

The Dynamics of Iraq's Media: Ethno-Sectarian Violence, Political Islam, Public Advocacy, and Globalization

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A recurring theme in debates on the future of Iraq is that the state is facing an imminent civil war among ethnic Kurds, Turkmen and Arabs, and among the Sunni and Shia Muslim sects. As tensions continue to escalate, the Iraqi media will play a crucial role in these developments. The pluralization of a private media sector in post-Ba'athist Iraq has served as a positive development in Iraq's post-war transition, yet this has also allowed for the emergence of local media that are forming along ethno-sectarian lines. The Iraqi media have emerged at a stage where they now have the capability of reinforcing the country's ethno-sectarian divisions. This policy paper examines the evolution and current state of Iraq's media and offer recommendations to local Iraqi actors, as well as regional and international organizations as to how the media can counter employment of negative images and stereotypes of other ethno-sectarian communities and influence public attitudes in overcoming such tensions in Iraqi society.

INTRODUCTION

Overview

Few analyses of the Iraqi media have been conducted despite the emergence of hundreds of newspapers and several satellite channels in the nation, a stark contrast to the five state owned dailies and single satellite channel that existed during the Ba'ath era. Studies of ethno-sectarian dynamics in the media have been devoted to Bosnia-Herzegovina and Rwanda, but unfortunately such studies failed to materialize prior to their conflicts and the existing literature has been retrospective in nature. This policy paper addressed the need for a proactive analysis of the Iraqi media and its portrayal of ethno-sectarian differences in Iraqi society.

Observers of the situation in Iraq often predict the nation will face an imminent civil war among ethnic Kurds and Arabs, and among the Sunni and Shi'a Muslim sects, while others argue this civil war has already begun. While differences between various ethnic and sectarian groups have been ever-present in Iraq, those differences were rarely articulated in official, public debate, nor used as a basis by politicians, religious and community leaders to criticize the others. Even in Ba'athist Iraq, while members of every community may have suffered discrimination, at least the media never employed the term, "Shi'a," "Sunni" and "Kurd" in a negative manner as it would harm national unity. Following the 2003 Iraq war, the emerging media mentioned such ethnic and sectarian terms for Iraq's people, but in the context of calling for national unity. However, the debates prior to the adoption of the Iraqi Constitution in October 2005 and the December 2005 election of a permanent Iraqi Assembly an emerging trend in Iraq's politics - its divisive ethnic and sectarian discourse that has now proliferated into the media.

Following the February 2006 bombing of the revered Shi'a Al-'Askariyya shrine in the city of Samarra, a spiral of violence consumed the center of Iraq, including the capital where sectarian killings between Arab Sunni and Arab Shi'a groups have become daily phenomena. These tensions manifest themselves in the political sphere, as certain Arab Shi'a parties have

advocated a federal entity in the predominantly Shi'a south as means of separating themselves from the violence ridden center. Another conflict that receives scant attention is that of the future of the oil rich city of Kirkuk, contested by Arabs, Kurds and Turkmen, and often resulting in violent clashes at times. This conflict also represents itself in the political sphere, as Kurdish parties have called for placing Kirkuk under their federal jurisdiction, which Arab and Turkmen communities oppose.

Private Iraq media have emerged in post-war Iraq, reflecting its conflicting ethno-sectarian agendas, with ownership in the hands of the competing political factions. At the same time, media have also emerged independent of Iraq's political mosaic, and seek to provide a public space for education, entertainment and cathartic release for the daily violence that dominates Iraqi public life.

The media has taken on a public advocacy role as well. Advocacy can be defined in the Iraqi case as the media advancing the plight of the nation's citizens by influencing policy makers to address deficiencies and shortcomings in providing security and infrastructure needs, by highlighting these problems, and giving Iraqi citizens as platform to express their views. Ethno-sectarian channels do conduct public advocacy as well, but primarily on behalf of their communities.

The media in Iraq cannot isolate itself from global trends in international media, and Iraqis can watch media produced outside of the region, ranging from the British series "Mr. Bean" to cartoons, music shows and films produced in the Arab World or the US on Iraqi channels. This influx of foreign media, combined with a desire for Iraqis to produce media that reflects their aspirations resulted in several foreign program formats, such as reality TV that have been adapted to a local Iraqi context. This Iraqi entertainment media can provide an alternative to the "Iraq" that the Iraqis usually witness on TV: that of the news depicting unrelenting violence in their country. The literature on conflict resolution and the media stresses that entertainment programming is one method to overcome tensions in deeply divided society. Both state and private media can play an important role in using entertainment for this goal.

A professional and independent media that can allow views expressed by all of Iraqi's communities is an important step towards establishing a viable democracy. Nevertheless, in a country relatively new to independent media, freedom of expression can be abused.¹ The aim of this policy paper is to address a growing problem in Iraq: how can the media exacerbate cleavages in Iraqi society, and how it can be used to facilitate a positive attitude in bridging the differences between its communities.

Methodology

The evolution of the Iraqi media since the collapse of the Ba'athist government raises several questions. What media is owned by political ethno-sectarian factions? How are ethno-sectarian differences and conflicts, both rhetorical and violent, represented in the Iraqi media? Do media outlets enforce a negative attitude to Iraq's ethno-sectarian mix? Are there any

¹ An important study in this subject in the Balkans is Izabella Karlowicz's "The Difficult Birth of the Fourth Estate: Media Development and Democracy Assistance in Post-Conflict Balkans," in Miklos Sukosd and Peter Bajomi-Lazar eds., *Reinventing Media: Media Policy Reform in East-Central Europe* (Budapest: Central European University Center for Policy Studies, 2003).

Iraqi media outlets seeking to address these differences in a positive manner? What kind of programs are Iraqis watching? Do the Iraqi media provide a space for the public to communicate and express its grievances? Do the media try to produce local entertainment, or import foreign entertainment for Iraqis to “escape” the grim realities of daily life in their country? Do other channels refuse foreign programming as a reaction to globalization’s influence in the country? What bodies have formed to create legislation to regulate the media? How does Iraq’s existing legal regulatory media framework deal with the problem? Finally, what recommendations can be made to ensure that Iraq’s media serves a constructive role in its post-war dynamics, rather than serving as an element that exacerbates the state’s current internal tensions?

An overview and assessment of the media in Iraq is needed as there have been relatively few studies of this subject and is crucial in reviewing the literature of media in other deeply-divided societies. This policy paper will examine ownership and financing of the various media and how that is linked with the ethno-sectarian discourse emerging in Iraq. It is based on hours of viewing the programs of Iraqi satellite channels, supplemented by interviews with Iraqi journalists and questionnaires delivered to the channels. Rather than focusing solely on newspapers or terrestrial channels, this project examines prominent TV stations that happen to broadcast both terrestrially and via satellite.² According to various surveys, more than 90% of Iraqis receive most of their information, whether it is news or entertainment from satellite TV stations. According to one statement in a report on the Iraqi media, “Many people do not buy newspapers because the satellite channels communicate every single piece of news.”³ The proliferation of Iraqi channels that broadcast by satellite also demonstrates another important factor: media owners are sending their messages to local Iraqi audiences, the Arab world, as well as the large Iraqi diaspora.

This policy report is based on four sets of data:

- 1) An investigation of which independent and political factions own the TV media in Iraq (with a brief overview of their print and radio media).
- 2) Questionnaires distributed to Iraqi media in coordination with the Stanhope Centre for Communications Policy Research in London.⁴
- 3) An analysis of programming content dealing with entertainment, both locally produced, as well as that which is imported. In the context of a media dominated by violent frames, entertainment can serve an escapist or cathartic release mechanism in Iraqi society.
- 4) A discourse/content analyses of programming of the stations deemed as having a potential for affecting ethno-sectarian tensions.

² This policy report survey does not analyze Middle Eastern regional satellite channels broadcast into Iraq, such as the Qatar-based Al-Jazeera, the UAE-based Al-‘Arabiyya, the Iran-based Al-‘Alam. While they have large audiences in Iraq, this report seeks to analyze those media that serve as a reflection of the factions and communities in Iraq itself.

³ International Media Support, “Media Development in Post-war Iraq Report,” April 2003, p. 16.

⁴ Due to the security situation in Iraq, establishing contacts and conducting research provides numerous difficulties. The author would like to thank Douglas Griffin of the Stanhope Centre for Communications Policy Research and Professor Monroe Price and Susan Abbot of the Center for Global Communication Studies at the University of Pennsylvania for arranging access to figures in the Iraq Communication and Media Commission, as well as sharing questionnaires which they distributed in Iraq.

The last set of data provides most of the information for this policy paper. Examining the programs and their content helps determine the priorities and audiences for these stations. The analysis examines the media beginning with a national event that had ramifications for all of Iraq's communities, the bombing of the Shi'a Muslim Al-'Askariyya shrine in the city of Samarra, in February 2006. It was this event that Iraqis attribute as the spark in intense inter-communal conflict in Iraq. It was also at this juncture that a sample of prominent Iraqi media representing all societal groups had emerged. The analysis ends at August 2006 when the researcher made a trip to Iraq to collect the audio-visual data beginning from February 2006.

The programming content of various Iraqi satellite channels was analyzed by "frames" the station's used. In the context of this paper I have used Snow and Benford's definition of a frame: "an interpretive schemata that simplifies and condenses the 'world out there' by selectively punctuating and encoding objects, situations, events, experiences, and sequences of actions within one's present or past environment."⁵ By watching satellite media channels in Iraq, the analysis sought to determine how prominent Iraqi media, both political and independent frames ethno-sectarian violence.

