



International Association of Contemporary Iraqi Studies

3rd Annual Conference, 16-17 July 2008

SOAS, University of London

Abstract of paper to be presented at the conference.

For details of the conference programme go to www.iraqistudies.org

Speaker: Joy Gordon, Fairfield University

Title: "Auditing the reconstruction in Iraq"

Abstract:

This paper will look at the audits of the reconstruction in Iraq conducted by the International Advisory Monitoring Board of the US (covering the Development Fund of Iraq), and the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, whose mandate includes a broad range of reconstruction activities, both from Iraqi and US funds. These audits show a systematic failure to follow the industry standards in awarding contracts, in managing them, and in quality control of the final work product.

Individually, many of these audits are startling for the extreme and obvious corruption they describe, but taken as whole, over time, they are even more striking. This is sometimes because exactly the same problem is never remedied, despite being criticized repeatedly over a period of months or years; or because it becomes apparent that a problem clearly anticipated at the beginning then in fact comes to pass, exactly as expected. The overall story has been one of disappearances of massive amounts of funds (far more than was the case with the accusations against the Oil for Food Program), as well as the failure to provide badly needed repair and construction of infrastructure.