



## **Iraqi Media Audit Eight-City Report**

### **The Current State of the Broadcast Media in Iraq**

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## Executive Summary

*The BBC World Service Trust has carried out two surveys of the Iraqi Broadcast media in Basra, Umm Qasr and Amara between 30<sup>th</sup> April and 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2003 and in Baghdad, Hilla, Najaf, Kerbala and Kut between 6<sup>th</sup> June and 14<sup>th</sup> June 2003. Below are the key recommendations:*

- The democratisation process requires a broadcast media that is technically proficient, editorially independent and impartial. The media should be responsive to the concerns and requirements of Iraqis of all kinds.
- The communal, ethnic and religious map of Iraq suggests that a national broadcaster based in Baghdad needs to be matched by strong federal support structure.
- One of the key emerging issues for the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) as it attempts to draw Iraqis into the process of nation building is the fostering of a free, independent, responsible and trusted broadcast media scene.
- A perceived failure of the CPA has been its inability to communicate to and convince Iraqis of its good intentions and to engage them in a discussion on the future of their country. The broadcast media could play a central role in this.
- The process of developing a strategy for the rebuilding of the Iraqi media is just getting under way. As military officials make way for civilians within the CPA this process is likely to accelerate. The strategy urgently needs to define the relationship between the CPA and the Iraqi Media Network, the putative national broadcaster, and to outline some kind of initial regulatory framework and media code.
- The proposed regulatory framework for Iraq as proposed by the US-based NGO Internews at a media regulation conference in Athens in June, could be seen as too complicated for the current situation in Iraq, and some simpler interim media law would be preferable, until such a time as the Iraqis can be consulted and until there is clarity as to how the law could be implemented. Furthermore, their proposals for establishing a media regulatory framework would have to be carefully tailored to Iraq.
- Although subjected to considerable bombing, the former national broadcaster and network has not been entirely destroyed. Some basic infrastructure remains that could form the skeleton of a future network. Most of these facilities require substantial repair. In some cases work needs to start from scratch on building and equipping transmission and production facilities.
- Iraqis all over the country have high broadcast engineering skills. Production and editorial skills are poor. A comprehensive training scheme should be at the centre of any broadcast media reconstruction strategy. The values and principles of independent public service broadcasting will have to be instilled as part of their training.
- All media development programmes should carefully consider security issues for personnel and equipment. Baghdad and surrounding areas are experiencing a further deterioration in security.
- A specific programme to encourage women into journalism may be necessary in the southern central provinces.
- The internet has barely penetrated into Iraqi culture and society.
- Iraqis, who can afford to, are buying satellite dishes. They want to look out on the world and they will expect their national broadcaster to compete technically and in terms of content.
- Commercial media enterprises are likely to take some time to develop in the current climate because of the legal vacuum.

### Immediate Priorities

- Building a technical infrastructure for a new federal broadcasting network, by establishing a central broadcaster with regional radio and TV stations.
- The production of distinct Iraqi programming that reflects the new situation in a free, independent and responsible manner. This will be additionally critical once any new constitutional or election process gets under way, to explain the functions of government.
- Facilitating a series of training programmes in Iraq for editorial, technical production and journalism skills. Identify a small

number of senior staff to receive training in

strategic planning and management.

## Baghdad

### Overview

Baghdad is still in chaos and security in the city is a constant worry. The Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) has hired a private defence contractor, SAIC (<http://www.saic.com>), to try to establish a national radio and television station, the Iraqi Media Network, from the bones of the former national broadcaster. This process is fraught with technical, security and political difficulties, and so far has been judged by the CPA as unsuccessful. Part of the difficulty results from the unsettled situation within the CPA itself and the lack of any transparent strategic plan for re-establishing a national Iraqi media network.

The capital city is strategically, economically and culturally crucial in ways that the provincial centres are not. There is no indication that the seat of government is going to move out of the city, as long as Iraq remains a single sovereign territory. This said, the fractured regional identity of Iraq and the demands of Shia, Kurdish and other community leaders to be involved in centralised politics and government means that the capital's relationship with the provinces is changing.

Baghdad is also being left behind. The other main cities across the country where order and some level of local Iraqi government are beginning to emerge have a much more robust broadcast media scene. Very little, apart from small scale commercial activity occurs in Baghdad at the moment, without the direct involvement of the CPA.

As the seat of the former regime Baghdad was most heavily hit in the bombing campaign. The collapse of the state and all its organs has been most keenly felt here and has left a profound vacuum. In the capital there are no alternative systems of social, religious or tribal organisation that might begin to replace the state. The reconstruction process is expected to take longer in Baghdad than elsewhere in the country - the electricity supply in Baghdad, for example, is less reliable than in other parts of the country. Within major cities like Basra and Kerbala, the telephone network is up and running. This is not the case in the capital.

The CPA itself is still finding its feet. Personnel at all levels are coming and going at a rapid rate as the military leaders make way for civilian officials more suited to governing Iraq after the war. General Jay Garner's time at the head of ORHA was widely seen as a false start. He has been replaced by Paul Bremer, an ex-State Department official with close links to US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld.

