

“Rebuilding a Non-Sectarian Iraq,”  
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Executive Summary

This article demonstrates that sectarianism, Iraq’s most pressing problem, is rooted in the economic decay that followed the 1991 Gulf War, not “ancient hatreds.” The military option pursued by the Bush administration cannot, by itself, secure a stable and politically viable Iraq. This article advocates instead a “Marshall Plan for Iraq.” Although politically organized by the US, it would be internationally funded. To assure transparency and efficiency, it would be implemented by an international panel of technocrats under the auspices of the United Nations. The incentives for international support of this comprehensive economic reconstruction plan are the potential of Iraq’s massive oil reserves (115 billion barrels) to offset increased pressures on oil prices and to enhance stability in the Arab East and Persian Gulf.

The “Marshall Plan for Iraq” would proceed in three stages: 1) a massive jobs program organized around public works projects; 2) locally initiated small business and social services projects designed to rebuild urban neighborhoods and rural areas; and 3) massive infrastructural development to bring Iraq’s oil industry to its full productive potential.

Comprehensive economic reconstruction would be enhanced by political reform of the Iraqi government. The centerpiece of this reform would be the “Rule of Law” complexes that are designed to not only prosecute terrorists, but government officials accused of involvement in sectarian killings and corruption. International pressure would be brought on the Iraqi government to live up to its promise to function according to the rule of law. Prosecutions of criminal and corrupt elements in the Iraqi government would inform “sectarian entrepreneurs” that they no longer enjoy immunity from the law. This process would enhance trust among Iraq’s three main ethnic groups, thereby promoting national reconciliation.

The international diplomacy and cooperation envisioned in this program for comprehensive economic reconstruction and political reform would repair the damage caused by the unilateralism of the Bush administration. It would encourage a new US foreign policy based on economic growth and social reform. This foreign policy reflects the needs of the increasingly global and interdependent political economy of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.