

WAR CRIMES



A REPORT ON UNITED STATES WAR CRIMES AGAINST IRAQ

*Ramsey Clark and others report to the
Commission of Inquiry for the International
War Crimes Tribunal*



Waging War on Civilization

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It was ironic to hear the former Prime Minister of Britain Margaret Thatcher ridiculing President Saddam Hussein and referring to Iraq as uncivilized-ironic because Europe was largely mired in barbarism when Baghdad was the world's most refined, most cosmopolitan center, the Baghdad of *1001 Nights* and *The Ruba'iyat*, the center of philosophical, scientific and literary achievements still remembered as the peak of high civilization, the pinnacle of Arab culture.

There is something barbarian about brutally bombing the world's cradle of civilization. It is cowardly to launch an unprecedented assault by high-tech weapons of destruction on a defenseless Third World country, and hypocritical on the part of the most powerful nation to do so in the name of civilization, in the name of order-a new world order while it is destroying the birthplace of the world's truly first world order. It was in Mesopotamia that the world saw the earliest codes of law, forms of human government and other administrative advances, urban life, farming and writing, technical and scientific discoveries. Accompanying these gigantic achievements were lasting contributions to world art and literature.

Is there no sanctity for the sacred places of worship ancient and continuing-temples, churches and mosques? Is there no concern that this is the believed birthplace of the patriarch Abraham, the root of our heritage, that it is the home for extremely valuable human history, the guardian and keeper of knowledge about our history?

Many people probably connect Iraq and ancient Mesopotamia, but most people may not know how much we owe to Iraq's ancient civilizations. Mesopotamia was the world's birthplace of urban, literate civilization. Then again in the early Middle Ages, Islamic Baghdad was a seat of learning and a world capital at a time when most of Europe was peripheral and had been reduced to a near-barbarian condition. With reference to these two high civilizations, it was pointed out by anthropologist Robert McAdams of the Smithsonian Institution that there exists no comparable examples in history in which a country has produced two extended periods of comparable

richness from entirely separate cultural traditions more than a thousand years apart.

A true new world order treasures its irreplaceable heritage, but with all this destruction, the U.S. will be remembered as a destroyer of antiquity. There was a treacherous deception by the media and military to present an image of Iraq to the American public and the world as if it were simply an empty desert with some oil wells, thus obscuring the direct and indirect threat posed to the extraordinary contributions of Mesopotamia that have elevated humankind above the beasts. "The archeological treasures in the museum in Baghdad are, in a very real sense, the property of all the peoples of the world," said David Stonach, professor of Near East archeology at the University of California at Berkeley. He said, "If it were suggested somehow that it was necessary to bomb Athens in a war, there would be a very large outcry from the scholars of the world that the Acropolis should not be put in such danger. It seems appropriate to me to point out the equal danger of our cultural patrimony in Iraq." Instead, neither front page coverage nor nightly newscasts give the people any hint that the Western world has any stake in Iraq beyond petrodollars.

Iraqi Contributions

Among the contributions of Mesopotamia to the world are: writing, the wheel, irrigation-agriculture, monumental architecture, organized religion, kingship, empire, social stratification, industrial production of goods and large-scale trade, law, administration, cities, schools, literature, poetry, medical, scientific and mathematical texts, geometry, astronomy, building bricks, wheeled transportation, and the first architectural groundplans. Moreover, in addition to the ideological role that goddesses and women played in the mythical history, Ancient Mesopotamia produced the first poet known in history: a woman called Enheduanna, a high priestess, in 2,300 BC. We have to remember this when, as American women, we celebrate the literary or artistic contributions of Founding Mothers, of about one hundred years ago.

By about 2,000 BC schools, libraries, literature, epics, scientific documents, dictionaries, encyclopedias had already existed. Stone Age skeletons found in Shanidar Cave, in northern Iraq, show the earliest evidence of ritual burial. A 5,000 year old temple unearthed at Abu Shahrein, about 80 miles north of the Kuwaiti border, is the oldest religious structure known to us. Iraq, some scholars argue, even gave rise to the concept of the single god. Commerce, as well as religion, had its pioneering aspects in Iraq. Installment plan purchasing has been documented in clay tablets dated to 2,500 BC and found near the Iraqi fighter base at Jalibah.

