



At the Tipping Point:

A Nineveh Plain Province and Related Solutions to Iraq’s Indigenous Minority Crisis

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Section One: ‘The Tipping Point’ – Today’s Situation for Iraq’s Christian Assyrians

Iraq’s ethno-religious minorities will define 2010 by the October 31st extermination of 58¹ Iraqi Christian Assyrians at the evening mass for All Saints Day. Yezidis, Shabaks, Turkmens and all minorities collectively rallied alongside Christian Assyrians (also known as Chaldean and Syriacs) to confront the undeniable fact that their future in Iraq *is* in peril. **2011 and 2012 will be seen as the tipping point.** Those aware of this crisis understand that upwards of 30-40% of all Christian Assyrians are already refugees. However, the most relevant dimension of the crisis is found at the internally displaced persons (IDP) level of analysis. For the first time since the liberation of Iraq, there is parity in minority refugee outflow from the Nineveh Plain (NP) than IDP inflow into the NP. This statistic is the best indicator today of an ongoing, slow Christian Assyrian genocide. The systematic waves of killings identified below create the conditions for genocide, displacement, and at best results in ethnic assimilation of Iraq’s indigenous Assyrians.

‘Tipping Point’ is the only way to view the situation in light of the figures set forth in Table 1.

Table 1: Nineveh Plain – IDP Families² Inflow and Refugee Outflow (By Targeted Wave)³

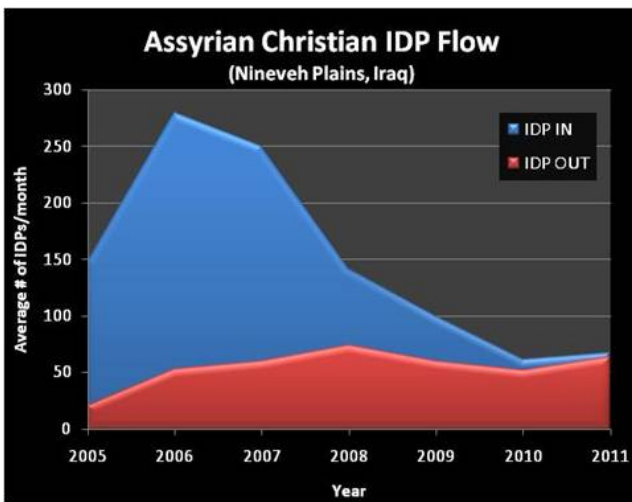
| Category \ Waves 1-5 | Jan 2005 to Aug. 2006 (20 months) | Sept. 2006 to Sept 2008 (25 months) | Oct 2008 to Dec 2009 (15 months) | Jan 2010 to Sept 2010 (9 months) | Oct 2010 to Present (6 months) |
|--|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| New IDP Arrivals to NP | 2971 | 7016 | 2138 | 559 | 410 |
| Refugee flight from NP | 420 | 1325 | 1106 | 468 | 383 |
| Avg # of IDP in p/m | 148 | 280 | 142 | 62 | 68 |
| Avg # of IDP out p/m | 21 | 53 | 74 | 52 | 64 |
| Ratio: NP IDP inflow vs Refugee outflow | 7 : 1 | 5.3 : 1 | 2 : 1 | 1.2 : 1 | 1 : 1 |

¹ This figure includes two unborn persons who died in their mothers’ wombs.

² The average family consists of 5 persons – information compiled from Assyrian Aid Society-Iraq and Nineveh Center for Research and Development studies and databases.

³ These are figures tracked for Christian Assyrians and do not include Shabaks, Yezidis and Turkmens.

In a January 2008 study conducted by the Nineveh Center for Research and Development (NCRD), 80% of IDPs reported familial/legal ties to the Nineveh Plain. 51% of IDPs, at that time, indicated a firm desire to build a future in the Nineveh Plain while 22% were undecided.



Only 26% of IDPs in January 2008 reported a desire to leave the Nineveh Plain to return to their homes. Moreover, the Nineveh Plain clearly became the destination of choice for the majority of displaced Christian Assyrians. These people are voting with their feet, and looking to have their vote heard and respected.

Unfortunately, their vote, their voices, and their pleas are being largely ignored except for some modest, yet insufficient, assistance stimulated by the herculean efforts of some

concerned Members of Congress, and for no other reason.

It is absolutely vital for all to understand that immediately following the October 31st extermination of 58 Assyrians, Islamist extremists continued to target Christian Assyrian homes throughout Baghdad and in major cities with the bombing of homes, vehicles, and businesses, killing many more. This was the fifth discernable “extremist wave” targeting Assyrians.