The Target Audience

The status of the Iraqi media provides the need for offering recommendations to address three areas: media regulation, media education, and media institutions. The policy recommendations are directed to actors on the local and international level.

On the local level, this report seeks to address the Iraqi regulatory body, The Commission on Media and Communication, the Iraqi National Assembly and policy makers involved with the media. On a societal level in Iraq, this paper address educational facilities, such as Baghdad University's Department of Communications, as well as journalist associations in Iraq. It also addresses international donors, including foreign ministries and NGOs who have had experience in providing aid to media in post-conflict societies, as well as organizations such as UNDP and UNESCO, which have experience with the Iraqi media.

This policy paper also targets an audience of policy makers and non-governmental organizations who simply seek to gain a broader understanding of the underlying dynamics of the ongoing violence in Iraq. To this general audience interested in Iraqi affairs, this report seeks to demonstrate that violence in Iraq is not simply fought on the streets, but is represented in the tele-visual and thus socio-cultural sphere. In this regard, the paper demonstrates how the media's public advocacy programs as an alternative means of political participation in Iraq, in addition to various forms of entertainment as alternatives to violent media in Iraq, as well as a possible means of overcoming divisions in Iraqi society.

Defining the Problem of Media and Conflict

The media have the capability of affecting vast audiences and in a time of conflict and they become important actors, on par with the actual combatants themselves. Media often serve as a means of transmitting hostility, directly or indirectly, whether it is between states or ethnic

⁵ D.A. Snow and R. Benford, "Master Frames and Cycles of Protest," in A.D. Morris and C.M. Mueller (eds.) *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992) p. 137.

groups and can exacerbate tensions by spreading misperceptions or exaggerations. The question that first needs to be answered is whether a conflict media can emerge from within the Iraqi context. Dusan Reljic examines four determining factors within a media system that allows for the emergence of a conflict media. These four factors are:

- 1) *political context*: the rule of law versus despotic authority
- 2) *economic conditions*: the media as an autonomous economic organisation or one subject to governmental control (media as part of the state apparatus)
- 3) *quality of journalism*: critical and analytic reporting or mere functioning as stenographers of power using the language of hate
- 4) *public attitudes*: enlightened democratic traditions or authoritarian value systems.⁶

In terms of the political context in Iraq, prior to 2003 war the rule of law was determined by the Ba'ath government and primarily by former President Saddam Hussein and, who could issue Revolutionary Command Council legal decrees at his personal whim, only to change them the next day. In post-Ba'athist Iraq, "despotic authority" still exists within militia, tribal, religious or ethnic structures. While there are autonomous media organizations in Iraq, there are equally, if not more powerful stations subject to control of political factions within the Iraqi government, but not directly controlled by the Iraqi state. In terms of quality of journalism, critical and analytic reporting are developing in Iraq, yet at the same time, other media outlets do serve as the "stenographers of power," which at this juncture have reserved their use of the "language of hate," but are in a position to employ it in the future. As for public attitudes, enlightened democratic traditions will take years to form in Iraq, as the norm in the past was "authoritarian value systems" and the latter will continue to exist on a micro level in Iraq in the future. In other words, the Iraqi context does allow for the emergence of a conflict media.

According to the conflict resolution literature, the constructive transformation of a conflict can only occur if it affects the mentalities of either an individual or a society. The media has the potential to play a significant role in this transformation, by building confidence between the parties and challenging misperceptions between them. However, this is the exception rather than the norm. While a review of the literature on media and conflict resolution (a sample provided in the "References" section demonstrates isolated cases where the media has had a constructive role in a conflict, in most cases the media has exacerbated conflict rather than resolving it, and the case of Rwanda illustrates one of the most extreme scenarios.

The second question that remains is has the media in Iraq reached a point where it can be characterized as a conflict media? To answer this question I have appropriated a model from the Rwanda context, as that is the case that has most vividly demonstrated the role of media and conflict. While satellite television is the most prominent medium in Iraq, radio is most important means of mass communication in sub-Saharan Africa. Radio Rwanda, a state controlled station was used by the Hutu dominated government to mobilize troops and ordinary citizens against the Tutsi Rwandan Patriotic Front in the nineties. During these tensions, another press was emerging, backed by the Rwandan President's close circles and militias practicing undisguised hate-speech against the Tutsi. *Radio Télévision Libre des*

⁶ Dusan Reljic, "The News Media and the Transformation of Ethnopolitical Conflicts," Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management, December 2002, p. 7.

Mille Collines (RTL) emerged a private radio station, whose financiers had high level positions in the government before and during the genocide. RTL played a direct role in the killings of moderate Hutus and Tutsis by broadcasting information on where to manage road-blocks, identified who were supposed to be eliminated, giving their address and license plates, invited listeners to give information to help find specific persons, and asked Hutus to join their militias. The relation between Radio Rwanda and RTL has some ramifications for the Iraqi context. Extremist elements in Rwanda were able to infiltrate both the official state media, while keeping their own private media as well. The author does not want to suggest that the a Rwanda like genocide can occur in Iraq, but rather seeks to illustrate the structural similarities between state-owned and private media, where political factions in Iraq have influence over the state owned media assets, but keep their own private media functioning as well.

Four factors are developed in an International Media Support (IMS) Report to explain the emergence of a conflict media in Rwanda.⁷ These four factors can be adapted to any scenarios where conflict and media are intertwined, and I have adopted the IMS model for Iraq. The IMS policy report elucidates four distinct factors, which I have placed in sequential order. In other words, I argue that a process needs to occur for media to evolve into a “conflict media.”

- 1) a strong ideology
- 2) control over a mass medium/media
- 3) psychological preparation to hate
- 4) a call to violence

The first factor of a strong ideology is propagated by prominent academics, journalists or politicians, who develop theories of their ethnic or sectarian group. Such theories are framed in the media by portraying their group as a “stronger race,” and “a race with a glorious past,” or they could be framed as “victims” who have to unite in order to deal with a threat posed by other groups otherwise they will be “eliminated” from the political process or “annihilated” from within the state altogether. In the final case, violence conducted by one community against the other is framed as a “matter of self-defense.”

Once ideology or message is framed, there is a need to articulate it, which brings in the second factor: control over strong mass media to disseminate their message. In these media outlets, journalists and editors are in many instances non-professionals whose priority is advocating an agenda rather than informing the public. The dissemination of a “conflict ideology,” is a key step in conflict escalation. According to the conflict resolution literature differences between ethnic and sectarian groups is in itself not a precursor to conflict. Rather, it is the leaders or political movements representing the ethnic and sectarian groups who mobilized their communities to “gear up” for a conflict. In this conflict escalation process, control over mass media is essential.

The third step after a faction consolidates both an ideology/message and a media outlet is the most crucial. It is this step where the media is transformed into a tool of conflict. The psychological preparation to hate seeks to prepare people or the audience for a violent conflict. Such preparations include misinformation, as an uninformed audience is easier to

⁷ Alexis, Monique and Ines Mpambara, “IMS Assessment Mission: The Rwanda Media Experience from the Genocide,” International Media Support Report, 2003.

manipulate. Usual rumors or conspiracies are presented as the opinion of the “ordinary man” of that particular ethnic or sectarian group. This preparation also seeks to sow division, by framing peace with other groups as “impossible” and that those who seek reconciliation are framed as “traitors.” This step also seeks to use demonizing frames of the opponent through dehumanizing the other group or groups.

The fourth factor in the emergent conflict media begins when it makes direct exhortations to violence. The media emerges with the omni-presence of violent frames. “Enemy,” “accomplice,” “traitor,” “massacre,” and “murder” are examples of violent frames, and lists of killed victims are framed as “victories,” while the perpetrators of massacres would be deemed as “heroes,” which would encourage even more killings. This policy paper seeks to address *where* the Iraqi media falls within this framework and how recommendations can be made to prevent the Iraqi media from being transformed into a conflict media.

OWNERSHIP, PROGRAMMING AND CONTENT IN IRAQI MEDIA

Ethno-sectarian “media empires” have formed in Iraq and are a quiet pervasive element in Iraq’s Fourth Estate. The extent of these media empires are illustrated in the appendix, to demonstrate how powerful media have coalesced around ethno-political groups in Iraq who have print, radio and TV communications at their disposal. Ethnic factions among the Arabs, Kurds and Turkmens, and religious-sectarian factions among the Sunnis, Shi’as and Christians all have their own means of communicating to their ethno-sectarian constituencies in Iraq and abroad in the Iraqi diaspora. Other independent media with no ethno-sectarian affiliation do exist, but do not have access to the funds that the political parties can provide. If Iraq is to truly consolidate democratic foundations its media will need to include objective and independent outlets that represent a broad spectrum of Iraq’s society. By dividing Iraq’s media into four groups, I seek to assess if the Iraq media is fulfilling this goal, or allowing itself to become an arena for the political ethno-sectarian divisions in the country to be fought out.

I categorized the Iraqi media into four groups:

- 1) media owned by the Iraqi state
- 2) media owned by political Islamist groups (religious/sectarian factions)
- 3) media owned by ethnic political parties
- 4) media owned by independent entities

The findings of this policy paper are based on the programs and media content of a select group of Iraqi satellite channels that represent each of these four groups. The programming and media content of news, political, socio-culture, religious and entertainment is analyzed in four separate sections.