Such achievements appear to have flowered first in "the fertile crescent" stretching along the mountains of Kurdistan to the Persian Gulf. According

to Dr. Adams, they emerged due to the particular climatological and geographical features of Mesopotamia at that time. True it was a very fertile area, but such achievements were possible only if people were cooperating -some irrigating the plains, some as shepherds in the steppes; that is, they had a division of labor and role specialization. And that required and rewarded social organization-writing, the accumulation and transfer of knowledge, a stratified social structure and the like.

Less easily explainable and perhaps more wonderful, he says, is that "these advances were not just linear and utilitarian. They were accompanied by tremendous creative surges in areas like sculpture, carpentry, ceramics and architecture-the arts that evidence a flowering of the human spirit." This occurred from the emergence of the Sumerian civilization, about 3,000 BC, to the overthrow of the Old Babylonian empire about 1600 BC. "Such learning as the world had achieved up to that time was to be found in the scribal schools and libraries of what is now Iraq. They were teaching the Pythagorean theories (of geometry) a thousand years before Pythagoras."

In the 6th century BC, Iraq fell to the Persians, and two centuries later to the Greeks. The Greek conquest was short lived, and soon afterwards an indigenous dynasty, the Parthian, arose later, succeeded by a Sassanian dynasty, which remained until the advent of Islam.

With the coming of Islam and the Arab rule of the Abbasid Caliphs, 750 -1,250 AD, Iraq once again became the world center of learning.

Appeal and Concern

Some voices of scholars and specialists showed concern and appealed for restraint, and stressed the scholarly, archeological, biblical, and artistic significance of Iraq and possible loss. In a letter to the editor published in the Washington Post on February 12, 1991, Dr. Robert Adams, Secretary, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C., and Prudence Harper, Curator of Ancient Near Eastern Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, referred to the intense and widespread human suffering denied by the use of the euphemism of "collateral damage." The immediacy of human suffering and environmental damage has forced into the background the uniquely rich and important history of the region that is today Iraq. The letter goes on to mention that the abandoned cities and villages of the last 8,000 or 9,000 years now take the form of tells or mounds that almost continuously blanket the country (thence very vulnerable). They cautioned that at risk from bombing are standing archeological monuments such as Samarra and the Arch of Ctesiphon. Of greatest concern are Iraq's museums, housing such treasures as Assyrian reliefs, royal tomb offerings from Ur and an unsurpassed wealth of clay tablets with early cuneiform writing many still unstudied.

These remains constitute a priceless heritage of all humanity. Worried about damage to this heritage, some scholars appealed for restraint: "Recognizing that accident, miscalculation and uncertainty play a major part in every war, we can only solemnly urge that all parties to the hostilities take every possible measure to protect them and to avoid military operations in their immediate vicinity. Intentional crime or careless error leading to their destruction would almost equally darken the record of any nation or individual responsible. As specialists in the antiquities and history of Mesopotamia, we share with scholars in many countries, including Iraq, a special responsibility for this crucial segment of our common cultural heritage."

Dr. Robert Adams stressed that the situation "in no sense diminished either our sense of responsibility or of collegueship . . . our collective inheritance of these creative accomplishments, and the meaning they still have for our lives, should not be forgotten even while this war is waged. . . [and] when hostilities cease, [it is hoped that we can] safeguard Iraq's antiquities and restore the amicable and productive atmosphere of international study of them under Iraqi supervision. Steps should be taken immediately to ensure that these needs will be adequately met."

In a call to preserve the cradle of civilization, Martha Sharp Joukowsky, president of the Archeological Institute of America and associate professor at the Center for Old World Archeology and Art at Brown University, raised the question: "What is being done to preserve the cultural heritage of Iraq?" Emphasizing both the biblical and archeological heritage, she pointed to the cultural importance of ancient Iraq (as it extended south to the Gulf) referring to the first eleven chapters of Genesis: "in the east," the land of "Shinar" [Sumer], in southern Iraq "Eden" was the name of a district in southern Sumer.

She mentioned how the account of Noah's flood bears striking similarities to a Babylonian legend of a great flood and added that according to Genesis, the first cities founded in Shinar after the flood were Babel (Babylon), Erech (Uruk), and Accad (Akkad), while the first cities in Assyria (northern Iraq) were said to be Nineveh and Calab. There are well-preserved remains of most of these cities in Iraq today. The "tower of Babel" was the great ziggurat, or temple tower, of Babylon. Though dismantled by Alexander the Great, its foundations are still preserved. Ur of the Chaldees in southern Iraq, the believed home of Abraham, has spectacular remains, especially its huge ziggurat.

