

American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research



Michael Rubin

Resident Scholar

American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research

1789 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.

Washington, DC 20036

202.862.5851

mrubin@aei.org

POSITIONS

Resident Scholar. The American Enterprise Institute, 2004 - present.

Contract Iran Analyst, Foreign Military Studies Office, Fort Leavenworth, 2012 - present

Senior Lecturer, Naval Postgraduate School, 2007 - present.

Contributor, *Washington Examiner*, 2017 - present.

Contributor, *Commentary Magazine*, 2011 - 2017.

Lecturer, Johns Hopkins University, 2010.

International Election Observer, Bangladesh, 2008.

Senior Editor, *Middle East Quarterly*, 2009 - present.

Editor, *Middle East Quarterly*, 2004-2009.

Political Advisor. Coalition Provisional Authority, Baghdad, Iraq, 2003 - 2004.

Staff Advisor, Iran and Iraq. Office of the Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs),
2002 - 2004.

International Affairs Fellow, Council on Foreign Relations, 2002 - 2003.

Fellow. The Leonard Davis Institute for International Relations, Hebrew University. Jerusalem.
2001-2002.

Editorial Board, *Middle East Intelligence Bulletin*, 2001-2002, 2004.

Fellow. Carnegie Council on *Ethics* and International Affairs, 2000-2001.

Assistant Editor, *Iranian Studies*, 1994-1997.

EDUCATION

Ph.D., History, Yale University, 1999.

Dissertation: "The Making of Modern Iran, 1858-1909: Communications, Telegraph and Society."

- Recipient, John Addison Porter Prize "for a work of scholarship in any field in which it is

possible, through original effort, to gather and relate facts and/or principles and to make the product of general human interest.”

M.A., History, Yale University, 1996.

B.S., Biology and History (dual major), Yale University, 1994.

BOOKS AND REPORTS

Seven Pillars: What Really Causes Instability in the Middle East? Routledge, 2020.

Kurdistan Rising, AEI Press, 2016.

Dancing with the Devil: The Promise and Perils of Engagement. Encounter, 2014.

The Shi'ites of the Middle East, AEI Press, 2014.

Meeting the Challenge: U.S. Policy toward Iranian Nuclear Development (lead drafter on task force chaired by Senators Daniel Coats and Charles Robb). Bipartisan Policy Center, 2008.

Dissent and Reform in the Arab World: Empowering Democrats (M. Rubin, Danielle Pletka, and Jeffrey Azarva, eds.). AEI Press, 2008.

Eternal Iran: Continuity and Chaos (with Patrick Clawson). Palgrave, 2005.

Into the Shadows: Radical Vigilantes in Khatami's Iran. Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2001.

BOOK CHAPTERS

M. Rubin, “Will the United States ever support Kurdish independence?” in Vera Eccarius-Kelly, ed. *Kurdish Autonomy and U.S. Foreign Policy: Change within Continuity*. London: Routledge, 2020.

M. Rubin, “Iranian Drone Doctrine?” in Stewart Webb, ed. *Drones: International Development and Deployment of UAVs*. Boca Raton: CRC Press, 2019.

M. Rubin, “Evolution of Iranian surveillance strategies toward the internet and social media” for *Security Challenges in the Digital Age, Cyber Space, and Social Media*, Institute for Policy, Advocacy, and Governance, 2018

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M. Rubin, “Rogue Policy: Bush and Iran,” in David MacDonald, ed. *The Bush leadership, the Power of Ideas, and the War on Terror*. (New York: Ashgate Press, 2012).

- M. Rubin, "When Realities Collide: Why U.S. and Pakistani Threat Perceptions Clash," in Usama Butt and Julian Schofield, eds. *The Dynamics of the U.S.-Pakistan Future Relationship*. (New York: Pluto Press, 2011).
- M. Rubin, "Why Neoconservatism was and is right," in Thomas Von Osten-Sacken, ed. *The Betrayal of Freedom*. (Berlin: Verbrecher Verlag, 2010).
- M. Rubin, "Military Tactics are Essential for Fighting Terrorism," in Stuart Gottlieb, ed. *Debating Terrorism and Counterterrorism*. (Washington: CQ Press, 2009).
- M. Rubin, "How the Media Missed Religion in Iraq." In Paul Marshall, ed. *Blind Spot: When Journalists don't get Religion*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- M. Rubin, "Asymmetrical Threat Concept and its Reflections on International Security." In K. Padmaja. *Humanitarian Laws*. Hyderabad: Icfai University Press, 2008.
- M. Rubin, "Understanding Iranian Strategy in Afghanistan," in Cheryl Benard et al., *Afghanistan: State and Society; Great Power Politics; and the Way Ahead* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2008), pp. 11-16.
- M. Rubin, "Who is Responsible for the Taliban?" In Barry Rubin, ed. *Political Islam: Critical Concepts in Islamic Studies, Vol. III*, (New York: Routledge, 2007), pp. 121-140.
- M. Rubin and S. Gershowitz, "Political Strategies to Counter Terrorism." In Alison Pargeter, ed. *The Evolving Threat: International Terrorism in the post-9/11 Era*, (Rome: Globe, 2006), pp. 153-168.
- M. Rubin, "Forward," in Timothy Furnish. *Holiest Wars: Islamic Mahdis, Their Jihads, and Osama bin Laden*. (Westport: Praeger, 2005), pp. vii-viii.
- M. Rubin and S. Stern, "Recruit Academia," in Frank J. Gaffney, ed., *War Footing: 10 Steps America Must Take to Prevail in the War for the Free World*. (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2005), pp. 255-262.
- M. Rubin, "Iraq and the Democratization of the Middle East." In Fiamma Nirenstein, ed., *La Rivoluzione Democratica Contro Il Terrorismo*. (Rome: Panorama 2005), pp. 47-68.
- M. Rubin, "Tactical Terrorism: Iran's Continued Challenge to the Secular Middle East" In Oded Eran and Amnon Cohen, eds. *Israel, the Middle East, and Islam: Weighing the Risks and Prospects*. (Jerusalem: Truman Institute, 2003), pp. 37-50.
- M. Rubin, "Federalism and the Future of Iraq," in P. Clawson, ed. *How to Build a New Iraq*. (Washington: The Washington Institute, 2002), pp. 44-55.
- M. Rubin, "The Culture of Telegraph Workers in Iran." In Maria Szuppe, ed. *Iran: Questions et Connaissances*. (Paris: Association Pour l'Avancement des Études Iraniennes, 2002), pp. 349-369.

ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS

- M. Rubin, "How the Ayatollahs Battle America," *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, Fall 2018
- M. Rubin, "Creating the New Czar," *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, Summer 2018.
- M. Rubin, "The Enemy of an Enemy: Will the Kurds Benefit from Shifting American Alliances?" *Europa Ethnica*, Volumes 1-2 (2018): 31-39.
- M. Rubin, "The Temptation of Intelligence Politicization to Support Diplomacy," *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, 2016.
- M. Rubin, "Baluchistan." *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern World*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- M. Rubin, "Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini." *International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences*. New York: MacMillan Library Reference, 2007.
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- M. Rubin, "Are Kurds a Pariah Minority?" *Social Research*. Spring 2003. pp. 295-330.
- M. Rubin, "Iraq," in Avraham Sela, ed. *Political Encyclopedia of the Middle East*. (New York: Continuum, 2002).
- M. Rubin, "Ansare Hezbollah," in Avraham Sela, ed., *Political Encyclopedia of the Middle East*. (New York: Continuum, 2002).
- M. Rubin, "Ayatollah Sayyed Ali Hossein-e Khamenei," in Avraham Sela, ed., *Political Encyclopedia of the Middle East*. (New York: Continuum, 2002).
- M. Rubin, "Reza Pahlavi," in Avraham Sela, ed., *Political Encyclopedia of the Middle East*. (New York: Continuum, 2002).
- M. Rubin, "The Telegraph, Espionage, and Cryptology in 19th Century Iran." *Cryptologia*. January 2001. pp. 18-36.
- M. Rubin, "A Report on the Library of the Ministry of Culture, as-Sulaymaniyyah, Iraq." *Iranian Studies*. Fall 1999. pp. 627-630.
- M. Rubin, "A Report on the National Archive of Afghanistan." *Iranian Studies*. Fall 1999. pp. 631-632.
- M. Rubin, "The Telegraph and Frontier Politics: Modernization and the Demarcation of Iran's Borders." *Comparative Studies of South Asia, the Middle East, and Africa*. Fall 1998. pp. 59-72.

