broad-based and representational, and that means it must include women. It must respect the rights of Iraqi women to choose how they will participate in their society. We cannot imagine a stable, post-Saddam Iraq without the involvement of women in all aspects of humanitarian, reconstruction, and development efforts that will be undertaken. Iraqi women must participate fully in the recovery of Iraq. We should insist that women play prominent roles as planners, implementers, and beneficiaries of the reconstruction and ensure that the women of Iraq have a voice in the future of their country.”

The physical infrastructure and the population of Iraq suffered greatly at the hands of Saddam Hussein. Both require extensive repair. The country has seen its economy ruined by corruption and war. Forty-nine percent of Iraqi families do not earn enough to meet their basic needs. Iraq has no experience with self-governance. Littered with unexploded ordinance that take lives and limbs daily, Iraq is home to more than one million displaced people; another half million are refugees in neighboring countries. Health services are crumbling; there has been a sharp increase in maternal mortality. Banks have been looted. Housing is ravaged, farms untended, irrigation systems destroyed, schools closed. Adult literacy rates are low, having plummeted from 89 percent in 1985 to 57 percent in 1997.

But according to Sideek, the example of northern Iraq's development since 1991 provides us hope for the future of Iraq as a whole. At the end of the first Gulf War, Kurdistan's infrastructure was 85 percent destroyed, she said. In an administrative vacuum, Iraqi Kurds created systems for security, governance, health care, education, employment, gender equality, environment, human rights, and participatory decision-making. There are now more than 40 political parties in this pluralistic society; most have their own media outlets and women's organizations. By improving the education of girls and women, the Kurdish Regional Government increased their participation in society and government; there are now three women ministers in the regional cabinet. Women played an invaluable role in northern Iraq's reconstruction, as they can in the rest of Iraq.

“Iraqi women must be included in reconstruction efforts. There is no cultural barrier in Iraqi society to keep women from playing a vital role. Women must participate in governing and rebuilding Iraq. Women also have a fundamental part to play in fostering peace in the wake of war... Women have a key role in rebuilding a sense of community. Their work at the community level is an essen-

tial part of nation building. It is women who try to bridge differences and create the building blocks of reconciliation.”

Sideek argued that the promotion of gender equality should begin with education, which increases civic awareness and economic power. With a pool of educated women to draw from, mainstreaming women into reconstruction and governance processes is possible. It is important to raise awareness of this issue, particularly among local authorities and communities. The emphasis should be on addressing gender considerations throughout the planning, implementation, and design of all programs, she said.

It is important that women not be the only ones working toward this goal; Iraqi men must be involved as well, Sideek noted. Further, “it is not enough to recognize the need to involve men and women; strategies must be put in place to facilitate this involvement.”

“The reconstruction and development of Iraq based on socio-cultural and environmental sensitivities, along with sustainable utilization of Iraq’s natural resources, should be the mission of any future Iraqi authority. Reconstruction and development policies should aim to assist all people in Iraq to acquire adequate and equitable access to the opportunities derived from Iraq’s natural resources. It is critical that no region or group of people is denied this access...No part of Iraq can secure its survival and shape its future separately from other parts of the country.”

Reconstruction and development policies can work effectively only when the framework and conditions are favorable. There are ten priorities an interim administration should tend to, Sideek explained:

- the restoration of order and stability, including the promotion and safeguarding of the rule of law;
- respect for human rights, including those of women and ethnic minorities;
- the restoration of oil production;
- the repair of public works, including electricity, water, health services, communication, and education;
- the return and resettlement of refugees and the internally displaced;
- the mobilization of donors for Iraq’s reconstruction, as well as the easing of debts;
- the political participation of the population;
- market and social orientation and integration and the provision of investment safeguards;
- the stabilization of the currency, as well as the modernization of banks and tax reform; and
- the orientation of state activities toward development, industry diversification, and the privatization of some government services.

Sideek explained that the international community could play an important role in the reconstruction process. The United Nations, which has administered the Oil-for-Food Program since 1997, should continue to help Iraq use its resources for the benefit of its people and should be the new Iraqi Government's partner. UN agencies can play a vital role in assisting refugees, providing humanitarian relief, and mobilizing support from donor countries. NGOs can help with communities' mobilization and management, as well as the promotion of human rights and democracy. International research institutions and think tanks can help modernize and reform Iraqi institutions; they can also help Iraqi universities become leaders of social and political analysis, capable of aiding the government in making sound decisions. Foreign governments can help Iraq by forgiving debt and providing money or material for reconstruction. Funding institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund can play a vital role in this area as well.

"In sum, the focus on women and children should be an integral part of our overall approach to rebuilding the whole country. This approach could be compared, in its goal of promoting the long-term promise of stability, prosperity, and freedom, to the post-World War II Marshall Plan in Europe. That combination of generous vision and sustained hard work crowned a military victory with a moral victory that resulted in better lives for individual human beings. Today, despite obvious historical and cultural differences, Iraq is a prime case for such a broad-based, long-term approach. . . . We need help to rebuild Iraqi schools and hospitals, restore agriculture and small-scale enterprises, de-mine roads and villages. In all of these efforts and more, we insist that women play prominent roles."

Key Findings from Monday's Women Waging Peace Sessions

Ambassador Hattie Babbitt, senior vice president of Hunt Alternatives Fund, furthered the discussion by providing an overview of the findings and conclusions from the previous day's sessions on women's empowerment in governance, the economy, the development of the Iraqi constitution, and civil society. Rather than list the findings of each group, Babbitt outlined key themes discussed in all groups.

Babbitt first identified the assets that Iraq brings to the process of reconstruction, as well as the challenges it faces. Abundant in natural resources, Iraq also boasts a well-educated population. Northern Iraq's success since 1991 benefits the country. Unfortunately, reconstruction is hampered by several factors. First among them is the international community's lack of knowledge about Iraq and its systems. Many groups identified the need for a gender-needs assessment. The lack of water and electricity and the culture of violence that pervades Iraq are compounded by the extra burden these factors place on women, particularly those who head households. The international community's commitment to the empowerment and participation of women has advantages and drawbacks:

“Although there is a very high awareness in the international community about women’s issues and women’s needs, those issues are very often eighth or tenth on a list of priorities, and our job—that is, the job of those who care about women’s role in a new Iraq—is to move it up on the list of priorities. There is not hostility. There’s not antipathy. There is a pretty high level of understanding. It’s just never at the top of the list. Our job is to move it up on the list.”

Babbitt also addressed the need for equality throughout Iraqi culture. It is critical that this change reach all realms of society—in the past, Iraq’s civil and criminal laws treated women and men equally, but family and religious laws did not. Participants in group discussions were adamant that women be given full rights with regard to childcare, divorce, inheritance, ownership of property, and freedom of movement, among other things. Babbitt cautioned that enforcing the equal protection of and responsibility under the law would not be an easy task, citing the United States as an example.

“We have a very old democracy in the United States. We have a constitution that talks about equality of rights, and we struggle with it every single day in this country. The notion of equality is an aspiration. It’s not a reality anywhere...It is hard to institutionalize these changes.”

Iraqi women, accustomed to more freedoms than others in the region, must be included in decision-making processes throughout government and industry. Both men and women will need to be trained in inclusive governance; financial support from the international community will be helpful in reaching that goal. The media will play an important part in any cultural change, helping to connect, educate, and inspire women throughout Iraq.

Babbitt reported a debate that took place in nearly all discussion groups—whether a women’s ministry would be beneficial, calling attention to the rights, responsibilities, and needs of women, or dangerous, marginalizing women’s issues and keeping them from being considered in other ministries and departments. Also debated was the prospect of instituting a quota of women in constitutional and legislative drafting committees and throughout the government. Participants disagreed as to the percentage of the population that would be appropriate; while important to ensure women enough seats to make their voices heard, it would be critical to ensure that the percentage not be high enough to lead to a backlash.

“The question of how to ensure adequate participation of women comes up in all kinds of contexts. For example, if you want to ensure in a parliamentary system that there are enough women involved, do you set a quota? Do you have three different lists, one of which is a general list, one of which is a women’s list, and one of which is a regional list, so that there will always be a certain per-

centage of the parliament that is women, guaranteed? If you are setting up a committee to draft a constitution, do you have a process that says, 'We're not going to have a committee until 30 percent of those on it are women?' Where do you—where do we all—find the balance, when there is so little consensus internationally?"

Question and Answer Period

Moderator Carla Koppell opened the question and answer session. Zainab Al-Suwaij was unable to attend this session; Minister Sideek and Ambassador Babbitt remained to respond to questions.

A public diplomacy officer at the U.S. Department of State, asked how women could help build bridges between different religious communities in Iraq.

