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"All Successful Democracies Need Freedom of Speech": American Efforts to Create a Vibrant Free Press in Iraq and Afghanistan

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Abstract

Over the last three years, the United States government has spent $215 million on a sweeping effort to try to create a vibrant free press in Iraq and Afghanistan. The drive is part of President George W. Bush's policy of spreading democracy across the globe to counter terrorism. In a May 2005 speech, the president said that all successful democracies are built on five common foundations, one of which is a "vibrant free press" that "informs the public, ensures transparency and prevents authoritarian backsliding."

This paper will examine American efforts to create a vibrant free press in Iraq and Afghanistan. A $200 million project in Iraq was the largest attempt ever by the United States, or any country, to help create independent media in another nation. Run by the Pentagon, it was a near total failure in its first year, with Iraqi journalists, American trainers and U.S. government officials assailing it as wasteful, amateurish and counter-productive. A far smaller, $15 million State Department effort in Afghanistan, by comparison, appears to have been more effective.

In both countries, many local journalists have performed well, particularly when given proper resources and training. But in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as around the world, murder and violence is now the single largest threat to the creation of an independent news media. Government officials, criminals and terrorists are increasingly using assault and murder to silence the media. Supporting, respecting and, most of all, securing local journalists may be the most critical way the United States can foster the creation of a vibrant free press in Iraq and Afghanistan.

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[1] The author thanks Missy Ryan and Caty Clement for their help with this paper. They made it possible.

> "Successful democracies are built on certain common foundations—and they include the following rights. First, all successful democracies need freedom of speech, with a vibrant free press that informs the public, ensures transparency, and prevents authoritarian backsliding."[1]
>
> – President George W. Bush, May 18, 2005, speech to the International Republican Institute, Washington, D.C.

INTRODUCTION

In his second inaugural address in January 2005, President George W. Bush declared a new doctrine that, if fully implemented, would represent the most sweeping shift in American foreign policy in fifty years.

"It is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world." [2]

The president's statement was bold, but not entirely new. It was the culmination of a series of remarks he had made about the spread of democracy since a June 1, 2002, commencement address at The United States Military Academy at West Point. In various speeches, the president argued that in the wake of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, the surest way for the United States to improve its own security was to spread democracy. In the introduction to the administration's September 2002 National Security Strategy, the president said the September 2001 attacks demonstrated the need to spread "democracy, development, free markets, and free trade to every corner of the world."

Five months after his second inaugural address, the president called democracy an antidote to terrorism in a May 2005 speech at the Washington, D.C., headquarters of the International Republican Institute, a non-profit group that tries to spread democracy abroad.

"We know that democracies do not forment [sic] terror or invade their neighbors," he said. "Democratic societies are peaceful societies – which is why, for the sake of peace, the world's established democracies must help the world's newest democracies succeed."

During his speech, the president said that "all successful democracies" included "certain common foundations," which he defined as freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, a free economy, an independent judiciary and freedom of worship.

Elaborating on his concept of freedom of speech, he argued "all successful democracies need freedom of speech, with a vibrant free press that informs the public, ensures transparency, and prevents authoritarian backsliding."[3]

The president's words echo the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which calls the ability to obtain and convey information a human right. Article 19 of the declaration states that "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers."[4]

The goal of this paper[5] will be to compare, contrast and evaluate American efforts to create a vibrant free press in Iraq and Afghanistan, the two predominantly Muslim nations receiving the largest American military, monetary and political support in the world today. The paper will conclude with lessons for American policymakers based on the American track record in Iraq and Afghanistan.

PART ONE: CREATING A VIBRANT FREE PRESS

I.1 How is press freedom defined?

The most commonly used system for rating press freedom is a 24-year-old system employed by Freedom House, a non-profit, non-partisan Washington, D.C.–based organization that describes itself as a "vigorous proponent of democratic values and a steadfast opponent of dictatorships of the far left and the far right."[6]

Since 1980, the organization has produced annual "Freedom of the Press" reports that rate press freedom in countries around the world. The organization rates freedom in three broad areas—the economic, legal and political environment for the press—and combines them into a score designed to convey a country's level of press freedom.

- First, the "economic environment" considers the structure, transparency and concentration of media ownership, the costs of establishing, producing and distributing news media, the selective withholding of advertising or subsidies by the government, the impact of corruption and bribery and the impact of the economic situation in a country on the development of the media.

- Second, the "legal environment" refers to the laws and regulations that could influence media content, the likelihood a government would use those laws to inhibit the press, constitutional guarantees for freedom of expression, libel penalties, judicial independence and the ability of journalists' groups to operate freely.

- Third, the "political environment" refers to the amount of political control that exists over news reports, the editorial independence of the news media, official censorship, self-censorship, the vibrancy of the media, the ability of journalists to cover the news freely and intimidation of journalists with such methods as "arbitrary detention and imprisonment, violent assaults and other threats."[7]

Throughout the paper, the Freedom House measures will be used as a tool to evaluate the success or failure of the American efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Freedom house ratings of Iraq and Afghanistan will be compared to each other and to two other countries in the region, Iran and Pakistan. News reports and interviews will also be employed. The central question addressed will be whether the American policies improved or worsened the economic, legal and political environment for journalists in Iraq and Afghanistan.

I.2 American efforts to spread democracy and a vibrant free press abroad

Before examining American media development efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan, the history of American efforts to create democracy, and a vibrant free press, will be examined. President Bush's calls for the United States to spread democracy abroad is the latest incarnation of intermittent American democratization efforts dating back to 1898, when the United States unsuccessfully attempted to establish electoral systems in Cuba and the Philippines after the Spanish-American war.

In the 1960s, President Kennedy included "political development aid" as part of American foreign aid programs. In the 1970s, when foreign aid failed to bear fruit, political aid, as well as development itself, fell out of favor.[8] In the 1980s, President Reagan revived the concept as a way to counter Soviet expansionism in Latin America, but the effort remained small and uneven.

After the end of the Cold War in 1989, American officials devoted large amounts of funding to democracy promotion for the first time in U.S. history. Democracy promotion efforts mushroomed, with funding jumping from $165 million in 1991 to $637 million in 1999. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) launched democratization programs in nearly all former Soviet block countries, 40 African countries, 12 Asian countries and 5 Middle Eastern countries.[9]

Democracy spread rapidly around the globe in the 1990s, but its spread has slowed in recent years. When democratically elected governments fail to quickly produce better jobs, policing and schools, they lose credibility. In Latin America and parts of Asia, in particular, democracy's sheen quickly faded when it failed to deliver.[10]

I.3 The Bush administration effort

Since 2001, the Bush administration has doubled the amount the United States spends on programs promoting "democratic change" around the world. In its fiscal 2006 budget, the administration requested $1.3 billion for such programs. The main implementers of the effort have been the State Department, primarily the United States Agency for International Development, or USAID. USAID has seen its overall budget triple to $23 billion since 2001. Its spending on democracy and governance programs doubled from $671 million in fiscal 2002 to $1.2 billion in fiscal 2004.[11]

One other active component of the administration's democracy promotion effort is the National Endowment for Democracy, or NED. In the last two years, the administration has doubled NED's budget from $40 million to $80 million.[12] A non-profit group created by President Reagan in the early 1980s, the endowment receives roughly 90 percent of its budget from the U.S. government. The vast majority of its funding goes to the National Democratic Institute, NDI, and International Republican Institute, IRI, two non-profit groups aligned with the Democratic and Republican parties.

NDI and IRI are the 101st airborne, if you will, of the American effort to spread democracy. Few Americans have heard of the groups, but they have existed for 20 years, run democracy programs in over 100 countries and trained the opposition groups that ousted Augusto Pinochet in Chile and Slobodan Milosevic in Serbia. They helped train the opposition parties that carried out Ukraine's Orange Revolution, Georgia's Rose Revolution and unsuccessfully tried to topple Venezuelan

President Hugo Chavez.[13] In March, the Ethiopian government expelled both groups, which had been training opposition parties there.[14]

I.4 Criticism of the Bush effort

Critics of the Bush administration's democracy drive accuse the administration of not putting nearly enough money behind its rhetoric. Two weeks after the president declared in his second inaugural address that the United States' goal was to spread democracy around the world; his fiscal 2006 budget contained no vast increase in democracy promotion funding, according to the *Washington Post.*

While democracy aid has doubled since 2001, nearly all of the $600 million increase has gone to Iraq and Afghanistan. Funding for National Endowment for Democracy programs outside the Middle East has remained flat for two years. Since Mr. Bush took office, democracy-building programs have been cut by 46 percent in the former Soviet Union and 38 percent in Eastern Europe. Two large foundations that run democracy promotion and legal reforms programs in Asia and the former Soviet block, The Asia Foundation and Eurasia Foundation, also had their budgets cut.

Administration officials argue that Iraq and Afghanistan should be the focus of American efforts because they are critical examples of whether democracy can be successfully spread. If Iraq and Afghanistan are failures, they contend, it will curb the spread of democracy in other parts of the world. Lorne W. Craner, the current head of the IRI and a former assistant secretary of state for democracy, human rights and labor, said establishing stability in Iraq, in particular, is critical.

"If Iraq doesn't work," he told the *Post*, "a lot of people are going to say 'is that what you mean by democracy?'"

Critics say that President Bush is correct when he says that a desire for democracy, or some form of self-determination, exists around the world, as well as in predominantly Muslim countries. But they contend that the administration is failing to create the infrastructure, the organizations, experts and funds needed to carry out the effort. Jennifer Windsor, executive director of Freedom House, said the U.S. government does not have the capacity to match the president's democracy oratory.