Trend analysis is vital at this point to appreciate how 2011 and 2012 are a tipping point for Iraq’s vulnerable minorities. The 1:1 ratio of IDP inflow to refugee outflow reflected in Table 1 is the clearest indication that without deliberate, focused policy intervention by the United States Government (USG) the number of Christian Assyrians fleeing the Nineveh Plain and Iraq will tip past a sustainable demographic threshold.

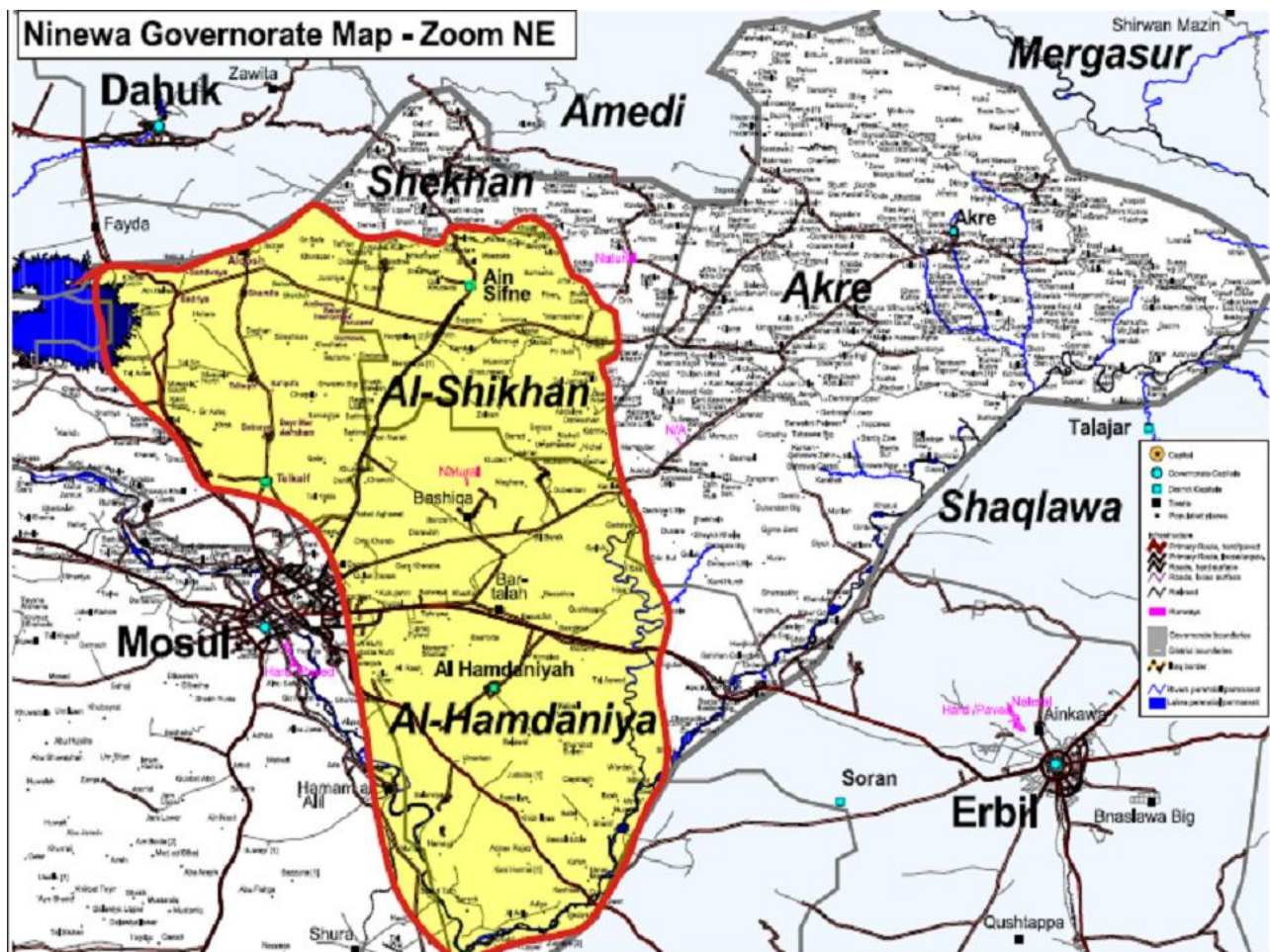
Three vital inferences result from the data presented in Table 1. *First:* if nothing is done, more Assyrians will begin leaving the Nineveh Plain than those arriving. This will create a natural ‘pull-factor’ on those remaining and depopulate the last remaining area of territorial concentration for this indigenous, ethno-religious minority. *Second:* the dramatically lower absolute numbers of IDP arrivals in the 4th and 5th waves is a strong indication that many Christian Assyrians are opting to become refugees directly, as opposed to trying to forge a future in the Nineveh Plain. *Third:* the fifth wave of targeting, commencing with the October 31st Church Slaughter, sent a message to IDPs and refugees that no hope remains of return to homes in Baghdad, and by extension, other major metropolitan centers.

