

National Records and the Impact of International Conflicts on them: the Iraqi Case

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ABSTRACT

International conflicts, wars and crises have multiple impacts on countries, including economic, political, military and cultural ones. The 2003 invasion of Iraq by a U.S.-led coalition not only reshaped the political and security landscape of the Middle East but also initiated a controversial chapter in the management and ownership of Iraq's cultural and historical records. In the aftermath of the invasion, a vast trove of official Iraqi documents ranging from Ba'ath Party archives to intelligence files was seized and subsequently transferred to various institutions in the United States for analysis, preservation, and, in some cases, public access. Millions of Iraqi documents were subjected to translation, organization, and scanning in order to benefit from the information contained in those documents. This study attempted to trace the fate of Iraqi documents within American institutions.

Keywords: Iraq, Iraq National Records, Ba'ath Party Files, Saddam Files, Minerva Initiative, Harmony Program

INTRODUCTION

The 2003 United States-led invasion of Iraq marked not only a profound shift in global geopolitics but also precipitated a significant displacement of Iraqi cultural and historical materials. Among the most contentious outcomes of the conflict was the transfer of thousands of Iraqi government documents, archival records, and cultural artifacts to U.S. institutions. These materials, taken amid the collapse of the Ba'athist regime and widespread looting, now reside in a legal and ethical gray zone that continues to challenge archivists, policymakers, and historians. Central to the debate is the question of ownership: whether these documents, often containing sensitive personal, political, and religious information, should remain in U.S. custody or be repatriated to Iraq. This issue intersects with broader concerns about colonial legacies, cultural sovereignty, international law, and the responsibilities of custodianship in post-conflict settings. The presence of Iraqi documents in U.S. institutions can be traced to both formal and informal transfers during and after the invasion. One of the most prominent collections is the Iraqi Jewish Archive, consisting of thousands of documents and books recovered by U.S. forces from a flooded basement of the Iraqi Intelligence Service in Baghdad. These materials were transferred to the U.S. National Archives for preservation and digitization under a temporary agreement, though their continued presence in the United States has drawn criticism from Iraqi officials and Jewish diaspora communities alike (Baker, 2013). Other collections, including Ba'ath Party records and files from Saddam Hussein's secret police, were collected by the U.S. military and later made available to researchers through American academic institutions such as the Hoover Institution and the Conflict Records Research Center (CRRC) (Bejtullahu, 2019). Legally, the status of these documents raises complex questions. Under international law, particularly the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, occupying powers are prohibited from seizing

or transferring cultural property unless for the purpose of temporary protection (UNESCO, 1954). The U.S., although not a party to the original convention until 2009, is still bound by customary international law and the principles of cultural preservation. Furthermore, the removal of state documents implicates sovereignty and property rights under both Iraqi national law and customary international norms. The Geneva Conventions also offer limited protection for civilian and state property, further complicating the legality of prolonged possession of these materials (Cunliffe, 2014). From an ethical standpoint, the custodianship of Iraqi records in the United States reflects longstanding tensions in the global archive between preservation and power. While U.S. institutions argue that they rescued and preserved materials at risk of destruction, critics contend that such actions perpetuate neo-imperial dynamics whereby the West controls the narrative and memory of the Global South. The archival displacement of Iraqi documents serves as a contemporary example of what Michel-Rolph Trouillot (1995) describes as "silencing the past"—where control over historical records equates to control over historical narrative. Moreover, communities connected to the contents of these archives—whether Iraqi citizens or diasporic groups—are often excluded from decisions about access, ownership, and interpretation. Ethical frameworks of archival practice increasingly call for shared stewardship, consent-based access, and the prioritization of affected communities' rights over that of foreign institutions (Caswell, 2016). Historically, the movement of cultural property during conflict has been a recurring feature of imperial and post-colonial encounters. From Napoleonic France's seizure of art across Europe to the looting of artifacts during the British occupation of Egypt and Iraq in the 19th century, cultural pillage has often been justified under the guise of protection or scholarship. The Iraqi case, though situated in the 21st century, follows this pattern, raising urgent questions about what lessons—if any—have been learned (Hicks, 2020). This article explores the trajectory of Iraqi documents held in U.S. institutions post-2003.