"The U.S. government is not well organized right now to realize the administration's rhetoric on democracy," she told the Post. [15]

I.5 American efforts to create a vibrant free press in other countries

During the post–World War II American occupation of Germany, the United States encouraged the creation of a free press, but also maintained sweeping powers of censorship. American officials, for example, strictly licensed and monitored German newspapers and made special efforts to ensure that people with "anti-Nazi backgrounds" staffed press and radio outlets.[16]

The concept of directly aiding the development of independent media first emerged during the 1980s when the Reagan administration created the National Endowment for Democracy and a "democracy template" emerged at the State Department. Along with free and fair elections, a democratic constitution, and an independent judiciary, the development of civil society was seen

as a critical foundation of a successful democracy. The United States began funding programs designed to strengthen civil society advocacy groups, labor unions and independent media.[17]

USAID officials created the first American government-funded programs to train journalists in Latin America in the 1980s, including a training program for Central American journalists. The Asia Society mounted small training programs in Asia. The National Endowment for Democracy funded independent publications in the Soviet bloc. But media training efforts remained small and scattered until the end of the cold war in 1989.[18]

After the fall of the Berlin Wall, USAID, the United States Information Agency, the National Endowment for Democracy and later the Eurasia Foundation established media training programs across the former Soviet bloc. Many were run by non-profit organizations, such as the International Media Fund, the International Center for Journalists, Internews and the International Research and Exchanges Board, or IREX. The U.S. also expanded existing programs in Central America, increased the number of training projects in Asia and launched new programs in Africa. American officials were not alone. The World Bank, European countries and private foundations also funded media development projects. A new field emerged, known as "media development."[19]

Media development programs focused largely on basic journalism training, such as collecting facts, writing stories and producing shows. American media aid went farthest in the former Soviet bloc, where American aid was given to help establish and equip private media outlets, teach business managers how to make them profitable and sustainable, and introduce liberal press regulatory laws.

Thomas Carothers, an expert on democracy promotion at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, argues in his book *Aiding Democracy Abroad* that several successful examples of media development emerged in the 1990s. In Romania, grants helped various independent newspapers go into business. Training courses met a growing need for new print and broadcast journalists. Technical aid helped business managers learn how to make media companies profitable. Private foundations, particularly the Soros Foundation in Eastern Europe, also played a significant role.[20]

The largest effort came in Serbia in the late 1990s when western government and private donors gave financial and political support to the independent news outlets that played a major role in the ouster of Slobodan Milosevic in 2000. Serbia showed that relatively small amounts of money, combined with diplomatic pressure, could help independent outlets resist government pressure to close.[21]

Mark Whitehouse, director of media development for IREX, one of the groups that worked in Serbia, said the United States spent no more than $15 million a year on independent media in Serbia in the late 1990s. Roughly $2 million a year continues to go to the country, he said. Since 1997, the United States has spent a total of $46 million in Serbia.

Across the former Soviet block, the United States has spent $260 million over the last decade on media development, he said. During the heyday of reform in Russia in the 1990s, the United States spent $10 million a year on media development there. For two years, post-conflict Bosnia received roughly $10 million a year in American aid, Whitehouse said. The United States currently spends $3 million a year on media assistance in Bosnia and $2 million a year in Kosovo.[22]

I.6 Methods the United States uses to try to create a free press in other nations

In the late 1990s, an office USAID created to help quickly stabilize countries emerging from conflict began trying to use media development to create stability and foster reconciliation. In 1996, the Office of Transition Initiatives, or OTI, first funded media development efforts in post conflict Angola and Bosnia. By 2002, it had funded media development projects in Liberia, Croatia, Serbia, Indonesia, Nigeria, Kosovo, East Timor, Macedonia and Afghanistan.

On its website, OTI says the goals of its program are to assist radio, television, print and non-traditional journalism in helping the public make informed decisions; expand public support for "peaceful reconciliation and democratic values;" counter extremist propaganda and support the independence and professionalism of the local media. The programs funded coverage of the proceedings of war tribunals, public debates and town hall meetings. It trained journalists to increase the supply of accurate uncensored news to the public. It provided equipment to journalists in information-poor regions. It funded public information campaigns designed to increase voter turnout or reinforce messages of "peace and reconciliation." [23]

A 1999 USAID document, "The Role of Media in Democracy: A Strategic Approach," explains in detail exactly how a USAID program can support the growth of independent media.[24] Citing a USAID funded program in Russia, the document listed five options:

- fund and train legal groups that can draft or revise media laws that would remove legal obstacles to media development.
- fund and train watchdog groups, professional associations and think tanks that will publicly call for reform.
- provide small grants, loans and training to media outlets to increase the number of media outlets available to the public and decrease dependence on state advertising.
- promote investment and other mechanisms that will capitalize the media industry; support programs designed to create private industry advertising.
- train local journalists in basic skills, ethics and investigative reporting, revise university curricula and offer international fellowships to increase the quality of local journalism.[25]

The document suggests intermediary organizations be awarded media development funds and then distribute the money themselves to the local news media. Creating such a cut out "protects beneficiaries from excessive U.S. interference," the document says. The USAID paper also discourages USAID officials from interfering when a media outlet funded by the United States is critical of the United States.

"The ultimate goal of journalism training or outlet support is to develop the capacity for professional, objective reporting," it says. "If this reporting is critical of the United States or its policies, then in some respects this should be seen as a sign of success."[26]

1.7 Shortcomings of the current American effort

Carothers, the democracy promotion expert at the Carnegie Endowment, argues that the American media development effort, like the American democracy promotion effort in general, often tries to impose American models onto other cultures. In journalism, for example, American projects tend to stress the importance of a news outlet being perceived as non-partisan and the use of investigative reporting, and to favor the creation of privately owned outlets over European

style, state-run news organizations. Carothers argues that those approaches do not always fit the countries the U.S. is trying to aid. It has also led to disagreements with European donors who tend to favor reforming or creating state run media.[27]

Along with the successes in Eastern Europe, Carothers points out that there have also been noticeable failures. Large media training and development programs in Guatemala, Nepal and Zambia all failed to produce major changes.[28] In Russia in the 1990s, privatization of the media did not necessarily lead to higher quality, independent journalism. In countries with weak economies, oligarchs or wealthy political parties can gain direct or indirect control of media outlets and turn them into overt or subtle advocates of their political or business interests.[29]

In many countries, particularly in Latin America, Asia and Africa, journalists face a host of problems including "corruption, low professional standards, risk-averse and politically collusive owners, and an insufficient local economic base for growth or change," Carothers writes. While training provided by virtually all democracy promotion programs have shortcomings, complaints are unusually high about journalism training. Local journalists say training is too short term, too basic and led by Americans with little sense of the realities they face on the ground, including arrest by the state, assault from criminals and weak economies that make them dependent on state advertising or sensationalism. Carothers urges American policymakers to not view journalist training as a panacea for media reform.[30]

Whitehouse, director of IREX's media development division, said that American media development efforts have successfully created new, independent media outlets in the former Soviet block and the Balkans and increased their professionalism. But they have been less successful at making new outlets profitable, self-sustaining businesses. They have also failed to find a way to effectively reform state run media.

"There really isn't yet a successful model of reforming the state run broadcaster in the former Soviet Union and the Balkans," he said. "It's something to consider, but very often a waste of resources."

I.8 American efforts to create a vibrant free press in Islamic countries

Since the 2001 attacks, the United States has expanded its media development efforts[31] in predominantly Muslim countries. But the efforts remain far smaller than the projects in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Prior to 2001, most of the programs were outside the Middle East. In predominantly Muslim Central Asia, two-USAID funded media development groups, Internews and Freedom House, have been active in the former Soviet Republics of Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan since the early 1990s. The groups have established dozens of radio stations, provided journalist exchanges and training seminars, legal assistance, production and other technical assistance.

There have been successes. In Kyrgyzstan, a newspaper funded by Freedom House played a critical role in a March 2005 uprising against the government. The newspaper published photographs of the lavish home being constructed by the country's then unpopular ruler, Askar Akayev, accentuating simmering public frustration. Once protests began, the paper printed the locations of opposition demonstrations. [32] There have also been setbacks in Central Asia. Over the last several years, authoritarian rulers in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, and to a lesser extent

Tajikistan, have successfully muzzled media outlets created with American assistance in the early 1990s.[33]

Outside of Central Asia, USAID funded an Internews project in Indonesia to establish a nationwide network of 100 independent radio stations. The group's "reporting for peace" program trained 165 journalists to produce reports that defuse rather than incite conflict.[34] In Pakistan, USAID is funding a $1 million program managed by Internews to train broadcasters at new, privately owned FM radio stations. The program has also funded a new female-produced and hosted radio show "Our Voice."[35]

In the Middle East itself, few programs exist outside of Iraq. One media development program exists under the Bush Administration's Middle East Partnership Initiative, or MEPI. Known as the Initiative for Open and Pluralistic Media in Arabic Speaking countries, the project spent $3.5 million in fiscal 2002 and 2003 on an open media fund in Lebanon to train and support journalists, managers and media lawyers from Bahrain, Morocco, Lebanon, Algeria and Tunisia. A separate $500,000 program in fiscal 2003 funded the creation of videos showcasing women who have "overcome barriers to full participation in society, and how their community has benefited." The videos are distributed to television channels in Jordan.[36]

In Egypt, the National Endowment for Democracy funded a $300,000 program in 2004 to promote democratic and economic reform principles to "decision-makers, youth, journalists and entrepreneurs." In Jordan, it funds $95,000 in programs designed to strengthen and support independent journalism and female journalism across the Arab world. In Saudi Arabia, it provides $42,000 to an institute that develops and maintains an Arabic language Internet site that reports on human rights abuses and debates on political, economic and social reform. In the Palestinian territories, it provides $65,000 for the production of a nine episode series to promote democracy and freedom of thought.[37]

PART TWO: CREATING A VIBRANT FREE PRESS IN IRAQ

II.1 A sweeping contract

On March 11, 2003, eight days before American bombs began landing in Baghdad, the Pentagon's Defense Contracting Command issued a contract to a large, San Diego–based research and engineering company called Science Applications International Corporation, known by the acronym SAIC. After the fall of Saddam Hussein, the longtime defense contractor was to do something it had never done before. It would take over Iraq's dilapidated, state run national broadcasting system and within one year turn it into a British Broadcasting Corporation independent national news service with two national television channels, two national radio channels and a national newspaper. The initial value of the contract was $15 million, but its total size could increase exponentially as work progressed.[38]

The media development contract was one of seven awarded to SAIC with no competitive bidding that spring, according to the San Diego Union Tribune. Another $33 million contract charged SAIC with hiring a group of 150 Iraqi exiles chosen by Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz to become the Iraq Reconstruction and Development Group, a shadow Iraqi government backed by the Pentagon. As American troops prepared to invade Iraq, SAIC flew the exiles to Washington, D.C., rented them apartments and provided them with offices near the Pentagon where they could plan a new, post-Saddam government. The other contracts called on

SAIC to train Iraqi soldiers and police officers, reshape the oil industry, rebuild the prison system, advise on democracy, act as liaison with the United Nations and analyze intelligence.[39]

SAIC had little experience in most of those areas. For decades, it served as a research and engineering subcontractor for the U.S. government, earning about 70 percent of its $5 billion in annual revenue from government work.