On the outskirts of Baghdad are two ancient sites with well-preserved architecture: Aqar Quf, with its great ziggurat, and Ctesiphon, with the immense vault of its Sassanian palace. In the heart of Baghdad is the Iraq Museum, with the most important collection of Mesopotamian antiquities worldwide. Throughout Iraq are old and beautiful mosques, and in the north are some of the oldest Christian churches in the world.

The citadel town of Erbil, with its medieval city wall, high atop a mound that has been inhabited for thousands of years, is perhaps one of the most picturesque sites in northern Iraq. Virtually the whole country is an archeological site. The *Atlas of Archeological Sites in Iraq*, compiled by the Iraqi Department of Antiquities and Heritage, lists thousands of known sites, and many more yet to be identified.

Archeologists have had the time and resources to investigate only a small fraction of these sites, but even this limited sample continues to produce significant discoveries every year. Three of the world's oldest known villages have been explored in the north during the last few years. At Sippar, south of Baghdad, Iraqi archeologists recently discovered an extensive library with hundreds of clay tablets still arranged on shelves. These are still unread, unresearched, uninterpreted. An Assyrian palace was partially excavated by Iraqi archeologists at Nineveh this past spring.

The destruction of this material would leave a gap in human history impossible to fill. The risks that the Gulf war posed for the record of human development must not be minimized. Many sites, particularly those that are the sources for the earliest stage of civilization, could easily be obliterated without ever having been documented. Just like the deceptive assurances by the administration that Iraqi civilians were not targeted due to the precision of smart bombing, vague assurances were made by the military that cultural sites were not targeted. There is no evidence that any archeologists or scholars of Iraq were consulted prior to the war. Without consulting scholars and archeologists, the non-specialized cannot determine or identify such archeological remains.

Spectacular remains, such as the Parthian city of Hatra and the ziggurat at Ur of the Chaldees in southern Iraq, are visible and known monuments, but 90% of Mesopotamia is still below the ground, and valuable remains appear only in the form of mounds that the U.S. military cannot on their own appreciate. Remains below the ground may not seem significant to the present administration, but in fact the significance of such unknown sites is immeasurable and far-reaching.

According to Dr. Robert Adams, in brief remarks on television, he was asked by the Air Force to submit a map of the sites after the Allied bombing had ended and at the time of the so-called ground war phase. No specialists in the archeology and heritage of Iraq are known to have been consulted by: American military planners prior to that. The few voices of concern went unheeded by the government, other voices were muted by their institutions or scholarly organizations and ignored by the media. Some institutions prevented scholars from making statements to the media. It is sad to realize that many of the scholars who commented on the war did so after the air war was over. They were silent through most of the devastation. *The San Francisco Chronicle of March 6, 1991*, published a story about the meeting of the American Oriental Society held in Berkeley

at that time, during which a resolution proposed by some scholars expressed concern about the war and the damage to Iraq's valuable historical record. Shockingly, the Society voted against the resolution, using the pretext that such a resolution is political! I know of no resolution being proposed or action taken by any other national society of scholars.

Recent Discoveries

Months before the war, archeologists digging in Iraq reported to have uncovered the ruins of a huge temple to the Babylonian goddess of healing that they believe will produce new insights into the early practice of medicine. The discovery was made in 1990 at Nippur, the ancient religious center of Mesopotamia about sixty miles southeast of Baghdad. The ruins now being examined date from 1,600 BC to 1,200 BC, but they prove that beneath this layer previous structures stood on the same site, perhaps as early as 5,000 years ago in the time of the Sumerians. Dr. McGuire Gibson, an archeologist at the oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, who is directing the excavations, said the size of the temple, which may prove to be as large as a football field, was a surprise and could mean that concerns about health and medicine played a more significant role in the people's lives than had previously been supposed. Many of the people who made pilgrimages to Nippur probably came to seek healing at the temple dedicated to the goddess Gula. Among the artifacts found at the site were small clay figurines of humans that were apparently left at the temple by ill people. One is holding his throat and another his stomach, gestures that Dr. Gibson said obviously referred to their ailments. "These figurines are telling the goddess where it hurts," he said. "We know from cuneiform tablets that the ancient Mesopotamians used figurines in a number of rituals, but we don't know much about their use in healing- I am reminded of figurines that are left in Mexican churches, even today, as reminders to the saints to help cure someone. I have a feeling that the figurines in the Gula temple are for much the same purpose." The temple's association with Gula was established by the presence of dog figurines, known to be central to the worship of the goddess, and by an inscription to Gula, dated at about 1,300 BC, that was found on a disk of lapis lazuli.