In response, Sideek spoke about the network of women's organizations in northern Iraq. Emphasizing the multiethnic and politically plural nature of the region, she explained how people traditionally tolerant of diversity became discriminatory under Saddam Hussein, who exploited differences between groups to consolidate his own power. Despite this tension, more than 20 women's groups, mainly affiliated with political parties and ethnic groups, recently challenged and overturned the law protecting from prosecution men who commit honor killings. The umbrella organization pressured the Kurdish Parliament and used the media to reach society as a whole. Encouraged by their success, the women in the network are now focused on other goals.

Ambassador Don Steinberg, principle deputy director of the Policy Planning Department at the Department of State, raised three points, which led to fruitful discussion. Concerned about the debate over the creation of a women's ministry, he encouraged those present to work for its creation. "I understand the concern about stove-piping or allowing people to believe all issues are going to be addressed by a women's ministry, but...the creation of a women's ministry serves to focus peoples' attention, to mainstream issues, to provide a conduit for foreign assistance, and to serve as a watchdog over the education, health, and housing ministries, ensuring that women's issues are adequately reflected in those areas."

Sideek agreed that having a women's ministry would be a positive step, but also stated the importance of ensuring women are part of and considered by other government ministries:

"I am a minister in a very technical ministry, and of course, I'm very outspoken on women's issues, and I'm a member of women's unions...it's good to have a women's ministry, but we should not look at it as the solution for all of our problems. I think it has more impact to have a health minister who is a woman, an education minister who is a woman, a prime minister who is a woman."

Head of the World Bank's gender activities in North Africa and the Middle East Nadereh Chamlou agreed, adding that she would like to see more minis-

ters who, like Sideek, are in the “hard” sectors, engineering and banking, among others, rather than the “softer” sectors of education and health care.

Steinberg acknowledged he was also uneasy about Iraq’s history of separating family law from civil and criminal law, leaving the former more prone to interference from the religious community. “Family law may be the area where the country’s leaders accommodate Islamicists and go back to what is a regular pattern throughout the Middle East: constitutions that hand that issues over to traditional sources.” Babbitt responded by saying, “The conclusion [in the working groups] was that the constitution should be secular,” rather than allowing it to reflect religious beliefs.

Bushra Perto, former general secretary of the Iraqi Community Association in the United Kingdom, said that she was reluctant to have an interim administration make decisions regarding family law. She argued that to better represent the Iraqi people, an elected government should address the issue. Chamlou agreed that it would be important to Iraq’s development to have an elected body make decisions regarding family law.

Finally, Steinberg agreed that one way to ensure women’s participation in governance is to implement a quota. He pointed out that, far from the 30 to 50 percent Winning the Peace participants had discussed, the Nasiriyah meeting included only four women in a group of 122. “That’s three percent. The right percentage to be set in Iraq may not be 30, but it sure isn’t three.”

Chamlou argued that merely establishing a quota—even one of 30 to 50 percent—would not ensure regard for the rights and needs of women. “It will be very important to find engendered men who are going to be pushing for women’s rights.” She said that where women have gained equal rights, it is due in no small part to the involvement of men in the campaign. “It’s important to us...to really target or educate or engender these men so that when they’re sitting at the table and there are not enough women at the table, they, too, advocate for women’s rights.” She added that in order for women to fully participate in a democracy, women voters must be perceived to be important to winning elections.

Ann Kaiser of Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom asked whether Winning the Peace participants had addressed UN Security Council Resolution 1325, which calls for the inclusion of women throughout the peacekeeping and peacebuilding process. Babbitt confirmed that 1325 was discussed the previous day in a session with Sanam Anderlini, director of the Women Waging Peace Policy Commission. English and Arabic copies of 1325 were distributed as Anderlini explained the utility of the resolution.

Winning the Peace participant and President of the Assyrian Women’s Union Pascale Warda emphasized the need for religious tolerance and a constitution that explicitly recognizes the equality of all religions and ethnic groups within Iraq. “The new Iraqi constitution must take into consideration the existence of those who must be represented in every level of Iraqi life and government.” She stated that Assyrians, Chaldeans, and Turkomen live throughout the country and

should not be considered only on a regional basis. Also, she argued that these groups should be considered full and equal partners in Iraq—not members of minority groups that need protection. “We are a people, a nation.”

Nella Ferkcasi, of the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University, noted that no one had openly addressed whether he or she supported the U.S.-led war in Iraq; she asked how participants felt about the issue. “If you’re talking about reconstructing Iraq and you’re talking about changes in their legal system and their socio-political system and the direction in which they’re going, that inevitably takes into account who’s in the country and in what phase or what manner that will continue.”

Representing the Wilson Center, Carla Koppell explained that reconstruction had been the topic of conversation throughout *Winning the Peace*, and that support or a lack of support for the war was not at issue. She added that the Wilson Center did not take a position on the war in Iraq. Speaking for Hunt Alternatives Fund and Women Waging Peace, Babbitt stated that the organization focuses on the inclusion of women in peace processes, not the relative merit of each side’s case.

“Obviously, the role of the United States in Iraq, and in the region, is an enormously complicated one. And the position of Women Waging Peace is a relatively narrow slice—a commitment to enhancing the role of women in peace processes around the world. To get out of that narrow slice and into this very complicated discussion about the U.S. role in Iraq would detract from our mission.”

Tanya Gilly, a member of Women for a Free Iraq and a participant in *Winning the Peace* stated that she had supported the war and the removal of Saddam Hussein. Sideek agreed, adding that although the few people who benefited from Hussein’s regime had been against the war, “the majority of the country just wanted to be freed, to be liberated.” In general, *Winning the Peace* participants were supportive of the U.S.-led effort to remove Saddam Hussein from power.

Koppell closed the panel by reminding the audience that the Iraqi women present for this meeting were only “a small sample of the breadth and depth of those out there to work on this process.”

Panel Discussion II: Key Issues in Transition

Moderated by Haleh Esfandiari, Consulting Director, Middle East Project, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

Religion in Democratizing Iraq

Abdulaziz Sachedina, professor of Islamic and Shiite studies at the University of Virginia, opened the discussion with a warning to those present:

“I want to raise important issues connected with the recent demonstrations in Iraq and even the call for an Islamic government using the Quran, using the Sharia. These things cannot be taken lightly because they are going to have an impact on the role of women. Religion has been used in every ruse to control women’s freedom.”

Many Iraqis may now feel uncomfortable with a secular government, Sachedina noted. Although international activists speak of the importance of a secular government in ensuring human rights and women’s empowerment, many Iraqis recall only too well the violations perpetrated by Saddam Hussein’s regime. The “atrocious ideology” of that government, said Sachedina, strictly secular until recent years, makes some Iraqis wonder whether they would be safer in a religious country.

But he invited the audience to imagine an Islamic alternative to the proposed secular government in Iraq. Largely due to the restrictions placed on religion by the Ba’ath party, Iraq’s religious leaders have not explored the many reforms pursued in other Islamic countries.

There has been very little intellectual movement addressing the issues that are important for the rights of women. “When they speak about an Islamic alternative it raises serious questions about women’s rights.”

“If we are talking about democracy, we are talking about empowerment of women or gender equality, and that’s where culture and religion are intertwined. They are intertwined in such a way that religion and culture work together to suppress the voice of a woman. And it is not only in the matter of choosing a spouse, it’s not only in the matter of somehow controlling polygamy or polygyny. It’s a larger issue of how exactly a woman’s voice is to be preserved. And I’m talking about, not simply gender relation, but rather the dignity of the woman as a human person. That’s an issue also in Iran. That’s an issue also in Afghanistan. These are the new developing democracies where religion is going to play a dominant role and we need to be aware of its implications for the development of new form of governance in which women need to play an equal part with men.”

“It is a new reality that we are faced with. Religion today will not sit on the margins. It’s going to claim a greater role and this is where we need to be alert.”

Would religion be allowed to control the culture, Sachedina asked, or would it merely frame its contours? Would it control the discussion about human rights, or add to our understanding of it?

Currently in Iraq, women's rights are severely restricted with regard to family, or personal law. When she marries, a woman does not negotiate her own marriage contract. Her male family members design the contract with her future husband's family, and her concerns are not always taken into account. Any rights the woman will have with regard to divorce are contracted at this time. Without having been established in the contract, a woman cannot initiate divorce, even if her husband takes another wife. Similarly, the inheritance rights of women are restricted; women inherit only half of what men do. Although it is argued that this is derived from the Quran, the context of such norms are conditioned by specific tribal culture in which a woman's share was determined.

Most religious reforms that take place in Iraq do so only at the popular level; doctrine does not change. But with the development of a truly democratic constitution, the religious law that renders women inferior to men will itself become a source of conflict in matters that affect women's dignity and rights in a modern Muslim society. There are a number of religious reformers who are sympathetic to women's situation. It is therefore important to identify and recognize reformers within the religious classes, as purely secular leaders may not be able to establish credibility within religious communities.

