

F-1 Eyes on the Middle East: Iraq, Afghanistan and Iran

Chair: **John Miglietta**, Tennessee State University jmiglietta@Tnstate.edu

Amal Khoury, McDaniel College amalkhoury@gmail.com

The Humanitarian Consequences of War: Internal Displacement as Obstacle to Peacebuilding
in Iraq

ABSTRACT:

This paper uses a qualitative constructivist stance to explore both the theoretical linkage between peacebuilding and development as an effective approach to state-building in post-conflict areas and the practical conditions in which development and peacebuilding activities facilitate post-settlement, inter-group accommodation and reconciliation in deeply divided societies. Taking Iraq as a case study, it focuses on the complex issue of internally displaced persons (IDPs) as a major challenge confronting policy-makers and investigates how development and peacebuilding policies and programs can best promote sustainable return of displaced persons to their homes of origin. This evaluative case study critically examines various organizations' return policies, programs, and projects that target IDPs in Iraq and assesses whether and how peacebuilding and development initiatives are implemented together within these various policies. This paper attempts to derive lessons on ways in which war torn, ethnically divided societies can be healed and rebuilt. In a more general way, it contributes to new thinking in the areas of international relations, conflict resolution, and development.

John Vanzo, Bainbridge College jvanzo@bainbridge.edu

A Geopolitical Analysis of a Balkanized Iraq: Political, Economic, and Military Analyses of Hypothetically Trisected Iraqi Ethnic States

ABSTRACT:

The most nightmarish hypothetical scenario envisioned by Coalition planners for a post-war Iraq is an all-out civil war between the country's three major various ethnic/religious groups, resulting in the fragmentation of the country into separate political entities. This increasingly possible scenario is the basis for this paper. The paper will begin by examining the neoconservative geopolitical assumptions and strategies of the Bush Administration vis-à-vis Iraq. It will note the shortcomings of the current Administration's conduct of the war/occupation, especially in comparison to the prior Bush (#41) Administration's actions during Operation Desert Storm. Next, the historical background of ethnic conflict in Iraq will be reviewed, providing evidence that the existence and promotion of ethnic/religious conflict has been a basic ruling tenet of Iraqi regimes dating back to the days of British occupation. Based on its history, the paper will conclude that a political devolution of Iraq into separate ethnic states is a probable, and perhaps even desirable, outcome. The post-Cold War fragmentation of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia will be used as a comparative model for the likely character of the process of devolution. The author will conclude that a violent break-up, similar to Yugoslavia, is the most likely pattern to be followed. Based on existing demographic data, the probable borders of the states will be outlined. Then, using traditional geopolitical methodologies of analysis, the economic, political, and military viability of the hypothetical states will be assessed. The data will indicate that Shi'a and Kurdish regions would be viable as independent states, though the independent survival of the Sunni region would be very problematic. Finally, the author will explore various possible international alignments and survival strategies for the states, and speculate as to their effect on U.S. national interests and foreign policy alternatives in the region.

Ross Worden, University of Georgia rossworden@yahoo.com

Afghanistan and Nation-Building: At Theoretical Approach

ABSTRACT:

This paper argues that current theories of state-society relations are insufficient for understanding Afghanistan's developmental challenges. Namely, the traditional core of state-society relations posits that

states whose power structures are consonant with social power structures will be strong and that states whose structures are conflictual with social ones will be weak. Following this line of thought, coalition forces convened a *loya jirga*, or grand council, in 2002 so that Afghanistan's government could be inclusive of tribal groups and therefore strong and legitimate. However, though the *loya jirga* constructed a state that was consonant with Afghanistan's tribal power structures, the state has yet to take hold. Hence, this paper posits that the traditional notion of state-society relations is incomplete and that softer notions of political culture must be considered when trying to build nations. Specifically, Afghanistan's failure to develop politically is not due to the *loya jirga* being faulty, but rather to the absence of a long-term political culture that accepts centralized states as legitimate ruling bodies. This modification of state-society relations also has implications for better understanding political development in a pragmatic sense. Namely, in places like Afghanistan, democratic rule will likely only be possible in the long-term as deep seated cultural norms and views of legitimacy change to accommodate the idea of a modern, democratic nation-state. Short-term democratic development is thus the least likely option in Afghanistan, despite the sound design of the *loya jirga*.

Jeremy Windus, University of Kentucky jeremy.windus@uky.edu

The Lighting of a Fire in this Region.....” The Diplomatic Anatomy of the 1998 Showdown

Between the Taliban and Iran

ABSTRACT:

Between August and November of 1998, Iran and Afghanistan stood poised for a major ground war. When ten Iranian diplomats turned up missing after the Taliban's brutal sacking of Mazāri Sharīf, both nations rallied their people and prepared their armed forces. With roots in the political composition of the regional, religious schisms, cultural divides, and historical antipathy, the Afghan-Iran Crisis can be read as a culmination of causes rather than a simple manifestation of any one prevailing factor. As each side raced troops to their respective borders, conflict became more and more likely. This paper provides both a context and narrative of the diplomatic maneuvering of both sides followed by an analysis of the Crisis. Given the nature of the incident, this paper is first and foremost an inter-disciplinary work utilizing history, political science, and security studies.

Discussant: **John Miglietta**, Tennessee State University