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Coalition Provisional Authority
Announcement of Inspectors General
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Human weakness is a permanent condition.

One need but read the Code of Hammurabi to know that people have always been tempted to lie, cheat and steal. This is not news to any student of history or the human condition. All societies must wrestle with the question of what to do about it.

Hammurabi recognized that civilization requires a code of laws to deal with inevitable temptation and crime. And thus Hammurabi earned his place in history as the world's first great law-giver.

And as the inhabitants of Hammurabi's kingdom needed a means to deal with those who yield to temptation or corruption, so do all of us in the modern world. Iraqis know this as well as anyone in the world. During Saddam's regime Iraqi children attended dilapidated schools and sought treatment in clinics with no medicine. Meanwhile, Saddam Hussein, his family and friends indulged in a Pharonic excess of palaces and collections of expensive cars.

The wake of Saddam's corruption is long and wide. Now, almost a year after liberation we are just beginning to understand the outline of the theft and corruption associated with the Oil for Food program. Both the United Nations and the Iraqi Governing Council have begun investigations into a program initiated to help the Iraqi people instead allegedly diverted Iraq's money to other, possibly illicit, uses.

In order to facilitate these investigations, two weeks ago I ordered that all Iraqi official records in any department or ministry which might pertain to the Oil for Food program administration, sales or purchases be identified, inventoried and secured. The Coalition Provision Authority will do all we can to facilitate these investigations.

Never again should the Iraqi people's wealth be squandered on palaces and Ferraris. Never again should such corruption be allowed to take root.

Ladies and gentlemen, the theft of government property is a particularly odious crime because government property is the people's property. In a democracy money raised from lawfully imposed taxes should be used for the people's benefit as determined by their representatives. That money is held in trust for the people of Iraq by their government. It is not there to ease the lives of government officials or political leaders.

And Iraqis, you the people, know the threat of corruption is real. In conversations with hundreds of Iraqis since liberation, I have heard that stamping out corruption is one of the people's greatest concerns and I agree.

Fighting government corruption is important in any country, but doubly important today in Iraq. If public officials steal or abuse their position here they are not just stealing, they are undermining confidence in the new Iraq's democratic government.

One way to track corruption and waste is to ensure that each and every Iraqi ministry has an independent Inspector General. This person must be authorized to investigate allegations against anyone in the Ministry, including the Minister. And, where he finds evidence of crimes, the Inspector General must be able to refer cases to Iraq's independent judiciary. This is the system I have determined to set up in Iraq.

Thus, Iraq's new Inspectors General have a special responsibility. They will be protecting not just the people's money, but the people's faith in their government.

The Inspectors General will not be alone in their efforts to protect the public from corruption. I am creating two additional independent, but cooperating agencies which will work with the Inspectors General.

The Inspectors General will work with The Commission on Public Integrity and revitalized Board of Supreme Audit.

Working together, the Board, the Inspectors General and the Commission, form an integrated approach intended to combat corruption at every level of government across the country.

Although all three elements are important, the Inspectors General have a unique opportunity to serve their fellow citizens. Seldom does mismanagement, waste, fraud or abuse occur in government without people in the relevant ministry knowing about it. That means that a hard-working Inspector General will have an excellent opportunity to expose corruption.

Best of all, an active Inspector General helps honest people stay honest. An active inspections program lets people know that waste, fraud or abuse, are likely to be detected and those responsible are likely to be punished-- and that helps everyone.

This program has already begun. As of today, I have already appointed 21 Inspectors General and I expect to name the remaining Inspectors General within the next few days.

Man's ancient tendency towards self-enrichment has not been overcome, but a comprehensive system using individuals dedicated to discovering waste, fraud, abuse and mismanagement will reduce the temptation for many and help ensure that the corrupt few receive the punishments their crimes deserve. I mentioned that I have appointed 21 Inspectors General and I am very pleased to have several of them here today.

Along with the Transitional Administrative Law, the appointment of these Inspectors General represents yet another milepost on Iraq's progression to sovereignty, elections and democracy, to a future of hope for all Iraqis.

Mabruk al Iraq al Jadeed.
Aash al-Iraq!