The first section analyzes the channel’s representation of issues of ethnicity and portrayal of differences between Arabs, Kurds and Turkmens. Additionally the coverage of Islam, particularly political Islam in Iraq is examined and whether the media’s portrayals exacerbate sectarian Shi’a-Sunni divisions.

The second looks at how violence in Iraq is reported and whether the channels encourage violence amongst Iraq’s various groups, or whether they seek to bridge the differences.

Third, channels are examined as to whether they may provide an alternative space for overcoming differences amongst Iraq's divisions. This section examines how some channels provide a space for civic involvement in political affairs through various talk shows and call in programs. In this area, channels often serve a public advocacy role, by serving a means to present the citizen's demands to the government.

Finally, if applicable, how the channels appropriate foreign media in a local context and what foreign programs, (political, entertainment) do they import from abroad. It will also examine what channels are resistant to foreign programming.

STATE OWNED MEDIA

The Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) in Iraq established the Iraqi Media Network (IMN). In its initial phases the Network included a terrestrial TV channel, two radio stations, and the *Al-Sabah* newspaper. The IMN faced two challenges from an Iraqi perspective. The first was to demonstrate that it can emerge as a public service broadcaster, serving as the voice of all Iraqis. The second was to establish a satellite channel that had the broadcast infrastructure and lively and informative programming that could compete with the regional satellite channels being watched in Iraq, such as Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabiyya, and the Iranian based Arabic language channel, Al-'Alam. In this regard, the IMN was restructured into the Al-Iraqiyya network, and expanded to two terrestrial TV channels and the Al-Iraqiyya satellite channel. The satellite channel began transmissions in May 2003 and is a 24 channel. It is the only national public service channel as its financing comes from the coffers of the Iraqi state, and the Ministry of Finance approves the channel's budget.

The development of Al-Iraqiyya reflected the evolution of Iraq's post-war political process. In its initial phases, it was used by the CPA as a means to communicate with the Iraqis, and thus considered a tool of "American propaganda." It eventually established itself as a channel free of US editorial interference, but then reflected the agenda of the interim Iraqi government of Iyad 'Allawi, who attempted to co-opt the channel to support his party in the January 2005 election. Given that the current government in Iraq is dominated by an alliance of Shi'a Islamist groups, known as the United Iraqi Alliance and an alliance of ethnic Kurdish groups known as the Kurdish coalition, the station had an inherent Shi'a-Kurdish bias, according to its critics. In past, the station rarely showed news conferences of leading Sunni Islamist political parties and ethnic Turkmen complained of predominantly a pro-Kurdish bias in this channel. The station has tried to address by allowing more of its content to be devoted to Arab Sunni and Turkmen guests who use the channel to express their grievances, if not criticize the government directly. Since Iraq's majority population are Shi'a, the station reflect this sectarian group's majority status by featuring the Shi'a call to prayer. The crucial difference between this call to prayer is the inclusion of an additional line referring to 'Ali bin Abi Talib, the first Shi'a Muslim Imam.

The station reflects a pro-government line in its depictions of violence in Iraq. For example, the content of Al-Iraqiyya's programming tends to feature mostly pro-government frames that stress "optimism" in the progress being made in "reconstruction" and "security." The campaigns of the Iraqi security forces are highlighted, giving viewers the impression that they are the only force that claims the legitimate use of violence, a key frame that seeks to buttress the legitimacy of the Iraqi state itself. The channel usually has access to live footage of Iraqi government military campaigns, which serves as an additional reminder to Al-Iraqiyya's

audience that the state is in fact taking action against the violence in Iraq. Members of the Iraqi security forces killed in action are framed as “martyrs” (*shuhuda*). The predominantly American forces in Iraq are usually framed as “Coalition” or “Multi-national Forces” and the insurgents are usually framed as “terrorists” (*irhabiiun*).⁸ Supposedly random interviews with people on the street are designed to give the impression of public condemnation of the “terrorists” activities in Iraq. Al-Iraqiyya also tries to frame state violence as legitimate by featuring public service announcements calling upon the Iraqi public to volunteer information on the “terrorists.”

One of the programs on Al-Iraqiyya is the show “Terrorism in the Hands of Justice.” The proceedings are filmed live in a courtroom setting where those accused of taking part in “acts of terrorism” deliver live confessions. The stage seeks to represent the state which is taking concrete steps to crack down on the violence. The program shows confessions of insurgents who admit that they are working for financial motives, in other words to frame them as a “criminals” opposed to a “legitimate national resistance.” However the show has ramifications for Iraq’s inter-communal violence. One account writes of the show, “On one episode an interrogator accused the members of important Sunni tribes—the Juburi, Janabi, and Duleimi—of all being terrorists. The show only heightened Sunni fears that the Shia security forces were targeting them en masse.”⁹

Al-Iraqiyya also frames the role of its competition, the other regional satellite channels in the ongoing violence in Iraq, a direct acknowledgement by the state’s public broadcaster of the power of TV and violence. In January 2006, the channel reported that the “suggestive material” of “certain” satellite channels had the potential of inciting viewers to “conduct criminal and terrorist acts.” Al-Iraqiyya did not specify whether it was referring to pan-Arab channels Al-Jazeera and Al-‘Arabiyya, or local channels inside of Iraq. The station’s news program interviewed Iraqi psychologists who stated the other channels had the capability of influencing its viewers to conduct violence.

However, Al-Iraqiyya does attempt to minimize the differences between Iraq’s Sunnis and Shi’as by broadcasting live coverage of Friday sermons where religious leaders from both communities preach against the nation’s sectarian divide. Thus, the channels usually frame sermons that stress “Iraqi unity.” It also holds televised meetings between Shi’a and Sunni leaders as a means of inter-sectarian dialogue. Even music videos are imbued with lyrics and images with Iraqi nationalist themes.

Al-Iraqiyya also provides a space for Iraq’s citizens to interact and communicate with the government or politicians, providing an alternative for the acts of violence that are in themselves protests against the Iraqi state. Shows such as “The Iraqi Podium” allows for a live call-in segment where viewers can direct questions about political affairs to the guests, ranging from various civil society leaders such as to journalists, academics and intellectuals. For example, the Wednesday program “Open Encounter” hosts government officials and

⁸ Those taking part in the violence in Iraq against Coalition forces, the Iraqi government and civilians have been referred to as either “resistance fighters,” “terrorists” or “foreign jihadists.” For the sake of this article, the term used most often in the Iraq discourse, “insurgent” has been employed. The term is by no means neutral however. It was the same term that British authorities in the twenties used to refer to those Iraqis taking part in the 1920 revolt against the UK’s role in the mandate of Iraq.

⁹ Nir Rosen, “Anatomy of a Civil War: Iraq’s Descent into Chaos,” *Boston Review*, November/December 2006 <http://www.bostonreview.net/BR31.6/rosen.html>.

political leaders to discuss elections, military operations and the agendas of various Iraqi political parties, with studio audience participation. Programs deal with local socio-economic issues such as “The People’s Concerns” where the viewer can phone in the program express their opinions about issues such as government corruption and unemployment. “Al-Iraqiyya With You” serves as a forum for public advocacy where the hosts of the program seek to capture on film the poverty and unemployment among the Iraqis and then call upon the Iraqi government to address these social problems. Even issues such as corruption are addressed on programs such as “You and the Official,” a topic rarely discussed on state channels in the Arab world. Al-Iraqiyya seems to have found its role as public service broadcaster, rather than an official state channel owned by a Ministry of Information as in most Arab states.¹⁰

Given its role as a public service broadcaster most of its show deal with politics, economics, social issues or religion. It used to broadcast older Egyptian dramas in its beginning phases, but does not import as much foreign programming as the independent channels or even the more secular Kurdish and Turkmen owned stations.

MEDIA OWNED BY POLITICAL ISLAMISTS

Arab Shi’a Media

All the Shi’a political parties operate their own radio stations, newspapers and satellite channels. The strongest Shi’a parties dealt with in this study are political Islamist groups in that seek a greater role for Islam in the state and public life, but differ on matters of how large a role Islam should play in Iraq. The four prominent Shi’a Islamist political factions include the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), the Al-Da’wa Party, the Sadr Trend of Muqtada al-Sadr, and the Iraqi Hizbullah. Each faction owns various newspapers, radio stations, and terrestrial TV channels, such as SCIRI’s Ghadir TV, the Da’wa Party’s Al-Masar TV, the Sadr Trend’s Al-Salam TV and Ayatullah Sayyid Hadi al-Mudarissi’s Ahl al-Bayt TV.

The Al-Furat satellite channel based in Baghdad began broadcasting in November 2004. SCIRI owns and finances the channel and it is run by Sayyid ‘Ammar ‘Abd al-‘Aziz, the son of the party’s leader.

The dominant frames in this channel are the “progress” SCIRI is making as the largest constituent party in the Iraqi government in terms of “reconstruction” and providing “security.” Therefore, the channel’s content supports the government, as well as the possibility of a federal Iraq, and victimization in terms of attacks by Sunni Arab militants referred to as “*takfiri*.” The term “*takfiri*” is a euphemistic frame that literally means, “those who condemn others as ‘unbelievers,’” and usually refers to members of the Al-Qa’ida Organization in Iraq, or in general foreign volunteers from the Arab world who came to Iraq to combat the US and Iraqi security forces. Nevertheless, Iraqi Sunni Arabs argue the term is used as a justification for operations against their community for allegedly giving tacit or overt support for their co-religionists fighting in Iraq.