M. Rubin, "Stumbling through the Open Door': American Policy Toward Iran, 1920-1925."

Iranian Studies. Summer 1995, pp. 203-229.

SELECTED POLICY JOURNAL ARTICLES

M. Rubin, "Turkey's Coming Chaos," *National Review*, June 12, 2017.

M. Rubin, "What's Next if Assad Fails," *Commentary Magazine*, August 2012.

M. Rubin, "Syria's Path to Islamist Terror," *Middle East Quarterly*, Winter 2010.

M. Rubin, "Who are Iran's rogues?" *Middle East Quarterly*, Autumn 2008. pp. 37-48.

M. Rubin, "Lebanon's Tenuous Transformation." *Aspenia* (Rome). October 2005. pp. 129-137.

M. Rubin, "What are Iran's Priorities?" *Middle East Review of International Affairs*. June 2002. pp. 25-39.

TESTIMONY

M. Rubin, "'The Trouble with Turkey,'" Republican Policy Committee, August 15, 2018.

M. Rubin, "Protecting America from a Bad Deal: Ending US Participation in Nuclear Agreement with Iran," House Oversight Committee, National Security subcommittee, June 6, 2018.

M. Rubin, "Fueling Terror: The Dangers of Ransom Payments to Iran," House Financial Services Committee, September 8, 2016.

M. Rubin, "How White House spin undercuts US national security," House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, May 17, 2016.

M. Rubin, "The Looming Iranian Threat to Israel," House Foreign Affairs Committee, Subcommittees on Terrorism, Non-Proliferation and Trade and Middle East and South Asia, April 19, 2016.

M. Rubin, "U.S. Policy towards the Islamic State after its Seizure of Ramadi and Palmyra," House Foreign Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Middle East and South Asia, June 3, 2015.

M. Rubin, "Iran's Noncompliance with its International Atomic Energy Agency Obligations," House Foreign Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Middle East and North Africa, March 24, 2015.

M. Rubin, "The Fatah-Hamas Reconciliation: Threatening Peace Prospects," Middle East Subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, February 5, 2013.

M. Rubin, "Iranian Influence in the South Caucasus," House Foreign Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Europe and Eurasia, December 5, 2012.

M. Rubin, "Challenges from Iran and Turkey," Testimony before joint meeting of Senate Defense and Foreign Affairs Committee, Canberra, Australia, June 21, 2011.

M. Rubin. "Turkey's New Foreign Policy Direction: Implications for U.S.-Turkish Relations," House Foreign Affairs Committee, July 28, 2010.

- M. Rubin, "Iran: Recent Developments and Their Implications for U.S. Policy," House Foreign Affairs Committee, July 22, 2009.
- M. Rubin, "Iranian Policy Options," Testimony before the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Canberra, Australia. September 2008.
- M. Rubin, "The Extension of the United Nations Mandate for Iraq: What is the Role of the Iraqi Parliament?" House Foreign Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on International Organizations, Human Rights, and Oversight, January 23, 2008.
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- M. Rubin, "U.S. Policy Options in Iraq," House Foreign Affairs Committee, July 17, 2007.

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- M. Rubin, "Will Fuad Hussein's appointment as finance minister sink Abdul-Mahdi's reform efforts?" 1001 Iraqi Thoughts, October 28, 2018.
- M. Rubin, "Here's how we can make Turkey's president pay a price for his crackdown on journalists," *Washington Post*, April 5, 2018.
- M. Rubin, "Does Speaking up for Iranians Advance Democracy?" *McClatchy-Tribune Syndicate*, January 17, 2018.
- M. Rubin, "Six Things You Need to Know about Iran Protests," *Washington Examiner*, January 8, 2018.
- M. Rubin, "'Spontaneous' violence in the Middle East? Don't be fooled," *Washington Examiner*, December 6, 2017.
- M. Rubin, "Why Reza Zarrab guilty plea matters to Turkey and the World," *Washington Examiner*, November 28, 2017.
- M. Rubin, "The Iran nuclear deal weakness that even Republicans ignore," *Washington Examiner*, November 9, 2017.
- M. Rubin, "There's too much at stake in Afghanistan for Trump to fail," *Washington Examiner*, August 21, 2017.
- M. Rubin, "The Endless Errors in U.S. Korea Policy That Has Brought Us to the Brink of Nuclear War," *Newsweek*, August 10, 2017.
- M. Rubin, "Is the CIA About to Dump a Key Kurdish Ally? The Spooks Are Spooked," *Newsweek*, July 28, 2017.
- M. Rubin, "Which Country Today Is Most Like Orwell's 1984 Authoritarian Nightmare?" *Newsweek*, July 15, 2017.
- M. Rubin, "An Independent Kurdistan Would be a Failed State," *Newsweek*, July 4, 2017.

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M. Rubin, "Manchester Bombing Highlights UN Hypocrisy on Terror," *Washington Examiner*, May 23, 2017.

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M. Rubin, "Is removing Syrian President Bashar Assad from power key to defeating the Islamic State?" *McClatchy-Tribune*, April 20, 2017.

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M. Rubin, "How Erdogan Rigged the Election That Makes Him a Dictator," *Newsweek*, April 19, 2017.

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M. Rubin, "Why Have the Kurds Got Into Bed With Putin?" *Newsweek*, April 12, 2017.

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M. Rubin, "Trump's strike on Syria a direct hit on Putin's MidEast power," *New York Post*, April 8, 2017.

M. Rubin, "Trump's Missile Strikes Could Help End Syria's Civil War," *Fortune*, April 7, 2017.

M. Rubin, "What Trump Could do to Punish Assad," *New York Daily News*, April 6, 2017.

M. Rubin, "Spain's Land Grab in Gibraltar is Pure Hypocrisy," *Newsweek*, April 5, 2017.

M. Rubin, "NATO Members Defeat, Don't Launder, Terrorism," *Washington Times*, April 5, 2017.

M. Rubin, "Iran and Turkey Pose Problems for Trump in Syria," *Lawfare*, March 29, 2017.

M. Rubin, "Erdogan Uses Dutch as a Distraction," *Newsweek*, March 15, 2017.

- M. Rubin, "What Will Trump Do About Obama's Iran Ransom Deal?" *Newsweek*, February 27, 2017.
- M. Rubin, "Are Our Top Spies Hiding Intelligence Info From Trump?" *Newsweek*, February 22, 2017.
- M. Rubin, "Flynn's fall should have the intel community in the hot seat," *New York Post*, February 15, 2017.
- M. Rubin, "Border walls have a history of doing their jobs," *Washington Examiner*, February 6, 2017.
- M. Rubin, "Manning move is Obama's latest betrayal of US ideals," *New York Post*, January 18, 2017.
- M. Rubin, "Iran's Rafsanjani was no Moderate," *Newsweek*, January 9, 2017.
- M. Rubin, "Deceased Iranian President Rafsanjani was No Moderate," *Washington Examiner*, January 8, 2017.
- M. Rubin, "Aleppo sold out by the 'human rights' community's moral hypocrisy," *The Hill*, December 16, 2016.
- M. Rubin, "How diplomatic shortsightedness a decade ago empowers Hezbollah today," *AEI Ideas*, August 11, 2016.
- M. Rubin, "Yemen 2015 is Lebanon 2008, an Iranian triumph," *AEI Ideas*, January 22, 2015.
- M. Rubin, "From Baghdad to Beirut, Arab Leaders Being Held to Account." *The Forward*. October 27, 2005.

