Distance Learning

Drawing from exit and post-deployment interviews of individuals who have worked in Iraq, USIP produced an award-winning DVD on "The Iraq Experience." The Institute is incorporating such best practices and lessons-learned into seventeen new courses on conflict prevention and management, peacemaking, and state-building. USIP's existing online course in conflict analysis is now available in Arabic. An Arabic language version of the interfaith conflict resolution online course is currently being developed.

Policy Focus

Following the success of the Baker-Hamilton Iraq Study Group in 2006, USIP continues to convene regular expert working groups to discuss policy options for mitigating the present challenges faced in Iraq. In-house research fellows regularly publish articles, books and option papers are furnished to the public.

United States Institute of Peace
1200 17th Street NW
Washington, DC 20036

WWW.USIP.ORG

UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE

PROGRESS IN PEACEBUILDING

IRAQ

The Current Situation

The security situation in Iraq has improved dramatically over the past year. Iraqi governing capacity, though still weak and uneven, has shown progress. Nonetheless, as the fog of war has receded, the obstacles Iraqis face have become clear and profound challenges remain.

At the grassroots level, Iraqi society is fractured. Profound distrust, sectarian animosity, and the desire for revenge run high, as communities come to grips with the effect of decades of dictatorship and five years of war. This fragmentation is literal as well: numerous communities have been uprooted and displaced in the past five years. At the national level, the ruling coterie of parties endeavors to shut out its opponents and political gridlock remains. At the regional level, Iraq is at risk of becoming a proxy state for regional competition. The gains of the past year are fragile, and it is imperative that Iraqis, with our help, seize the opportunity to shore them up.

Going Forward: USIP in Iraq

Since 2004, USIP has maintained a permanent field mission in Iraq, with an outstanding Iraqi and American staff who provide essential on-the-ground support to USIP's programs. Experts in Baghdad and Washington implement projects aimed at:

- **Promoting reconciliation and moderation;**
- **Strengthening governance and civil society;**
- **Giving the next generation a stake in peace and stability; and**
- **Facilitating positive international engagement.**

Promote Moderation and Reconciliation

USIP is building on its successful efforts to promote reconciliation by broadening the scope of dialogue at the grassroots and national levels.

- **Network of Iraqi Facilitators:** Since 2004, USIP has trained and expanded its Network of Iraqi Facilitators (NIF) to over 120 highly skilled individuals who conduct grassroots peacebuilding initiatives in some of the most violence-prone areas of Iraq. At the request of communities, the NIF bring together local government, tribal, religious and civil society leaders to prevent and resolve conflict at the local level.

- **PRT Reconciliation Support:** In Fall 2007, USIP staff and NIF members, in coordination with the Mahmoudiya ePRT and the 10th Mountain Division, assisted tribal and local government leaders in forging a groundbreaking peace accord in the South Baghdad region formerly known as the "Triangle of Death." Local leaders and the U.S. military refer to the accord as a "turning point" in putting one of Iraq's most violent regions on a path to lasting stability and peace. USIP continues to work with PRTs to produce similar successful results throughout some of Iraq's most conflicted areas.

December 2008

- **Iraqi Forum for Dialogue (IFD):** Supported by USIP, the IFD serves as a neutral space inside Iraq for top-tier leaders from diverse backgrounds to reach across political, sectarian, and ethnic divides, in order to build trust, negotiate differences, and push beyond political stalemate.

- **Confronting the Truth: Transitional Justice in Iraq:** USIP has distributed over 440 Arabic and Kurdish language copies of its film *Confronting the Truth*, which explores truth commissions and transitional justice around the world. In coordination with the Ministry of Human Rights, USIP supports screenings and dialogues surrounding the film, to spread awareness of the potential role of truth commissions as Iraq confronts its own painful past.

- **Equipping Iraq's Religious Leaders to Promote National Reconciliation:** At the request of the Council of Representatives (CoR) Committee on Religious Affairs, USIP is assisting religious leaders and the Prime Minister's Office to develop a common strategic plan for promoting interfaith reconciliation throughout Iraq.

- **Preventing Media Incitement:** Through its newly established Center of Innovation for Media, Conflict and Peacebuilding, USIP is bringing Iraqi media officials and private-sector figures together with international experts to establish an independent watchdog organization to monitor and self-police incitement in the Iraqi media.