¹⁰ For those who can read Arabic, a link to all the Iraqi channels (and their programs) discussed in this policy paper can be found on the Project’s website <http://www.policy.hu/anmarashi/>. Otherwise detailed English summaries of these satellite channels and their programs can be obtained via BBC Monitoring or the Open Source Center (OSC).

Since Al-Furat is owned by SCIRI, a Shi'a political Islamist group, much of its programming is religious. It includes "The Talk of Friday," which interviews religious figures, and a cartoon show with Islamist themes, "The Most Virtuous People on Earth." The station has coverage of Friday sermons from mostly Shi'a mosques. The channel also prominently features the activities of the leader of SCIRI, Sayyid 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Hakim, and only featured campaign ads for the Shi'a coalition, the United Iraqi Alliance, but not for other parties during the run up to the December 15, 2005 elections for the permanent National Assembly.

Given that SCIRI is dominant in the government, this channel tends to frame violence in Iraq with a pro-government stance, just as the Al-Iraqiyya channel does. Since members of SCIRI have a prominent role in the armed forces, the channel frames the role of the "security forces" and their efforts to "eliminate terrorism" in Iraq. When some of these security forces were implicated in a scandal involving the Ministry of Interior (headed by a SCIRI member) maintaining a secret underground prison, these incidents were played down on the Al-Furat channel. The channel has also featured speakers who have criticized other Arab states for failing to condemn the violence committed by "terrorists" in Iraq.

Public advocacy programs include a live call in program "Al-Furat and the People," and "Al-Furat Reports," an investigative show which deals with domestic issues affecting the lives of everyday Iraqis. While the channel has distinct Shi'a leaning, songs in between programs support peace and unity among Iraq's various ethnic and sectarian communities.

Al-Furat's programs are mostly religious and it does not feature popular entertainment shows such as Arabic dubbed Latin American soap operas, Hollywood films, or music videos from Arabic pop-stars.

Arab Sunni Media

The Arab Sunni Islamist factions developed political associations relatively later in Iraq's post-war dynamics. An assumption prevalent in external discourses on Iraq is that Iraqi Sunni Arabs dominated the Ba'ath Party, even though Kurds and Shi'a did make up some of its leadership and party cadres. Iraqi Sunni Arabs were also involved in forming exile organizations, such as the Islamist Iraqi Islamic Party and returned to Iraq to represent their constituencies in post-war Iraq. In addition to this party, other prominent groups include the General Dialogue Conference, Association of Muslim Scholars (technically not a political party), or the Unified National Movement.

These parties coalesced into the Tawafuq Front, and the satellite channel that represents their political agenda is The Baghdad Satellite Channel which began to transmit in August 2005 and will be the focus of this policy paper. The channel depends on advertising primarily from the Arab Sunni community, and also receives advertising revenues from the aforementioned Sunni political parties.

The dominant frames on this channel are "opposition" to the US military forces, referred to as "occupation forces." It also frames a future federated Iraq as a "foreign scheme" to divide the nation, and serves as a reflection of Arab Sunni fears of Kurdish and Shi'a entities in the north and south of Iraq respectively, would leave them in a landlocked rump state. Another prominent frame is that of the Arab Sunnis as the victims at the hands of "militias," linked to the government or that have "infiltrated" the security forces.

The channel has sympathies to the Al-Tawafuq Front, a coalition of Arab Sunni Islamist parties. It only featured campaign advertisements for the Front during the last Iraqi elections in December 2005, and carries live press conferences of the Front. Such sympathies manifest themselves in a news program that features the headlines from various Iraqi newspapers with Sunni Arab Islamist tendencies. Islamist themes are also evidenced by anchorwomen who don the head scarf, as in the SCIRI al-Furat channel. Religious programming includes “Explaining the Holy Quran” where Arab Sunni clerics offer religious interpretations of the sacred text. Other religious programs include “In the Shadow of the Shari’a,” discussing topic on Islamic law and “Fatwas on the Air,” which examines various religious rulings. Political programs feature a mix of guests, including government officials, but mostly feature Arab Sunni politicians.

The station’s views of violence in Iraq is also the same as the Front’s in that it opposes the American military forces stationed in the country, which the station refers to as “occupation forces.” Unlike Al-Iraqiyya or Al-Furat the channels refers to insurgents as “armed men” rather than “terrorists.”

The channel also has programs for Iraqis to express themselves, many of whom vent their frustrations over unemployment and the lack of basic utilities. “Baghdad Daily” features on-the-street interviews to give the “common man” view of current events in Iraq, particularly related to the security situation and the reconstruction efforts. “Your Place is Empty” focuses on the plight of Iraqi prisoners, a good number happen to be Arab Sunnis, showing the circumstances of the prisoner’s arrest by interviewing the prisoner’s families.

Al-Baghdad has shows are mostly religious in nature, but have some that deal with culture, the arts, and sports. It does import other programs that deal with Islam, but the station does not feature popular entertainment shows such as soap operas or films, neither imported from the region nor internationally.

MEDIA OWNED BY ETHNIC PARTIES

Iraqi Kurds, Turkmen and Christian Assyrians have established their own ethnic media empires, with the Kurds having a “head start” as they have enjoyed relative autonomy in the north of Iraq since the end of the 1991 Gulf War. A sample of their media outlets is included in the Appendix.

Kurdish Media

The Kurdish satellite channel examined in this policy paper is The Kurdistan Democratic Party’s (KDP) Kurdistan Satellite Channel opened in 1999. It should be mentioned that after the establishment of the KDP channel, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) opened its own satellite channel KurdSat, which is non-profit and is financed by the PUK. While the directors of both channels stress that their station has editorial independence from the PUK and KDP respectively, its content suggest that both channels serve as mouthpieces for the parties.

The dominant frames in both channel are the progress of the Kurdish north, the ability of the parties, the KDP and PUK in providing security, support for Kurdish members of the government, support for a federated Iraq, with a northern Kurdish state that includes the oil

rich city of Kirkuk, and victimization in terms of attacks by Sunni Arab militants referred to as “terrorists.”

The content of the two channels owned by the Kurdish parties, the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) are similar in that they offer news about their respective political parties, events in the Kurdish areas of Iraq, referred to as the Kurdish Regional Government, followed by political and socio-cultural programs in the Kurdish language. On the KDP channel, the Kurdistan Satellite Channel, programs such as “Manshit” offers a review of the headlines from the Kurdish papers. The content of the political programs primarily deals with events of the KDP, while the political programs of the PUK’s Kurd Sat are devoted to the activities of the PUK.

On the KDP channel programs deal with social affairs range from “Hello People,” a call in show dealing with social issues in the north of Iraq to the locally produced “Kamo,” a children’s show hosted by a puppet. Social cultural programs on the PUK include shows such as “Kultur we Rawshangari,” which deals with cultural affairs. An example of programming that is influenced from abroad is “Star Kurd,” an entertainment music show.

INDEPENDENTLY OWNED MEDIA

There are several channels that do not receive funding from any political or religious groups and primarily broadcast entertainment programs, and depend on advertising revenues and financing by wealthy Iraqi or Arab businessmen. Some are financed by funding from foreign government. The independent satellite channels examined in this policy paper are Al-Baghdadiyya, Al-Diyar, Al-Fayha, Al-Sharqiyya, and Al-Sumariyya. While the content of Al-Baghdadiyya, Al-Fayha, and Al-Sumariyya are directed towards an Iraqi audience, the channels are based in Cairo, Dubai, and Beirut respectively, due to the security situation in Baghdad. While these channels are independent, critics argue that due to sectarian ownership, Al-Baghdadiyya and Al-Sharqiyya have a Arab Sunni bias, while Al-Fayha has an Arab Shi’a bias. Al-Baghdadiyya’s director is Arshad Tawfiq, a former Ba’athist diplomat, who has stated that the station is financed by Iraqis. Al-Sharqiyya is owned by Sa’ad al-Bazzaz, the former editor of the newspaper, *Al-Jumhuriyya* in Ba’athist Iraq. Al-Diyar is directed by Faysal al-Yasiri a former media figure in Ba’athist Iraq, and the channel is partly owned by a group of Iraqis and the regional ART, Arab Radio and Television. Al-Fayha is an independent Iraqi channel owned by an Iraqi Shi’a businessman. Al-Sumariyya is owned by a group of Iraqis under the rubric of CET (Communication Entertainment and Television), and depends on advertising revenues from both Iraqi and Arab companies

Ethno-sectarianism and Islam

The aforementioned channels claim to be independent of any ethno-sectarian or political Islamist faction, and in surveys distributed to these channels, when asked if they refuse to air any material, they indicate a refusal to air programming that incites ethnic or sectarian divisions. Yet the various stations deal with Iraq’s ethno-sectarian political factions in various ways. For example, Al-Sumariyya does not carry live statements or press conferences of Iraqi politicians from the various parties, indicating the station’s effort to maintain its neutrality and it claims non-affiliation with any sectarian, ethnic or political party. Thus it stays clear of the Arab-Kurdish-Turkmen conflict as well as the inter-sectarian Shi’a Sunni conflicts as well. The channel does not carry religious programs, rather it usually gives summaries of statements of religious figures during its news broadcasts. While other

channels carry state run public service announcements calling for national unity, Al-Sumariyya produces its own announcements that call for peace among Iraq's communities. The station also features on the street interviews with the Iraqi public who stress unity among Sunnis and Shi'as, as do guests on its programs.