SELECTED OTHER POLICY ANALYSIS

- M. Rubin, "Iran: How the Legal System Should Approach Cyberspace," Foreign Military Studies Office, *Operational Environment Watch*, October 2017.
- M. Rubin, "Iran: Ex-IRGC Leader Targets UAE," Foreign Military Studies Office, *Operational Environment Watch*, October 2017.
- M. Rubin, "Iran says it's among World's Top Radar Producers," Foreign Military Studies Office, *Operational Environment Watch*, October 2017.
- M. Rubin, "Iran: Launch Officially Opens Space Facility," Foreign Military Studies Office, *Operational Environment Watch*, September 2017.
- M. Rubin, "Iran: Cyber Crime Increases 45 percent," Foreign Military Studies Office, *Operational Environment Watch*, September 2017.
- M. Rubin, "Iran and Iraq sign Defense Memorandum of Understanding," Foreign Military Studies Office, *Operational Environment Watch*, September 2017.
- M. Rubin, "Western Sahara: The Cherry Blossom Affair," Foreign Military Studies Office,

- Operational Environment Watch*, September 2017.
- M. Rubin, "Iran: Production Line Opens for New Sayyad-3 Missile," Foreign Military Studies Office, *Operational Environment Watch*, September 2017.
- M. Rubin, "Iran: IRGC Training in China," Foreign Military Studies Office, *Operational Environment Watch*, September 2017.
- M. Rubin, "Iran: Qods Force Commander Brags about American Casualties," Foreign Military Studies Office, *Operational Environment Watch*, September 2017.
- M. Rubin, "Iran Officially Opposes Kurdish Independence Referendum," Foreign Military Studies Office, *Operational Environment Watch*, September 2017.
- M. Rubin, "Is Iran Facing Insurgency Upswing?" Foreign Military Studies Office, *Operational Environment Watch*, September 2017.
- M. Rubin, "Iran: Army Unveiled Video Game," Foreign Military Studies Office, *Operational Environment Watch*, September 2017.
- M. Rubin, "Iran: Budget Increases for Missiles, Qods Force," Foreign Military Studies Office, *Operational Environment Watch*, August 2017.
- M. Rubin, "Iran: Rouhani Commends Iranian Missile Developers," Foreign Military Studies Office, *Operational Environment Watch*, August 2017.
- M. Rubin, "Iran Suspends Flights to Najaf, Iraq," Foreign Military Studies Office, *Operational Environment Watch*, August 2017.
- M. Rubin, "Iranian Reformist: Terrorism is an American Plot," Foreign Military Studies Office, *Operational Environment Watch*, July 2017.
- M. Rubin, "Iran: Why Has Qatar Approached Us?" Foreign Military Studies Office, *Operational Environment Watch*, July 2017.
- M. Rubin, "Iran: Khamenei Speaks on Voter Participation," Foreign Military Studies Office, *Operational Environment Watch*, July 2017.
- M. Rubin, "Iran: Military Budget Increased 145%," Foreign Military Studies Office, *Operational Environment Watch*, June 2017.
- M. Rubin, "Iran: Qods Force General is new Ambassador to Iraq," Foreign Military Studies Office, *Operational Environment Watch*, June 2017.
- M. Rubin, "Iran Unveils New Sniper Rifle," Foreign Military Studies Office, *Operational Environment Watch*, June 2017.
- M. Rubin, "Iran and Russia Upgrade Cooperation," Foreign Military Studies Office, *Operational Environment Watch*, May 2017.
- M. Rubin, "Development of Iranian Nanotechnology Companies in China," Foreign Military

- Studies Office, *Operational Environment Watch*, May 2017.
- M. Rubin, "Iran Claims Enhanced Missile Precision," Foreign Military Studies Office, *Operational Environment Watch*, May 2017.
- M. Rubin, "Iran: IRGC conducting Training by Fire in Syria," Foreign Military Studies Office, *Operational Environment Watch*, April 2017.
- M. Rubin, "New Valfajr Torpedo Launched from Ghadir Submarine," Foreign Military Studies Office, *Operational Environment Watch*, April 2017.
- M. Rubin, "Iran Demonstrates New Minesweeping," Foreign Military Studies Office, *Operational Environment Watch*, April 2017.
- M. Rubin, "Iranian Competitive Soft Power Curriculum," Foreign Military Studies Office, *Operational Environment Watch*, March 2017.
- M. Rubin, "Iran: Domestic Weapons Production up 69 percent," Foreign Military Studies Office, *Operational Environment Watch*, March 2017.
- M. Rubin, "Iran: Who are our Enemies?" Foreign Military Studies Office, *Operational Environment Watch*, March 2017.
- M. Rubin, "Iran: U.S. Presence in Bahrain in the Crosshairs?" Foreign Military Studies Office, *Operational Environment Watch*, March 2017.
- M. Rubin, "Iran Internet Use Expands Exponentially," Foreign Military Studies Office, *Operational Environment Watch*, February 2017.
- M. Rubin, "Iran Navy Now Hiring," Foreign Military Studies Office, *Operational Environment Watch*, February 2017.
- M. Rubin, "Iran: Was Rafsanjani Murdered?" Foreign Military Studies Office, *Operational Environment Watch*, February 2017.
- M. Rubin, "Iran: New Karrar Tank to be Unveiled Soon," Foreign Military Studies Office, *Operational Environment Watch*, January 2017.
- M. Rubin, "Iran Ultralight Gyrocopter Crashes," Foreign Military Studies Office, *Operational Environment Watch*, January 2017.
- M. Rubin, "Iran Building High-Speed Catamaran," Foreign Military Studies Office, *Operational Environment Watch*, January 2017.
- M. Rubin, "European Commission Accuses Algeria of Embezzling Aid," Foreign Military Studies Office, *Operational Environment Watch*, March 2015.
- M. Rubin, "Iranian Commanders Are in Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine," Foreign Military Studies Office, *Operational Environment Watch*, November 2014.
- M. Rubin, "Iran to Help Lebanon Counter Terrorism," Foreign Military Studies Office,

Operational Environment Watch, September 2014.

M. Rubin, "Will Ansar-e Hezbollah Rise Again?" Foreign Military Studies Office, *Operational Environment Watch*, June 2013.

M. Rubin, "The Enduring Iran-Syria-Hezbollah Axis," *AEI Middle Eastern Outlook*, December 2009.

SELECTED CONFERENCE PAPERS AND PRESENTATIONS

"Social and Political Issues along the Highway One Corridor," U.S. Navy SEAL Team 7, Coronado, California, November 26, 2018.

"What Posture Should the U.S. Embrace toward Iran?" Harvard University Hamilton Society, Cambridge, Massachusetts, October 29, 2018.

"The Future Strategic Posture of the United States toward the Strait of Hormuz," Diplomatic Academy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Muscat, Oman, October 16, 2018.

"New Threats and Future Opportunities of the New World Economy," Dakhla, Western Sahara, Morocco, December 7, 2017.

"The Future of Iran's military," Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, June 12, 2017.

"The U.S. - Kurdish Collaboration in the Course of Reshaping the Middle East," Kurdish Policy Research Center conference, Washington, DC, May 25, 2017.

"Talk Ain't Cheap: The High Cost of Diplomacy with Enemies," Towson University Global Lecture Series, April 27, 2017.

"What should Trump be doing about ISIS?" Hamilton Society, Boston College, April 25, 2017.

"Restore or Revise: The Future of US-Israel Relations," Hamilton Society, University of Texas-Austin, April 4, 2017.

"New Developments in Hezbollah and Iran Arsenals," Temple Emanu-El, Palm Beach, Florida, March 29, 2017.

"Lessons from Failed Middle East Diplomacy," EMET Capitol Hill Conference, March 23, 2017.