Strengthen Governance and Civil Society

Institutional capacity-building is essential to Iraq's long-term stability. USIP projects aim at bolstering Iraqi institutional capacity and strengthening civil society organizations.

- **Strategic Economic Needs and Security Exercise (SENSE):** Approximately 600 Iraqis have benefited from this interactive, computer-supported program that teaches negotiation, coalition-building, and effective resource allocation skills. This intensive 5-day program targets senior Iraqi decision makers and local leaders, and is designed to encourage cooperation and coordination across government and civil society institutions. Originally employed by USIP's own SENSE team to train senior Iraqi officials in key ministries, it is now being delivered by Iraqis for Iraqis.

- **Property Claims:** To assist the Iraqi government in managing refugee and IDP flows resulting from post-2003 displacement, USIP is bringing together senior Iraqi officials, civic leaders and international experts to formulate legal remedies for such key issues as property claims. USIP's NIF are mapping communities where IDP/Returnee issues are likely to spark confrontation, and implementing projects locally to help mitigate violence.

- **The Justice System and Judicial Independence Initiative:** To enable an effective Iraqi justice system, USIP works closely with civil and government stakeholders to develop recommendations and public education regarding judicial independence.

- **Constitutional Review and Implementation:** USIP has played an important role in helping create the Iraqi Committee on Judicial Independence (ICJI), a consortium of representatives from the Ministries of Human Rights and Justice, the judiciary, the legal community, civil society organizations, academia and the media from across Iraq. USIP's legal experts provide technical assistance to help ICJI develop sound, consensus-based laws and policies, as it completes the crafting of remaining constitutional amendments.

- **USIP Grants in Iraq:** USIP's grant program is a well-respected source of funding and support among Iraqi civil society organizations that aim to resolve conflict and build peace. USIP has funded sixty-one projects in Iraq since 2004, and will grant an additional $1.2 million to Iraqi organizations in 2009. USIP assists organizations throughout the application process, and places heavy emphasis on monitoring and evaluation to ensure maximum efficiency and impact.

Facilitate Positive International Engagement

Iraq's neighbors must play a positive role in helping it emerge as a stable international actor. USIP projects encourage greater regional and international engagement in Iraq.

- **The Marmara Declaration:** In order to promote greater cooperation between Iraq and its neighbors and prevent regional conflict, USIP initiated a series of groundbreaking dialogues among leading figures from Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Syria, Turkey, Iran and Kuwait. The 2007 *Marmara Declaration* set forth a framework for a regional peace process for Iraq, garnering high marks from participants and U.S. leaders. USIP is working with Iraqi officials and regional partners to continue dialogue and improve cooperation.

- **The Iraq International Engagement Initiative:** A team of regional experts assembled by USIP is developing a set of rigorous analytical tools to measure Iraq's regional and international engagement in both formal and informal sectors.

- **Engaging Regional Arab Media for Peacebuilding:** By engaging top-level regional Arab and Iraqi media stakeholders, USIP is working to facilitate the return of regional journalists to the country and encourage more balanced and accurate coverage of Iraqi affairs.

Give the Next Generation a Stake in Peace and Stability

The next generation in Iraq faces the challenge of transcending the effects of their recent past, and embracing democratic values and human rights. USIP projects help Iraqi youth emerge from the cycle of violence by giving them a stake in peace and stability.

- **"Rights of the Citizen" Curriculum (ROC):** Crafted specifically for youth ages 14-18, the ROC is an 11-lesson plan that teaches the basic rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democracy, with lessons on diversity, human rights, and peaceful coexistence. With the help of an Iraqi university, the ROC has successfully reached approximately 400 youth in eight secondary schools in five Baghdad districts. Having received rave reviews from participants and educators, USIP is expanding its efforts to engage an even greater number of young minds.

- **Strengthening Iraq's Education Sector:** At the request of the Iraqi Parliament, USIP is convening key decision-makers and stakeholders to identify obstacles and develop joint approaches to rehabilitating Iraq's education sector.

- **Developing Peace and Human Rights Educators:** USIP is helping human rights leaders and educators develop lesson plans and participatory teaching methods to use in human rights, peacebuilding and civic education. Future Iraqi educators will be taught how to more effectively impart these lessons to young people, planting the seeds for long-term positive impact.

- **Media for Iraqi Youth:** By assisting Iraqi media experts in developing media peacebuilding products that can reach greater numbers of Iraqi a new generation of young people, USIP aims to engage youth in building peace for the future.