



THE MANIFESTO GROUP

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FRIDAY 22ND DECEMBER 2017



THE MANIFESTO

This Manifesto is the product of three years of reflection and debate, culminating in intense activity throughout 2017. The leading author of the Manifesto has been Prof. Ali Allawi working in close consultation and collaboration with his co-authors, Dr. Abbas Kadhim and Dr. Luay Al-Khatteeb. This team was engaged in extensive debate of its various sections and conducted comprehensive series of meetings, workshops, and consultation efforts with various Iraqi groups and individuals inside and outside Iraq. These included statesmen and diplomats, politicians and senior civil servants, lawmakers and specialists, academics and intellectuals, teachers and students, businessmen & businesswomen and bankers, writers and thinkers, clerics and social leaders, farmers and workers, activists and union members, officers and judges – people who come from all walks of life and share a burning desire to see our country set on the right path to peace, security, prosperity and justice. They reject the politics of division, and the branding of any of our communities as enemies. All of those involved in the debate agreed on the importance of introducing a comprehensive platform for reform and change in Iraq and the urgency of doing so immediately.

We gratefully acknowledge the observations, comments and insights of all those who gave of their time and energy to the formulation of the Manifesto through its many drafts.

We extend our hand to all those who want to turn decisively the page towards a new future. We do not ignore the pain and sufferings of the past, but we will not dwell on it. We have to move on. Our eyes are firmly fixed towards the future. We must transcend the bitterness of the past in a shared plan of action that is optimistic, ambitious and realisable.

The Manifesto is the blue print for this plan.

Ali Allawi
Abbas Kadhim
Luay al-Khatteeb

Friday 22nd December 2017



THE MANIFESTO - A PLAN FOR NATIONAL REGENERATION

PREAMBLE

Nearly fifteen years after the invasion and occupation of Iraq, the country is now facing its most crucial test of survival. Daesh has been defeated thanks to the bravery and heroism of all the forces fighting under Iraq's flag, the resistance of the communities and tribes to Daesh's savagery, and the acts of courage and defiance of ordinary individuals and families. It has been a costly victory, leaving in its wake tens of thousands killed and wounded, millions displaced and living in atrocious conditions, and immense devastation to towns and cities. This horrific and tragic episode in our history was greatly enabled by the appalling mismanagement and corruption that has been endemic to Iraq since 2003. However, its origins go further, back to the dictatorships and tyrannies that marked the decades before. Iraq has been continuously in a state of crisis for over 50 years. We have been racked with coups, wars, insurrections, sanctions and isolation, invasion and occupation, suicide bombings, mass killings, population displacements and expulsions. All forms of violence have been inflicted relentlessly on the public. No community has emerged unharmed or unscathed from this legacy. Our people have been battered; our lands ravaged; our cities and towns ruined; our economy shattered; our rivers drained; our waters polluted; our natural resources squandered; our historical monuments destroyed; our religious sites desecrated. Generations of our young are condemned to unemployment, poor job prospects, or dead-end positions in over-staffed government departments. Our governments have become a byword for dysfunction, incompetence, lying and corruption, presided over by unqualified and unaccountable people. Billions are spent on projects that don't materialise, are shoddily executed or abandoned unfinished; social welfare programs designed to help the poor are systematically looted; weapon purchases are mired in huge bribes and kickbacks; government-supplied services, whether it is for electricity, education, health, water and sewerage, or waste disposal are abysmal. Iraqis are very poorly housed. There is a critical shortage of basic dwellings for our people. Illegal and dangerously built slum housings proliferate everywhere. Our natural environment is blighted; desertification is spreading remorselessly.

Political chaos and fragmentation reign supreme. Thuggery, unremitting greed, violence, deviousness and betrayals are the hallmarks of our politics. It has been reduced to an ignoble profession, held in contempt by our people. The airwaves and social media are full of lies and character assassinations. Political parties are vehicles for the vainglory of individuals and families. Others easily betray their founding principles for the sake of power and enrichment. All parties are patronage-dispensing machines that have flooded the state with armies of ill-equipped people. The opposition to the post 2003 disorder masks itself with the rhetoric of resistance but is in reality violent, irredentist and murderous, unwilling to consider its own part in the downfall of the country. The interference in the country's affairs by outsiders is brazen. But much worse is the open and despicable kowtowing to foreign powers by our political leaders. The capitals of the nearby states are gathering grounds for those who rule, have ruled or seek to rule, our country. And far away, superpowers and regional powers all conspire or aspire to put their mark of ownership on Iraq. Our future is debated in faraway international forums; our economy is a prisoner to international creditors and financiers.



Our professional and intellectual elites are targetted by assassins and hounded into exile. Our cultural life is barren. Many of our creative and talented artists, writers and thinkers are in self-imposed exile or have withdrawn in disgust and despair. Others, unforgivably, have added to the poisonous hatreds that have nearly destroyed our ability to co-exist as a harmonious entity. Such so-called intellectuals have worked assiduously to destroy mutual understanding amongst our people. Even while claiming to right the wrongs, they have disfigured, reduced, and degraded the very ideals whose representatives they were. They have turned harrowing narratives of oppression and discrimination into instruments of the egotistical interests of a political or social group. These tragic episodes of our common history have been disfigured and debased by unscrupulous people and manipulated in their pursuit of power and gain.

Our diversity has been undermined. The pre-2003 order withheld rightful citizenships from hundreds of thousands of people, expelled entire communities on spurious grounds, and drove millions into exile. Multitudes were killed indiscriminately and mass graves were filled with the bodies of tens of thousands of the innocent. The post-2003 order has continued to preside over communitarian hatreds and marginalisation of entire groups of people. Vile practices which were committed directly by the state are now committed by non-state actors, terrorists, ordinary criminal gangs and out-of-control militias. There are still unacceptable numbers of our people who have been driven abroad or are seeking to leave the country. Minorities, the young, as well as the multitudes that see the state as institutionally biased against them, do not see a future for themselves in the country. The millions of Iraqis in the diaspora, a vital resource for the reconstruction of the country, are ignored. They watch this unfolding drama with anxiety and trepidation. The very identity of the country is slipping away.