The change of guard and re-branding of ORHA as the CPA signalled a change from military to civilian control. The re-branding may also indicate a longer term, firmer and more centralised approach to administering Iraq.

The political Shia parties that dominate in the south and central regions of the country are also influential in the capital. However, they are competing with Kurdish and secular parties. Political parties and organisations representing Sunni Iraqis have yet to emerge or establish themselves.

### Security

The security situation is still far from settled. Military aircraft leaving the Baghdad airport have been shot at. There is a police force in the city, but it is not effective. There is no judiciary to try captured criminals and the prison facilities are very limited. Looters and other criminals tend to be held by the US Army for very short periods and released. US forces patrol and man checkpoints, but there are simply not enough soldiers deployed in the city to bring order.

There have been many cases of armed car-jacking, some during daylight. It is not rare for shots to be fired during such incidents and this makes it very difficult for journalists and technical staff to operate. Looting continues, though it is much reduced, but any renovation, rebuilding or installation of technical equipment will need armed security. The compound in which the Iraqi Media Network (IMN) transmitter is currently based, is fired on most nights.

It is not advisable to venture out at all after dark. After 11pm, US forces patrolling the streets can shoot or detain anyone outside their home. The city is generally unstable because of criminal activity, some of it

organised. Coalition officials say that some of the criminal activity and attacks are organised by members of the former regime.

Civil unrest, in the form of disorganised and unpredictable demonstrations, is occurring. There is no evidence so far of this being violent or of it targeting westerners. Ordinary people are very friendly to westerners and generally people in Baghdad are ready to co-operate with foreign agencies, including the CPA, when it is to their advantage.

### *Prospects*

Baghdad is not yet a safe environment in which reconstruction or development programmes can be operated. It is difficult to see how this can be remedied in the short term. Coalition military leaders seem to vacillate between treading softly, in order not to offend Iraqis, and treating parts of the city and areas to the north as a war zone in which members of the former regime are trying to mount armed resistance. The first approach tends to mean the process of restoring order and public services to the capital is very slow. The second gives the impression that the war in Iraq is not yet over and the reconstruction process should be put on hold.

Only now is the operation of the CPA and the relationship between the various bodies that have interests in the media being settled. A UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office official, is currently in overall charge of CPA media relations. This includes, indirectly, the Iraqi Media Network. The emergence of a strategic plan for the indigenous media to which all CPA departments are working is crucial.

There is a great deal yet to be resolved about the IMN's relationship with the CPA. Is it the broadcasting wing of the CPA? Is it a national public service broadcaster, independent of the CPA?

Relations between the IMN and the CPA have been mixed. In the early days, it is alleged that the CPA requested that the station's news programmes be reviewed ahead of broadcast by the wife of Kurdish leader Jalal Talabani. The journalists working on the programmes and SAIC refused. The station also aired verses of the Quran, against the CPA's wishes. At one point there was a proposal from the CPA that all IMN radio broadcasts simply be replaced by Radio Sawa (the Voice of America in Arabic). This was not acted on. Senior IMN journalists used to be invited to a

daily morning meeting at the CPA during which the day's press and information agenda was set.

The running of the IMN by SAIC has not been judged a success. On the 12 June, SAIC was given a 30 day extension to its contract. If dramatic improvements were not achieved, CPA officials said, SAIC would lose the contract. SAIC has a wide range of activities, though broadcasting is not one of them. As elsewhere in Iraq, the engineering and technical skills of Iraqi staff are high. There are large numbers of young Iraqis, male and female, keen to work for the IMN, but SAIC says they need technical, production and editorial training.

The various regions of Iraq have distinct cultural and ethnic identities. After decades of centralised dictatorship that brutally crushed regional cultural and religious expression, Iraq's different communities appear to want to organise themselves into several regional centres. The logic of this is that there should be a strong element of regional control over the broadcast media that speak to Iraqis about their particular regional concerns as well as about national issues. This decentralisation is likely to reflect the political arrangement between communities that might be expected to emerge in Iraq over the next few years.

### **Iraqi Media Network**

Iraqi Media Network, both TV and radio programmes are prepared and pre-recorded in facilities at the Convention Centre near to the CPA headquarters in the Republican Palace. They are then physically taken for playout to the TV and FM radio transmitter site about 2km away.

The IMN broadcasts for between 10 and 12 hours daily on TV. This includes a two-hour news programme, films, sport and music. The station also broadcasts sport, films and children's programmes from Jordanian TV.

The station has 10 reporters and camera crews, and a staff of about 50. Its reporters work in the Baghdad area only.

The same reporters worked for the FM station which was on air for seven or eight hours a day broadcasting a mixture of pre-recorded speech, interviews and live inject CDs from a 'studio in a box' at the transmission site.

The media audit group spoke to Iraqis who were aware of the IMN and its broadcasts but were not impressed. They saw it simply as the mouthpiece of the CPA.