"The Age of Hyper-Terrorism & 'Low cost' Terrorism," Marrakech Security Forum, Marrakech, February 2017.

"Terrorism and Militancy," Counterterrorism Investigations and Operations, FBI, Manassas, Virginia, January 11, 2017.

"Terrorism on our Doorstep," Awakening Conference, Sea Island, Georgia, January 7, 2017.

"What Role Should Western Powers have in Kurdistan?" European Parliament, Brussels, November 2016.

"Islam, Terrorism, Iran, and Hezbollah," FBI Field Office, Miramar, Florida, November 20, 2015.

"Islam, Terrorism, Iran, and Hezbollah," FBI Field Office, Houston, Texas, October 21, 2015.

"Islam, Terrorism, Iran, and Hezbollah," FBI Field Office, New York City, July 30, 2015.

- "The Expectations of the West with regard to the Turkey-Kurdish dispute," European Parliament, Brussels, December 2014.
- "Supporting the Global Campaign Against Terror," Counter Terrorism Expo, London, April 2012. "Over-the-Horizon Iranian Threats," U.S. Central Command, March 2012.
- "What Comes Next in the Arab Spring?" Phoenix Council on Foreign Relations, Scottsdale, Arizona, December 2011.
- "Problems in Kurdish-American Relations," *Luvin* Seminar, Sulaymani, Iraq, December 2010.
- "Can the United States Negotiate with the Taliban?" Williams College, Massachusetts, October 2010. "Determining Rogue vs. State-Sanctioned Behavior in Iran," National Counter Terrorism Center, Washington, DC, August 2010.
- "Iran 2025," International Future Operation Environment Seminar, Newport News, Virginia, June 2010.
- "The Challenge of Diplomacy with Iran," World Affairs Council of Houston, May 2009.
- "Can Diplomacy Tame Iran?" Kennedy Center Lecture, Brigham Young University, Utah, April 2009. Panelist, "Are the Revolutionary Guards rogue actors?" Center for Naval Analysis, Alexandria, Virginia, October 2008.
- "The Future of U.S.-Turkish Relations," Global Leadership Forum, Istanbul, Turkey, May 2008. "Are Muslim Values Compatible with those of the West?" Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and Prague Civic Forum, Prague, Czech Republic, October 2007.
- "Asymmetrical Threat Concept and its Reflections on International Security." Conference on New Dimensions of Security and International Organizations. Organized by Strategic Research and Study Center (SAREM) under the Turkish General Staff. Istanbul. May 2007.
- "Iranian Strategy in Iraq." Conference on "Iraq: Past and Present." University of Haifa. Israel. March 2007.
- "Current Threats from the Middle East," NATO Parliamentary Assembly, Quebec City, Canada, November 2006.
- "Saudi-Iranian Relations," Royal Danish Defense College, Copenhagen, October 2006. "Transformational Diplomacy," Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Training Department, Helsinki, Finland, March 2006.
- "Iran: New Challenges Ahead," Uppsala Association of International Affairs, Uppsala University, Uppsala, Sweden, March 2006.
- "U.S. Middle East Policy," University of Iceland, Reykjavik, March 2006.
- "Political Responses to Terrorism," Globe Research Institute, Rome, Italy, February 2006.
- "The Future of Iraq," Roundtable at the Office of National Assessment, Canberra, Australia. June 2004. "Ethnic Cleansing in Iraq? Arabization and the Kurds." The Gustav Heinemann

Institute of

Middle Eastern Studies. Conference on Forced Migration in a Comparative Perspective.

University of Haifa. June 2002.

"Current Developments in Northern Iraq," Diplomatic Academy, Vienna, May 2002.

"Communications during the Constitutional Revolution." Constitutional Revolution Conference.

Iranian Institute of Contemporary Historical Studies, Tehran, Iran. August 1999.

"U.S.-Iranian Relations in the 1920s." Institute of Political and International Studies. Tehran.
August 1996.

DECLARATION OF MICHAEL RUBIN**(28 U.S.C. § 1746)**

I, Michael Rubin, make the following declaration:

My Qualifications

Since April 2004, I have been a resident scholar in foreign and defense policy studies at the American Enterprise Institute, a private, non-profit think tank located in Washington, DC. From 2007 to the present, I have also worked as a senior lecturer at the Naval Postgraduate School, in Monterey, California. Since 2009, I have served as senior editor at the Middle East Quarterly, and between 2004 and 2009, I was chief editor of the same publication. I hold a Ph.D. in history from Yale University with a concentration in modern Iran; a Master's degree in history from Yale University; and a Bachelor of Science in biology and history from the same institution. I have previously taught both undergraduate and graduate degree students at Yale University, graduate degree students at Johns Hopkins University, and undergraduate students at both Hebrew University in Jerusalem and three universities in northern Iraq: The Universities of Sulaymani, Salahuddin, and Erbil.

Between 2002 and 2004, I worked on the Iraq and Iran desk at the Office of the Secretary of Defense as a Council on Foreign Relations' International Affairs Fellow, during the course of which I was seconded to Baghdad as a political advisor for the Coalition Provisional Authority. My job in Iraq was to roam the country without security in order to talk freely with Iraqis from across the ethnic, sectarian, and political spectrums to fact-check reporting from diplomats and officials assigned to Baghdad and individual provinces.

I have testified numerous times on issues relating to Iraq and the broader Middle East in the U.S. Congress and in Australia's parliament, and have appeared several hundred times on most

major U.S. television, cable, and radio networks, such as CNN, MSNBC, Fox, PBS, ABC, and NPR. In addition, I frequently appear on Arabic language television in the Middle East, including Al Jazeera, al-Arabiya, SkyNews Arabia and Al-Hurra, as well as a number of Iraqi and Iraqi Kurdish channels. Arabic, Turkish, Kurdish, and Persian newspapers from across the region and across the sectarian divide cite my analysis and commentary.

I have published widely about the Middle East in academic, peer-reviewed journals, and have delivered papers at conferences and seminars across the Middle East, including in Iraq, Iraqi Kurdistan, Turkey, and Iran. Over the course of my career, I have written and spoken about religious freedom for audiences such as *Commentary Magazine*, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom and Liberty University.

I also teach frequently about Iraq. On September 10 and 11, 2019, for example, I taught seminars for U.S. Navy SEAL Team 3 on issues relating to Iraqi Shi'ite militias, sectarian violence, security and stability in Iraq, and assessing continuing threats from the Islamic State. I had taught a similar seminar series in November 2018 for U.S. Navy SEAL Team 7. In May 2019, I deployed with the USS Boxer Amphibious Ready Group and 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit in order to teach classes during their Pacific Ocean transit on Iraqi politics and society, Kurdish politics and society, Shi'ite militias in Iraq, and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. I had taught similar seminars in December 2018, during the trans-Atlantic portion of the USS Kearsarge Amphibious Ready Group and 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit's deployment.

I traveled first to Iraqi Kurdistan in 2000 and to Baghdad-controlled Iraq in 2003, and have been a frequent visitor ever since. Beyond the period in which I taught in Iraq or was based in Iraq as a Defense Department employee, I have visited Iraq two or three times per year for approximately ten days per visit. I estimate my total time spent in Iraq and Iraqi Kurdistan exceeds

two years. My most recent trip to Iraq was in July 2019 at the invitation of Barham Salih, president of the Republic of Iraq, during which I visited Baghdad and Erbil, as well as northeastern (Kurdish-controlled) Syria. In addition to meeting President Salih, I also met with Minister of Defense Najah al-Shammari; Minister of Interior Yassin Taha al-Yassri; Ammar al-Hakim, head of the al-Hikma youth movement; Hadi Amiri, the head of the Badr Corps militia; Minister of Electricity Luay al-Khateeb; and Krikor Der-Hagopian, the senior aide to the president of Iraq and a member of Iraq's Christian community.