SAIC helped in the cleanup of the Three Mile Island nuclear accident and Exxon Valdez oil spill. It worked on the Voyager Mission to Mars and the deployment of the Hubble Space Telescope. After the September 11, 2001, attacks, its employees set up a microwave communications system for the ground zero clean up in Manhattan. But it had never before attempted, or been asked, to mount such a sprawling state building task as it faced in Iraq.[40]

A subsequent audit by the Defense Department inspector general's office found that Pentagon officials awarded the contract without following Pentagon rules. The audit also faulted Pentagon planners for preparing no written plans or strategies for reconstruction and humanitarian efforts in Iraq. It also questioned the decision to declare SAIC the only acceptable contractor and issue it seven no-bid contracts, including the media contract.

Media development experts questioned the design of the contract, calling it vastly unrealistic in its goals. Whitehouse, the IREX official, said that no matter how much money his organization received, it would never promise to establish two nationwide television channels, two nationwide radio channels and a national newspaper within a single year.

"To do that well in a year, that's not something we would ever promise to do," he said.

A government media development expert who spoke on condition of anonymity said the project was far too ambitious. He said no responsible media development planner, or organization, would promise to successfully develop even one of the three elements in a single year.

"Not only is each one impossible," said the expert. "But anyone who says they can do it is a charlatan."[41]

All eight contracts were issued under the purview of Undersecretary of Defense Douglas Feith, according to the *Union-Tribune.* Feith's deputy, Christopher Ryan Henry, was SAIC's head of strategic development at SAIC until the month before the war in Iraq started. Several retired military commanders and government officials have also worked for the company. David Kay, who headed the CIA's unsuccessful effort to find weapons of mass destruction in Iraq after the fall of Saddam Hussein, was an SAIC vice president until 2002.[42]

The head of the Defense Contracting Command admitted to the inspector general's office that shortcuts were taken in the awarding of the contracts, according to the *Union-Tribune.* But he said the report "represented a serious injustice to the personnel in his command, was riddled with faulty assumptions, erroneous conclusions."

II.2 SAIC's performance in Iraq

SAIC officials have repeatedly said their employees, working under dangerous conditions, have met or exceeded every requirement set by government officials in Iraq.[43] But criticism abounded about the quality of SAIC's work, particularly its handling of the media development contract.

Before another company won the contract through competitive bidding process in January 2004, SAIC had spent $82 million on the creation of an "Iraqi Media Network" that was dismissed as an unprofessional and costly mouthpiece of the Coalition Provisional Authority.[44]

In July 2003, IMN staff went on strike protest not being paid for 35 days. In August 2003, Ahmad Al Rikabi, a former London Bureau chief for the US government-funded Radio Free Iraq, quit his job as head of IMN. He complained that SAIC was not giving the fledgling station enough resources and failing to win the trust of Iraqi viewers.[45] Don North, a former NBC correspondent who worked in Baghdad as a senior television adviser for SAIC, told *U.S. News & World Report* that SAIC was stingy about paying for basic news equipment, and requests for batteries, tripods, and other equipment were routinely denied. Iraqi news anchors had salaries of as little as $60 a month, not enough for clothes to wear on the air. When a request was made to improve their appearance, SAIC offered $150 for clothes, only from the waist up. SAIC officials told *U.S. News* that they did not realize they would need to provide a clothing allowance.

At the same time, SAIC spent lavishly in other areas. One former SAIC employee told *U.S. News* that one person earned $209 an hour while scouting other business for the company. The company paid $890,000 to an advertising firm, J. Walter Thompson, to promote IMN, including renaming it Al Iraqiya.[46]

Pentagon auditors found that SAIC's media program manager tried to purchase a Hummer H2 and a Ford C-350 pickup for his use, reported the *Union-Tribune.* He also chartered a DC-10 cargo plane to fly them to Iraq. When a Pentagon acquisition official blocked the request, the manager "went around the authority of this acquisition specialist." The exact cost could not be found, but auditors found one invoice for "Office and Vehicle" that totaled $381,000.

There were also questions about the quality of some of the experts hired by SAIC to establish the network. For example, Pentagon auditors found that a "subject matter expert" hired for the media development project was put in charge of finding out how best to dispose of garbage in Iraq. After that, he was made an adviser in the Ministry of Youth and Sport.[47]

II.3 Allegations of CPA interference

Most importantly, Mr. North, the former NBC correspondent, and others charged that American officials tried to make the network the mouthpiece of the Coalition Provisional Authority. North testified before Congress in February 2005 that American officials told him "we were running a public diplomacy operation" for the occupation authority and the network was given "a laundry list of CPA activities to cover."[48] Journalists for the station said CPA officials told them to stop conducting man on the street interviews because they were too negative about the American presence in Iraq. They were also told to stop reading parts of the Koran as part of cultural programming.[49]

Mr. North said that in the summer of 2003, over his objections, American officials forced the IMN to air a CPA-produced, hour-long program on new occupation authority laws. No journalists were allowed to participate.

"It was an interest group massaging [itself] without a journalist being a host," Mr. North told the American Prospect. "A lot of Iraqis I know saw what a farce it was. That was the sort of thing that was degrading the quality of journalism at IMN and making it less credible."[50]

A November 2003 article in the *Washington Post* reported that SAIC's operations were, in fact, being overseen by a Defense Department office that "specializes in psychological warfare operations, or psyops." The article said the Iraqi Media network was known as "psyops on steroids" in parts of the Pentagon. The article described a short-lived series of weekly speeches by Bremer aired by IMN. Designed to resemble the President's weekly radio address, Mr. Bremer repeatedly referred to Saddam Hussein as "the evil one," for example, in an address delivered just before the Islamic holy month of Ramadan.[51]

Five months after the fall of Saddam Hussein, a September 2003 Gallup poll found that only 24 percent of Iraqis in Baghdad felt that IMN was "objective." The highest rated station in terms of objectivity was the Dubai-based Arabic language news channel "Al Arabiya," which 59 percent of Iraqis declared objective. Six percent found the BBC objective. Two percent found CNN objective.[52]IMN's ratings also appeared weak. Despite being the country's only terrestrial broadcaster, only 36 percent of Iraqis polled said they got most of their news from IMN. That figure dropped to 12 percent among Iraqis who had access to satellite television.[53]

In an interview, an aid worker who worked with the CPA from 2003 to 2004 and asked not to be identified criticized Gary Thatcher, who served as both a media adviser to CPA head Paul Bremer and the head of the Iraqi Media Network. The aid worker accused Thatcher of trying to micro-manage the message the CPA provided to Iraqis. He also said CPA head Bremer had a wildly erratic management style, with Bremer going back and forth on major decisions in the course of a single week.

"It was all ad hoc," said the worker, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he feared retaliation. "It went right to Bremer, his own personal management. This is the thing people don't understand." [54]

In his defense, Mr. Bremer has said officials in Washington did not understand the conditions CPA staffers were forced to work under in Iraq. He said ad hoc systems had to be created to get things done. [55]

In a June 2005 telephone interview, Gary Thatcher, who now heads the U.S. government-run Middle East Broadcasting Network in Washington, D.C., denied ever trying to influence IMN's coverage. He said he never mixed his dual role as communications adviser to Mr. Bremer and formal head of the IMN.

"During the entire tenure I was there, I never got any complaints about any attempts by me to manipulate the content," said Thatcher. "I held the two roles completely distinct. I did not attempt to use the network to spin. It would have been transparent to Iraqis."

Mr. Thatcher criticized SAIC for the poor quality of IMN and said government officials were "exceptionally" unhappy with SAIC's work. He said the company misled government officials, in one case claiming that a nationwide network had been established in 90 percent of the country. When Pentagon auditors checked, they found the company's claims to be false.

He also said that SAIC staffers told him they were surprised when CPA expected them to oversee the development of news and entertainment content for the network, instead of simply performing technical repairs.

"The fundamental problem there was confusion, according to them, at who should be responsible for the content," said Thatcher. "From the government standpoint, I don't think there was any doubt that it was the responsibility of the contractor." [56]

II.4 SAIC is replaced

At the end of 2003, Pentagon officials put the media development contract out for competitive bidding. SAIC bid to retain the contract, but a new one-year contract for $96 million was awarded to Harris Communications, a Florida based communications equipment company, in January 2004.