The day the group visited, the journalists were on strike because they had not been paid for 40 days of work. This was resolved later in the day when emergency payments of \$20 were distributed and promises of regular salaries for permanent staff were made. The station has no designated offices yet.

At the transmitter site there is a 5 Kw UHF for TV broadcasts and 5kw FM for radio transmitter powered by a single generator. An 80m mast allows coverage of most of the Baghdad area to a distance of about 25km.

A satellite uplink facility is currently being brought online to provide TV networked coverage via downlink sites and re-broadcasters in 14 major cities. This process is likely to take months, not weeks. A similar plan for FM radio networking has yet to be formulated.

The TV production facilities within the Convention Centre have been partially looted and a programme is underway to re-wire the Central Apparatus Room and refurbish one of the production galleries. A comprehensive four-person studio with lighting grids built in the mid-1980s is operational. Material for a daily TV news programme is prepared in two temporary off-line edit suites. The radio studio is functional and is being used for programme preparation.

### *Radio*

Some 2km from the CPA HQ there is a small IMN AM radio station broadcasting approximately 8 hours a day from a 3kw transmitter and 15m mast. The station uses a flight case package – “radio in a box” - supplied by the US Army with CD/Cassette playout, supplemented by their own PC-based playout.

A small make-shift studio is being built to provide a live speech facility.

## **Basra region**

### *Overview*

An independent station could broadcast in a short time scale in Basra and the south using the technical capacity which exists and by selecting TV and radio FM and MW frequencies distinct from the previous regime's broadcasts. A small TV studio and one self operated radio studio (plus FM transmitter) could be fitted initially within the stadium or other suitable site to enable TV broadcasts to take place. Security will be needed especially at night in any chosen location.

In the absence of a national plan for the media it is anticipated that restarting limited and locally driven broadcasting might fill a distinct vacuum of locally generated news and information. If the national network is resurrected on a similar structural model to that which existed before, these local stations might be expected to supplement a centrally run public service network which it is hoped would share the same editorially independent and diverse, representative values.

### *Prospects*

Former senior employees of the Iraqi TV station work out of Basra football stadium where they have added antenna to one of the floodlight rigs and connected the feeder cables to a 1 kW transmitter salvaged from the main complex which was entirely destroyed in the military campaign.

While this gives them the short-term technical ability to broadcast TV they have no programmes or any studio capacity in which to generate new programmes. The previous

station director has left and is not likely to return to work. The middle management have 'elected' a new station head. He was previously a production engineer, his deputy was also an engineer.

There are 81 people engaged in production and administration and a further 31 journalists, producers and editors. The staff does not have the experience of managing a regional station. Their technical abilities are reasonably good although their experience has been in analogue rather than digital equipment.

The Iraqi staff are eager to start work again – they had received the emergency \$20 payment for ex-public servants but after more than 20 years of command and control are unused to taking these decisions. “Who do you apply to for permission to establish a newspaper?” was a question at a Local Joints Council meeting in Basra. “No-one, just set it up,” was the reply. This is an empowering but also a bewildering response. Where do they start?

### *Security*

The TV and radio relay station was targeted early in the war and has been very heavily damaged. The main mast is down and irreparable. The buildings are unusable and have been extensively looted of any conceivably useful items. It would appear that the building accommodated both TV and radio studios, presumably for regional inserts, but this is not confirmed due to the inability to enter the buildings safely. External air-conditioning plant, standby generator and power lines have been equally destroyed.

### *Programming*

There was an enthusiasm for city news and regional programming to reflect local concerns. There was a view expressed by a number of Sheikhs and traditional leaders that the programming would need to reflect Iraqi and Islamic cultural traditions.

There was also an interest in civic education – explanations in accessible language about democratic principles, about elections and about local and national governance issues.

### *Local Management*

Three members of the team, including a representative from the BBC’s Arabic Service met a group of thirty local leaders at Sheikh Mohammad Soballah al Sa’edi’s house. All were Shia tribal leaders and business people. A wide ranging discussion took place regarding the role of the media and the ability to produce TV and Radio to meet local needs.

They were concerned primarily about the lack of security in Basra and the inability to resume local businesses. They recognised the need to begin to plan and to be involved directly if genuinely locally owned stations were to come in to being. They said they wanted a station where they could place adverts; they wanted local news; it should be for everyone and for all religions and cultural traditions. There was an acceptance of the need for programmes to interest all groups, including women. They expressed concern about the negative influences of satellite TV and we heard about their wishes that programming on locally run stations should reflect Islamic traditions.

## **Umm Qasr**

The port town of Umm Qasr had a major TV and radio relay station and some studio facilities during the previous regime. It was not possible to undertake an assessment of the facilities as they are now being used as a Prisoner of War facility by the US military. The site for the MW transmitter facility believed to be used by CPA for the Voice of Iraq radio, is based in the port of Umm Qasr, and is closely guarded by the military. Just outside of Umm Qasr there still exists a 4 mast relay array for MW relay which appears to be intact. However, the transmitter building has been extensively looted and the transmitters removed and thoroughly vandalised.

