

# PRESS RELEASE

# COALITION PROVISIONAL AUTHORITY

**DATE: 10 July**

**PR No. 00016**

## TEXT OF A SPEECH BY AMBASSADOR BREMER: DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN NAJAF 9 JULY 2003

Sabah al Khair.

I'm delighted to be in Najaf today, one of Iraq's greatest historic cities.

And I'm delighted to have met your new Governor, and the members of the new Najaf *provincial/city [check]* council who selected him. These leaders were selected on the basis of merit alone. They represent you, the people of Najaf, not a corrupt regime in Baghdad seeking to repress you. Their job is to protect your new freedoms, and to promote your interests – not theirs. This is the start of the path to democracy across Iraq.

Shortly, a national Governing Council will be in place, in which representatives from all of Iraq, including Najaf, will help drive this democratic process forward. They in turn will help launch a constitutional process, in which Iraqis from across Iraq will write a new constitution for this country.

We understand and agree with the need for the constitutional process to be seen as a legitimate Iraqi process in the eyes of all Iraqis. Therefore, one of the first responsibilities of the Governing Council will be to decide on a process for writing the constitution and for convening a Constitutional Conference truly representative of all Iraqis. Like the Governing Council, the constitutional body will be a truly representative group, reflecting the views and interests of all Iraqis. The Constitution itself will be written by Iraqis, for Iraqis. It will not be written by the Coalition. It will be Iraq's constitution.

Once a new constitution has been approved, then true, democratic, free and fair elections will be held across Iraq. At this point, Iraqi citizens will elect a sovereign Iraqi government for the first time in this country's history. And that will mark the end of the coalition's job in this country.

## COALITION PROVISIONAL AUTHORITY

Coalition forces came to Iraq as liberators. We have freed you from the tyranny of Saddam Hussein. Our objective now is to contribute quickly to the reconstruction of Iraq. We all have an enormous job to do: the coalition, Iraq's new emerging leaders, the Iraqi civil service, and the Iraqi people whom we all serve. Najaf, like much of the rest of the south of Iraq was neglected economically and repressed politically by Saddam Hussein. The coalition has already started many reconstruction projects in Najaf since liberation. Work on your schools, work on your roads, and work on your hospitals – like the project to repair the air-conditioning in this hospital, which has just been completed.

Today, I am pleased to announce several new projects to improve the lives of the citizens of Najaf, and to help your economy:

- First, water. Najaf is blessed with the waters of the great Euphrates river. The families and children of Najaf should have access to clean, healthy water. I have ordered that the Coalition spend more than \$16 million dollars, some 22 trillion dinars, in the months ahead to improve water and sewage treatment for this city.
- Second, I recently announced a new construction initiative for the whole of Iraq. About 3 billion dinars of this has been earmarked for construction projects in Najaf. These projects will be targeted at improving public services in Najaf, and will create jobs for the people of this city.
- Third, a scheme to tackle the issue of jobs and employment head-on. Today I am announcing a new lending program for the Southern Region. In the first phase, there will be almost 10 trillion dinars available. Different types of loans will be given: loans of 150,000 dinars to enable women to work from their homes while caring for their children. And loans of up to 40 million dinars for businessmen and women to set up new businesses or expand their existing ones.

In time, we expect to expand this program even further, to include larger loans for larger businesses. The aim is to stimulate growth and economic activity, so that all citizens can find jobs and provide a livelihood for their families. We will consult with community and religious leaders here to assure that these programs respect the norms of Islamic banking.

Many other important projects have already been started in Najaf, such as work on the irrigation canals. This project already has created jobs for 2,000 people. It will soon employ some 8,000 people a day. This will have an important impact on agriculture in this area. And many other projects will be launched over the coming months. Taken together, these projects demonstrate the firm commitment of the coalition and of the new Iraqi civil service to serve the people of this great city.