METHODOLOGY AND STUDY QUESTIONS

The researchers employed a qualitative historical research method, primarily researching archive materials and official records pertaining to the transfer of Iraqi state documents to the United States. The study concentrated on locating, gathering, and analyzing historical documents pertinent to the topic in order to comprehend the events that impacted the transfer of Iraqi official records overseas. The primary sources gathered by the researchers constituted the foundation of the study, encompassing official records from US and Iraqi government agencies, as well as data accessible on the websites of institutions and centers that preserve Iraqi records, including the Hoover Institution, the Minerva Initiative, and the US National Archives, among others. Researchers have tracked the trajectory of Iraqi state documents relocated from Iraq post-2003 and identified their final destinations within various organizations in the United States. This was accomplished by documentary study in relevant sources. This study sought to answer the following question: Where are the Iraqi state documents that were transferred from Iraq in 2003 to the United States now located?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The archives and libraries of countries represent the cultural memory of the people of those countries. Therefore, one of the tools of war was to destroy that memory, in addition to destroying the infrastructure of countries. This is certainly what the occupying forces did when they invaded Iraq in 2003. It is a type of genocide of the collective identity of peoples (Qureshi, 2009). At the beginning and during the American invasion of Iraq, which ended with the end of Saddam Hussein's regime in April 2003, libraries and archives in Iraq, whether in Baghdad or the rest of the provinces, were subjected to widespread looting that amounted to a cultural catastrophe (Arnoult, 2003). It can be said that the theft, burning and destruction of libraries and government ministries began on April 8, 2003 and continued for several days. Certainly, the legal responsibility lies with the occupying forces, as stipulated in the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of War of 1945 (Al Tikriti, 2007). Immediately after the invasion of Iraq, the United States tried to obtain any evidence linking Iraq to weapons of mass destruction or terrorism. Therefore, American forces conducted surveys of various Iraqi provinces in order to obtain documents proving this supposed relationship. They seized millions of Iraqi government documents, which is considered the largest amount of enemy documents seized after World War II (Montgomery, 2019). Among the entities that seized the Iraqi state documents was the Iraqi Memory Foundation, which is an outcome of the Iraqi Research and Documentation Project founded by the Iraqi dissident Kanan Makiya at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University in 1992. In the chaos that followed the occupation of Baghdad, Makiya seized the documents of the ruling Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party, which were stored at the headquarters of the party's national command. Then, shortly after, they were transferred to the Hoover Institution at Stanford University in the documents to the United States (Wilkinson, 2019). It is also certain that