## **Amara**

Once again the TV and Radio station has been targeted and extensively destroyed. The mast is down and irreparable, and the building is uninhabitable with considerable looting. All external air-conditioning plant, the standby generator and power lines have been equally destroyed. A subsequent military visit suggested that there is an additional site - a TV relay station with basic facilities, which is also located in the town.

## South Central Iraq

### Overview

There is no question that the opportunities in this region for supporting the emergence of an indigenous independent media are very good. In Kerbala, Najaf, Kut and Hilla we met many enthusiastic and determined people trying to establish TV and radio stations in post office premises and relay stations belonging to the former national broadcaster. Technically, the engineers are often highly skilled and ingenious in managing with very basic facilities. Production and editorial skills are by comparison very weak. In the central region of the country, we found that there were no women working in the media at all.

The South Central region of Iraq is the Shia heartland. The region is home to 60% of Iraq's population. The area contains the important holy cities of Kerbala and Najaf. To the east is Kut, the city nearest the Iranian border. At times of religious pilgrimage, Najaf and Kerbala are visited by millions of Shias and become the focus of Shia Muslim world. On Thursdays and Fridays, the day of prayer, thousands of Iraqi Muslims inflate the numbers in these two cities.

In part the importance of the region lies in the fact that Shia Iraqis, long suppressed, are energetically throwing themselves into the new reality in Iraq. They hope to influence this to their advantage by weight of numbers. Politically, the region is highly contested. Several Shia political parties, some radical, some pragmatic, are seeking to assert themselves ahead of possible elections. Currently they are seeking to do this through newspapers. There is every reason to assume that they will move on to do this through radio and TV as well.

The political groups that are operating and influential in this region are:

- Daawa: The oldest Shia party in Iraq. After a series of attempts to assassinate Saddam Hussein and some of his ministers, it was harshly suppressed and eventually split into several factions. A senior Daawa figure, Sheikh Mohammed Nasser, has returned to Iraq from exile in Iran as part of an attempt by the party to re-establish itself after years of clandestine existence.
- SCIRI: Ayatollah Muhammad Baqr al-Hakim leads the Tehran-based Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (Sciri). The group has a 10,000-strong militia under his command. He has supporters in Iraq,

but the Iranian connection makes the US - and many Iraqis - wary of him.

- Sadr group: A radical Shia group, Jamaat al-Sadr al-Thani, appears to be behind an outbreak of infighting among Shia factions in the holy city of Najaf. A leading moderate Shia cleric was murdered in Najaf, days after his return from exile in Britain by members of the group. The group is led by Moqtada Sadr, the son of a Shia cleric murdered by the old regime, Muhammad Sadiq al-Sadr. The name of the murdered cleric clearly has powerful resonances - the Shia district of Baghdad, Saddam City, has already been renamed Sadr City.

### Security

Security in the region is generally good. The region is classified by the CPA as a "permissive" environment. There have been no reported attacks of any kind on NGO personnel or property, according to CPA officials. We experienced no hostility of any kind and were warmly welcomed wherever we went. The people we met are keen to cooperate with us and with CPA officials.

However, civil unrest is occurring. Demonstrations calling for the coalition forces to leave or for salaries to be paid to people who are turning up to work in government services are not unusual. There are also incidents of political groups or parties trying to lean on media operations to cover the news in a certain way. This can sometimes take the form of violence and intimidation. Security for personnel and equipment is of course still an issue that will need close attention.

### Prospects

In the south central region people seem to be relishing the opportunities that regime change

and a free media present them. Shia religious, cultural and political expression is rampant. This new freedom of expression does not appear currently to be taking violent or even radical form.

CPA officials in this region are very keen for urgent and substantial help in developing an indigenous and free media in the region. They are doing their best to do so themselves. They are supporting local radio and television operations and providing technical assistance and, in places, broadcast equipment. This assistance is drastically under-funded.

## Hilla/Shomali

A TV station is based in a former relay station. It is in a partly derelict building within a very large secure compound with corner watchtowers and an entrance gatehouse. The power supply is about 90% regular. Transmission equipment is operable, but broadcasts are limited to two or three hour sessions due to transmitter cooling problems.

The compound has an undamaged transmission tower. All programme content is recorded from Arab satellite stations and re-broadcast. There is no original programming or live broadcast. The station is manned by former Iraqi TV relay broadcast staff who appear to have a high level of technical skill, but limited production skills or ambition. There is currently no radio facility at Shomali or within the Hilla area.

### *Technical recommendations*

Adjacent to the transmitter hall are rooms suitable for conversion into TV studio, gallery, offices and training rooms. The entire facility, apart from the mast, needs upgrading, including the electrical infrastructure. Much of the equipment is incomplete due to looting. As the facility was a relay station there has never been any production facility at the site. Within the building there are several rooms suitable for conversion to radio studios and transmission facilities.

