MEMORANDUM

TO: Ambassador Clarke

FROM: Samuel

DATE: 5/22/17

RE: A Case for U.S. Responsibility and Iraqi Partition

SUMMARY:

Time and time again, Iraq has fallen into sectarian conflict and chaos. As of 2015, over 4.4 million Iraqi civilians have been displaced. This is largely due to the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003. Though many U.S. politicians insist this invasion was a success, it failed entirely to address the root of the problem. No amount of U.S. military support can resolve this situation, and the most viable course of action may be partition of the country. Between the Kurds in the north, Shiites in the South, and the Sunnis in between, there will always be sectarian conflict. U.S. military intervention was mostly ineffective at curbing this conflict, and not long after Obama called back the troops, chaos returned ten fold. Iraq is ripping itself to shreds, and the only way to achieve stability is to do away with the dysfunctional and artificially drawn Iraqi state altogether.

BACKGROUND:

In 2003, in light of Saddam Hussein's alleged possession of weapons of mass destruction, the United States invaded Iraq. Hussein was captured in April of 2003, though U.S. troops stayed

to help curb the sectarian conflict which would eventually evolve into a full blown civil war by 2007, between the U.S.-backed Shiites and the Sunnis militias. Since troops were withdrawn in 2011, Iraq has yet again fallen into complete disarray with the entry of ISIS from the west.

As a result of the U.S. invasion, the civil war in 2007, and the ruthless violence of the so-called Islamic State, one of the largest humanitarian crises in the world today has arisen. According to Chantal Berman in a report published by Brown University, over 4.4 million Iraqis have been displaced since 2015. Berman notes that, "Lack of access to sanitation, clean drinking water, and adequate nutrition are particular concerns among Iraqi IDPs." and that Infant mortality has increased by 150% from 1990-2005 in Iraq. This problem is made even more serious by the fact that half of Iraq's registered doctors have fled the country since 2003. Berman points out that, "The war has brought increased rates of illness and disease to Iraq, while displacing the very medical professionals who could have treated the sick." (Berman).

Iraq has three distinct ethno-religious groups living within its borders. The Kurds of the North, the Sunni-Arabs of the West, and the Shia-Arabs of the South-East. Iraq's borders were devised by way of the Sykes-Picot agreement after WWI. This was an agreement between France and Britain allowing them to divide the recently fallen Ottoman Empire to their advantage. This border drawing was done, according to Delovan Barwari of Huffington Post, "without taking into account the demands of the ethnic and religious groups living in their own ancestral lands." (Barwari). The formation of the Iraqi state forced these three former provinces of the Ottoman Empire under the ruthless and oppressive rule of the Sunnis, leading to a long history of uprising and sectarian conflict.

PROPOSED STEPS:

1. The U.S. must help facilitate Iraq's partition. Time has shown that the United State's current strategy in the middle east is only effective in the short term. An effective way to stop ethnic conflict in a country made up of conflicting ethno-religious groups is partition of the country, beginning with the Kurds. As of now, the Kurdish region in northern Iraq has established a functioning government, and the Iraqi government has granted limited economic autonomy to this Kurdish region. It has been the goal of the U.S. foreign policy to maintain Iraq's unity, primarily to appease Turkey, the U.S.'s closest ally in the area. Much of what makes up the predominantly Kurdish region in the middle east extends north across the Turkish border, and Turkey is far from willing to jeopardize its territorial integrity in allowance of a Kurdish state. In fact, Turkey is firmly opposed to any notion of Kurdish independence. This being said, Turkey's goal for many years has been to gain a European Union membership. As seen through deals made with the E.U., including the acceptance of several million Syrians, Turkey is willing to sway policy in exchange for the economic gains of an E.U. membership. The U.S. must assume a leadership role for the Kurds, much like it did for the Israelis and the Kosovar Albanians during the Clinton administration. The U.S. must propose to the E.U. new policy regarding Turkish membership, wherein Turkey would be given incentive to stop its military action against the Kurds and begin talks of Kurdish independence. With enough outside help, borders in Iraq, as well as Syria (another artificially drawn country), can be redrawn to accommodate the needs of ethno-religious groups in the region. To promote peaceful relationships between these newly formed nation-states, there may be opportunity to help

structure a trading bloc among countries in the middle east similar to the African Economic Community. Though many nations in this region have no incentive to join such a bloc due to oil wealth, there may still be some opportunities among those middle eastern countries whose economies do not depend on oil such as Afghanistan, Lebanon, and the newly formed states in former Iraq and Syria.

2. Measures must be taken to ensure that the United States takes more responsibility for the massive refugee disaster for which it is partially responsible. The most effective way to achieve this is through raising public awareness of the situation. This crisis has received little public attention in the United States. Ben Sanders gave an explanation to this lack of publicity in 2007, claiming that, "Addressing the refugee crisis implies an acknowledgement that the U.S.-led coalition and the Iraqi government have been unable to provide security within the country." (Sanders 26). It is vital that politicians on both sides acknowledge the failure of U.S. intervention in Iraq between 2003 and 2011. If an increased public awareness of this crisis can be achieved, this is more likely. According to the U.S. Department of State, "In FY 2015, more than 12,600 Iraqis were admitted to the United States and Iraqi admissions numbers are expected to reach even higher levels in FY 2017." Despite its ability to accept far more refugees, the U.S. accepts only a fraction of the persons it is partly responsible for displacing. A bill must be proposed to congress wherein a comprehensive Iraqi resettlement program would be introduced to build upon the State Department's current U.S. Refugee Program. The prospects of any increase in Iraqi refugee acceptance have been made dubious as a result of the current

U.S. administration. Iraq is one of the seven countries on President Trump's proposed travel ban. Though the original ban and several revised bans have been blocked by the legal system, it is clear that our current administration is not open to any policy allowing more refugees into the country.

RECOMMENDATION:

U.S. foreign policy in this region must be tailored to address the root of the ethno-national conflict, as opposed to addressing the problem as only a military issue, which past administrations have done. This being said, the adverse effects of U.S. military intervention in this region has led to a full blown refugee crisis which the U.S. must take responsibility for by doing its part to resettle more refugees, and supply even more funding to the UNHCR and other organizations committed to protecting the health and wellbeing of refugees and internally displaced persons.

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    Refugee Tiba Faraj. Faraj came as Warren's guest to observe Pres. Trump addressing a

    joint session of congress. Since arriving in the U.S. as a refugee from Iraq in 2010, Faraj

    has acquired her U.S. citizenship and is currently enrolled as a junior at UMass

    Dartmouth, studying international relations and accounting. Faraj expresses her gratitude

    for the opportunity to live her dream and believes that others like her should be able to do

    the same. Sen. Warren commends Faraj's hard work and determination. Potentially useful

    primary source, though seems somewhat contrived.

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