Further excavations which were scheduled to begin in January 1931 would have consisted of a search for a main chamber, where archeologists expect to find a statue of Gula, and for clay tablets to document in more detail how the temple fit in with Babylonian medicine, which was largely based on herbal treatments described in previously discovered clay cuneiform texts.

Previous temples discovered at Nippur have been rich lodes of Sumerian and Akkadian documents written on clay tablets. Some forms of herbal

treatments may go back to the Stone Age, but historians of medicine say the Babylonians and the Egyptians were among the first people to develop a systematic practice of medicine. Their writings include instructions for specific recipes of herbs to treat certain conditions, from eye infections to diarrhea or constipation, and even to restore gray hair to a more youthful tint.

Dr. Robert D. Biggs, professor of Assyriology at the University of Chicago and specialist in Babylonian medicine, said the people also went to magicians to drive out the demons responsible for their afflictions. The discovery of medical texts in the temple, he said, could clarify the relationship between the herbalists and magicians and the place of the temple in their practices. Dr. Gibson said the Gula temple was probably the center of elaborate economic activity, with people bringing offerings to help in healing and buying clay figurines at the doorway.

Only two years ago, archeologists unearthed a previously unknown 4,000 year old city, Mashkan-shapir, mentioned in the writings of King Hammurabi. It is in Iraq that archeologists have found the earliest evidence of organized human society—more than a century older than comparable artifacts in Egypt and a thousand years before any found in China.

Bombing

But the full industrialized fury of a new world civilization [or is it called Order?] was turned on the very land that gave civilization birth. The Los Angeles Times of February 14, 1991, reported that the Bush administration accused Iraqi President Saddam Hussein of endangering one of the world's most precious archeological treasures by parking two warplanes near the ruins of an ancient temple in the historic city of Ur. Defense Secretary Richard Cheney said the Iraqi military command has placed the two Soviet made MiG-21 fighter-bombers "right next to the pyramid" at Ur, a reference to the famous temple of Ur-Nammu, the king who reigned over the city-state about 2,100 BC. Defense Secretary Cheney's ignorance as to the difference between a pyramid and a ziggurat was evident. Also in another television appearance, Cheney incorrectly stated that "the pyramids of Iraq were older than the pyramids of Egypt." According to present evidence known to archeologists and anthropologists, the ziggurat of Iraq (indeed, not pyramids) appeared over 500 years after the pyramids of Giza. This is not the place to debate scholarly dating, but the evident ignorance of archeology by the military and the administration has posed a serious threat to human knowledge and to significant human history. Anthropologists and archeologists should have been consulted prior to decisions on war.

Instead, the only stated concern by the administration and the military was that civilization was an obstacle to their plans of destruction and that

it was Iraq's fault that it was. Professor McGuire Gibson of the University of Chicago was worried that U.S. military planners were ignorant of Iraq's rich archeological legacy. He and other archeologists were explicit in their warning that all of Iraq is archeologically significant. They expressed concern that the archeological sites left by successive ancient civilizations that flourished in the area were at great risk during the bombing. Carpet bombing could wipe out 5,000 year old artifacts in five minutes-hundreds of thousands of sites in the form of mounds. There are also Iraq's museums housing irreplaceable records-some 100,000 cuneiform tablets in Baghdad museums have not been read.

Some 10,000 archeological sites in Iraq, out of possibly 500,000, exist among or near military targets. Basra, founded in 637, enjoys a strategic position close to the sea and the border with Iran, already ravaged in the eight years of war with Iran-a war that has been supported and supplied by the U.S. Mythical Babylon, which reached the height of its splendor during the reign of Hammurabi around 1,750 BC is only 6.2 miles from Iraq's Hilla chemical arsenal. The modern city of Mosul has undergone waves of allied air missions, because it contains missile ramps. It has not yet been confirmed whether the Nur ad-Din mosque, built in 1170, and its seventeen foot high minaret are still intact.