## Kerbala

There is an existing TV station located in a former post office building providing evening transmissions over a 20km radius. The power supply is stable. The programme output

consists of re-broadcasts from Arab satellite stations and some limited live speech from a makeshift studio. There are two off-line PC based editing suites for VHS, and a further off-line VHS editing arrangement. A PC is used to make captions and put up text of public service announcements and "editorials" by the station manager. There are currently no radio transmission facilities within Kerbala.

The operation is run along the lines of a commercial station as opposed to a public service broadcaster, and the station manager has ambitions to sell advertising space once the reach of his station is extended.

A new studio is currently being constructed within the building. There is some original production. Using a very old VHS camera, news packages on the renewal of the water supply, anti-coalition demonstrations, the insects attacking local palm trees and the high price of local transport have been produced and broadcast. The camera, VHS players, computers, microphones, etc have been donated to the station by people in Kerbala. Each piece of equipment has on it a little sticker with the name and telephone number of the donor.

The station manager, a photographer and curator of a museum, insists that the station is the first independent TV station in Iraq. He says that his station takes no money from any political party. The station's staff has received emergency payments of \$40 from the CPA and may receive salaries. The CPA has a working relationship with the station regarding the broadcast of public information announcements that the authority wants to communicate. Much of the programming is general interest – natural history, sport, music concerts. The manager insists there is not a religious agenda, though all programmes would have to reflect religious sensitivities. The station re-broadcasts a wide range of Arab satellite TV stations, including al-Manar (Lebanese Hezbollah's satellite station).

Again, station staff tended to have excellent technical and engineering skills, though production and editorial skills are weak.

### *Technical recommendations*

Technically, the Kerbala TV transmission radius and the general quality of broadcasts could be improved dramatically by upgrading the transmitter and antennae, and supplying a vision and sound mixer, several tripod

cameras, caption generator and a Betacam off-line editing suite all installed within the existing building. Some additional work would also need to be undertaken on the electrical infrastructure.

A separate building would have to be identified nearby for the provision of radio facilities, which would need to be established from scratch.

The current station is in the centre of the city, 200m from the al-Hussein Mosque, one of the most important sites in Shia Islam. Security for such a facility would be a major issue.

## Najaf

Holy Najaf Television is based in the nearby town of Kufa, just to the north. Offices and facilities are on the third floor of a former post office building that also contained a relay station. The station is able to broadcast over a 70km radius, and claims to reach 70% of Najaf's population. The programme output consists of satellite re-broadcasting, VHS/DVD playout and limited live speech through a home-made vision mixer, with a PC-based off-line VHS editing suite.

The station and its staff have been threatened by local armed groups unhappy with its stance and output. One of the vans used by station staff had its window shot out when we visited. The manager maintains that he receives little co-operation from the CPA, though his workers have received emergency payments.

The relationship between the CPA and the TV station is tense. The station manager says that the CPA is leaning on him to cover the activities of the local interim governor. This, the station manager says, is pure propaganda. He spoke of "unacceptable editorial interference". As with Kerbala, the manager here insists that his is the first independent television station in Iraq. The US army officer charged with relations with the indigenous media says that the TV station is not broadcasting crucial public information announcements that the CPA needs to communicate. He has threatened to end emergency payments to the station staff.

Original programming for the station includes some reporting, a daily news bulletin read live to camera, plus Quran and poetry readings.

There are no apparent radio facilities in Najaf and the TV station manager is not interested in moving into radio. However, a local business man approached the US Army about opening a radio station and was given money to do so. No radio station materialised. The US Army is still trying to establish a radio station. The CPA in Baghdad has promised US Army commanders in the area that they will be provided with ex-military transmitters and an antenna.

Iranian TV and radio in Arabic, al-Alam, are widely listened to in the area. CPA officials believe it is essential to have some kind of radio presence that is not hostile to them in order to counter the Iranian influence in the area.

### *Technical recommendations*

The transmission radius of the station could be improved to 50-60km radius by the provision of a new transmitter and antennae array. The production output would benefit from having a vision and sound mixer, several tripod cameras, caption generator and a Betacam off-line editing suite all installed within the existing building. Some additional work would also need to be undertaken to the electrical infrastructure.

There needs to be further discussion with CPA to determine the extent of the funding already provided for a radio station. If the US Army is not working to do this already, it may be that the primary assistance required is the supply and installation of equipment or radio production and transmission facilities from scratch. Training, technical and editorial, would also need to be provided.

## Kut

The TV and radio facilities are in two trucks, 10m long, built by the local Iraqi staff and hidden during the aftermath of the war by employees of the facility – as above, a former relay station for the national broadcaster. The trucks were moved from location to location to avoid looting. They had been purchased by the former regime, to be used as broadcast facilities once the fixed ones had been destroyed by coalition bombing.

The TV truck includes a transmitter, voltage stabilisation, power and lighting distribution and air-conditioning. It is powered either from the grid or a separate generator (shared with

the radio cabin) but only provides satellite re-broadcasting or VHS/DVD payout from a small vision mixer. The antennae have been mounted some 70m up a nearby power pylon (inactive) and provides approximately 6km transmission radius for about 16 hours daily. A make-shift studio has been set up for the reading of live public information announcements.