In October 2018, I traveled to Najaf and Karbala at the invitation of Sheikh Abdul-Mahdi al-Karbalai, the official representative of Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani inside Iraq, in order to speak at a conference inside the Shrine of Imam Hussein. During this trip, I also traveled to Sulaymani and Baghdad, where I met with Haider Abadi, the outgoing prime minister; Naufel Hassan, chief of staff both to Abadi and newly-installed Prime Minister Adil Abdul-Mahdi, Mustafa Kadhimy, the head of Iraqi National Intelligence Service; and I had a private dinner with Barham Salih, the newly-elected president of Iraq. In addition, I met with a number of civil society activists and opposition activists, including Wadhah Malik Kanaan al-Sadeed, a Sunni tribal leader whom U.S. forces had imprisoned at Camp Bucca.

When I visit Iraq, I travel in my capacity as a scholar at the American Enterprise Institute and as a private citizen. I fly on regularly-scheduled commercial flights into Iraqi airports; I have experience with the international airports in Baghdad, Basra, Najaf, Sulaymaniyah, and Erbil. I do not travel with private security contractors nor do I remain exclusively inside the international zone. I regularly travel through Iraqi checkpoints.

I have provided this declaration at the request of the Department of Homeland Security for use as it sees fit in its deliberative processes and in litigation.

Changes in Iraq and Iraqi Security

Iraq has changed dramatically over the past two years. Security within Iraq has improved dramatically. According to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI), in December 2018, 32 civilians died as a result of terrorism or political violence. This represents a more than 50 percent decline from December 2017, and a 90 percent drop from December 2016. Prime Minister Adil Abdul Mahdi has removed blast walls and checkpoints throughout Baghdad, including along the airport road. Iraqis—Shi'ite, Sunnis, and Christians—feel secure enough that they travel around not only Baghdad, but also Basra, Najaf, and Erbil using Careem, a ride-sharing service now owned by Uber. A generational shift is also underway: According to Iraq's ministry of planning, more than 40 percent of Iraqis were born after Saddam Hussein's ouster. Travelers can again buy alcohol in Baghdad International Airport's duty-free shop, Starbucks opened its first official franchise in Erbil, where women also peruse lingerie displays in storefront windows. Tripadvisor ranks more than 30 Baghdad hotels—many new or newly-renovated—and several dozen restaurants. Across the country, and especially after the defeat of the Islamic State, a wave of nationalism has united Iraqis and begun to erode the divisions left by previous dictatorship and post-war insurgency.

Of course, the news from Iraq was not always positive. One-in-six Iraqis fled their country during the rule of Saddam Hussein. Terrorism and political violence killed hundreds monthly from the launch of Operation Iraqi Freedom in March 2003 until June 2017, when the rate dropped precipitously. In the initial years after Saddam's fall, returning Iraqi Americans were conspicuous: differences in nutrition, lifestyle, and clothes made it hard for these returnees or visitors to blend in among Iraqis who had lived inside Iraq under Saddam Hussein. Such conspicuousness had a high cost, as it made returnees whom Iraqis assumed to be wealthy, targets for criminals and

kidnap-for-ransom syndicates. In addition, the presence of so many Iraqi Americans working for the Coalition Provisional Authority or the U.S. military led some Iraqis opposed to the U.S. presence to suspect all returning Iraqis of working for or cooperating with the U.S. military.

With the fall of Saddam Hussein's government, sectarianism increased in Iraqi political discourse. Saddam Hussein's Arab Socialist Baath Party was, in practice, staunchly anti-Shi'ite. His regime repressed Shi'ism, outlawed Shi'ite-oriented political parties, and sought to silence ayatollahs based in the Iraqi shrine cities of Najaf and Karbala. Saddam's ouster was like lifting a lid off a pressure cooker. Shi'ites gravitated overwhelmingly to political parties such as Da'wa or the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq, and populist leaders sought to impose their sectarian vision on Iraq. Sunni and Shi'ite sectarian militias waged a violent campaign against each other, often targeting civilians in mixed neighbors, towns, and villages, especially in the environs of Baghdad, along the Highway One corridor, and in the "Triangle of Death" south of the capital city.

While Shi'ite and Sunni militias focused their sectarian hatred on each other, Christians also fell victim to violence: They were collateral damage in mixed neighborhoods, Islamists forced the closure of alcohol shops (many of which have now re-opened), some criminal gangs kidnapped Christians for ransom believing family members in the West would supply high ransoms and, in 2010, Al Qaeda targeted a Syriac Catholic church in Baghdad.

Iraq today is far different from that of 2003 or, for that matter, 2008 or 2013. While there is still sporadic violence, given that Iraq's population now exceeds 39 million, UNAMI statistics and news reports suggest the chance of falling victim to terrorism or politically-motivated violence in any month is less than one in a million. Put another way, it is now less likely to be murdered in Baghdad or Erbil than in some high-crime American cities.

Just as crime in the United States differs from city to city and from neighborhood to neighborhood, so too does the threat of crime differ across Iraq. The U.S. State Department's Overseas Security Advisory Council 2019 Iraq report found "There is minimal risk from crime in Erbil" although it did assess that organized crime and corruption remain major problems in Baghdad. Organized crime differs from random street violence, however, and random criminally-motivated street violence is limited to specific neighborhoods like Sadr City, Bayiaa, and Furat, while districts such as Jadriya, Arasat, Karrada, Mansour, Adamiyah, and Kadhimiyah remain safe. As in U.S. cities, violence is often localized to specific neighborhoods and focused more on internal criminal disputes than on random passers-by.

Anecdotally, the decline in political violence and terrorism is reflected in new investment and a building boom in Baghdad and across Iraqi cities which were not damaged in the fight against the Islamic State. New malls modelled after those in Dubai, Europe, or the United States have opened in Baghdad, Erbil, and Sulaymani. High-end coffee shops and a diverse array of restaurants are opening weekly. Women and children shop or walk in the streets without escort. The famous weekly book market on Mutanabbi Street is doing unprecedented business; even new Iraqi President Barham Salih has strolled among its stalls. Traffic, however, has increased as infrastructure is unable to keep up with Iraq's population boom and growing affluence.

U.S. State Department travel warnings—the most recent issued May 15, 2019—continue to warn American citizens to avoid all travel to Iraq. Such warnings appear based more on concern that the Iranian government might target American officials than as a reflection of danger to ordinary Iraqis. The statement that "Attacks by improvised explosive devices (IEDs) occur in many areas of the country, including Baghdad," does not appear to have a statistical basis and,

indeed, contradicts recent UN and Iraqi statistics. The World Bank's April 2019 "Iraq's Economic Update" also cited "a notable improvement in security conditions" in 2018.

Beyond security, living standards in Iraq continue to improve. The World Bank has reported life expectancy at birth for Iraqis to have improved every year for more than a decade: In 2017, it surpassed 70 years. According to the Central Intelligence Agency's World Fact Book, Iraqi life expectancy is now on par with Thailand and Turkey, and surpasses that of Brazil, Jamaica, and Vietnam. The UN Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation has reported that Iraq's infant mortality rate is also at an all-time low and is less than India, South Africa, Ethiopia and Kenya. Iraq still faces difficulty ensuring sufficient electricity, especially during the summer months when demand outpaces supply. This is less the result of wartime damage and more a reflection of population growth and Iraq's growing consumer economy.

The general increase in wealth and living standards of Iraqis means that returnees who may have stood out a decade ago, no longer do; the large number of returning and visiting Iraqis have normalized their presence. Baghdad International Airport welcomes more than 50 international flights daily from major airlines including Qatar Airways, Turkish Airlines, Royal Jordanian, and Egypt Air. European carriers like Austrian Air and Lufthansa fly direct to Erbil, in Iraqi Kurdistan. Additionally, growing wealth in Iraqi society and the corollary consumption of Western goods makes the presence of Western clothing, cosmetics, cars, and other symbols of wealth less of an issue.