"We need to be aware of the issues that need to be confronted in our efforts to help women regain their equal place in Iraqi society. To attain this goal we need male lawyers and male scholars who support women's issues and who are in conversations with women about women's issues. This approach will help us build the necessary consensus. We need a pool of Muslim scholars who are willing to risk the anger of traditional scholarship and traditional scholars in furthering justice for men and women's relationships within legal structures that are built in the family law."

"It is worth keeping in mind that although Iraq was largely secular for the past three decades, as it moves forward, the country will be unable to avoid addressing the interplay of religion and women's rights. Remember, the dictatorship of religious people is worse than the dictatorship of the military. When you begin to speak for the hidden voice of God, you can do a lot of things that the military leader cannot do."

Relief and Humanitarian Assistance

Zainab Salbi, president of Women for Women International, addressed the economic concerns facing Iraq as it moves toward recovery. The initial concern she raised was the distribution of aid packages. According to the United Nations, some 60 percent of the Iraqi population is dependent on the aid distributed

through the Oil-for-Food Program. Although Salbi recommended continuing aid shipments for the time being, she warned of the dangers that can come with long-term dependence on the program.

“Any group of people who has not had assistance for a long time will not take anything for granted. So, you give them a dollar, and they take it, immediately invest it, and make it into 10 dollars. It is dangerous when we shift their minds by saying, ‘Calm down, it’s OK. We’ll just give you the aid packages.’ Then you actually take them a step back from the positive mentality of entrepreneurship.”

The aid packages also do not necessarily meet the requirements of the people who need them most. Although women account for more than 55 percent of the Iraqi population, their special nutritional and hygiene needs are not always met in the packages distributed by the United Nations. Without an alternate social service network, this can leave women with significant basic needs.

Aid agencies working in Iraq must also be aware of the unrealistic understanding most Iraqis have of the speed and nature of their economic reconstruction and development. “Regardless of how they felt about the war...everyone in Iraq was expecting very rapid economic development,” Salbi said. She has worked extensively in economic reconstruction and knows all too well the long timeline for recovery and development—particularly in a country that has had its infrastructure destroyed.

One reason Iraqis are so certain their reconstruction will move quickly is the country’s enormous oil reserves. “When I talk to them about economic reconstruction in Afghanistan, or Kosovo, or Bosnia, or Rwanda, all the Iraqis—and I’ve talked to people from different classes as well as different social and ethnic groups—say, ‘Don’t compare us to these countries. We have our own oil, we have our own resources, we want rapid building...now.’” Salbi argued that Iraq would be unwise to focus solely on its oil reserves as it rebuilds its economy. She referred to the “oil curse,” which occurs when oil-rich nations neglect their other industries. “That can actually undermine future sustainable economic development in Iraq.” She recommended that Iraq invest in other industries in addition to oil.

Salbi also spoke about the importance of including women in Iraq’s economic development, but noted the need to do so in an inclusive way. Women and men must be given equal opportunities, but “focusing a lot on women, you create resentment among men...This is not a woman’s issue, it’s a gender issue. This is about how to incorporate all sectors of the population.” Salbi noted that she is often asked how men respond to attempts to incorporate women in reconstruction. Salbi said that because she always includes men in the process of empowering the women, she does not have problems gaining their assistance. “Men are fundamental in increasing women’s rights and in promoting women’s economic opportunities.”

Salbi acknowledged the need to involve religious leaders in economic initiatives in traditional societies. “Denying the importance of religion only leaves room for the extremists to take over the debate.” Even while advocating for secular law, those working toward Iraq’s reconstruction have to develop a comprehensive process that incorporates all Iraqis.

It is important that when including women in economic programs, Iraq’s leaders pay attention to women at all socio-economic levels, Salbi said. Too often women are encouraged only to make use of micro-credit programs, which are geared toward the well-educated and entrepreneurial. Women who are not qualified for these programs are generally not included in economic initiatives for low-income or undereducated men.

“We need to get women into factories as well...I’m not talking about business-women, the elite. I’m talking about the rest of the population, people who are poor, who are not as educated... We need to give women opportunities other than the very narrow micro-lending or small business opportunities... We need to look at the macro-economic picture for the development of Iraq.”

Salbi stated that including women fully in the economic sector has political and social effects as well. “I would argue that it’s not a matter of opening a factory and putting men and women in it, or giving micro-credit loans to women. It’s about social awareness-building, their confidence, their self esteem, their awareness about women’s roles in the society, their contributions to the economy, to family, to politics.”

Salbi stated that Iraqi women should seize the chance to become involved in all levels of the country’s economic development. She expressed excitement about the possibilities for the future. “There is no need for us to ask for anything less than an absolutely brilliant and successful model... This is the time for us to ask for our utopia.” She cited the women of South Africa, who demanded and received equal representation when rebuilding their society in the mid-1990s, and said that the women of Iraq should ask for no less.

“Let’s start from the best-case scenario and ask for a good, successful model where Iraq can be an example for economic reconstruction, for post-war reconstruction, an example for the rest of the Middle East.”

Transitional Justice

Rakiah Al-Kayssi, a researcher at the Iraqi Jurist Association, specializes in the evolution and development of Saddam Hussein’s Ba’ath Party. She began her discussion by explaining to the audience that the former dictator carefully cultivated a wide base of support through all socio-economic classes in Iraq. The reasons for this were twofold: By including in his government Iraqis from all levels of society, Hussein was able to give his government the appearance of being

democratic. Contact with members of the lower classes also provided the elite of the Party (i.e., Saddam Hussein and his family) a link to the wider society. The presence of Party members in all levels of society ensured that there were watchdogs throughout the Iraqi population, which helped to control dissent. Al-Kayssi cautioned those present that many members of the Party were still at large and would present a challenge to the development of a new system of government. She said that key to reform would be the elimination of those members of the Ba'ath Party who would seek to undermine the new state.

Education of the Iraqi people is also critical. In order to help them participate in a democratic society—which they have never known—the international community should begin an awareness campaign, as well as educational programs to foster the development of civil society. To make these projects successful, education in schools also needs to be improved.

Al-Kayssi explained that fostering the rule of law is vital to creating a stable state. Power should rest not in the hands of the ruling elite, but in the three independent branches of government: executive, legislative, and judicial. Of greatest import, she said, is an independent judiciary; the strength of western-style democracy lies in its judicial system.

Also important are the rights to freedom of association and expression, including criticism of the government. “Criticism promotes a scientific approach in society. It teaches people to relate cause and effect,” Al-Kayssi noted.

Moving forward, Iraq needs to ensure that its women are fully included in all democratic processes, and that they play an important role determining the shape of the country for future generations.

Demobilization and Reintegration of Soldiers and Reform of the Security Sector

Sanam Anderlini, director of the Women Waging Peace Policy Commission, began her presentation with an observation: Very few women and NGOs engage in the discussions and debates surrounding the security sector. For women who see themselves as “peace activists,” engaging with the security sector is tantamount to legitimizing their nemesis. Also, the discipline is perceived to be the domain of experts in the security arena, and it is kept sufficiently mystified to bar civilians from the conversation. But security sector reform, Anderlini argued, is such an important component of post-war reconstruction, is so critical to shaping the nature of the future government, and has such an impact on the lives of citizens, that it is vital for people throughout the society to seek solutions. “It is essential for all of us to think about, to engage, and to look at what we mean by the reforming of the security sector.”

Key to discussions of post-war reconstruction and transformation is the way the security sector—military, police, secret service, intelligence agencies, correctional services, etc.—is addressed. Anderlini stated that the uncertainty of the post-war situation requires security enforcement, but following the collapse of a

totalitarian regime, security forces that have been part of that regime do not have the credibility to provide safety. The security sector must be reformed to gain credibility and legitimacy, and to ensure that its forces do not regroup to pose a threat to peace.

Anderlini noted problems that need to be addressed in reforming the security sector. First, totalitarian regimes often use their security forces to terrorize and control populations. Following conflict, citizens—particularly those from repressed groups—fear police and soldiers, rather than counting on them for safety. Second, security forces that wield considerable power often create systems under which violations of human rights are considered acceptable. There is no understanding of human rights within the forces, making rehabilitation difficult. Finally, sexual abuse is often a feature of totalitarian states, including Iraq under the Hussein regime. Routine sexual abuse, coerced prostitution, and the trafficking of women can create a population that believes these things are the norm, skewing reality.