A team of journalists with 25-year-old cameras and a very basic editing facility work out of the local government building in Kut. A studio with a make-shift backdrop is used for pre-recording a daily news bulletin.

There is a scheme to refurbish a nearby derelict building to become the radio and TV station offices and production facilities. The building has been cleared up after extensive looting. A local US army officer charged with relations with the indigenous media has had a project approved by his HQ. The money has yet to be authorised.

As elsewhere the technical skill and ingenuity of the staff were impressive, while the production and editorial skills appeared to be weak.

## **The Coalition Provisional Authority**

### *What's happening inside the CPA?*

Paul Bremer has brought professionalism to the work of the CPA. Officials with organisational skills are arriving daily to attempt to bring order and co-ordination between CPA departments. However, there is still a great deal of confusion between departments in the central CPA in Baghdad and officials in the regional CPAs complain of communication problems and the difficulty of getting straight answers to direct questions from headquarters.

The changeover from military to civilian officials is going to take time and will be slowed down by what appears to be a deteriorating security situation in and around the capital. Recently arrived CPA officials say political rivalries that exist in Washington are migrating to, and playing themselves out in Baghdad.

For every success, the re-opening of a water plant or hospital for example, there is a setback, such as the recent civilian deaths at a

The radio station has been installed in an adjacent Portakabin with a US-supplied flightcase package of mixer, CD and cassette players, and two microphones – a “radio station in a box”. There is a 300w FM transmitter feeding a 15m mast on top of a 15m high adjacent building giving a reception radius of approximately 11km.

### *Technical recommendations*

If the CPA funding is approved then the refurbishment and installation project would benefit from an experienced Project Manager to oversee the work and in particular the electrical and broadcast infrastructure. The existing TV truck could be retained as the transmitter housing and supplemented with a full complement of cameras, vision and audio mixers, off-line edit suite, caption generator and VCR playback. A generator would be required to ensure uninterrupted power.

For a radio production and broadcast operation, two one person studios, PC recording/editing facilities and full production hardware support, PCs, furniture and so on would have to be supplied.

demonstration on a day that former Iraqi soldiers were supposed to receive US\$20 emergency payments. The promised payments did not materialise.

### *CPA and media reconstruction*

The atmosphere and functioning of the CPA has some direct consequences for indigenous media reconstruction and promotion. Officials have been too stretched to concentrate on anything beyond trying to get the CPA's messages across to Iraqis.

A long term strategy for the indigenous media that aims to establish a free and independent media scene has not yet been formulated. The early beginnings of such a process are

underway. While CPA officials of all kinds insist they want to foster a free, independent and responsible media that will be at the centre of the democratisation process in the Iraq, at the moment they are too busy trying to

convince Iraqis of their good intentions and getting public information announcements onto the airwaves.

The CPA's tense relationship with the IMN suggests that the balance between seeking to get information out to Iraqis and promoting an independent indigenous media has not been struck. A central question needs answering: is the IMN the mouth piece of the CPA or is it Iraq's independent national broadcaster in its infancy?

### *Establishing a media administration*

The company awarded the contract, SAIC, is working on establishing a transmission and production headquarters for the IMN. It is also trying to extend its broadcast range through arrangements with regional relay stations and satellite uplinks. In early June, John Sandrock, a senior SAIC executive, who replaced Bob Reilly and Mike Furlong, arrived in Baghdad to oversee this process and establish the administration of the IMN on a firm footing.

A UK Foreign Office official arrived in mid-June to establish a structure for the news, media and information department of the CPS.

The structure being established is as follows (see table in appendix 2):

- IMN administrator and SAIC employee John Sandrock reports to John Buck, the director of strategic communications in the CPA. The relationship between the CPA and IMN is meant to be an informal one.
- John Buck reports to Paul Bremer. John Buck's deputy is currently a White House liaison officer called Dan Senor.
- Civilian and military affairs spokesmen and an information operations head and the entire press office operation in Baghdad work to Buck and Senor.
- Each region and policy directorate has a press officer.
- The communications department has a one press officer for the US media, one for the UK and other media, and one of the Arabic media.
- The department has a speech writer and plans to put up a web site.

### *Regulation*

There is a clear need for regulation in the broadcast media in Iraq. There are no adequate existing laws in Iraq. There is a proposal that an interim commissioner for the media advise the CPA on regulation. An outline media regulation structure has been proposed but so far no specific action has been taken in this direction.

A conference sponsored by the US-based NGO, Internews, in Athens in early June proposed a draft media law. A BBC media law specialist has written a critique of draft law, an extract of which is included below:

“There is little to argue with in the proposed media law which has been drafted in more or less isolation from the situation on the ground in Iraq. It fits pretty much all of the international norms in relation to freedom of expression and the establishment of a liberal media framework even if it might be considered, by the most exacting western standards, to be a little sketchy on detail in places. Indeed, so advanced is it that some of its provisions are really only just being introduced into the UK (for instance freedom of information).