Summarizing the Following Sections of this Policy Report

Section Two, 'Towards the Nineveh Plain Province', sets forth the core policy prescriptions, by priority and with estimated costs, necessary for reversing the ongoing 'slow genocide' of Christian Assyrians. 'Ongoing Slow Genocide' reflects the intent behind current attacks while also conveying the fuller history of Assyrians in Iraq beginning with the Simele Massacre of 1933 killing over 3,000 Assyrians in a genocidal attack. Section Three, 'Minorities and the Lessons of the Last Eight Years in Iraq' draws forth key lessons learned related to the plight of ethno-religious minorities in Iraq. *However, both sections presume the reader appreciates the gravity of the situation; that Iraq's defenseless indigenous minorities are at the 'Tipping Point'.*

Nineveh Plain – Basic Information (by district/sub-jurisdiction)

- Telkaif: population 180,000; 1275 km²
- Hamdaniya: population 120,000; 1137 km²
- Shaikhan: population 100,000; 1259 km²
- (Mosul) Bashiqa: population 100,000; 526 km²





At the Tipping Point:

A Nineveh Plain Province and Related Solutions to Iraq's Minority Crisis

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Section Two: Towards the Nineveh Plain Province and Related Policy Solutions

Iraq's Christian Assyrians (also known as Chaldeans and Syriacs) are at the '*tipping point*' of either retaining a viable demographic in Iraq or being destroyed, as they were historically in both Iran and Turkey. Other ethno-religious minorities, namely Yezidis, Shabaks, and Turkmens, look at the plight of Assyrians as a barometer for their collective plight. If the United States and other responsible actors, such as the United Nations, allow the ethno-religious disintegration of Christian Assyrians to continue without any meaningful attempt to reverse the situation, the message will be clear: there is no hope. When Iraq's ethno-religious minorities are wiped-out, it will become a nation polarized along solely Arab—Kurdish ethnic lines and the Sunni—Shi'a sectarian divide. Such an Iraq will become an ideal base for international terrorists. The loss of Iraq's ethno-religious minorities, who constituted upwards of 8-10% of the population in 2003, removes any real chance of leveraging pluralism and diversity. These minorities are so critical in the creation of sustainable democracies. Setting in place a feasible and comprehensive policy for Iraq's indigenous minorities is critical before the U.S. withdrawal.

The following policy solutions are the primary means of offering hope for ethno-religious minorities like Assyrians. Together, these policy prescriptions not only offer a chance for them to survive, but to *thrive*. It is vital to understand that a 'survival' strategy (for example one that only tries to prevent more of them from fleeing) is at this stage insufficient. Too many Assyrians have fled Iraq and become refugees. A policy that tangibly demonstrates they have a chance to *thrive* is the only way refugees can be convinced to return to Iraq of their own volition. *This is necessary to rescue Assyrians from the 'tipping point'.*

The policy package summarized below reflects only Phase One found in Table 2. It consists of three policy areas consistent with the policy areas guiding the work of the USG in Iraq. They are: *governance, development and security*. However, the entire policy package revolves around the collective and *ongoing* effort of Iraq's vulnerable minorities to establish a province in the Nineveh Plain that is tied directly to the national government via Baghdad, and not annexed to the Kurdistan Regional Government. Therefore, the policy package is referred to as the, **"Nineveh Plain Province Solution"**. *U.S. public endorsement for establishing the Nineveh Plain Province is of political and symbolic importance, in addition to its fiscal support.*