the US Department of Defense has seized most of the Iraqi state documents under the pretext or justification of the laws of military conflict with enemies, which enable US forces to seize enemy documents (Montgomery & Brill, 2022). With the American forces controlling the city of Baghdad, those forces seized millions of government documents that had previously been decided to be seized. Therefore, the American forces headed to those ministries and institutions and seized those documents before the gangs of looting, theft, and burning reached them. The American Ministry of Defense deposited most of the seized documents in the Defense Institute in order to study them and learn lessons from them (Helfont, 2024). That some of the Iraqi documents that were transferred from Iraq were transferred by US Vice President Dick Cheney and Secretary of Defense Rams Fairwood. This was evident when the Iraqi Jewish archive was transferred from Baghdad to the United States, in addition to people who were following the matter hour by hour from Jerusalem, headed by Natan Sharansky (Sugarman, 2019). The Washington Post estimated that 80% of Saddam Hussein's files were seized by US forces, which is a very large number. The newspaper also indicated that most of these files were transferred in the first stage to Qatar, where they underwent technical processes such as indexing, cataloging, and digitization before being transferred to the United States (Cox, 2009). Iraq certainly has one of the oldest civilizations in the world, and therefore everything that happens there and in its cultural heritage will attract the world's attention. This is what happened when the Society of American Archivists and the American Library Association called for the protection of Iraqi government records and heritage sites during the American invasion of Iraq (Nugent, 2005). The seizure of Iraqi state documents and their transfer to the United States did not begin in 2003, after the US forces invaded Iraq, as some believe. This is because in 1992, the United States, in agreement with the Kurdish parties in northern Iraq, transferred Iraqi government documents that had been seized by Kurdish opposition forces after those forces took control of the three northern provinces following the riots that followed the first Gulf War in 1991. Most of these documents related to the ruling Baath Party and the security departments in the provinces of Iraqi Kurdistan (Degerald, 2021). The US forces seized a large number of Iraqi state documents that had been previously decided to be seized, while leaving a large number of other files and documents exposed to theft, looting, and deliberate burning. Some sources have indicated the presence of US forces near the National Library and the Iraqi Museum, both of which were exposed to theft and burning without those forces intervening, despite some workers in both institutions demanding that the US forces intervene to stop the looting and burning. This gives the impression that the burning and theft of many Iraqi state documents and even antiquities was deliberate from the beginning (Al-Tikriti, 2003). The United States justified its decision to leave Iraqi state documents with many excuses that completely contradict international laws related to the preservation of countries' heritage during wars, specifically the Hague Treaty of 1954 (Young, 2022). The United States' attempts to undermine the legitimacy of seizing Iraqi state documents were accompanied by a parallel effort to discredit these documents among Iraqis, aiming to confuse their identity and credibility. This is what happened with the documents of the Al-Ba'ath Party, which ruled Iraq before the American invasion. Ironically, Iraqi researchers have not been allowed access to these documents, and even if they do, they cannot make photocopies of them (Farhan, 2022). It is worth noting that all Iraqi documents seized by US forces were first transferred to Qatar, where the US Department of Defense's Media Processing Center is located, and then transferred to the United States, with the exception of the Search Party documents, which were transferred directly to the United States through an agreement concluded between the Iraq Memory Foundation and the Hoover Institution at Stanford University (Montgomery, 2019). A portion of the Iraqi documents transferred to the United States, specifically Baath Party documents, has been returned. However, there are certainly no official statistics for the number of Iraqi documents transferred to the United States, and therefore no official estimate of what percentage of those documents have been returned. Walter notes that the US Department of Defense seized documents estimated at between 100 and 200 million pages, confirming that any information regarding the number of Iraqi state documents is merely speculation and estimation and that the true number is known only to US authorities (Walter, 2022). The primary objective of the US forces in seizing Iraqi state documents was to search for evidence of Iraq's supposed weapons of mass destruction. The search then shifted to documents linking Iraq to terrorism, human rights violations, and other intelligence information (Montgomery, 2019). Paper documents were not the only form of documentation that was seized and transferred by the United States. There are approximately 1,500 video files of Saddam Hussein's meetings with senior Baath Party leaders and Iraqi military leaders (Mustafa, 2018). The United States has a history of seizing state documents. Not long ago, when the United States invaded Grenada, American forces seized Grenadian government documents. This action was documented in the text of the National Security Directive of 1983, which was drafted to legislate the invasion of Grenada. The directive stipulated the immediate protection of all documents seized by American forces and the guarantee of their safety (Cox, 2011)

DISCUSSION

After the occupation of Baghdad on April 9, 2003, American forces took control of some important buildings and sensitive centers in the capital, Baghdad, such as the Iraqi Ministry of Oil building, the Intelligence building,

the Republican Palace, and the National Command building of the Ba'ath Party. After the American forces took control of those buildings and centers, they searched for documents related to the supposed Iraqi mass destruction programs, which were the argument used by the United States and its allies in invading Iraq. The American forces seized millions of official Iraqi documents, whether related to the military, security, intelligence or even economic aspects, and then transferred them to the Combined Media Processing Center in Qatar. These massive documents in Qatar were translated from Arabic to English, categorized by subject, and scanned for digital storage in databases. The documents were studied to understand Saddam Hussein's regime, his methods of governing Iraq, and his international relations. They were then transferred to various entities within the United States. Below is a review of the American institutions and centers that received Iraqi state documents.