The American firm partnered with two Middle Eastern companies. Harris would focus on equipment and the Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation would provide radio and television training and content. An Iraqi owned company, Al Fawares, would assist the newspaper.[57] In January 2005, the interim Iraqi government, which took control of the network when the CPA was dissolved in June 2004, extended the contract for another three months at a cost of $22 million.[58]

News reports pointed out that Harris had made campaign contributions to Republican candidates. Harris donated $263,570 to Republican political action committees and candidates during 2004 election cycle, compared to $8,200 to Democratic candidates or causes, according to the Orlando Business Journal.[59]

Complaints about Harris also emerged in Iraq. In May 2004, the editor of the national newspaper, *Al Sabah*, or "The Morning," quit and complained of editorial interference from Harris employees. According to the Associated Press, the editor, Ismail Zaher, wanted to turn the newspaper into a private venture, but Harris officials objected. Harris denied editorial interference and said the paper would continue publishing.[60]

But overall, Harris and the two Middle Eastern firms appear to have done a better job running the network. In February 2004, fifty percent of Iraqis polled expressed confidence in the IMN/Al Iraqiya television channel, an increase of 11 points from polls in November 2003.[61] Amar Al Shabander, Iraq coordinator of the Institute for War & Peace Reporting, a British media development group working in Iraq, praised the training by the Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation. The key change, he said, was that Iraqis have more autonomy.

"Al Iraqiya has improved a lot under Harris," he said. "Since Harris took over, Iraqis had much more control of the station."[62]

In April 2005, the Iraqi government chose not to extend Harris' work on Al Iraqiya. Tom Hausman, a spokesman for Harris, said he did not know why Iraqi officials chose not to renew the contract.[63] Mark Whitehouse, the IREX official, said his group is now doing one small project with Al Iraqiya, helping produce a series of television ads that explain the constitutional process.

He said that after Harris' departure, Al Iraqiya staffers forcibly removed from their offices a worker from a neighboring country who was hired by Harris and tried to remain.
Whitehouse said staff members at Al Iraqiya were cautious about getting more training from American firms and expressed concern about the amount of money paid to SAIC and Harris, the two former contractors. He said that Al Iraqiya officials told IREX that their preference now was to choose and hire trainers themselves and "not go through a contractor."

"They were cautious and really wanted to make sure that it is something they wanted," said Whitehouse, referring to more American training. "They wanted to make sure it wasn't 'here is IREX, this is what you need, and we're going to give it to you.'"[64]

II.5 A belated State Department effort

After the restoration of Iraqi sovereignty in June 2004, USAID asked groups to bid for a $40 million grant for a Civil Society and Media Support Program in Iraq. Internews did not submit a bid for the grant, citing security concerns.[65] USAID officials awarded the grant to America's Development Foundation, a small non-profit group that has previously worked on democratization and development programs in Central America, Africa, the former Soviet Union, the Balkans and the Middle East.

The media development program mirrors past USAID efforts, with funding for projects that provide journalist and media business manager training, foster the creation of professional journalism associations and lobby for liberal media laws.[66] ADF hired IREX to provide $1.6 million in journalism training. IREX's current work with Al Iraqiya is part of the project.[67]

Along with the USAID effort, the United Nations and other groups are considering funding efforts to strengthen journalism curriculums in Iraqi universities as a way to train journalists while avoiding putting foreign trainers at risk. Groups like the Index on Censorship say a far larger media training effort is needed.[68]

II.6 A neglected private sector

While the United States invested all of its media development effort in the IMN/Al Iraqiya project in 2003 and 2004, a chaotic private sector media boom occurred in Iraq, an oil rich country with a surprisingly strong economy. Between spring 2003 and spring 2004, the number of privately owned newspapers and magazines jumped from zero to 150; private radio stations mushroomed from zero to 80; and private television stations rose from zero to 21. The number of Internet subscribers soared, from 4,500 pre-war to 59,000.[69]

By spring 2005, privately owned Iraqi commercial television stations were producing wildly popular television series shot in Baghdad.[70] In print, Sunni and Shiite clerics, Democratic liberals, Kurdish nationalists, Communists and freelance satirists all had their own outlets.[71] Call-in talk radio shows thrived, giving Iraqis the freedom to criticize government officials, speak in colloquial dialects instead of classical Arabic and gossip in a way never possible under Saddam Hussein.[72] In January 2004, a small Baghdad newspaper named Al-Mada gained standing and credibility by naming dozens of people who Saddam Hussein purportedly gave oil bribes in exchange for support.[73]

Yet problems have emerged, particularly in 2004. An initial surge in the growth of independent media slowed. From spring 2004 to spring 2005, the number of independent magazines rose slightly, from 150 to 170. The number of commercial radio stations remained flat, at 80. Commercial television stations followed the same pattern, rising from 21 to 23. The number of Internet subscribers was the only area where strong growth continued, rising from 59,000 to 160,000.[74] Overall, though, the Iraqi media market was extremely volatile. According to one BBC

estimate, as many as half of Iraqi publications launched in 2003 were out of business a year later.[75]

A small number of strong, independent news outlets have emerged and some Iraqi journalists are gradually improving their skills on their own. But the overall quality of Iraq's new media is mixed. Most privately owned radio and television channels are widely viewed as backing certain political parties. Sensationalism is rampant in many publications.[76]

II.7 Few experienced media development groups

For a variety of reasons, many of the most experienced media development groups are not working in Iraq. Two factors have caused the shortage, according to government and private media development experts.[77] In Iraq, the Bush administration rejected the Clinton administration model of using the State Department to manage post-conflict Bosnia and Kosovo. Instead, the post-war stabilization of Iraq was modeled after the military run post World War II occupations of Germany and Japan. For the first time since 1953, all critical "nation building" activities, such as the creation of independent courts, a free press and a free market economy, would be run by the Department of Defense.[78]

In 2003, most major media development groups did not offer their services because the Pentagon, not the State Department, issued all contracting money. Experienced groups like IREX and Internews chose not to work in Iraq in 2003 and 2004 because they were not comfortable accepting Pentagon funding.

"We've worked under State Department and USAID," said Whitehouse of IREX. "We're much more comfortable with their role. They tend to stay out of politics."[79]

Internews officials said they feared that accepting Pentagon funding would endanger their ability to be perceived as a neutral aid group, particularly in Arab countries. Questions about the legitimacy of the American invasion of Iraq also prompted some media development groups to decline to participate.

"A lot of media people simply refused to go in because they saw it as occupation money," said Ivan Sigal, Internews' Regional Director for South and Central Asia. "Most media groups didn't want to go in. They had to find alternatives."[80]

The return of Iraq's sovereignty in June 2004 and the United Nations' new involvement in the country should have opened the doors for media groups to enter the country. But a new problem emerged: safety. The danger foreigners face in the country has led to only a small number of media development groups working in the country. Those that do work in Iraq have generally been limited for safety reasons to the Shia-controlled south and Kurdish-controlled north. The small number of experienced media development groups who have worked in Iraq include the BBC trust, Institute for War & Peace Reporting, the Index on Censorship, and IREX.[81]

The aid worker who worked in Baghdad and criticized CPA officials said the United States missed an opportunity to engage in media development in 2003. Now, security concerns and Iraqi skepticism toward American motives makes the task far more difficult.

"This is a place where pretty much across the board we missed the boat," he said.[82]

II.8 Economic environment in Iraq

The area where the future of Iraq's media appears brightest is its economy. Iraq's oil wealth, along with the $7.7 billion in American reconstruction aid spent to date in the country,[83] give Iraq a surprisingly strong economy. Despite continuing violence, Freedom House's rating of the economic environment for journalists in Iraq only worsened by one point between 2003 and 2004. As noted below, the economic environment score includes the selective withholding of advertising or subsidies by the government, the impact of corruption and bribery, and the impact of the economic situation in a country on the development of the media.

In a positive sign for the country, Iraq's Freedom House economic score remained relatively high compared to that of neighboring countries. Freedom House found Iraq's economic environment for the media in 2004 was four points better than the economic environment in Afghanistan and three points better than the economic environment in Pakistan and Iran.[84]

II.9 Legal environment in Iraq

In June 2003, the CPA issued Order 14, which set basic rules for the media. CPA officials said it was designed to ensure Iraq's stability. Critics said it laid the groundwork for censorship. The order prohibited media activities aimed at inciting violence, civil disorder, rioting or action against coalition forces of the CPA. It also banned the media from advocating the Baath party's return to power or the changing of Iraq's borders by any means. One of the first uses of the law was in July 2003 when American troops and Iraqi police raided the offices of *Al Mustaqila* newspaper in Baghdad. American officials said the newspaper had published an article saying the killing of spies working for the United States was a religious duty, echoing calls from insurgents.

American officials also publicly criticized the coverage of the Arabic language news channel Al Jazeera, accusing it of bias. The Iraqi Governing Council, a small group of Iraqis chosen by American officials to advise Mr. Bremer, repeatedly banned Al Jazeera and a second Arabic language news channel, Al Arabiya, from covering its sessions from late 2003 to early 2004. Council members accused the channels of inciting violence against its members, specifically, the murder of council member Akila al-Hashimi in September 2003. The council also criticized Al Arabiya for broadcasting an audiotape purportedly from Saddam Hussein calling for attacks on U.S. forces and the murder of council members.

In March 2004, Mr. Bremer carried out the ban that arguably had the most impact in post-Saddam Iraq. He shuttered the offices of *Al Hawza,* a weekly newspaper controlled by hard-line Shiite cleric Muqtada Al Sadr. CPA officials said the newspaper incorrectly blamed American helicopters for the February death of 50 Iraqi police recruits in a suicide truck bombing. Mr. Bremer also reportedly objected to the newspaper's editorial comparisons between himself and Saddam Hussein. The closure of the newspaper, and the CPA announcement that an arrest warrant had been issued for Mr. Sadr in the 2003 killing of a rival cleric, helped spark an armed uprising by Sadr followers that destabilized southern Iraq throughout the spring. [85]

Gary Thatcher, Bremer's media adviser, said he was not present in Iraq when the CPA implemented the bans. But he said he understood Bremer's concern about the security situation.