Table 2: Phases 1 thru 3 of the Nineveh Plain Province Solution

| Policy Priority | Governance | Development | Security | Total Projected Cost |
|----------------------------------|--|--|---|-----------------------------|
| Phase One | Nineveh Plain Province – Community Dialogue & Empowerment (\$3 million) | (D-I) Start-Up: Nineveh Plain University (\$36 million) | Nineveh Plain Police Force (NPPF) to 5,000 | \$128 million |
| | | (D-II) Start-Up: Nineveh Plain Provincial Hospital (\$42 million) | Replacing current officers of NP Police Force with officers from the NP. | |
| | | (D-III) NP Basic Infrastructure Development (\$47 million) | | |
| Phase Two | Nineveh Plain Province – Training and Capacity Building for ‘Get Out the Vote’ campaigns and Referenda stages | Large Scale/ Industry Promotion | Justice Sector – recruitment and training of Chief Magistrates for the Nineveh Plain | TBD |
| | | Small-Medium Enterprise Development | | |
| Phase Three | Nineveh Plain Province – Government Capacity Building for Nineveh Plain Province Representatives and Administrators; NGO | USG Promotion of economic and trade relations between the US and the NP | Sustained training and support for the NPPF | TBD |
| | | | Expansion of the NPPF and also expanding indigenous minority recruitment into Iraqi National Police Force and Special Forces Units | |

General Note on the Nineveh Plain Province Solution and Funding Needs

Support for the Nineveh Plain Province Solution is vital to saving the indigenous Assyrian minority from the brink of total ethnic destruction. It also serves important U.S. national security interests, by maintaining pluralism and diversity to leverage core American values and concerns. The plan also makes financial sense. In 2007, ISDP costed the minimum money bill to the American tax-payer to relocate the minorities of the Nineveh Plain if the ‘tipping point’ spills into a complete minority exodus. The cost of just relocating the 500,000 residents of the Nineveh Plain would be \$8 billion (\$8,250,000,000.00)⁴. The first phase of the Nineveh Plain Province Solution is \$128 million and the medium term budget estimates reach \$300 million.

⁴ ISDP. ‘Local Development or Mass Resettlement’. http://www.iraqdemocracyproject.org/policy_alert_1.html

Governance – Phase One: Nineveh Plain Province, Community Dialogue & Empowerment

Project: Support independent, local NGOs in coordinating and conducting community empowerment programs and dialogues around the issue of forming a province in the Nineveh Plain. The aim is to make Iraq’s burgeoning federal system work for all Iraqis. Assyrians, Shabaks, Yezidis, Sabaeen-Mandaeans, and Turkmens have been killed, summarily arrested, tortured, tormented and economically discriminated against in apartheid-like de-development fashion, in efforts to eliminate and/or subjugate them. Islamist extremists (with government complicity or not) seek the destruction of Christian Assyrians while the Kurdistan Regional Government seeks to dominate and persecute them in an authoritarian, tyrannical manner. Like any bloodied and victimized group, the Assyrian community needs external support to empower its NGOs, civil society and elected representatives to facilitate an open, safe, and meaningful community dialogue so that they may pursue their stated political objective of forming a province in the Nineveh Plain. It is worth noting that four other proposals calling for the formation of new provinces are under discussion in Iraq today.

Assyrian political parties and national institutions coalesced around the specific vision of a Nineveh Plain Province policy. The signatories to this political declaration are:

| | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| Assyrian Democratic Movement | Chaldean National Council |
| Chaldean Syriac Assyrian Popular Council | Assyrian General Conference |
| Assyrian Democratic Organization | Bet-Nahrain National Union |
| Chaldean Democratic Forum | Assyrian American National Federation |
| Assyrian Universal Alliance | Chaldean Culture Society |
| Syriac Independent Assembly | Assyrian Patriotic Party |
| Bet-Nahrain Democratic Party | ChaldoAshur Organization of the |
| Chaldean Democratic Party | Communist Party of Kurdistan |

Cost: \$3,000,000.00

Background: Making federalism in Iraq work for vulnerable minorities is as fundamental a priority to a lasting solution as it was for the Framers of the American Constitution to find a way of getting competing factions of all stripes working towards the common good. Assyrians managed to secure language in the Transitional Administrative Law (TAL) that carried over into Iraq’s current Constitution that provides the basis for creating a province if the enabling legislation is managed properly. Article 125 of Iraq’s current constitution states that, *“This Constitution shall guarantee the administrative, political, cultural, and educational rights of the various nationalities, such as Turkomen, Chaldeans, Assyrians, and all other constituents, and this shall be regulated by law.”* In November of 2010 and January 2011 Assyrian political representatives collectively agreed to prioritize the enabling legislation of Art. 125 to allow for the creation of a new province in the Nineveh Plain and wherever else justified by the spirit of