Experts have also worried about Nineveh, the third capital city of the Assyrians. This was surrounded with conventional weapons and chemical weapons plants. Nearby are seven and a half miles of wall that enclose Jonah's Hill, which is Jonah's burial place, where in 1990 a palace from the 7th century BC was discovered. Only slightly farther to the north is Khorsabad, the site of the best known of the Assyrian palaces. Also there is Nimrud, some twenty miles from Mosul, and its famous palaces, such as that of Ashurnasirpal II. Under restoration, Nimrud was recently the site of the discovery of untouched tombs of Assyrian queens and princesses and a tomb of the king's wife and her three ladies-in-waiting.

Ur was a Sumerian capital and is believed to be the birthplace of the biblical patriarch Abraham. Its temple, or ziggurat, is perhaps the most spectacular archeological relic in Mesopotamia, the area between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers known as the cradle of civilization. Ur may be the most significant city of Sumerian culture. It is close to the nuclear plant in the town of Nasiriya which has been bombed several times. Among other relics, Ur holds the royal tombs that have provided treasures for Iraqi and British museums. On the outskirts of Samarra, another target is a dam and a chemical weapons plant. Two buildings of great importance to the history of architecture also are there: the Aljama' mosque and the Abu Duluf mosque, one of them crowned with a great spiral minaret.

Cheney said the decision to park the planes by the temple shows that President Hussein should bear the blame for unintended destruction by allied bombers of civilian neighborhoods, cultural sites, and other non

military facilities. Speaking to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Cheney said the two MiGs were spotted by "satellite imagery" and blamed President Hussein for "using the archeologically significant facility to protect his military capabilities." The same Los Angeles Times story claimed that Near Eastern specialists confirmed that Hussein has placed military installations near ancient sites. Independent communication with archeologists led me to the fact that this statement was a misrepresentation and that the military bases had been built by the colonial British deliberately over archeological sites for defense purposes. It is not uncommon for developing nations to continue to use the colonial military bases

Damage

It is still uncertain how much damage was inflicted on archeological and cultural sites in Iraq during the unprecedented, relentless allied bombing. It is significant to mention that the Iraqi government had requested from UNESCO that a group of scholars go to Iraq to assess damage, but that the UN sanctions committee had voted against it. There has been talk, according to the office of Dr. Robert Adams and observations by Professor McGuire, about a team of UNESCO observers to be dispatched to make an investigation of damage to cultural sites, but so far this has not happened.

It has been confirmed that the Iraqi Museum in Baghdad and the 900 year old church of St. Thomas in Mosul in northern Iraq were hit during the first five days of the bombing. Reports trickling out of Iraq suggest that allied bombers did strike in areas around important archeological and cultural sites. According to McGuire Gibson, professor of Mesopotamian archeology at the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute, these sites include Samarra, home of a 9th century mosque and minaret tower, the ancient city of Nineveh, in northern Iraq, and Ctesiphon, situated eighteen miles southeast of Baghdad. The famous hundred foot arch at Ctesiphon, the world's largest single span vault, a fragment of a 1,400 year old royal palace, is reported still standing but precariously, Gibson says. The arch, which has undergone considerable restoration over the last five decades, was violently shaken by shock waves during bombing raids and may be in danger of collapse:

In the World Press Review of April 1991, there are reports from the newsmagazine Cambio 16 of Madrid of assaults on the Iraq Museum in Baghdad, on the Tigris River, and on some sacred cities, such as al-Kufa, on the west bank of the Euphrates where Ali, son-in-law and cousin of the Prophet Mohammad, made his home in the 7th century; Kerbala, the seat of Shi'a sacred shrines; and Najaf, where Ali was buried. Allied troops bombed Kirkuk, in northeastern Iraq, a city that has been inhabited since the second millennium before Christ. Kirkuk-an artificial hill formed by

the superimposition of cities from different eras "is a living archeological document," says Spanish archeologist Joaquin Cordoba-a professor of Eastern history at the Autonomous University of Madrid. "The loss of the museum's artifacts would mean the loss of an irreplaceable resource for the preservation of Mesopotamian culture."

