

Institution: University of Exeter
Unit of Assessment: Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies
Title of case study: Political Dynamics in Post-2003 Iraq
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Professor Gareth Stansfield's research at the University of Exeter into aspects of post-2003 Iraq has informed UK government and international policy towards Iraq since the invasion, and has had impact on policy makers in the US and the UN, through interventions raised and derived from his research. Specifically, his research has had an impact in three areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research into conflict management in Iraq's disputed territories has informed the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) recommendations for resolving the dispute. • Research on political mobilization and civil war dynamics in Iraq informed guidelines for asylum/human rights determination process for the UK Borders Agency (UKBA). • Research into post-conflict stabilization and approaches to state building contributed significantly to public awareness and policy debate through the media on managing the situation through federal and power-sharing arrangements in Iraq.
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>Researcher: Gareth Stansfield – Research Fellow (2002); Lecturer (2004); Reader (2005); Associate Professor (2006); Professor (2007)</p> <p>In 2003, a coalition force led by the United States invaded and occupied Iraq, removing the Ba'ath regime of Saddam Hussein. By 2004 and onwards, the security situation in Iraq began to deteriorate rapidly and several civil wars unfolded as different communities of Iraqis began to coalesce around ethnic and sectarian identities. Stansfield's research programme considered conflict management, political mobilization, and the rebuilding of the state in Iraq.</p> <p>In 2002, Stansfield was awarded a Leverhulme Trust Special Research Fellowship to investigate 'The reconstruction and rehabilitation of Iraq', between 2002 and 2004. The dates of the fellowship occurred alongside the move towards regime-change. As such, the research programme maintained a degree of flexibility to take into account post-conflict developments, allowing the research findings to be targeted on particular issues of relevance to the policymaking community. The research focused on the rise of communal politics in Iraq, and possible mechanisms by which they could be managed in a post-conflict setting, including consociationalism and asymmetric federalism (Stansfield 2003; Anderson and Stansfield 2004). Research additionally considered the impact of Coalition policies upon the stability of the post-conflict environment. This research theme was further developed following the awarding of a grant by the United States Institute for Peace (USIP) on 'Investigating Political Mobilization in Iraqi Kurdistan', held from 2005 to 2007. The thematic of ethno-sectarian political mobilization proved to be significant to policy makers due to the unfolding of a range of fast-moving inter- and intra-communal wars from 2004 onwards. Stansfield's research contributed significantly to the debate on causation and, importantly in terms of impact, the policy level debate on managing the situation through federal and power-sharing arrangements (Stansfield 2007). This work contextualised a successful application for £738,000 made to the Leverhulme Trust Research Leadership Award scheme on 'Ethnopolitics in a Globalized World', which then further supported additional research on Iraq.</p> <p>The second part of Stansfield's research programme focused specifically on the Arab-Kurdish dispute in Iraq, and particularly upon the disputed city and region of Kirkuk. The research benefited from the awarding of a Leverhulme Trust Research Fellowship entitled 'Between Arabs, Kurds, and Turkmens: Managing Kirkuk', held from 2007 to 2009. The research culminated in several articles (such as items 1. and 3. in section 3. below) and a monograph (Anderson and Stansfield 2009). This research coincided with Kurdish-Arab relations faltering and the status of Kirkuk turning into one of the most volatile situations in Iraq. The many findings of this work identified the relative claims of the different communities, and the mechanisms by which they attempted to exercise control in Kirkuk. The research also presented a range of options whereby Kirkuk's inclusion in either Iraq or in Kurdistan could be managed, and how the resolution of the question of Kirkuk's</p>

territory could be separated from the question of Kirkuk's oil reserves. The third part of the research programme reflected upon the UK's experience in Iraq, with a particular view to involvement, intervention, and stabilization. This theme developed in the first instance from Stansfield's participation in a Defence Intelligence Staff initiative in 2002-03, and his subsequent work with a range of senior UK military officials from PJHQ and DCDC. The research was further underpinned by the awarding of an ESRC grant in 2007 on 'British military intervention and ethical statecraft' (with Tim Dunne). This work focused on the options available to UK military planners to stabilize the situation in Iraq, particularly by working with local political actors.