the law. (see link: <http://www.admzowaa.com/2011/01/16/meeting-of-the-nationalist-political-parties-of-the-chaldean-syriac-assyrian-excerpts-from-the-press-conference/>) This political objective was first declared officially in 2003 (see link: <http://zowaa.org/news/news/english/pr4eng.pdf> - page 2). Two chief impediments to pursuing this agenda developed shortly after the 2003 declaration. First, the security situation deteriorated and Assyrians, Shabaks, Yezidis, and others found themselves deliberately targeted in an ethno-religious cleansing. Second, the Kurdistan Regional Government officially declared its intention to annex the Nineveh Plain into the KRG, declaring it ‘disputed territory’. Consequently, the KRG began a program devoted to the unbridled political persecution of minorities, particularly Assyrians, Shabaks, Yezidis and Turkmens.⁵ Wherever possible, the KRG disenfranchised indigenous voters, intimidated their communities, silenced their political parties and elected politicians. These minority politicians have endured summary arrests, assassination attempts, and the creation of proxy indigenous minority parties and NGOs beholden to the KRG, all with the purpose of destroying their political independence.

It is of vital importance that the NGOs and local politicians awarded the funding are politically independent of the KRG and other dominant political forces who could also intimidate and silence their freedom of political choice.

Additionally, a colloquy between the Chairwoman of the Appropriations Sub-Committee for State and Foreign Operations and Rep. Anna Eshoo (D-CA) during the 2010 appropriations process confirmed Congress’ intention to fund community organizations and leaders in the dialogue around Art. 125 and a prospective Nineveh Plain Administrative Unit. Up to this point in time, this expectation has been unmet.

Finally, this governance-based solution can increase the capacity of minorities in securing an equitable distribution of resources for development and in physically securing their communities.

Development I – First Phase: Nineveh Plain University

Project: Land for the Nineveh Plain University (NPU) has been approved by the Government of Iraq. It is essential for such an endeavor to be a joint partnership between the USG and Government of Iraq (and obviously would benefit from assistance from the United Nations and

⁵ Readers are referred to the following reports by respected policy institutions and human rights organizations: International Crisis Group, “Iraq’s New Battlefield: The Struggle Over Ninewa”, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=6318&l=1>. Human Rights Watch, “On Vulnerable Ground”, <http://www.hrw.org/en/node/86357>. Minority Rights Group International, “Assimilation, Exodus, and Eradication: Iraq’s Minority Crisis Since 2003”, <http://www.minorityrights.org/2805/reports/assimilation-exodus-eradication-iraqs-minority-communities-since-2003.html>.

other major multilateral governmental organizations). First phase development consists of developing prefabricated structures/facilities that can be rapidly erected and made usable within months while concurrently laying the foundations for the permanent institution. The first phase also includes current expenditure costs in the form of staffing (from university administration, to professors, to maintenance personnel). The existence of thousands of eager students sitting idle in the Nineveh Plain exist alongside countless university professors that have also fled their jobs and homes and are a readily available teaching corps for the NPU.

Building the NPU will have the additional and vital impact of creating a stimulus in the local economy of the NP. The supply chain needed for the construction of the NPU covers multiple industries, including steel, cement, lumber, labor, and logistics, as well as the service industries upon which these industries rely. Once the NPU commences with operations, secondary channels can begin to grow, specifically in the retail sector. These include standard support services for universities such as print shops, book stores, restaurants, internet cafes, dry cleaning, hospitality (e.g. hotel and catering services), among many others.

Cost: First Phase – estimated at \$36,000,000.00

Background: Ethno-religious minorities are being denied access to higher/tertiary education in the thousands. Children within displaced families arriving in the Nineveh Plain share in the persecution being faced by existing residents of the Nineveh Plain in being driven away from Mosul University. As far back as 2005 it was determined that upwards of 3,400 students were being denied a university education. In the half decade that has passed, this number has increased to not less than 9,000 Assyrians. In May 2010, the targeted roadside bombing of 70 university students on shuttle buses bound for the University of Mosul cemented the decision of hundreds more to stop attending university. When Shabaks and Yezidis student numbers are derived from their proportion of the NP population and IDP numbers, the number of university students increases to roughly 20,000. It is essential to understand that a university education is at a relatively greater premium for Assyrians and other minorities given their history in Iraq. As a result, they constitute a disproportionate percentage of Iraq's human capital. With the chances of a university education reduced to nil, many families with university-aged children opt for refugee status based on that consideration alone. *Establishing the NPU will not only keep thousands and thousands of ethno-religious minorities in Iraq, but will certainly attract hundreds, if not thousands of Assyrian families and other minorities back to Iraq.*

It is vital that those awarded contracts to develop the NPU be independent politically of dominant political forces, especially the Kurdistan Regional Government. The KRG has dominated the aid/development field in the NP as a means of politicizing aid/relief and subverting any initiative that could lead to the empowerment of minorities who can develop their own capacities as communities; community empowerment being a key element to any well-

designed development project. Screening of partners/developers in the project can be done effectively by creating a minorities consultative council consisting of independent NGOs and politicians with the express purpose of vetting candidates for development contracts.