Traditional religious authorities have heroically stood up against the enveloping chaos and violence. They have called for moderation, temperance, unity and common sense. But their voices have been often drowned by different agendas that demonise the other, that turn a sense of victimhood into a license to dispossess and murder. The moral teachings of religion have been twisted into their parody. The consequences have been dire. Religious justifications are given for nihilism, extreme violence and cruelty, self-segregation and abominable practices. This will only pave the way to irreligion and the loss of our ethical moorings.

THIS CONDITION MUST END

Our people have been deprived of the promise of a rewarding life, their talents and potential wasted, and their prospects diminished by atrocious governance. This is totally unacceptable to the proud citizens of an ancient land. Our people deserve and must be assured a better future.

We are now facing a watershed election for the national and provincial assemblies. The stakes could not be higher. We have to ask ourselves fundamental questions as to who we are, and where are we heading. Are we one people or many? Will we continue to elect those who always privilege their private and party interests over their civic and national obligations? Will we allow our politicians and senior government figures to mask their incompetence and corruption by fanning sectarian and ethnic differences? Can we allow our futures, the futures of



our children and grandchildren, to be held hostage by self-serving groups, acting frequently on the agenda of foreign powers and commercial interests? Will our institutions of government, weak and ineffectual as they are, be continually degraded by the machinations of a few individuals and special interests? Will we allow our natural resources, especially our hydrocarbons, to be wasted or stolen, while the time bomb marking the end of the oil age ticks away? Do the people in power, or those aspiring to power, have any clue as to the way out of the extraordinary range of problems besetting our people and country, apart from their useless platitudes and making false promises?

That is why we, out of deep concern about the future direction of the country, have joined together to articulate a declaration of principles and objectives to set Iraq on an entirely new course towards

PEACE, STABILITY, SECURITY AND PROSPERITY

This declaration is a road map for tackling the pressing issues that we face and a vision for the country at the end of the next decade. It is a vision worthy of the great people who dwell in these lands, a vision that offers a clear path for a secure and prosperous future for our children and grandchildren. It is a vision of a functioning, responsive and accountable government, a vision of development and welfare, a vision of inclusiveness and brotherhood, a vision of justice and opportunity, a vision of Iraq that is united by a common set of values and one that leaves behind the divisions and conflicts of the past. It is a vision of an independent, united country, proud of its diversity, and one that is an anchor to the peace and security of the Middle East. An Iraq that is a responsible and constructive partner in the world community. It is a vision of a people living without humiliation; the humiliation that comes from poverty and illiteracy, from being misgoverned, from living in perpetual insecurity, from being robbed of rights and freedoms. In short, a vision of a people living in **DIGNITY**.

THIS IS A PLAN FOR NATIONAL REGENERATION

We believe the fundamental problems of Iraq are tied to poverty, abuse of power, and the erosion of the personal and social virtues. No society can prosper and thrive if it allows the foundations of decent human conduct to atrophy. Trust, openness and fairness are absolutely essential attributes of a healthy polity and the evolution of dynamic societies. In essence, these are ethical matters, and we must revitalise the ethical roots of our society. The rich and deep religious and humanistic legacy of Iraq's long history must be marshalled to this end. Without moral regeneration there can be no economic, social, cultural or political regeneration. This will be reflected ultimately in the quality of our leadership and the qualities of our institutions.

WHAT IS OUR VISION?

We start with the basic building blocks of our society-the individual, the family, and the community out of which our neighbourhoods, villages, towns and cities are constructed. We understand and respect the other loyalties and identities of our people: to tribe, ethnicity,



religion, sects and ideologies but our concern is with human beings at the most elemental level. It is they who have been sacrificed at the altar of larger schemes; it is they who have paid the price of the failed experiments of the past and present. It is they who are killed and made homeless; it is they who have no work; it is they who have to struggle and strive for a decent life.

We seek to achieve **PEACE**, in a land where violence and lawlessness have been drastically curbed.

We seek to achieve **PROSPERITY**, in a land of economic opportunity that is soundly governed with dynamic economic and social policies

In the next twenty years, or the span of one generation, our vision is to see Iraq climb towards the ranks of developed nations. We should aspire to be a developed country in our own mould, benefitting from but not copying the standards of other advanced countries. Our developed status should encompass the broadest possible dimensions: economic, political, social, spiritual, psychological and cultural. We must be fully developed in terms of national unity and social cohesion, in terms of our economy, in terms of social justice, political stability, system of government, quality of life, social and spiritual values, national pride and confidence. Our constitutional structure and political system must generate stability, flexibility and continuity. Our society must be rooted in strong moral and ethical foundations. We must expand and enhance our democracy and push for the values inherent in our ethical and religious culture, values of openness, accommodation, caring, and the establishment of a just economic and social order. Our economy must be dynamic, diversified, competitive, and resilient. Our educational system must develop an enlightened, motivated and creative generation. Our health care must provide the underpinnings for a fit and vigorous population.

THE TWENTY CHALLENGES

We recognise that the spectre of terrorism has not been laid to rest. Terrorism goes beyond being a challenge. It is an existential threat to Iraq and we cannot be supine about it. Without the containment and defeat of terrorism, we cannot consider seriously the possibility of realising our vision.

We recognise that the security forces have to be re-equipped and re-organised to continue to meet the threats emanating from internal and external enemies. But fighting terrorism is not an excuse for dysfunctional and corrupt government. It must not be used to justify the militarisation of society and the subordination and demonisation of groups and communities. We maintain that the fight against terrorism cannot be solely a military issue. Daesh overran a third of the country not because of their superior fighting skills or better organisation and arms. They succeeded mainly because the security forces deployed against them were poorly directed, poorly motivated, and poorly commanded at the field level. The security forces greatly outnumbered Daesh and were far better equipped and armed. Tens of billions of dollars had been expended on them since 2003. Lessons must be learnt from this near catastrophe, and officials who were directly or indirectly responsible for this debacle must be brought to account. Daesh succeeded in part also because important sections and regions of Iraq were



alienated from the federal government and had fallen under the sway of false promises and doctrines.