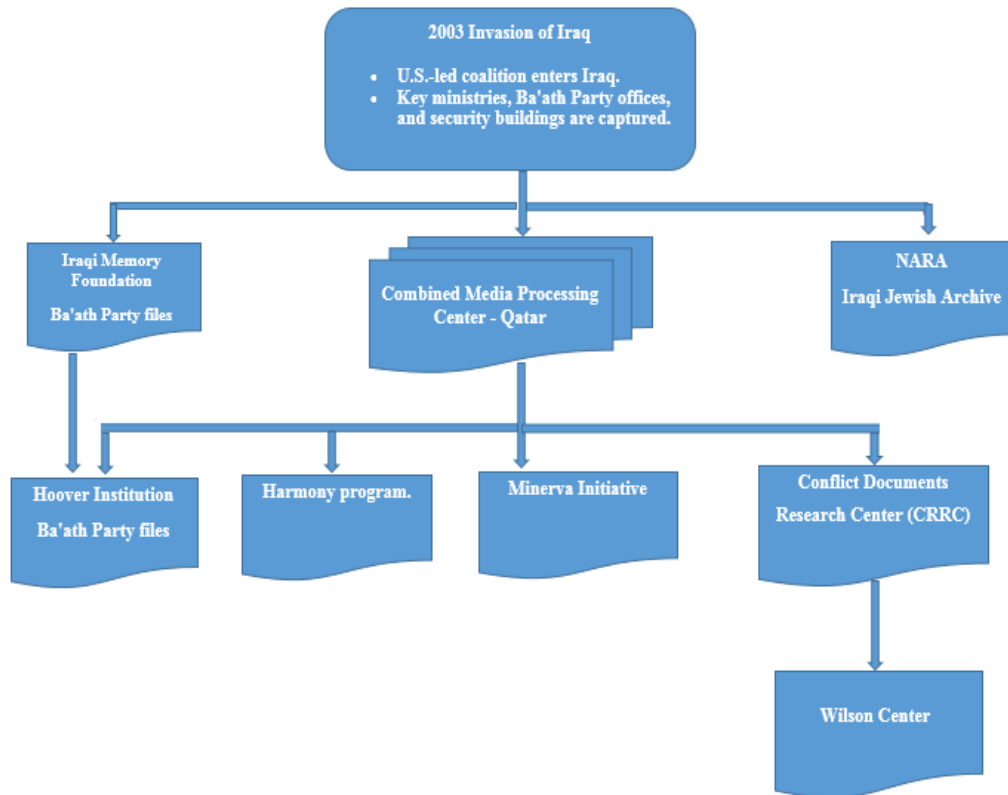


Figure (1). Institutions and centers to which Iraqi state documents were transferred.

Harmony Program

In 2005, the Combating Terrorism Center (CTC) initiated the Harmony Program to make available and examine records stored in the Defense Department's Harmony database. Primary source documents will be used to put al-Qa'ida, its related movement, and other security threats into context within this program. The CTC usually includes an analysis report and the original source materials that supported its findings with its Harmony products. The CTC's goal in making these materials public is to allow other researchers to use them for their own research. The sources were obtained during operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other theaters(ctc.westpoint.edu).



Harmony Program

The CTC launched the Harmony Program in 2005 in order to release and analyze documents from the Department of Defense's Harmony database. The focus of this program is to contextualize the inner-functioning of al-Qa'ida, its associated movement, and other security threats through primary source documents. Harmony

Figure (2). Harmony program website

The Harmony database contains documents that were gathered in an unscientific manner during wartime operations. There is no source that specifies the exact number of Iraqi state documents seized by US forces and

included in the Harmony program. However, some sources indicate that the Harmony database contains thousands of hours of audio recordings and approximately 200 million pages of Iraqi documents. The collection of these documents took place both during and after the 2003 military operations in Iraq. Some of these documents were sent to a warehouse in Doha, Qatar, where a group of translators translated them from Arabic to English, indexed and scanned them, categorized them, and entered them into the Harmony database. The result is a large number of Iraqi state documents in this database, and there is no publicly available source that accurately indicates the exact number of these documents, whether paper or audio recordings (Montgomery & Brill 2019). Most of the documented history of Saddam Hussein's dictatorship in the United States is in digital format, classified, and stored in the Pentagon's Harmony database (Montgomery & Hennerbichler 2020).