Development II – First Phase: Nineveh Plain Provincial Hospital

Project: Developing a provincial/regional-level hospital in the NP is of vital importance at this stage given the humanitarian crisis facing the area. The NP was deliberately under-developed by Saddam Hussein during his effort to Arabize it and cleanse the ethno-religious minorities there. The liberation of Iraq and the subsequent attacks and persecution of Christian Assyrians by Islamist extremists and the KRG pushed tens of thousands of IDPs into the Nineveh Plain, many with severe health problems. The insecurity in Mosul City and surrounding areas makes access to Mosul Provincial Hospital impossible. As a result, the current dilapidated and under-resourced NP district hospital is required to try and meet the needs of a regional population in what can only be described as an area of regular, internecine violence that can become an active war zone as the KRG pushes to annex the NP and Iraqi nationalists prepare for violent resistance.

The provincial/regional-level hospital envisioned for the NP is being designed as part of a health-industrial complex, wherein as a teaching hospital it is tied directly to the NP University. As with the NPU, it is possible to begin with essential pre-fabricated structures to commence with essential health services delivery as early as possible. Concurrently, the development of the permanent structures can commence in coordination with the expansion of health services. Additionally, current expenditure is included (such as personnel costs) from the onset given the number of health professionals (administrators, doctors, nurses, etc.) currently residing in the NP, most as IDPs, who are ready to work. This project will generate a massive impetus for population retention.

Cost: First Phase - \$42,000,000.00

Background:

In the 2010 appropriation for state and foreign operations, Members of Congress actively sought to ensure that the Dominican Sisters of Nineveh become central to the construction of the NP Provincial/Regional Hospital. The Dominican Sisters in Iraq and Nineveh specifically retain the pre-eminent capacity in the delivery of health services but were literally driven out of this function by Saddam Hussein. Their properties seized, their people dispossessed, the Sisters saw renewed hope in returning and making their contribution to the rebuilding of Iraq through their extraordinary capacity in the delivery of health services. The Department of State, in that financial year, targeted a sum of the \$10 million marked for the NPs towards health care services and facilities; however, the funds went to Baghdad and to another group. This perplexing measure requires explanation and rectification. Certainly, any assistance to the health services is appreciated and will do well, but these funds are specifically marked for the NP. Why they were

used outside of the NP, in contradiction to the intent of Congress is highly regrettable since even a modest contribution could be used to commence with this vital project.

As with the NPU, constructing the NP Provincial/Regional Hospital will have the additional and vital impact of creating a stimulus in the local economy of the NP. The supply chain needed for the construction of the hospital covers multiple industries, including steel, cement, lumber, labor, and logistics, as well as the service industries upon which these industries rely. This project will generate a massive impetus for population retention, against the push factor driving them as NP residents sit at the *tipping point*.

Development III – Basic Infrastructure Development

Project: The under-development of the NP and its escalating humanitarian crisis are well established in many sources. However, to this day the single most comprehensive analysis of the infrastructural needs of the NP can be found in the Nineveh Plain Needs Assessment published by the Iraq Sustainable Democracy Project in 2005. Roads, electrification, and potable water remain some of the most pressing needs of the NP population and will also serve as part of a sustainable, integrated development plan. The needs exist everywhere and for all peoples of the NP. Therefore, working with local development partners and communities to systematically roll-out projects using the Nineveh Plain Needs Assessment as a guide is paramount.

Understandably the needs are too great to be implemented in a single financial year, however, a recurring budget to further develop NP infrastructure and maintain existing infrastructure can be feasibly achieved. The Nineveh Plain Needs Assessment can be found here and estimates need to be adjusted for inflation and do not account for new sources of essential materials and logistics:

<http://www.iraqdemocracyproject.org/pdf/Nineveh%20Plain%20Needs%20Assessment.pdf>

Emphasis is on Chapters 12, 13 and 14 covering ‘Water and Sanitation’, ‘Electricity’, and ‘Transport’, respectively.

Cost: \$47,000,000.00.