The volunteer armed formations that arose to defend the country against Daesh have mostly been given an official status. This is both correct and welcome. They deserve to be honoured and acknowledged for their significant role in the war against terror. But their future mission has to be clearly established, their command structures transparent, their military creed well defined. We envisage them as a permanent force that is deployed against the threat of terror, and one that can be used to train and advice provincial and local law enforcement on counterterrorism.

The scourge of terrorism must be eliminated as a matter of necessity. However, we still face tremendous challenges and tests in fulfilling our vision. These have accumulated ever since Iraq became an independent state in 1921.

THE FIRST CHALLENGE is the type of state and nation that we aspire to be. Iraq has experimented with varieties of formal structures and defining identities, none of which has survived the tests of time. We have had eight separate flags since our inception as a nation in 1921, and five 'national' days. The balance between centralisation and decentralisation, between capital and provinces, between autonomous regions and the centre, between federalism and confederalism has not been achieved. The conundrum of whether Iraq is one people or many, one nation or an unsteady amalgam of three major constituent groups, is still hotly contested with no resolution in sight. The end vision though, must be a nation at peace with itself, territorially integrated, in full and fair partnership for all its citizens. This would necessarily imply that the citizenry must all recognise and acknowledge that their primary loyalty must be to this nation. We must understand that no particular national, ethnic, religious, or ideological affiliation can impose itself unilaterally on the country, without grievous harm to the well-being and security of others who do not share this affiliation.

THE SECOND CHALLENGE is the degradation of the institutions and machinery of government. The state built up its capacities over a half century since the inception of Iraq, but these were subsequently distorted by the imposition of a totalitarian order privileging the one party and its security and military apparatuses. The pace of state disintegration accelerated with the era of sanctions and then galloped in the post 2003 period. There is a serious mismatch now between the capacities of government and the needs of a modern, dynamic state. Our systems and procedures are antiquated; our managerial, administrative and technical staff and standards are grievously deficient; and quality personnel and talent have fled the country.

THE THIRD CHALLENGE is to forge a national identity and consciousness that takes Iraq and Iraqis beyond the politics and the conflicts of ethno-sectarianism. This identity and consciousness would transcend the narrower sense of belonging to a tribe, sect or ethnic and religious group, but without cancelling or overwhelming them. It would be based on the common heritage of Iraqis and a remembrance of the civilisations that grew out of the lands between the Two Rivers. Without a common national identity, the welcome diversity and plurality of our country could be turned into an instrument for internal fragmentation and outside manipulation. For



too long, the Iraqi state pursued agendas that privileged particular identities beyond Iraq's borders, weakening the bonds of loyalty to Iraq and undermining its cohesiveness.

THE FOURTH CHALLENGE is the reconstruction of our society after decades of strife and violence, along the principles of toleration, neighbourliness, forgiveness and mutual trust and respect. We do not deny that social fragmentation and ethnic and sectarian clustering is well advanced, but these must be transcended by a common effort in a national project firmly oriented towards the future. Our family life has been severely strained by the huge numbers of widows and orphans, the injured and the disabled, the psychologically wounded and impaired. Half our population, women, continue to be treated iniquitously, in spite of ineffectual constitutional protections. They have suffered from unacceptable levels of violence and discrimination, and are effectively disempowered socially, economically and politically. Minority groups have not fared well. They have been marginalised and targeted. Their nationality status has often been a point of dispute and contention. Huge numbers have left the country. Many ethnic and religious minority groups in Iraq are now at a point of vanishing.

THE FIFTH CHALLENGE is the creation of a new political culture, rooted in the habits and practices of democracy and in the ethics, values and standards inherent in our traditions, faith and spiritual inheritance. Democracy is the rule of law, fairness in the state's dealings with its citizens, accountability of the political and bureaucratic classes, the impartiality of courts, the swiftness of justice, fair and free elections, responsible and responsive media. Democracy is the balance between the powers of the state and other countervailing powers, in particular those of civil society and the habits and practices of individuals and groups. When these countervailing powers privilege moderation, equity and acceptance of other points of view, then the authoritarian tendencies of the state will be checked and modified in the right direction.

THE SIXTH CHALLENGE is the reduction and elimination of the atrocious levels of violence to which our people have been subjected. The huge quantities of lethal weapons in the hands of all manner of groups and individuals is unacceptable to the functioning of an orderly and law-abiding society. The glorification of violence and force in the popular culture must be reversed. The culture of arms-bearing for self-protection and assertion must stop. Our vision is of an Iraq where weapons and weapon-bearing are solely the monopoly of legitimate authorities, responsible to elected institutions. Disarming and the decommissioning of weapons, whether with individuals or armed groups is an essential element of this vision.

THE SEVENTH CHALLENGE is the reform of the judicial system. The thicket of laws and regulations that have been layered over the decades must be streamlined. They contribute greatly to the dysfunction of government, the unchecked high-handedness of the executive and the provision of justice. The judges who administer and preside over the system must not only be highly trained and proficient, they are also the embodiment of the meaning of the rule of law. Iraq must have the judicial system worthy of a developed, rules and law-bound society. An honest, empowered and effective judiciary will be the front line in confronting and reversing the scandalous levels of corruption and abuse of power, and enforcing the rule of law.



THE EIGHTH CHALLENGE is the establishment of a prosperous society, with an economy that is fully competitive, dynamic, robust and resilient. Our vision is of a balanced economy which has moved beyond simple dependence on hydrocarbon extraction, an economy with a strong and resourceful private sector, in healthy interaction with the regional and global economy, and which is open to international trade and investment. Our vision is of an economy that is based on Iraq's human capital, with a productive work force that is well educated, skilled and trained, that is disciplined and imbued with a strong work ethic, that is adept at using cutting edge technologies. We must integrate advances in science and technology into the fabric of society, economy and government. Our vision is of an Iraq that is not only a consumer of science and technology but also a contributor, an Iraq that employs technology in the service of the citizenry, enhances their well-being, protects their rights and expands their choices and options.