Within Iraq, Anderlini argued, the international community and transitional authority need to concentrate their efforts on “de-Saddamifying” the security sector, ensuring civilian control of all armed forces, and creating transparency and accountability for the security sector—this means government control, parliamentary oversight, and civil society monitoring. It would be necessary to dismantle some existing forces, she said. This includes demobilizing forces, trying the leadership for crimes, retiring soldiers who cannot be redeemed, and rehabilitating those soldiers who will be able to execute their duties in a new, civilian-controlled security sector. These changes are both difficult and delicate, they can have unexpected consequences. Iraqi leaders also need to ensure that any new security forces are representative of the diversity of Iraqi society, and that the new forces are professionalized. Trust must be built between the new forces and society.

The above tasks are well within the bounds of standard security sector reform. But Anderlini asked participants what might happen were they to view demobilization through a human—or inclusive—security lens. First, Anderlini stated, we must recognize that peace means a good deal more than the absence of war. Human security comprises economic development, social justice, environmental protection, democratization, disarmament, and respect for human rights and rule of law. Although the large-scale war has ended, it is clear that this does not mean that peace has at last come to Iraq. Violence and lawlessness are erupting, as they do in many post-conflict societies.

Anderlini stated that while car-jacking, burglary, assault, rape, the presence of small arms, and other forms of organized and random crime are not always considered when examining national or military security, they do impact our notions of personal or human security:

“The questions that many people—particularly women—end up asking are these: What kind of security do I really have if I’m afraid to open the door of my house? What kind of security do we have if vigilantes rule the streets, and

we see looting and assault with impunity? What security do we have if young women are being abducted at gunpoint and being raped in badly lit neighborhood alleys?"

Women in war zones around the world have said that the end of war does not signal the beginning of peace. They know that the trauma, humiliation, and violence that men experienced in war and conflict are often vented behind closed doors, in the home, against women. "If women are being beaten up at home, there's no way they can come out and take on any sort of leadership position outside." Insufficient security reform, then, can significantly impact the rest of the society.

Human security, however, highlights a different set of issues and enables us to think about security differently. Anderlini offered her thoughts on what should be done in Iraq. She suggested that Iraqis define a vision of security in Iraq; women should be asked specifically: "What do you want? What are your concerns? ... What are the threats that you perceive? What kind of forces do you need?" The international community and transitional leaders in Iraq should determine the best way to engage with women in communities to ensure their concerns are heard and addressed. Anderlini said that in her experience, "When we ask women about security, they very often talk about issues of food security, education, safety in the community, absence of poverty, water security, and so forth—the most elementary but critical ingredients in ensuring basic quality of life."

Iraqis must determine what they need from their security forces. Anderlini cited South Africa, where citizens agreed to frame their security within the "human security paradigm." They also had a "defense review process," in which ordinary people throughout the country were asked their views about the functions their army should perform and the weapons it should carry. Initially, the South African military was against such a review; in the end, they accepted the people's findings, recognizing that the process of consultation had given them the legitimacy, credibility, and trust they previously lacked.

It is particularly important for women to participate in any defense review process. The kind of forces and the ways they are used dramatically affect women's lives. If there is a problem with gender-based violence and domestic violence, including women in the police force can be helpful. "It is easier for women who have been battered to talk to women than to talk to men. So their presence in the security sector makes a difference in terms of how the community relates to the police force."

Anderlini cited other countries where women have been active in security sector reform. In Mali, women's NGOs worked at the national and regional level to pass a moratorium on the illicit sale and trade of small arms within the country and to monitor government activities. In Albania, UNIFEM and the UNDP promoted women's active involvement in disarmament. In the two towns where the project was implemented, about 7,000 weapons and 300 tons of ammunition were collected. An independent survey indicated that 62 percent

of the respondents believed women influenced their family's decision to voluntarily surrender their illegal arms and munitions.

“Certainly Iraq has different problems that will require different solutions, but what I'd like to stress as I end is that we know that security sector reform is top of the agenda, but instead of letting this process go along without engaging, we should see this time of transition as an opportunity—a brief window—during which other sectors of society, most of all women, can and should engage and help shape the outcome.”

Question and Answer Period

A participant from Common Ground Radio opened the question and answer session by asking how the Islamitization of Iraq since the end of the first Gulf War affected women. Al-Kayssi responded by saying that multiple factors led to women's adoption of more religious dress and behavior. The control Saddam Hussein wielded over the country was certainly a factor. The poor economic situation in the country also contributed to the revival of headscarves—it was cheaper for women to wear them than to color and style their hair. Also, having experienced pain and suffering under the Ba'ath party for more than three decades, people turned to religion for solace. She also pointed out that the form of Islam practiced in Iraq is not a religion chosen freely by the people. “It was an ideological use of the process of Islamitization that provided legitimacy to the government. In a way, it was a tool in the government's hands.”

Zainab Salbi added that the secular Iraq she knew in the 1980s had vanished; she also noted that this was a phenomenon she had seen often in post-conflict countries. “I think in many... post-war countries, it's a way to express your frustration, because you say, ‘Well, I surrender to God; this is all God's will.’ So, religion becomes a safe venue to express all of these frustrations.”

Robert Miller, of the Islamic Development Initiative, asked how aid workers could give money directly to women in Iraq without causing conflict, since to do so was to circumvent the traditional power structures. Salbi explained the process she has used in the past:

“I've worked in more traditional societies than southern Iraq, and...you don't distribute the money through the leadership. But you get the leadership's buy-in. You make them feel that they are consulted...Do they feel crossed...or do they feel that they are part of the process?...It's a matter of spending that half hour, or that hour...I've been doing this work for 10 years. Not one time did...any leader in particular object to it...They take your hand and introduce you to their relatives and ...they give you their blessings. And then you go on your own and you do your own research and you do your own identification of ...who needs help...It's a psychological process as I see it.”

President of Washington's Kurdish Foundation **Paiman Halmat** raised the issue of interpretation of the Quran. She noted that each Imam and Mullah interprets the holy word differently, and that the Arabic used in the text is complicated and difficult to understand, making a single interpretation impossible. Sachedina proposed two methods for reaching a common understanding of the Quran's position on women:

One is the paradigm of Darul-Ifta (the office issuing religious rulings). It functions as an official body of Muslim legal scholars trained in the juridical sciences, taking it upon itself to interpret the social laws of Islam. Since it is primarily a body of male jurists their interpretations actually cause the imbalance in gender relationships. Their interpretation of some verses dealing with women could practically cause what we would identify as the enslavement of a woman. This is one model that can work in the context of Iraq. There are a number of prominent Sunni and the Shia scholars of Islamic jurisprudence who can come together in order to form a kind of a consensual body that makes legal decisions and that is cognizant of the modern situation of women in society.

The second model is the involvement of women jurists in the process. This is the ideal. In this model women can define the situational circumstance that affect them and apply the necessary legal doctrines to find solutions that can further their welfare in the total system. So far, Islamic jurisprudence has been the domain of male jurists. The change is coming but at a slow pace. For the first time, women are saying, *"We will train ourselves in the Islamic jurisprudence. We will tell the women what the laws are and we will inform the government the decisions that apply to them as women."*

Her proposal for Iraq is to work towards creating a body of well-respected legal authorities to come together and discuss these issues. The composition of this body should include men and women jurists. "Rather than simply men sitting and making decisions for women," as is obvious in the first model, the second model, tailored in accord with the present cultural and social conditions of Iraq, would produce better results in advancing women's rights.

Katrin Michael, an associate of the Iraq Foundation in Washington, D.C., asked speakers their thoughts on the interaction between Muslim Iraqis and international aid workers, many of whom are Christian. She told of a recent conference she had attended where Iraqis wore gloves when shaking hands with Americans, because of their perception that Christians are unclean. Michael pointed out that many Iraqis are also Christian, and asked how they should cope with such treatment. Sachedina spoke of the importance of not using religion to subjugate others, as well as the importance of preventing religious discrimination from entering the public sphere. Salbi noted that the views of such extremists should be addressed, as ignoring them will only make them more powerful.

Dave Pollack, from Charlotte Ponticelli's office, asked panelists how they would recommend encouraging moderate Islamic views. Sachedina stated his belief that there was still a moderate element in Iraq. "Moderate leadership is

damaged, but it's there." Anderlini said she believed the key to empowering moderates is to move away from the culture of a single person in charge. She recommended bringing together large groups of people representing all positions on the spectrum, "even extremists," and encouraging them to work together. She noted that bringing the extremists to the table instead of isolating them might help soften their views.

An employee of Women for Peace asked how Iraqi women could use UN Security Council Resolution 1325 to gain inclusion in Iraq's post-conflict political planning. Anderlini said that people—including Americans—need to be reminded that 1325 is international law. She also commented that the onus for implementation is on women, who need to think about what the security sector really means and define priorities for involvement.

Esfandiari closed the session, reminding participants of the discussion about the previous day's findings and conclusions that would follow.