Conflict Documents Research Center (CRRC)

In order to achieve the Secretary of Defense's goal of facilitating research into captured documents with "complete openness and rigid adherence to academic freedom and integrity," the Conflict Documents Research Center (CRRC) was founded. Facilitating the use of seized documents to assist research, both inside and outside the government, is the goal of the CRRC. Electronic copies are kept in a U.S. Government database that is restricted. The main goal of the CRRC is to provide researchers with copies of a sizable percentage of these records through the researcher database (conflectrecords.wordpress.com).



Figure (3). CRRC website

There were two separate collections in the CRRC researcher database: 1) Saddam Hussein's Iraq; and 2) al-Qaeda and Associated Movements (mostly from Afghanistan). The Conflict Records Research Center (CRRC) at the National Defense University in Washington, D.C. came to hold digital copies of about 143,000 pages of documents and almost 200 hours of audio recordings taken from Saddam Hussein's regime during the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq between 2010 and 2015. Processed from the Department of Defense's Harmony Records Database, the digital records came from a total between 100 and 200 million pages, around 600,000 unique files. Along with visiting foreign dignitaries, there were around 2,000 hours of audio recordings of Saddam's sessions with his cabinet, the Revolutionary Command Council, the Regional and National commands of the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party (Brands & Palkki, 2012). A digital copy or audio file of the original record in Arabic, a complete English translation, and a file information sheet with basic background information are included with every record in the CRRC. Software for searching the entire range of English-language information sheets and translations is available in the CRRC researcher database; however, Arabic texts cannot be searched. The Iraq records at the CRRC cover a broad range of topics related to foreign and domestic policies. The Iraq records include audio recordings of meetings between Saddam and senior officials and visiting dignitaries, Saddam's speeches, records of the Presidential Diwan, and communications between various ministries. Records dating from 1979 to 9 April 2003 are categorized by the office or agency from which they originated (Rubin, 2011). CRRC was shut down in 2015 due to operational cuts in the U.S. government budget (Hadi & Cannon, 2024).

Minerva Initiative

In order to confront emerging risks to national security, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates launched the Minerva Initiative in 2008 with the goal of bridging the gap between government and academia. Gates likened the current state of affairs to the Cold War, emphasizing the intricacy of the global scene and the necessity of refocusing attention on the government's preparedness to handle threats in the twenty-first century. He underlined how crucial academic research is to national security and how universities must serve their constituents, the country, and the world (Wachbrit, 2020).



Figure (4). Minerva Initiative website

Chinese Military and Technology Studies, Iraqi and Terrorist Perspectives Projects, Religious and Ideological Studies, and New Disciplines Project were the four areas of special attention identified by the initiative. Gates underlined the importance of engaging with a variety of fields, studying the Iraqi and Terrorist Perspectives Projects, understanding the ideological climate inside the Islamic world, and sharing open-source knowledge on military and technology advancements. As a result of the United States seizing Saddam Hussein's Ba'athist regime's archives during the 2003 Iraq War, one of Minerva's objectives was to research "The Iraqi and Terrorist Perspectives Projects." These archives, which number millions of pages of written records and thousands of hours of recordings, represent the largest collection of primary sources on any Arab regime, past or present. The collection had already revised our understanding of the 1991 Gulf War and 2003 Iraq War (Woods,2006). US Secretary of Defense Robert Gates announced in 2008 that scholars access to the Ba'ath archive and the records of the Saddam Hussein regime promised to spark new scholarship on authoritarian regimes in the Middle East and to reshape fundamentally the field of Middle East studies (Mahnken,2023)

Hoover Institution

The Conflict Records Research Center (CRRC), which has a collection of significant digital documents from the Saddam Hussein regime and al-Qaeda and its affiliates, was acquired by Stanford University's Hoover Institution in 2024. Due to a lack of finance, the CRRC closed its doors in 2015. For almost ten years, CRRC's records were inaccessible despite the controversy surrounding them. The General Directorate of Military Intelligence, General Security Directorate, Ba'ath Party, Fedayeen Saddam militia, General Command of the Armed Forces, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defense, and the Presidential Diwan were among the organizations that produced the data. After the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, U.S. military document exploitation teams seized all of them. Papers about intelligence, security, communications, propaganda, fundraising, recruitment, diplomacy, training, and operations are all included in a data compilation. All documents are available in Arabic, with English translations available as well (Rahi,2024)