"If you had anybody directly advocating the killing of anyone else, be it Americans, be it Sunnis or Shias," he said. "Then you stop that. That was permissible under occupation law."[86]

Since the dissolution of the CPA in June 2004, Iraq's new interim government has sometimes taken a hard line with the press. It ordered Al Jazeera to close its Baghdad office in August. The interim government said the channel supported criminals and insurgents by airing videotapes of kidnap victims provided by the groups.[87] During fighting in Najaf in August, Iraqi police ordered all journalists not embedded with coalition or Iraqi forces to leave the city. They rounded up 60 Iraqi and foreign journalists, kicking in hotel room doors and telling one group of British journalists they would be shot if they did not leave.[88]

In November 2004, during the American-led attack on Fallujah, the government's media regulatory body invoked a 60 day state of emergency declared by the interim government, issued guidelines for coverage and warned journalists they could face legal action if they failed to abide them. The guidelines called on journalists to not "project nationalist tags on terrorist gangs of criminals and killers." It also asked outlets to "set aside space in your news coverage to make the position of the Iraqi government, which expresses the aspirations of most Iraqis, clear."

"We hope you comply," said the statement. "Otherwise we regret we will be forced to take all legal measures to guarantee higher national interests."[89]

The new Iraqi government elected in January 2005 has also showed signs of trying to influence the coverage of the American built, but now Iraqi government controlled Al Iraqiya network. Gary Thatcher, Bremer's former media adviser, called Iraqi politicians' efforts to influence coverage a setback.

"I'm disappointed as it looks as if politicians have not been able to resist putting their hands back on the levers of control," he said. "That, to my view, is a deeply disappointing development."[90]

Freedom House's rating system reflected the worsening legal environment in the country. As noted below, the legal rating includes the laws and regulations that could influence media content, the likelihood a government would use those laws to inhibit the press, constitutional guarantees for freedom of expression, and judicial independence.

The group's rating of Iraq's legal environment for journalists worsened by one point from 2003 to 2004. The lower rating reflected the CPA's closure of news outlets in the spring and the new Iraqi government's issuing of legal threats to journalists in the fall.[91] Media rights groups say Bremer's closure of newspapers set a bad example for Iraqi politicians, but the country's American-written media laws remain liberal.

Compared to other countries in the region, Iraq's legal rating remained good in 2004. Iraq's legal rating was two points better than Pakistan's, three points better than Iran's and four points better than Afghanistan's.[92] But much could change when the Iraqis begin drafting their own constitution and laws in 2005.

II.10 Political environment in Iraq

To a greater extent than in any other country, Iraqi journalists face the threat of being killed while covering news events or in retaliation for their work. As of June 2005, Iraq is poised to surpass Vietnam as the most dangerous international conflict journalists have ever covered. In Vietnam,

63 journalists were killed over a twenty-year period. In Iraq, 56 journalists and media assistants have been killed in two years. Iraqis made up over seventy percent of those who perished.

The bloodiest conflict of all for journalists remains Algeria's 1993 to 1996 civil war, when 57 journalists and 20 media assistants died in three years. Twenty-nine journalists have been kidnapped in Iraq, more than in any other conflict.[93]

Safety concerns are clearly curtailing reporting. "Reporters in Iraq continued to face banditry, gunfire, bombings, and insurgent missile attacks," according to the Committee to Protect Journalists. "By mid-year, escalating hostilities made most of the country a virtual no-go zone for foreign journalists. As a result, international news organizations began relying heavily on local Iraqi hires for newsgathering, putting them in increased danger."[94]

Insurgents continue to intentionally target journalists. In 2004, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists, insurgents and extremist groups killed 15 Iraqi and foreign journalists and 16 media workers. A car bomb detonated at the offices of the Al Arabiya satellite news network killed five employees after it received threats from purported supporters of Jordanian extremist Abu Musab Al Zarqawi. Two Iraqi journalists were killed in apparent reprisal for their perceived collaboration with American forces.[95]

At the same time, fire from American forces killed at least five journalists – all of them Iraqis, making fire from American forces the second leading cause of death for journalists in Iraq in 2004, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists. Freedom House argues that many of those deaths could have been avoided if more adequate safeguards had been in place, such as military units being informed that journalists were in the area.[96]

For both Iraqi and foreign journalists the danger of an insurgent attack or fire from American forces makes it extraordinarily difficult, and in some areas impossible, to carry out the very basics of reporting, such as going to the scene of news events, interviewing witnesses and getting a sense of average people's feeling in the country.

As noted below, Freedom House's rating of the political environment for journalists includes the editorial independence of the news media, official censorship, self-censorship, the ability of journalists to cover the news freely, and intimidation of journalists with "arbitrary detention and imprisonment, violent assaults and other threats."

In its 2004 report, Freedom House said that in Iraq "ongoing instability and violence remains the biggest threat to press freedom." Freedom House's rating of the political environment for journalists in Iraq worsened by two points between 2003 and 2004, a sharp decrease, and a sign of how violence continues to handicap the growth of the free press. Compared to other countries in the region, it fared poorly. Iraq's political rating was 2 points better than Iran's, but four points worse than Afghanistan's and six points worse than Pakistan's.[97]

II.11 Iraq conclusion

The American approach to media development in Iraq was rife with problems. Concentrating the American effort into one mammoth project, the reform of a state run radio, television and newspaper organization, was a mistake. An even larger error was entrusting such a critical and gargantuan task to a defense contractor with little experience in the area.

The United States spent $200 million in two years on media development in Iraq – six times more than it has ever spent in any another nation.[98] Media experts say that using part of the funds to train privately owned media could have allowed the American funding to have more of an impact. At the same time, the explosive growth in the number of Iraqi owned media outlets, as well as the strength of Iraq's economy, are signs that an independent media can be established in the country in the future. In short, a chance existed in Iraq but was missed.

In terms of the legal environment, CPA and Iraqi Governing Council officials repeatedly closed or banned media outlets in 2003 and 2004. While some of the closings may appear to be justified short-term efforts to increase security, others appear to have been random judgments applied to the wrong newspapers. [99] Taken together, the closings appeared to have been a failure. They did not silence those trying to incite violence in Iraq and were not even aggressively enforced. The Arabic language news channels banned in the country continued to operate through freelancers. Almost throughout Al Jazeera's ban in Iraq, Iraqi officials continued to appear on the stations for interviews. As of spring 2005, signs were emerging that Iraq's newly elected leaders could try to make state run media a government mouthpiece.

Lastly, the political environment for journalists, like so much else in the country, is primarily dependent on an improvement in security. As is clear in so many areas of the American effort to establish democracy in Iraq, a free press will not flourish in Iraq until the country is more secure. The United States should consider deploying additional troops to Iraq or speeding up the training of Iraqi security forces.

Freedom House's overall rating of press freedom in Iraq in 2004 was 70, a decline of four points between 2003 and 2004. Iraq's score worsened in all three categories, the economic, legal and political environments for journalists. It also fared poorly compared to other countries in the region. Its overall score was 10 points better than Iran's, but 9 points worse than Pakistan's and 2 points worse than Afghanistan's.[100]

"Press freedom remains constrained by the instability, escalating violence and unanswered questions about the power and role of new institutions created to regulate the media," the report concluded.[101]

Two years after the invasion of Iraq, the country has not become the symbol of press freedom that American officials envisioned. Indeed, American policies, particularly those of the CPA, have curtailed the establishment of a free media in the country and undermined the broader cause of spreading democracy in the Middle East.

PART THREE: CREATING A VIBRANT FREE PRESS IN AFGHANISTAN

III.1 A sweeping task

Following the fall of the Taliban in the fall of 2001, the American effort to create a vibrant free press in Afghanistan was led by the Office of Transition Initiatives, the USAID agency created to help stabilize countries in transition. It faced a daunting task.

Afghanistan is vastly poorer than Iraq, has an economy dependent on agriculture and boasts virtually no natural resources to market abroad. According to the United Nations 2004 Human Development Index, Afghanistan ranked 173rd of 178 countries in the world. Only a handful of Sub-Saharan countries in Africa—Burundi, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Sierra Leone—were

worse. Afghanistan has the world's worst education system, the study found, and one of the lowest literacy rates in the world, 28.7 percent.

But the country has shown signs of promise, with students, including girls, flocking to school. More than 54 percent of school age children are now attending school. The economy is also surging, with 16 percent growth in the non-drug domestic economy in 2003 and 10 to 12 percent growth expected for the next decade. Millions of refugees have returned to the country more quickly than expected, doubling the population of Kabul to 4 million and bringing with them energy, skills and optimism.[102]

In their media development effort, OTI officials decided to first focus on rehabilitating the country's state-run broadcast service, Afghan Television & Radio, according to John Langlois, a senior media adviser with OTI who oversaw the media development effort in Afghanistan. OTI issued a grant to Internews to work on media development in the country and lobby for a liberal media law. For the first year, the effort focused on restoring equipment and training staffers at the government-run broadcaster, which was still dominated by the Soviet management and reporting practices inculcated there during the 1980s. [103] All told, Internews trained 150 journalists at the state run broadcaster.[104]

III.2 An independent rural radio network

Over time, officials at USAID and Internews grew frustrated with their efforts to reform the state-run broadcaster. The Northern Alliance forces that seized control of Kabul after the fall of the Taliban had turned the agency into a patronage mill. Reporters there exhibited an ossified, stiff, Soviet-style reporting and appeared to have little interest in change.