Group Discussion: Previous Day's Findings and Conclusions

Moderated by Ambassador Swanee Hunt, Founder and Chair, Hunt Alternatives Fund and Women Waging Peace and Director, Women and Public Policy Program at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government

Following the morning's panel discussion, a broad group of policy shapers joined the Iraqi women to review the recommendations generated by working groups the previous day. Representatives from each working group outlined the initial findings and conclusions, which those present helped to refine. The morning's panel discussions aided participants in their understanding of the interconnectedness of the four topics being discussed: governance, the economy, the legal system, and the development of civil society.

Advancing Women's Participation in Democracy, Good Governance, and Political Decision-Making

A central theme of this discussion was whether the new Iraqi government should institute a quota system to ensure the inclusion of women in governance. If so, what would be the appropriate percentage quota. Noting that women make up 55 percent of Iraq's population, most participants believed a quota of between 30 and 50 percent would be necessary, and that this quota should apply to all levels of government. Some believed that this approach could lead to a backlash against women's inclusion, particularly if not enough qualified women could be found. Some asked whether setting and failing to meet a quota would hinder progress; they suggested that a quota be achieved over a pre-established period of time. Others cautioned against placing "the glass ceiling on our own heads." One participant suggested that the quota remain in place only until it becomes unnecessary; once women were represented equally, the quota should become extinct. A compromise was eventually reached: A quota of 30 percent would be recommended. Accompanying the quota would be suggestions for the training and support of woman candidates and elected officials. Qualified women would be sought, identified, and encouraged to lead. These women would come from all ethnic and religious backgrounds.

Beyond involvement in government, participants argued that it was key for women and women's groups to be involved in identifying Iraq's transitional leaders. One participant suggested that, rather than a single leader, a national collective council lead Iraq in the transitional period. This council would include representatives of civil society and NGOs, making the inclusion of women more likely.

Some participants called for the creation of a coalition of Iraqi women in the diaspora to raise awareness and advocate for Iraqi women's issues, particularly in the media and the U.S. government. Others suggested developing media and public relations campaigns to educate Iraqi women about their rights; such programs could also be used to publicize Iraqi women who are successful in gov-

ernance. Training programs—for women and men—on inclusive governance would also be helpful in advancing women's inclusion, participants agreed.

There was some concern among those present that Iraqi women in the diaspora would be at odds with women who never left Iraq. Participants recommended that women living outside Iraq create bridges with groups already in existence in the country.

Advancing Women's Economic Rights and Empowerment

In a country with some 60 percent of the population dependant on food aid and the security situation unstable, participants demanded that water and electricity services be restored immediately. Many women heads of household, wary of leaving their homes for fear of being attacked, are now unable to provide for their families.

Participants agreed that gender perspectives ought to be addressed within humanitarian aid. Many believed it would be important to focus on women heads of households, widows and others excluded from the traditional power structure. Women-owned businesses should be incorporated into reconstruction efforts and granted a percentage of all contracts; opportunities should be created for women at all levels. Acknowledging the importance of a new, part-time gender focal point in the Office for Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance in Iraq, participants called for the appointment of a full-time gender focal point.

There was considerable discussion of micro- versus macro-economics. One participant believed that too often, women are encouraged to turn to entrepreneurial, micro-credit programs for economic stability. She argued that not all women were ready for such projects, and that it would be more appropriate for some women to seek employment in factories. She also said that some women might not want to be trained for jobs that are more complicated; it was necessary, she said, to create practical, low-level employment opportunities as well.

The United Nations Mission to Afghanistan, which counts only four Afghans among its 200 employees, was cited as an example of the problems international aid organizations can bring to conflict areas. One participant stated that in-country workers should fill jobs in international organizations, strengthening the country's economy. Another participant explained that as a result of the UN, UNICEF, and WHO assistance programs that have been underway in Iraq since 1991, the country's citizens are used to working with, and sometimes for, the international community. Another woman, still living in Iraq, argued that the presence of the United Nations and other international organizations actually had a detrimental effect and should be limited. Maintaining the same pay scales around the world, she said, these organizations ensure that they will employ the best workers in Iraq—pulling resources from other initiatives and skewing the salary scale in the country.

Some participants felt that international organizations, likely to hire members of the Iraqi diaspora before coming to Iraq, should wait to hire employees until they reach the country, providing job opportunities to Iraqis. One speaker

pointed out that women from the diaspora would know a different Iraq than the one that exists today, and that local women would be more helpful in moving assistance programs forward. Still others argued that Iraqis in the diaspora should be encouraged to travel to Iraq and to begin working with the international organizations, possibly taking leadership positions in the transitional and new governments.

Group members and other participants agreed that funding opportunities for the inclusion of women were needed immediately in order to create development, business, leadership, and reconstruction training sessions, as well as executive programs for Iraqi women. A women's employment agency or database might be established to help women find employment. One participant who recently traveled to Iraq said this sort of program was already being developed; she agreed that more extensive implementation would be beneficial.

Advancing Women's Interests in Constitutional Law and Legislation

Members of this working group were pleased to announce that, despite the diversity of the group, there was much agreement on the preferred shape of Iraq's future constitution. It was agreed that Iraq needs both an interim constitution, to be put in place as soon as is feasible, and a permanent constitution, to be drafted and ratified by a democratically elected government at a later date. These constitutions should be secular; civil law should take precedence over religious law. The constitution should also establish separate executive, legislative, and judicial branches; the judicial branch in particular should be independent.

Participants agreed that the interim constitution should provide a mechanism for transitional justice—including the trials and punishment for the leaders of previous regimes. The international community and the new government in Iraq would need to be careful not to punish the families of former leaders (e.g., by imprisoning the former leader without ensuring that his or her family can sustain itself). The interim constitution ought to establish guidelines for moving to a democratic system of government and a new, permanent constitution. It would also need to abolish all Ba'ath laws that violate human rights laws and practices.

Both constitutions would need to establish the equality of all Iraqis, group members said, as well as recognize that Iraq is a multiethnic state and protect freedom of religion. Each constitution should also contain a bill of rights. The constitutions should incorporate the appropriate principles from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, which calls for the inclusion of women in all stages of the peace process.

There was much discussion over the percentage of women that should sit on each constitutional drafting committee. Not wanting to inspire a backlash, participants recommended that women comprise at least 30 percent of the drafting committee that will create these constitutions. Additionally, a committee of

women lawyers and professionals might be used to create principles for inclusion in the constitutions; this body could also provide advice as to whether or not the contents of the constitutions meet the needs and interests of women.

Most participants agreed that family law in Iraq should be secular rather than being taken from the Sharia, as in the past. Polygyny should be abolished. Divorce and custody laws would need to be identical for men and women. Women would need to have the same right as men to own and inherit property. Some believed that marriage should be entered into according to religious traditions, but in the case of disputes, men and women should have recourse to a civil court. One participant believed that separate but parallel systems of religious and civil law should be enacted; others did not want to consider this unless the civil law was given pre-eminence.

There was some debate as to whether a women's ministry should be created within the Iraqi government. Some argued that this would provide a department dedicated to women's interests and participation. Others believed that this would marginalize women's issues, resulting in other ministries' ignoring the needs and contributions of women.

As many of the laws and freedoms in the future Iraq will be unfamiliar to its citizens, some participants recommended launching an educational campaign. Everyone agreed it would be important for Iraqis to feel invested in the new constitutions and legal system.

Advancing Women's Participation in Civil Society

Participants agreed on the need for an assessment of Iraqi women's skills and status in civil society—both formal and informal—prior to the devotion of resources to particular projects and plans. Once completed, participants said that women would need to be supported in leadership roles in programs dealing with reconciliation, trauma, disarmament, and demobilization. This would capitalize women's comparative advantage as bridge builders.

One participant noted that many had talked about supporting civil society organizations in northern Iraq. While she agreed this was a worthy goal, she commented on the need to encourage groups throughout the country. The south of Iraq is particularly important, she noted, as it is less developed than the rest of the country.

There are no social workers in Iraq. One woman cited the evident need for them, given the abuses suffered by Iraqis under Saddam Hussein's regime. She believed that the NGOs could easily train Iraqi women as social workers. This would be more effective than bringing social workers into the country, she argued, because women in Iraq would already be familiar with cultural norms and would share a base of experiences with the families they serve. Others pointed out that it would be necessary to encourage women in Iraq to become active in all civil society organizations throughout the country.

Many agreed that it would be necessary for the aid providers and the donor community to work with women and men equally. Women could be employed

delivering humanitarian aid. They could also be the recipients of funding for education and training. Grants might come through local women's organizations rather than only international organizations, some participants suggested.

Closing

Following the discussions on the conference's findings and conclusions, Winning the Peace participants came together with organizers to debrief the events of the two days. Statements were generally quite positive; many women present had not believed their voices would be heard during reconstruction and development.