Figure (5). Iraq files on the Hoover Institution website

Approximately eleven million pages of official documents from the Ba'ath regime are available as digital images, along with hundreds of hours of audio and video recordings, according to Blaydes, a political science professor at Stanford University (Blaydes, 2018).

The information contained in the Hoover Institution's guide of Iraqi documents contains ten collections of documents, divided thematically into separate databases. 9,351,739 documents are included in total, offering a comprehensive view of various aspects of Iraqi governance, military operations, and societal issues during the relevant periods. This total number of documents does not include the number of documents added to it from the CRRC. This certainly means that the number of documents in the Hoover Institute is higher than the number indicated in the guide. Table No. 1 below shows the number of documents in each database (www.hoover.org).

Table (1). number of documents in each database.

Dataset title	Number of records
North Iraq Dataset	2,394,561
Kuwait Dataset	11,671
School Registers Dataset	162,628
BRCC Box files Dataset	2,764,631
Membership Files Dataset	3,782,723
2005 Secondary Collection	232,559
Ministry of Information Dataset	1,336
Jewish Presence in Iraq Dataset	283
Video Documents	1,274 videos
BRCC Artifacts Dataset	73 artifacts
Total number of records	9,351,739

The Iraqi Memory Foundation.

Exiled Iraqi dissident Kanan Makiya found a significant stockpile of Saddam Hussein's Baath Party and security forces documents shortly after the 2003 US invasion. After the documents were discovered, Makiya's private Washington, DC-based Iraqi Memory Foundation (IMF) seized ownership of them and deposited them in Stanford University's Hoover Institution for five years as a safe haven (Alshaibi, 2019). The documents collected by Makiya, are categorized into four distinct groups: A dataset comprising high school student information from all eighteen governorates of Iraq. This category comprises roughly 160,000 pages. This category examines the period subsequent to the 1991 war and encompasses the student's name, date and place of birth, parents' names, address, and political affiliation. The second category contains 2.7 million records from all Iraqi governorates' Ba'ath Party headquarters correspondence. About 5 gigabytes of high-quality photos of these documents. The

Office of the President of the Republic's correspondence with security agencies such as the Intelligence Service, General Security Directorate, and Special Security is prominent in these pages. These files cover everything from daily life to parties (Wilkinson, 2019). Party membership files, with almost 3 million pages, are the third category. It has 5 terabytes of high-resolution photocopies. This category contains files on all senior party leaders, including their security, political positions, promotions, roles in securing party interests in their homes and workplaces, travel requests, and retirement procedures. The 1,336-page Ministry of Culture and Information files are the fourth category. This category contains ministry-specific documents that show Saddam Hussein's concern with his public image. It covers 1991–2003 (Montgomery, 2011).

Wilson Center

The US Congress chartered the Center, which is a knowledge- and science-based institution. The purpose of this is to provide relevant parties and policymakers with information that will aid in their understanding of global developments and occurrences. The analysis and insights provided assist decision-makers make better use of the information they have and ultimately reach the right conclusion (Wilson.org).