However, this is perhaps its weakness. The proposed media law is probably, at this stage, somewhat optimistic. The proposed law implicitly presupposes an efficient, effective and in some sense legitimate interim authority (ie a functioning civil administration) which could actually implement the law effectively nationwide. It also presupposes an effective means of impartially publicising the activities of non state bodies in a large and populous country with no tradition of authority apart from that of the State. In addition, the sophistication of the law is such that it assumes a grasp of the rule of law and a willingness to engage with complex legislative materials. Finally, the law assumes an effective nationwide enforcement mechanism.”

In the interim period, the time that it takes to institute and enforce some kind of media regulation, the broadcast media is likely to proliferate – especially if law and order returns and some kind of Iraqi political process is embarked upon.

## Appendix No 1

### Media under the Baath Regime

The media in Iraq was strictly controlled under the Baath regime and all news, information and entertainment on both TV and radio was subject to strict censorship by the Ministry of Information in Baghdad. Satellite dishes were banned and illegal ownership carried a prison sentence – thus satellite TV such as al-Jazeera and Abu Dhabi TV, popular in neighbouring countries was not available. The main terrestrial TV service was Republic of Iraq Television and this was supplemented by Youth TV (Shabab) run by Saddam Hussein's son, Uday. Radio Voice of Iraq also broadcast.

During the Gulf War in 1991 many Iraqi transmitters were damaged or destroyed, and following the war began to operate irregularly or with reduced power which affected the transmission coverage of Iraqi state media to the regions. As military action over the years has taken its toll on Iraqi radio transmitters, the location of various frequencies that can be heard on the air have changed, and it is far from clear which facility radiated which signal on any particular transmission, particularly on medium wave, VHF/FM and the TV bands.

However, Republic of Iraq main service medium wave transmitters heard in March 2001 by BBC Monitoring staff were: 603 kHz (Ninevah) , 693 kHz (Basra), 909 kHz (Baghdad). All programmes originated from Baghdad and were re-broadcast by a series of high-powered MW relay transmitters spread though the country, and would have been audible in Kurdish-controlled northern Iraq during the hours of daylight, and further at night. No FM transmissions were confirmed. The web site <http://www.tdp.info/me.html> gives coordinates of other transmitters.

There is no reliable information regarding the reception of domestic terrestrial TV services in Iraq though it can be assumed that the main Republic of Iraq Television (domestic) service which originated in Baghdad was similarly widely available through a network of relay transmitters. As mentioned above, Satellite TV was banned by the previous regime but there is now an upsurge in demand for receiver dishes. These are priced at between US\$200-US\$300 and are beyond the reach of most Iraqis.

Two satellite TV channels operate from Kurdish-controlled northern Iraq: Kurdistan satellite TV (based in Salah al-Din, mouthpiece of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, KDP), and Kurdsat (based in Sulaymaniyah, mouthpiece of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, PUK). The KDP also operates a local terrestrial TV channel, Kurdistan television.

Shortwave and medium wave radio listeners inside Iraq have access to a wide range of general Arabic-language services from the Middle East, particularly Iran, and from international broadcasters. The main international stations heard in Iraq are the BBC, the USA's Radio Sawa (which has a strand of programmes beamed to Iraqi audiences), Radio Monte Carlo (Radio France International) and US-funded Radio Free Iraq (operated by Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty from studios in Prague).

On 12 December 2002 the USA started radio broadcasts targetted at the Iraqi military as well as civilians. The broadcasts are transmitted by US planes flying over Southern Iraq. Leaflets printed in Arabic and English dropped over Iraq say the American "information radio" broadcasts are on the air from 1500-2000 GMT on five separate frequencies in the FM, medium wave and shortwave bands.

In March 2003 the British army psy-ops team commenced broadcasting Radio Nahrain from Shaibah, 15km from Basra, on 96FM with a radius of approximately 15-20km. It broadcasts news, music and information announcements and it is understood this service will continue until the end of August and has recruited three announcers/journalists. The team at Shaibah are making attempts to encourage local Iraqis to take over the name and frequency of the station. The equipment will however be repatriated to the UK.

Due to the flat terrain and absence of high buildings there is an extensive network of relay masts throughout the country for both TV and radio and with some exceptions this network is believed to be largely undamaged – only the main city relays were targeted.