As organizers left the conference room, several of the Iraqi women participants gathered around a table, planning a new organization to represent the views of Iraqi women in the diaspora.

Winning the Peace: Women's Role in Post-Conflict Iraq

*Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars
and Women Waging Peace*

Monday, April 21, 2003

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| 9:00-9:15 am | Breakfast |
| 9:15-9:45 am | <p>Welcome and Opening Remarks
 Ambassador Swanee Hunt, Chair, Hunt Alternatives Fund and Women Waging Peace
 Ambassador Hattie Babbitt, Senior Vice-President, Hunt Alternatives Fund
 Haleh Esfandiari, Consulting Director, Middle East Project, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars
 Carla Koppell, Interim Director, Conflict Prevention Project, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, and Deputy Director, Washington Office, Hunt Alternatives Fund
 Katrin Michael, Washington Kurdish Institute</p> |
| 9:45-11:00 am | <p>Introductions
 Facilitated by Robyn Champion, Director, Women Waging Peace
 Iraqi participants
 Resource experts
 Hunt Alternatives Fund and Woodrow Wilson Center staff
 Rapporteurs</p> |
| 11:00 am-12:00 pm | <p>Exercise
 Facilitated by Ambassador Hunt</p> |
| 12:00-12:30 pm | Lunch |
| 12:30-3:30 pm | <p>Concurrent Working Groups
 Strengthening Civil Society - <i>Upstairs Conference Room</i>
 Constitutional Law and Legislation - <i>Downstairs Conference Room</i>
 Women's Participation in Democracy, Governance, and Public
 Decision-Making - <i>Upstairs Foyer</i></p> |

Economic Rights and Empowerment – *Downstairs
Conference Room*

- 3:30–3:45 pm **Break**
- 3:45–5:30 pm **Report Back to all Participants**
Twenty minutes per Working Group
- 5:30–6:00 pm **Review tomorrow's schedule**

Tuesday, April 22, 2003

- 8:45–9:00 am **Coffee**
Location: Sixth Floor Conference Room
Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars
Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade
Center
One Woodrow Wilson Plaza
1300 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, D.C.
(202) 691-4000
[Photo ID must be presented upon entrance.]
- 9:00–9:15 am **Welcome**
Michael Van Dusen, Deputy Director, Woodrow Wilson
International Center for Scholars
Ambassador Swanee Hunt, Chair, Hunt Alternatives
Fund and Women Waging Peace
Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson, U.S. House of
Representatives
Charlotte Ponticelli, Senior Coordinator for International
Women's Issues, U.S. Department of State
- 9:15–10:45 am **Panel Discussion I: Women in Iraq, Future
Prospects**
Zainab Al-Suwaij, Executive Director, American Islamic
Congress
Women's Role in Transition: The Current Situation
Nasreen Mustafa Sideek, Minister of Reconstruction
and Development, Kurdistan Regional Government
Looking Forward: Opportunities Created by Reconstruction
Ambassador Hattie Babbitt, Senior Vice President, Hunt
Alternatives Fund and Women Waging Peace

Key Findings from Monday's Sessions

Moderated by Carla Koppell, Interim Director, Conflict Prevention Project, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

10:45-11:00 am

Break

11:00 am-12:30 pm

Panel Discussion II: Key Issues in Transition

Dr. Abdulaziz A. Sachedina, Professor, Islamic and Shi'ite Studies, University of Virginia

Religion in Democratizing Iraq

Zainab Salbi, President, Women for Women International

Relief and Humanitarian Assistance

Dr. Rakhia Al-Kayssi, Iraqi Jurist Association

Transitional Justice

Sanam Anderlini, Policy Commission Director, Women Waging Peace

Demobilization and Reintegration of Soldiers and Reform of the Security Sector

Moderated by Haleh Esfandiari, Consulting Director, Middle East Project, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

12:30-1:00 pm

Break

1:00-1:30 pm

Introduction to Previous Day's Proceedings**Working Lunch**

Facilitated by Ambassador Swanee Hunt

1:30-2:00 pm

Constitutional Law and Legislation

2:00-2:30 pm

Women's Participation in Democracy, Governance, Decision-Making

2:30-2:45 pm

Break

2:45-3:15 pm

Strengthening Civil Society

3:15-3:45 pm

Economic Rights and Empowerment

3:45-4:30 pm

Conclusion and Findings

Participant Biographical Information

A research analyst in the Department of Studies and Research at the Iraqi Jurists Association, **Rakiah Al-Kayssi** specializes in Ba'athist ideology, roots, and methods. She is also a member and coordinator of the proposed truth and reconciliation committee in Iraq. Al-kayssi holds a B.A. in English and Arabic literature from Al Mustansirriyah University in Baghdad and a Ph.D. in politics from Glasgow University in the United Kingdom.

Zainab Al-Suwaij is the co-founder and executive director of the American Islamic Congress, a post-September 11th social activist organization based in Cambridge, Massachusetts, that works to foster tolerance, promote civil society and civil rights, and mobilize a moderate voice in the American Muslim community. After fleeing Iraq following the 1991 uprising against Saddam Hussein, she worked as a refugee case manager for Interfaith Refugee Ministry. She continues to be an outspoken social activist and positive voice in the Muslim community. Al-Suwaij's writings have appeared in the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Boston Globe*, and the *Houston Chronicle*, and she has been interviewed on National Public Radio, CNN, Fox News, and other national media outlets.

With experience as a print and broadcast journalist, **Vanessa Denha** is currently a communications specialist and speechwriter for an elected official in Michigan. She authors a monthly column for the Detroit-based magazine *Women's HealthStyle* and writes for the newsletter of the Chaldean Iraqi Association of Michigan. She sits on the board of the Chaldean Chamber of Commerce and is a member of the Chaldean American Ladies of Charity and Chaldean Americans Reaching and Encouraging. Denha has been interviewed by such publications as the *Washington Post*, the *New Republic Magazine*, and the *Baltimore Sun Times*. With over ten years experience, she has won several awards for her work.

As a member of Women for a Free Iraq, **Basma Fakri** lobbied for U.S. involvement in Iraq, sharing her story with media and policy shapers. Fakri is a bridge group leader at Tetra Tech MPS in Michigan. She holds a B.S. in civil engineering from the University of Baghdad and an M.S. in engineering from Tennessee State University in Nashville.

Active in the Iraqi opposition movement for the past 12 years, **Tanya Gilly** is a board member of the Kurdish Foundation and a member of the advocacy group Women for a Free Iraq. Gilly was involved in the U.S. State Department's Future of Iraq project, where she participated in the Anti-Corruption and Transparency working group and the Free Media working group. She has organized and supervised a number of conferences and seminars on Kurdish and Iraqi issues and on the role of women in the opposition. She recently traveled to Northern

Iraq to renew her ties with leaders of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan. Previously, Gilly served as special assistant to the organization's Washington representative for three years. Gilly holds a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Carleton in Ottawa, Canada.

An attorney in northern Virginia and Vice President of the Iraqi-American Council, **Zakia Hakki** is a member of the committee drafting Iraq's new constitution. The first woman judge in Iraq, she served as an expert legal adviser in the government's Ministry of Agriculture. She is the founder of the Kurdish Women's Federation and was president of the group from 1958 until 1975. She was the only woman elected to the leadership of the Kurdistan Democratic Party during the general assembly meeting in 1970. As a result of her outspokenness on behalf of the Kurdish people, she was placed under probationary arrest for 20 years until her emigration to the United States in 1996. Hakki has since participated in various working group sessions on Iraq at the U.S. Department of State. She holds a bachelor of science degree in business administration from the International Labor Union in Switzerland and a doctor of law degree from the University of Baghdad.

Paiman Halmat is currently president of the Kurdish Foundation in Washington, D.C. She is trained as a teacher and has worked with elementary school children both in Iraq and in Washington.

Executive Secretary of the Assyrian-American National Federation **Pauline Jasim** is also a research project specialist in the Department of Medicine at the University of Chicago. She is also a member of the Iraqi Forum for Democracy and has received various awards for her work; she was named Assyrian Woman of the Year. Jasim holds a B.S. in computer information systems from DeVry Institute of Technology in Chicago.

Riva Khoshaba is currently an associate with the law firm Foley and Lardner in Washington, D.C. In that capacity, Khoshaba reviews international oil corporations' security, labor, and land provisions with an eye toward potential conflicts with international human rights law. Khoshaba has worked with the Human Rights Chamber for Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo and with Physicians for Human Rights in Bosnia. She holds a bachelor's degree in history and anthropology from the University of Chicago and a law degree from Yale Law School.