Background: The politicization of reconstruction and development assistance is a major issue throughout Iraq but perhaps nowhere more so than in the NP. In its relentless effort to subjugate and control the local population, the Kurdistan Regional Government has used the suffering and vulnerability of Christian Assyrians and other minorities to only allow development and aid in exchange for support of the annexation of the NP to the KRG. Department of State responses to Congressional enquiries confirm that the KRG, particularly via its Ministry of Finance, discriminates against Christian Assyrians in the NP.⁶ The vast majority of infrastructural projects, regardless of how modest, are channeled through entities explicitly or indirectly controlled by the KRG. These projects are largely presented as KRG largesse to the residents of

⁶ Department of State report available upon request.

the NP. The goal is to annex the NP and this activity enormously destabilizes the area and contributes to the escalating tensions between Kurds and Arabs in northern Iraq. The NP is the fault line and if it completely fractures because of this pattern of mismanaged aid/development, it will spark the territorial fuse to Kirkuk and lead to full-blown civil war between Arabs and Kurds. Respected security analysts and local NGOs and politicians attest to this potential.⁷

Indeed, when some Members of Congress visited Mosul in years past, to discuss the humanitarian plight, they were surprised to find Assyrian politicians who belonged to the KDP and PUK explicitly focused on the subject of directing the \$10 million dollar annual appropriation through channels controlled by their political parties. The dismay and discouragement this caused those Members of Congress is understandable but this activity must only be seen to reinforce the need to break the KRG stranglehold on development in the NP.

The USG must ensure that all its projects go to independent aid/development partners, from the NP. This strategy has a two-fold aim. First, it removes much of the potential of the KRG to destabilize the area and thus further harm ethno-religious minorities and US national security interests. Second, it not only provides aid/development to the residents of the NP, but it also empowers them. Using their local, established NGOs and independent elected officials is akin to any community empowerment program run in the United States as a matter of course. If current practices are not remedied, politicized development via the KRG in the NP will only sustain the pressures on minorities that are driving them out of Iraq.

Development Alternatives International (DAI), the chief organization coordinating local Iraqi sub-contractors for the Department of State, has demonstrated an extraordinary capacity to be negligent of the strategic considerations and local political dynamics, escalating tensions for minorities in the NP. DAI, if they are allowed to continue to manage these funds targeting minorities in the NP, require clear direction to avoid all sub-contracting with KRG based agents and groups under the control of the KRG.

Nota Bene: Members of Congress asked the Government Accountability Office to audit the performance of the relevant departments/agencies in the delivery of the tens of millions targeted for the NP in previous years. This fact alone should be the basis to require the Department of State to institute extraordinary measures to prevent further implementation of development projects in a manner that hurts minorities and American interests.

⁷ See footnote 5 on P. 7 of this report.

Security – The Nineveh Plain Police Force (NPPF): Force Structure and Its Officer Corps

NPPF Project I (Police Officers/Recruits): Formal, local policing in the Nineveh Plain is almost non-existent. It is far below the levels required to secure the population in the long-term. A standing order from the Government of Iraq to implement the first element of the NPPF was approved in conjunction with MNC-Iraq and U.S. military commanders there at the time. The first component of the police force comprised 711 police officers. That force currently consists of roughly 430 police officers. More than half of these officers have been reassigned to the ‘Facilities Protection Services’, which serves to substantially reduce visible policing by the NPPF. Five years later, not even 711 police officers of the NPPF are in place and it is nowhere near the necessary force structure of 5,000.

The Kurdistan Regional Government is the primary impediment to the creation of the NPPF. The KRG understands that once the NPPF is functional, it will remove the basis for their continued occupation of the NP. The KRG has been so determined in this respect that while blocking any attempt to establish the NPPF, they also established an informal Christian Militia paid for by the KRG Ministry of Finance, rather than allow for the fulfillment of the Government of Iraq order to establish the NPPF.

USG coordination with the Government of Iraq to remove the political blockages by the KRG and begin coordinating for full recruitment, training and equipping of the NPPF is a vital priority. Facilitating the removal of the KRG’s militia in the NP and its secret police apparatus (the Asayesh) will remove a major source of friction and instability between expansionist Kurds and nationalist Arabs. While the USG will not be involved in funding the NPPF, it can assist with training, logistics, and other forms of support it currently offers other local police forces.

NPPF Project II (Officer Corps/Commanders): One primary means by which the NPPF is consistently undermined in terms of operational effectiveness is because its officer corps and commanders are foreign to the NP and drawn from other communities. As with the police officers themselves, the Officer Corps/Commanders should also be drawn from the demographics in the NP, who have local legitimacy and local interests central to their mission.

