

Europe must be brought on board for Iraq's reconstruction

The EU's experience in post-conflict reconstruction is desperately needed in Iraq and must be put to use as part of a new strategy of European assistance, according to a pamphlet published today by the Foreign Policy Centre.

"The EU cannot remain on the sidelines indefinitely," report author Dr Richard Youngs argues. "European expertise is crucial for disarming insurgents and building democratic institutions, so that the coalition need not face any more Fallujahs."

The report identifies the EU's strong track record in cooperating with local groups as crucial to securitisation and institution-building in Iraq. It argues that European nations should launch or expand initiatives to mediate in conflict zones, disarm insurgents, train security forces, and consolidate democracy at the grassroots level.

Dr Youngs also believes that anti-war leaders such as French president Jacques Chirac could now be persuaded to increase assistance to Iraq, stopping short of troops. Although the defeat of John Kerry was a disappointment for those hoping for increased EU involvement, favourable signals from Brussels since the handover of power to the interim Iraqi government indicate a window of opportunity has emerged. European nations must now build on the new strategy on Iraq agreed in summer 2004 which promised consideration of new forms of cooperation and dialogue.

A high-level closed conference organised last month by the Foreign Policy Centre also revealed that Iraqis themselves would welcome greater EU assistance for reconstruction. Prominent public figures, including two Ministers in the interim government, said European programmes such as cash-for-guns would dramatically increase the safety and confidence of Iraqi communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS for EU assistance:

- **Mediating with insurgents** in conflict zones such as Fallujah, in a way the US has been unable or unwilling to do.
- Launching an EU **Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration** initiative (DDR) with local militias.
- **Training border guards and security forces**, not currently a high US priority. This would stop the passage of foreign fighters into Iraq, improving security substantially without needing to deploy deep into the Iraqi interior.

**For briefings, interviews or a copy of the pamphlet,
call Lucy Ahad on 07950 550 426**

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- Accelerating **EU economic involvement** and developing “social market” structures, as opposed to the much-criticised US neo-liberal approach.
- Promoting democracy at the **sub-national level**. Developing Iraqi civil society by strengthening networks, institutions, and grassroots political parties.

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. *Europe and Iraq: From Stand-off to Engagement* by Dr Richard Youngs is published today by the Foreign Policy Centre. The views expressed are his own and not necessarily those of the Foreign Policy Centre.
2. Dr Richard Youngs is a Research Associate of the Foreign Policy Centre and an expert on the Middle East. Richard previously worked at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and is currently a research fellow to an EU project looking at emerging European security identities (ESDP Democracy). Richard has published widely on EU democracy and human rights policies and his latest book, *International Democracy and the West*, was released in early 2004 by OUP.
3. The **Iraq Retreat** organised by the Foreign Policy Centre was held at Ditchley Park, Oxfordshire, from 22-24 October 2004, under the Chatham House rule. Seventeen prominent Iraqi nationals attended, including the Minister for Human Rights, HE Mr. Bikhtiyar Amin, the Minister for Civil Society, HE Dr. Mamou F Othman and leaders of NGO and women’s groups. British, European and American officials also attended.
4. The Foreign Policy Centre is an independent think-tank on international issues set up under the patronage of British Prime Minister Tony Blair in 1998.

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