3. References to the research

1. Stansfield, G. (2010) 'The Reformation of Iraq's Foreign Relations: New Elites and Enduring Legacies', *International Affairs*, 86(6), 1395-1410. ISSN 0020-5850.
Evidence of quality: peer reviewed article in highly ranked journal; result of external grant funding from United States Institute for Peace (USIP).
2. Anderson, L and G. Stansfield (2009) *Crisis in Kirkuk: The Ethnopolitics of Conflict and Compromise*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 298 pp. ISSN 97808122417610812241762
Evidence of quality: peer reviewed monograph from university press in dedicated ethnopolitics series; reviewed very favourably in leading journals (see *Perspectives on Politics*, 9:1 (2011)).
3. Stansfield, G and Anderson, L. (2009) The Kurds in Iraq: The Struggle Between Baghdad and Erbil', *Middle East Policy*, 16(1), 134-145.
Evidence of quality: peer reviewed journal article in the leading Middle East area studies journal on IR citations listing.
4. Stansfield, G. (2008) *Iraq: People, History, Politics*. Cambridge: Polity. ISBN 9780745632261.
Evidence of quality: peer reviewed monograph in prestigious series; favourably reviewed in leading journals.
5. ESRC 'Impact' grant (2007), 'British military intervention and ethical statecraft'. PI Tim Dunne, CI Gareth Stansfield.
6. Stansfield, G. (2007) 'Accepting Realities in Iraq', *Chatham House Middle East Programme Briefing Paper*, MEP BP 07/02. London: Chatham House.
Evidence of quality: peer reviewed briefing paper that has been highly cited; a much downloaded paper from Chatham House website.
7. Anderson, L and Stansfield, G. (2004) *The Future of Iraq: Dictatorship, Democracy or Division?* Co-authored with Liam Anderson. New York: Palgrave Macmillan., 260 pp. ISBN 9781403871449
Evidence of quality: peer reviewed monograph; reviews generated indicate both quality of book and the interest the arguments in it created.

4. Details of the impact

Conflict management in Iraq's disputed territories

Research by Stansfield on conflict causation and management in Iraq helped steer the activities of the UN mission tasked with facilitating negotiations between the Iraqi central government and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). In 2008, the FCO recommended Stansfield to act as a Senior Political Adviser to the UN's Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) in Iraq – a position he held throughout 2008 and which included a three-month stay in Iraq. During this time, he was tasked by the SRSG to discuss possible strategies with the Kurdish leadership. In 2009, Stansfield's research on the disputed territories and Kurdish political mobilization had a direct input into the drafting of the UN's recommendations for the resolution of the disputed territories, with the UN Department of Political Affairs staff utilizing his co-authored book *Crisis in Kirkuk* extensively. Stansfield's research on range of options for the future status of Kirkuk (inclusion in either Iraq or in Kurdistan; resolution of Kirkuk's territorial status and its separation the question of its oil reserves) informed the shaping of the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq's (UNAMI) report on 'Disputed Internal Boundaries in Iraq', published in 2009, but still under embargo. Since then, Stansfield's expertise on Arab-Kurd politics has been noted by the private sector, with him acting as an adviser to the senior management of Shell on the politics of Kirkuk, with the Chairman

of Shell Iraq noting the importance of *Crisis in Kirkuk* (2009) to Shell's deliberations. Stansfield has also chaired US Government events on this subject, and briefed research analysts and ambassadors-designate of the FCO regularly, with his book *Iraq* (2008) recommended to FCO staff beginning their work on Iraq as essential reading, as an ideal way of introducing them to a complex country in a detached, dispassionate, fashion.

Political mobilization and civil war dynamics in Iraq

Stansfield's research informed guidelines for asylum/human rights determination process through being cited in the UK Border Agency's 'UK Country of Information Report on the Kurdistan Region as a separate and independent region of Iraq' in April (<http://bit.ly/1fgmu7m>), revised in September 2009, and the Country of Information Report on Iraq in December 2009. These reports provide general background information for officials involved in human rights' claims in the UK. Stansfield independently reviewed and made recommendations on the original version of these documents and when the Office of the Independent Chief Inspector of UKBA convened a meeting of the Independent Advisory Group on Country Information on the 19th of May 2009 (<http://bit.ly/18GN3eZ>), it was noted in the minutes that '*the UKBA had responded positively to nearly all of the recommendations made by Professor Stansfield [report Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) area of Iraq] and had amended the COI report accordingly*'. Moreover it was noted that '*The group considered Professor Stansfield's report [to be] very helpful because he set out the information gaps and suggested where further information was needed. For this reason the group agreed his report should be used as an example of best practice for distribution to future authors*'.