With European-funded groups, primarily the BBC Trust, committed to continue the reforming of state-run radio and television, the Americans decided to focus on the creation of privately owned media. Mr. Langlois said his goal was to create an alternative to state-run broadcasting, particularly state run radio stations controlled by warlords in rural areas.

The largest USAID/OTI effort was a $4 million Internews-run project to build, fully equip and professionally staff a nationwide network of independent radio stations outside of Kabul. Despite major logistical and security concerns, Internews was able to establish 29 stations around the country and Mr. Langlois praised the group's work as "fabulous."[105] Internews trained over 800 Afghan journalists in courses including business development, English, computing, mathematics, gender sensitivity, covering politics and Pashto, one of Afghanistan's two primary languages. Internews estimates that 20 of the 29 stations are staffed with strong journalists. [106] As of spring 2005, OTI had funded the training of over 2,000 male and female journalists and media workers across Afghanistan.[107] Internews, for example, tried to minimize the number of foreigners involved. In February 2005, only three foreigners worked on the project as senior managers. All the trainers and teachers were Afghans.[108]

Along with supporting the creation of a free press, the stations served another basic function in the American-led nation building effort in Afghanistan. They allowed the government to project information and authority, said Mr. Langlois. The stations gave the weak central government in Kabul and aid groups the ability to disseminate information about reconstruction activities, health care, education programs, the drafting of a new constitution and presidential and parliamentary elections.[109] Radio is by far the dominant means of spreading information in Afghanistan. A 2005

USAID funded survey found that 83 percent of the population owns a radio, 37 percent own a television and 6 percent have access to the Internet.[110]

The survey found that the local Internews stations were the most listened to radio service in the areas where they were available. Seventy-nine percent of respondents within their coverage areas said they listened to the local radio stations. Nationwide, the BBC was listened to by 76 percent, Radio Free Europe's Afghan service was listened to by 75 percent, and state run Radio Afghanistan was listened to 74 percent. Only 33 percent of those polled said they listened to Voice of America.[111]

In terms of trust, the BBC was the most trusted news source for international news, with 57 percent of Afghans polled citing it. Radio Afghanistan ranked first for national news, with 54 percent saying they trusted it. The local independent stations created by Internews were considered the most reliable for local news by 56 percent of those polled.[112]

III.3 A privately owned radio and television network

The second largest USAID project was a $2.2 million grant to two Afghan-Australian brothers trying to start the country's first private radio station, Radio Arman, and later its first private television station, Tolo TV. Both stations were designed to serve as an alternative to state-run television in Kabul and push the limits on content.

"They've been one of our best partners in blowing open the doors," said Mr. Langlois.

Within months of its launch, Radio Arman became the top-rated station in Kabul, capturing 70 percent of the market, according to the station's own surveys. In the cities outside Kabul where it broadcasts, it attracted roughly 60 percent of listeners, according to the USAID funded poll. Two months after it appeared on the air, the radio station was making a profit.

The USAID-funded survey found that Tolo TV was the most popular channel among young Afghans, but it did not perform as well among other groups. Nationwide, state-controlled Afghan television was the most popular channel among adults and women, according to the survey.

Both stations have been criticized for featuring too much popular culture, flaunting social norms and featuring too little news and serious discussion. Radio Arman, for example, plays pop music, primarily from Indian made films. Female announcers are common on the station. One of its most popular shows is a call-in program where young people describe their romantic woes. In a deeply conservative nation where parents still arrange virtually all marriages, the show has fueled a harsh backlash from religious hard-liners.

Tolo television has been just as controversial. It aired the film "The Ten Commandments" and has played music videos by Madonna. Scores of Indian music videos featuring scantily clad women, as well as a steady stream of Indian and American-made movies, have also aired. One of its most popular programs is a call-in music video show called "Hop." One of the program's founding co-hosts was Shaima Rezayee, a 24-year-old Afghan woman who wore western clothes on the air, chatted with her male co-hosts on camera and showed music videos from the United States, Turkey and Iran. She grew so popular in Kabul that last winter people built a snow woman on one sidewalk in her image and placed a sign with her name on it.

Tolo's news coverage is generally considered independent of the government. State-run television, for example, did not broadcast pictures of prison abuse in Iraq's Abu Ghraib prison. Tolo TV did.[113]

In an interview in his Kabul office in February, Saad Mohseni said he planned to increase Tolo TV's news programming, but dismissed criticism that the two new stations do not feature enough serious news content.

"People say they like that sort of stuff and they want it," he said. "But at the end of the day they want to be entertained."

His heavily guarded office and studios reflected his hybrid Afghan-Western approach. Four books sat on his office bookshelf: three on Afghan history and "Jack," the bestseller by General Electric executive and management guru Jack Welch. Mohseni said he tries to have Afghans perform as many jobs as possible at the stations. Of his 153 employees, 3 are foreigners: an Indian TV producer, an Indian computer technician and a French graphic designer.

Mohseni said he was trying to use the stations, which feature public service announcements emphasizing positive developments in the country, to change perceptions of Afghanistan.

"We can change the country," he said. "Not just the way it's perceived, but in the way Afghans see themselves."[114]

III.4 An Afghan news agency

USAID/OTI also funded a project to create an independent national news agency. At first, the London-based media training group, the Institute for War & Peace Reporting (IWPR), helped establish the agency and train its Afghan managers and reporters.[115]

In April 2004, the Afghans in the news agency, along with four foreign trainers, told OTI that they wanted to run the project independently of IWPR. OTI agreed to the request and in July 2004 the independent Pajhwok Afghan News was launched. It has a staff of 140 people, bureaus across the country and produces 20 to 30 stories a day.[116] It appears to represent OTI's goal: programs initially run by foreigners developing into independent Afghan media outlets.

III.5 An all-talk radio station

Lastly, USAID/OTI provided $400,000 in funding to the Killid Media Group, or "Key Media Group." Led by Aziz Hakimi, a former anti-Soviet fighter who lived in exile in France for four years, the group produces a weekly news magazine with a circulation of 25,000 and is published in the country's two main languages, Dari and Pashto. In March 2003, it launched a women's magazine, which now has a circulation of 15,000. The group also received $1 million in funding from the European Commission.[117]

With help from Internews, the group launched Radio Killid in August 2003, Kabul's first privately owned 24-hour talk radio station. It is a distant second to Radio Arman in ratings, but the station produces 58 hours of live talk and call-in programs a week. All together, the Killid group fields 30 reporters. Its modern newsroom is run by a female news editor and equipped with rows of computers, a library and a day care center for employees' children.[118]

Killid is generally praised for independent journalism.[119] Its magazine ran one recent cartoon showing British, American, Chinese, Russians and French trying to milk Iraq for all they can. Hakimi said that after 20 years of invasion and civil war in the country, it will take time to get Afghans to engage politically.

"It's a huge challenge to build curiosity in people who have turned off their minds in order to survive," he said. [120]

Killid, which also receives European Commission financial support, reflects the advantages of having multiple countries funding projects. Another is "Good Morning Afghanistan," a popular radio program on Afghan state-run radio funded by a Danish media development group. Private donors and foundations have also helped. The Pakistani journalist Ahmed Rashid used the royalties from his best-selling book, *Taliban,* to help create a $450,000 open media fund for Afghanistan that helped fund Afghan print media.

As of April 2005, OTI had issued 132 grants worth $14.6 million in Afghanistan since 2001.[121] OTI chose to fund many different projects, instead of a single mammoth effort to reform state-run media, as occurred in Iraq. Ivan Sigal, Internews' regional director for South and Central Asia, said the diversity of funding from OTI and the international community allowed a large number of different media development groups to work in Afghanistan. It also allowed the media development groups to work more closely together, instead of competing for one winner-take-all contract.

"OTI gave every group something," he said. "It wasn't really a question of us competing."

Afghans have a positive image of their new news media, according to the USAID-funded survey. Afghans said they see the news media as bringing "new and good ideas" and as a provider of education, "particularly in rural areas and for women." They called the media a "vehicle of progress and social development" and a "major tool to enhance accountability of political, social and military leaders, as well as the international community." Afghans interviewed in rural communities with few sources of information said they would like to develop more local news media.[122]

In terms of the total number of media outlets, Afghanistan is smaller than Iraq but still sizeable. There are now 267 independent publications registered in Kabul and 61 in the provinces. Nationwide, several dozen privately owned radio stations were broadcasting, along with eight television stations. Cable television systems are also operating in Kabul and several other cities.[123]

III.6 Economic environment in Afghanistan

While the United States and other international donors have helped successfully create a small news industry in Afghanistan, many of the new outlets are not profitable and depend on foreign aid to survive. Of the major American-funded projects, the project that would be most likely to survive is Radio Arman and Tolo TV, which makes a profit.

Internews estimates that one-third of the 28 local radio stations it established would survive if American aid were withdrawn. Another one-third would fail. The fate of the remaining third is unclear. Only 10 of the 30 stations have skilled business managers, according to the group.[124]

Sigal, Internews' regional director, said that stations located in the poorest areas have staffs of only three to five people. If they receive satellite programming from Internews, they receive a small stipend to pay for gasoline for a generator, but buying gas to broadcast its own local programming remains a challenge. The stations try to raise additional funds by reading birth and wedding announcements, but that brings in only $500 a month.

"They're paying for gasoline and the salaries of two or three people," said Mr. Sigal. "That's not enough to create a team of reporters."

Mr. Mohseni, the head of Radio Arman and Tolo TV, criticized the Internews project. He said the money should have been given directly to the Afghan private sector. He accused Internews of having high overhead and not paying enough attention to market forces, something the group denied.

"It's good for now," said Mr. Mohseni, but he questioned whether 80 percent of the Internews stations will last.