Al-Sharqiyya claims that it has no connections with any political, ethnic, or religious faction, and refuses to air any programming that encourages sectarianism. However, it did openly support Iyad 'Allawi, a secular Iraqi politician during the electoral campaign in December 2005. The channel has minimal religious programming, and it airs programs such as the "The Horoscope," an entertainment program that deals with astrology, which is considered a taboo in Islam.

Al-Baghdadiyya stresses that it seeks to promote "the unity of Iraq and promote Iraqi culture" and it refuses to air any content that is "against" this unity. The channel urges Iraqis "to unite" through various advertisements and music clips and ensures that its guests include Arab Shi'as and Sunnis, Kurds, and Christians. The channel has minimal religious content and according to its responses to the questionnaire, the channel has sought to increase entertainment programs such as music shows, and drama series that are not usually found on channels owned by Islamist parties. In fact, the popular show "Other Eye" brings in guests to discuss topics considered taboo from an Islamic perspective, such as local Iraqi superstitions, magic in Iraqi folklore, as well as hypnosis and exorcisms. Other programs that demonstrate the secular nature of this channel include "Shahrazad's World," which deals with current fashion trends and beauty tips.

Televised Violence

The independent channels deal with violence in Iraq in different ways, with some highlighting ethno-sectarian fighting and attacks against US/Coalition forces, while other channels have a policy of not airing violent scenes. For example, al-Diyar rarely shows live footage of the aftermath of insurgent attacks. Its news programs usually focus on domestic news, with an emphasis on social affairs rather than the violence.

Al-Sumariyya describes itself as "an independent satellite television which aims at showing the world the true face of Iraq, and not only images of violence." While the channel depends on advertising revenues, other sources of financing come from Iraqi's shareholders who insist that news programming not just focus on the violence, and support the station for its emphasis on entertainment as a means to take the public's mind of the bloodshed in Iraq.¹¹ Lead news items on Al-Sumariyya include events occurring in Iraq, but the channel does not show live coverage of the aftermath of insurgent attacks, like al-Diyar. Unlike Al-Iraqiyya, Al-Fayha or Al-Furat, when the Al-Sumariyya channel frames casualties among the Iraqi security forces, it uses the term "killed" opposed to "martyred." Whereas Baghdad Satellite Channel and Al-Baghdadiyya frames the insurgents as "armed men" and US forces as "occupation forces," Al-Sumariyya frames the former as "gunmen" and the latter as "coalition forces."

On the other hand, Al-Fahya news programs deal primarily with the security situation in Iraq and like Al-Iraqiyya it frames insurgents as "terrorists" and those security forces killed in

¹¹ "Media Aid: Survey of Al-Baghdadiyah Television," Open Source Center, October 5, 2005.

action as “martyrs.” Additionally, it runs public service announcements highlighting anti-terrorist measures, like al-Iraqiyya and al-Furat.

Like the Baghdad Satellite Channel, Al-Baghdadiyya is opposed to the presence of US forces in Iraq and insurgents are framed as “armed men” rather than the term “terrorists” used by Al-Iraqiyya, Al-Furat, Al-Fayha and the Kurdish channels.

Themes of violence and post-war instability are also prevalent in entertainment programs on these channels, such as satirical comedies, dramas and even music clips, discussed in the section below.

Public Advocacy

All the independent channels feature public advocacy programs. Al-Sumariyya’s “Who is Responsible?” interviews Iraqi citizens on the hardships they face in Iraqi society, and then allow the guests on the show, usually a government official, to discuss how they are dealing with these problems. “Files” deals with lack of infrastructure and basic utilities, and questions both the public and state officials about these problems. “Behind You, Behind You” also highlights particular social problems faced by individual Iraqis.

Al-Diyar also offers programming also deals with the daily hardships faced by Iraqis, such lack of basic utilities and insecurity. Iraqis can voice their concerns on the news program “The Screen is Yours” which interviews random citizens on social and political issues that concern them.

Al-Fayha’s “Space of Freedom” focuses on issues such as reconstruction and the insecurity in Iraq, while “Free Views” provides a space for Iraqi citizens to comment on the aforementioned topics. “Hand in Hand We Build Up Our Homeland” is a news program dedicated to the reconstruction efforts and “What If You Were...?” features comments by ordinary Iraqis expressing what they would do if they were head of a various government ministry. This program deals with the shortcomings of the various ministries that deal with reconstruction and unemployment. Al-Fayha also addresses a sensitive issue, but important in terms of reconciling with the state’s former past. The shows “Iraqi Testimonies” and “Bars” deal with the political conditions of Ba’athist Iraq and allows those Iraqis who were victimized during this period to relate their experiences.

Al-Sharqiyya features programs that seek to aid Iraqis in need. “Materials and Labor” is a reality TV-type show where the station finances the repair of homes destroyed due to the violence in Iraq. “Blessed Wedding” is another reality program that finds a young couple in need of funds to hold a wedding. The station then finances the ceremony and films the festivities. “The Ration Card” is similar to a lottery program where prizes are given out to the numbers associated with a family’s ration card, a system initiated during the UN sanctions period. This channel uses sarcasm, to poke fun of political life in Iraq and such satirical programs, often banned in the region are quiet popular in Iraq. One of the most well-known shows in this genre is “Karikatira” a comedy skit program that finds humor in scenarios of post-war Iraq.

Al-Baghdadiyya also uses the stations resources to aid Iraqis. “The Forgotten” program finds someone in need of financial assistance and provides them with a monthly salary. “A Drop of Hope” is a reality show where Iraqis with medical conditions are financed by the station for his or her treatment abroad. The “Platform” hosts those government officials responsible

for providing basic infrastructure needs and utilities and allows them to be questioned by the host and audience. “Youth Chat” is a talk show which allows teenagers and college level students to discuss issues of popular culture such as film and television, and social issues that are of concern to them. “The Camera Shoots” is similar to the Al-Sharqiyya’s programming that uses sarcasm to address the state’s shortcoming in providing basic services. It takes various issues such as fuel, electricity and water shortages and frames them in a comic matter. “The Dialogue of the Deaf” is a critique of Iraq’s social problems, with skits similar to Al-Sharqiyya’s “Karikatira” that mock the political establishment.

Global and Regional Influences and Local Reactions

Al-Sumariyya’s programming is primarily dedicated to entertainment, including music videos, and soap operas and other series imported from Egypt, Latin America and the United States, included dubbed Disney programming such as the “Lion King,” and “Aladdin, and Warner Brothers shows such as the young Superman series “Smallville.” One of the effects of globalization is evident in the show “Iraqi Star,” the local equivalent of “American Idol.” The advertising during this program generates significant revenues for the channel. Programs in a similar format include “Stars of Poetry” a contest for aspiring Arabic poets.

Al-Diyar is also primarily an entertainment channel comprising 80% of its content. It imports foreign films and comedy series, both American and Egyptian. Nevertheless, the majority of its programs are produced in Iraq including local soap operas.¹²

Al-Sharqiyya was the first to respond an Iraqi desire for entertainment that related to their daily lives, and an indirect acknowledgement that some were growing tired of imported series dramas from Egypt or Latin America. Most of its Arabic drama shows for are produced locally and filmed in the Iraqi dialect. One of the most popular series it produced was “Love and War” a soap opera detailing the lives of Fawzi and Fatin, a couple who lives through the March 2003 Iraq War and the ensuing post-war chaos.

Like Al-Sharqiyya, Al-Baghdadiyya claims to be an “Iraqi channel for Iraqis.” It has made an effort to increase the number of Iraqi produced programs and estimates that 90% of its programming is produced inside of Iraq, while it purchases other programs from Iraqi sources as well.¹³

THE FUTURE OF IRAQ’S MEDIA

Indeed, the Iraqi media has exhibited pluralism since the end of the 2003 Iraq war. Citizens can now use various media, such as talk shows, call-in programs, and “man-on-street interviews” to express their desires, complaints and frustrations. Additionally news makers and prominent members of civil society can use televised panel discussions to give their opinions about salient issues in the nation’s development. While most media in the Middle East serve as tools to legitimize the state, in Iraq various media has assumed its Fourth Estate role by challenging the incumbent government for its shortcomings. Specific programs often carry out this role by highlighting the daily difficulties faced by the average Iraqi and channels call up the government to address their needs. While issues such as government corruption, poverty and unemployment may be taboo subjects in Middle Eastern countries with only a handful of state-owned channels, in Iraq various media address these challenges

¹² Stanhope Centre for Media Research Questionnaire.

¹³ Stanhope Centre for Media Research Questionnaire.

directly. Additionally, certain Iraqi media import entertainment, while others produce local Iraqi entertainment, particularly humor, music and drama to relieve the stresses of Iraq's post-war society. All of these developments are positive indications for the future of Iraq's media and for its civil society. Nevertheless, there are some disturbing trends emerging as well.