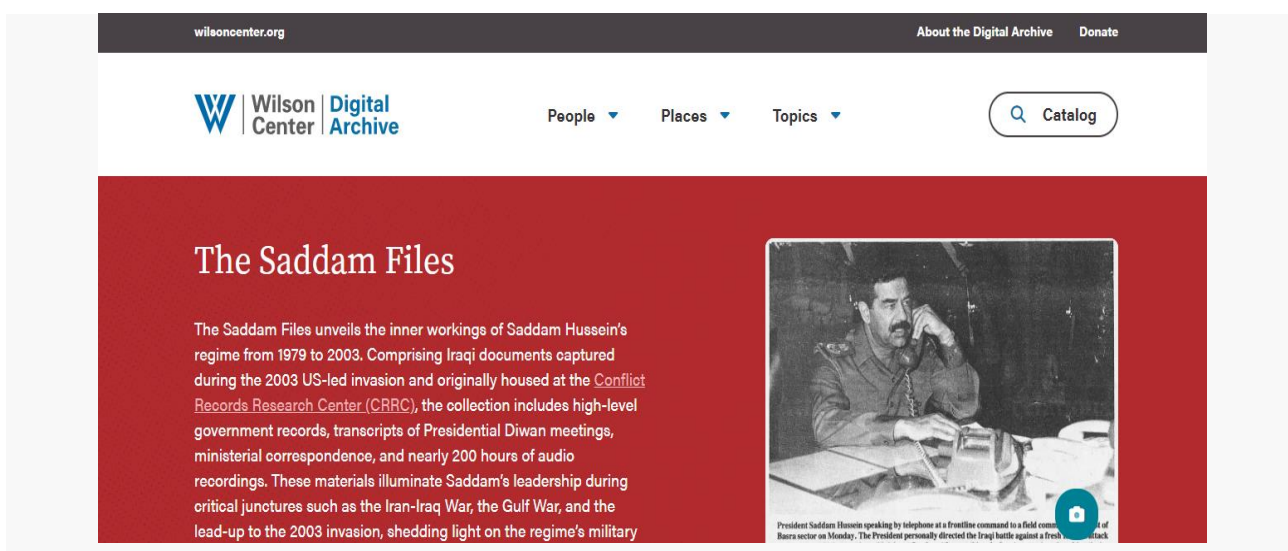


Figure (6). The Saddam files on the Wilson Center website.

Included in the collection of Iraqi documents originally held at the Conflict Records Research Center (CRRC) and seized during the US-led invasion of 2003 are records of high-level government officials, transcripts of meetings of the Presidential Diwan, correspondence between ministers, and nearly 200 hours of audio recordings. These documents provide insight into the military strategy, internal administration, and foreign diplomacy of the Saddam government throughout pivotal times, including the Iran-Iraq War, the Gulf War, and the years leading up to the invasion in 2003 (digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org). The collection of Iraqi documents and records at the Wilson Center falls under the heading of the Saddam Files. These files can be searched through six elements: people and organizations, places, topics, archives, languages, and years. The Wilson Center allows, through its website, searching through the documents of Saddam Hussein's regime in two ways: the first is by viewing all the documents individually for each document (View All Documents), and the second way is by viewing the documents visually (View Visualization).

National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)

An assortment of valuable books and documents was discovered in the Iraqi Intelligence Headquarters in Baghdad by a special unit of the United States military. Originally called the Iraqi Jewish Community Documents, this collection documents the history of the Iraqi Jewish community. In order to save and restore it, the archive was moved to the United States of America. In 2014, a contract was made to extend the archive's stay in America, with the condition that the archive be returned in September 2018.

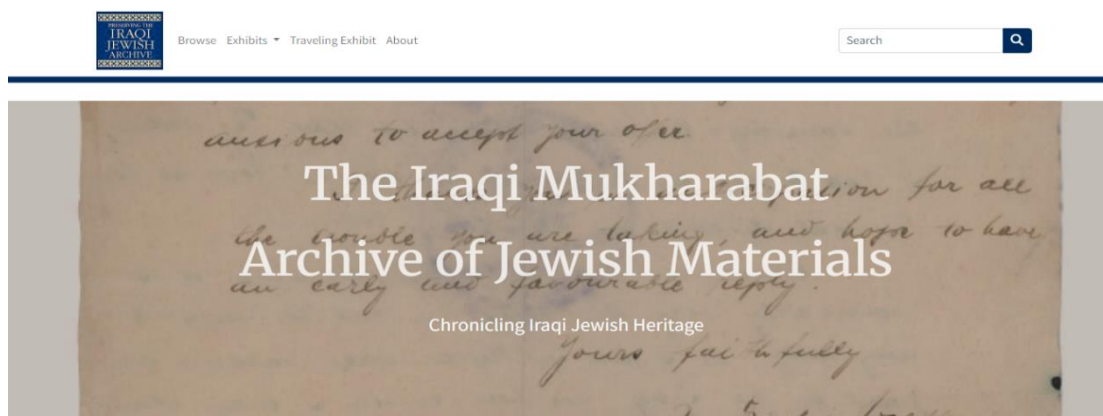


Figure (7). The Iraqi Jewish Archive website.