According to the *New York Times* of May 5, 1991, Iraq reported that priceless art works and artifacts, some of them Islamic but many dating back thousands of years to the ancient civilizations of Babylon, Nineveh and Ur, have been looted from Iraqi museums. Iraq's Director General of Antiquities, Dr. Muayad Said, suspects that these treasures may soon appear on the international art market in Europe and the States. Among the stolen arts in southern Iraq are illuminated Islamic manuscripts; gold and silver coins and jewelry; and statues, pottery and carvings in stone and ivory that were excavated from the ancient cities of Mesopotamia and Sumeria. These were reported stolen from the museums of Basra, Kufa and other southern cities. In northern Iraq from the museums of Kirkuk, Dohuk and others, similar ancient objects were missing. Also a local museum in the town of Nasiriya was looted.

Dr. Said reported the good news that they succeeded in preserving contents of the Iraqi National Museum in Baghdad, which housed one of the finest collections of ancient Sumerian and Mesopotamian art-these were removed and hidden, and the most famous pieces have survived, such as the 4,000 year old golden harp from ancient Ur, and the headdresses of golden myrtle leaves found in the Royal Tombs, and a strikingly realistic bronze head of King Sargon, who founded the Akkadian dynasty in Mesopotamia around the year 2,334 BC.

This is critical since it was reported that the National Museum building was damaged by nearby bomb explosions during the allied air raids, including a direct hit on the telephone exchange across the road, damaging windows. Other than broken windows, the main door of the museum was blown in and parts of the roof were destroyed. The safety of the artifacts mentioned above is due to Iraqi efforts and measures of precaution prior to bombing. Unfortunate for the world, however, some of the ancient Assyrian bas-relief carvings that were built into the museum's walls were cracked and shaken loose.

Furthermore, Dr. Said reported that several famous monuments suffered strain and damage from the effects of nearby bomb explosions, causing cracks in the walls and roofs of ancient buildings-including the Mustansiriya School, the university founded by the Abbasid Caliph alMustansir Billah in 1,226, which helped keep alive the learning of the ancient Greeks until it was rediscovered by Western Europe at the time of the Renaissance.

The nearby Abbasid Palace, built by the Caliph al-Nasser Lidinillah around the year 1,179, has also developed cracks and structural weaknesses.

The bombing of a nearby central bank building has caused flooding to develop in the basement of the Khan Murjan, the largest covered caravanserai in existence, serving as a marketplace, where Arab traders once gathered with their camels to prepare caravans across the desert, and where important goods were exchanged.

Outside Baghdad, bombing resulted in cracks and other damage in the walls of the Assyrian royal palace at Nimrud, usually known as the northwestern palace. At Ur the reconstructed stairway of the Great Ziggurat was also said to have been damaged. At Ctesiphon, about thirty miles south of Baghdad, the great third-century brick arch, the largest such structure in the world, was damaged by the blast from allied attacks supposedly on a nearby Iraqi nuclear installation and is in danger of collapse. "Bricks have started falling down from the top of the arch, and without urgent repairs, the whole thing could soon fall down."

In addition to the direct destruction, the economic embargo and military blockade of Iraq can only hasten the process of destruction of hundreds of archeological sites, because food shortages are driving Iraq to cultivate more land in places that could have been avoided under normal conditions. The situation will further be aggravated because the destruction of the infrastructure has caused a shortage of labor power and technology that is necessary for the Iraqi Antiquities Department to document the disappearing sites prior to emergency cultivation. In other words, even after the direct threat from the bombing, the inhumane sanctions against Iraq continue to cause direct destruction of antiquities and are a factor in obliterating a priceless record of human achievement.

Effect and Action

Iraq today is a demoralized nation with a demoralized people who are devastated by destruction and death and threatened by famine and disease. But also less stressed is the fact that Iraq is the culmination of this rich heritage and a guardian of its knowledge and evidence. The Iraqi people are proud of the archeological heritage, which stretches back to the time it was the center of the Islamic world in the Middle Ages, as well as to the ancient civilizations that flourished between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers at the dawn of history. Knowledge of these shining episodes may well be a strengthening and unifying element for the Iraqi people today: Consciousness of their rich past is part of the psychological makeup of their character. Iraqis are enriched by an identity that stretches deep in history and civilization. Other than the loss to the entire body of humanity, the destruction or the threat of destruction of such heritage shakes the fundamental sense of their identity—the very essence of who they are. Americans rightly deserve to be informed about Iraqi civilian casualties.

But scholars find it urgent that a full account be made of the steps and measures that have been taken or, as evident, not taken by the United States to protect our irreplaceable cultural patrimony.

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