Post conflict stabilization and approaches to state building

In response to the sudden downturn of the security situation in Iraq, the US employed a different strategy (the 'surge' strategy) through localising of security structures in a bid to defeat the threat posed by Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) and the Shi'a *Jaish al-Mahdi*. Stansfield's research considered how Coalition actions had exacerbated tensions within Iraqi society rather than resolve them, as reported in the House of Commons Select Committee on Foreign Affairs Sixth Report of 2005 (<http://bit.ly/1bv5U3P>). In high-level meetings, Stansfield presented his research on the regional mobilization of political communities in Iraq and the possibility of structuring military forces along regimental lines – i.e. recruiting from localities, finding local solutions to local security problems. Following Stansfield's 2007 Chatham House Briefing Paper (<http://bit.ly/1qGTXpF>) the research's impact was further extended through discussions held with senior UK military officials tasked with working alongside US counterparts on improving security. Stansfield's 2007 research also impacted upon the Coalition's 2007/8 'surge' strategy aimed at removing the Al-Qaeda insurgency threat from Iraq, with him providing analysis and advice directly to the Director of Intelligence at the Permanent Joint Headquarters (PJHQ), on strategies to defeat Al-Qaeda in Iraq and further the Coalition reconciliation effort. His involvement in this area was highlighted by an invitation to present a paper on the subject at the Iraq Inquiry in 2009 (<http://bit.ly/1eXG1vV>) and he has since contributed to the writing of UK stabilization doctrine in events held at the Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre (DCDC) of the Ministry of Defence (<http://bit.ly/16dD4nx>). Following this engagement with the military, Stansfield has been asked to join several ad hoc working groups tasked with advising on the interaction of the UK with nascent Syrian opposition groups, (evidence: DFID funded project through Coffey International focused upon the capacity-building of Syrian opposition groups in the Kurdish north; adviser to Chief Joint Operations (CJO) Permanent Joint Headquarters). Stansfield has also won a further unsolicited USIP/Chatham House award to undertake work on Iraq's foreign policy formulation, being the one of the first academics to recognise that at least two foreign policy structures existed in Iraq (Stansfield 2010).

Further impact and benefit

In 2010, Stansfield's research informed policy makers by being cited in a House of Commons research paper 'The Arab uprising' and pointed to the similarities between the situation in Iraq after the fall of Saddam Hussein and Libya (<http://bit.ly/15aU4o8>). His work on counter-insurgency saw him invited to be a founding member of the 'PJHQ Red-Team', designed to inform the Chief of Defence Staff on strategic options in Libya. And, in 2011, regarding the Arab Kurd dispute, his research was cited in the United States Forces 'Iraq' commissioned report by RAND National

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Defence Research Institute 'Managing Arab-Kurd Tensions in Northern Iraq After the Withdrawal of U.S. Troops' aimed at informing US policy makers on preparations for the withdrawal of US troops from Iraq. He has also briefed, in spring 2013, the Defence Select Committee of Parliament on the subject of Iraq, Syria, and sectarianism.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

1. UK Border Agency Report on KRG Country of Origin Information Report, April 2009 <http://www.ociukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/files/IAGCI-reviews/review-krq-coi-report.pdf>
2. Minutes arising from the Office of the Chief Inspector of the UK Borders Agency 19.05.2009 http://icinspector.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/Minutes_IAGCI_19.05.2009.pdf
3. UNDP/YouGov, April 2009 'The Iraq Provincial Election Study, with Joe Twyman and David Saunders
4. Iraq Inquiry Written Submission, November 2009 'What were the causes and consequences of Iraq's descent into violence after the initial invasion <http://www.iraqinquiry.org.uk/media/37048/stansfield-submission.pdf>
5. RAND National Defense Research Institute 'Managing Arab-Kurd tensions in Northern Iraq after the withdrawal of US Troops' 2011.
6. After the Spring; Prospects for the Arab World in 2013. UNA-UK http://www.una.org.uk/sites/default/files/UNA-UK%20After%20the%20Spring%201%20of%203_1.pdf
7. Chatham House Briefing Paper, 2007 'Accepting Realities in Iraq' http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/files/9260_bpiraq0507.pdf
8. House of Commons Select Committee on Foreign Affairs Sixth Report of 2005 <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200405/cmselect/cmfaaff/36/3608.htm#note181>
9. House of Commons Research Paper, RP11/73 'The Arab Uprisings', 15 November 2011. <http://www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/RP11-73>
10. Letters from Greg Shapland (FCO), Hans Nijkamp (Shell Iraq), and General Sir Peter Wall (Chief of General Staff, British Army).