Currently a researcher and consultant for JNP Enterprises in Toronto, **Jawhara Mansour** is writing two books on agricultural economics and financial management. Mansour conducted research at the Moscow Agricultural Academy and Aden University in Yemen. She also participated in various workshops and committees on women's and children's rights. She holds a B.S. in administration

of farms from Baghdad University and an M.S. and Ph.D. in agricultural economics from the Moscow Agricultural Academy.

Katrin Michael is currently associated with the Iraq Foundation, a nonprofit, non-governmental organization working for democracy and human rights in Iraq. A member of the Iraqi opposition in the United States, Michael has worked to increase women's presence in domestic and international resistance movements. She has also helped to develop relevant international human rights and humanitarian standards and advocated for support of civil society. More recently, Michael has met with U.S. President George W. Bush and his staff to discuss the chemical and biological attacks on northern Iraq and request that the United States assist in democracy building in her country. Her publications include *From Violence to Non-Violence*, an autobiographical account of 26 years in exile.

The co-founder of the Assyrian Committee for Civic Responsibility in Illinois, **Nadia Mirza** has long served the Assyrian community in the United States. Her work has focused on youth; she has also been active in community organizing around civic rights and responsibilities. In addition, she is the president of the Assyrian Academic Society, which seeks to preserve Assyrian culture and language within the U.S.-based community. She has worked with the Assyrian-American League on lobbying efforts to enhance political and religious rights for Assyrians. She holds a B.A. in history from Loyola University.

In 1991, **Esra Naama's** father was one of the instigators of the uprising against Saddam Hussein in southern Iraq. When the revolt was crushed, Naama and her family were granted asylum in the United States. She is now a member of Women for a Free Iraq, a campaign designed to educate Americans about the abuses women and their families suffered under Saddam Hussein.

Sabria Naama took part in the 1991 uprising in southern Iraq; she later escaped to Saudi Arabia and the United States. She is now active in the nonprofit organization the Iraqi Community, a coalition that encourages all Iraqis to participate in the political, educational, and social activities they prefer. She recently established the Iraqi Women's Organization of America.

The former general secretary of the Iraqi Community Association in the United Kingdom, **Bushra Perto** has long been part of the Iraqi opposition movement. She was a member of the Iraqi Opposition Congress held in London in December 2002. She was the administrative secretary of the Iraqi Peace Council in the 1970s and was an active member of the Iraqi Women's League in the 1950s and 1960s. Perto holds a degree in chemical science from Geneva University.

Tamara Sarafa Quinn is a fuel buyer and administrator for the Tennessee Valley Authority, where she negotiates, administers and arranges logistics for

large coal contracts; she is also a member of Women for a Free Iraq. She holds degrees in accounting and mathematics from Murray State University and the University of Evansville and is currently working toward an MBA.

A founding member of the Kurdish Women Action Against Honour Killing, **Nazaneen Rashid** has been active in humanitarian issues and women's rights for years. She recently served as the volunteer programme director of the Kurdish Diasaster Fund in London. In that capacity, she organized women's projects in Iraqi Kurdistan on shelter, literacy, health, and computer training. She was the volunteer chair of Action for Refugee Women in London, where she advocated for gender-sensitive policies and programs and worked to raise the awareness of policymakers and service providers on issues relating to refugee women. She holds a B.A. in history from the University of Baghdad and was nominated in 1996 for the Robert F. Kennedy Prize in Human Rights; she is a frequent participant in international women's conferences.

Raz Rasool is a member of the Iraqi National Congress. Long active in the Iraqi opposition, her father is a member of the Kurdish Parliament and head of the Kurdish Writers Union. Rasool holds a B.S. in electrical engineering from Salahadin University in Iraq and has worked with Mines Advisory Group and the Kurdistan Reconstruction and Development Society, both NGOs in northern Iraq. She currently works as a senior electrical inspector at Cable Communications and Consumer Protection in Centerville, Virginia.

Currently a professor of anthropology at the City University of New York, **Amal Rassam** conducts field research on the status of women in Arab society and on ethnic groups and minorities in the Middle East. Her most recent publication is *Peoples and Cultures of the Middle East*. Dr. Rassam holds a BA from the American University of Beirut and a doctorate from the University of Michigan.

Jennifer Ridha is an attorney with Gibson, Dunn, and Crutcher, LLP, in New York. She has long been active on human rights and women's issues, working for Amnesty International in Washington and for Amideast in Morocco. Through the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee in New York, she continues to be a leader in the Iraqi-American community and has served as a commentator on the current conflict in a variety of local and national media outlets. Ridha holds a B.A. in political science from Ohio University and a J.D. from Columbia University School of Law.

Women for Women International a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting women survivors of armed conflict and social and political upheaval; Founder and President **Zainab Salbi** has written and spoken extensively on the role of women in war and post-conflict situations. She has been nominated for

several human rights awards and was recognized for her work by former President Bill Clinton in a ceremony at the White House. Salbi's publications include "Strategic Planning and Institutional Development" in a civil society empowerment article series and "The Role of Microcredit in Poverty Alleviation in a Post-Conflict/Transitional Society: Bosnian Villages as a Case Study." Salbi holds a bachelor's degree in women's studies from George Mason University and a master's degree from the London School of Economics and Political Science.

Neeran Saraf is a member of the Iraqi Forum for Democracy, a nonprofit, political action group that believes in non-violent means to achieve its aims. She is also president and CEO of SARAF Software Solutions in Falls Church, Virginia, and has more than 20 years of technical and business experience in the information technology industry. She holds a B.S. in computer science from the Imperial College at the University of London and an M.S. in computer science from George Mason University in Virginia.

Kanar Sarraj is an engineer with the Fairfax County Department of Public Works and Environmental Services in northern Virginia. Previously, Sarraj worked with humanitarian organizations to assist and resettle Iraqi refugees and victims of violence of the regime. She holds a BS in electrical engineering from Salahadin University in northern Iraq.

Nasreen Mustafa Sideek is the Minister of Reconstruction and Development for the Kurdistan Regional Government in Northern Iraq; she is also a member of the economy and infrastructure working group at the U.S. State Department's Future of Iraq Project. Following the 1991 war in Kuwait, she worked with the International Organization for Migration to assist in the repatriation of refugees; she also worked with the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs to coordinate relief services with UN agencies and NGOs. She holds a bachelor's degree in architectural engineering from the University of Baghdad and a master's degree in public policy and management from Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government.

As president of the Assyrian Women's Union in Iraq, **Pascale Warda** applies her experience with human rights, refugees, and civil society to her work with Assyrian women. Warda co-founded the Iraqi Society for Human Rights in Damascus, Syria, and served as the representative of the Assyrian Democratic Movement Foundation in Paris—the highest position of any woman in the ADM, which is the primary Assyrian political party in Iraq. Warda holds a degree from the Human Rights Institute at the University of Lyon in France.

Conference Participants

Rakiah Al-Kayssi, Ph.D.

Research Analyst, Department of Studies and Research, Iraqi Jurist Association

Zainab Al-Suwajj

Co-Founder and Executive Director, American Islamic Congress

Vanessa Denha

Journalist

Basma Fakri

Engineer Group Leader, Tetra Tech MPS

Tanya Gilly

Board member, Kurdish Foundation
Member, Women for a Free Iraq

Zakia Hakki

Vice President, Iraqi-American Council
Founder and former President, Kurdish Women's Federation

Paiman Halmat

President, Kurdish Foundation

Pauline Jasim

Research Project Specialist, Department of Medicine, University of Chicago
Executive Secretary, Assyrian-American National Federation
Member, Iraqi Forum for Democracy

Riva A. Khoshaba

Attorney, Foley and Lardner

Jawhara Mansour, Ph.D.

Researcher and Consultant, JNP Enterprises

Katrin Michael

Associate, Iraq Foundation
Member, Women for a Free Iraq

Nadia Mirza

Co-Founder, Assyrian Committee for Civic Responsibility

Esra Naama

Member, Women for a Free Iraq

Sabria Mahidi Naama

Member, Women for a Free Iraq

Bushra Perto

Former General Secretary, Iraqi Community Association, UK
Member, Iraqi Opposition Congress, UK

Tamara Sarafa Quinn

Fuel Buyer and Administrator, Tennessee Valley Authority

Nazaneen Rashid

Founding member, Kurdish Women Action Against Honour Killing, UK
Volunteer Programme Director, Kurdish Disaster, UK

Raz Rasool

Electrical Engineer, Cable Communications and Consumer Protection
Member, Iraqi National Congress

Amal Rassam, Ph.D.