THE NINTH CHALLENGE is the rooting out of corruption. In Iraq, corruption has become a national survival issue. It has gone beyond the normal economic consequences of distorting transactions and raising their costs. It has seeped into the body politic in a poisonous manner, twisting and corroding the integrity of governmental and social systems, and the quality of human relations. Unchecked, it will block and ultimately destroy the vision of national regeneration.

THE TENTH CHALLENGE is ensuring the establishment of an economically just society. This is a society in which there is a fair and equitable distribution of the wealth of the nation, in which there is full partnership in economic progress. The national vision cannot be realised if large segments of our people do not partake in the benefits of economic growth, or if the rewards of the country's revitalisation disproportionately pass to the very few. There must be an end to privileged sectors and deprived sectors, to huge differentials between secure work and benefits in the public sector and unpredictable work and benefits in the private sector. Our middle classes, which had been decimated by war and sanctions, must be nurtured and supported so that they play their pivotal role in societal balance and mobility.

THE ELEVENTH CHALLENGE is creating a new balance between the responsibilities of the state, the individual and the family, and civil society. The foundations of a caring and responsible society cannot be arrogated only to the state or to the individual. Iraqis must be weaned away from the false notion that the state ought to be the sole or even main provider of work, welfare and benefits. The welfare of the people cannot be based on the might of the state alone. It has to be based also on individual effort, on family cohesion and solidarity and beyond that on civil society organisations and voluntary and cooperative institutions. Our vision is of an Iraq that has a vibrant set of key institutions that provide vital services and welfare, provided not only by government but also by civic groups.

THE TWELFTH CHALLENGE is to revitalise the life of our cities and provinces. Our vision is of vibrant cities which act as drivers of economic change and opportunity and underpin the foundations of the new Iraq. Iraq's historic cities must regain their central role in the economic, cultural and spiritual lives of our people and act as the fulcrum of connecting Iraq with neighbouring lands. Our cities can recover their historic role as the nodes of vital maritime and regional trade networks, fit for the 21st century, linking Asia with Europe and the Middle East.



THE THIRTEENTH CHALLENGE is to restore the significance and productivity of Iraq's agricultural sector and to manage effectively our dangerously stressed water resources. The rural sector must not only provide the basis for a decent and rewarding livelihood to our agricultural workers, it must also play its part in food production and security. A vibrant rural economy will form the underlying basis for the growth and development of agribusiness and the food processing industry, stabilise the rural population and reverse rural-urban migration.

THE FOURTEENTH CHALLENGE is to manage the size of the population of Iraq. The fruits of economic change and growth can be easily overwhelmed by unchecked population growth. Iraq's population is expanding at an alarming rate and could pose a serious burden on the development of the economy and the protection of the natural and man-made environment. While our present youth bulge can be an instrument for rapid economic growth, we must move Iraq's population pyramid towards a more stable and sustainable form. Our vision is of a country whose population is in balance with both the demands of the economy, the demands of a healthy society and the imperatives of a secure and balanced family life.

THE FIFTEENTH CHALLENGE is to mobilise our youth in the process of rebuilding our nation. Iraq is an overwhelmingly young country. Our youth has gone through very trying periods of strife and violence. Many have grown without knowing or interacting with others from different backgrounds, ethnicities or regions. Boredom, despair, and hopelessness have gripped many youth leading to drug abuse, criminality and delinquency. To confront this challenge, we will call for the introduction of a national programme of civil action and service, whereby our youth will be inducted into a variety of carefully structured activities that emphasise community service and reconstruction.

THE SIXTEENTH CHALLENGE is to regain full sovereignty over our land and natural resources. Our vision is of Iraq which is not subject to any interference, directly or indirectly, in its internal affairs by outside powers. For that Iraq will pursue a policy of the 'Four Points of the Compass'. We will seek the good will, support and cooperation of all our neighbours on the 'Four Points of the Compass', as well as regional and global powers that lie further afield. To this end, we must have a foreign policy that is fit for the purpose, and which is strategically conceived and structured. Our diplomats and our foreign affairs administration must be expertly led and managed, and are able to execute an ambitious foreign policy. However, our foreign policy has suffered great setbacks at the regional and international levels. Iraq's foreign policy is characterised by incompetence and incoherence. Our foreign affairs administration is replete with untrained, amateur diplomats, many appointed or promoted according to party affiliation criteria or nepotism. Our embassies are often the butt of ridicule, some barely able to provide the basic level of service and support to Iraqis abroad. Embassy staff, particularly in major countries, often lack the requisite linguistic skills.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHALLENGE is the creation of a new security, defence and economic architecture for the countries of the Middle Eastern region and the broader Islamic world. The present institutional arrangements have proven completely ineffective in the prevention of conflict. Our vision is of a region that will become progressively de-militarised and which cooperates closely in matters of security and the fight against terrorism. We believe that the security of the area



can only be addressed by the citizens and countries of these lands. We believe that the national security and welfare of the lands of the Middle East will be immensely strengthened by growing convergence and interdependence of our economies and our trade, transport and energy sectors. For this end, Iraq will seek an entirely new or radically revamped institutional arrangements grouping these countries in the field of security, defence and economic alignments.

THE EIGHTEENTH CHALLENGE is to raise our educational standards and levels of achievement. Iraq had enviable levels of education and literacy until the 1980's, after which education levels fell into relentless decline and decay. We have reached a point now where the sector suffers from abysmal standards and conditions. These include unqualified teachers, absenteeism, overcrowding, widespread functional illiteracy, appalling school conditions, flawed examinations, and cheating. This tangle of problems is overseen by a huge educational bureaucracy that is poorly motivated with low productivity and efficiency. Iraq occupies the low rungs of international benchmarks for educational quality and standards. This is simply unacceptable. A common factor that unites all developing nations that broke into the developed nation category is the strong emphasis on education and the resources devoted to this sector. The entire field of education in Iraq needs to be radically rethought to develop a system that ensures universal literacy and the delivery of quality and appropriate education at all levels. This requires the raising of teaching standards, introducing the correct curricula and textbooks, providing suitable school buildings and facilities, rigorous testing and selection, and a dedicated, motivated and technically proficient administration that can deliver the required outcomes.