Well before the 2003 Iraq war, the Iraqis were viewed through a "tri-ethnic prism," separated into Shi'as, Sunnis and Kurds, while ignoring Turkmens, Assyrian and Chaldean Christians, Yazidis and Sabaens, in addition to the more traditional fault lines in Iraq, such as class, rural-urban, religious-secular and tribal divisions *within* the three communities. It has been a fashion in a fashion in the foreign media to essentialize Iraqis into three "ethnic" categories leading to erroneous notions, such as viewing Iraq's Shi'a as an "ethnic" group or neglecting that the majority of Kurds are also Sunnis as well. Nevertheless, an examination of the media sphere in Iraq suggests that past misguided observations may be in fact emerging into reality. Indeed, Iraq's media is divided along ethno-sectarian lines, with an independent media competing for audiences. One article refers to this situation as the "Lebanonization" of the Iraqi media: "With Iraq's TV menu growing increasingly sectarian, it is possible to draw a parallel with Lebanon's highly sectarianized hodgepodge of channels-linked directly or loosely with political parties-which regularly report sect-specific news."¹⁴

The Iraqi media is pluralistic, but also fragmented. Ethnic and sectarian political groups have consolidated powerful media empires, including print, radio and TV, broadcast in Iraq and internationally, at their disposal. The ethno-sectarian control of Iraq's media landscape reveals a greater trend in Iraq's political dynamics- the lack of ideological political parties that can transcend Iraq's divisions. Ideological, secular parties such as the Iraqi National Accord, the Iraqi Communist Party, the United Nation Party, or the Independent Democrats Grouping may own newspapers, but do own a satellite TV station, the most widely consumed media in Iraq. Other independent media with no ethno-sectarian affiliation do exist, but do not have access to the funds that the ethno-sectarian political parties can provide.

Four phases were identified as necessary for the emergence of a conflict media: 1) a strong ideology, 2) control over a mass media, 3) psychological preparation to hate, and 4) a call to violence. As I stated that this process was evolutionary, I would argue that Iraq's media ethno-sectarian media is slowly beginning to enter phase three. The policy paper and the appendix which outlines the reach of the faction in Iraq's politics demonstrate that the sectarian Islamist groups as well as ethnic parties are dominant in the Iraqi media. Following the bombing of the Shi'a Al-'Askariyya shrine in the city of Samarra in February 2006, the various sectarian and ethnic media outlets escalated tensions but eventually called for restraint among Iraq's communities.

However, each sectarian and ethnic group uses their media to demonstrate that they are the victims in Iraq's ongoing violence. While they do not explicitly exhort violence against other communities, as would happen in phase four, their continued portrayal of respective victimization serves as a means of encouraging Shi'a Arabs and Sunnis to "defend" themselves in the ensuing sectarian violence. After the bombing of the sacred Shi'a Al-'Askariyya shrine in February 2006 for example, the Arab Sunni oriented Baghdad TV

¹⁴ Paul Cochrane, "The 'Lebanonization' of the Iraqi Media: An Overview of Iraq's Television Landscape" *Transnational Broadcasting Studies*, June-December 2006.

focused its coverage on the Arab Sunnis killed in retaliation, while the Arab Shi'a oriented Al-Furat's coverage focused on the actual damage to their sacred structure. According to one account, "Al Furat was even more aggressive, encouraging Shias to 'stand up for their rights.' On a Shia radio station's talk show, one caller announced that those responsible for the attack were Abu Bakr, Omar, and Othman, the three first caliphs whom Sunnis venerate and whom Shias reject as usurpers of the position that rightfully belonged to Imam Ali, the prophet Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law."¹⁵

When a particular channel reports frames a violent incident in Iraq as for example an Arab Shi'a militia killing an Arab Sunni family in their home, or when another channel reports on Arab Shi'a killed in a marketplace by Arab Sunni suicide bombers, neither channel directly calls for revenge against the other. In these cases, the channels may not even invoke the term "Shi'a" or "Sunni." Usually viewers can identify the victims by the location of where the attack took place, or the perpetrators by the method of attack they used. The respective audience members that feel victimized may take matters into their own hand in "self-defense," which in most cases manifest themselves in revenge attacks. Even if the "victimized" fail to act, it may generate support for their respective militias, and not the state, to provide them with protection.

The biases and victimization in Shi'a and Sunni reporting was expressed by Ahmed Rikabi, an Iraqi journalist who has had extensive experience in the post-war media. On the CNN program, *International Correspondents* he said in reference to the Iraqi media:

Well, the sectarian tension is so strong in Iraq today. And I think this guy who's name is Omar, it's clearly that this is a Sunni guy, when he goes and tries to cover an incident in a Shi'ite area, he feels like one of the victims. He doesn't go and feel like a neutral person covering this. And so is the case for the Shi'ite Ali, who goes to that Sunni area and trying to cover. You also feel the fear. He feels that those people standing there, they might kill him as well. So that probably also affects him somehow. I mean, whether he is very objective or whether he is very normal or neutral or unbiased, but he can't help it that he's got a certain name. And that name might get him killed. And that will influence his way of thinking or approaching the subject.¹⁶

A month later, Al-Rikabi state explicitly that the media in Iraqi has emerged as a tool of conflict: "We are witnessing a civil war. And this civil war is conducted by different religious groups and different political groups. And of course, the media is an extension of this sectarian violence we are witnessing today."¹⁷

The Iraqi ethno-sectarian media has reached stage three, in that it is laying the psychological groundwork for hating the other. To reach stage four, these factions would need to make direct exhortations to violence against the other. While this has not occurred, if the security situation were to worsen, the political factions would have the option of using their media as mouthpieces to exacerbate the conflict, by whipping up ethnic and sectarian feelings or even directing the conflict. So far, these factions have used their media to stress unity among Iraq's communities, but they nevertheless have the potential to instigate conflict with these means if it suits their interests.

¹⁵ Rosen, "Anatomy of a Conflict."

¹⁶ International Correspondent, *Cable News Network*, 14:00 EST, October 13, 2006

¹⁷ International Correspondent, *Cable News Network*, 14:00 EST, November 17, 2006

According to the author's fieldwork on the media in Iraq, a common perception held amongst the Iraqi public, even journalists themselves is that they see their media as an arena, where different factions have used the newspapers, radio and TV as "tools of war." As the Iraqi political parties rarely communicate directly with each other, they have expressed their grievances through the media, with some media discreetly encouraging violence against the incumbent government. While observers of the situation in Iraq argue whether a "civil war" has emerged in Iraq, a "civil war of words" has at least emerged in the Iraqi media according to some Iraqi journalists that I interviewed. Nevertheless, the content analysis of the various ethno-sectarian channels did not find frames that directly demonized the other. A Shi'a channel will not specifically mention that they were the victims of "Sunni aggression" and vice versa. Often the location of the attack often gives that away without being explicit. For example, if Baghdad Satellite Channel states that the Abu Hanifa Mosque was attacked by mortar rounds, an Arab Sunni viewer will most likely infer that the rounds were launched by the Shi'a Mahdi Army from the adjacent neighborhoods.

While most of the journalists I spoke to were hesitant to be quoted by name, others have stated similar sentiments in various articles dealing with the Iraqi media. Saleh Al-Shibani, an Iraqi journalist stated in regards to political factions who own newspapers, "Every party, every party leader, basically everyone who can afford it has launched a newspaper. And each newspaper speaks for the entity it represents, makes a claim to the truth, assuming the right not only to criticize but to insult its adversaries; this is particularly easy in the light of the legal void."¹⁸

The policy paper sought to provide an overall assessment for local and international organizations. While the much anticipated report of the Iraq Study Group has been sought as an antidote to Iraq's maladies, it suffers from one inherent weakness in viewing the conflict in Iraq by primarily focusing on "hard power" or the "hard conflict" in this case.¹⁹ The purpose of this assessment was to demonstrate that Iraqi media development should be viewed as a matter of concern for Iraq's long term stability. While attention on Iraq's situation focuses on actually acts of insurgents groups or sectarian militias, one has to also realize that ethno-sectarian divisions, even if they are opaque, have proliferated the televisual and print spheres as well, and have the potential of exacerbating tensions.

This potential was demonstrated in the light of events that occurred in Sadr City in late November 2006. Multiple car bombs caused the highest amount of casualties in a single incident since the cessation of the war. The Iraqi government has accused various networks, both Arab and Iraqi of inflaming the conflict through their coverage, and is threatening prosecution of these channels. The President of Iraq, Jalal Talibani went as far as blaming the media for inciting the violence. Following these statements, a news blackout was imposed, only allowing al-Iraqiyya to cover debates in the Iraqi National Assembly.

Events in Iraq could stabilize and as a result the Iraqi media may not proceed beyond stage three, nevertheless, in the long term, various ethno-sectarian media outlets in Iraq still could prove problematic in another fashion. Rather than a media sphere in Iraq, Iraq has ethno-sectarian media "spheres" that have the potential of furthering the gap between Iraq's communities, developing identities along ethno-sectarian lines and weakening any kind of

¹⁸ Nermeen Al-Mufti, "Can You Help Me Not Miss Them?" *Al-Ahram Weekly*, No. 787, March 23-29, 2006.

¹⁹ Iraq Study Group Report can be found at the website of the United States Institute for Peace
<http://www.usip.org/isg/iraq_study_group_report/report/1206/index.html>

national belonging. Additionally, these media “spherecules” owned by Islamist groups have the potential of increasing sectarian nationalism in the guise of political Islam in Iraq. At the same time, there are independent media that are trying to provide an alternative to the ethno-sectarian media. At this stage, recommendations can be made to internal as well as external actors as to how to prevent the Iraqi media from developing into a conflict media.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In Izabella Karlowicz’s work on media development in post-conflict Balkans she offers recommendations over three phases: a set up, implementation, and capacity building. This framework can also be applied to the Iraqi situation. While the post-war Iraqi media has passed the “set up phase,” there are still some important recommendations that can be made that were ignored in the first phase. In the case of the Balkans, her recommendations are designed to highlight, “the dangers of poorly planned assistance to the development of the Fourth Estate in post-conflict areas, which may cause an outburst of ethnic conflict rather than fostering peaceful cohabitation.”²⁰ An “outburst of ethnic conflict,” or in the Iraqi case, “ethno-sectarian conflict” has become a reality. The media should emerge as a “safety valve” for the nation, by ensuring that these differences are debated on the airwaves, rather than in the streets. The key for the future of Iraq’s stability is using the media to address the grievances of all of Iraq’s ethno-sectarian communities, thus transforming this debate into a constructive one.