The USG can coordinate with the Government of Iraq in the training, resourcing and facilitation of the officer corps/commanders for the NPPF.

Cost: Dependent on US DoD estimates and USG political support for this essential policy.

Background: At the time of liberation the Peshmerga (Kurdistan Regional Government militia) descended into the Nineveh Plain to offer temporary security. The Peshmerga have now become an occupation force. Under the cover of the Peshmerga, the KRG’s internal security service (the Asayesh) also operates in the NP, and strategizes the intimidation and political persecution of

ethno-religious minorities in the NP who desire political freedom from Kurdistan Regional Government authoritarianism in the NP. The Peshmerga are identified as being singularly responsible for the disenfranchisement of Assyrians, Shabaks, and Yezidis in the NP during the vital 2005 national elections. This one single act, for which they were never held accountable, ensured that ethno-religious minorities lacked the political means to defend their collective interests and is arguably one of the primary reasons they lacked the means to secure themselves economically and physically – as their ability to utilize the political process was far below their full potential.

As a Congressman, Senator Mark Kirk focused extraordinary attention to this issue and after confronting Ambassador Ryan Crocker, the establishment of the NPPF began (see link: http://www.zindamagazine.com/html/archives/2008/04.14.08/index_mon.php#newsdigest). Within 2 weeks of the hearing MNC-North reported the commencement of recruitment (see link: http://www.usf-iraq.com/?option=com_content&task=view&id=18960&Itemid=128). The consistent push by others, especially Senator Carl Levin, who played a significant role in this effort with several visits to the area, managed to get the NPPF started. Regrettably, since the creation of the force, the KRG via its Peshmerga control of the Nineveh Plain undermined the NPPF's ability to reach the initial 711 mark, let alone the 5,000 necessary for a full force structure. Since the KRG lost political control of Nineveh Provincial Council, Arab Iraqis are replacing some of the Kurdish Iraqi commanders of the NPPF as these two dominant groups compete for power. This is further undermining the chances of growing the size of the NPPF to necessary levels.

Interested readers are encouraged to read The Struggle to Exist, published by the Assyria Council of Europe. <http://www.aina.org/reports/acetste.pdf>. This exhaustive report, based on in-depth and rigorous research on the plight of Iraq's indigenous Assyrians analyzes the governance, development and security issues facing Assyrians in Iraq today.



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Section Three: Minorities and the Lessons of the Last Eight Years in Iraq

At every major juncture since 2003, Christian Assyrians have been asked by the United States Government to cooperate, wait and have faith. In 2005, the USG told minorities to rely on Iraq's new security apparatus. The Assyrian Democratic Movement, the only Assyrian Christian political group officially recognized as allies of the US disbanded its militia as per American insistence. Assyrians were then blocked from entering into policing and related services. Assyrians were told to believe in the democratic system, specifically the electoral process. Here too, they saw a vast number of their voters systematically and deliberately disenfranchised with impunity. Indeed, both 2005 elections were deemed a success despite the silencing of Assyrians and other minorities. Crushed politically and blocked from the security sector, Assyrians and others in the NP became extremely vulnerable to the violence of Islamist extremists and the political oppression/victimization by the KRG.

The lessons learned are straightforward. USG policy for indigenous, ethno-religious minorities should be guided by three fundamental principles:

1. **Prioritization of the Indigenous Minorities Crisis:** Up until now the USG has not developed a policy to save Iraq's ethno-religious minorities. Instead, the USG is encouraging these indigenous minorities to assist in making all of Iraq a better place so that it will also become better for them. With hundreds of thousands of indigenous Assyrians already becoming refugees and the IDP population at the 'Tipping Point', this minority population will not survive.
2. **Nineveh Plain Province as the Centerpiece of a Policy:** Assyrians, Shabaks and Yezidis are voting with their feet in focusing on the Nineveh Plain. Support in the ways set forth in Section Two, especially in empowering the community's dialogue on a Nineveh Plain Province, ensures progress in the governance, development and security policy fields.
3. **Empowerment of the Community's Independent Political Groups and Civil Society:** As the KRG's efforts to annex the NP escalated it began establishing Assyrian, Shabak and Yezidis political parties and civil society organizations, funded through the KRG's Ministry of Finance under the direction of the KRG Prime Minister. The USG must screen all such groups beholden to the KRG and work exclusively with those groups who maintain their political independence.