THE NINETEENTH CHALLENGE is to stop and then reverse the environmental degradation of the country. The Iraq that we seek is one that builds on its natural physical attributes, that is a pleasant and beautiful country to live in. Our vision is of clean rivers and clean air, protected nature, greening of cities and urban landscapes, reforestation and the renewal and expansion of our date palm groves.

THE TWENTIETH CHALLENGE is to revitalise our cultural and artistic life, and protect our civilisational heritage. Writers, artists, poets, architects, and other creative talent must have an honoured and recognised status in our country. It is not the job of the state to direct or dictate the content of an artist's work, but it will be our responsibility to create an enabling environment that will bring the best of our artistic and creative talent to the fore.

WHAT GOALS DO WE SET FOR OUR VISION 2028?

1. THE FIRST SET OF GOALS APPLIES TO OUR VISION FOR THE FORM OF THE STATE

The twenty challenges that we have set out are not necessarily in order of priority, but undoubtedly the most strategic involves the first challenge- the identity of Iraq as a country. This is the fundamental building block from which all others emanate. The vision must revolve around an Iraq whose contours have been clearly established.



This is the Political and Constitutional Form of the Iraqi State

The first Iraq state, established in 1921 came to an end in 2003, passing through monarchical, republican, military, one party and finally tyrannical systems. The second Iraqi state, established in 2003 has been unable to achieve the needed stability, security and acceptance to allow it to claim universal legitimacy from all its citizens.

The 2005 Iraqi constitution was approved by the requisite number of provinces in a referendum. However, it was developed in an environment fraught with strife, dangers and violence. It was not the grand bargain between the various elements of Iraq's population that it could have been, although it includes admirable principles enshrining personal, social and communal freedoms and rights. However, the constitution is rejected, in part or in whole, by important segments of Iraq's population. Those who reject it in its entirety claim that the constitution was overly influenced by outsiders and is not an Iraqi project as such. They base their arguments on the role that the proto-constitution, the Transitional Administrative Law, on which the constitution was partly based, was drafted when Iraq was under occupation. Others believe that the constitution was overly tilted towards protecting the rights and goals of particular groups, and created an administrative outcome that is strewn with contradictions, unresolved issues and impediments to the creation and functioning of a modern, unitary, state.

The outcome has been deeply unsettling.

Iraq is not a fully centralised state, as the autonomy enjoined by the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) precludes that possibility. A state cannot be centralised if nearly a fifth of its population and territory live under a different set of rules and law.

Iraq is not a federal state, as the power exercised by Baghdad over the provinces and local authorities precludes that possibility. A state cannot be a federal state unless there are wide powers, and resources, that are devolved to a decentralised administrative structure.

Iraq is not a confederal union, as the relationship between the KRG and the Centre is not structured as between two sovereign states, and therefore precludes that possibility.

We believe that a new state structure has to evolve for Iraq, taking into account the disposition of the Kurds and the consequences of that for the structure of the new Iraqi state. These outcomes will be fundamental and will require the drafting of a new constitution by an elected constituent assembly, advised by a blue-ribbon panel of constitutional lawyers and experts.

We believe a new constitution has to consider the following matters, at a minimum:

- Remove the contradictions, ambiguities and obsolete provisions in the present constitution
- Retaining and if necessary strengthening the democratic, rights and freedoms provisions of the present constitution



- Defining clearly and definitively the status of the Kurdistan region within Iraq. The Independence Referendum that was held on 25 September 2017 was rejected nationally and internationally, and annulled by Iraq's federal court. .
- Enshrining the principle of decentralisation and the devolution of powers to provincial and local governments
- Establishing the principle of fiscal federalism
- Establishing the principle of the right of each Iraqi to the natural resources of the country, through a universal basic income
- Establishing the constituency as the basis for national parliamentary elections
- Establishing the Office of the Presidency to be directly elected with executive powers
- Committing the state to protect all religions and faiths
- Committing the state to support and propagate an open and ecumenical Islamic identity
- Committing the state to fighting discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, religion, sect or gender

2. THE SECOND SET OF GOALS APPLIES TO OUR VISION FOR THE ECONOMY

The objective of establishing a prosperous country necessitates the adoption of goals that are both ambitious and realistic. Between now and 2028, we should be able to achieve a doubling of our economy to a GDP of nearly \$ 500 billion. Admittedly this is an optimistic projection but we should set our sights high if we are to motivate ourselves into striving hard. It will be a difficult task, with many peaks and low points, particularly as we need to make wrenching changes in all aspects of our economy and society. In periods of relative calm and political stability, Iraq did achieve and exceed these targets; for example in the 1950's and early 1960's and part of the 1970's. If we succeed in achieving these ambitious targets, and maintain a low rate of population growth, say less than 2% per annum, Iraqis will be twice as rich as they are now by 2028. That is the measure of the prosperous society we wish and hopefully we can achieve.

Our economy must be competitive. Such an economy must be able to sustain itself over the longer term. It must adapt to the expected changes in the global energy markets and the possibility of the ending of the oil era. To succeed Iraq's economy must be rebalanced towards the manufacturing and processing sectors, towards the services and transport sectors, and towards the adoption of the most appropriate technologies and information systems. We must promote entrepreneurship and business formation and create an environment that supports, encourages and drives innovation and investment. We must take full advantage of Iraq's unique geographic position as a crossroads of civilisations and trade routes, and open up our country to the winds of technological change. In a world where the quality of human resources is the key to development and prosperity, our performance will be dependant critically on the skills and proficiency of its labour and managerial force. Our work ethic must be held to the highest standards; our productivity high and rising.