The collection, also known as the Iraqi Jewish Archive, is comprised of 27 aluminum boxes containing thousands of Jewish sacred books written in Hebrew and Arabic. In addition to other materials, these boxes contain Torah scrolls, Prayer books, sacred books with commentary, books on Jewish law, and Hebrew language instruction books for children. The printed books date back to the close of the nineteenth century and the start of the twentieth. The volumes have been gathered from various locations, including Baghdad, Warsaw, and Venice. The archive contains a 1568 edition of the Bible printed in Venice by Giovanni de Gara. Some of the Arabic collections in the archive are written by hand, while others are printed, and they all pertain to the Jewish community in Iraq. In addition to handwritten materials generated by the Iraqi Jewish community, this collection contains personal documents issued by the Iraqi government (Montgomery, 2013). The archive contains 2,700 books and tens of thousands of documents, according to information sources (IJArchive.org). In addition to 48 Torah scrolls, the archive contains the Babylonian Talmud, which dates back to the 18th century. The archive contains a Jewish calendar for the year 1972–73 in both Arabic and Hebrew, as well as various documents that explain the life of Jews in Baghdad during the 20th century, such as communal records, Jewish school records, university applications, commercial records, and family photographs (Leff, 2013). The Iraqi Jewish Archives collection was transferred from Iraq to the United States directly, without passing through the Combined Media Processing Center in Qatar, and was transferred directly to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA).

CONCLUSIONS

By reviewing many documents related to the subject of the documents of the Saddam Hussein regime that were seized by the American forces following the invasion of 2003 and transferred to the United States, it can be noted that there is no specific number for the number of those documents that arrived in the United States, and no official American statement was issued in this regard, although all the Iraqi documents had been sorted and many of them translated and then stored in databases after being scanned. It is illogical that there is no specific number for the number of these documents after the extensive technical processes mentioned above. Most of the sources tracked by researchers used the term "more than" when referring to the number of these documents, which reinforces the lack of official figures for the number of Iraqi documents held by various institutions and centers in the United States. Although no official statistics exist regarding the number of Iraqi documents, a significant discrepancy is evident in the estimated counts reported in various articles and sources on the topic. Blaydes stated that the Hoover Institution database contains more than 11 million Iraqi documents; however, after conducting a simple count of the Iraqi documents listed in the database and on the website, researchers found only 9,351,739 documents. I consider this group of documents to be of immense value in terms of general awareness and understanding of the internal nature of the regime. So, Iraqi researchers must first understand the regime that ruled them for over 34 years. Iraqi documents hold significant value both in the general field of intelligence and specifically for understanding the former Iraqi regime, its security apparatus, and their methods of operation both internally and externally. These documents also have great historical value, as they document a long period of Saddam Hussein's rule in various political, security, and economic fields. There is no way to replace these documents, making their return to Iraq a critical issue. Most of the Iraqi documents, after being taken out of Iraq, first stopped at the CMBC Center in Qatar. Then, after undergoing technical procedures, they were transferred to the United States, with the exception of two collections of documents that were not sent to Qatar: the Iraqi Jewish Archive, which was transferred to the United States, specifically to the National Archives and Records

Administration, and the Baath Party documents, which were seized by the Iraqi Memory Foundation. After some time, the United States received the collection. The reason for this procedure may have been the nature of the information contained in both sets of documents, which did not contain a security or intelligence nature. The research showed that the Iraqi documents were not stored in one place when they were sent to the US, but were instead spread across six institutions and centers. Four of the six locations to which the Iraqi documents were distributed are institutions and centers of a military or intelligence nature, while both the Hoover Institution at Stanford University and the National Archives and Records Administration are institutions of a civilian nature.

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