Aziz Hakimi, the head of the Killid Media Group, said he hopes to someday buy the Internews radio network, but he too is currently dependent on foreign aid to survive. More than two years after its creation, the Killid group is growing and has an annual budget of $2.6 million, but is not making a profit.

The radio station is already profitable, he said, but print advertising covers only 25 percent of the two magazines' production costs. Hakimi is trying to buy one of Kabul's daily newspapers. Advertising from the newspaper, he said, is the only way the print operation can become profitable. Hakimi said he tries to maintain his editorial independence by receiving no more than 20 percent of his budget from a single donor. The real problem, he said, is the meager advertising market that exists in Afghanistan.

"The problem is that the private sector is very small," he said.

Mr. Langlois, the OTI official, said the US-funded news agency, Pajhwok Afghan News, was earning $2,000 to $3,000 a month in income from its article sales. If the Afghan media sector grows and buys more articles from Pajhwok, it could become profitable, he said, but so far it too remains dependent on foreign aid.[125]

Ricardo Grassi, an Argentinean journalist who is Pajwhok's executive editor, said there is currently not enough advertising in Afghanistan.

"You don't have an advertising market," he said. "All this 'independent' media is not independent financially. It's a big problem."[126]

Many Afghan news outlets, including Killid, are also dependent on Afghan government advertising, a situation that allows the government to have leverage over national outlets. National and local governments control or own several dozen newspapers and almost all of the broadcast media, according to Freedom House's 2004 survey of Afghan media. Their reporting is generally balanced, but a November 2004 report by the International Crisis Group pointed out that the state-run media covered President Karzai's re-election campaign more extensively than those of his challengers. More importantly, the state-run or -owned media outlets are clearly vulnerable to political pressure and would not survive if the government withdrew funding.

Political parties and warlords also directly or indirectly finance many of the country's publications.

Freedom House's rating of the economic environment in Afghanistan remains low and has stayed the same for three years. As noted below, the economic environment score rates factors such as the selective withholding of advertising or subsidies by the government, the impact of corruption and bribery, and the impact of the economic situation in a country on the development of the media.

Even with 16 percent growth in the non-drug economy, Afghanistan fared poorly when compared to other countries in the region. Its Freedom House economic rating was one point worse than Iran's, two points worse than Pakistan's and four points worse than Iraq's.[127]

Freedom House's 2004 report on Afghanistan concluded that "In the country's underdeveloped economic environment, the majority of media outlets remain dependent on the state, political parties, or international donors for financial support."[128] Even with 16 percent growth in the non-drug economy, the advertising market remains tepid in Afghanistan, leaving most Afghan media dependent on funding from foreign governments, the Afghan government, political parties and warlords.

III.7 Legal environment in Afghanistan

Afghan President Hamid Karzai adopted a press law in February 2002 that guarantees the right to free expression but included broad restrictions on content deemed "contrary to the principles of Islam or offensive to other religions or sects," as well as "matters leading to dishonoring and defaming individuals." That was the opening round in a battle over media content that continues today. Afghan journalists and station managers say they still have no clear understanding of the exact definition of what content is "contrary to the principle of Islam." [129]

The country's Supreme Court, which is dominated by religious conservatives, has waged an aggressive campaign against media coverage it deems "unislamic." In January 2003, the conservative head of the Supreme Court, Fazl Hadi Shinwari, banned cable television stations throughout Afghanistan. They returned to the air in April 2003 after a government-appointed commission produced a broadcasting code, a list of authorized stations and permissible content.

In June 2003, two editors of the Kabul-based newspaper *Aftab* were arrested for a short period, charged with blasphemy, and one Supreme Court office recommended they be sentenced to death. The two editors fled the country and the newspaper has not resumed publishing.

Six months later, the situation seemed to improve. In January 2004, free press advocates won a victory when Afghanistan adopted a constitution that provided for freedom of the press and free expression. But a setback quickly emerged. In mid-January, state-run television aired footage of a woman singing for the first time since 1992. Complaints from the conservative Supreme Court prompted a state-run-television manager to reverse their decision and stop the broadcasts.[130]

In April 2004, President Karzai signed a new, amended media law that disappointed free press advocates. It prohibited censorship but retained the restriction on content "contrary to the principles of Islam" in the 2002 law. It also established a government-appointed commission to determine whether journalists have broken the law and should face prosecution or fines.[131]

In the fall of 2004, pressure from conservatives grew again. This time, President Karzai and his government briefly sided with them. On November 7, 2004, President Karzai's information minister asked state and privately owned stations to stop airing "Islamically incorrect" programs, "particularly Indian and western films showing unveiled women behaving in a way that would shock Afghans," according to the press advocacy group Reporters Without Borders. The following day, the cabinet voted at a meeting chaired by President Karzai to ban cable TV and threatened to revoke Tolo TV's license if it was found to be airing content contrary to Islam and Afghan culture. On November 10, the conservative Supreme Court head ordered ten cable operators closed. [132]

President Karzai then abruptly reversed course. On the same day the Supreme Court ordered the ten cable operators closed, he appointed a new commission to evaluate the channels' content and decide which ones could operate. On November 23rd, Karzai's government announced a compromise. Cable television operators were allowed to operate but they had to stop airing ten foreign stations that showed Indian and western films.[133]

Conservatives mounted pressure again this spring. Mohseni, the director of Tolo TV, said the government-appointed media commission called him to its office in February 2005, but only two of the five commission members were present. The two members, along with a third non-member, criticized the station's broadcasts, particularly the Hop music program, saying the language used was inappropriate "street talk," according to Mr. Mohseni. They said one of the main anchors should be fired and said other journalists on the channel were not respectable members of society because they ignored the culture of the people. They threatened to ask the Supreme Court to ban the channel if such programs continued to be aired.[134]

In March 2005, an association of conservative clerics called on the government to stop state and private television from airing "immoral and anti-Islamic" programs.[135] In May 2005, officials at the Ministry of Information and Culture announced that it would be forming a new commission to "issue guidance" to electronic media owners and monitor whether stations and journalists were abiding by the media law. They also said yet another effort will be made to revise the media law.[136]

As of spring 2005, the situation remained unresolved. Free Press advocacy groups such as Reporters Without Borders are calling on President Karzai to take a "clear and definitive public stance in support of cable television and diversity in the broadcast media."[137] President Karzai appears to be following the same path he has in other policy areas, shifting his position at times, but generally trying to strike a middle ground between Islamic conservatives and more liberal Afghans.

Beyond banning cable television from showing the ten stations airing western and Indian movies, his government has interpreted the country's media laws in a liberal way and allowed stations to continue broadcasting. Contacted by Internews in May, a spokesman for Mr. Karzai struck the same balance, saying the government respected freedom of the press, but television content should not be against Islamic culture. The spokesman emphasized that "no action was being taken against any media organization in this regard," [138] a signal that the government would continue to try to maintain its middle-ground.

Freedom House's rating of the legal environment in Afghanistan did not change between 2002 and 2003. But after President Karzai signaled he would fight off pressure from the conservatives

in 2004, the country's legal environment rating improved by three points, a major increase.[139] The legal environment is one sign of positive movement in Afghanistan.

The country fared well when compared to other nations in the region. Its Freedom House legal rating was three points worse than Pakistan's but two points better than Iraq's and seven points better than Iran's.[140]

III.8 Political environment in Afghanistan

On May 18, 2005, the groundbreaking young woman who was the founding co-host of "Hop," Tolo Television's popular call-in music program, was found dead in her home, shot in the face. The killing came several weeks after Tolo TV fired Shaima Rezayee for unspecified reasons. Police said they would question Rezayee's brothers, a sign that relatives may have decided she somehow shamed the family and killed her. Whatever its cause, her death illustrates the dangerous conditions that Afghan journalists, particularly women, still operate in three and a half years after the fall of the Taliban.[141]

Across Afghanistan in 2004, government ministers, the intelligence service, religious conservatives and regional warlords harassed, threatened or physically attacked journalists, according to Freedom House and the Committee to Protect Afghan Journalists. The attacks were in retaliation for acts ranging from broadcasting popular music to writing satires of government officials. [142]

At least six Afghan journalists were physically attacked in retaliation for articles they wrote or while covering news events in 2004.[143] One recent example occurred in a local radio station in Takhar province in northern Afghanistan. This spring, the station received threatening calls urging them to stop airing a listeners' choice music program, where the station plays Indian, Afghan and western music, upon request. The station's manager believes the threats are not related to music. They are in response to a series of news reports the station recently aired on land-grabbing activities in the area. Earlier, supporters of northern warlord Abdul Rashid Dostum threatened staff at the station after it aired a satire of the leader. In a separate incident, supporters of the mayor of the northern city of Shibergan beat a television journalist after the station aired a report critical of the mayor's performance.[144]

In Kabul, The Committee to Protect Afghan Journalists accused the Presidential Media Department of censoring news issued by the government-run Bakhtar Information agency and preventing Bakhtar reporters from attending government meetings. [145]

The continuing threat of violent attacks from government officials, criminals and religious extremists results in self-censorship among Afghan journalists, according to Freedom House. "Many practice self-censorship or avoid writing about sensitive issues such as Islam, national unity, or crimes committed by specific warlords," the group said in its 2004 report.

One positive step was the removal from power of western warlord Ismail Khan from power by the central government in September 2004. Khan had repeatedly threatened local journalists. In 2003, his security forces beat, jailed and expelled a correspondent for Radio Free Europe.[146]

The removal of Ismail Khan, the steadily increasing vibrancy of the Afghan media and President Karzai's continued public statements in support of freedom of the press have steadily improved

Afghanistan's political environment rating. It improved three points between 2002 and 2004, another sign of progress in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan again fared well compared to its neighbors. Its Freedom House political rating was two points better than Pakistan's, four points better than Iraq's and six points better than Iran's.[147]

III.9 Afghanistan—Conclusion

Three and a half years after the fall of the Taliban, Afghanistan has made enormous strides—the hard-line regime had banned all television viewing in the country and allowed only one radio station, state-controlled Radio Sharia, to broadcast. Significant media diversity now exists in Kabul and is slowly spreading to other major cities.