Iraq's private sector cannot be an engine of change and growth if it is inefficient, uncompetitive and dependent on the state for its well-being. Many businessmen and bankers feed off



corruptly-derived government contracts or programs. This cannot be the basis for the development of a dynamic, robust, honest and competent private sector. Free enterprise does not mean an unbridled license to manipulate, deceive and exploit with little regard for the public interest and the needs of the broader economy. Our businessmen must develop a sense of corporate duty and responsibility, and recognise their essential part in the healthy development of our economy. We cannot envisage a large and leading role for the private sector if maximising profit is its sole objective. Our businesses must be prepared to think not only in their own narrow interests but also in the longer-term interest of the country. The private sector must forge relations with the foreign investor community in mutually beneficial partnerships and joint-ventures. This will expand the stock of foreign direct investment in Iraq and bring in needed technology, integration into global markets and introduce best international standards and practices. Our private sector has also a most important role to play in the training and equipping of manpower and upgrading the skills of our labour force.

At the same time, the government must provide an enabling environment for the private sector to flourish. The private sector cannot function and prosper if it is strangled by unnecessary, burdensome and destructive rules and regulations. Our businessmen are harassed by an often hostile, unsympathetic or uncomprehending bureaucracy, and subject to extortion and demands for kickbacks not only by government employees but by politicians.

The relationship between the state and the private sector must move away from the often parasitic dependence of the private sector on the government. We envisage a new form of collaboration and cooperation between the two sectors, manifested through the encouragement and support of public-private partnerships in infrastructure and the provision of municipal and other services. Not all such collaboration between our public and private sector is justifiable or productive, but where it is, it should be vigorously pursued and encouraged, but based on competitive and arms-length norms.

The broad economic targets that we have set for ourselves must, at a bare minimum, meet our international commitments as well as satisfy the targets of our vision. Iraq must reaffirm and exceed its commitments to the UN's Millennium Development Goals. However, we must also add our own measures of success beyond the requirements of the MDG.

Many different types of economic models, strategies and policies have been tried in Iraq, with most ending abruptly after changes in the political system or because of external shocks. The 1950's were a period of rapid economic growth fuelled by rising oil income. Development took place within a generally liberal and open economy marked by rising state involvement and infrastructure investments. The 1958 revolution had important economic consequences, in particular the radical changes that were effected in agrarian relations. The 1960's were characterised by the establishment of a socialist economy through wide scale nationalisations and the curtailment of private sector activity, against a background of political turmoil and the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. The 1970's saw the extension of state ownership, the nationalisation of the oil industry, a huge expansion in public sector employment and an economic boom driven by an unprecedented expansion of oil revenues accruing to the state. The 1980's began with the war against Iran, necessitating the establishment of a war economy and the incurring of



massive international indebtedness to finance the war effort. The 1990's began with the invasion of Kuwait and ushered a decade of economic hardship, hyperinflation, collapsing incomes and rising unemployment, as a siege economy grew in response to the imposition of crippling international sanctions.

After the 2003 watershed, there has been no conscious, sustained or effective strategies and policies for Iraq's reconstruction and development. Economic policies have been characterised by incoherence, improvisation, opportunism, short-termism, amateurism and rank incompetence. The occupying forces attempted to impose a shock program of privatisation and liberalisation. This was quickly abandoned, leaving a muddled mess. This was followed by the so-called International Compact with Iraq, an effort joining Iraq and the international community, which purported to set a commonly agreed vision and pathways for reforming the Iraqi economy. Various agencies of the UN, the IMF and the World Bank also set out sector reform prescriptions for Iraq, culminating in the 2017 comprehensive diagnosis of the Iraqi economy by the World Bank. Very little of these program for change and reform were ever implemented and little of their goals realised.

The Ministry of Planning set in motion two Four Year Plans, 2010 to 2014 and 2013 to 2017. While these were marked by greater realism and a deeper understanding of the functioning of the Iraqi economy by the professionals at the Ministry of Planning, the results were also poor. The plans were derailed by the Daesh invasion, as well as the collapse in oil revenues. They are no longer valid bases upon which to base policies to reconstruct the Iraqi economy. The plans also, conspicuously, failed to focus on the institutional weaknesses in Iraq, the matter of corruption, and the dysfunctional political economy of the country.

The vision for the economy that we are proposing does not emerge from a vacuum. We have benefitted greatly from the work done by the Ministry of Planning, other Iraqi ministries as well as the international development agencies. But we have set our vision within a context that includes institutional and political reform. These are preconditions to any successful realisation of our vision. We have also articulated a bold strategy to reposition the Iraqi economy to meet the objectives of our vision.

WHAT DO WE AIM TO DO AND WHAT ARE OUR GOALS FOR 2028?

- We aim to eradicate absolute poverty in all parts of Iraq. As a goal, we will strive to reduce absolute poverty to less than 10% of the population by 2028.
- We aim to create, support and sustain rewarding jobs, particularly for our youth. As a goal, we will strive to achieve full employment, with less than 5% unemployment of the active labour force, by 2028.
- We aim to improve the standard of living of the average Iraqi citizen. As a goal, we will strive to raise per capita income in real terms to \$10,000, or twice its current level, by 2028.
- We aim to expand the Iraqi economy at a rate that will fulfill our social and economic objectives. As a goal, we will strive to achieve an average real rate of growth of GDP of 8% per annum over the period to 2028.



- We aim to diversify the economy away from its over-dependence on oil export revenues sector. As a goal, we will strive to raise the share of the non-oil sector in the economy to 60% of GDP by 2028.
- We aim to expand, optimally, the energy business value chain by 2028. As a goal, we will strive to achieve 10 million barrel oil per day, 8 billion cubic feet gas per day, 1.5 million barrel of refined product a day, 40 gigawatt of power capacity and two million tons of petrochemicals per annum, by 2028.
- We aim to reduce the enormous gaps in the socio-economic conditions of Iraq's different geographic areas. As a goal, we will strive to raise the consumption rates of the poorest regions to the national average by 2028.
- We aim to rebalance Iraq's economy towards the private sector. As a goal, we will strive to increase the share of private sector activity to 65% of GDP by 2028.
- We aim to prioritise reconstruction and infrastructure development. As a goal, we will strive to maintain an average rate of capital investment of no less than 30% of GDP per annum in the period ending 2028.
- We aim to maintain price stability throughout the process of reconstruction and development. As a goal, we will strive to keep inflation at no more than 3% per annum, with a managed exchange rate, in the period ending 2028.