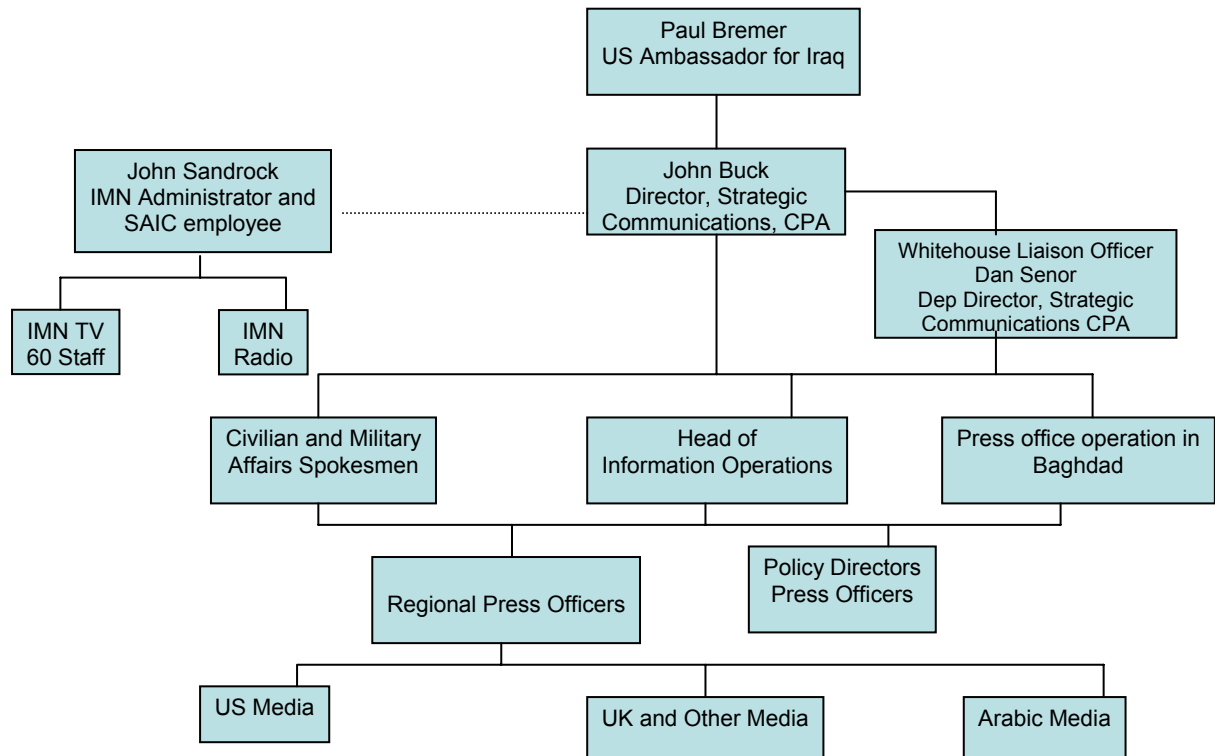
Iraqi TV and Radio carried a mix of strictly controlled news and current affairs and some entertainment programmes including extensive sports coverage. These were uncritical organs of the state known colloquially amongst Iraqis as “Boots and Rifle TV” due to their undue emphasis on military images. These stations broadcast 18 hours per day, between 0600 and 2400 hrs.

There is no data available on media consumption and viewing or listening habits. Anecdotal evidence suggests that in most urban areas, most household owned TVs and radios, some radios were only available on MW bands, as FM was used by military broadcasts. This cannot be assumed to be the case in rural areas. TVs were widely available in shops costing between US\$150-200. Radios are also widely available costing from US\$5.

The command and control nature of the regime was replicated in the complex and Byzantine system of management of the media. The Basra base of Iraqi TV employed 112 staff engaged in production, journalism and technical matters. Each team reported to separate managers in Baghdad and there was no integrated team in Basra. Locally generated programmes were subject to editorial control by Baghdad and relayed back to the local populations via Basra. A similar arrangement existed in al-Amara, though with less full-time staff. The state controlled Iraqi News Agency produced news items for domestic and international sources. They had offices in all major cities.

## Appendix No.2

### Organisational Structure of Media Relationships in CPA



## **Appendix No 3**

### **BBC World Service Trust**

#### ***Background***

The BBC World Service Trust was created in October 1999 to improve the lives of people living in countries in transition through the innovative use of the media. The Trust is a UK-registered charity with a Board of Trustees comprising of experts with backgrounds in business, international development and the media, and representatives of a number of divisions within the BBC itself.

The unique strengths of the Trust derive from its ability to draw upon the extensive experience and expertise of the BBC, as well as its close working partnerships with local and international NGOs, government and international agencies. The BBC World Service currently broadcasts in 43 languages and has a weekly audience of at least 150 million. The relative cheapness of radios, and their portability, means that they are available to even the poorest communities - an important consideration for the work carried out by the Trust. This ability to reach a mass audience, coupled with its access to the highest professional standards of broadcasting and programme-making lies behind the success and scope of the projects which the Trust undertakes.

#### ***Target Areas***

The Trust operates in a wide range of geographical areas, with a focus on Africa, South and South East Asia and Eastern Europe. It focuses on four areas of work:

- Health
- Development
- Education
- Training

#### ***Funding***

With an annual turnover of £7.5 million in 2002, the Trust was dependent on funds raised from various international foundations as well as from the UK's Department for International Development, the European Union, UNICEF, UNHCR and WHO.

During the short period since its foundation, the BBC World Service Trust has made a significant contribution to improving the quality of life for some of the world's poorest communities, often providing information, in local languages, through a trusted and highly respected medium.

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Hilla TV Centre

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