While some diplomats and Iraqi government officials have previously opposed forcible return of Iraqis to Iraq, and some continue to do so, the Iraqi government as a whole has, since 2016, committed to receive returnees at the highest levels. Fareed Yasin, the Iraqi ambassador to

the United States, for example, has said he opposes the policy, especially for those who have spent the bulk of their lives in the United States, but nevertheless cooperates with it.

The change in Iraq's government as a result of the May 2018 elections, Iraq's fourth consecutive democratic transfer of power, has not changed Iraqi policies toward returnees. The willingness at the most senior levels to accept such returnees and the procedures put in place to handle such returnees transcend Iraqi administrations as both the Iraqi diplomats involved in such cases and who issue papers from embassies abroad are professional civil servants rather than political appointees. They accept the directions provided by the senior level officials. The priority of the new Iraqi government is to focus on better provision of government services and rooting out corruption rather than expending diplomatic effort with the United States in revising previous commitments with regard to returnees.

Iraqis who have returned to Iraq from host countries in the West have not suffered adverse consequences. The United Kingdom's Home Office, for example, has tracked returnees from Great Britain and found no evidence of any harm coming to any returnee. Its October 2018 report, "Country Policy and Information Note, Iraq: Internal Relocation, Civil Documentation and Returns," for example, found that, "Since the introduction of the new system (i.e. not to return on EU letters [and the capturing of biometric data at the airport upon arrival]), there have been no detentions upon arrival in Iraq. With so many checks and balances, in our opinion, the new revised procedures will prevent a returnee being detained upon arrival as they have adequate documentary evidence of their identity and nationality."

Likewise, the Australian government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)'s October 9, 2018 "Country Information Report" for Iraq observed that many Iraqis who sought asylum in Australia returned to Iraq within months to marry or establish businesses. While DFAT

did not report any violence perpetrated against Iraqi returnees, it did note that they faced “difficulties in assimilating back into their communities,” especially if they did not return to their family’s town or region of origin.

According to the Finnish Immigration Service, 449 Iraqis voluntarily returned from Finland to Iraq in 2018; in comparison, only 18 Afghans voluntarily returned from Finland to Afghanistan, and 11 Somalis returned from Finland to Somalia. In the Finnish Immigration Service report, Tarja Rantala, project manager of the Auda project, which supports voluntary return, explained the disparity between returns of Iraqis and returns from other nationalities. “When things back home [in Iraq] seemed to have calmed down, some asylum seekers felt that going back to their children or to sick parents would be more meaningful than sitting around in a reception centre,” she said. In December 2018, however, one Iraqi who returned from Finland was shot and killed, although the circumstances of that case remain unclear.

Indeed, far from suffering detention or mistreatment upon arrival, a senior Iraqi National Intelligence Service (INIS) official said that the INIS quietly gives stipends to those who are forcibly returned from the United States in order to enable them to maintain a basic standard of living and to resist recruitment by criminal elements. I am aware through documents prepared to assist with litigation in the matter of *Hamama v. Adducci*, No. 17-cv-11910 (E.D. Mich.) and shared, in redacted form, with me by attorneys for ICE, that since May 1, 2018, ICE has removed 74 individuals to Iraq using both commercial and charter flights. I have not personally heard of any of these individuals being detained or mistreated upon arrival. In one well-publicized and incident, Jimmy Aldaoud, an Iraqi returnee from the United States arrived in Najaf rather than Baghdad. Airport officials bent over backwards to find an English translator, find him a hotel, and organize transportation onward to Baghdad. Tragically, he subsequently passed away although

press reports suggest that he had refused multiple attempts by his Iraqi contacts to enter a hospital when he became ill.

Screening Criteria

It is natural that the Iraqi government will seek to assess returnees to ensure they pose no threat to Iraqi security. Deportees returning to Baghdad International Airport or Erbil International Airport are likely to be questioned only to ascertain who they are and the circumstances by which they left Iraq. Security and intelligence officials will be seeking to determine if they worked in the government under Saddam Hussein, if they had been a senior member of the Baath Party, if they had gone absent without leave from the Iraqi military, and if they had criminal convictions inside Iraq. The priority of both the Iraqi Interior Ministry and Iraq's intelligence services is counterterrorism inside Iraq; there is neither capacity nor desire to adjudicate nor seek revenge for crimes which occurred outside Iraq.

At the same time, growing professionalism within the government has largely negated the risk that returnees will have trouble upon their return. Security forces and screeners at the airport no longer have functional autonomy. Popular Mobilization Forces or other militias independent from government control do not control airports. That, and the passage of time, has resulted in a more professional rather than haphazard system.

Returnees might fear detention if they are suspected of committing serious criminal offenses *inside Iraq*, like murder or rape. Those who belonged to the Baath Party at a *firqa* or above level, that is, at a level that would require actual complicity rather than simply membership as a convenience, would not be detained but would be banned from civil service positions. Low-level bureaucrats in the former administration need not otherwise fear retribution.

While Iraqis will seek to determine previous military status, the issue of desertion no longer carries the legal ramifications it once did. Iraqis were subject to conscription under Baath Party rule, but conscription inside Iraq ended in 2003. Iraq today relies upon voluntary military service among males aged 18 to 40. Iraqi screeners may ask military-aged returnees whether or not they had served with the Iraqi military.

Many Iraqi soldiers went absent without leave (AWOL) during the fight against coalition forces seeking to liberate Kuwait in 1991 (Operation Desert Storm); in the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 (Operation Iraqi Freedom); and against the backdrop of the 2014 rise of the Islamic State. There would be no consequences for those who deserted their posts during the Saddam-era and, indeed, in most situations following it unless the returnee was a flag officer. Indeed, many who deserted between 1991 and 2003 fled to Iraqi Kurdistan which was not under the control of Saddam Hussein's regime. Many of the Kurdish authorities who welcomed them into the region at that point in time are now in senior positions within the Iraqi government. A former Republican Guard officer personally well-known to me who deserted the Republican Guard just prior to the 1990 invasion of Kuwait and who subsequently sought shelter in Erbil, Iraqi Kurdistan, has since traveled across Iraq without difficulty.

In 2003, the Iraqi army largely disintegrated as U.S.-led forces entered Iraq. Conscripts returned home as Iraq's army collapsed, and U.S.-led forces fired senior officers who had been appointed by Saddam Hussein. Those on "the deck of cards" suspected of human rights violations or war crimes were detained. Middle-ranked officers were invited to rejoin the constituted army. There has been no action taken against those who deserted in this period and there has been no action by the post-Saddam government taken against those who deserted their posts under Saddam Hussein.

In January 2015, Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi offered amnesty to those who had left their units during the fight against the Islamic State so long as they returned within 30 days. This makes it likely that Interior Ministry employees and security screeners who meet returnees at an airport or border crossing checkpoint will seek to determine if they had an honorable discharge from the Iraqi military, if they had served in it from 2014 to the present. Any Iraqi who has resided in America prior to the rise of the Islamic State, however, will not fall under such concerns as they were not present during the fight against the Islamic State.

Assessment of Popular Mobilization Forces

The Popular Mobilization Forces (*Hashd al-Shaabi*, PMF) are militias which arose largely in response to Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani's call to defend Iraq against the threat of the Islamic State. It is wrong to suggest that all PMF units are pro-Iranian sectarian militias or, for that matter, are as a whole Shi'ite. Indeed, up to 15 percent of PMF members are Sunni Muslim or Christian. Many Iraqis also point out that the PMF is not born out of sectarian animus. When, in 2006, Al Qaeda terrorists bombed the al-Askari shrine in Samarra, they hoped to spark a sectarian war. In the wake of the bombing, Sistani forbade sectarian reprisal. It was only after Sunni terrorists threatened the entire population of Mosul—a largely Sunni city—that Sistani called for Iraqis to take up arms.