WHAT STRATEGIES WILL WE FOLLOW TO ACHIEVE OUR VISION IN 2028?

- A strategic economic relationship with the dynamic economies of Asia.
- A strategic economic orientation towards expansion of regional trade and investment.
- A transport-focussed and urban-focussed development strategy based on expansion and upgrading of the infrastructure and regional linkages.
- A major public and private sector effort to expand the housing stock.
- A strong push into value-added petrochemicals and energy intensive industries.
- Encouragement of large scale agribusiness enterprises and commercial farms.
- Establishing a network of special enterprise zones, free zones and heavy, energy-intensive industrial zones in key regions.
- A reorganisation of the primary and secondary education sectors to create another tier of merit-based and results-focussed academies.
- A creation of a super tier of higher and specialised education institutes that will achieve world class benchmarked status.
- Reform and consolidation of the banking sector into a few universal banks with distributed ownership.
- Reorganisation of the public finance and budgeting system to ensure accuracy, fiscal discipline, effectiveness, proper control and reporting, and sound information flow.
- Reform of the direct and indirect taxation system to ensure fairness, collectability, and adequacy while maintaining incentives.
- Review and reform employment criteria, levels, training, skills and pay and benefits of public sector workers and civil servants.



- Review all the subsidies and social welfare programmes and explore the possibility and desirability of replacing them with a universal income plan.
- Encourage savings and pension plans through a compulsory National Provident Fund that would provide a critical source for investment financing for both the public and private sectors.
- Reorganise the savings markets for housing purchase finance and mortgages.
- Reorganise, strengthen and expand the powers of the capital markets bodies, including the Iraq Stock Exchange.
- Establish a statutory independent Reconstruction Board responsible for designing and implementing strategic projects.
- Establish a National Reconstruction and Development Bank.
- Establish a National Investment Trust for holding major equity stakes in strategic enterprises and joint ventures with domestic and foreign companies.
- Establish a National Economic Policy Board with Iraqi academics and experts and supported by a blue ribbon foreign advisory board.
- Establish a Federal Energy Council that will set strategic and policy directives for the energy sector.
- Establish a National Social Policy Board to set broad social objectives and targets, including income transfers.
- Rationalising the number of ministries and government bodies, especially those in the energy sector.
- Reorganisation of all state-owned economic bodies into autonomous public corporations, separately capitalised and funded, and operating according to commercial and market principles.
- Creating a tier of highly trained cadre of non-political senior public administration officials.
- Establishment of a National Administrative Institute to train senior civil servants and those expected to rise to leadership positions in the government.
- Major judicial and administrative reform aimed at drastically reducing adverse laws and government regulations affecting business and investment, including foreign direct investment.

3. THE THIRD SET OF GOALS APPLIES TO OUR VISION FOR REBUILDING OUR INSTITUTIONS

The decay, atrophy and destruction of Iraq's institutions are well advanced. The process has been continuing and accelerating over the past 50 years or more. It is all-encompassing, from the basic units of government and administration, to the judiciary, the educational systems, law enforcement, the security and military forces. It also stretches to the institutions and organisations of civil society including professional associations, cooperatives, and religious foundations. This relentless process of retreat and decay has seeped into the nature and quality of interpersonal dealings and transactions. Trust, fairness, honesty, neighbourliness, and civic pride are essential elements of successful economies and societies. They are the formal and informal rules by which societies manage their affairs. They have been undermined in our



country by decades of dictatorship, chaos, and civil strife. No development is possible without the recovery of these personal and social virtues.

What are our objectives for 2028?

- We aim to recast the machinery of government at all levels so that it is fit and proper to manage the complexities and challenges of a 21st century economy and society.
- We aim to restructure central, provincial and local governments to provide effective, fair, competent, unobtrusive and efficient services and administration to the public.
- We aim to reform the administration of justice to ensure that justice is rendered impartially, honestly, effectively, and quickly.
- We aim to reorganise our armed forces to ensure professionalism, effectiveness and doctrinal focus.
- We aim to overhaul our system of foreign policy making, administration and management; and the selection, training, assigning and supervising of diplomats.
- We aim to reorganise our law enforcement to emphasise effectiveness, rapid response and community participation and oversight.
- We aim to restructure our educational institutions at all levels to emphasise quality, depth, values and purposefulness.
- We aim to encourage and support voluntary, cooperative, communal and religious organisations in the provision of services and in lieu of government wherever appropriate.
- We aim to strengthen our values-based society by a coordinated national effort of information-dissemination, education and publicity.

Corruption is a terrible affliction that has seeped into the depths of the Iraqi state and society. The people see it, rightly, as one of the most serious challenges facing the country. It deserves a set of priority objectives and strategies specifically designed to reduce and ultimately overcome its toxic effects on our country.

Our goal is to bring the level of corruption by 2028 to the average level of a developed country.

- We aim to raise the ranking of Iraq under the Transparency International index from its present ranking of 162 out of 168 most corrupt nations to a ranking of 30 or better by 2028.

Our **strategy** to drastically reduce corruption is based on the following principles:

Deterrence; Retributive Justice; Improved Governance; Public Outreach

We will therefore call for strategies that will:

- Reform the institutional arrangements that oversee corrupt practices.
- Reform government practices and procedures, byelaws and regulations and adopt the best and most appropriate of e-government systems.



- Overhaul government procurement standard and procedures.
- Centralise government procurement in a National Procurement Body.
- Enhance anti-corruption laws and enforcement.
- Establish a National Fiscal Police for investigating serious financial crimes.
- Protect 'whistleblowers'.
- Establish a high-level independent National Commission of Inquiry of Economic Crimes with statutory investigative and prosecutorial powers.
- Vigorously pursue, domestically and internationally, corrupt malefactors since 2003
- Establish an Asset Recovery Fund for the return of stolen assets.