Assess the Iraqi Media Landscape

Any attempt at making recommendations should first start off with an assessment of the Iraqi media landscape for local and international organizations.

1) Create a National Media Directory

An Iraqi or an international organization should compile a national directory of all local media (radios, newspapers, terrestrial TV stations). This is crucial as most media in Iraq developed in the post-war chaos and before the establishment of any regulatory or licensing body. Second such a directory should provide an assessment of which media have a proven record of overcoming ethno-sectarian tensions. For example, the assessment of this policy report is that the only satellite channel that could be considered entirely non-partisan and non-sectarian is the Al-Sumariyya channel. Local Iraqi media specialists and journalists have also echoed this statement. A comprehensive national directory that highlights responsible, not-partisan media can provide a list of reputable media outlets for international donors.

2) Conduct a Media Consumption Assessment

The Iraqi media landscape changes quite dramatically. A second assessment needs to be conducted of media consumption in Iraq, or in other words how many people watch a particular channel, or specific programs on a channel. A local Iraqi body or international organization should take the initiative in commissioning a survey of the Iraqi media consumption that is updated regularly and available for public access. For example,

²⁰ Karlowicz, p. 127.

reputable agencies such as InterMedia have conducted media surveys for specific clients. While such surveys are costly, there is a need not only for a survey, but a set of regularly updated surveys that can be shared *publicly* as a common database for Iraqi actors, regional media organizations and international donors to better assess the media environment.

One of the weaknesses of this paper is that is based on media content, but reliable, public statistics on Iraqi audience preferences and media consumption are lacking. While such figures are not public, various private surveys, plus interviews with local journalists indicate that consumption of ethno-sectarian media is on the rise in Iraq. Such trends need to be documented in a proper survey to help both local and international actors and policymakers in devising the most effective strategy to prevent the emergence of a “conflict media,” or at least provide a viable alternative.

3) Conduct an Audience Research Survey

There are no reliable statistics of audiences in Iraq. Audience research can determine how age, location, and income affect media consumption. Such information will be valuable to advertisers and boost the revenues of independent media in Iraq, thus strengthening an alternative to media dominated by political factions.

Improve and Implement Media Regulation

Bodies have formed in Iraq to regulate the media, such as the Commission on Media and Communication (CMC) formed in 2004. The function of the CMC is similar to the American Federal Communications Commission (FCC) or the UK’s Office of Communication (OfCom). The CMC is a body designed as independent regulatory authority for Iraqi communication industries, such as television, (both satellite and terrestrial), radio, telecommunications and wireless communications such as internet. The CMC is independent from the executive government and falls under the jurisdiction of the Iraqi parliament according to the 2005 Constitution. In terms of this policy paper, the CMC is important as it is charged with establishing the framework and editorial guidelines for the content of TV and radio programs. The establishment of the CMC is a positive step, as these functions in the past were controlled by the Iraqi Ministry of Information. The Ministry essentially used the media to disseminate Ba’athist propaganda and was eventually abolished after the 2003 Iraq War.

There are several recommendations that can be made to the CMC, in addition to other Iraqi governmental entities. In Karlowicz’s study, she writes:

In some countries where conflict was fuelled by ethnic hatred (e.g. Rwanda, Burundi, Bosnia, Kosovo) an initial “hard hand” on the media may be necessary to stop further incitement of violence. Temporary and emergency measures such as a hate speech regulation, applicable to both the print press and broadcast media, may be necessary to keep the fragile peace under control. However, such measures should *only* be implemented at the very initial phase of the mission when journalistic self-regulation is largely absent.²¹

²¹ Karlowicz, p. 131.

The Commission demonstrated its “hard hand” when it closed the offices of channels such as pan-Arab Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabiyya in August 2004 for “incitement to hatred.” The Commission charged that these channels framed the insurgents as an “Iraqi resistance,” and thus bestowing regional legitimacy upon them. However, the Commission will also have to deal with the local Iraqi channels as well, and there are several recommendations that can be made besides coercive measures.

1) Increase Awareness of Media Regulation in Iraq

The CMC needs to increase its awareness amongst other Iraqi journalists. The author realized that many of the journalists he interviewed had not even heard of the body. Other journalists have expressed critiques of the Commission, arguing it has not done enough. Sa’ad Al-Saraf of the Star TV Network stated in regards to the CMC: “Indeed, there seems to be a sort of ‘look the other way’ approach to enforcing the commission’s rules, such as the ban on ‘spreading sectarian, racial and religious sedition and strife.’”²² The question remains as to how to prevent ethno-sectarianism in the Iraqi media, while still allowing for free speech. The first step is for the CMC needs to elaborate on a code of ethical journalistic practices when reporting on ethno-sectarian issues. Such a code will demonstrate to all Iraqi media outlets that the CMC’s actions are based on a set of values reached by consensus, rather than arbitrary sanctions imposed by organization akin to the former Ministry of Information.

2) Create a Code for Reporting Ethno-sectarian Issues

The CMC operates under an Interim Broadcasting Program Code of Practice that was inherited from a former CPA Order 65, which restricts media messages that “incite violence.” The second recommendation calls upon the Iraqi National Assembly to urgently deal with a draft law introduced by the CMC to replace the CPA Order. The CPA Order has a stigma in Iraq, as many would point out that it was those CPA Orders that called for the closure of Muqtada al-Sadr’s outspoken al-Hawza newspaper, which ultimately ended up inciting only inciting violence between his forces and the US military. Passing this law, will give both the CMC and its codes more legitimacy in the Iraqi media environment.

If this legislation is to pass, the “Interim” Broadcasting Program Code of Practice would presumably be “permanent.” The Code as is seeks to protect freedom of speech, as long as that freedom is not abused by inciting violence or upsetting ethno-religious dynamics in Iraq. However such a Code will need to be more specific in defining what constitutes “incitement to violence.” Agreeing on this matter should be done with the CMC and a body of Iraqi journalists so that such a code can be based on consensus. Such a Code must give concrete examples of how tele-visual media in the past have “incited violence.” Second, such a code should specify the punishments that will be meted out to channels that intentionally incite violence. Additionally such a Code should acknowledge how ethno-sectarian violence may be encouraged indirectly by the media, particularly by giving concrete examples, and indicate that equal punishments will be incurred for such infractions. While the court system in Iraq is inundated with cases, a special body for media arbitration should be created for the media outlets to settle media related disputes.

²² Cochrane, “‘The ‘Lebanonization’ of the Iraqi Media.”

While enhancing the existing Code of Practice will be a positive step, this policy paper recommends creating a specific Code for Media Reporting on Ethno-Sectarian Issues. This recommendation is based on a past precedent where the CMC created a Code for Media during Elections, which laid out rules on how the Iraqi media should cover electoral campaigns in 2005. Additionally an education film was produced to illustrate the Code in an audio-visual manner that was viewed by the Iraqi media outlets, and broadcasted to the general public via the Iraqi media itself. Creating a separate Code for Ethno-sectarian Issues, as well as an educational film will demonstrate that the CMC first acknowledges this problem exists in the Iraqi media. Second it would demonstrate to the Iraqi media outlets that this body is serious about dealing with this problem. Creating an educational film can also provide live examples of media in the past that conducted unfair reporting, spread rumors, or incited violence, directly or indirectly.

In order to ensure that stations comply with this code, the CMC will have to ensure continuous monitoring of the Iraq media. The CMC has an established Monitoring and Research Department which surveyed the media during the elections to ensure compliance their elections reporting code. It is recommended that the relevant entities in the Iraqi legislature increase funding to the CMC so it can expand this Department to carry out this monitoring task. In the long term, this Department should issue their findings as to make public the media inciting ethno-sectarian tensions, as well as issue a report of those media seeking to defuse tensions.

3) Apply Specific Measures to Deal with Ethno-sectarian Media

Measures should be adopted for making special provisions for political, sectarian and religious broadcasters. Renewing their licenses can be connected to requirements that these channels have a board or staff that are heterogeneous. Requirements can be made to these stations that they include programming that reflects Iraq's ethno-sectarian mix in a positive manner.

Increase International Assistance

1) Create an Iraqi Media Loan Fund

International donors and NGOs have aided with media development projects and this trend should continue. It is recommended that a loan fund be established to develop support, capacity building, and training for non-partisan media in Iraq. An example of such an initiative includes the South African Media Development Fund which was developed in conjunction with the Free Voice of the Netherlands and Open Society Initiative of Southern Africa (OSISA).

2) Create an Iraqi Media Development Network

There have been positive contributions made by international actors to the Iraqi media. Various ministries of the governments of the UK, Germany and the Czech Republic have offered assistance to the developing media in Iraq. Examples include Al-Mirbad Radio and TV in the south of Iraq that was established with a grant from the UK Department for International Development, with the BBC World Service Trust providing training and infrastructure needs. The German Foreign Ministry sponsored Telephone FM, a youth program produced in Germany and then broadcast by FM stations in Iraq. The independent

news outlet, Aswat Al-Iraq was established with aid from the Reuters Foundation and UNDP. The Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR) and International Media Support (IMS) have been active in developing the Iraqi media. Other NGO's have had experiences in training Iraqi practitioners in Jordan, while others are seeking to develop Iraq's cultural, entertainment and film media. It is recommended that these various actors "pool" their expertise together in a common network so that each party benefits from the others' experiences with the Iraqi media.