Many PMF members joined only to defeat the Islamic State; many of these have since decommissioned, although tens of thousands more remain in various PMF units. In Karbala, I have watched new PMF volunteers arrive for their basic training. They appeared to range in age from 15 to 60 and sought only to defend their country rather than wage sectarian war. Across Baghdad and southern Iraq, businesses hang fliers and posters bearing the image of employees who

volunteered and died fighting the Islamic State. While Western reporters often generalize PMF as pro-Iranian sectarian militias, many Iraqis who are not pro-Iranian and who do not prioritize sectarianism lionize them for providing defense within days of the Islamic State's capture of Mosul. In contrast, it took at least two months for the deployment or transfer of the bulk of U.S. assistance. Simply put, the PMF broadly have the same reputation among Iraqis that the Kurdish *peshmerga* have among Kurds; that is, a group which made tremendous sacrifices in order to prevent a far greater genocide. The PMF have been formally folded into the Iraqi military command structure and are no longer informal operators.

It is incorrect to say that all Shi'ite organizations are anti-American. Many opposed U.S. military occupation of Iraq but, since the departure of U.S. forces, many have expressed willingness to work and cooperate with the United States and American officials. Successive U.S. ambassadors, for example, have met with Badr Corps head Hadi Amiri. Likewise, I am a frequent visitor to the Universities of Baghdad, Basra, and Karbala. With the departure of U.S. forces, anti-American attitudes have also declined considerably. Iraqis of all ethnicities and religious identities openly seek fellowships like the Fulbright to study in the United States and return without difficulty or penalty. Many Iraqis pointed out that when riots erupted in the southern city of Basra in September 2018, it was the Iranian consulate which Shi'ite protestors targeted and burned.

That said, there has been Iranian penetration of certain Shi'ite militias, such as *Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq* (AAH) and *Kata'ib Hezbollah* (KH), the latter of which the Deputy Secretary of State designated in 2009 as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) under Section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act, as amended (INA).

Most estimates—including those of members of the Iraqi government—suggest that 25-30 percent of PMF members belong to units which are compromised if not under the operational control of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Iraqi government tolerates these units only because they cannot defeat them outright and do not wish to precipitate a fight with Iran. That said, the Iraqi government have worked in recent years to quarantine and roll back the influence of pro-Iranian units.

The PMF itself has been brought under the umbrella of the Ministry of Defense which furthers its accountability and increases coordination. In effect, most PMF have subordinated themselves to central control, and groups like AAH and KH operate more autonomously although within well-defined limits. The Iraqi government position is that they will guarantee and defend the right of PMF forces to include AAH and KH to operate openly in Iraq, so long as they operate under the law. However, the Iraqi government specifically will not extend any protection to the groups should they operate beyond Iraq's borders, for example, in Syria.

On July 1, 2019, Prime Minister Adil Abdul-Mahdi issued an executive order to rein in the militias. While that order lays out a path for asserting more government control over the militias, the order does not extend to training and recruitment and so it is likely many militias will retain separate identities.

While the political influence of the PMFs are substantial, they do not overwhelm. Hadi al-Amiri, commander of the Badr Corps and a former minister of transportation, was unable to translate a strong electoral showing into the premiership because of widespread unease at his relationship with Iran.

There is no indication that the PMF have identified let alone targeted returnees, nor do they identify such returnees as spies. Exaggerations about PMF conduct were frequent themes of Iraqi Kurdish region propaganda in 2017 as tension increased with regard to the Kurdistan independence referendum. Many of the statements offered by the Kurdistan Regional Government at the time seemed geared to sway American opinion but were not based in fact. Some of those propagating anti-Shi'ite accusations were bitter because of their own political misfortunes. For example, Najmiddin Karim, who lost his position as governor of Kirkuk against the backdrop of the 2017 referendum, and also Hoshiyar Zebari, a former Iraqi foreign and finance minister (and uncle to Kurdish leader Masoud Barzani) whom the Iraqi parliament impeached on corruption charges in 2016, are examples of two individuals who propagated anti-Shi'ite sentiments with questionable personal motivation.

During the fight against the Islamic State, there have been credible reports of human rights violations perpetrated by all parties—Islamic State, Iraqi Army, PMF, and Kurdish *peshmerga*. This is reflected in the State Department's annual human rights reports. Independent human rights groups, Iraqi officials, and journalists have also said that certain PMF units and Kurdish *peshmerga* have been guilty of reprisals against captured alleged Islamic State fighters. Standards of evidence have undercut the ability to prosecute in some cases, especially when there are no independent witnesses to the episode. Importantly, however, as the Iraqi government has regained control of most territory controlled by the Islamic State and the fight against the Islamic State shifts to a more traditional counterinsurgency campaign, the Iraqi government has cracked down on PMF excesses and investigated crimes, and has begun to prosecute abuses. In 2016, for example, the Iraqi government investigated 20 cases of PMF alleged abuse. Iraqi government officials say they have subsequently investigated other cases, although it is difficult to pin down exact figures.

The State Department's "2018 Report on International Religious Freedom" does say that "Christians reported harassment and abuse at numerous PMF-operated checkpoints, restricting their movement in and around several Christian towns on the Ninewa Plain." The report also stated that "Christians in PMF-controlled towns reported harassment of Christian women by PMF members. They also said elements of the central government in Baghdad were attempting to facilitate demographic change by providing land and housing for Shia and Sunni Muslims to move into traditionally Christian areas."

Such complaints are not limited to any particular sectarian group, however, and reflect more a problem of militias trying to increase political influence and less one of sectarian motivation. On July 19, 2019, for example, Vice President Mike Pence announced sanctions against several militia leaders under the Magnitsky Act, including Rayan Al Kildani, a Christian who leads the 50th Brigade Babylon militia.

Iraqi government officials acknowledge that PMF presence often chafes locals which is why Iraqi authorities have removed PMF units from areas they entered during the fight against the Islamic State. The State Department report acknowledges that there has not been interference in Christian or other minority religious practices. Christians within the Iraqi government have said that some religious leaders and Diaspora activists exaggerate claims about discrimination for fear that relating them with greater accuracy might undercut both fundraising to rebuild areas damaged in the conflict with the Islamic State and also undermine the special status for Christians who wish to emigrate for economic purposes.

There are also reports of PMF reaching across sectarian lines to provide aid and assistance. Indeed, it is important not to exaggerate sectarianism. In general, Sunni Arabs displaced from their

homes by the rise of the Islamic State and subsequent conflict report better security and integration in areas controlled by Shi'ite Arabs than they do in Iraqi Kurdistan. The 2018 elections in Iraq were marked by multiple political groupings which spanned ethnic and sectarian lines. In October 2018, civil society leaders in Karbala, for example, pointed out that Christian politicians had campaigned openly in the province prior to the May 2018 vote as part of broader political coalitions and they said they had garnered significant votes from the largely Shi'ite province who were dissatisfied with the record of the incumbent government and parties.

Regardless, the end of active combat against the Islamic State has meant increased accountability for the PMF. Recognizing that the perception of sectarianism also undercuts stability, the government is mindful to restrict sectarian militias from any permanent role in areas that consider them hostile. It is important also to recognize that some journalists and diplomats jump to conclusions with regard to PMF deployments. Take, for example, complaints about PMF presence in and around Tel Afar: Press reports imply that Shi'ite militias from southern Iraq have deployed north. In reality, the PMF units operating around Tel Afar are comprised largely of natives of Tel Afar and its environs.

The Case of the Christians

Most Christians in Iraq belong to the Chaldean or Assyrian church, communities which have been in Iraq for centuries if not millennia, and are recognized by Iraqi society at large as part of Iraq's heritage. In 2018, the Iraqi Ministry of Finance undertook the first major redesign of Iraq's currency in 15 years, replacing a symbol bearing the Ikhlas Surah from the Quran—a Muslim symbol—with an Assyrian star on the 1,000 Dinar note. The move was deliberate, in order to reinforce and endorse recognition of the Christian heritage of Iraq. The decision for such a

redesign rested with Abdul Razzaq al-Issa, a Najaf-born Shi'ite politician who also served as the president of Kufa University. I have met church leaders not only in Iraqi Kurdistan, but also in Baghdad, Karbala, and Basra, the latter two cities in predominantly Shi'ite southern Iraq.