4. THE FOURTH SET OF GOALS APPLIES TO OUR VISION FOR SOVEREIGNTY AND NATIONAL SECURITY

Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity have been violated over decades. In a world of nation states, our sovereignty and territorial integrity have been regularly threatened by regional and global powers. It is our vision to reclaim our sovereignty absolutely, so we are not blithely challenged by outside powers who see in us a fertile field for interference and extending their influence. We will respect the sovereignty of all nations but will deal with other nations on the basis of mutual interests and reciprocity. We will reject entangling alliances, whether explicit or not, that oblige us to commit to one camp or another. Iraq will seek to play a leading and constructive role in the stabilisation, reconciliation and de-escalation of tensions in the Middle East. Our vision is of a radically demilitarised and denuclearised Middle East, bound together by ties of mutual advantage, and drawn together, formally, by supranational institutions that promote the freedoms, security and prosperity of the peoples of the area. Our vision is of Iraq sponsoring and promoting globally an authentic, open, accommodating and pluralist Islam that transcends sectarianism and guards against retrograde ideologies and terrorism.

HOW WILL WE ACHIEVE THESE GOALS BY 2028?

- We aim to remove the influence of regional and foreign powers on the internal affairs of Iraq, including the withdrawal of all foreign forces and foreign-controlled or influenced armed groups.
- We aim to create a new security and defence architecture for the states of the Middle East that will assume primary responsibility for the collective security and defence of the area.
- We aim to create a permanent regional anti-terrorism alliance that will combat and inhibit the spread of extremism in the region.
- We aim to revamp radically the Arab League, or create an entirely new grouping of Arab states to replace the deficient institutions of the present time.
- We aim to revamp radically the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, or create an entirely new grouping of Islamic states to replace the deficient institutions of the present time.



- We aim to broaden, update and institutionalise the framework of the 2004 Amman Message that calls for the elimination of sectarianism and extremist thought in the teaching and practice of Islam.
- We aim to establish institutions and frameworks that will coordinate and regulate economic and trade relations of the Middle East region, with a view to the establishment of a common market in goods and services, and to encourage the free flow of capital.
- We aim to establish institutions and frameworks that will protect and support the enhancement of personal, community and minority rights in the Middle East region, and the promulgation of a regional charter of rights and freedoms, backed by appropriate supranational institutional mechanisms.
- We aim to enact laws that prevent Iraqi political groups from establishing financial and political relations that undermine the sovereignty and security of Iraq, including laws ensuring transparent political campaign finance and fundraising by political parties.

LEADERSHIP, ETHICS, INSTITUTIONS, STABILITY

The history of modern Iraq has been one of missed opportunities, outright failures and some successes. Where successes had occurred, they were not only because of the implementation of right policies and programmes, but more importantly, because of the presence of good leadership, a high level of personal and societal ethics, robust institutions and political and social stability. It is this mix that will be decisive in determining whether Iraq will break out of its present unacceptable conditions towards the status of a developed nation. We firmly believe that no ideology or theory, in the long run, can produce the desired goals of broad, fair and sustainable development in the absence of four critical elements:

Leadership, Ethical Foundations, Institutional Depth and Political Stability

By **Leadership**, we mean not only outstanding political leadership, but also leadership of the key institutions of modern states and economies. By **Ethics**, we mean not only high standards of public integrity and probity, but also the broader cultural and **Institutional** framework in which economic policies and political leadership operate. By **Stability**, we mean a high degree of political order and continuity of legal and institutional norms. The absence of one or more of these elements will distort the process of regeneration and bring it to a halt or at best make its gains temporary. **These are the bedrock upon which appropriate economic, social and cultural policies can be built.** The best of policies can easily founder and collapse if they are developed in a vacuum or in an uncoordinated way; or if they are implemented in an environment in which leadership, ethical norms, institutional vigour and stability are lacking.

Sadly, these four preconditions for sustained, balanced and rapid economic and political development are all missing, or have greatly receded, in Iraq.

The political system that has evolved in Iraq since 2003 is a self-serving and self-perpetuating loop designed by political groups, and justified by constitutional, democratic and legal pretexts. The system is programmed to produce managed outcomes that do not veer much from those



predetermined in backroom deals. Democracies are not immune to the politics of factions and feverish manoeuvring, but few countries have reached the level of dysfunction that Iraq has.

The system in Iraq has combined, uniquely, the worst aspects of factional politics twinned with a broken state mechanism and collapsing institutions. Factional leaders cut deals that divide the spoils of power between themselves, according to formulae that supposedly encourage ethno-sectarian balance and guard against discrimination and disadvantage. In practice though, every single institution of government is presided over by appointees of political groups whose primary loyalty lies not to the institution and its purposes, but to the faction that appointed them. These appointments have been mostly abysmal. They combine utter incompetence and self-serving opportunism with venality and abuse of power, overriding whatever limited safeguards exist in the appointments system. The end result is there for all to see. Already weak institutions are debased further; new institutions designed to protect democracy and sound government, are undermined and rendered useless or even counterproductive. The electoral control and supervision machinery, as well as the laws governing political activity, are subverted to ensure the return of the same political groups, or variants thereof, to power. The notion of accountability is rendered meaningless. Political groups, antagonistic in most respects, combine to stop the enforcement of laws against malefactors of other groups, as that could also affect their own supporters by holding them to account.

The parliamentary route of effecting change is seriously impeded. Movements for reform and change originating in parliament have been ineffectual. No leaders have emerged, or are likely to emerge, from within the power structure to shepherd the long and difficult process of change towards open, responsible, accountable and effective government.

At the same time, we do not condone nor support any violent action to change the status quo. Iraqis have learnt to their cost that violence begets violence and only results in further polarisation, death and destruction, and irremediable antagonisms.

The Manifesto has set out a plan and a vision for the country's rebirth. We are committed to propagating the principles that it carries onto a broad cross section of our dear land. The Manifesto is not a flawless document, but we believe that it could provide a firm foundation for encouraging widespread debate and discussion on the future directions of Iraq. We call on the people and their political, religious and civic leaders to engage seriously and constructively with the Manifesto, with the ideas that are embedded in it and the challenges that it proposes. If such an engagement leads to the evolution of a new consensus regarding the future of Iraq, and that consensus permeates and colours a reformed political order, then Iraqis would have taken a giant step in creating a new national compact. Our development and growth as a progressive, secure and orderly society will then be assured.

END

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