Improve Media Education

The solutions to the status quo in the Iraqi media landscape cannot solely rest with legislation against media outlets that incite hatred. Media regulation does not solve the problem of educating journalists on social responsibility and reporting during times of conflict. One of the problems in Iraq is that professional standards and practical training for journalists is relatively new in a society that repressed its media in the past. Schools of journalism existed in Iraq, but instruction focused on promotion of the views of the state Ba'ath Party. Under the circumstances of ethno-sectarian reporting in Iraq, international media organizations can offer recommendations on how to raise awareness of international standards in journalism to local media practitioners.

1) Improve Training for Iraqi Media Practitioners

In a survey distributed to the Iraqi radio and TV channels, the most common request was the need for "technical training of their staff." Often media stations in Iraq would receive donations of high-tech equipment that their staff did not know how to use. Granted, the security situation in Iraq makes such future cooperation difficult in the country itself, as foreign trainers may be hesitant to travel to Iraq. Ways to overcome such difficulties include holding training workshops abroad to train Iraqis to serve as media trainers once they have returned to Iraq. International assistance can be spent on financing Iraqis to take part in these training sessions abroad. Training should not just include sessions dealing with technical matters, but Iraqis should also participate in programs in media law and ethics such as the Program for Comparative Media Law and Policy at Oxford University (<http://pcmlp.socleg.ox.ac.uk/>).

2) Improve Local Media Educational Institutions

It is also recommended that international assistance be directed towards developing the institutional capacity of Iraqi media. Education in these institutions could focus on how journalists can conduct balanced reporting at a time when their nation is on the brink of a "civil war," and thus create an alternative to an ethno-sectarian media. Baghdad University's College of Mass Communications, as well as other regional universities with Communications departments are in desperate need of updated technical equipment. Faculty at these universities can benefit from intellectual development by revising their syllabi and curricula, and this process can be facilitated by hosting Iraqi media professors in foreign universities.

Outside of the university system, most media practitioners agree that an independent institute should be created in Iraq to offer professional and mid-level training to Iraqi media practitioners. In this capacity, international donors can offer financial and technical expertise for establishing such an institution.

Protect Iraqi Journalists

Improving education for Iraqi journalists may seem like a moot point, when once they have acquired their skills they could be targeted in Iraq's ensuing violence. Protecting Iraqi journalists would seem to be crucial, yet it is the hardest to offer recommendations for as it involves organizations not necessarily involved with media. The plight of the independent journalist in Iraq in between conflicting ethno-sectarian media should be emphasized. Often such journalists will be pressured by competing political factions to portray one party in a positive light and the other in a negative light. Refusal to do so can result in significant dangers for such journalists. A free and pluralistic media cannot emerge when the journalists are themselves targets of the violence they seek to cover. Organizations such as the International Federation of Journalists have called on "the Iraqi government and the US government to make a commitment to protecting journalists and freedom of the press and bringing to justice those who target journalists in violent attacks." Yet, the question is how to protect journalists, if the Iraqi security forces can barely protect themselves? Iraqi journalists could embed with Iraqi security forces, but that may also make them a target, or influence their reporting. In the context of this policy paper, the only recommendation that can be made is for a standardized program, offered by an Iraqi or international organization that deals with reporting in conflict zones, and can offer training for Iraqi journalists to learn to better protect themselves while covering potentially dangerous topics or areas.

Create a "Peace Media" Alternative

While this policy paper has highlighted how media has emerged as powerful tools in increasing awareness of ethno-sectarian divisions in a deeply-divided society, they also have the potential to shape and influence public attitudes in overcoming tensions in such countries. The media can channel communication between parties and serve a dialogical role in the ethno-political context, ultimately building confidence between parties. The cases of such a "peace media" are rare, yet there are organizations that can offer advice to Iraqi journalists on how to create such a media.

1) Learn From Other Applied Experiences in Peace Media

The NGO Common Ground has had extensive experience in creating "peace media" and offers three strategies for transforming the media in areas of conflict. First, they advocate the media playing a role where they deliver a free flow of accurate and constructive information and counteracting misperceptions. Second, they suggest that the media can build confidence and mediate between conflicting parties by fostering dialogue and communication between the parties. Finally, they state how the media can serve a "watchdog" role, or as instruments of early warning for the potential escalation of a conflict.

Common Ground also advocates a holistic approach to societies where conflict has occurred or has the potential to break out. In their opinion, addressing only media institutions, fails to bring in other actors who have a role in the conflict. They stress that a sustained effort to transform a conflict has to involve efforts to change the mentalities of individuals, as well as societies, and thus they seek to involve governmental organizations, non-governmental

organizations, businesses (including media owners), public opinion leaders, academics and marginalized sections of the society into their programs.²³

The Common Ground study describes their organization's efforts in strengthening local capacities' efforts of the media in conflict zones. Common Ground assisted in producing documentaries and radio programs, as well as holding training workshops for media practitioners in African countries such as Angola, Burundi, Rwanda, Liberia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Sierra Leone, the Balkans in Macedonia and Albania as well as the Middle East, Sri Lanka, Cyprus and its Greek-Turkish project. Their assistance focuses on three different aspects of local media structures in conflict zones: "creating an open media culture that allows different voices to emerge and be heard, enhancing professional training and education for journalists, and supplying technical equipment to local media institutions."

2) Develop a Peace Media Strategy

It is recommended that the techniques adopted by the Common Ground NGO be applied inside of Iraq. It is strongly recommended that such efforts should focus on entertainment, such as films, drama series and comedies as such programs can reach wider audiences and provide a release from the daily violence in Iraq:

- Workshops on dialogue facilitation and collaboration for Iraqi media practitioners
- Workshops to educate on how to defuse inflammatory coverage
- Training local journalists and students in conflict resolution skills using various media and materials
- Joint media projects between the various ethno-sectarian groups
- Facilitating meetings between owners of independent and ethno-sectarian media
- TV and Radio programs fostering dialogue and cooperation between journalists from different ethno-sectarian groups
- Documentaries about initiatives that bring ethno-sectarian groups together
- Drama series that use entertainment to convey themes of ethno-sectarian cooperation
- Programming for children that deals with these themes

Finally, the material on peace media and journalism is primarily in English. Prominent articles and hand books should be translated into Arabic, Kurdish and Turkmen to be distributed at media institutions and educational facilities.

This paper demonstrates that the media landscape in Iraq is at a juncture where it has the potential to exacerbate the ethno-sectarian tensions that already exist. Rather than waiting for the media to turn into instruments of hate, the policy recommendations in this report are essentially proactive measures that should be taken to ensure that the media can serve as tools of reconciliation, if not cohesion, rather than further distancing these communities.

²³ Melone, Sandra D., Georgios Terzis, and Ozsei Beteli, "Using the Media for Conflict Transformation," Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management, April 2002, p. 10.

APPENDIX A: SAMPLE OF ETHNO-SECTARIAN MEDIA IN IRAQ

Political Islamist Media

Arab Shi'a Media

SCIRI

Al-'Adala (Justice) daily paper

Al-Wahdah (Unity) weekly paper

Al-Ghadir radio station

Al-Furat (The Euphrates) satellite channel

The Da'wa Party

Al-Da'wa (The Call) daily paper

Al-Bayan (Announcement) weekly paper

Al-Masar radio station

Al-Masar TV channel

Sadr Trend

Ishraqat al-Sadr daily paper

Al-Hawza al-Natiqa (The Active Hawza) weekly paper

Al-Salam radio station

Al-Salam TV station

Iraqi Hizbullah

Al-Bayyinah (Evidence) paper

Arab Sunni Media

Iraqi Islamic Party

Dar al-Salam (House of Peace) radio station

Dar al-Salam (The House of Peace) newspaper daily paper

General Dialogue Conference

Al-'Itisam (The Guardian) daily newspaper

The Unified National Movement

Al-Sa'ah (The Hour) biweekly newspaper

The Association of Muslim Scholars

Al-Basa'ir (Insights) daily newspaper

Ethnic Based Media

Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP)

Khabat daily newspaper in Kurdish

Al-Ta'akhi (Brotherhood) daily newspaper in Arabic

Voice of Iraqi Kurdistan radio station

Kurdistan Satellite Channel

Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK)

Al-Ittihad (The Union) daily newspaper in Arabic

Kurdistan Nuwe daily newspaper in Kurdish

Al-Hurriyya (Freedom) radio station

Al-Hurriyya (Freedom) terrestrial Arabic TV station in Sulaymaniyya

Voice of the People of Kurdistan radio station

KurdSat satellite channel

Iraqi Turkmen Front

Turkmenelli (The Turkmen Nation) daily newspaper in Turkish

Turkmenelli (The Turkmen Nation) radio station in Kirkuk, Tal Afar and Mosul

Turkmenelli (The Turkmen Nation) terrestrial TV in Kirkuk

Assyrian Democratic Movement

Bahra al-Diya (The Light) newspaper

Ashur (Assyria) terrestrial Arabic TV station in Sulaymaniyya in Mosul

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