In terms of American policy, USAID efforts appear to be designed to improve the environment in all three categories designated by Freedom House: the economic environment, the legal environment and the political environment. But the actual impact of American policies in these three areas has been mixed.

In terms of the economic environment, USAID policies are clearly designed to create viable, privately owned media outlets. While the USAID media effort may be serious, the initial amount of US and international funding for Afghanistan has been vastly lower than in Iraq, Bosnia and other post-war situations. During the first two years after the end of fighting, per capita external assistance in Bosnia was $1,390 and $814 in Kosovo. In Afghanistan, it was $52.[148] Bush administration efforts say it takes time to stand-up such a large effort in a country devastated by twenty years of civil war.

Over the last 18 months, the American reconstruction effort has been more serious, with a doubling in overall reconstruction aid to the country to over $2 billion in fiscal 2004. But Afghanistan still lacks the type of vibrant private economy that produces the advertising needed to support a strong, privately owned news media. For the foreseeable future, the Afghan news media will remain dependent on American, foreign and Afghan government funding to remain open. Until the outlets can survive on their own, they will not be truly independent.

In terms of the legal environment, the country's media law contains clauses that a more conservative government could use in the future to shut down media outlets and intimidate journalists. Having such a law may be necessary to placate Islamic conservatives in the short-term, but it is dangerous for the long-term viability of the free press. The United States should back efforts to revise the country's media law and remove the vaguely defined restrictions on content "contrary to the principles of Islam."

Lastly, violence against journalists appears to the be largest single threat to the functioning of a free press in Afghanistan, as it is in Iraq. The United States currently deploys roughly 15,000 American soldiers in Afghanistan and is heavily funding the training and equipping of a new Afghan army and police force. Increasing the number of American or international troops in the country, as well as increasing the size of the effort to train the new army and police force, could improve security for journalists, as well as the public.

Overall, the American-backed media development effort in Afghanistan appears to be a success. Each year since the fall of the Taliban in 2001, Freedom House's overall rating of the environment for journalists in Afghanistan has improved. The largest improvement occurred in

2004, when the country's overall rating was 68, a four point improvement from its 2003 score. Afghanistan again fared well compared to other nations in the region. Its overall 2004 score was seven points worse than Pakistan's but two points better than Iraq's and twelve points better than Iran's.[149] A variety of factors are responsible for Afghanistan's improving media, but the OTI effort clearly deserves some of the credit.[150]

CONCLUSION

Overall, the American effort to develop an independent media in Afghanistan appears to have been more successful than the American effort in Iraq. According to the Freedom House rating system, the media environment is worsening in Iraq while it is improving in Afghanistan. In 2003, Iraq had a better overall Freedom House press rating than Afghanistan. Its overall score was six points higher than Afghanistan's. In 2004, the countries swapped places and Afghanistan's overall rating is now two points better than Iraq's. In two of three Freedom House categories, press conditions are improving in Afghanistan. In all three of the Freedom House categories, press conditions are worsening in Iraq.[151]

What is most striking about the success in Afghanistan is that it has been achieved with a fraction of the money spent in Iraq. The United States spent $200 million on media development in Iraq, versus $15 million in Afghanistan.[152] Even though Iraq and Afghanistan have roughly the same population, 27 to 28 million people, oil rich Iraq received 20 times more American media development assistance per year than war-ravaged Afghanistan, one of the poorest nations on earth.

The same pattern is mirrored in terms of overall assistance. As of June 2005, the United States had provided Iraq with $7.7 billion in assistance in two years.[153] In Afghanistan, the United States had spent roughly $3 billion over a three-year period.[154]

In hindsight, a variety of factors handicapped the American media development effort in Iraq. The de facto unilateral American invasion of Iraq, the Pentagon's issuing of a single contract to an inexperienced contractor, the Pentagon's decision to focus on only reforming the state-run broadcaster and the CPA's efforts to influence Iraqi media network coverage all contributed to an effort that was a near complete failure in its first year. American policies improved in the second year with the hiring of the Harris Corporation, but safety problems continue to handicap the media development effort.

The American effort in Afghanistan, in contrast, shows that officials from the State Department's Office of Transition Initiatives have developed relatively effective strategies for helping independent media develop in foreign countries. While not perfect, the American-funded Internews radio network, the Radio Arman and Tolo TV project, Killid Media Group and Pajhwok News Agency all appear to be elements of the "vibrant free press" that the United States hopes to create in the country.

Better security, a more stable government, a broad United Nations mandate, a variety of international donors, and focusing on privately owned outlets came together to produce better results in Afghanistan. A lack of close attention from officials in Washington also allowed OTI to take a wide-ranging approach in Afghanistan.

"Afghanistan is a great laboratory because we've done virtually all of it," said Mr. Langlois of OTI. "Helped finance radio and television stations. Helped change laws to make that happen."

"We've been able to play with far more things," he added. "We've never done anything that is that broad in the Islamic world."

Sigal of Internews said that the United States should commit to 10 to 15 years of additional American funding of the new Afghan news outlets. So far, the United States and its allies have made no such commitment.

"If you're looking at media as a source of education and political engagement, the donor commitment should be 10 to 15 years," he said. "There's no evidence of that."

Gary Thatcher, the former CPA media adviser, said he remains optimistic about the long-term prospects for a free media in Iraq, if the insurgency can be contained. The country has a long history of being one of the most literate in the Middle East. The country's culture retains a strong entrepreneurial streak. Iraq has a large internal media market of 26 million people. The explosion in local media that has occurred since Saddam's fall, something some observers have called media chaos, has shown the tremendous indigenous media energy that exists in Iraq.

"Longer term, I think it has the potential to be the powerhouse of the Middle East," said Mr. Thatcher. "It's going to be a force to be reckoned with."

In both countries, local journalists have performed well under extraordinarily difficult and dangerous circumstances. They know and understand their countries in a way no foreign correspondent could. Given proper resources and training, as well as a stable environment, they are likely to thrive.

Yet one trend threatens to derail the development of the independent news media in both countries. In Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as around the world, the single largest threat to independent journalism is "murder with impunity," according to the Committee to Protect Journalists.[155] In Iraq and Afghanistan, criminals, government officials and terrorists increasingly use assault and murder to silence the media. Supporting, respecting and, most of all, securing local journalists may be the most critical way the United States can foster the creation of a vibrant free press in Iraq and Afghanistan.

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[19] Carothers, "Aiding Democracy Abroad," 236.
[20] Carothers, "Aiding Democracy Abroad," 240.
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[25] Center for Democracy and Governance, 10-12.
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[27] Carothers, "Aiding Democracy Abroad," 237.
[28] Carothers, "Aiding Democracy Abroad," 242-244.
[29] Carothers, "Aiding Democracy Abroad," 241.
[30] Carothers, "Aiding Democracy Abroad," 242, 342.
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"The whole media development business, it's something of a poor stepchild to the A.I.D. activities," said a government media development expert who asked not to be named out of fear of retaliation. "It's not a traditional development area."
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[141] CNN.com, "Female Afghan TV host shot dead - May 21, 1005," CNN.com. http://edition.cnn.com/2005/WORLD/meast/05/20/afghan.tv.ap/ (accessed June 13, 2005.) The snow woman built in her image was seen by the author in Kabul in February 2005.
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[143] Center for International Journalism.
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[147] "Iraq," "Pakistan," "Afghanistan," and "Iran," *Freedom of the Press 2005*: *Draft Country Reports.*
[148] Dobbins, 146.
[149] "Iraq," "Pakistan," "Afghanistan," and "Iran," *Freedom of the Press 2005*: *Draft Country Reports.*
[150] Freedom House, "Afghanistan." See also: Karlekar, "Afghanistan." See also: Karlekar, "Afghanistan," Freedom of the Press 2003. Under Freedom House's rating system, a low score represents more press freedom and a high score represents more press restrictions. Afghanistan's overall Freedom House press rating for 2002 was 74, with a 24 rating of its legal environment, a 30 rating of its political environment and a 20 rating of its economic environment. For 2003, its overall rating was 72, with a 24 rating of its legal environment, a 28 rating of its political environment and a 20 rating of its economic environment. Afghanistan's overall rating in 2004 was 68, with a 21 rating of its legal environment, a 27 rating of its political environment and a 20 rating of its economic environment.
[151] "Iraq," and "Afghanistan," *Freedom of the Press 2005*: *Draft Country Reports.*
[152] The Iraq figure is based on the $200 million total spent in Iraq from 2003 to 2005 includes $87 million on the SAIC contract, $96 million on the initial Harris contract and $22 million on the Harris contract extension. The Afghanistan figure is based on the $15 million spent by OTI from 2002 to 2005.
[153] Lins de Albuquerque, O'Hanlon and Unikewicz.
[154] No exact figure on the amount of American aid disbursed in Afghanistan could be obtained. The total Congressional budget allocation to USAID is $2.1 billion for fiscal 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2005. USAID is the primary source of reconstruction aid in Afghanistan, but other government agencies also fund reconstruction projects, such as anti-drug efforts. The $3 billion total figure is an estimate. See United States Agency for International Development, "Afghanistan Program Summary," United States Agency for International Development, http://www.usaid.gov/policy/budget/cbj2005/ane/pdf/af_programsummary.pdf (accessed June 13, 2005.)
[155] Committee to Protect Journalists, "The Five Most Murderous Countries for Journalists," Committee to Protect Journalists. http://www.cpj.org/briefings/2005/murderous_05/murderous_05.html (accessed June 16, 2005).