Professor of Anthropology, City
University of New York

Jennifer Ridha

Attorney, Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher,
LLP

Zainab Salbi

Founder and President, Women for
Women International

Neeran Saraf

President and CEO, SARAF
Solutions, Inc.
Member, Iraqi Forum for Democracy

Kanar Sarraj

Engineer, Fairfax County Code and
Department of Public Works and
Environmental Services

Nasreen Mustafa Sideek

Minister of Reconstruction and
Development, Kurdistan Regional
Government

Pascale Warda

President, Assyrian Women's Union
Co-Founder, Iraqi Society for Human
Rights, Damascus
Representative, Assyrian Democratic
Movement Foundation, Paris

Resource Experts**Randa Akeel**

Adviser, Middle East and North
Africa Region for Knowledge and
Economic and Sector Work, World
Bank

Sanam Anderlini

Director, Policy Commission, Women
Waging Peace

Hattie Babbitt

Senior Vice President, Hunt
Alternatives Fund

Katherine Blakeslee

Director, Office of Women in
Development, U.S. Agency for
International Development

Virginia M. Bouvier

Program Officer, Jennings Randolph
Fellowship Program, US Institute of
Peace

Juana Brachet

Officer, Post-Conflict Reconstruction
Unit, World Bank

Kate Burns

Senior Social Affairs Officer; Women,
Peace, and Security; Office of the
Special Adviser to the Secretary-
General on Gender Issues and
Advancement of Women; United
Nations

Nadereh Chamlou

Senior Adviser, Middle East and
North Africa Region for Knowledge
and Economic and Sector Work,
World Bank

Nat Colletta

Co-Director, Institute for
Peacebuilding and Development,
George Washington University

Haleh Esfandiari

Consulting Director, Middle East
Project, Woodrow Wilson
International Center for Scholars

Vivien Hart

Fellow, U.S. Institute of Peace
Director, University's Cunliffe Centre
for the Study of Constitutionalism
and National Identity
Professor, American Studies,
University of Sussex

Swanee Hunt

Founder and Chair, Women Waging
Peace

Ray Salvatore Jennings

Senior Fellow, Jennings Randolph
Fellowship, U.S. Institute of Peace

Miki Jacevic

Policy Officer, Women Waging Peace

Mikaela McDermott

Senior Program Officer, Freedom
House

Richard D. Kauzarich

Director, Special Initiative on the
Muslim World, U.S. Institute of Peace

Susan Kinsley

Media and NGO Liaison Officer,
United Nations Information Centre

Carla Koppell

Interim Director, Conflict Prevention
Project, Woodrow Wilson
International Center for Scholars
Deputy Director, Washington, D.C.,
Office, Hunt Alternatives Fund

Matthew Levinger

William C. Foster Fellow, Bureau of
Political-Military Affairs, U.S.
Department of State

Ana Paula Lopes

Officer, Post-Conflict Reconstruction
Unit, World Bank

Elizabeth Powley

Associate Director, Policy
Commission, Women Waging Peace

Phillipa Strum

Director, Division of United States
Studies, Woodrow Wilson
International Center for Scholars
Broeklundian Professor of Political
Science Emerita, Brooklyn College

Sussan Tahmasebi

Director, Science and Arts Foundation

Judith Yaphe

Middle Eastern Specialist, Institute for
National Security Studies, National
Defense University

The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

Lee H. Hamilton, President and Director

One Woodrow Wilson Plaza
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004-3027

www.wilsoncenter.org

Board of Trustees

Joseph B. Gildenhorn, Chair; David A. Metzner, Vice Chair. Public Members: James H. Billington, Librarian of Congress; John W. Carlin, Archivist of the United States; Bruce Cole, Chair, National Endowment for the Humanities; Roderick R. Paige, Secretary, U.S. Department of Education; Colin L. Powell, Secretary, U.S. Department of State; Lawrence M. Small, Secretary, Smithsonian Institution; Tommy G. Thompson, Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Private Citizen Members: Joseph A. Cari, Jr., Carol Cartwright, Donald E. Garcia, Bruce S. Gelb, Daniel L. Lamaute, Tamala L. Longaberger, Thomas R. Reedy

Wilson Council

Bruce S. Gelb, President. Diane Abouafia-D'Jaen, Elias F. Aburdene, Charles S. Ackerman, B.B. Andersen, Cyrus A. Ansary, Lawrence E. Bathgate II, John Beinecke, Joseph C. Bell, Steven Alan Bennett, Rudy Boschwitz, A. Oakley Brooks, Melva Bucksbaum, Charles W. Burson, Conrad Cafritz, Nicola L. Caiola, Raoul L. Carroll, Scott Carter, Albert V. Casey, Mark Chandler, Peter B. Clark, Melvin Cohen, William T. Coleman, Jr., Michael D. DiGiacomo, Sheldon Drobny, F. Samuel Eberts III, J. David Eller, Mark Epstein, Melvyn J. Estrin, Sim Farar, Susan Farber, Joseph H. Flom, John H. Foster, Charles Fox, Barbara Hackman Franklin, Norman Freidkin, Morton Funger, Gregory M. Gallo, Chris G. Gardiner, Eric Garfinkel, Steven J. Gilbert, Alma Gildenhorn, David F. Girard-diCarlo, Michael B. Goldberg, Gretchen M. Gorog, William E. Grayson, Ronald Greenberg, Raymond A. Guenter, Edward L. Hardin, Jr., Jean L. Hennessey, Eric Hotung, John L. Howard, Darrell E. Issa, Jerry Jasinowski, Brenda LaGrange Johnson, Shelly Kamins, Edward W. Kelley, Jr., Anastasia D. Kelly, Christopher J. Kennan, Michael V. Kostiw, Steven Kotler, William H. Kremer, Raymond Learsy, Abbe Lane Leff, Perry Leff, Dennis LeVett, Francine Levinson, Harold O. Levy, David Link, Frederic V. Malek, David S. Mandel, John P. Manning, Jeffrey A. Marcus, Jay Mazur, Robert McCarthy, Linda McCausland, Stephen G. McConahey, Donald F. McLellan, J. Kenneth Menges, Jr., Philip Merrill, Kathryn Mosbacher, Jeremiah L. Murphy, Martha T. Muse, Della Newman, John E. Osborn, Paul Hae Park, Gerald L. Parsky, Michael J. Polenske, Donald Robert Quartel, Jr., J. John L. Richardson, Margaret Milner Richardson, Larry D. Richman, Carlyn Ring, Edwin Robbins, Robert G. Rogers, Otto Ruesch, B.

Francis Saul, III, Alan Schwartz, Timothy R. Scully, J. Michael Shepherd, George P. Shultz, Raja W. Sidawi, Debbie Siebert, Thomas L. Siebert, Kenneth Siegel, Ron Silver, William A. Slaughter, James H. Small, Thomas F. Stephenson, Norma Kline Tiefel, Mark C. Treanor, Anthony G. Viscogliosi, Christine M. Warnke, Ruth Westheimer, Pete Wilson, Deborah Wince-Smith, Herbert S. Winokur, Jr., Paul Martin Wolff, Joseph Zappala, Nancy M. Zirkin, Richard S. Ziman

Honorary Wilson Council Members

Hushang Ansary, Bill Archer, James A. Baker III, Jack S. Blanton, Sr., José Cancela, Richard L. Carrión, Jean Case, Stephen M. Case, William S. Cohen, Jerry Colangelo, Norm Coleman, Philip M. Condit, Denton A. Cooley, Gray Davis, Arturo Díaz, William H. Draper III, David Efron, Dianne Feinstein, Luis Ferré, Julie Finley, Charles Foster, Esq., Sam Ginn, Richard N. Goldman, Slade Gorton, Allan Gottlieb, Dennis J. Hastert, Roger Hertog, Roy M. Huffington, Ray L. Hunt, Bobby Inman, Dale M. Jensen, E. Floyd Kvasme, Joseph P. Lacher, Dan Lewis, Howard Lincoln, Thomas Loeffler, Robert J. Lowe, Donald B. Marron, John McCain, Michael S. McGavick, Robert A. Mosbacher, Sr., Peter Munk, Marilyn Carlson Nelson, George E. Pataki, Nelson Peltz, Alex Penelas, Richard Perry, Robert Pincus, Lee R. Raymond, William T. Solomon, James R. Thompson, Jr., R. E. (Ted) Turner III, Paul A. Volcker, Thomas W. Weisel, David H. Williams, Reba Williams

About the Center

The Center is the living memorial of the United States of America to the nation's twenty-eighth president, Woodrow Wilson. Congress established the Woodrow Wilson Center in 1968 as an international institute for advanced study, "symbolizing and strengthening the fruitful relationship between the world of learning and the world of public affairs." The Center opened in 1970 under its own board of trustees.

In all its activities the Woodrow Wilson Center is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, supported financially by annual appropriations from Congress, and by the contributions of foundations, corporations, and individuals. Conclusions or opinions expressed in Center publications and programs are those of the authors and speakers and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Center staff, fellows, trustees, advisory groups, or any individuals or organizations that provide financial support to the Center.