For the past several years, Iraq's Shi'ite-majority government and security forces have worked to secure Christian churches and Christian neighborhoods. Iraqi leaders symbolically stand with the Christian population rather than incite against them. The Iraqi first lady and prime minister, for example, have paid respects publicly to the Christian community following attacks. The Iraqi President's chief policy advisor is also a Christian. His appointment was not due to any confessional quota, but rather a reflection of widespread acceptance of Christians by non-Christian Iraqis. While many Christian activist organizations and groups often highlight and perhaps exaggerate difficulties faced by the Christian community, many of the same groups also publicize the rebuilding or restoration of churches damaged by the now-ousted Islamic State and the return of Christians to villages they abandoned against the backdrop of the Islamic State's rise. In some cases, Muslims in Mosul hid Christian relics and books at risk of death to prevent their destruction at the hands of the Islamic State.

While the Islamic State and other Sunni-led radical organizations like Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia have sought to conduct ethnic cleansing if not genocide against Iraqi Christians, it would be incorrect to conflate the Islamic State and other terrorist groups with the elected Iraqi government. It is the elected Iraqi government which is now in control of Iraq. The defeat of the Islamic State, therefore, increases the security for Christians broadly throughout the country. Because Christians and Christian parties are not seen as a political threat anywhere in Iraq, they are largely immune from politically-motivated violence.

In Iraqi Kurdistan, of course, the Christian community has long been secure. The Kurdistan Regional Government has long bragged about its freedom of religion and the safety it offers both for Iraqi minorities—Christians, Yazidis, Kakais, and others—and for Westerners. Because they have made so many public statements and offered assurances of their partnership to American officials, the Kurdistan Regional Government would be hard-pressed to reject the return of Iraqi Christians into areas they control. Both Erbil and Sulaymani maintain international airports which receive both commercial and charter flights, and Christians returning to areas controlled by the Kurdistan Regional Government would not encounter any PMF. Many Christians from Baghdad or points south have chosen to resettle in northern Iraq for this reason rather than emigrate from Iraq. The Kurdish Regional Government often brags about its status as a haven for displaced Christians and other minorities. Iraqi Kurdish immigration regulations mirror those of the central Iraqi government, with the exception that Iraqi Kurdish authorities would conduct their own security investigation to ensure that returnees did not pose a terror threat. Iraqi Christians and other religious minorities, of course, would be exempt from any suspicion as the Islamic State is a Sunni terror group.

Instances of kidnapping for ransom have declined considerably in the years since the U.S.-led intervention, although there has been a recent spike in organized crime in and around Basra. Iraqis attribute this criminality—not directed against Christians *per se*—to the departure of many security force members to fight the Islamic State in and around Mosul. That group's defeat, however, should lead security forces to again staff fully, enabling the restoration of security.

Those who target Christians in Iraq can expect to pay the full penalty of Iraqi law. Christians who are uneasy about returning to Baghdad or Basra because of fears of criminality or

who do not wish to return to Mosul and the Nineveh plain because of the destruction of property both by the Islamic State and also that which occurred during the military campaign to free the city would have little difficulty settling in Iraqi Kurdistan. There are no prohibitions on Christians entering Iraqi Kurdistan, although anyone returning would be subject to questioning and screening by the Kurdistan Region's security forces.

Acquisition of New Identification Documents

Lack of current identification documentation will not translate into detention for Iraqis returning to the country of their citizenship after a long sojourn in the United States, especially given coordination between the Iraqi and U.S. governments. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees noted in November 2011 that “[n]o [civil] documentation would be issued at the airport, but a letter would be issued to facilitate the individual’s movement back to their place of origin / relocation.” A Spring/Summer 2014 paper in *Canadian Studies in Population* by Sulaiman Bah, a professor at the University of Western Ontario, found that Iraqi family registries recorded the name, title, father’s name, mother’s name, sex, relationship to head of household, occupation, literacy, religion, date of birth, and place of birth of all Iraqis, and found that such information was usually accessible within five minutes.

A *laissez-passez* may slow transit through checkpoints when those manning such checkpoints are unfamiliar with the document, but any such confusion would likely be resolved with phone calls to superiors. Iraqis with expired identification documents will not likely be harmed or tortured at Iraqi government checkpoints. The chief mission for security officials at checkpoints is to determine the person is who they say they are and has a legitimate purpose to their travel.

The Iraqi government is also in the process of converting all identification documents to a new biometric standard and so all Iraqis are now updating their identity documents. Iraqis returning to Iraq would need to apply for updated papers based on records kept by numerous ministries. While Iraq has not had a scientific census since 1958, the Iraqi government does have extensive records of households and families due to the ration card program accompanying its Oil-for-Food program.

It is rare that any Iraqi returnee would lack any network upon their return to Iraq. Family networks in Iraq are extensive, as are tribal and professional networks. Family networks include not only the nuclear family, but first, second, and third cousins and other distant relatives. Those who grew up in Iraq would also be able to tap into peer networks from school days. During the Iran-Iraq War, Saddam Hussein dispersed many communities: He sent Kurds to the southern city of Basra, for example, and Shi'ites to Kurdistan. The civil conflict that erupted in the wake of U.S. occupation also scattered population internally. As a result, it can be easier to find networks and personal contacts outside the district of one's birth. Churches would likely help mentor returnees unfamiliar with Iraqi bureaucracies and would help returnees network within the community.

While the 2016 State Department Human Rights Report for Iraq found that "Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), members of the Federal Police, and the [Kurdish] Peshmerga committed some human rights violations, and there continued to be reports of PMF killing, torturing, kidnapping, and extorting civilians," much of these abuses occurred in the backdrop to the fight against the Islamic State and the counter-terror campaign; it is not directed at Iraqi civilians or returnees.

Iraqi politicians do acknowledge land disputes, including in the Ninewa Plains, in which the Iraqi government has sought to reward PMF veterans with land grants in areas now or in the

past populated by Christians. Overlapping land disputes date back to the Ottoman period, however. Until 1974, Iraqi land registration was based upon the Ottoman Tapu system, at which point the Baathist government passed a Real Estate Registration Law. In 2005, the U.S. Agency for International Development found that 96 percent of Iraqi land owners said their land was registered, with a slightly smaller number saying they had actual deeds. The situation was complicated further, however, by the Saddam Hussein government to void property ownership by some minorities and to transfer those properties to Sunni Arabs and political allies. Deliberate arson in property registration offices and the proliferation of fake deeds has complicated determination of land ownership in many cases. Such a situation is not limited to Iraq, but impacts almost every Middle Eastern country or territory subject to subsequent Ottoman, colonial, or dictatorial regimes.

There have been reports published by the State Department and acknowledged by Iraqi officials of PMF or *peshmerga* checkpoints interfering with free passage of Christians or other minorities to areas under dispute. This generally impacts land owners and is limited in scope rather than a universal problem across Iraq. For example, such incidents do not occur in Baghdad or within the formal territory of the Kurdistan Regional Government.

It has been and continues to be my assessment that Iraq is now safe for Iraqis who have lived in the United States to return. I base my assessment on almost two decades of frequent travel to and experience in Iraq, and on my discussions with Iraqis and Iraqi officials across the sectarian and ethnic divides, and among both government officials and opposition members. While there are localized areas that remain dangerous within the country, for example, Hawija and a small area north of the Baiji oil refinery, broad swaths—Iraqi Kurdistan, Baghdad, Najaf and Karbala, and

increasingly the Ninewa plains, for example—are now stable and secure and the threat of violence to individual returnees from either the PMF or the Islamic State is minimal.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed on September 26, 2019.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Rubin", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michael Rubin